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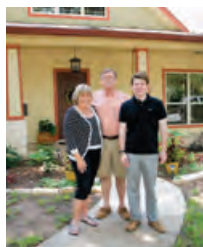
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## ON THE COVER



A fire taught the Grindeles a lesson on what really matters.

*Photo by Amy Ramirez.*

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## Editor's Note

*Anxiously waiting!*

Another grandbaby is on the way, and to say I was excited would be quite the understatement. I'm thrilled, overjoyed and ecstatic! We'll roll out the red carpet for him — yes, I said him — as he makes his arrival later this month. The furniture has been painted to represent a baseball-themed room. Personalized red, white and blue bedding is finished. Handmade curtains are hung. All the room needs now is a baby.

As my oldest son and his wife embark on the crazy, and sometimes unpredictable, journey called parenthood, I can't help feeling a sense of pride in the people they've come to be. Their pasts have definitely formed their future — and what a wonderful future they have in front of them — a future of diapers, late night bottles and growing pains. But, I do believe they're up for it!

### Sandra

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# A CALM Dress

— By Callie Revell



*Their house sits comfortably on one of Waxahachie's oldest streets. The living room is filled with family pictures and portraits.*

*Heirlooms line the side tables and bookshelves. In a far corner of the dining room hangs a picture of a young girl with dark hair in a crisp, white dress.*

To Jessica Errisuriz, this dress represents a family tradition that spans decades and generations. A prekindergarten teacher in Lancaster, Jessica has lived in Waxahachie for nine years with her two daughters, Isabella, age 10, and Titiana, age 8. Since her grandmother made the dress in 1959, it has been passed down from mother to daughter to be worn for each girl's First Communion.

.....  
THE DRESS EXUDES A SENSE OF  
calm elegance  
AND POISE THAT SEEMS TIMELESS.  
.....

First Communion is a ceremony in the Catholic church that usually occurs around the time a child turns 7 or 8 years old. The occasion celebrates the first time a child is permitted to partake in Holy Communion, acknowledging the fact the child has reached the age of reason and has studied the importance of the event through special classes or lessons. It is a significant event, generally involving parties, gifts and visits from relatives and family friends.





"I think First Communion is important because you're finally getting to have part of God and Jesus in you, and you're going through the process of learning so you can receive the body and the blood," Isabella said. Because First Communion is considered one of the most important events in the life of a person following the Catholic faith, children dress formally, with boys in suits and girls in white dresses with veils.



Over 50 years ago, Jessica's family dress traveled across the Atlantic Ocean and back to make sure it was ready for her mother's First Communion. "My grandmother was Italian, and my grandfather met her during World War II," Jessica explained. "In Italy, during that time, you went to school in the mornings and in the afternoons you learned a trade. My grandmother learned to sew, and her sisters learned embroidery. So, my grandmother made the dress here [in the United States] for my mother, and then she sent it to Italy and had her sister do the embroidery." Jessica's grandmother, Titiana Tafani French, was a seamstress in Waxahachie for 45 years before passing away in 2000.



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The dress is obviously handmade with care, with meticulous and beautiful blue flowered embroidery work around the trim and collar. "It's not one like you would see other girls wearing for First Communion," Jessica said. "Theirs are really frilly and lacy, and ours is more traditional."

"Calm," young Titiana added, sparking laughter from her mother and older sister. Indeed, the dress exudes a sense of calm elegance and poise that seems timeless. Isabella described the cotton dress as "soft like silk" from being worn over the years.



Jessica's mother, Patricia Smith, wore the dress for her First Communion in May of 1959, and Jessica wore it herself in May of 1983. She joyfully watched Isabella wear it in April of 2011, and Titiana this past May. As Jessica pensively thumbed through photo albums, she pointed out each 8-year-old girl wearing the dress over the years. They all bear a striking family resemblance, down to their smiles and postures.

The dress has remained consistent





throughout the years, and hasn't been modernized or embellished. "My mother had one size, but when I wore it we had to make it smaller. Then we made it bigger for Isabella, and we didn't alter it for Titiana," Jessica acknowledged. "That's the only thing we've changed, though, is the size."

Jessica's grandmother and great-aunt also made a baptismal gown for the family in the early 1950s. Catholics baptize infants within the first few weeks after being born. Jessica's mother and her two brothers, Roger and Marco French, wore the small, white gown as infants when they were baptized.

"They wore a gown?" Isabella asked, giggling with her sister at the thought of her uncles wearing something she considered "girly." Jessica went on to list her family members who have worn the gown, including her cousins and her daughters. In total, 12 members of her



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family have been baptized in the gown. Both the First Communion dress and the baptismal gown remain protected as family heirlooms. By Isabella and Titiana's enthusiasm, it's easy to see they enjoy discussing the dress and are interested in their heritage.

Jessica's family understands the importance of family traditions, especially in an age when many seem disconnected from the past. "Traditions bring your family together as a unit, and it's neat to pass them on through the years," Jessica said, also sharing that part of the tradition is that all the Communions have taken place at St. Joseph Catholic Church. The First Communion dress has become a priceless piece of family history that revives an old memory every time it is pulled out and worn. "It's nice to learn the story of the dress and how my grandparents met and how they would send the dress back and forth," Jessica added.

The dress has even helped Jessica connect with her Great-aunt Valeria, whose talented hands stitched the blue embroidery on the dress 55 years ago. "My grandmother passed away in 2000, but her sister Valeria is still alive," Jessica said. "We took a family trip to Florence last summer and got to visit her."

Isabella and Titiana had the unique opportunity of meeting their great-great-aunt, who spoke little English, but was very happy to meet them.

"I kind of couldn't understand the language," Titiana admitted.

"I thought she was quiet," Isabella added.

According to Jessica, Valeria was overjoyed to know the First Communion





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**"I HOPE MY  
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dress and the baptismal gown she helped make were still being worn by members of her family. What began as a project between two sisters on separate continents has stretched into a new century and several new generations. Jessica hopes the First Communion dress will be worn by future girls in her family.

"I hope my children will wear the dress," Titiana added.

"How do you know we'll have girls?" Isabella asked her, but then admitted, "I hope they do, too."

Clearly, the dress holds a special place in Jessica's family and always sparks fond memories when mentioned. Both of her daughters light up with excitement when the dress comes up in conversation, eager to be involved and tell their sides' of the story. It isn't difficult to picture them sharing the story with their own daughters one day.

In a "calm" manner, the dress holds its place in time. It will be a keepsake for generations to come for a family that appreciates its history and looks to the future with bright hope. **NOW**



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For the



# Children



— By Dianne Reaux

*Sharon Johnson is a longtime resident of Waxahachie who has a warm disposition, a sunny outlook on life and a big heart for young children. She spent many years working in the health care field, but many who know her would tell you she spent just as many years working as a child care provider. In 2010, her health deteriorated to the point where she could no longer take care of children, but she found another way to express her love for them.*







"I was born in Dallas, and my two brothers, my sister and I lived in the Kiest/Lancaster section of Oak Cliff. When I was 11, we moved to Waxahachie, and my mother was fortunate enough to move us into a Victorian gingerbread home in the historic district," Sharon said. "And as kids, we loved it."

Her home is in Waxahachie's historical district, not far from where her former home still stands. "When we were growing up, my siblings and all of our friends loved playing in the house because it had a full floor attic with a captain's walk," she explained. "There were windows in the captain's walk that looked out of all four sides of the house, and we were eye level to the Waxahachie Court House. We would take friends up in the attic, turn the lights out, and run out and leave them up there. It was scary for them and fun for us!"

Fond memories of her childhood may be one of the reasons Sharon has such a large heart for children. "I never had any children of my own, but I've taken care of children for most of my life," she shared. "I remember baby-sitting when I wasn't much more than a child myself. I started when I was about 9, and I would look after my cousins. When I was a little older I 'officially' started baby-sitting for people who weren't relatives. All during high school and even while I attended Navarro College, I would baby-sit for people." Sharon graduated from Waxahachie High School and went



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on to earn an associate degree in general studies at Navarro College. She worked for Dr. Fearis III for 16 years. During that time, she also cared for children.

But a time came when Sharon left Waxahachie and all of the little ones she'd cared for. "Back in 2002, the job market started to decline, so I decided to move to Coolidge, Arizona. I really liked living in Coolidge, a small town named after President Calvin Coolidge," she explained. "I remember enjoying Coolidge Days. Coolidge Days is an event similar to Canton First Mondays, but on a much smaller scale. They had the best Indian fried bread! It took me a little while to settle in, but once I did, I realized the job market in Arizona wasn't much better than it had been in Texas."



Sharon didn't find the career boost in Coolidge that she'd hoped for, so she decided to pack up her things and move back to Waxahachie. "I was fortunate enough to know someone who knew





Sharon now cares for her mother.

someone, and I was able to get a job as a billing clerk," she said. She also returned to baby-sitting. Most weeks, Sharon would put in 40 hours working at her job, and then she would work almost as many hours baby-sitting young children. "I also took care of children at St. Joseph's Catholic Church during Saturday and Sunday masses. I worked as their nursery manager for 17 years." Sharon continued taking care of children until 2010 when she was diagnosed with fibromyalgia and bilateral osteoarthritis in both of her knees. "I always said if I ever reached a point where I was physically unable to take care of the children, I would give it up. And that's what I did," she stated. "Besides, my baby-sitting had become generational. I was beginning



to take care of the babies of the children I once cared for who were now adults, so it was probably time to give it up anyway," she added with a warm smile.

But Sharon has a large heart and rather than sit idly each day, she found another way to reach out to the babies. "My mother taught me to embroider when I was a

young girl. I learned the basic stitches, but I never completed anything," she admitted. "When I found out I was going to be an aunt for the first time, I found a Disney pattern with Bambi and Thumper

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and made my first blanket. Over the years, I continued to work at it, and now I love doing it.”

At this point, Sharon has mastered her craft, and the quilted blankets she creates are beautiful. “Not only do mothers and babies love quilts, but quilting has become a form of stress management for me. I’ll sit on the couch working on different pieces, and the rhythm of the stitching is soothing. Rather than just mindlessly watching television day after day with nothing to show for my time, at the end



of a few weeks I’ve created a quilt that a new mother and baby will love.”

The blankets Sharon creates are like soft, cuddly, colorful pieces of art. “At first, I worked only from patterns, but now I can be a little more creative,” she said. “I know how to modify patterns and add details to suit my tastes.” Each baby who receives one of Sharon’s quilts is receiving a gift made with a lot of skill and love. “I can make a simple quilt in

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one day, or it can take up to a month-and-a-half to make a more intricate quilt, it just depends on how much detail is involved.” And there are times when Sharon finds herself working on more than one piece at a time.

A famous quote states, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Any worn-out, sleep-deprived parent can attest to their appreciation of having a trusted person



in their circle — someone special who can step in and give them a brief respite from the demands of being the parent of a small child. Sharon has been that trusted someone for many of the parents in Waxahachie. Those parents knew their babies and young children held a special place in Sharon’s heart, and although she is no longer able to kiss little boo boos, wipe away tears or lay little babies down for a nap, her quilts have given Sharon a wonderful way to continue touching beautiful little lives. **NOW**



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# Heart of the Matter

At Home With Jim  
and Liz Grindele

— By Carolyn Wills

*Jim and Liz Grindele wanted a home on Waxahachie's renowned Main Street. For a year, they lived in a rental house while looking for just the right historic home on that historic street. "We bought our house in March 2000," Jim said. "It had been built in 1902, and although it was not the oldest on the block, it was close."*

Their son, Tyler, was in first grade when they moved in, and before long, their house became a gathering place for him and

his friends. "Tyler graduated from Waxahachie High School, so all of his school years were spent here," Liz said.

Throughout the years, the family became an important part of the community. They enjoyed their house and felt very much at home. They also grew to know its needs. "There's always something to be done in an older home," Jim said. After nine years and a fair amount of repairs and projects, he and Liz decided it was time for a major remodel.

"We were so excited as we planned for a lot of changes and happily saw the work begin," she said. No one, however, could have predicted the unthinkable change that came on the night of September 3, 2009.







After midnight, Tyler was asleep in his bedroom. He was awakened by a loud pop in the direction of the front porch and then saw sudden flames. "The smoke alarms hadn't even sounded yet," Liz said. "Thankfully, Tyler rushed to alert us. At the time, we had a dog, a rabbit and a chicken, so everyone grabbed an animal and ran outside." The

fire trucks, only minutes away, arrived to find Liz, Tyler and a shirtless Jim standing in the front yard. Neighbors began opening their doors.

"It was an old house with cottonseed insulation so everything burned fast," Jim said. He could do nothing but watch as their beloved house and belongings burned to the ground. "The cause

was determined to be spontaneous combustion," he explained. "In our remodeling, the hardwood floors were being refinished and stained. The used rags were being thrown into a five-gallon bucket on the front porch."

"To make the whole thing weird," Liz added, "our fire started around 1 o'clock. At 3 o'clock that same morning, the fire



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department was called to another house fire at the very same address as ours only East Main instead of West Main." That fire was ruled as arson, and to Jim and Liz the coincidence remains strange and interesting to this very day.

"The fire was horrible," Liz shared. "Our wonderful neighbors brought us clothes and consoled us. For weeks while we were still numb, we were amazed by the generosity of Waxahachie residents who dropped by with school supplies, household goods and even money. One neighbor took Cocoa the rabbit and another took Henrietta the chicken, so they were cared for. From strangers to the police to the schools, everyone was so kind and caring. We feel very blessed to be living in Waxahachie."

Amazingly, the guest house in the back of their lot was spared. "It was rented, though, so we moved into my sister's one-bedroom guest house on the outskirts of town," Liz said.

So much loss was especially hard on Tyler. "Although the move was temporary, it took him away from his friends, and he lost virtually everything in the fire," Liz said. "Any time we came across something that had belonged to him he was thrilled. We found some old toys that were, at least, part of his memories and so precious."

Gradually, the family's resilience strengthened. "We began to rebuild," Liz smiled. "We called our builder friend, and I knew some designers in the area, so we got busy."

"Before the fire, I think the newest house on the street was built in the late '40s," Jim said. "We moved into our new house in 2010, which meant that one of the oldest houses had become the newest."

"We wanted to still fit with the neighborhood, so we decided on a two-story Craftsman-style," Liz said. Adding a top story allowed them to have a bigger yard. "We also wanted the interior to be more open. Like most aged houses, our old house had no hallways and every room had several doors. As much as we loved that house, it was time for more space and less clutter."

Today, the Grindele's new 2,300-square-foot home fits in perfectly with its neighbors. From the outside, the home is so well-suited that anyone



unaware of the fire would be surprised to learn that it is indeed the newest house.

The interior is still as welcoming as its predecessor, yet the change is remarkable. An opening to the second story ceiling lightens the entryway and adds a sense of height and space. The living/dining/kitchen areas are now one large open area with polished, bronze-stained concrete floors. "Great for the dogs," Liz smiled.

Downstairs, in addition to the open area, are a small bedroom and bathroom, master bedroom with large master bath and laundry room. Upstairs are two more bedrooms and another bathroom. "We wanted a house that anyone can walk into and feel perfectly comfortable, a feet-on-the-sofa and nothing-off-limits-to-touch kind of house," Liz smiled. "If we learned anything from the fire, it's that material things are just not that important. Mostly, we miss the family things like handmade furniture and photos."

Thankfully, they were able to save the rocking chair that once belonged to Liz's grandmother as a child. "My plan is to not go back to having so many things," she added. "Tyler, who was very involved in the building and design, told us, 'You know, a fire is sure painful, but it's a good way of getting rid of clutter.'"

The living room features a leather sofa in front of a fireplace and a unique coffee table that can be raised or lowered to accommodate dining or reading or resting one's feet. The kitchen is complete with gorgeous, oak cabinetry, granite countertops and three stunning pendant light fixtures.

"Green is my favorite color, so we have three shades of green, as well as some rooms in mocha or blue," Liz said. "Most of our art pieces are from flea markets, garage sales or thrift stores."

Tyler was 16 when the fire occurred. He's 20 now. He works in downtown Waxahachie and attends Navarro College. "His friends still hang out," Jim smiled. "In the evenings, five to 20 kids will be here. They're good kids, and we enjoy them."

Liz's favorite spot to relax is on the back porch. She can be outside while Jim cooks on the grill and Prissy, the miniature Pomeranian, bosses the big dogs, Ruffles and Buddy. "I never want to leave Waxahachie," she smiled. "It's very special." **NOW**



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A full-page photograph of a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a blue t-shirt, a denim jacket, and dark pants, standing next to a black Labrador dog. The dog is sitting and wearing a blue backpack. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a path.

# Sugar Sensitivity

— By Sandra Strong

*Even though it will soon be a year since their first meeting, Cari Humphrey and her diabetic alert dog are still getting to know one another. Cari didn't grow up with a dog in the house, so including one into her daily routine has taken a great deal of patience and understanding. Cari's husband, Kyle, is the main reason she has the black Labrador. "I want her life to be easy and as worry-free as possible," Kyle stated. "I want to make sure she's taken care of when I'm away." Checker, aptly named for what he's been educated to do — keep a check on Cari's sugar levels — has given Kyle the peace of mind he was looking for, while helping Cari stay ever mindful of the daily routine she must follow to remain in the best health possible.*

Cari's journey with diabetes first began right after she graduated from high school. "I was in my first semester at East Texas Baptist University when I started feeling bad," Cari explained. "I remember being more tired than normal. I just thought it was the change." But as Christmas rolled around, her symptoms became much worse. "I just felt bad all over," she added.

During winter break, she went to her family physician. That appointment led to her diagnosis. Her diagnosis led to daily pills, which only lasted





for a week. Pills led to daily shots. After completing one semester at ETBU, Cari came home for a full semester to get her health in check. Once her meds were properly regulated and she started to feel better, she returned to college, transferring her credits to Southwestern Assemblies of God University in order to be closer to home. As fate would have it, she met Kyle soon after this move. "We dated for a short time before Kyle went back home to Muskogee, Oklahoma," Cari said. "He came back to Waxahachie in 2005."

Kyle and Cari married in February of 2007. Their son, Cale, is a happy, playful 5-year-old, who is learning the signs to watch for if his mom's sugar levels go too high or too low. Those signs include dilated pupils, sweating and making little sense when talking. In August 2009, Cari was diagnosed with diabetic kidney disease. Soon thereafter, Kyle insisted Cari get an insulin pump to help her more closely monitor her sugar levels.

The idea for a diabetic alert dog came to mind one day as Kyle tuned into KLTY's Christmas Wish List. "Someone was asking for an alert dog as their wish," Kyle remembered. "After listening to the call, my research for just such a dog for Cari began." Kyle found several avenues, but the one he felt best matched what he was looking for and what Cari needed was found at Service Dogs by Warren Retrievers in Virginia. Service Dogs offered their alert dogs as puppies, which Kyle found most appealing.

On January 29, 2012, Cari had a diabetic seizure in her chair at work. A normal blood sugar level is between 80





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and 100. Cari's level plummeted that day to 11. "That's the day I decided to



call Service Dogs," Kyle said. "I added Cari's name to a list and paid the deposit. Nine months later we had our diabetic alert dog."

Checkher came to Waxahachie, while his sister found a home in Midlothian



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with a young man Kyle had met long before his venture on alert dogs began.



"I wanted to reach out to them," Kyle said, referring to the Midlothian family, "so I told them about the program."

As Checkher has grown, he and Cari have been able to bond more closely than if he'd come to the home as an adult dog. Every 90 days for the first two years, specialized trainers visit the home to help reinforce and train Cari and



Checkher as a team. Cari is learning how to handle him, while Checkher is learning how to care for his precious charge. "He was just 7 weeks old when his training began," Cari said. "His sense of smell is what alerts him to a problem. He touches my leg with his nose when he senses my levels are low, and he will paw repeatedly

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at my leg or Kyle's leg to alert us if my levels are high."

"His job is very stressful," Kyle added. "He's just like a person suffering with anxiety. As he learns something new, he wants to perform at 100 percent. There are times when he throws up or just refuses to eat."

Checkher's job list may not be long, but what he does is crucial to Cari's overall health and well-being. He senses changes 30-45 minutes before the tester does. Cari will check, and the tester will read 130, but Checkher will nudge Kyle's leg a moment later to let him know Cari's sugar level is getting low. "Cari will wait

*"Exercise stimulates his brain, which keeps him alert and prepared for his task as a diabetic alert dog."*

about 25 minutes and check again," Kyle said. "Checkher is almost always right."

"It's a pain to keep checking," Cari admitted, as she massaged the calluses on her hands from continued use of the tester that pricks her fingers to get the needed blood. "Diabetes is a tough disease."





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Even though Cari is still getting used to the dog hair on the floor, the constant licking and the fact that Checkher has to sleep beside her in the bed, she has come to terms with the need for a diabetic alert dog. Most of her episodes happen either at work or in the evening. She has to admit, it's most generally operator error. "Over-medicating with insulin means too little sugar," Cari stated. "Under-medicating means too much sugar."

Now after nearly a year, she understands how important it is to have Checkher at her side. She also understands the degree of comfort he brings to Kyle and Cale. "He takes care of Mommy," Cale said, referring to the family's newest addition.

While he's at the office or out in town with Cari, Checkher wears his backpack loaded down with medical necessities for Cari. He has to remain always attentive and on duty. Around the house, he can run and play fetch. He sharpens his smell by playing hide and seek with dog toys or finding a treat under a cup. "My job is to exercise him," Kyle said. "Exercise stimulates his brain, which keeps him alert and prepared for his task as a diabetic alert dog."

This journey for the family has been filled with many ups and downs, but they've emerged so much stronger. The road to today has meant a huge lifestyle change for the family, but to look at Checkher's happy demeanor and wagging tail, can only mean one thing — it's all been worth it. **NOW**

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# Swinging a CLUB

— By Rick Herron

*Anyone who can hit a golf ball should seriously consider participating in Ellis County's fifth annual 100th G.R.E.E.N. Marathon on September 20. "The event, held at the Old Brick Yard Golf Club in Ferris is the year's major fundraising event for three nonprofit organizations that do a world of good for the county," mentioned Sylvia Smith, who is enjoying her fifth year working with this event. Funds raised will benefit Ellis County Child Welfare, Court Appointed Special Advocate of Ellis County and Rainbow Room.*

Sylvia, who retired several years ago from the United States Postal Service after 20 years of service as a rural mail carrier, somehow manages to fit this epic responsibility neatly into her already busy schedule, an accomplishment that boggles the mind. She is spokesperson and a board member of the Ellis County Historical Commission, and greets visitors to the Ellis County Museum in downtown Waxahachie several days a week. She is also involved with the Ellis County Women's Building Board, is on the board of Ellis County Child Welfare and works with the Waxahachie Downtown Merchants Association. "I've always tried to be involved with local community and historical things," she said. After resigning from KBEC radio as their business manager in 2011, she has more time than ever to devote to volunteer work.

Through her work with Ellis County Child Welfare, something





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she's been doing for nearly nine years, she has become acutely aware of how vital and important agencies that focus on children really are to the community. "Our focus at Ellis County Child Welfare is on foster children under the care of Child Protective Services," she explained. "We try to fill in the gaps monetarily that the state of Texas does not currently cover, such as buying medications and paying for drug testing. We also help pay for CPS workers to attend work-related conferences."

Sylvia is one of 14 members on the board of Ellis County Child Welfare, and is particularly proud of the fact they were able to provide funds for foster parents to buy clothes for their kids in preparation for the 2013 spring semester. However, funds to cover all the needs

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don't just magically appear for these nonprofit organizations, so events like the 100th G.R.E.E.N. (Golfers Rallying to Erase the Effects of Neglect) Marathon go a long way in bolstering funding. "The goal for participants in the marathon is to hit 100 balls in one day," Sylvia said, adding that many golfers who have historically participated in the event have already brought in over \$3,000 in pledges and entrance fees. "A person can play in the marathon for an entrance fee of \$250," she said. "We encourage each participant to get \$1,000 in pledges when possible, too."

The marathon began in 2008, when Dr. Leroy Fenton came up with the idea as a way to raise money for organizations in Ellis County devoted to benefiting the county's abused and neglected children. He has spearheaded the event each year along with a tireless steering committee. "He's decided it is time to pass it on to someone else, and is looking for the lucky recipient," she laughed.

Historically, the marathon has received the necessary funding from hundreds of sponsors that include individuals and local businesses, and Sylvia is quick to express gratitude for their past, present and future involvement. "We encourage anyone who wants to be a sponsor to contact us, and we will send them the sponsorship form to complete," Sylvia said. There are six sponsorship

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This mother of five and grandmother of 10 obviously understands the importance of early and careful planning in order to support Dr. Fenton’s very successful history with the marathon. “We will start setting up around 6:00 a.m. on Friday, September 20,” she said. “The golfers start arriving between 6:30 and 7:00 a.m. We furnish breakfast for them, courtesy of Ellis County Child Welfare. The objective is for each player to hit 100 balls in one day. We serve lunch, courtesy of the Rainbow Room, and supper will be provided by CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate). We have some really nice prizes, including a brand new Chevrolet and \$5,000 for whoever hits a hole-in-one.

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paperwork. The main goal will be for each participant to get as many pledges as possible," Sylvia continued.

In 2012, the 100th G.R.E.E.N. Marathon had around 42 golfers participate, and the goal for the 2013 marathon is to enlist at least 75 golfers. Funds raised from the event will be evenly divided between CASA, headed by David Setzer, president of the organization that helps fund training of volunteers who spend hours with an abused child and family and represents them within the judicial system; Rainbow Room, headed by Cassi McCauley, serving as president of the group, started by First Lady Laura Bush several years ago when her husband was governor of Texas, to provide necessities to small children removed from their homes and their caregiver(s); and Ellis County Child Welfare.

On the flyers created for the fifth annual marathon, there is a striking depiction of a golfer with a golf bag holding his hand out to a child, with the words, "How many holes of golf would you play to protect a child from abuse?" At the bottom, the marathon's objective clearly states, "Safe children is our passion. Good citizenship is our commitment. Community education is our objective and the ultimate golf event is our goal." Sylvia and all of the volunteers working diligently to make the fifth annual 100th G.R.E.E.N. Marathon another big success are certain to make sure those words continue to ring true, now and in the future. **NOW**

*Editor's Note: Forms are available for those wanting to sponsor or participate in the marathon by calling (214) 676-4486.*

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Covenant Place Assisted Living is the bridge between home and a full-skilled nursing facility. Staff pictured, back row, L. to R.: Sherry Walker, Chris Baker and Jennifer Bosarge; front row, L. to R.: Sylvia Crawford and Jimmy Adams.



# Full-circle Moments

*A top-of-the-line trio is making a difference in the field of senior health care. — By Sandra Strong*

The most important thing Covenant Place Assisted Living offers its residents is an atmosphere filled with caring, loving individuals who take their jobs seriously. Every staff member considers what they do a calling — not for the faint at heart — where working closely together is a must for the welfare of all those who call the 50-apartment facility home. “We are a team here,” executive director Chris Baker stated. “In fact, we’re more than a team, we’re a family. We are vested in each other’s lives.”

Chris cannot recall a time when he hasn’t been in the health care field. He remembers leaving Waxahachie and returning several times before finally settling in at Covenant Place Assisted Living. “I fell in love with the industry immediately,” Chris admitted. “I still find satisfaction in seeing older individuals get back to a better state of well-being. Getting to come home and

make a difference in the lives of others is so fulfilling. It really is a dream come true.”

Sylvia Crawford, business director, and Sherry Walker, activities director, are two staff members who make Chris’ job at the helm so much easier than it would be otherwise. They also feel quite blessed to work in the field of senior health care.

Sylvia grew up in Palestine, Texas, where she fondly recalls spending many hours at the Palestine Nursing Home. “I grew up around the Palestine Nursing Home. My grandparents and father ran the facility, so I spent many hours in the summer months there,” Sylvia explained. Sylvia’s love for seniors came from these experiences, but soon after graduation she moved to Plano where she embarked on a 28-year career with a major soft drink company. “I decided it was time to give back, so I moved here to



be near my family," she shared. "I would drop my grandson off at Wedgeworth Elementary, and as I drove through the parking lot I'd look over at Covenant Place. The Lord kept prompting me to stop, but I'd keep driving."

One fateful day, she decided to heed the Lord's calling. "I walked in and knew this is where the Lord wanted me to be," she confessed. "Each day is different, but each day I know I'm doing something worthwhile."

Sherry is known as the facility comedian who keeps them all, staff members and residents, sanely in stitches most of the time. The label fits her personality and zest for life quite nicely.

**"The goal is to ensure family members are comfortable in knowing their loved ones have choices."**

Before relocating to Waxahachie 22 years ago, Sherry worked in customer service, and then as an activities director and social worker in a skilled nursing facility in Arkansas. "I've always loved people, and I enjoy making a difference," Sherry said. Chris has grand ideas, which take some thought and a lot of hard work to pull off, but Sherry is up for the challenges he extends her way. "My job is to make his ideas come to fruition," Sherry explained. "It's not really work."

Covenant Place Assisted Living offers long-term care for residents 62 years and older. The assisted living facility is the bridge between home and a full-skilled nursing facility. "The goal is to ensure family members are comfortable in knowing their loved ones have choices," Chris said, "from monthly birthday parties, bingo and Wii games to ice cream sandwiches, annual dances and great conversation. We assist in medication management, and home-cooked meals are made from scratch every day." **NOW**

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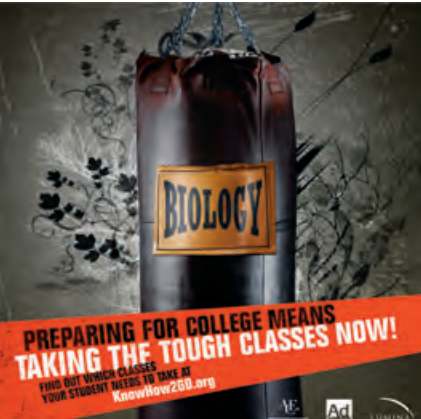
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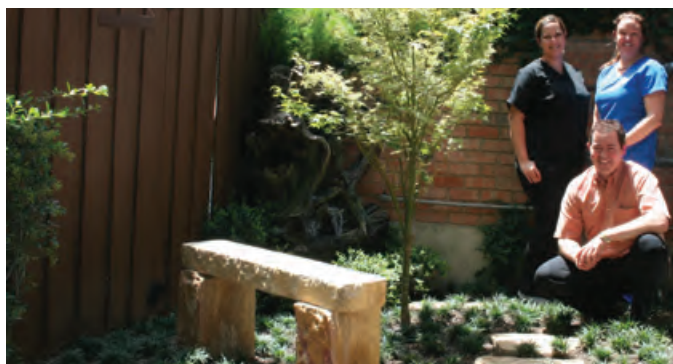
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Addison and Emma James enjoy their visit with GaGa at College Street Pub.



Dr. Craig V. Smith, Deborah Smith and Kasey Clifton, of Main Street Dental Arts, are proud of their new zen garden.



Jordan Phillipi, Maresa Carter and Ashley Ray brave the heat to support the Hearts of Midlothian Girls Soccer Club garage sale fundraiser.



Jimmy Poarch enjoys a cool drink on a hot summer day at Rylie and Gannon Sigler's lemonade stand.



A ribbon cutting is held by the Chamber of Commerce for Harris Bar-B-Que.



Mason Middleton found the perfect toy at a garage sale with his mom, Brooke.



Dalton and Annabeth Furlow stand on a dirt mound in front of the courthouse.



One of many Lone Star Santas and Stu Stephenson, as the Polar Express conductor, share a bit of Christmas in July.



The Rotary Club hurries to get the American Flags out for Independence Day.



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# How Much Can You Expect From Social Security?

Determining your Social Security benefits is an important aspect of retirement planning, especially if you plan to rely on them during your retirement years. Nine out of 10 Americans age 65 and older receive Social Security benefits, according to the Social Security Administration. The majority of recipients depend on these benefits for about half of their income. In June 2010, the average monthly benefit for retired workers was \$1,176.

You can get an estimate of your benefits at the SSA website. The Retirement Estimator calculator accesses your Social Security earnings record when you provide your name, Social Security number, date and place of birth and mother's maiden name. Keep in mind that even though the estimate is based on your actual earning record, it is still only an estimate. Your actual benefit amount will be determined when your benefits begin, and will probably vary slightly from your estimate due to updates in your earnings record, inflation and assumptions the calculator makes about your future earnings and length of employment.

Wondering how the U.S. government determines Social Security benefits? Besides how much you earn during your lifetime, the calculation is based on your full retirement age, when you retire and whether you continue working while collecting benefits.

## Full Retirement Age

Your year of birth determines your full retirement age, or the age at which you are eligible to receive your full retirement Social Security benefit. Those born in 1937 or before have a full retirement age of 65. The full retirement age increases slowly for those born after 1937; at 1960, the full retirement age hits and remains 67.

## Retiring Early or Late

You don't have to wait until your full retirement age to retire. You can retire either earlier or later, although both will affect your Social Security benefits. You can begin collecting benefits as early as age 62 — but doing so reduces your benefits by as much as 30 percent. Keep in mind that your benefit amount will not readjust once you reach full retirement age. The reduction is permanent, to compensate for drawing on Social Security for a longer period of time.

Delaying retirement increases your benefits. In addition to adding years of earnings to your Social Security record, you'll receive a delayed retirement credit until age 70.

## Working During Retirement

You can work after you begin collecting Social Security, but your benefits will be reduced \$1 for every \$2 you earn over the current earning limit until you reach your full retirement age. Good news, though: Once you hit your full retirement age, your benefits are recalculated, taking into account the months that benefits were withheld. Plus, you can then work as much as you want, with no earning limits.

## Know Your Benefits

Take into consideration the factors that determine your Social Security benefits when you're deciding when to retire and when to begin collecting benefits. Knowing how much you'll receive, and when, may be a key factor in planning your retirement years. **NOW**

*Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.*

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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**

Call the Ellis County Master Gardeners at (972) 825-5175 for more specific information.

*Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.*

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# A Fungal Mess

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

“What happened to your nail?” is a question usually delivered in tones of incredulous disbelief. Nail fungus is unsightly, and if you have it, you want to get rid of it. This condition occurs when one or more of your nails become infected with a fungus that grows in your fingernail or toenail. Fungi (plural for fungus) are microscopic organisms that like to live in warm, moist places.

Nails with a fungal infection may present as being thick, brittle, discolored and crumbling. They may have an odor, may separate from the nail bed and may become painful. It all starts as a white or yellow spot under the nail where the fungi have entered from small scratches in the skin or where the nail separates from the nail bed. Once the nail is affected, the infection will not go away on its own. It just continues to grow until treated. When that first spot appears, it is time to see your doctor before the fungus causes too much damage to the nail or spreads to the surrounding area.

This condition shows up in men more than women and in older people more than the young. Nail growth may slow down as one ages and may also thicken. This can increase the possibility for nail fungus. There may be a hereditary aspect to this also. Having pedicures under less than sanitary conditions can make you susceptible to fungal infections. Also walking

barefoot in public swimming areas and gym showers and damp locker rooms increases your risk. If you perspire heavily and wear socks and shoes where your feet receive little to no ventilation, the environment is great for fungi to grow and thrive.

Nail fungus can be difficult to treat. There are anti-fungal medications you can purchase over the counter. Sometimes these are ineffective, and stronger medication from a physician is necessary. They may prescribe topical and/or oral medication for treatment. In severe cases, an option is removal of the nail surgically or by laser therapy. Treatment in many cases takes weeks or even months before relief is seen. Unfortunately the fungal infection is subject to reoccurrence. It is important to keep your hands and feet clean and dry. Change socks throughout the day. Wear sandals or other protective footwear when walking on wet surfaces. Avoid places of business for manicures and pedicures that do not uphold stringent hygienic practices. Some home remedies for treatment may bring results. Research these treatments carefully, and check with your doctor before implementing them. It takes work, but you can be free of nail fungus. **NOW**

*This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.*

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### Through December 21

Waxahachie Farmer's Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., historic downtown Waxahachie, 410 S. Rogers. For more information, contact Anita Williamson at (972) 938-2102, ext. 198.

### September 6 — 7

Dale Hansen Football Classic: 4:00 p.m., Stuart B. Lumpkins Stadium, 1000 Hwy 77 North, Waxahachie. Games will feature Italy Gladiators vs. Malakoff Tigers, Florence Buffaloes vs. Thrall Tigers and Alvarado Indians vs. Mexia Blackcats.

### September 14

Sip 'N Stroll: 4:00-7:00 p.m. Sample wines from Messina Hof and Red 55 Wineries in nine different retail locations in the downtown area. Must be 21 to participate. Tickets are \$10 and include a souvenir wine glass. Advance tickets are available at Crooked Creek Farms, The Dove's Nest, Ellis County Museum and Plain Jane.

### September 20

5th Annual 100th G.R.E.E.N. (Golfers Rallying to Erase the Effects of Neglect) Marathon: 6:30 a.m., registration; 7:30 a.m., shotgun start, Old Brickyard Golf Course,

Ferris. Free golf all day with the objective to play 100 holes of golf individually, or as a team of two or four. Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided on the golf course at no charge to the golfers. Each participant is expected to raise \$1,000 through pledges. For more information on registration, call Leroy Fenton at (214) 676-4486.

### September 21

VFW Post 3894 Ladies and Men's Auxiliary Fall Fundraising Festival: 1:00 p.m.-midnight. All proceeds benefit various national VFW programs. For additional information, email pstwax@yahoo.com or call (972) 937-7007.

Silver Ring Thing: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Southwestern Assemblies of God University, Sheaffer Full Life Center Chapel, 1200 Sycamore St. Registration begins at 5:45 p.m., parent session at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$6 online, \$8 at the door and \$5 group online. For more information, visit [www.silverringthing.com](http://www.silverringthing.com).

### September 23

Waxahachie Community Education Lighthouse for Learning: classes begin. Visit

[www.wisd.org](http://www.wisd.org) to see over 50 classes offered. Call (972) 923-4631, ext. 142 to register.

### September 28

Wish Upon A Paw Goes Western: 6:00-11:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. This is a dinner and silent auction event with proceeds going to the Ellis County SPCA. Email your questions to [director@elliscountyspca.org](mailto:director@elliscountyspca.org).

Girl Scout Registration: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Brown Street Church of Christ, 2471 Brown St. For more details, visit [joinus@gssu251.org](mailto:joinus@gssu251.org).

### October 5

Dentistry From the Heart: 7:30 a.m. registration begins for the first 50 patients, Waxahachie Family Dentistry, 125 Park Place Blvd. Special free event is for people ages 18 and over. Patients will be seen on a first come first served basis. Services include a choice of filling, extraction or cleaning. The event is slated to be held annually. Please see ad in the magazine for event details or visit [www.waxfamdent.com](http://www.waxfamdent.com).

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com](mailto:sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com).*

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## In The Kitchen With LaDonna Gutierrez

— By Sandra Strong

LaDonna Gutierrez's grandparents played an integral role in her upbringing, so it only serves to reason she would cite them as the teachers who inspired her to cook. "I'm inspired to try new things constantly," LaDonna shared. "I also find many new recipes on Pinterest — the greatest electronic recipe file cabinet ever."

Her love of New Orleans has her leaning toward Creole and Cajun dishes these days. Garlic is her all-time favorite spice, and she loves to prepare southern dishes that are both savory and satisfying. "Cooking is therapy," she explained. "And I love to go to estate sales. The kitchen is the first place I hit. Searching for old kitchen utensils, pots and pans is just heaven to me." **NOW**

### Creole Banana Foster French Toast and Syrup

*Bread:*

- 1 loaf French bread**
- 2 eggs**
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk**
- Pinch of salt**
- 1/2-1 stick butter (for frying bread)**

*Syrup:*

- 1 stick butter**
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed**
- 4 bananas, sliced**
- 1 tsp. vanilla**
- Reddiwip whipped cream**
- Fresh sliced strawberries, optional**

- 1. For bread:** Slice bread into 1-inch slices the night before; leave bag open to expose bread to the air. Or place slices onto a cookie sheet; bake at 200 F for about 15 minutes.
- 2. Mix** eggs, milk and salt in a bowl until eggs incorporated into the milk. Melt butter in sauté pan, be sure not to burn.

- 3. Dip** bread slices into egg mixture quickly, making sure to coat both sides evenly.
- 4. Lightly** brown on 1 side in melted butter before flipping it to the other side. Remove from pan; place on plate.
- 5. For syrup:** Place butter and sugar in a saucepan over low heat, stirring until sugar is melted and syrupy. Stir in bananas; add vanilla. Keep syrup warm on lowest setting.
- 6. To complete:** Drizzle warm syrup over bread. Add a dollop of cream on the side or on top. Top with strawberries to liven up the presentation.

### Pumpkin Roll

*Cake:*

- 1/4 cup powdered sugar**
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour**
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder**
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda**
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 1/2 tsp. ground cloves**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**

- 3 large eggs**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 2 cups fresh pumpkin, cooked**
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped (optional)**

*Filling:*

- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, room temperature**
- 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted**
- 6 Tbsp. butter or margarine, softened**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- Powdered sugar, optional for decoration**

- 1. For cake:** Preheat oven to 375 F. Grease 15x10-inch jelly-roll pan; line with wax paper. Grease and flour paper. Sprinkle a thin, cotton towel with powdered sugar making sure to use plenty of sugar so the cake does not stick.
- 2. Combine** flour, baking powder and soda, cinnamon, cloves and salt in a small bowl. Beat eggs and sugar in large mixing bowl until thick. Beat in pumpkin. Stir in flour mixture. Spread evenly into prepared pan. If desired, sprinkle with nuts.
- 3. Bake** for 13-15 minutes or until top of cake springs back when touched. Immediately loosen; turn cake onto prepared towel. Carefully peel off paper. Roll up cake and towel together, starting with narrow end. Cool on wire rack.
- 4. For filling:** Beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, butter and vanilla extract in small mixing bowl until smooth. Carefully unroll cake. Spread mixture over cake. Reroll cake. Wrap in plastic wrap; refrigerate at least 1 hour. If desired, sprinkle with powdered sugar before serving.

### Candy Apply Jelly

- 4 cups apple juice**
- 1/2 cup Red Hot candies**
- 1-3/4 oz. powdered fruit pectin**
- 4 1/2 cups sugar**

- 1. Combine** juice, candies and pectin in a large saucepan. Bring to a full rolling boil over high heat; stirring constantly. Stir in sugar; return to full rolling boil. Boil for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.
- 2. Remove** from heat; skim off any foam and discard any candies that have not completely dissolved. Carefully ladle the hot mixture into hot sterilized half-pint jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace.
- 3. Remove** air bubbles, wipe rims and adjust lids. Process for 5 minutes in a boiling-water canner.



INTRODUCING  
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