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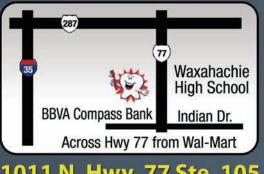


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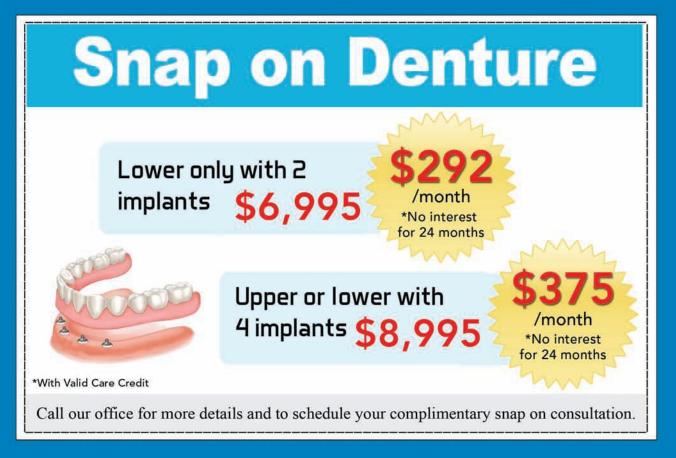
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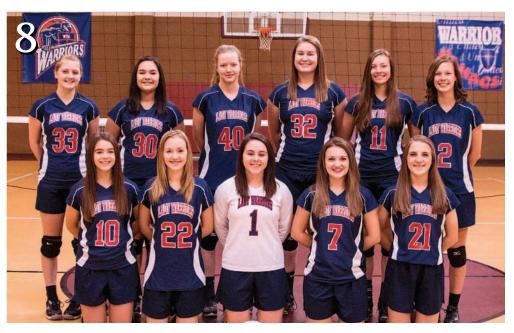
On The Cover



Coach Prohaska and Assistant Coach Moore lead the volleyball team to victory.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Happy Autumn!

Autumn conjures up many fall visuals. **A** is for the apple pie that will soon be baking in my oven. **U** is for the unmistakably cooler temperatures, which I love. **T** is for the toe socks that are now keeping my feet warm. **U** is for the unspeakable beauty found in the fall-colored leaves. **M** is for the meaning this time of year holds for me. **N** is for the natural way things change from season to season.

Yes, I love autumn for these aforementioned reasons and so many more. It's the beginning of the holiday season, for me. I begin planning for the special occasions between now and the end of the year — anniversaries, birthdays, Thanksgiving and Christmas. I look forward to the baking, the family gatherings and the memories that will surely be made along the way. And I can't forget the family game of Farkle. Let the dice land where they may!

Sandra

Sandra Strong *WaxahachieNOW* Editor sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com (972) 765-3530





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Becca Prohaska is a hometown girl who grew up in Waxahachie and attended Ovilla Christian School. She loved high school athletics and was a solid athlete competing in many sports, but volleyball held a special place in her heart. She worked hard to elevate her game but never felt as though she had accomplished all she could with the sport. Years later, after sharing a wish with only her husband, she would have the opportunity to pursue her dream while also making an impact on young lives.

> "I've always really enjoyed playing sports," Becca shared. "I played softball in high school at the catcher position, and we had a really great team. We won the championship. But my favorite sport was volleyball," she admitted. "I always wished that I could have devoted more time and effort into developing the fundamental

skills of the game." Becca graduated from high school, attended Navarro College, and in 2006, she met the love of her life, Luke Prohaska. They were married, and soon Becca and Luke started their own family. She loved being a wife and mother, but she had a desire to do more. "Td always wanted to be a coach," she admitted. In January 2013, she shared her dream of coaching



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volleyball with her husband. "I told Luke it was something I wanted to do, regardless of whether I was coaching girls at the YMCA, a school, a select team or a recreational league, it was a dream that I didn't want to let go of."

Not long after her conversation with her husband, Waxahachie Preparatory Academy launched a search for a volleyball coach. Waxahachie Preparatory Academy, or WPA, is a university-model school where students attend classes on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday schedule. On days when students aren't on campus, they continue their studies via satellite-home classroom.

Shelly Slack is the athletic director for WPA, and she knew Becca would make an ideal candidate for the coaching position. "Becca had a reputation as an accomplished athlete at Ovilla Christian School. But most importantly, we could see her commitment to her faith. She lives out her faith in front of her team as a strong Christian woman, and she pushes her players to be the best they can be as individuals," Coach Slack shared.

Last year, the volleyball team won the TAPPS-1A Division (Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools) State Volleyball Championship. "Winning last year in San Antonio was like a dream come true," Coach Prohaska exclaimed.

"It felt great," Hannah Strength added. "It was an honor to be a part of WPA's first state volleyball championship! I will always cherish the accomplishment and memories we achieved together as a team."

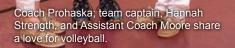
Coming off of a winning season, Coach Prohaska is excited about the



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upcoming school year. "We lost a couple of really good players last year, but we've also gained some really good players," she shared. And Hannah, one of the team's strongest athletes, will return next year as the volleyball team captain. "Not only is Hannah a skilled player, she has strong character and leadership skills. She's levelheaded and keeps her composure under pressure, and she always thinks of others before herself."

Like Coach Prohaska, Hannah also has a passion for volleyball. "I enjoy playing volleyball because it's a team sport," Hannah shared. "Every member of the team has to work in unison to achieve the goal, and through teamwork, comes great

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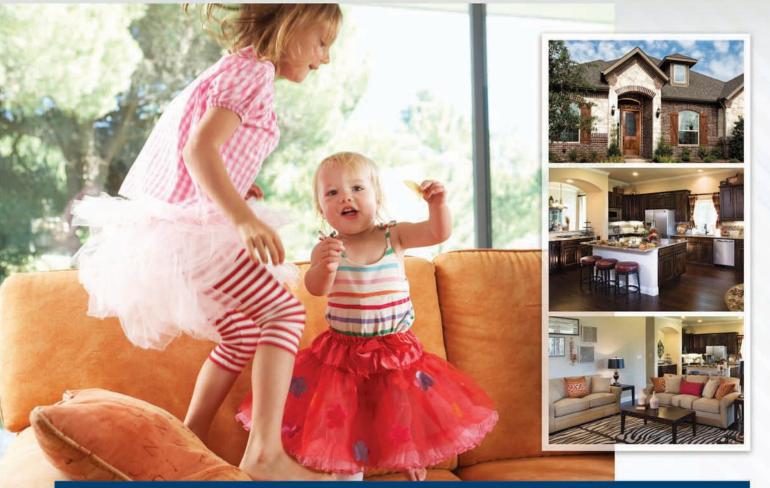
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friendships and great memories." And she has nothing but words of admiration for her coach. "Coach Prohaska is not only a great volleyball coach, she is an influential Christian leader for her team. She relates volleyball to everyday life lessons we can use to glorify God,"

Hannah explained. As with everything else in Coach Prohaska's life, her faith is first and foremost, and it's also a part of her coaching philosophy. "We work hard every day on the fundamentals of the game. We focus on skills like passing and serving, and we also have fun developing our defensive/offensive game with skills like hitting and blocking." But for Coach Prohaska, there is another aspect of the game that is just as important, if not more so, than the fundamentals. "It's not always about winning. I try to use the game of volleyball to build the character of my players."

She is also quick to credit those who support her efforts as team coach, including the athletic director, Assistant Coach Caryn Moore and the parents of her players. "I learn so much about life and godliness just by watching them live their lives. I couldn't be the coach that I am without the supportive atmosphere they create for me." And she also shares her thoughts on what makes WPA such a special school. "Our school is very family-oriented. Parents are really



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involved with their students, and the students are accountable to their parents for their actions." Coach Prohaska believes that when students are held accountable, they learn to be respectful. And being respectful is an important pillar in building character.

When Coach Prohaska isn't coaching, she enjoys being a wife and a mom to 7-year-old daughter, Madi, and two sons, 6-year-old Tyson and 2-year-old Graham. "Working with my husband building homes is also a large part of my life outside of volleyball. I design all of the finishes for the houses Texas Pro Properties builds in North Oak Cliff," she shared. They are active members of Stonegate Church, and they enjoy going camping and creating memories together as a family. "Our kids go to WPA, so on the days I'm not coaching, I homeschool our children," Coach Prohaska said.

The WPA volleyball team Scripture is I Timothy 4:8, which teaches that physical training is important, but training for godliness holds the most value because it lasts for this life and the next. "So that's my coaching philosophy," Coach Prohaska explained. "I make sure that the team has fun, and I join in with them when we practice. Of course, we like to win, but our main goal is to have a platform to share our love of Christ with others."

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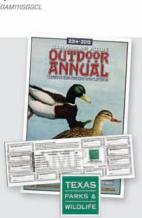
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Living Their Purpose -By Sandra Strong

Vicki Grady, Shelley Huskins and Sharon Hawthorne are the heart and soul of Our Sunflower Friends.

"God equips the called. Paying it forward does make a huge difference."

Everyone has a purpose in life. Vicki Grady understood this soon after she started the Purpose Driven Life Bible study at her church. She felt compelled to do something. "God told me I needed to be doing more in my life," Vicki remembered. 'I needed to be more involved in the lives of others."

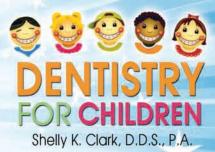
Shelley Huskins soon learned of Vicki's desire, and she too felt the need to do something to help others. Soon thereafter, the two ladies got together to discuss the endless possibilities. "We really didn't know what we were getting into," Vicki said, referring to the first few months. "The need was so much greater than we imagined."

From the beginning, their mission has been to be involved in event/ fundraising for children and adults within Ellis County who suffer from a life-threatening disease or life-altering injury. They initially decided to help two individuals per year. The two recipients their first year were Penny Jurkash and

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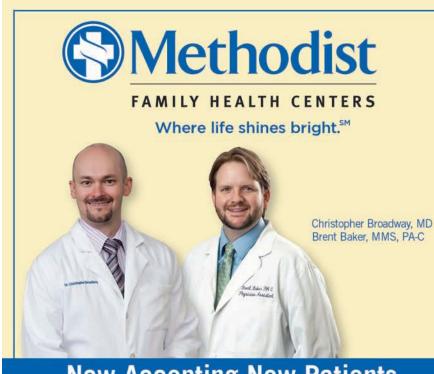
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Brooke Foster. Penny was diagnosed with leukemia as a kindergarten student. Brooke, at age 16, was diagnosed with Stage IV Osteosarcoma. Both of these recipients lived in Waxahachie.

As the second year of the organization got underway, a third member came on board, completing the heart and soul of Our Sunflower Friends. Sharon Hawthorne also realized there was a need, and she had a yearning to do something more than sit on the sidelines. "I had an unrelated connection with one of the first-year recipients, and I also knew of another little girl who needed help," Sharon explained. "I fully believe God brought our different talents together to form this group of caring women."

Each of the three brings something different to the table, that when added together, makes for a mighty strong team. Vicki, who grew up in Waxahachie, graduated from Midlothian High School and now resides in Italy, is the PR person, and she has a spirit that doesn't give up or take "no" for an answer. She is also the face of the organization. "I'm a good talker," she admitted. "I have a passion for the cause for several reasons."

Shelley, from Italy, comes with an extensive background in education. In her day job, she is an oncology nurse. She comes with the knowledge of the diseases the group will face as they continue to grow their organization. "I have a personal base of friends and colleagues I can call upon," Shelley said. "This organization means so much to me. I can't close my eyes to the needs around me."

And last but definitely not least, Sharon, from Red Oak, comes with the experience to complete the necessary paperwork. She arrived with 30 years' experience in a legal environment. "I know how to organize and prepare papers for filing," Sharon confided. "I had the resources at my fingertips to get the nonprofit status we needed early on." The group incorporated as a nonprofit under the name Our Sunflower Friends and obtained tax exempt status from the IRS. A ribbon cutting was held for Our Sunflower Friends on March 26, 2014, at the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce offices.

What they do as a group is a true labor of love. They have seen the families they have served go without so many personal things to care for their loved ones ----those battling an illness as well as those who have remained healthy. Each of the women feels called to do what they are doing, and honestly, they wouldn't have it any other way. "Until now, I think I must have been living under a rock," Sharon confessed. "There are so many people with needs, who are living right under our noses."

"What we do is so time-consuming and intensive," Vicki said, "but it's necessary. It's definitely a calling."

"It's all about stomping the pavement," Shelley stated. "It is a lot of work with very little glory, but it's all worth it when you see the faces of the families you help."

The second-year recipients who are currently benefiting from Our Sunflower

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Friends are Isabella Day, from Red Oak, and once again, Brooke. Isabella and her twin sister were born on July 25, 2011. At her regular 9-month checkup, the pediatrician found a mass in Isabella's stomach. Test results showed she had Stage IV Neuroblastoma. She is still courageously battling the disease.

After a year of extensive chemotherapy and treatments, Brooke's doctors discovered that a large, softball-sized lump had redeveloped above her right knee. The tumor she'd been fighting had not only returned, but it was four times its original size. Because of this recurrence, the group chose to benefit her family for a second year.

Many events are held throughout the year for the recipients and their families. In May, the group held a community garage sale, a charity golf tournament and the Painting With a Purpose event. In September, they are planning to host a huge bake sale. The largest fundraiser each year is a family festival held in October. This year, it will fall on Saturday, October 3. The benefit concert and show will also include silent and live auctions, a 5K run/walk, classic car show, chili cook-off, children's events and much more. "There are so many opportunities to get involved," Vicki said. "There really is something for everyone."

As they reminisce about the events that have taken place thus far, they are still in awe of the giving spirits found in Ellis County. In early December 2014,



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the group conducted a "Fill the Boot for Brooke" campaign where they stood on a busy street corner in Waxahachie. "We had collected over \$7,000 dollars in just four hours," Vicki said. "It was crazy good!" At last year's bake sale, a man wanted to give all the money he had in his wallet as a donation.

All the money received at each of these fundraising events goes back to the families —100 percent! The money is given to the two families to pay expenses as they see fit.

"There are so many sad, yet wonderful stories," Sharon said. "Every story brings hope, and God is found in each one."

Vicki, Shelley and Sharon found their purpose, their true destiny and so much more in Our Sunflower Friends. The future goal is to grow to a size that will allow them to meet the needs of more than two individuals a year. Vicki and Sharon, both closer to retirement than Shelley, are looking to make this a full-time mission.

"Love is the purpose and the main goal," Vicki stated.

"God equips the called," Sharon said. "Paying it forward does make a huge difference."

"We are setting examples for our children and grandchildren," Vicki added. "There's no better lesson than giving back to those in need. One person really can make a big difference in the life of another."



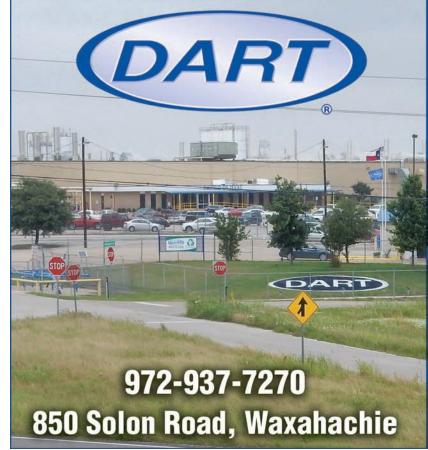
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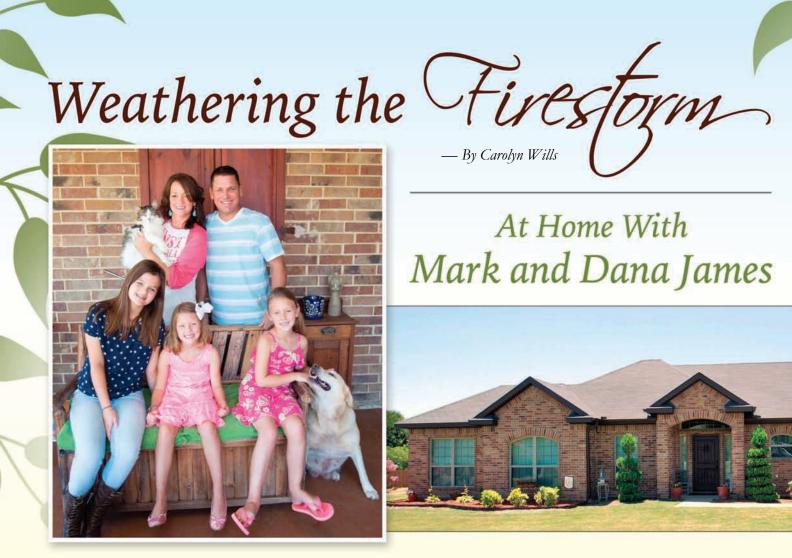
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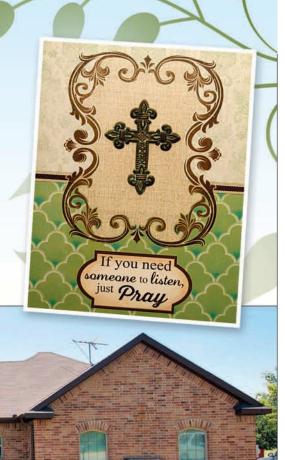




The day was November 17, 2014, the first cold day of the year and four days before Mark and Dana James' 16th anniversary, when a neighbor saw the smoke and called 911. Dana was at work, Mark on an errand and their daughters were in school. The fire started in an exterior wall of their 1,822-square-foot home, and except for two boards and back window frames, very little actually caught fire. "Heat and smoke damage did it all," Mark said. "The interior had to be gutted to the studs."

While they lost most of their belongings including, and most importantly, their beloved cat Jake, Mark and Dana were determined to rebuild and, especially for their children, to find blessings in the process. "We cannot say enough about our neighbors, family,

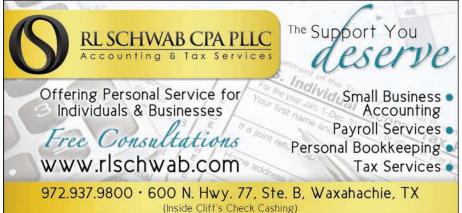




friends, schools, churches and the Waxahachie and Maypearl volunteer fire departments, Red Cross and so many others who helped us through this," Mark affirmed. "We love this community. Waxahachie is big enough to thrive on its own, yet still has the heart of a small town."

Today, it's hard to imagine their home as anything but a traditional beauty inside





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and out. From insulation to Sheetrock to finished materials, though, everything on the inside is new. "The house was built in 2006," Mark said. "It was move-in ready when we bought it, so the floor plan, colors and finishes had already been chosen." The fire called for a total remodel. Dana became the interior decorator with professional contracting and design help from her uncle and aunt, Scott and Shelly James. "We rented a house for four months while we worked on ours," Dana said. When all was said and done, this family that had endured so much returned to a stunning customized home. "We updated, opened up and made changes to better fit our lifestyle," she smiled.

By last May, Mark, Dana, 14-year-old Madelynn and 7-year-old twins Addison and Emma had come home again. "We still have blank walls and spaces to fill," Mark said. Fortunately, before the fire, he had stored the family photos on a flash drive and kept them in a fire-proof box, so when the time is right to enlarge and frame, there will be many choices.

The James' variegated brown brick home shares a neighborhood with other distinctive traditional and country-style homes with spacious yards and large lots. The fire left the timeless exterior of their home untouched and the interior virtually a blank canvas. Today, all of the carpets are replaced with dark wide-plank, hand-scraped wood, and areas like the entryway, kitchen and bathrooms with contemporary rectangular tile. For a more open look, the once cove-edged ceilings in the living room are now straight-edged, trimmed with white molding and accented by cam lights. "We also gained square footage by removing the fireplace," Dana said.

Walls throughout the house are painted a grayish-taupe, a color that changes with the light according to Dana. "Brighter rooms appear as a light taupe," she said. "In other rooms, especially at night, the gray is dominant."

The core of the home features an open living/kitchen/dining area that has all been transformed. The kitchen peninsula has been shortened and straightened to widen the space between the dining area and kitchen, and the kitchen is now the picture of perfection. Beautifully patterned tiger-oak custom cabinetry is soft-closing, extends to the ceiling and is loaded with amenities like pull-out spice shelves, cookie sheet/ baking pan holders and extra storage.



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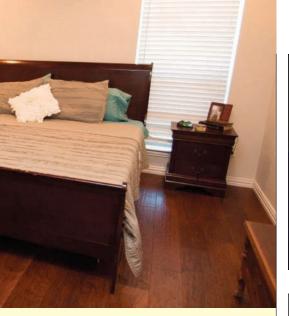
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The rich wood patterns are so distinctive that each dark-finished cabinet is like a piece of art. A light-colored travertine backsplash, gorgeous granite counters, neutral tile flooring and shiny stainless steel appliances complete the dream kitchen and, importantly, the place where Dana once again creates her family-famous sesame chicken and cinnamon cheesecakes. Three bedrooms are to the left of the central area. "We had used one bedroom as the media room, but our youngest daughters really wanted their own rooms," Mark smiled. Second-graders, Addison and Emma, spend a lot of time together. They're fraternal twins who, like most best friends, also enjoy time apart. At first glance, their rooms appear to be identical with matching quilts, zebra-patterned chairs and mounds of stuffed animals. Emma, though, is quick to point out that *her* animals are ducks and bears, precisely three ducks and four bears, and Addison will clarify that hers are bunnies and, in fact, a favorite bunny was returned to her by a fireman on the day of the fire.

The middle bedroom belongs to ninth-grader, Madelynn. She, too, has a zebra print chair but her bed is full-sized and, from the abundance of trophies and photos, she's clearly an avid athlete. "Madelynn has played soccer since she was 3 years old," Dana smiled. "She's on the Lady Dragons soccer team." Lady Dragons gained fame as a top Texas recreational team by winning the U14 Girls Division in the 2014 North Texas Soccer Association's Tournament of Champions and, last April, placing first in the 30th Annual Waxahachie Soccer Association's Tournament of



Champions. "She lost a lot of trophies in the fire and, then, also suffered an injury last June when she broke her femur during an indoor soccer game," Dana explained. "It's been tough, but she's definitely a winner." Madelynn is also a fan of country music and the TV show, *Nashville*.

The master suite is located on the opposite side of the house. "We updated our bathroom and enlarged the shower by taking in part of the bedroom," Dana said. They managed to create a spa-like bathroom while maintaining a beautiful and spacious master bedroom.

After the fire and remodeling, the backyard also needed attention. "We have 1.25 acres that back up to a creek," Mark said. "We like encouraging the girls to spend time outside, so we're re-establishing our garden." Toward the back of the lot, Mark has built a pond for the family's 10-year-old Labrador Retriever, Cameron. "We've also expanded the back patio," he said. Using doors from an old armoire, he removed enough exterior brick to make an outside cabinet for a TV. With furniture and a fire pit, it's become another living space. When he's not inside, the patio is a favorite lounge for the newest family member, 9-month-old Bruno, a handsome Maine Coon cat.

They are a young, active family. Dana is an instructional coach for the Waxahachie ISD and three years ago, Mark established his own landscape business after serving many years as a YMCA counselor. "We feel very blessed," Mark smiled. "We're thankful, especially, that our children weathered the 'firestorm' and are now home again." NOW



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— By Melissa Swedoski

Fitness crazes come and go, but the reality of a strong, fit, healthy individual rings true for all ages. As David Christiansen began his journey of self-improvement, he only had plans to be physically fit, ready to enjoy the second half of his life with energy and passion. However, his competitive streak simmered just below the surface, and as he built his CrossFit skills over the years, he soon discovered he has what it takes to compete with the best, regardless of the winds of time.



CrossFit emerged on the sports fitness scene in 2000, introducing a strength and conditioning program with constantly varied functional movements executed at high intensity. With classes in gyms, or in CrossFit terminology, "boxes," there is camaraderie and motivation - part of the reason that earlier this year David found himself in the top 200 in the world in his age division. Jokingly referring to himself as "one of the old guys," the 56-year-old competes in the 55-59 age division of the CrossFit Games. After finishing at number 208 in 2014, David decided that 2015 was going to be the year he broke through.

"I wrestled in high school, but I wasn't a jock," David said. "As a contractor, I've worked all my life with my hands, so CrossFit fits me perfectly because of the functional movement. And I happen to be a little competitive," he added with a wide grin. He started working out at the CrossFit Waxahachie box about five years ago, where his wife and several friends were already training. "It was fun, I was having a blast," he recalled. "My wife did the first competition they hosted, and as I watched, I decided I wanted to do this."





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That interest began to evolve, as David knew he wanted to enjoy himself while working out. He also had a very good health reason, having watched his own father die at the young age of 49. He found that his CrossFit training meant having fun while spending time with "good people, good Christians," with the occasional in-house competitions between members. As the CrossFit Games began to approach in 2014, David decided he wanted to see how he would fare with others across the globe, so he started with Stage 1, the Open.

During Stage 1, competitors are given five different workouts for five weeks. They complete the workouts in front of judges in their home box and then log the information into the CrossFit website. In order to advance to Stage 2 Regionals, a competitor must be in the top 200 in his/her division, and since David landed at 208, that was the end of the line. Although he admits he was "surprised a little bit" at finishing that well in his first year, the fires of competition had clearly been lit. "I'm up there thinking, What's going to get me to the next rank? I had worked out three times a week, nothing special. So I set my goal for the top 200, and I kicked it into high gear."

Since CrossFit is about functional movement, much of it is lifting and pushing, using a combination of body weight and barbells. A WOD, or workout of the day, might include flipping tires,



"I would not do any of this if I didn't have fun."

pushing a sled, carrying sandbags and more. Hailing originally from Minnesota, David grew up working on a farm where he spent much of his days working with his hands, and CrossFit reminds him of it. "It can look scary, because it's always changing," he said, "but you don't ever get in a rut. It fits me." As David began his training for the 2015 CrossFit Games, he focused on core workouts and the constant variation of what he was doing. "To compete, you need to be good at a lot of things," he said.

After the CrossFit Open in spring 2014, David occasionally competed in other Masters-level events for competitors age 40 and over. He also worked out at a box in Austin, where he met other Masters and bonded over their common experience. David gained insight into how he stacked up against other athletes in his division.



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David Christiansen poses with his coach, Chris Biles.



In the summer of 2014, he competed at WODapalooza in Austin, where he finished second place at the Masters level. "It was the first time I went somewhere to compete," he said. "I realized I had to pick up the intensity. I learned how to compete and asked myself, 'How can I go faster?' It was a very good learning experience." He finished in second place after moving up from fourth place on the very last workout of the day.

Then came 2015 and the chance to see if he could improve his international rank. David began the Open portion, but a vacation to Hawaii during the fiveweek period did make competing a little difficult. "My first three were real good, but those last two ... I did one in Hawaii, and it was a nice box, but I was just too exhausted from vacation," he admitted.





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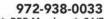
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Ultimately, David finished 191 out of 2,013 in his division in which the top 200 moved to the Masters Qualifier round. After competing in the Qualifier, his final placing was 159 in the world among men 55-59. While he missed the cut to go to the Finals in California (top 20 in the world), he successfully achieved this year's goal.

David has already set his goal for next year, as he plans on being in the top 100. He plans on reaching his goal through his home box, where his coach and fellow Master, Chris Biles, competes, along with a third Master, Kara Brown. All three compete regularly together, and Chris said, "Where our box shines is in the Masters Class. The average age is 35, so we cater to that crowd. When David decided to compete in the Games, we didn't know how good he was, and we're proud of his achievement."

David said the accountability, support, encouragement and teaching he receives at CrossFit Waxahachie is what keeps him on track. He grinned as he said, "I keep the young guys honest. I'm stronger when they first start, but they catch up quickly. But once in a while, I have a great day, and I really push them." David's wife, Patricia, and son, Dane, also work out with him, and with another broad grin he shared, "I would not do any of this if I didn't have fun." **NOW**

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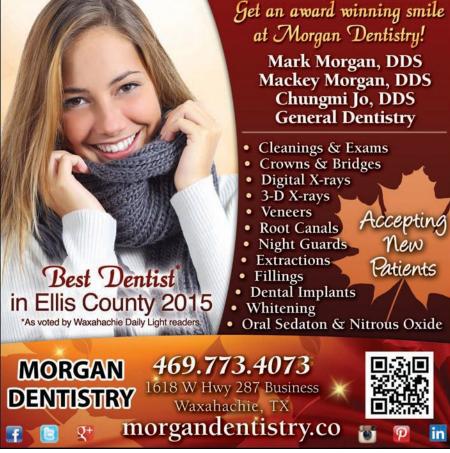
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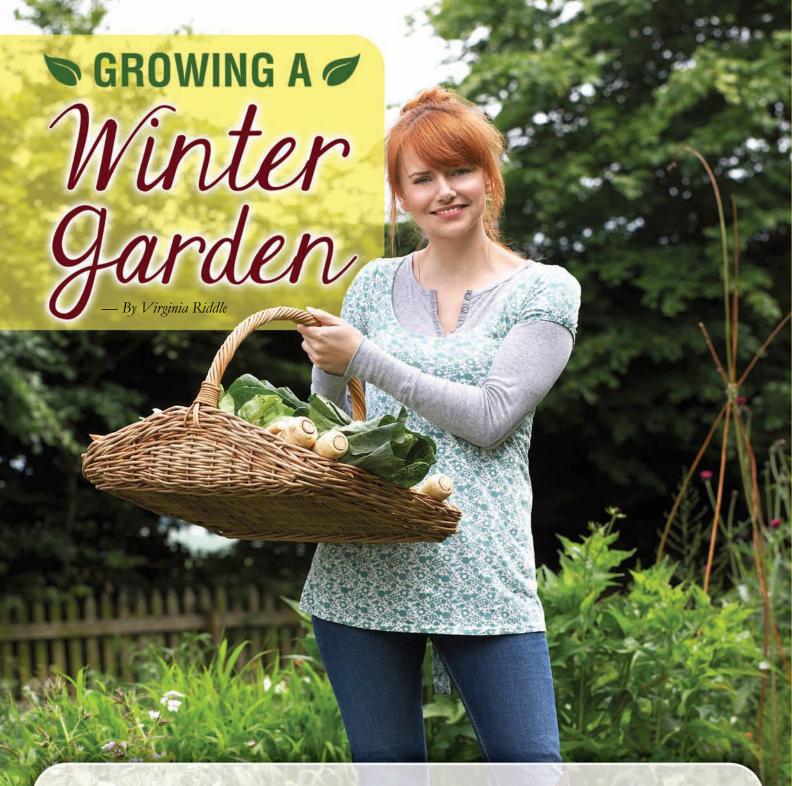
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As September nights start to take on that "fall's coming soon" feeling, gardeners might consider their hard work to be over for the year, except for harvesting the last of the summer's bounty. While letting the soil rest after the first frost and throughout the winter months is a choice, gardeners this far south can enjoy planting cold-weather vegetables and herbs, which can't be grown during the hot, late springtime and even hotter summers. September is decision-making time.

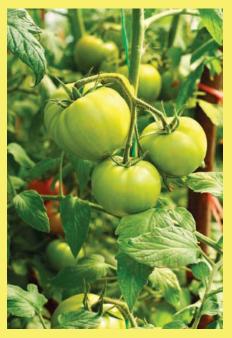
Should you start closing down gardening for the year or start thinking green for winter and enjoy growing food for the table well into the coming year?

Take a Break, But First ...

Fall and winter crops have a better flavor, since they are not under the stress of the summer sun. Fewer insects and diseases also help their growth. Those second plantings of tomatoes in August are going to taste great in November. Keep on a regular watering and feeding schedule and enjoy the bounty of vegetables that results from cooler fall days and nights.

With the approach of the first predicted frost, protect container-grown plants by covering them or storing them temporarily in a protected place. Veggies from your last harvest can ripen when set on paper towels in window sills or, in the case of green tomatoes, enjoy using them in chow-chow (relish) or fried green tomato recipes.

As plants die during the summer and into the fall, gardens have space to fill. Before retiring a garden space until spring, plant a winter cover crop rye, wheat, oats, ryegrass, hairy vetch or legumes. Sow between August and mid-October, so the roots will become established before the first freeze. These plants hold in soil and will add organic matter back to the soil when tilled under in the spring.



Clean, oil, sharpen and repair garden tools before storing. Follow manufacturers' instructions for storage of all power equipment.

Planning Your Cold-weather Harvest

As the fall nights cool, it's the perfect time to get winter crop seedlings started. Cool winter plant choices center on roots and leafy veggies and herbs: kale, spinach, Brussels sprouts, Swiss chard,



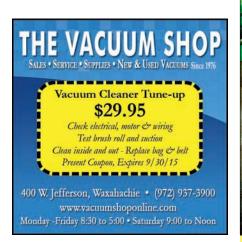




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varieties of lettuce, cauliflower, collards, kohlrabi, mustard greens, garlic, radishes, turnip greens, asparagus, English peas, rutabagas, alfalfa (as an herb used in salads, sandwiches and teas), tarragon, beets, leeks and carrots. Rosemary, an evergreen herb, is a wonderful choice. Plant the seeds in starter kits available at local garden centers or directly into tilled gardens or containers.

While rain might be plentiful in the winter, keep a water source handy for occasional dry periods. Plant roots will not freeze as easily if the surrounding ground is watered prior to a freeze. Remember to feed the winter crops every two to four weeks with a well-balanced fertilizer.

If a severe winter is predicted, spend some time this fall by building and/or collecting some season extenders. Repurposed old shower doors and glass window frames along with hay bales for insulation become cold frames. Hotcaps or *cloches* (the French word for bell) are mini greenhouses, which retain the warmth from the sun and protect the plant from being covered in frost. Plastic milk jugs with cut-away bottoms or garage sale plastic

punch bowls make great *cloches* to protect low-growing greens. Another, but more expensive protective solution is to build hooped row tunnels and covers. Detailed instructions, photos and videos for all of these suggestions can be found on the Internet.

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Culinary herbs can be grown in pots that can be easily moved inside when temperatures dip below 40 F, or they can become a true kitchen garden by setting pots on the kitchen counter or in a sunny window sill. Keep the plants watered and use a mister on the leaves to keep them from drying out in the heated house. Turn each plant every day for even growth. Once plants reach 4-5 inches



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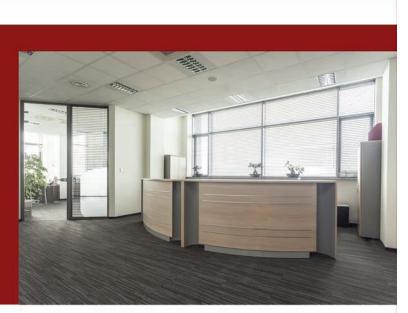
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in height, cooks can harvest from the top. Herbs that are easy to grow inside include: parsley, rosemary, thyme, chives, marjoram, savory, oregano, sage, basil and scented geraniums. If a kitchen has no space and/or light, a grow light and stand will work in any room.

Planning the Spring Garden

As days get shorter, it's time to think of next spring's garden. What worked well this past season, and what new crop will be included for next year? Did the family enjoy eating fresh veggies? If so, think of adding fruit and nut plant varieties to the garden between December and February, the dormant time span for most fruit and nut plants in Texas. These months are also the time to prune fruit trees that are already a part of your garden plan and to build frames for berries. The most popular fruit and nut varieties — blackberries, blueberries, figs, grapes, pears, plums, strawberries,



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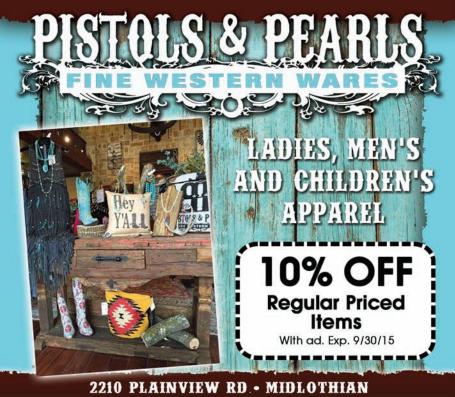


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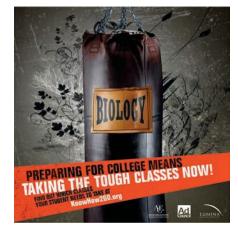
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native pecans and black walnuts — will be available at local garden centers during these months.

Enjoying the Harvest

Whether the shelves are stocked with canned vegetables or freezers are full of frozen produce, households that grow veggie crops can enjoy great-tasting foods and memories made at many upcoming meals and special occasions. There's also the satisfaction of turning sunny portions of a grass lawn into a productive food source and teaching children to grow what they eat. During the long winter nights there will be plenty of time to dream of the new gardening adventures that await you in the spring.

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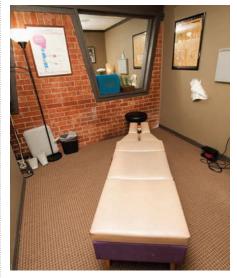


Ellis County Back Institute & Project You Weight-loss and Rejuvenation 905 Ferris Ave.

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Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.; 3:00-6:00 p.m. Friday: 8:00 a.m.-noon Project You: Monday-Thursday: 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.; 3:00-7:00 p.m.



From left:

Dr. Gavin Wolff, Michelle Fain and Dr. Josef Verhaert, along with their dedicated staff members, find great rewards in helping others live longer, healthier lives.

Truth in the Treatment

Patients are learning to live healthier, more productive lives. — By Sandra Strong

Born in Belgium, Europe, Dr. Jozef Verhaert attended Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, for two years, and completed his bachelor's degree in physical therapy in 1982 from Coloma Institute in Mechelen, Belgium. In 1984, he journeyed to the United States, completing his Doctor of Chiropractic studies at Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa. He vividly remembers the event that changed his career path and gave him cause to relocate to the United States. "I was in a serious car accident while still living in Belgium," he shared. "Chiropractic care got me back to health." His goal from the start still lies in clinical practice and helping patients the same way he was helped. "I want to teach patients how to lead healthier and more enjoyable lives," he added.

After completing a two-year internship in private practice in Louisiana, Dr. Verhaert moved to Texas to start his own clinic. This year marks his 28th year in Waxahachie. The truth he lives by and extends to his patients is quite simple: "It's your life ... live it in health." He's a doctor who leads and teaches by example by working his own program for optimum overall health. To accomplish these life changes in his patients, he uses a combination of chiropractic care, advanced nonsurgical treatments and a plethora of nutritional aids to help patients in a safe and highly effective way to rid their bodies of toxins.

Business NOW

The staff at Ellis County Back Institute & Project You Weight-loss and Rejuvenation has a heart for what they have been called to do. Dr. Verhaert remembers meeting Dr. Gavin Wolff, one of the many staff members, when he was 7 years old. "I gave Gavin his first chiropractic adjustment," Dr. Verhaert explained. While serving in the military, Dr. Wolff had a desire to change lives in the same manner Dr. Verhaert had changed his. After a lengthy conversation, Dr. Verhaert told Dr. Wolff he had a home when he completed his chiropractic studies. Needless to say, Dr. Wolff is home.

Two years ago, Dr. Verhaert added weight-loss and rejuvenation to his overall program. In doing so, he was able to bring Michelle Fain back home, too. "Michelle left about seven years prior to go back into nursing," Dr. Verhaert stated. "I was able to hire her back when we introduced Project You." Under Michelle's guidance, Project You has seen fantastic results. "It works, without fail, once the patient learns the truth about their body," Dr. Verhaert admitted. "Once they learn how to undo the bad, they will begin to see the positive effects of Project You. We really are seeing great results."

Those interested in feeling their best can attend one of the free Tuesday night seminars. This seminar is the portal for information. The second phase of the process is an assessment. During this meeting, the doctor will determine the program that's right for the patient. "Since we are all different, each program is designed for the individual patient," Dr. Verhaert said. "The patient is the project."

Ellis County Back Institute & Project You Weight-loss and Rejuvenation offers a new beginning. When the weight comes off, you will not only look and feel so much better, your organs get healthier, thus you live longer. "How you live today will determine the quality of the last 15-20 years of your life," Dr. Verhaert stated. "We are designed to leave this life when our bodies are done living, not when organs fail because of toxic living."



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Around Town NOW



Olivia Lawrence, soon-to-be 3 on September 4, has fun playing on the slide at Getzendaner Park.



J.R. McMahan and Susan Gilliland share their talents at the Waxahachie Farmers Market.



Alberto Zuniga works extra hours at HEB to make a little extra money to help with his college expenses.



A large crowd gathers for the ribbon cutting for Instrumental Benefits Consulting.



Easton McIntosh and Zane Robinson hug the matching elephants they got at The Ringling Bros. Circus.



Jeannie Derryberry paints her weathered fence making it a perfect white.



Josiah and Alana show off the prizes they won at the Lions Club Carnival.



Natalie de Dios finds a squeaky toy in the tomatoes while grocery shopping with her mom.



Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce welcomes new member eTeam Travel.com.



Rebecca Gregory and her son, Kayden, age 6, walk to town each day so she can go to work at the Dove's Nest and he can help his dad at Detailed Wright.





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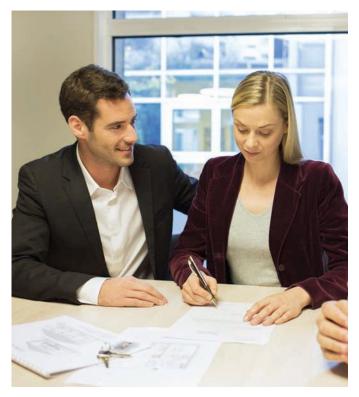
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What to Know About Co-signing a Loan



Your friend or family member wants to take out a loan, but they don't qualify. They could, however, if someone cosigns, so they ask you. Before you jump in to help, understand how the decision potentially impacts *your* credit. Consider the following carefully.

What Happens When You Co-sign

There are potential risks when co-signing a loan.

• You are 100-percent responsible for the debt. When you co-sign, you agree to pay the loan back in full — plus any late fees or collection costs — if the primary borrower defaults or misses just one payment. If you can't pay, the lender could sue you or garnish your wages.

• *It can lower your credit score.* The primary borrower's late or missed payments can prevent you from qualifying for personal loans or other lines of credit in the future.

Before Co-signing: Factors to Consider

Think about the following before agreeing to co-sign a loan.

• *Is the borrower able to make payments on time?* If the primary borrower doesn't have a steady source of income, making ontime payments may become an issue.

• *How can you protect your credit?* Ask the borrower to make any missed payments within 30 days to ensure your credit score (theirs, too) doesn't take a hit.

Your Investment Is Key

If you're comfortable co-signing a loan, treat the debt like it's your own.

• *Set a timeline*. Agree on a specific date to get your name off the account. To do this, the primary borrower must refinance the loan or close the credit card.

• *Monitor the account.* Review online statements to make sure the primary borrower is regularly making payments.

Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.

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Calendar

September 4, 5 Dale Hansen Football Classic: Lumpkins Stadium.

September 12

Around the World Poker Sip, Snack & Stroll: downtown Waxahachie.

September 19

Oktoberfest: Waxahachie Civic Center.

Downtown Sidewalk Sale: downtown Waxahachie.

Odd Fest presented by IOOF Waxahachie Lodge #80: 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Singleton Plaza.

Waxahachie Symphony Association – Imperial Brass: 7:00 p.m., SAGU Hagee Communication Center Performance Hall, 1200 Sycamore. For more information, visit www.waxahachiesymphony.org.

September 20

12th Annual Bridal Extravaganza: Noon-4:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Currently accepting vendor applications. For more information, call (469) 309-4040 or visit www.waxahachieciviccenter.org.

September 21

Lighthouse for Learning Community Education: The fall/holiday semester begins. There are over 50 classes to choose from. For more details on available classes, call WISD at (972) 923-4631 or visit www.wisd.org.

September 23 — 26

Crossroads of Texas Film Festival: For more information, visit www.crossroadsoftxff.com.

September 25

Plaque Dedication for Bessie Coleman: 5:30-7:00 p.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport. Admission is free.

September 25, 26

Holy Homes Marriage Conference with Clay and Renee Crosse: **Friday**, 7:00-9:15 p.m.; **Saturday**, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Cowboy Church of Ellis County, 2374 W. Hwy 287 Bypass. Tickets are on sale now for \$20 each. Contract the church office for tickets by calling (972) 935-9801. Doors will open 30 minutes before conference starts times each day.

SEPTEMBER 2015

September 26

Chautauqua Assembly – Chautauqua Celebrates Flight: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium, Getzendaner Park.

Take It To The Box Prescription Drug Return: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., WHS parking lot, 1000 N. Hwy 77, Waxahachie; 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Italy Police Department, 101 W. Main St., Italy. The "box" is a place to dispose of unused or expired medications quickly, safely and anonymously. For more locations within Ellis County, contact IMPACT Waxahachie at (972) 937-1531 or IMPACT Ennis at (972) 921-5156 or online at www.dpri.com.

Telico Volunteer Fire Department 30th Annual Barn Dance: 4:00 p.m., Sokol Hall, 2622 E. Hwy 34. For more information and to purchase raffle tickets, contact Chief Van Fowler at (972) 878-2083 or Marvin Trojacek at (972) 875-6655.

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



-Health NOW

Allergy Triggers

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Achoo! It isn't springtime, but your constant sneezing and runny nose make a box of tissues your best friend. During the spring, allergies are expected and have become almost a rite of passage through the season, for some people. However, fall allergies come as a surprise to many. These allergies are called seasonal because the allergens are present in sufficient quantity during specific times of the year. Perennial allergens are located in the atmosphere year-round. The symptoms, in addition to sneezing and a runny nose, can include watery eyes, an itchy nose and itchy throat and eyes. They all appear as early as August and last through October.

There are several causes or triggers for the onset of allergic symptoms. Ragweed is the most common. Ragweed can be found almost anywhere, but particularly in the Eastern and Midwestern part of the United States. The pollen released from the blooming plant is a fine powder that has been detected up to 400 miles out to sea!

Another contributor to fall allergies is mold. Mold is a fungus that thrives in moist areas and is virtually everywhere. Its spores are small, light and easily airborne. Mold is not only found in damp areas in your bathroom, under sink areas prone to leakage and basements but outdoors in compost heaps, under leaves and in the soil. It has an earthy smell and a fuzzy appearance. Check ceilings and floors where there are water stains, look for the source and correct it.

If you are allergic to cedar and live in Central Texas, most people can expect some allergy problems. The trees are quite numerous in this region. The heaviest times of pollination will occur in the months of December, January and February.



The best way to escape the plague of being an allergy sufferer is to avoid its triggers, if at all possible. Practical suggestions would be to keep your home as dust-free as possible. Before you turn on your heating system for the year, clean your vents and use a high-efficiency particulate air filter known as a HEPA filter. Use air conditioning in your home and car to avoid the offending pollen. Shower and change your clothes when coming in from outside. Wear masks with vard work. Some of the remedies, such as antihistamines, decongestants, cough medications and nasal sprays found overthe-counter, may or may not be advisable for you. Check with your doctor if your symptoms do not decrease. You may need allergy shots or prescription medication. There are ways to lessen your misery, but you may need help. 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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Cooking **NOW**



In the Kitchen With Chef Dré Johnson

— By Sandra Strong

Chef Dré Johnson's cooking was influenced by his grandparents. "After church on Sundays, my family would always meet up at my house," Chef Dré said. "We didn't have a wide variety of food when I was a kid, but whatever was on the menu was very tasty."

As an adult, Chef Dré's grandfather, who had also been a chef, encouraged him to go to culinary school to earn his certification. "I decided to go to school at Aims Academy of Culinary Arts, graduating in 2006 at the top of my class," he shared. His career as a chef has taken him to so many wonderful places, landing him happily at Renfro Nursing Home. "I believe this is my calling," he said, "to please the elderly and the disabled."

Fire-spice Roasted Chicken

I/4 cup soy sauce
2 Tbsp. fish sauce
I Tbsp. Asian sesame oil
I Tbsp. brown sugar
2 tsp. fire spice seasoning
I/2 tsp. kosher salt
I Tbsp. garlic, finely chopped
2 tsp. chopped ginger
3 1/2 lbs. chicken legs and thighs

I. Preheat oven to 375 F. Combine the soy sauce, fish sauce, sesame oil, sugar, fire spice seasoning and salt in a large bowl; mix well. Stir in the garlic and ginger. Add chicken pieces, turning to coat.

2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight. Turn the pieces now and then so that the marinade coats them evenly.

3. Place chicken in a roasting pan. Cook for 30 to 45 minutes.

Chipotle Plum BBQ Pork Ribs

- 1/4 cup hot water
- 1 tsp. instant coffee
- 3/4 cup plum sauce
- 1/2 cup fresh-squeezed orange juice
- 2 Tbsp. minced chipotle in adobe
- with sauce
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 1/2 lbs. pork back ribs

 Mix hot water with coffee to dissolve. Once dissolved, combine with plum sauce, orange juice, chipotle sauce and brown sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat.
 Bring sauce to a boil; reduce heat. Simmer until sauce thickens, about 5 minutes.
 Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
 Coat both sides of the ribs with sauce, saving 2/3 cup of sauce for basting. Arrange the ribs, meat side up, on a lined baking sheet. **5.** Cover lightly with foil. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour, basting throughout with the remaining sauce. Allow to cool before slicing.

Daisy Mae's Tea Cakes

cup butter, room temperature
 1/2 cups sugar
 tsp. baking soda
 1/2 cup buttermilk
 eggs
 cups all-purpose flour
 tsp. baking powder
 1/2 tsp. salt
 tsp. ground nutmeg
 tsp. vanilla flavoring

 Cream butter and sugar until well-blended. Dissolve soda in buttermilk; add to butter/ sugar mixture. Stir in all remaining ingredients in the order listed. Mix until dough forms.
 Roll dough out lightly on a floured board. Cut dough with cookie cutters of your choice. Bake at 400 F on an ungreased cookie sheet until lightly browned.

Strip Steak With Rosemary Butter

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 Tbsp. fresh rosemary
- 2 tsp. grated lemon rind (divided use)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 Tbsp. dried Italian seasoning
- $1 \frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. salt

4 6-oz. beef strip steaks, 1/2-inch thick Rosemary sprigs, optional

I. Stir together butter, rosemary, 1 tsp. lemon rind, salt and pepper. Cover and chill until ready to serve.

2. Combine Italian seasoning and next four ingredients in a small bowl. Stir in remaining lemon rind. Rub mixture over steaks. Cover and chill for 1 hour.

3. Cover steaks with grill lid and grill over medium/high heat (350 F) for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, or until desired doneness.

4. Serve with butter mixture. Garnish with rosemary sprigs.

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

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