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ON THE COVER



Coach Blenden is creating winners in the game of life.

Photo by Kevin Painter.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Corsicana Friends!

Following Labor Day on September 2, we will be busy returning to a full fall of school, festivals and other happenings. But as a grandparent of five wonderful, beautiful and handsome kids ranging in age from college to a not-quite-1-year-old, I am ready to celebrate National Grandparents Day on September 8. Please remember those grandparents and great-grandparents in your life — whether they are still with you or are memories and in photos you share with the next generation of your family.

We can also celebrate, with a big dose of patriotism, Star Spangled Banner Day on September 14 and Constitution Day on September 17. September is also the National Hispanic Heritage Month. And, last but not least, let's celebrate my favorite flavor of almost everything — chocolate — on International Chocolate Day, September 13.

Virginia

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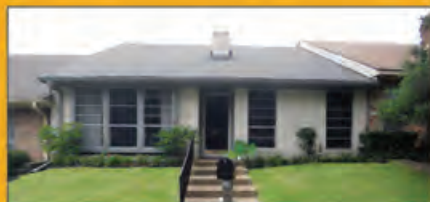
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WE MADE THE *Difference*

— By Rick Herron

As just about any high school football coach in Texas knows, the Gordon Wood Award, given once a year to a deserving high school football team by the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame, acknowledges the team that displayed good sportsmanship, the ability to overcome challenges, had the support of its community and achieved success on the field. It is named after Gordon Lenear Wood, a legendary Texas high school football coach. During his 43-season career, he served as head football coach for several different schools and won or shared 25 district championships and nine state championships.

Earlier this year, after making it all the way to the state quarterfinals under the leadership of Coach Eric Blenden, the Frost High School Polar Bears football team was the proud recipient of that prestigious award. “The award is given to the team they believe has overcome adversity and had success on and off the field,” Eric said. “Six years ago, we started out the 2008 season with 16 boys, and between injuries and grades, we couldn’t even finish out the season.”

The trend turned around in 2009, with the team completing the season, but with a record of zero wins and 10 losses. In 2010, they finished with three wins and seven losses. The team was making great progress, and in 2011, they finished with five wins and five losses. “We just had one senior on the team in 2011, but we had learned how to finish a game,” Eric said. “Then in 2012, we got to go to the state quarterfinals. The team had their first district win after being winless for four years. Plus,



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getting our first playoff win was a huge thing, both for me and for the school."

Prior to 2012, the Polar Bears hadn't made the playoffs since 1991 and hadn't won their first playoff game since 1989. "I was ecstatic for the boys," Eric admitted. "They had worked so hard and turned everything around."

When the team went into the playoffs in 2012, they lost to Tenaha, the returning state champions, and finished the season with 12 wins and two losses. However, the story of their incredible ability to turn everything around in just a few short years had reached the ears of the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame.

Eric's dream of someday being a high school coach started when he, the oldest of three boys, was in seventh grade in Crawford, Texas. "It's always been in the back of my mind, I guess. After I graduated from Crawford High School, I went to Tarleton State University where I played baseball and probably would have continued doing that, but I tore my elbow bicep. After I had surgery, I didn't play again for a year-and-a-half," he remembered.

In 2009, Eric graduated from Tarleton and took a coaching position at Frost High School. "One of the main reasons I wanted to coach in the first place was because of the coaches I worked with in high school," Eric said. "I started at Frost as an assistant coach, and the following year, I took over as defensive coordinator and boys' basketball coach, which I did for two years."

The year 2012 was important for Eric. He met his wife, Gayla, during his first year at Frost High School, and they married in 2012. They have three children: two boys and a girl. That same year, at the young age of 26, Eric was named head football coach at Frost High School. In addition to his position as head football coach, Eric continues to coach the boys' basketball team.

Eric's goal has been to instill in his players a desire to work hard and to win, and the kids decided they wanted to be good players. "You can be the greatest coach in the world, but if the kids aren't excited about playing — about being the very best — being a great coach doesn't matter," he said. "They all have a deep



desire to play hard for the town of Frost, for their teammates and for themselves."

As for Eric, he gets a real kick out of watching each athlete grow up a little through each football season. "They learn if they act like adults, they will be treated like adults," he said. "What is really great is they get along so well, which I think is one of the good things about being from a small town. We pride ourselves on the fact that everyone on the team does what they are supposed to do, because they just want to win."

The Frost High School Polar Bears football team is comprised of 31 members. There are 11 seniors, eight

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freshmen and the remaining members are a mix of sophomores and juniors. The team follows a regimented practice schedule, practicing at night before the school year begins. "Times are tough, and most of the kids work during the day," Eric said.

From Monday through Friday, they practice from 6:00 p.m. until 11:00 or 11:30 p.m. "They lift weights inside on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for one-and-a-half hours," Eric said. "Then for two-and-a-half hours, we practice on the field. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we spend the whole evening practicing outside."

After school starts, the team lifts weights for 50 minutes, and after school, they practice from 3:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. "Practicing during the hottest time of the day is the hardest thing we do," Eric said. After spending the summer indoors in the air-conditioning, they have to get re-acclimated both to stricter schedules and working out in the Texas heat. "We take a lot of breaks to make sure everyone stays hydrated." On Saturdays, they begin practice at 9:30 a.m., sometimes watching films of past games in the school film room, and they get to have Sundays off.

The 2013-14 season's biggest game is Frost High School's homecoming game on September 27 against McKinney Christian Academy, after which they will go right into district playoffs. As head coach, Eric appreciates the assistance he gets from defensive coordinator and head baseball coach, Heath Blaylock, and Jimmy Alexander, assistant football coach and head track coach. "To be actually living my childhood dream of being a high school coach is incredible," Eric said. "But to coach these boys and watch them win the Gordon Wood Award is probably one of the greatest things to happen to me so far." **NOW**

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IT'S IN THE CARDS

AT HOME WITH RUTH NELSON

— By Virginia Riddle

Ruth Nelson is a winner when it comes to cards, whether it's the beautiful greeting cards she makes and distributes or the joy that winning a card game brings. Her home reflects her love of both types of cards. A utility closet houses her card-making work area, and the dining room table is always ready to become the fierce playing field for a variety of card games with friends in Cambridge Crossing, the seniors' independent living community within which Ruth has a duplex apartment.

When she's not at home with cards, friends or family, Ruth can be found each week attending club meetings, working as a community volunteer or attending her church, Corsicana First United Methodist. She has been a member of the local chapter of James Blair Daughters of the American Revolution, in which she served as chairperson of the Columbus Day Essay contest. Ruth also has served as co-coordinator of Meals on Wheels and worked as a volunteer in the Road to Recovery program of the American Cancer Society.

Working within her church is near and dear to Ruth. She has served in many capacities, including as a member of the administrative board and president of the United Methodist Women. "The first time I attended a UMW meeting, I was inside my mother's womb. I think I was born into UMW," Ruth said. At lunchtime on Mondays, Ruth can be found helping to cook for and serve Navarro College students at the United Christian Fellowship just off campus. Ruth was recognized in 2009 for her community service as an Outstanding Senior Volunteer by the Texas AgriLife Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Committee.

Corsicana has been fortunate that such a hardworking lady was transplanted to Texas as a military bride. Ruth grew up in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where she remembers summers filled with reading books and visiting her mom's family in Mount Rainier near Washington, D.C. "Those were good afternoons," she said. She graduated from William Penn High School prior to meeting her husband, Joe Jr., who was



stationed near her home at the invitation of the U.S. Navy. Six weeks after their marriage, Joe received orders for Guam, so Ruth came to Texas to live with his family. "I soon went back home. It was too much of a culture shock. At that time, I couldn't find smoked Amish bologna or pretzels *anywhere*. My relatives were sending care packages of food to me," Ruth remembered. When Joe returned, upon completion of his service, the couple moved back to Texas. This time the transplant took, and while Ruth and her family have driven back to the Northeast on 36-hour road trips for numerous visits, Corsicana and Texas are now home. "Up until 1945, you lived within 100 miles of your parents," Ruth said. "People live all over the world now."

That sociological shift included Joe and Ruth, who reared three children in Texas. Today, Joe III lives at Lake Richland Chambers. Donna is a school counselor in Ennis, and Eric lives in Lake Hills, Texas. "Each of the kids is six-and-a-half years apart in age, so it was like having three different families," Ruth revealed. Joe, now deceased, and Ruth have five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, with another one on the way.

Joe and Ruth lived in Temple, Texas, while he began his career with William

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Cameron Company of Waco, which operated sawmills and lumberyards and owned acres of timber. The couple moved to Corsicana when Joe became a manager. "He trained himself to draw house plans and started bidding jobs and serving as a contractor. People still remember Joe as their builder," Ruth recalled.

By 1982, Joe had designed the plans for their Corsicana family home. Ruth had found a lot on which to build, but



Joe didn't like it. Finally, however, the house started taking shape. "The house had the roof on it when Joe died. He never got to see it completed," Ruth said. The completed home was Ruth's abode for the next 10 years, to be followed by an easier-to-maintain apartment lifestyle.

A part-time job at Navarro Savings and Loan turned into a full-time position, which Ruth worked for 28 years. "I was there long enough to go through five name changes," she said of the

institution. Now retired, she enjoys the companionship and camaraderie of family, friends and neighbors.

A sign on the duplex unit that Ruth picked in March 2010 seemed to signal that it was perfect for her. "The door number is my birthday, which I share with a great-granddaughter," Ruth said. Her family worked together to settle her into the duplex.

A front porch, with a rocker and glider that she bought at a church

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garage sale, is a favorite gathering spot. "Everyone just loves to sit and talk," Ruth said. She entertains quite often around her dining table. "Everyone brings food. We play board and card games and dominoes and stop long enough to eat. Then it is back to our 'card killing,'" Ruth revealed with a smile.

Luckily for recipients, a scrapbooking class inspired Ruth to design and make greeting cards for all occasions. Forgoing a washer and dryer, Ruth converted a utility closet with bi-fold doors to hold her floor-to-ceiling collection of materials and tools. "This is my therapy," she



“WHEN I SEE
MY CHILDREN
AND THEIR
CHILDREN
GROWING UP —
THAT’S MY JOY.”

said. Joe III, a woodworking enthusiast, designed and built the shelving and workspace, which Ruth enjoys being able to close away when guests arrive.

A computer helps Ruth publish the activity sheet for the complex and is also a tool in her hobby of genealogical research. One night, about 1:00 a.m., Ruth’s search found a cousin. She received a response to her email query. “That was fun. The hair went up on the back of my neck!” she said.

Ruth’s pride in her family is evident. The first quilt Donna made graces Ruth’s bedroom. She has taken communion from Todd, her grandson, who is now a minister in Kentucky. “When I see my children and their children growing up — that’s my joy,” said Ruth, who has just returned from Kentucky where she saw her first great-granddaughter graduate with valedictorian honors. **NOW**





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LEADING BY EXAMPLE

— By Rick Herron



● Texas is one of many states planning to slowly, but surely,
● make vocational and technical programs in the country's middle
● schools a much more important facet of the overall educational
● offerings. Larry Acock, longtime Collins Middle School agricultural
● mechanics instructor, is one of many who are firmly behind making
● sure this happens, and the sooner the better. "I see a real need for
● our schools to increase and expand vocational and technical classes,"
● he said. And he's not alone in his beliefs. Supporting him is Diane
● Frost, superintendent of the Corsicana Independent School District.

● For Larry, it's a solid answer to the alarming and growing trend of high school
● dropouts, which studies show is highest for ninth-graders. "A vocational technical
● class gives students the ability to see how the math and English they've learned
● can work together and better prepare them for high school."

● Born in a military family, Larry has lived all over the world. At the age of
● 12, his family moved back to Corsicana, his family's hometown. During Larry's
● high school years, he focused on showing cattle and competing in a livestock



Larry Acock (far right) is proud of his agricultural mechanics show team.

judging contest. He received a judging scholarship from Tarleton State University. After college, he came back to Corsicana where he was hired by former superintendent, Mark Culwell, who had been his high school principal. Mark hired Larry in 1980 as the vocational technical instructor at Collins. Since then, Larry has received the Collins Middle School Distinguished Teacher Award and has been given the Golden Apple Award for Corsicana ISD. Larry is married to Diane Acock, principal at Fannin Elementary, is the father of four kids and is the grandfather of three.

Now in his 33rd year of teaching, Larry has learned that the main goal should be to teach basic work skills to the students in his classes. "They need to learn how you work for someone else,"

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Larry explained. "They should learn work ethics, such as the ability to take directions."

Larry's show team at Collins has racked up an impressive list of awards over the last couple years. In April 2012, they took the Grand Champion Award, First in Class, at the prestigious State Fair of Texas, with a mobile wildlife management lab that featured a main trailer outfitted as a small living quarters complete with bunk beds, kitchen and shower. An additional component of the lab was an escalating observation booth with hydraulic lift. "The trailer the kids created was equipped with the most up-to-date technology and a night vision camera," Larry shared.

The winning projects the students work on go through an evolutionary process, starting with ideas Larry gets, which are formed from his past experiences and current trends he sees at shows. "I put my idea on the white board in the workroom, and the students and I talk and think about it, adding additional facets. Then we start building. An example is the meat cooler/trailer we built, which took about 340 hours, from design to completion. The hydraulic trailer took 400 hours. We then start taking our finished product to shows, a recent one being the San Angelo Stock Show, which was in February," he said. "We were the Reserve Champion Division winner at that show."

To be selected for the show team, seventh-graders have to earn a spot in the advanced shop class. "Out of 75 kids, I

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pick 30 who come in as advanced shop students in the eighth grade. From those 30 kids, I pick six to 12 for the traveling show team,” Larry explained.

In 2013, the Collins agriculture mechanic/shop show team won first in class at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, winning \$2,000 worth of welding supplies including wire welders, welding helmets, grinders and cutting torch rigs. They were also grand champions in Division and Show at the Navarro County Youth Exposition three years in a row — 2011, 2012 and 2013. Current Collins Middle School agricultural mechanics show team members under Larry’s tutelage are eighth-graders Austin Rios, Drew Miller, Sam Gilfillan, Kishawn Kelly, Avery Cantu and Tucker Farmer.

In looking back at his team’s winning record over the last few years, Larry believes the sponsors behind the show team’s winning projects — individuals, including: Lee Paulk at Cargo Craft Trailer Co., John Lang at Casita Trailer Co., Eric Myer Senior and Junior at Oil City Iron Works, Sign Pro and Jerry’s Paint and Body — are well-deserving of

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a shout-out of thanks. "I also have a lot of gratitude for Mr. Vitters, at Corsicana High School, who has been really helpful," Larry added. "It's good to have him as a supporter."

Larry is already deep in thought about the next project the students will tackle, and he's excited about getting started on it. "We will build a totally wheelchair accessible deer stand trailer that will have push buttons for everything, and we'll give it away to a wounded military warrior," he said. He's already begun the process of collaborating on ideas about how to build it and determining the best approach to handling publicity with the help of the principal and the superintendent.

Larry believes the process of designing and building projects in his classroom should be a form of career-based learning that also teaches the kids life lessons they can use going forward. "As eighth-graders, they can learn to walk up to an adult and speak with confidence and knowledge, shake hands and demonstrate a proper use of the English language," he admitted. "They can learn to present themselves properly, which is a big factor in preparing them for college and a career. I really believe the earlier we start teaching those skills, the kids will be much more successful and less likely to drop out."

Larry realizes that when he started 33 years ago, teaching agricultural mechanics was just a job, but it has become part of his lifestyle. He shared, "When I see one of my students walk across the stage to get his diploma, I realize this is much more than a job." **NOW**



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BEAUTIFUL Journey

— By Hope Teel

Fran Vincent reflects back on her artistic journey through the exploration of multiple mediums of art including painting, sketching, sculpting, dressmaking and more. Her passion for the larger subject of art has had a major impact not only on Fran but on many others, as she has generously made numerous donations to charity work over the years.

Fran's interest in art began at a young age, and she remembers drawing as early as third grade. At the time, she was limited to what was available in her classes, but as soon as she was able to branch out on her own, she launched a creative cycle that would follow her through the remainder of her life.

Around the age of 19, Fran received a small sum of money for Christmas to be used however she wished. "I thought, *I am going to buy something I really want before I spend this money on groceries,*" Fran shared. "So that's exactly what I did. I went down to the local store, bought some art materials, and that's when I really got started."

She purchased oil paints, watercolors and brushes, and there were free art booklets available, which she picked up to help her get going. From that point forward, Fran craved further creative experiences, and she has continually expanded her artistic horizons. She attended art classes at The University of Texas at El Paso, the El Paso Art Academy and the Bill Morton Studio in El Paso, in addition to taking lessons



from several local artists to broaden her knowledge of different types of art. "I took lessons in and studied oils, watercolors, pastels, inks, scratchboard and more," Fran said.

Her creative scope, however, stretched beyond just putting paints and inks to paper and canvases. Fran stayed very involved with her community in El Paso and in her children's school activities, in particular. "There was a large period of time when she was the creative go-to person in El Paso for Christmas and Halloween events, plays, western days and, essentially, anything similar that was going on at school," her son, Clint Anderson, shared. "She was always a big part of anything we had going on at the time."

This fluidity between different mediums and aspects of art came natural to Fran and began when she was a young girl. In fact, she learned to sew before she



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even reached high school age.

She has continued to sew throughout the years, making literally thousands of Barbie and other doll outfits, clothes for her children and grandchildren and even more to be donated to underprivileged children through various programs, including those at Navarro College. "By the time my first son was born, I already had about 35 outfits made for him!" Fran laughed. "And when the kids were in school plays, I did all of the set designs and costumes, and all of the stages for the fashion shows and the like."

In 1976, Fran and her husband, Bill, moved to Corsicana. They built a house in the Chatfield area and, for the first time, Fran had her own art studio. "She found it to be her retreat," Clint shared.

"It was separate from the house, and I would paint out there often until 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning," Fran added. For years, even as her children were growing up, Fran painted or worked in other mediums for eight or nine hours a day. "I stayed very busy, and I never sat around! I was always doing something," she remembered.

Through the years, the diversity of her artwork has been vast and included painting semi trucks, jackets, water towers and even a guitar. She has also made many stuffed animals, Christmas ornaments and decorations for all holidays and much more. "Creativity really shows in all aspects of her life," Clint said.

By the time they relocated to Corsicana, Fran had delved into the art of china painting, and she attended a weeklong retreat in the Piney Woods





with a friend and fellow china painter to expand her knowledge of the subject, as she did with many other mediums. "I actually think china painting is one of the hardest things to do," Fran noted.

Following china painting, Fran became involved in sculpting. After watching a gentleman as he was sculpting one day, she was prompted to explore the art herself. "I remember thinking, *Well, now I have to try this, too!*" she laughed. Since she had no potter's wheel, Fran focused her interest on freehand sculpting, and



Bill and Fran Vincent show off one of Fran's works of art.

she won one of the first shows she entered in Corsicana with a sculpture of a prospecting cowboy that sits in her display case to this day. Similar to much of Fran's art, the cowboy was inspired by historic aspects of the Southwest and nature, including: trees, landscapes, flowers and American Indian culture.

Fran entered her first art show in 1968 with two 5-by-7 paintings, and she successfully sold them both. "I was so excited," she remembered. In 1989, she won Best of Show in a Texas bicentennial art show, and over the years she won


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many other awards in different mediums on both local and national levels. She's had art hanging in many galleries all over the state, and has even had a painting hanging in the Texas State Capitol.

Although she relishes her successes, Fran has always preferred to remain behind the scenes. "She is a reclusive artist, who has influenced many lives in many ways," Clint shared.

In 1976, Fran joined the Corsicana Art League. She and June Cade were co-directors of The Gallery and were in charge of rotating the art and doing window displays, and they often gave art lessons and demonstrations. Bill also played an important role in aiding and supporting Fran's artistic endeavors. He often built frames, primed boards and helped Fran and June with moving and hanging art in the gallery downtown. Bill is still one of Fran's biggest fans. "Her careful detail work really makes her shine," he smiled.

During Fran's artistic journey, charity has remained a major theme through her donations to schools and underprivileged children, as well as many other philanthropic contributions. Passion for art and a desire to express her creativity, keep her motivated. Currently, she and Bill live in a log cabin at Coyote Airfield built by her son, Clint. The home is filled with many examples of her art. It's also where they enjoy being close to continuous family activities "And Corsicana is fortunate to have the Pearce Collection in The Cook Center," Fran shared. "I am inspired by such great art." **NOW**



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A TALENT in Training

— By Virginia Riddle

Career pathways are rarely straight and narrow, but Caleb Grant, a junior at Dawson High School, has set his sights, single-mindedly and whole-heartedly, on a career in music. Postings on social media and a growing group of fans have come to admire talented Caleb, son of Navarro County Commissioner Jason Grant and Melissa Heaton. Caleb has played guitar and sung as a solo performer during the 2013 Derrick Days and at the Remington Roadhouse and Corsicana Country Club. Local musicians have taken Caleb “under their wings” and invited him to play with them. All this attention could go to Caleb’s head, but with an ambition for a long-term career in music, he knows he has a lot more to learn. “I really didn’t expect to be here — getting to do what I love. I feel so lucky,” Caleb said.

The guitar has long been the instrument of love and romance, and so it was from the beginning for

Caleb. As a freshman, he had a puppy love infatuation with a senior girl. A date to the prom resulted, and to impress her, Caleb decided to write a song. Written in the shower, it wasn’t long — only eight words. “I couldn’t forget them that way,” Caleb explained. His dad, Jason, had bought a pawn shop guitar a couple of months prior to Caleb’s pre-prom dinner performance at Olive Garden. “It’s the only thing I have ever bought at a pawn shop,” Jason recalled.

Caleb admitted that, at least at that point, “If I had been my parents, I wouldn’t have bought a guitar for me.” But Caleb now recalls the public premier of his song and talent as being pretty bold. He didn’t get the girl, but he did find his avocation and began to take steps toward a dream of becoming a performer and songwriter.

With little previous formal musical training, only a few classical guitar lessons when he was 9 years old, Caleb did what so many folks do today. He turned to the Internet for instruction. “It’s like free guitar lessons,” he said. “You just keep rewinding.”

Caleb had several factors that worked in his favor to project him into the local musical performance limelight. Genes are rumored to skip generations, and while Jason admits to having little musical talent, Caleb’s grandfather played bass guitar for country western artist, Tony Douglas, of Athens, Texas. Those genes must have enabled



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Caleb's raw talent to shine through his inexperience and lack of formal training.

Another factor working for Caleb was his enthusiasm and innate ability to learn. "My uncle told me early on that I had to learn to sing while playing. That's hard, but my dad knows everyone," Caleb said, "and I pretty much knew, after that first night, that I needed to learn more."

Jason turned Caleb over to George Plemons and Jesse Bonner for further instruction. Humbly, Jesse said of Caleb,



"I taught him how to learn a new song and how to feel music. He's got to really *feel* the music. Caleb did all the work. I just helped him to go in the right direction. He deserves all the credit. He's already surpassed my abilities."

Caleb has found plenty of mentors and camaraderie among local performers. "Everyone in the county is so friendly. Musicians have let me feel so comfortable.



Ryan Payne was so nice to me. I sang 10 songs in front of over 100 people," Caleb recalled. He cites Chris Aldama, Sloan McCain, Aaron Copeland and Randy Blue as supporters and mentors.

Also in his corner is Caleb's family consisting of his younger siblings Jot, Micah and Hannah; stepmom, April Grant; stepdad, Scott Heaton; and a close family friend, Shannon Heaton. Caleb also found inspiration toward pursuing a career in music while attending a concert in Dallas with his mom, Melissa. "I watched the crowd be in awe of the performance, and I wanted to be able to do that with an audience," he recalled.

Practice does make perfect. At home,

Caleb practices song after song for gigs. "I spend a lot of wonderful moments in my bedroom — just me and my guitar. When something stands out, Mom knows, stops what she's doing and tells me, 'It's good.'" Caleb's most memorable performance, to date, came when he performed, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" at his great-grandmother's funeral.

"I couldn't have been



prouder," Jason added.

Finding music that he likes and others will like is challenging. Caleb listens to all genres of music, from Stevie Wonder to Keith Urban, but favors a singer-songwriter rock style, which does not always go with his Texas native, country speaking accent. "I dress the part of an alternative rock music artist,"

Caleb said. He has found other

challenges, such as a lack of equipment, songwriting and technology. "Songwriters really have to put themselves out there," he noted. Caleb "draws the line" at using a lot of technology to produce the sound

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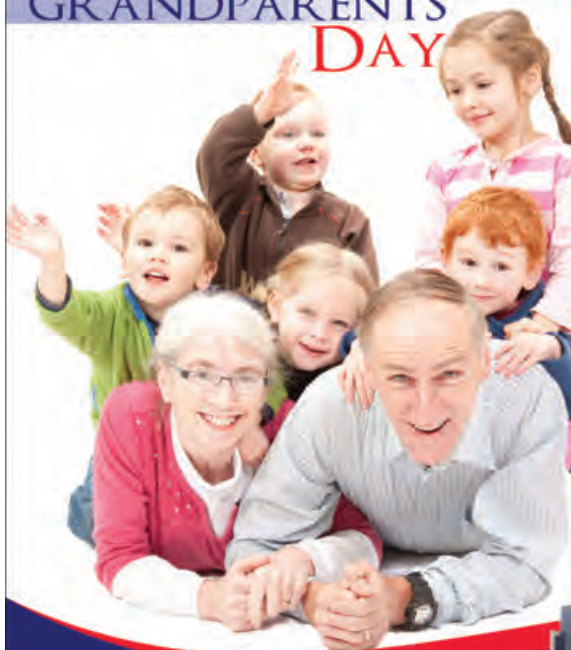
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he wants. "I like the human aspect of just my voice and guitar."

Caleb's favorite professional musicians are Dave Grohl of Foo Fighters, Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam, John Mayer and, of course, Keith Urban. "I am also a huge fan of Keith Richards." Of John Mayer, Caleb said, "I relate to him. He reminds me of me when he talks about starting out in music, but I like every single one of these guys. They are really inspirational. They don't even need a microphone. They are really good at just sitting and singing a song. I would love to jam with any of them."

An already established routine prepares Caleb for a performance. "I stop at a gas station, get a Snickers and bottled water, get to the venue early to make sure everything is good and start to intensely focus. I'm not nervous about the crowd. I'm nervous about my performance," he revealed.

Future plans for this basketball-playing teen include learning more vocal techniques, learning to play the electric guitar and piano, graduating from high school and moving to Austin or Dallas to become a serious performer/songwriter. "That would be a culmination of three years of dreams," Caleb said.

Jesse is betting that Caleb will make it. "He wants it bad and is willing to work for success," he said. Caleb is equally confident. He's practicing his autograph for the day a fan asks for it. **NOW**



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From left:

Bertha Perez and Taryn Rodriguez provide the clothing to dress up your special occasions.

Head-to-toe Shopping

The family-owned Plaza Garibaldi helps people make lasting memories.

— By Virginia Riddle

Specializing in meeting the entire family's clothing needs with personalized service is what Plaza Garibaldi store owners, Bertha Perez and her daughter, Taryn Rodriguez, offer to Corsicana area shoppers. At Plaza Garibaldi, savvy shoppers can find quality everyday wear, western wear, boots and other leather goods, fine jewelry and name-brand perfumes. Bertha and Taryn offer a one-stop shopping experience for life's special occasions such as proms, weddings, quinceañeras, first communions and christenings. Special orders, so necessary for such events, are no problem for Bertha and Taryn, and the store rents tuxes for men and boys. Alterations can also be arranged. "We sell a lot of

formal wear and stay focused on placing orders," Taryn said.

Repeat customers are the base of Plaza Garibaldi's business. "We want customers to feel happy and comfortable shopping with us," Taryn said. While a busy mother of four, Bertha started the business, working out of her home, by selling jewelry to customers in their homes. Plaza Garibaldi opened a store front in 2002, at College Mall where it twice expanded from an initial small space. Now, with an even more expanded inventory in Southland Center, this family business grows and thrives through Bertha and Taryn's dedication to their customers and their family's principals of hard work.

Theirs is an American success story. "My mother's family

in Mexico was in business, but during the 1990s in Mexico, the economy was not very good," Taryn remembered. On their way to California, the family stopped in Corsicana — a stop that became permanent. "We finally went to Disneyland 18 years later," Taryn said laughingly. The family first lived in the House of Refuge, while working hard to establish themselves as productive members of their newly adopted community.

Taryn and her brothers graduated from the Corsicana Christian Academy. She recently earned her associate degree from Navarro College. "My mother was the main lady who supported me," Taryn said. Her husband, Carlos, was also supportive, but studies came only late at night for busy Taryn. Her efforts have paid off. Taryn has become a role model for her own son, Alexandro. "I went through graduation to inspire my son," she stated. She will continue her studies toward a bachelor's degree in business and apply her knowledge to make Plaza Garibaldi an even more special place for shoppers.

Bertha is an active member of First Baptist Church of Corsicana where she is involved in the Hispanic ministry and went on a mission trip to Washington State. Her husband, Heysel, is the owner/manager of their family's store in Ennis. The couple's three other grown children, Nurinia, Manlio and Axkana live nearby and in the Dallas Metroplex, so they are available to help when Bertha, Taryn or Heysel need vacation time. Heysel and Bertha's two teenage granddaughters, Scarlett and Melanie, are frequently found learning the ropes in the family's businesses. "They are my princesses," Bertha, their proud grandmother, said. Heysel and Bertha also have five grandsons.

Working as a team, this family has found that their dreams are achievable. "Good things happen when you trust in the Lord and do the right thing," Bertha said. "God has given us success, and success is possible for everyone. We all can achieve our own goals when we put our trust in God." **NOW**

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Funding Your Child's College Education

Are you looking for a great gift to give to the children in your life? If so, consider giving the gift of higher education. It's never too early to start saving money for your child's education — or as a gift for your nieces, nephews or grandchildren. Long after toys are broken or outgrown, a college savings account will still be appreciated.

Three popular ways to save for college are:

- **529 Plans.** These “qualified tuition programs” allow you to save and pre-pay for college tuition under Section 529 (b) of the Internal Revenue Code. The 529 college savings plan allows you or any other family member to open an account specifically for future higher education expenses. A 529 plan lets you invest in any public college or university in your state at present-day prices. Residency requirements apply. Your investment is tax-deferred and distributions from the fund are exempt from federal income tax.

- **Coverdell Education Savings Account (ESA).** A Coverdell ESA is a trust that lets you contribute funds earmarked for future educational costs (elementary and secondary education through college and graduate school), up to \$2,000 per year, per child. Contributions can begin at birth and continue until a child turns 18 years of age. Coverdell ESA accounts are exempted from federal income tax and withdrawals are tax-free.

- **UGMA and UTMA Accounts.** You can also set up a college account for your child under the Uniform Gift to Minors Act (UGMA) or the Uniform

Transfer to Minors Act (UTMA). With these two accounts you can make monetary gifts toward your child's future educational needs without setting up a trust. Minors can take control of the funds when they reach the age of trust termination (which is age 18 to 21, depending on state and account restrictions). The donor pays no taxes. Income from UGMA/UTMA accounts must be reported on the child's tax return, but the assets are taxed at a much lower tax rate than those of an adult.

Talk to your financial advisor before moving forward with any of these educational account options. Before investing in a 529 plan, consider the plan's investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses. Contact the plan issuer for an official statement containing this and other information. Read it carefully. An investor should consider, before investing, whether the investor's or designated beneficiary's home state offers any state tax or other benefits that are only available for investments in such state's qualified tuition program. **NOW**

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Lynda Housley is a State Farm agent based in Corsicana.

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The Last Chance!

Did you get all the trimming of your shrubs and trees finished? If not, sharpen up the loppers and trimmers and get with it. Our plants need time to recover after we hack at them. The trimming actually stimulates growth, so we need to get it done at least six weeks before the first freeze.

I usually trim my bushes and trees as the year progresses, but I fell behind for about two years. When I mowed, I hated the branches slapping me in the face, so I made it a point to trim the branches down low as soon as they thickened up. The general rule of thumb is to not worry too much about little branches, but cutting them when they are about 1-inch thick will not leave a scar, and the tree will benefit from the food production of the leaves before they were cut. Be sure not to cut the central leader — the one you want to be the main trunk. You only need one main trunk. On most mature trees, the little shoots that come out on the trunk or large limbs are suckers and need to be removed. This can be an easy job with clippers or loppers, but leave the ladder-climbing to the experts.

Shrubs can be trimmed a bit differently, with the tallest and oldest branches usually cut to the ground or their point of origin. This results in a more open shrub and doesn't stimulate as much new growth, allowing plants to be maintained at a given height and width for years. Removing up to one-third of the oldest and tallest branches will rejuvenate an aging shrub. Remove much more, however, and you will take your chances! Not only could you put the plant in stress, but you might remove the very growth that would be the blooming part the next spring. Redbuds, quince, forsythia, hawthorn, some roses, as well as azaleas, all bloom on the previous season's growth. The shrubs that bloom after June, usually bloom on the current season's growth, and they need to be pruned in late winter to promote vigorous growth in the spring. Clean clippers are a must, but pruning paint isn't necessary unless disease is an issue. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.



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Ear Infections: A Common Childhood Problem

Know the symptoms and treatment recommendations

Ear infections are common among young children — and if not properly treated, they can have long-term effects ranging from hearing loss to delayed speech development. Children are at a higher risk for ear infections than adults, because their ear passages are smaller, narrower and angled differently, making it easier for germs to reach the middle ear and for fluid to accumulate.

Symptoms of an ear infection

Sometimes an ear infection has no symptoms. If your child isn't old enough to talk and cannot tell you his or her ear is hurting, common signs include:

- Tugging or pulling at the ear(s)
- Fussiness and crying
- Trouble sleeping
- Fever
- Fluid draining from the ear
- Clumsiness or problems with balance
- Trouble hearing or responding to quiet sounds

Certain factors may make your child more prone to ear infections, including: exposure to secondhand smoke, putting a baby down to nap or to bed with a bottle and being around sick children in close environments such as school or day care.

Treatment Guidelines

Treatment options are based on the child's age and severity of symptoms. For children with ear infections that can't be definitively diagnosed, treatment

guidelines include antibiotics and pain relievers, or observation and close follow-up for 48 to 72 hours before beginning antibiotics. The guidelines also call for more stringent criteria for diagnosing an ear infection, which will allow doctors to prescribe antibiotics more effectively. It's important to note that some ear infections will clear up on their own without antibiotics.

If your child's doctor prescribes a 7- to 10-day round of antibiotics for the ear infection, it's important to finish all the prescribed medication. Some fluid in the ear may remain after the infection clears, but usually will disappear within three to six weeks.

Multiple ear infections within a year may require your child to have tubes placed in the ears to prevent fluid buildup and to decrease pain. The simple and painless procedure is performed on an outpatient basis. These tiny ventilation tubes help improve air flow and prevent fluid from accumulating. Most tubes remain in your child's ears for six to nine months and are checked at follow-up doctor's visits until they fall out on their own. **NOW**

Remember that this information is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor, but rather to increase awareness and help equip patients with information to facilitate conversations with their physician.

Matthew Branch, M.D.

Otolaryngology

Member of the medical staff at Navarro Regional Hospital

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September 3, 10, 21, 24, 26

Navarro College Bulldogs Soccer Home Games: For more information, call 1-800-NAVARRO.

September 4, 12, 13, 18, 19, 25

Navarro College Bulldogs Volleyball Home Games: For more information, call 1-800-NAVARRO.

September 6 — 7

New Look at the West Show & Sale: The Pearce Museum. For reservations and further information, contact Holly Wait at (903) 875-7438 or visit www.anewlookatthewest.com.

September 7, 14, 21, 28

Cook Center Planetarium presents: 1:30 p.m. "Lunar Odyssey"; 2:30 p.m., "Night Lights". Admission is \$2 per person, per program. For more information, call (903) 874-1211 or 1-800-988-5317.

September 10

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1009 meeting: 7:00 p.m., Sirloin Stockade.

For more information, email Roy Messick at roy.messick@gmail.com.

September 12

Corsicana Newcomers' Club Lunch Bunch: 11:30 a.m., Corsicana Country Club. For more information, contact Pat Schroeder at (903) 872-9663.

September 13

Senior Circle Pot Luck Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Navarro Regional Hospital. For more information, contact Connie Beal at (903) 654-6800.

September 12-21

Mama Won't Fly: Warehouse Living Arts Center. For more information or to reserve seats, call (903) 872-5421 or visit www.warehouselivingartscenter.com.

September 13

Navarro County Retired Teachers meeting: 9:45 a.m., Northwest Apartments Community Center. For more information, email pk2@aimail.net.

September 14

Second Saturday "Fiesta Tejas": 4:00-9:00 p.m., downtown Corsicana. For more information, visit www.corsicanasecondsaturdays.com.

September 21

Grits and Glamour Tour featuring Pam Tillis and Lorrie Morgan: 7:30 p.m., The Palace Theatre. For more information, call (903) 874-7792.

September 21, 28

Navarro College Bulldogs Football: 7:00 p.m., Tiger Field. For more information, call 1-800-NAVARRO.

September 26

Corsicana Newcomers' Club meeting: 11:00 a.m., Kinsloe House. For more information or to make confirmed reservations, contact Marge Oslick at (903) 872-3508.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to virginia.riddle@nowmagazines.com.

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In the Kitchen With Gayle Henson

— By Virginia Riddle

Gayle Henson remembers a time when families lived on farms and ate what they grew. But times have changed. Gayle inherited generations of recipes through her husband, Dick's, family, as well as her own, and she has been busy in the kitchen converting family food favorites into healthier choices by gradually substituting ingredients until the recipe is perfected. "We are all about putting healthy things in our bodies now," Gayle said.

This retired counselor and mother recently ran in two 5Ks and works out with a personal trainer. "I felt such a challenge, accomplishment and camaraderie. I find joy knowing that the food we prepare is beneficial and wholesome for family and friends," Gayle revealed. **NOW**

Cranberry-Apple-Walnut Tossed Salad

Vinaigrette:

- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup fresh cranberries
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 1 Tbsp. Erythritol
- 1 Tbsp. red onion, chopped
- 1/4 tsp. sea salt
- 1/4 tsp. peppercorns, freshly ground
- 3/4 cup light olive oil

Salad:

- 2 pkgs. spring mix salad greens
- 3 medium red delicious apples, thinly sliced
- 1 cup walnuts, toasted and chopped

1. For vinaigrette: Combine the first 7 ingredients in a blender, cover; process while gradually adding olive oil.
2. For salad: In large bowl, toss salad ingredients; serve with vinaigrette.

Gayle's Tortilla Soup

- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 rotisserie chicken, deboned
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning mix
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 4 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes with green chilies in lime juice
- 2 14.5-oz. cans diced tomatoes
- 1 32-oz. container chicken stock
- 1 48-oz. container chicken broth
- Tortilla chips
- Mexican blend cheese, shredded

1. Melt butter in a large soup pan. Add onions; sauté.
2. Continue to sauté while adding remaining ingredients, except chips and cheese.
3. Stir until blended; cover and simmer for 1 hour.
4. Serve in individual bowls with chips and cheese topping.

Gayle's Carrot Cake

- 1 cup coconut flour
- 1 cup natural almond flour
- 1/2 cup arrow root flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 Tbsp. cacao powder
- 1 Tbsp. Korintje or Saigon cinnamon
- 1 Tbsp. nutmeg
- 1 cup Erythritol
- 1/2 cup Splenda Blend brown sugar, packed
- 1 cup coconut oil
- 1 16-oz. can crushed pineapple in 100 percent juice
- 1 8-oz. jar apple sauce
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups carrots, grated
- 1 1/2 cups pecans or walnuts, chopped
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup (or to taste) Late Harvest Vignoles wine, optional

Icing:

- 1 1/2 sticks I Can't Believe It's Not Butter baking blend sticks, unsoftened
- 2 pkg. Neufchâtel cheese, unsoftened
- 2 cups gluten-free powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups pecans or walnuts, chopped
- 1 cup coconut

1. For cake: Sift first 9 ingredients together; set aside.
2. Pre-soften oil by setting container in bowl of lukewarm water for several minutes. In mixer, combine Erythritol, Splenda, oil, pineapple with juice, apple sauce and vanilla; blend well.
3. Separate yolks from egg whites. Add yolks, one at a time, to sugar/fruit mixture, blending well after each addition. Add dry ingredients to sugar/fruit mixture; mix thoroughly.
4. Fold in carrots, nuts and wine; blend well. Beat egg whites; fold into cake batter.
5. Grease 2 9-inch round cake pans. Tap pans to release air. Add batter to pans; bake for 35 minutes in 350 F preheated oven. Cool for 1 hour on racks.
6. For icing: Cut butter into small cubes. Slightly soften in mixer. Add cream cheese; blend well.
7. Add remaining ingredients; mix until frosting is firm. Ice cake when cool.

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

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Just ask local Ennis resident and world champion barrel racer Mary Walker. She didn't know if she'd ever ride again – much less compete after suffering severe injuries during a competition two years ago. Following her surgery to repair a crushed pelvis, two fractured vertebrae, and two broken toes, Mary attended physical therapy at Ennis Regional Medical Center's Rehabilitation Clinic.

The highly-trained physical therapists and occupational therapists focused on Mary's capabilities rather than disability to put her back in the saddle and on the trail to recovery and independence. Ennis Regional Medical Center congratulates Mary's season title win at the 2012 National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.

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