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ON THE COVER



Princeton Abaraoha lives a changed life because of faith.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



Editor's Note

Hello, Midlothian!

In August 2005, *MidlothianNOW Magazine* said hello to the community. These past 10 years have been full of learning, growing and sharing for the magazine, as well as for the city. Midlothian has grown exponentially with the addition of the 287 bypass, a new elementary, middle and high school and the growth of Navarro Community College. We also have more new homes than you can shake a stick at! All of this incredible expansion means

the city is progressing and continuing to grow with our magazine being mailed to more homes and businesses.

We have been privileged to present many of your neighbors who've excelled in achievements and others who just have a good story to tell. We've rejoiced in your successes and marveled at your accomplishments. I personally am grateful for the conversations, the shared laughter and tears and the overwhelming kindness. *MidlothianNOW* is proud to be a part of your journey!

Betty

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor
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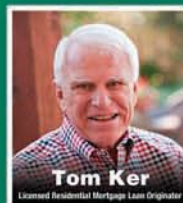
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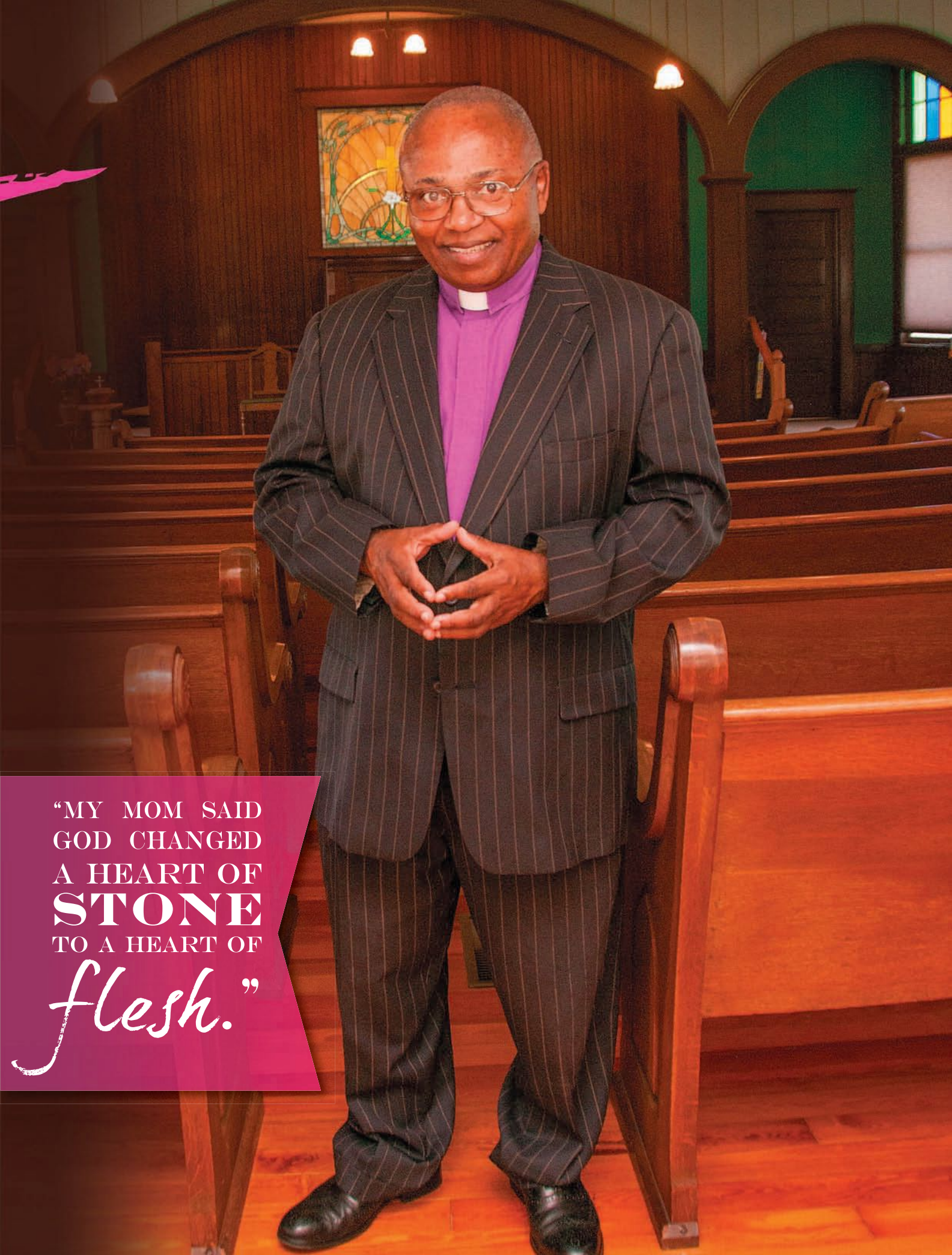
A CHANGED

Heart

— By Betty Tryon

The sound of the Russian jets roaring overhead struck fear in the Nigerian villagers' hearts. They screamed as they ran for cover from the bombs. "It was incredibly scary," Princeton Abaraoha, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Midlothian exclaimed. "The only time you heard the jets were when it was too late and the bombs were coming down. The air raids are something no human being should have to experience."





“MY MOM SAID
GOD CHANGED
A HEART OF
STONE
TO A HEART OF

flesh.”



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One of the bombs that landed did not explode. The bomb specialist's job was to grab it and use it against the enemy. Back in 1968, one of the specialists on explosives was 15-year-old Princeton. "This particular rocket was timed," he explained. "I was messing with it, and it exploded. It blew up my hand and my hip, and I was in the hospital for 18 months. I had six surgeries in my hand with no anesthesia."

For Princeton, war was not the norm when he was growing up. As members of the Igbo tribe, he recalled Nigeria as being a peaceful country for him and his nine siblings. Defining himself as a rascal when a young boy, he recalled his father putting him in military school for discipline's sake.

When civil war broke out between the Nigerian government and the tribe of Igbo, Princeton was scripted into the army. Being a child, he could infiltrate the enemy, cause harm and then disappear. "Because I was already in military school, I was an easy catch to put into the military," he remembered.

Boys in the army are still just boys, not men. When Princeton had the six surgeries on his hand, he was awake the entire time. "All I did was weep for my mom," he admitted. "It was the strangest thing. My mother later told me she dreamed that I was calling for her around the time I was hurt. She didn't know I was alive. They told her I had died, and she attributed that to the dream."

When the war ended, Princeton was even more of a troubled young man. "My



mom would always say that I had a hard heart," he shared. "At the end of the war, my heart hardened even more. I came to the place where I was convinced that God did not exist because of the atrocities that I saw. To be able to live with it, I drank too much."

Still a teenager, Princeton returned to school, this time attending an Episcopal Christian school. One afternoon, a white man rode into campus. "The deal was, whenever a white man came, he was bringing candy. You thought he was either a missionary or Red Cross," he revealed.

The gentleman was, in fact, a missionary and spoke to the school during chapel. One of his Scriptures got Princeton's attention. "He started talking about Jesus and about God loving us," he mused. "He gave the Scripture John 3:16, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' I'd never heard that Scripture before, and it did something to me. I started to weep."

Princeton spoke to the minister and said, "If this Jesus that you talk of is real, let Him fix this (pointing to himself)." Princeton returned to his room to voraciously read the Bible and felt as if someone had taken 2,000 pounds off of him. "My mom said God changed a heart of stone to a heart of flesh," he shared.

Princeton laughed as he thought about how people responded to him after his conversion. He turned his contentious ways from being destructive to being aggressive for the Gospel. "I



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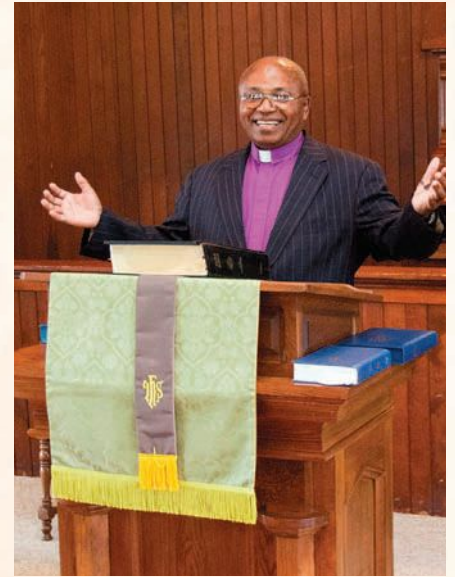

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was so aggressive that teachers would run when they saw me coming! If they were smoking, they would stop."

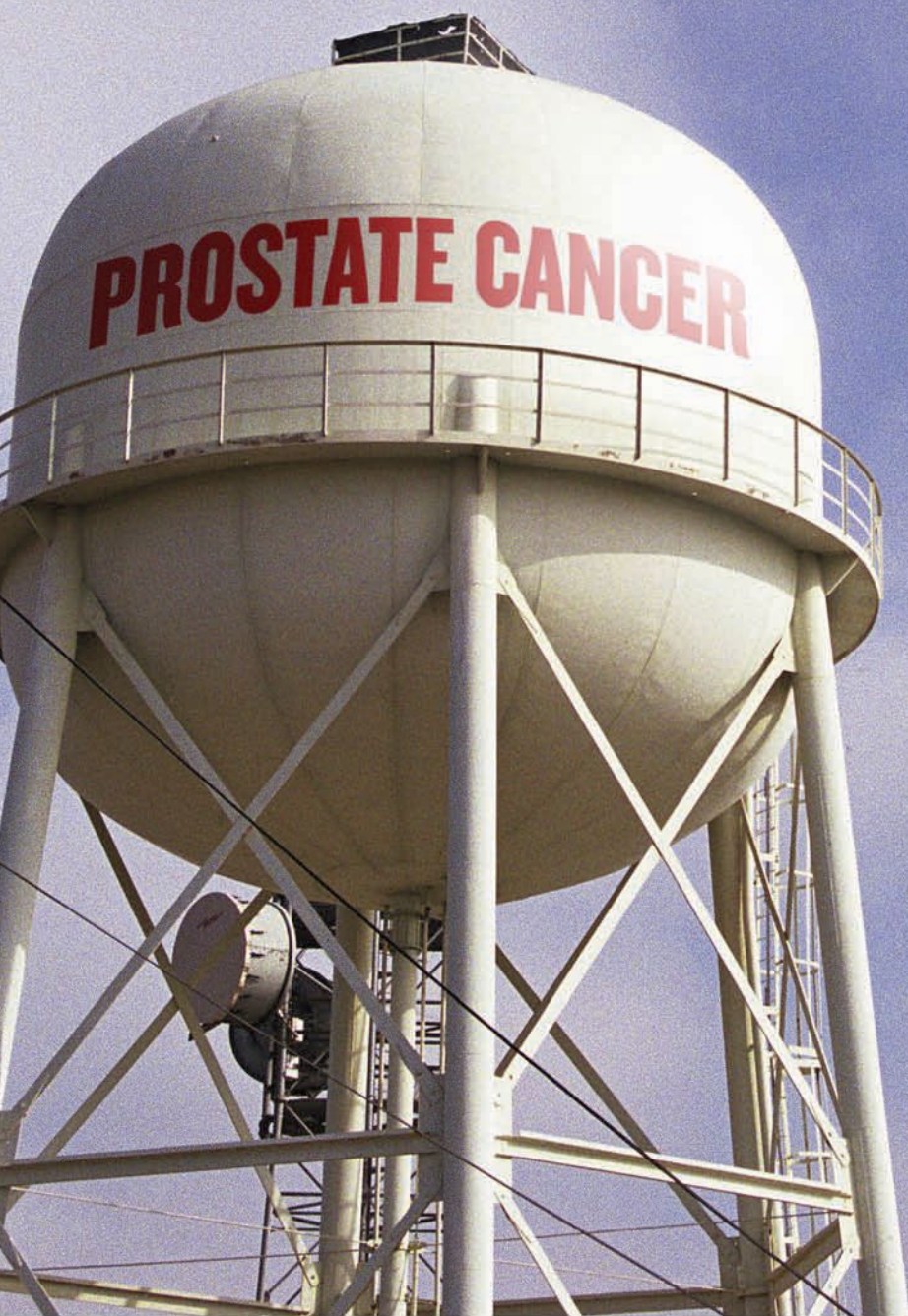
With the war over, 19-year-old Princeton made it to the United States with the help of a few miracles and his savings. "No one believed I could get to America. We didn't come from the class that could afford to go to America. But, I prayed by faith and truly believed God could do anything," he stated. His



faith delivered him to the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in Chickasha, Oklahoma where he encountered countless blessings from benefactors as he earned his education.

One of Princeton's most memorable events came one night when he was leaving work. A group of high school kids deliberately struck him with their car as he walked home. After arriving at the hospital, "The police asked if I wanted to press charges, and I said, 'No, but I want to talk to them,'" he stated. "Those kids became good friends and born again Christians. I also became friends with their families."

From 2006-2011, Princeton continued his education at Perkins School of Theology at SMU in Dallas. His long and challenging journey brought him to First Presbyterian Church in Midlothian where he became pastor in 2013. "I remember first walking into the church and saying, 'I could preach here!'" he said. First Presbyterian Church is one of the oldest churches in Midlothian and loaded with history. The interior of the church reminded Princeton of his time



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in Chickasha. “It had a country feel to it,” he shared. “I love the people and this church. I received a warm embrace when I came.”

When Princeton first arrived at the church, the members were searching for a pastor. As a guest preacher in December 2012, he had no idea the church would look at him as a possible pastor. “I was invited back several times, and the church made me an offer,” he remarked. And the rest, as they say, is history. The bond he shares with the church is strong, and he recently resigned his contract for another year.

Since becoming the pastor, Princeton wanted to be a part of the Midlothian community and became involved with the Ministerial Alliance and the Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast. “We meet once a month for the Ministerial Alliance. Its primary goal is the Manna House. We collectively

**“BUT, I PRAYED
BY FAITH
AND, TRULY
believed
GOD COULD
DO ANYTHING.”**

work as a group to meet the needs of the poor. I like that, and our church is involved with it. The mayor’s prayer group is open, inviting everyone to cover the city with prayer. I go every Tuesday at 7:00 a.m. When you pray, good things happen.”

Having lived such a turbulent life, Princeton is now focused on his ministry and his family. His 23-year-old-son, Obinna, attends Texas Tech University and will graduate in the spring with an engineering degree. Daniel, 19, attends Cornell University in New York where he is studying applied economics and finance. His daughter, Esther, is in the 11th grade. Princeton’s wife, Charity, is the “pillar of the home,” he said affectionately. “She stabilizes it.” Because of Princeton’s faith in God, his rebel-hard heart that destroyed lives has softened to one that now cares and ministers to people. **NOW**



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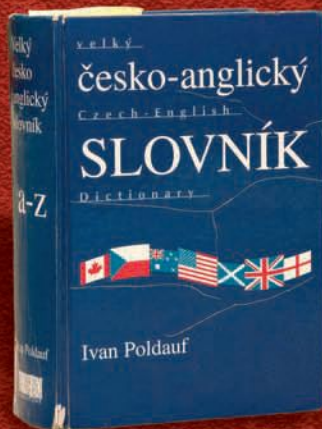
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A LANGUAGE *Remembered*

— By Betty Tryon

The deliciously intoxicating aroma of warm baked bread with hand-churned butter greeted the early morning risers on a farm in Ennis, Texas, during the 1940s. After breakfast, father and mother hurried out to the fields. A quick harvest of the family vegetable garden contributed to a hearty noon meal. Soon it would be time to replenish the bacon, ham and sausages from one of the hogs on the farm. Everything about this bucolic scene was quite typical for farm owners in Texas — everything, that is, except the language, which was Czech. The Czech Moravian dialect, however, was on its way to passing into the dusty pages of history.



History not actively remembered will be forgotten. Two of the keepers of the culture of the Czech-rich community in Texas began their lives in this type of environment. Henry and Carolyn Holub have dedicated themselves to preserving the Czech

history and language. Carolyn's parents could speak English but only spoke Czech around the home. "I spoke Czech before I spoke English," she shared. "I didn't learn English until I was 6 years old and started first grade."

Carolyn's future husband, Henry, also a Czech descendant, grew up in Penelope, Texas, on a farm. "It is such a small town that if you drive through it at 40 mph, you will never see it," Henry joked. He learned to speak English before starting school because his older brothers and sisters had already learned it in school, and they taught it to him.

With the passage of time, both of their families eventually left their farms and sought the big cities looking for work. Henry and Carolyn met, married and raised their family of four boys in Dallas. They now have seven grandchildren. Henry attended North Texas State

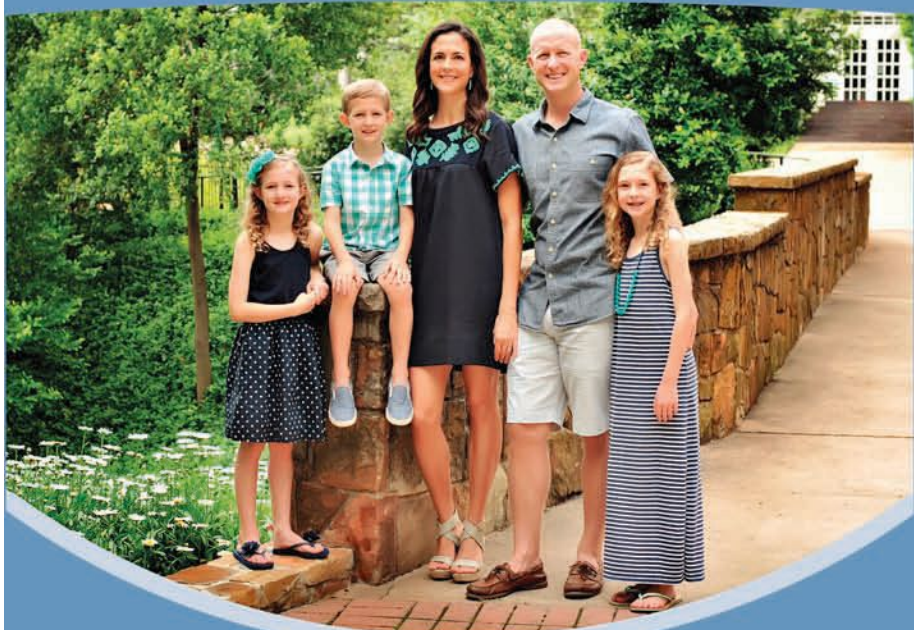


University (now University of North Texas). After college, he went to work at the Dallas branch of Sherwin-Williams Automotive and Transportation Finishes for 35 years, retiring in 1994 as Gulf/Southwest Region Fleet/OEM sales manager. Carolyn was a stay-at-home mom who did a lot of volunteer work at their church and at the children's school. She became the school board president and also worked for local political campaigns. After raising her children, Carolyn received a full scholarship to Southern Methodist University to study art and earned her degree in studio art in 1990.

When the couple isn't working, they spend happy hours with their individual hobbies — Carolyn with her art and Henry with his plane. They moved to Eagles Nest in 1994 where Henry owns



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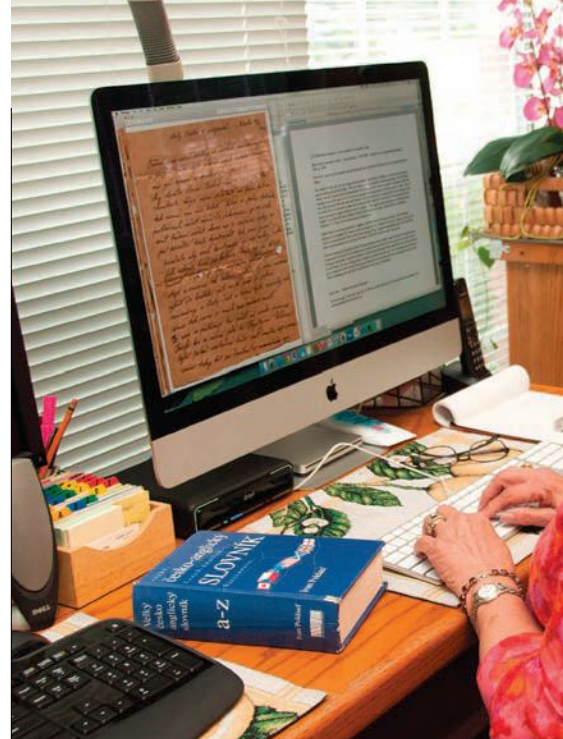
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a 1975 Citabria, which he completely restored by hand from the frame up.

When creating artwork, Carolyn would remember Czech words and phrases, long unspoken, and incorporate them into her art pieces. "When I realized I had all of these Czech words and phrases in my head, I obtained books, magazines and newspapers written in Czech to teach myself more of the language," she shared. "Henry and I are both native speakers of the Moravian dialect of the Czech language. When the borders of the Czech lands were closed, the literary materials became unavailable." In 1996, after the Velvet Revolution, Carolyn went to those lands and studied Czech during three summer semesters at the Charles University in Prague. She not only studied the Czech language but also the history and culture.

Henry recalled when he was able to establish contact with Czech relatives overseas. "When the Iron Curtain came down, that opened the door for me to make contact with my mother's relatives who are still living there," he recalled. "I was able to go back to the area where my mother had lived."


"The Czechs in Texas came from the small area in the Czech lands called Moravia, on the eastern part of the Czech lands now called the Czech Republic," Carolyn said. "Henry and I are probably at the end of the Moravian-speaking dialect because we didn't teach our children the language. Not many people did," Carolyn explained.



There is still a large Czech community here in Texas, and Henry marvels at how much they all have in common. "The childhoods were the same," he stated. "Our language was the same — the words and phraseology. There's no question and no doubt that our ancestors came from a 50-square-mile area of what is today known as Moravia in the eastern part of the Czech Republic. The dialect we speak originated in that region."


When Carolyn became interested in researching the Czech language, she and Henry went to Texas Czech Genealogical Society located in Temple, Texas. "They have so much valuable information to share and so many resources to use," she offered. The couple now travels two days a month to volunteer at the Genealogy

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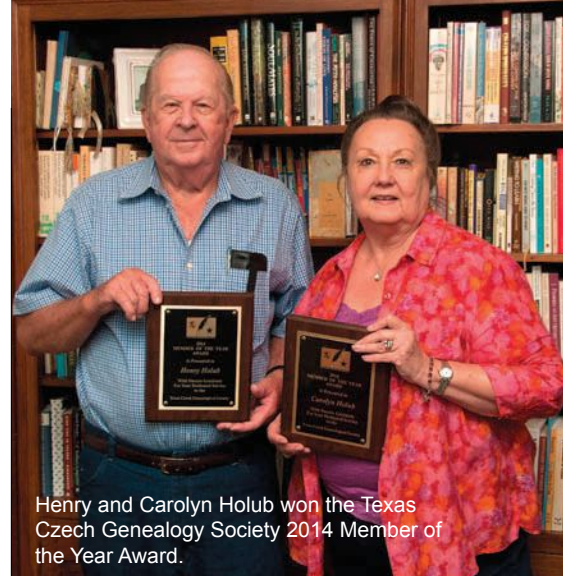
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Henry and Carolyn Holub won the Texas Czech Genealogy Society 2014 Member of the Year Award.

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Center located on the first floor of the Fraternal Organization of SPJST, Slovanska Podporující Jednota Statu Texas, or translated: Slavonic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas. Founded as an insurance group for the Czech people when they came to the United States, it also served as a social organization.

Carolyn and Henry collect articles and matters of interest from Czech publications and then translate them into English. "I find obituaries, records of marriages, golden wedding anniversaries, births and death certificates," Henry observed. "I have come across people I knew as a child and found the notice of their death. I look for people of interest — someone who was prominent in the community, such as a city council member or judge. Carolyn does the long obituaries, and I do the small notices and announcements." All of this information is translated into English by Carolyn.

Back to School

First Day
Aug. 24

Visit midlothian-isd.net/b2s for school supply lists, calendar, dress code, athletic physicals, immunizations requirements, and more!

All Parents/Guardians Must Complete a First Day of School Packet Online

This quick, easy online process allows parents to electronically sign-off on their child's back-to-school first day packet. Letters will be mailed to parents in early August with login and access information.

Elementary Meet-the-Teacher Night August 20

- J.A. Vitovsky Elementary: 6:00-7:00pm (K-5th)
- J.R. Irvin Elementary: 6:00-7:00pm (K-5th)
- LaRue Miller Elementary: 5:30-6:15pm (3rd-5th), 6:15-7:00pm (K-2nd)
- Longbranch Elementary: 5:30-6:15pm (K-2nd), 6:15-7:00pm (3rd-5th)
- Mt. Peak Elementary: 5:30-6:15pm (PK-2nd), 6:15-7:00pm (3rd-5th)
- T.E. Baxter Elementary: 5:30-6:15pm (PK-2nd), 6:00-6:45pm (3rd-5th)



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Frank Seale Middle School

Aug. 13 at 10a-12p CUB Camp: 6th gr. & students new to MISD
6:30pm 6th grade orientation
Aug. 17 at 6:30pm 7th & 8th grade orientation
Aug. 31 at 6:30-7:30pm FSMS Meet-the-Teacher

Walnut Grove Middle School

Aug. 12 at 10:30am Cat Camp for students new to MISD
Aug. 13 at 6:30pm 6th grade orientation
Aug. 17 at 6:00pm 8th grade orientation
7:30pm 7th grade orientation

Heritage High School

JAG CAMP

Aug. 13 at 3:30-5:00pm for 9th, 10th, 11th
5:30-6:30pm Parent Meeting
6:30-8:00pm Open House

Midlothian High School

PANTHER CAMP

Aug. 11 at 9-11am Freshmen (1st time Panthers)
12-2pm Sophomores (returning Freshmen)
3-4pm Juniors and Seniors



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Recognized in Community & Student Engagement

The 83rd Texas Legislature House Bill 5 requires all districts and campuses to evaluate its performance in the following areas: Fine arts, Wellness and Physical Education, Community and Parent Involvement, 21st Century Workforce, Second Language Acquisition, Digital Learning, Dropout Prevention, and Gifted/Talented. This bill allows school districts to showcase areas of excellence and success outside the limited scope of standardized test scores. It is also an opportunity for staff to recognize areas that need improvement.

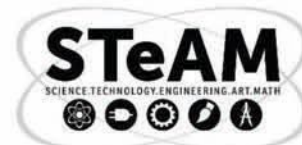
Midlothian ISD received an outstanding performance rating of "Recognized" determined by subcommittees and a parent survey.

STEAM Academy Survey for Elementary Parents

Midlothian ISD is exploring the possibility of creating a STEAM Academy held at one elementary school to serve student interest in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics through hands-on, project based learning. STEAM exposes students to content knowledge, critical thinking and innovation.

Elementary students who are interested will complete an application and participate in an annual lottery selection process.

The purpose of the survey is to determine the level of interest from parents who have elementary students. The information gathered will help the administration develop a plan that meets the desires and needs of the parents and district. A detailed discussion and more information will be presented at the School Board meeting August 17, 2015.



Elementary parents are encouraged to take a survey at midlothian-isd.net ends



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Their dedication to their volunteer work for the Texas Czech Genealogy Society earned them the 2014 Member of the Year Award. The work they perform in translations contributes to the knowledge base of history. "We don't consider ourselves historians because the work is so interesting," Carolyn exclaimed.

Henry and Carolyn aren't the only ones concerned about the Czech language languishing in history. The University of Texas at Austin has a project called Czech Legacy Project. "They are recording Czech speakers to analyze how the Czech Moravian dialect has changed in Texas over the past hundred years," Carolyn added. "They will also record it and preserve it because it is a dying language. Even in the Czech lands the Moravian dialect is not spoken that much."

"There is a real danger of the dialect that we speak disappearing," Henry mused, "to be lost forever."

"We went from speaking Czech as children, to not using it all these years, to back at it again," Carolyn marveled. Because of the Holubs' efforts and those of the Czech Legacy Project, perhaps all is not lost for the Czech Moravian dialect. **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information, visit the Texas Czech Genealogy Society's website at txczgs.org.

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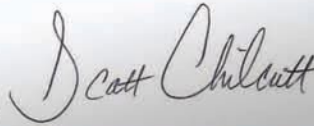
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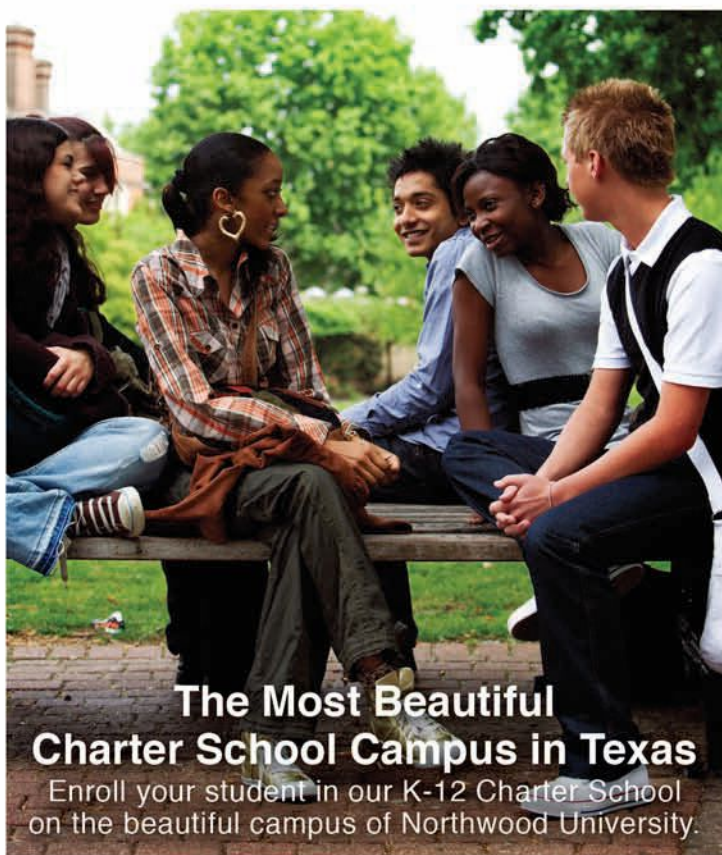
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— By Carolyn Wills

 At Home With Scott and Suzann Chambers



Initially, Scott Chambers had planned to serve in the Air Force for a period of four years. Twenty-eight years later, he retired as a one-star general. “New opportunities kept coming,” he smiled.

It appears the new opportunities were not limited to the military. A little over 16 years ago, Scott met a beautiful young woman named Suzann. “We were introduced and immediately clicked,” she smiled. They were married on May 28, and after settling into military life, discovered they would be parents. Scott and Suzann welcomed their new son, Brock, while Suzann’s son, Zachery, and Scott’s daughter, Alyssa, welcomed a new little brother.

Today, Brock is a student at Midlothian High School, Zachery a Penn State graduate, and 22-year-old Alyssa lives in Arlington. Midlothian is now home to the Chambers family, including their beloved Airedale, Zoey. “Before we moved to Midlothian, Brock had been to five different schools,” Suzann said. “We had lived abroad and in cities across the United States.”

In his stellar career, Scott had served his country, endured 9/11 while working at the Pentagon and excelled as a base commander at Hill Air Force Base in Layton, Utah. After a





couple more assignments, "It was time to retire," he said. He and Suzann began searching for their new home.

They narrowed possibilities to Texas and Arizona and, ultimately, a friend in Midlothian was the catalyst. "I believe this was God's plan," Suzann shared. "We've found a wonderful church, beautiful home and great friends. Most importantly, Brock is in a phenomenal school system, and we love living here."

It took time to find and "stamp" the perfect house, but by Halloween 2013, the Chamberses were settling into a 4000-plus-square-foot, French-style home. Ultimately wooed by quality and potential, theirs became the story of a very nice house transformed into a simply gorgeous home. "At first, the house was a little too 'shi-shi' for me," Suzann grinned. "The more I've decorated, though, the more I love it." In addition to an art history degree,



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Suzann has an eye for color and design and a history of helping homeowners realize their personal stamps. She started decorating for friends and, then, friends of friends and, today, clients from across the country fly her in for design projects. "I really enjoy what I do," she said. "Creating spaces to reflect people's styles and dreams is very personal and clients often become friends. When I'm asked to do one room, invariably, the job turns into the whole house."

"I still have miles to go with our house," she smiled. "I started with the boys' rooms and have progressed room by room."



Their four-bedroom, five-bath home, built in 2010, is located in an area of distinctive homes on spacious country lots. The two-story structure is wrapped in natural stone accented with reddish-brown brick. "The front and backyards had not been developed," Scott said. They added a half-circle drive for easier access to the front door.

The home opens to a foyer topped by the first of many spectacular ceilings. "This house has fun features like 8-foot, solid interior doors and all the different ceilings," Suzann said.

To the right of the foyer, the formal dining room is a breathtaking snapshot



of rustic-elegance. "Scott and I have lived so many places," she explained. "Most of our belongings have a story, and some are from places like Italy, Germany and Prague, or were passed down by family." The dining room, painted a dark red, is accented with a collection of early metal kitchenware and wonderful pieces like an antique dough bowl painted with a feather and an old workbench made in 1914. The large, rectangular dining table is centered under an amazing tray ceiling.

Across the foyer is Scott's study with a stone fireplace, leather and suede faux-finished walls, subtle lighting and a handsome desk. Cedar shutters mounted

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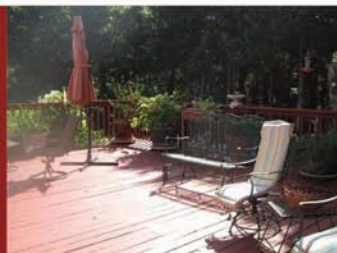
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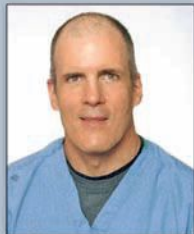


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on barn sliders shade the room's two windows. "Suzann had the idea to build and install them," Scott smiled.

The home's core is the spacious, inviting living room. Red silk drapes suspended on nail heads from old railroad ties line a bank of tall windows. A dramatic cathedral-like ceiling features a glazed faux finish and the walls are painted a warm brown shade called Meadow Lark. "This room is my favorite," she smiled. "The mirror above the fireplace is an old window I found on a Virginia roadside." The mantel is constructed from an old door jam. "The side tables next to the sofa and chair are trunk tables," she added. "They're small painted trunks attached to tables that once belonged to Scott's

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mother.” They also have comfortable soft leather furnishings and a magnificent wood cabinet.

The living room opens to a kitchen featuring Versailles-patterned floors of tumbled travertine, dark custom cabinetry highlighted with individual crystal hardware, granite counters and a large island topped by granite infused with quartz crystals. The master suite and guest bedroom, soon to become a craft room, are located downstairs and there are two bedrooms upstairs.

“Brock’s room has an industrial theme,” she said. “We had fun with that. Zackery wanted a headboard, so I built it from an old work bench.”



The upstairs also features a central living area and state-of-the-art media room. “The media room is the place to chill back with family and friends and watch a movie,” Scott said.

While the media room is impressive, Scott and Suzann have designed a second entertainment center to rival all others. “Suzann has 100-percent voting rights on the inside, and I have 49-percent on the outside,” Scott grinned. Together, they tackled the backyard, and the once open canvas is now the stuff of dreams. The custom saltwater infinity pool is truly a work of art. Beyond its edge of infinity, the water falls to a lower level into a pool lined with shiny blue tiles. The patio floors are made of stamped and stained concrete arranged in a Versailles pattern.

The backyard includes a fully equipped outdoor kitchen, arched stone-and-brick eating area, fire pit and pergola. “We wanted everything to match the house, so we used the same natural stone and bricks and duplicated the arches,” Suzann said. “This is where we hang out and the more, the merrier. We love for friends to bring their friends. Our house may be decorated, but it’s meant to be enjoyed!” **NOW**

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Improving Their Serve

—By Zachary R. Urquhart





Charlie and Natalie Scott have spent years competing with others on the tennis court. It is a healthy sibling rivalry, though, that has already landed Charlie a college home, and looks to be serving Natalie well. They lived in Mansfield before moving to Midlothian about 10 years ago with their parents, Monte Scott and Ofelia Scott. "We really liked the area and the feel, and we couldn't get a better place for the price," Monte said. "And the reputation of the district was awesome, so it was an easy choice to make." The kids have grown up in Midlothian schools, and it was in the schools where they first started their tennis careers.

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Though they sometimes went to one of the public courts in town for fun, Charlie and Natalie never seriously thought about playing tennis until middle school. “When I was going into seventh grade, tennis seemed like it would be easier than pre-athletics, so I signed up,” Charlie admitted. It did not take Charlie long to realize this idea might have been off-base, but somewhere along the way, he grew to love the sport. Along with being in the class at Frank Seale, Charlie was also grateful to his first private instructor, Ben Martinez. After several years of middle school tennis, Charlie stepped up his game when he got to high school. “My sophomore year, I started playing tournaments with the United States Tennis Association, which is the major amateur tennis organization,” he explained.

Natalie also got into tennis as an alternative to other school athletics in seventh grade. “I liked it a lot pretty much right away. I won district my first year of playing,” she recalled. Natalie was good enough to make varsity as a freshman this year, and she looks forward to moving up the team ranks in the coming years.

Though they never played more than casually, Monte and Ofelia have loved seeing the success their kids have had in playing for Midlothian, as well as with USTA. “They start out in ZAT, and they have to either win tournaments or earn enough points to move up to championship level, and then you can reach super champ level as well,” Monte detailed.



Since adding USTA tournaments to his schedule, Charlie has had two years of solid tournaments. "Between the high school season and USTA, I almost always have matches," he said. "You could schedule to play every weekend if you wanted." Charlie has been on the varsity team since his sophomore year, and has spent the last two years as the team's top singles player. "One of my best moments was clinching the area consolation match against Cedar Hill last year," he shared. He has enjoyed success in the high school ranks, as well as with USTA, despite having to overcome a relative lack of experience with those opponents. "I didn't start USTA until the age 16 level, and most of those top guys started playing at 10-12," he explained. But he has been able to catch up — and even exceed many expectations — earning a scholarship to play at Texas A&M University-Texarkana next year.

Natalie has a long way to go before she can hone in on colleges, but that does not keep her from having clear goals already. "I want to go to and play at either Midwestern State or Dallas Baptist," she said confidently. With less school experience than Charlie, her biggest moment was making it to the next USTA level. "I went into this tournament unseeded, only lost one set and won the whole thing," she described. She admits to having a tenacious competitiveness, and she sees that as a major strength to accomplishing her on-court goals. "I am really fiery. I can get myself pumped up, but you also know when I'm upset at myself," she said.

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When it comes to the style of their games, Charlie describes his as scrappy and adaptable. "I can really play any type of game," he explained. "I can play big shots or a finesse game. My forehand is strong, and I have good footwork. Also, I have become a really good doubles player."

Natalie highlights her competitive fire when describing herself. "I am pretty athletic and quick, and I have consistent strokes," she outlined. "But I really get into it on the court, and I never give up on a point or a game. I am a fighter."

It is that shared fighting spirit that gets Charlie and Natalie through the weeks of training. "On average, Charlie usually works one hour per day, while Natalie works about 30 minutes," Monte said. "And that is just personal practice. When you add in their lessons, tournaments and school practice, depending on where they are in the season, Charlie can be working 20 hours per week, while Natalie will work about half that time, especially during the peak school tennis season." While they enjoyed learning early stages from their first trainer, they now take lessons from separate trainers. "Charlie works with Trevis Bowman, who teaches at Brookhaven Country Club," Monte detailed. "Natalie takes lessons from Elmer Rudico in Cedar Hill."

The hard work is worth it, though, according to both of the kids. "The

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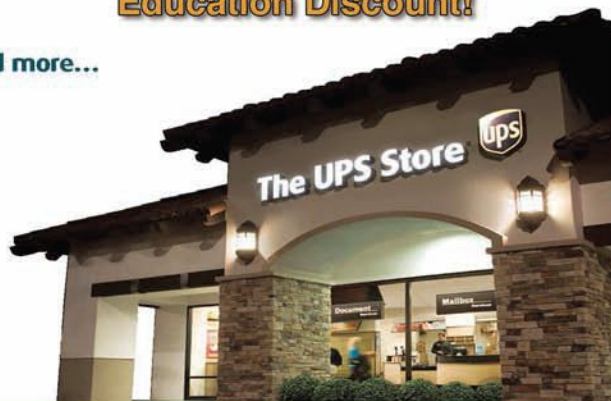
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hardest part is probably the mental aspect of the game," Charlie said. "But winning is the best, especially in the fall season when I could be part of the team winning."

Natalie agrees with most of what Charlie says. "For me, keeping my cool on the court is tough," she explained. "Since I do get fiery, it can be hard to stay focused on the next point, especially when my body gets tired. My favorite part is the bus ride home though, mainly after we win." As similar as they are in many ways, Charlie and Natalie have realized they cannot be too competitive with each other. "Whenever we practice together, he's always whining about everything," she laughed. "But when we do play together, we are always talking trash to each other."

Outside of tennis, they are typical teenagers. "Charlie watches soccer, plays volleyball and basketball and plays video games," Monte enumerated. "And Natalie is either on social media, eating or sleeping." While their schedules keep them plenty busy, the family loves what they get out of it. "We are always busy, but the tournaments are our family thing. Ofelia and my mom, Liz, come to cheer the kids on," Monte explained. Charlie and Natalie are grateful to their coaches, family, friends and the Midlothian Boosters for all of the support they receive. With that ongoing support and with their tenacious work ethic, it probably will not be long before Charlie is nationally ranked, and Natalie has hopes of excelling at the sport to one day play at the collegiate level. **NOW**

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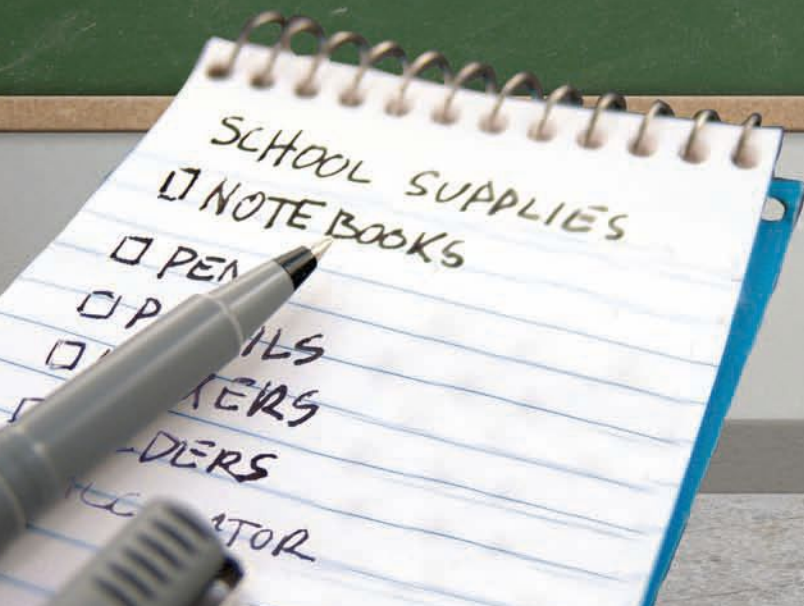
— By Melissa Swedoski

Summertime in Texas means outdoor fun, vacation or camps. It also means back-to-school time, right in the dog days of August. From new outfits and haircuts to new schedules and freedom never before had, there are plenty of challenges to be handled. While you remember the true investment of education, it's best to prepare ahead for both expenses and changes.

Shopping Season Helpful Hints

The long-standing tradition of back-to-school shopping means new clothes and shoes, braces and glasses, pencils and paper. Whether there's one student in the family or many, budgeting for expenses is imperative, and research is necessary when purchases are technology-related. According to the National Retail Federation, families spent approximately \$670 on back-to-school items in 2014. This year's numbers will likely increase, as electronic items continue to be part of the supply list.

Summer style will still be in before fall fashion takes over, but as most parents are aware, today's students live in the digital age, so they will be watching retailer websites and social media to see what's trending, what's out of style and what's fresh this fall.





Tips for back-to-school shopping:

- **Start early and pace yourself.** Since certain items will always be on the list, parents can buy over time and spend less.
- **Use shopping apps and websites.** Most retailers, both large and small, have websites or are on social media, and they send out notifications when they have sales. Using retail and coupon apps can help parents stay abreast of the sales.
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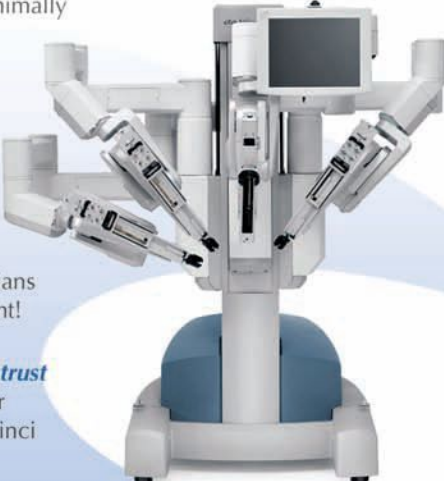
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needed basis. They will need electronic devices for their coursework, as well as notebooks and pens. Keep in mind that supply needs will change as the school year progresses.

Clothing based on the location of the college is important, so keep in mind if the weather will be warmer or colder than the student may be accustomed to at home, and plenty of fashionable, casual clothing is the norm for college students.



There's also the need to have dorm furniture to make living a little more comfortable, as well as personal grooming items, since many students will likely be sharing bathroom space for the first time. Try not to fall into the temptation of taking too many keepsakes from home, since there will be a limit on the amount of storage available, as well as display space.

Finally, some students may be considering getting their first credit/debit card or parents may be providing them with an emergency credit card. Parents should be sure to have a healthy conversation with them about spending habits and what constitutes a moment of real need, which would necessitate its use.

From transitioning grade levels to new schedules and time management, going back to school presents many new challenges. Be sure to talk about handling emotions that come with tougher coursework, along with changes in friendships and relationships. Finding new bus routes or walking to school can be intimidating for young children, so parental support is paramount. Be involved with your child's decisions, and he or she will be more willing to share the journey with you. **NOW**

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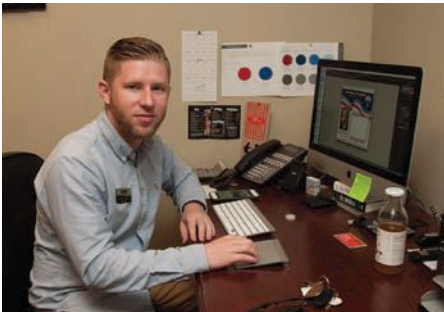
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Allan, Julie and Brandon McKeever use their expertise for their clients' real estate experiences.



The McKeever Team

Julie, Allan and Brandon bring their own area of specialty to the RE/MAX Suburban South realty business. — By Betty Tryon

"We are the McKeever team," Julie McKeever, Realtor, proclaimed proudly. As a Realtor for nine years, Julie welcomes her husband, Allan, and son, Brandon, to her winning team. Allan, formerly a full-time builder for 30 years, started working on the sales team at RE/MAX two years ago. Brandon joined the sales team this year.

"Brandon went to school for graphic design and e-marketing," Allan remarked. "This year he went to real estate school, got his license, and Julie hired him."

The McKeever family is a part of the fabric of Midlothian and has been since 1973. Their children grew up in the school district. "We graduated from here, and the kids graduated from here," Julie exclaimed. Her familiarity with Ellis County makes it

an area of expertise for helping customers with their real estate experience. HUD homes are another area of proficiency with the team. As HUD specialists, they have homes in other cities such as Granbury, Grandview, Italy, Mansfield and Arlington.

Their teamwork paid off as they were 2014 RE/MAX of Texas top producing team in the top 500 real estate agents. "The three parts that go together well with our team are Julie's real estate experience with sales and contracts, Brandon with all of the marketing and advertising and my homebuilding, construction and repair," Allan said. "When we have customers who cannot locate a home they desire, we build them one."

"In the contract stage, there is the repair amendment," Julie added. "Allan knows what needs to be done and the costs

associated with that. He can facilitate getting it done.”

Brandon is new to the sales team this year as a real estate agent. He enjoys combining all the different skill sets he has into his job, including graphic design

“We have to have their best interests in mind beyond profits. If you have someone’s best interests in mind, they will more than likely use you again.”

of the team’s website, which is state-of-the-art and offers many opportunities for clients. “I went to UNT for digital retailing,” he shared. “I make all the ads for our team, the web design, the photography, the marketing and find new places to advertise, so they can reach their target market better.”

Brandon feels blessed to have great mentors who are not only knowledgeable but have great connections to the community. “I do feel blessed to have that insight so early in my career,” he added. “In performing my job, I like the fact that there isn’t just one side to it. I get to do computer work and get to be out in the field. Real estate is more than selling houses. It is problem solving. There are a lot of variables and negotiables in real estate.”

Allan agreed with his son by stating, “If you can’t solve the problem, you can’t close the contract. What I’ve seen Julie do over and over for many years is help people make wise decisions. It’s meeting people’s needs and educating them according to their needs.”

“When we do listings, we meet them as a team and say goodbye to them as a team,” Brandon clarified. “We have to have their best interests in mind beyond profits. If you have someone’s best interests in mind, they will more than likely use you again.” The McKeever team is dedicated to using their areas of expertise to provide you with the best experience possible in real estate transactions. **NOW**

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Keri Lehmann accepts her Chamber of Commerce plaque for Savvy Bohème's ribbon cutting grandopening.



Liberty Cheer Team performs on the News 8 Daybreak Morning Show for 4th of July celebration.



Fifth grade scientists at LaRue Miller Elementary teach the properties of magnets to Kinder Friends in a shared science lab.



Volunteers help Pack 524 serve breakfast at Mid-Way Regional Airport's Fly-In Pancake Breakfast.



R.E. Dodson and his wife, Sylvia, accept their chamber plaque at Buckley Oil's Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting ceremony.



Tom Kowatch, June Deibel, Tasba Taylor and Billy Seals meet at Reach offices for monthly program meeting.



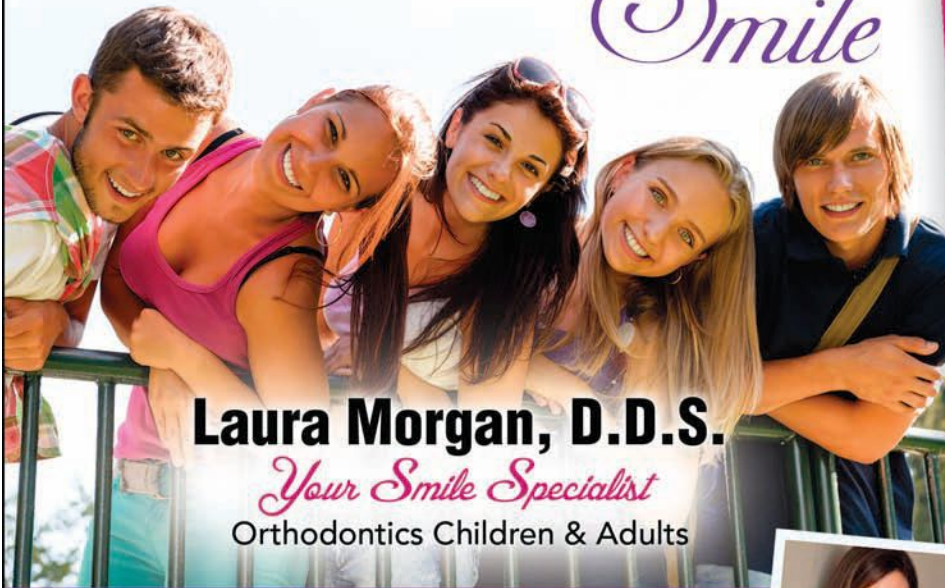
Remax agents Cindy Fearis and Abby Selman pose with the Mt. Peak fourth grade class in front of the company's hot air balloon.



Troop 524 sells homemade salsa at the Mid-Way Fly-In Pancake Breakfast.

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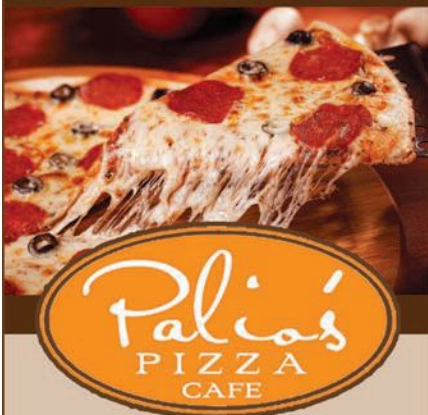
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Critical Choices Precede Retirement

As retirement looms, crucial financial and lifestyle decisions you may have put off for years suddenly assume more importance. You no longer have decades to decide whether you'll keep a large house with its upkeep costs, whether your current level of debt is appropriate or whether to pay off your mortgage.

Before you actually hang up your career, it's time to do some real planning. You might begin with lifestyle decisions, although these, to a large extent, depend on the financial foundation you've built. While these are personal decisions, successful retirements share at least one common element — they are rooted in reality, not fantasy.

Consider some possibilities. Will you plan to relocate? Or do developing family or financial considerations make that idea less attractive? Do you need to maintain and insure more than one vehicle? Do you expect to travel extensively in your early years of retirement, when you may be healthier and more likely to accept the rigors of travel?

Finally, can your lifestyle plans be supported by your portfolio? If not, now is the time to make adjustments rather than later. Anecdotal evidence shows that retirees who scale back their expectations are far happier in retirement than those who wake up already retired and find they can't really do all that they had planned.

Retirement Bottom Line

You've been marshalling your finances for years, and while you may have had intermediate goals, funding a pleasing retirement lifestyle has probably been a long-term objective. As you near your last day on the job, it's time to make adjustments.

First, you may want to realign your portfolio's asset allocation, especially if

you've been an aggressive investor with a high tolerance for risk. In retirement, your time horizon is shorter, recovering from major market downturns is more difficult — and you'll probably want a regular income stream to pay your bills.

Your retirement could be lengthy, so if your wealth is sufficient, you may consider dividing your portfolio into two parts. One would be devoted to producing a regular income, while the other would be allocated for growth. Ideally, this part of your portfolio would help you overcome the effects of inflation, which, historically, at least, has moved along at approximately 3.1 percent per year.

As you calculate how much you'll need, keep in mind that retirement specialists suggest drawing down no more than 4 or 5 percent of your portfolio each year, to give it the best chance of supporting a long retirement. Remember, part of your annual income will come from any required minimum distributions (RMDs) the IRS requires you to take from your traditional IRA assets.

No matter what your decisions, the time to work toward them is before your retirement party. Call your financial advisor if you have questions or need assistance in your planning. **NOW**

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Jonathan Pope is a Raymond James Financial Advisor based in Duncanville.

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Natural Ways to Care for Your Mouth

Sometimes in medicine and dentistry, we have an illness or infection we need to *attack*. For instance, a bacterial infection in your head or neck can quickly become life-threatening, so a strong antibiotic is often warranted. But did you know, that when treating many chronic illnesses, natural measures are often just as effective, if not more effective, than strong medications? So when an all-out attack isn't necessary, use these tips to nurture your mouth back to health.

Baking Soda

What doesn't baking soda do? When it comes to your mouth, you can use its high pH to neutralize acids. Remember, acid plus sugar equals cavities in susceptible people. So neutralizing those acids as soon as possible can help you prevent cavities. There are many toothpastes and mouthwashes that contain baking soda. Just make sure they aren't too gritty, as those can irritate your gums and damage your tooth enamel. If you would rather keep it simple, add a little baking soda to water and swish after you've had something particularly acidic (i.e., orange juice, soda, sports drinks, etc.).

Xylitol

Derived from plants, such as corn cobs and birch trees, this sugar alcohol is a promising cavity-preventer. Some studies are finding xylitol as effective as fluoride at preventing cavities, as it changes the bacterial makeup of your mouth. You can find it in toothpastes, mouthwashes, gums and candies in health food stores. It's most effective when used five times a day, but start slowly if you have a sensitive stomach. Sometimes it can cause some bloating and diarrhea, but this goes away once your system has had time to adjust.

Essential Oils

Many of these potent oils kill bacteria, yeasts and parasites that can cause disease. Eucalyptus and tea tree oils, for example, are effective against the germs that cause gum disease. Add some to water and use as a mouth rinse, or spread a drop along your floss. A little goes a long way!

Oil Pulling

Still not proven in Western scientific literature, this has been used in Eastern and Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years. The idea is that you swish oil in your mouth for 15-20 minutes daily, and the oil helps "pull" bacteria and toxins from your teeth and gums. Studies done in India show that pulling sesame oil is as effective as a prescription mouthwash for bad breath, and a preliminary study using coconut oil was effective against bleeding gums. Just don't forget to spit the oil in the trash, so you don't clog your drains!

Strength in Numbers

One of the many benefits of using natural products, is that they are safe to use and combine with other products. So experiment a little! Add baking soda and tea tree oil to your mouthwash, or add xylitol to your coconut oil before pulling. And when your dentist or hygienist gives you a good report, make sure you let them know what you've been using, so they can recommend the same thing to others! **NOW**

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August 1

Annual Ice Cream Supper/Fundraiser for the Mt. Peak Cemetery: 6:00 p.m., ice cream, hot dogs and cold drinks will be sold; 7:00 p.m., cakes, baked goods and arts and crafts will be auctioned. There will be a bounce house and face painting for the kids. Come visit with family and friends. All proceeds are used for upkeep of the cemetery grounds.

August 1

Dodge for a Cause, Dodgeball for a Cause Benefiting Big Brothers Big Sisters, First Annual Dodgeball Tournament: 8:00 a.m., Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 W. Hwy 287, Waxahachie. The family fun event includes concessions, dunking booth, DJ and other fun activities. Stadium seating available or bring your own lawn chairs and coolers. 100 percent of all dollars raised support the program and children

of Ellis County. Contact Jaime Green at (469) 248-4512 for more information.

August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Celebrate Recovery meeting: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th St. A Christ-centered recovery program designed to help those struggling with hurts, habits and hang-ups.

August 4, 11, 18, 25

Community Prayer meeting: 7:00-8:00 a.m., Midlothian Conference Center.

August 8

Movies in The Park- *Planes: Fire & Rescue*: dusk, Hawkins Spring Park, 1498 FM 1387. Bring lawn chairs or blankets and snacks/drinks. The concession stand will be open.

August 15

Pet Adoption Event: 9:00-11:00 a.m., Walmart Garden Center Entrance, 400 N. Hwy 67. Monthly adoption event. Animal Shelter pets available for adoption will be in attendance. Contact (972) 775-7614 for more information.

August 24

First day of school.

August 31

FSMS Meet the Teacher Night: 6:30 p.m.

September 12

Kimmel Park Centennial Celebration: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. The Kimmel family will be honored. Food, musical entertainment and activities will be available to celebrate the 100th birthday of our historical park.

September 19

2015 Annual Auction: 4:30 p.m.; The U.S.S. Southern Legend will set sail at 5:30 p.m. Highlights of the cruise include: casino (for entertainment purposes only), photo booth, delicious buffet provided by Mo & Hari's Italian Bistro, silent and live auctions, raffle and loads of fun. For information, contact the Chamber at (972) 723-8600 or visit info@midlothianchamber.org

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In the Kitchen With Brad Tate

— *By Betty Tryon*

Brad Tate is unmistakably an Italian cook. He comes from an Italian family, and that culture's influence is definitely found in his cooking. "Everything we do revolves around food," he said. "I had no formal training. I did, however, get several months of on-the-job training from my Italian grandmother."

One of the recipes that has been handed down through the years came from his grandmother's Italian father. "In our family we don't call it spaghetti sauce — it's Grampy Gravy! Better than inherited recipes, I have traditions in cooking that have been handed down. My Nana showed me that sometimes it's not what you put in a recipe, but how you put it in." **NOW**

Grampy Gravy (Marinara Sauce)

A large batch can be frozen if not used right away.

- 3 106-oz. cans tomato sauce**
- 4 6-oz. cans tomato paste**
- 1/2 cup Merlot or other red wine**
- 2 tsp. brown sugar**
- 1 green pepper**
- 1 red pepper**
- 1 large sweet onion**
- 3 heaping Tbsp. fresh garlic, finely minced**
- 2 Tbsp. Italian seasoning**
- 1 lb. ground hamburger**
- 1 pkg. sweet Italian sausage, leave skin on**

1. In a very large pot, combine tomato sauce, tomato paste, Merlot and brown sugar to start heating up.

- 2.** Chop peppers and add to medium-hot frying pan for 2-4 minutes to start cooking.
- 3.** Chop onions and add to peppers. Continue to fry mixture.
- 4.** Add garlic and Italian seasoning; continue to sauté until peppers and onions are softened. Add to pot.
- 5.** Brown hamburger and drain. Add to pot.
- 6.** Brown sausage only for a few minutes turning often. It's OK if they are not cooked through, as this sauce will cook down for several hours.
- 7.** Once pot starts boiling, cover and simmer overnight or for at least 4-5 hours. If left uncovered, the sauce will thicken quickly.

Authentic New England Clam Chowder

- 1/2 gallon whole milk**
- 1 qt. heavy whipping cream
(divided use)**

- 5-6 large potatoes**
- 1 lb. salted sweet cream butter
(divided use)**
- 1 large white onion, chopped into fine bite-size pieces**
- 1/2 lb. bacon, sliced into 1-inch pieces**
- 3 or 4 6.5-oz. cans clams, chopped
(only because fresh ones are hard to find here)**
- 1 tsp. celery salt, or to taste**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- 1 cup powdered creamer**

1. Put milk and half of cream in a pot to start heating up. (The most crucial part to chowder is to not let it boil. There are several ways to accomplish this. I add heavy creamer cold out of the refrigerator if I see it getting too hot.)

2. Peel, wash and cube potatoes into 1/2- to 3/4-inch cubes.

3. Place half a stick of butter in a frying pan on medium-high heat, adding potatoes as you cut them. You are basically searing the potatoes as you would a roast to keep them from getting mushy, so it is imperative that you keep them moving every minute or so to prevent them from browning. After about five minutes, add them to the pot.

4. Add onion to the pot.

5. Sear the bacon pieces in a frying pan so that most of the grease is cooked off but they are still rubbery. Discard grease. Add bacon pieces to the pot.

6. Add clams and spices.

7. Use remaining butter and heavy whipping cream to regulate temperature if it gets too hot. Ten minutes before you serve, start adding powdered creamer to thicken, and check to see if it's salty enough. Wait to add salt because usually the clams will lend a lot of salt. If thicker chowder is desired, you can add a roux made out of hot water and flour. Too much, though, makes it sandy tasting.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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1231 Greenbrook

Nice 3/3 on corner lot in sought after Mantlebrook Farms. Beautiful treed lot in Desoto is close to everything. Seller is motivated.



305 Poplar St., Italy

Charming historic home with front porch swing. A small town gem! Wonderful backyard with deck, storage shed, and grassy area framed by mature trees. MLS #13185654. \$84,900



8633 Vista Grande

Great family home in Dallas with Duncanville schools. 4 bed, 2 1/2 bath, community pool and playgrounds. In Summit Parc. Great neighborhood!



215 Willow Creek Ln., Ovilla

Beautiful 3/2/3 offers lots of space. Wait till you see the kitchen and living room! Enjoy cooling off this summer by relaxing in the pool in the big backyard. Call now to schedule your viewing! \$250,000

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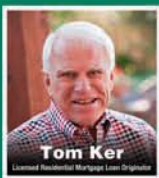
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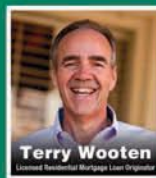
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