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OCTOBER 2011

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The Birdman of **BURLESON**

Terry Ford is a wood sculptor with a lifelong love for birds..

Also Inside

Sticking the Perfect Landing

Life is an Adventure

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Pioneer to a
NEW ERA

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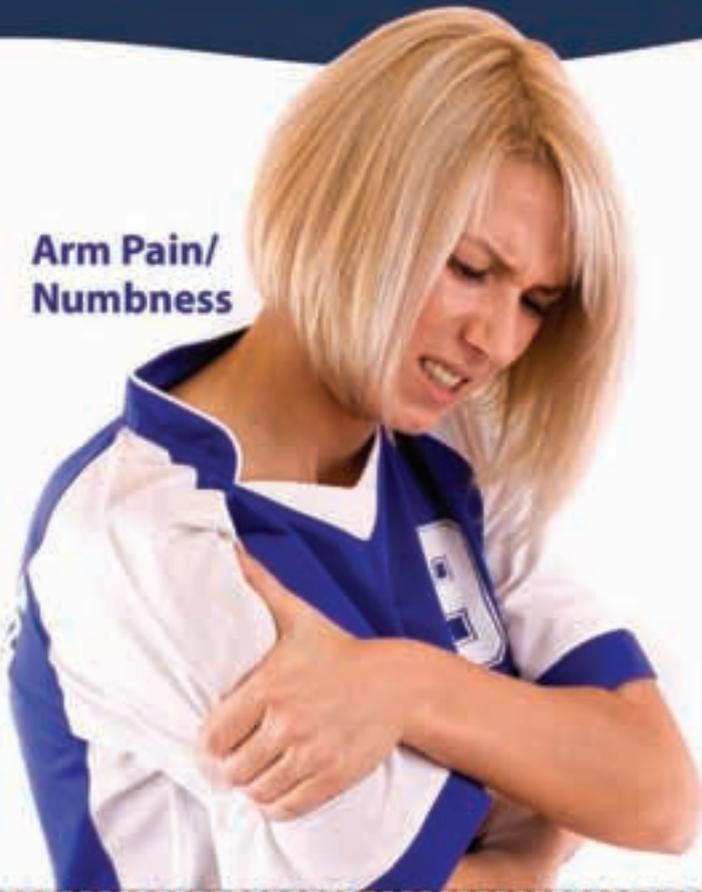
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On The Cover



Terry Ford carves stylized birds, reflecting the natural beauty of the wood.

Photo by Opaque Visuals

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Editor's Note

Howdy Burleson, Crowley and Joshua!

The beautiful cooler weather brings out the best in our communities. Over in Crowley, volunteers at the House of Hope (www.crowleyhouseofhope.org) are already creating Thanksgiving baskets to give away during the upcoming holidays. Joshua city officials and JR. ROTC are hosting a fun family-oriented Fall Festival at the Joshua High School Stadium on October 15. And Burleson Historic Foundation is gearing up for the Founders Day Celebration, to be held in Old Town Burleson on October 8. There will be a parade, making a revival from former years, and many vendors will be wearing turn-of-the-century costumes.

If the sun gets too hot for you, but you haven't had your fill of history, you can always head over to Johnson Street and go inside the air conditioned Burleson Public Library where Debbie Tarver and Mary Norris produced a fascinating display about our community's heritage. Back at home, you can relax with *BurlesonNOW Magazine*, because our people are what we're all celebrating!



Melissa

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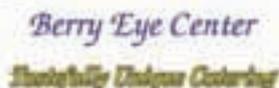


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The *Birdman* of Burleson

— By Carolyn Wills



When he was a student at Polytechnic High School in Fort Worth, Terry Ford enjoyed the times he spent in woodshop. After retiring from 31 years as an educator, he has reconnected with those high school memories, merged them with his lifelong love for birds and discovered a remarkable talent. He creates beautiful wood sculptures.

“I taught math for 20 years,” Terry said, “and was [the] principal at Burleson High School for the last 10 years of my career, following Charlie Boren’s retirement.” Terry’s friendship and previous working relationship with Charlie, an accomplished wood sculptor, ultimately spurred Terry’s interest in working with wood. “When I retired from teaching in 1984,” Terry added, “I told Charlie that I would love to learn to work with wood, so he told me to come



on out.”

Charlie works at his historic family farm south of Burleson, which he and his wife have developed into the Russell Farm Art Center. The Art Center is a combination of galleries and places for artists and students to work and learn. “I started assisting him with seminars,” Terry said. “Charlie would instruct and I helped, mostly by showing participants how to use the tools. I did that for about five years before I actually started sculpting.”

Charlie is known for his unique mastery. “He chooses a piece of wood and then just looks at it,” Terry explained. “Sculpture is three-dimensional and must work from all directions, so he turns the wood in different ways and stares at it for as long as it takes to know what he will do.”

One day, as Terry was looking for a new project, Charlie directed him to the scrap bin. “I had finished sculpting an eagle from mesquite,” Terry said, “so

when I pulled a piece of live oak from the bin, Charlie said to take it and make something new. I stared at it, piddled with it and finally decided that I could make little birds appear to be taking flight.” When he was finished, the live oak scrap had become take-off points for two smoothly-finished swallows — and with the birth of one proud eagle and two small swallows, Terry had become a sculptor.

“We call it sculpting more so than carving,” he explained. “Some artists painstakingly create reflections of a subject, but most of what I do is stylized and smooth. I like for people to see the tree and the object and, especially, the natural beauty of the wood. When God designed trees, he made grains go in all directions to add strength, especially down by the roots, so there tends to be a lot of waviness in the wood closest to the roots.”

Terry’s two swallows were followed by an owl made from burl wood. “A burl is

*“I’ve loved
birds all of
my life.”*



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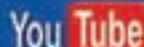
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an outgrowth on a tree that results from an injury or disease,” Terry explained. “Burls are nature’s way of protecting a wound, and their intense grains make beautiful sculptures. At first, the burl I used for the owl reminded me of a piece of cauliflower.”

After the owl, he worked on his biggest project to date, a life-sized swan made from ash. “My wife, June, and I were visiting our daughter in Bloomington, Indiana,” he said. “We were walking in the woods when I saw this big chunk of wood. It was raining that day so I couldn’t tell what kind of wood it was. It turned out to be the piece that wanted to be a swan.” The eagle, swallows, owl and swan were followed by a tern made from the stump of a cedar tree. “The roots are his wings,” Terry said. “He’s flying over the ocean with his head turned to look for fish.”

While he has sculpted a variety of objects such as bowls and a boot, overwhelmingly, Terry’s favorites are birds. “I’ve loved birds all of my life,” he said. The view from his picture window by the dining table confirms at least one birdhouse hanging from each of the many trees and boxes attached along the fence lines. “We’ve had bluebirds nesting,” Terry said. “They’re too shy to come close so they stay on the back fence. A mother bird was fussing around her nest the other day, so I unscrewed the top of the box and found a chicken snake. It’s a hard life being a bird. Everybody’s got to be somewhere and that counts for snakes, too. I usually don’t kill snakes unless they get into a birdhouse or keep coming back.”



Birds of just about every feather are drawn to the Fords' lush backyard. "I probably know more about birds than most people," Terry smiled. "I recognize all of the bird calls in our region and enjoy listening to recordings of calls from all over. From his window, he is quick to point to a visiting chickadee and a tufted titmouse. "The other day, I was putting feed out and a little titmouse landed on my arm," he grinned. "I think he was more surprised than I was." Terry also eagerly describes the neighborhood roadrunners, cardinals, hummingbirds, cute little screech owls born and raised in the backyard and the brazen Harris hawk that comes looking for dinner. The most treasured of all the animals, though, is one who spends her days inside and usually on the lap of the closest Ford. That would be Amber, the four-pound

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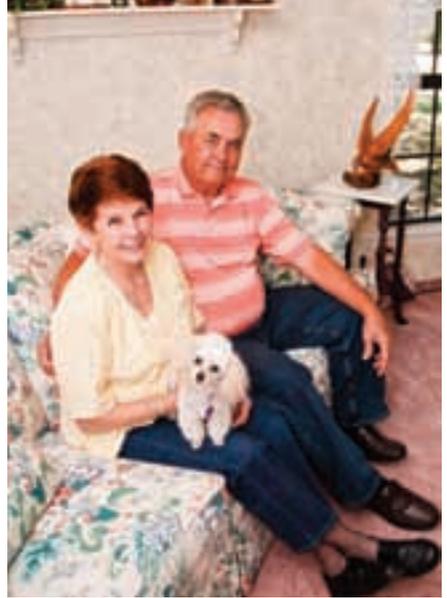
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teacup poodle.

Terry was born in Rome, Texas, and grew up in the Forest Hill area of Fort Worth. He graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington, received his teaching certificate from Texas Wesleyan College and accepted his first teaching job at Burleson Junior High at the Nola Dunn Campus in 1963. He and June were married 49 years ago and have two sons, Terry and Toby, who are both Burleson residents, and a daughter, Julie, who



lives in Indiana. Each of the children is married and has two children. "June enjoys oil painting," Terry said. "We have a place in Arkansas on about 70 acres near Fayetteville, and we sometimes take classes at the annual War Eagle Art Seminar."

As for his art, Terry is looking for the right piece of wood to sculpt a wren. "Their little tails stick up over their backs, and they're so cute," he said. "It takes a lot of work with a chain saw and intensity to finish a sculpture, and I wouldn't do it if I didn't have fun." He also has a standing order from his oldest son. "He wants a wolf," Terry smiled. "There is a piece of walnut in the barn that might just be that wolf." **NOW**



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Pioneer NEW

to a ERA

— By Carolyn Wills

“This is the time to change how we live, by converting negative space into renewable energy and learning to exist more simply and efficiently.”

Ryan Wilson’s boyhood wish was to be a fireman when he grew up. “I wanted to be one of those heroes who save the day,” he shared. Ryan is now 30 years old. He isn’t a fireman, yet according to one of his best friends, who just happens to also be his mother, he’s living his childhood dream. “She says I’m a pioneer to a new era,” he smiled.



Rather than fire-engine red, though, Ryan is all about green. His mission is to help the world become a better and more lasting place in which to live now and in the future. "This is the time to change how we live," he said, "by converting negative space into renewable energy and learning to exist more simply and efficiently. It's time to unplug, recycle, reuse and renew."

Ryan is eager to share with people, especially young people, about the world's environmental realities and how we can make our planet healthier and better for everyone...and he practices what he teaches. "I remember seeing that public service spot on television about the devastating impact of littering. It pictured an Indian looking at the land and, as he turned his head toward the screen, you could see his tears. With global warming and ice caps melting, we have so much more to think about now."

Today, Ryan's garden is fed by rainwater captured in a barrel. His toaster and cell phone are charged by his own kinetic energy as he runs on his treadmill. And his houselights are operated by a single wind turbine on his roof. He is vibrant and hyper-energetic and, by following his own principles for clean and healthy living, he recycles an



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Ryan Wilson, Duke and Humberto Dominguez, partners in Wilsons Energy.

amazing amount of personal time and energy. His road, though, has not always been smooth. “It took me awhile to put my life together,” he said. “I know what it’s like to sleep in my car and under a bridge, and I know what it takes to make a commitment.”

The son of a carpenter, he began learning his father’s skills at the age of 13. “By the time I was 15, I knew how to build a house,” he explained. “I thought, though, that I wanted to work with engines so I became an auto mechanic in Burleson for four years at the time that gas prices started spiking. One day, my dad and I were talking about an energy-saving idea that had occurred to him and it started me thinking about what the world really needs.” As a result, he traded



his day job for a classroom at Tarrant County Junior College and added a part-time restaurant job to help with expenses.

“One of my class assignments was to give a persuasive speech,” he said. “I decided to convince people about the need to solve environmental issues, and during my research, I realized how much the government, industries and real estate worlds have begun to focus on renewable energy. The degree of energy efficiency is now a distinguishing point for new construction and renovation.”

Understanding that he could potentially earn a living by combining his personal commitment in ways that would benefit others was a major turning point in Ryan’s life. He currently manages his own “green” energy company and has recently joined with a group of contractors to start an employee-owned “green contracting” business. “My father gave me some great advice when I told him I wanted to start a business. First is to offer a service that everyone needs, second is to have a product that sells itself or lends itself to good marketing, and third is to have your p’s and q’s in order and always do the proper paperwork. Most importantly, though, is to believe in what you do.”

Clearly, Ryan believes in what he does. He’s dedicated to spreading the word about the fragile state of the earth and what can be done to help. “I love talking with people and taking care of their needs,” he said, “but the best thing I do is talk with kids.” Two years ago, Donna Hollowell, the environmental science teacher at Burleson High School and a



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sponsor of the Green Club, asked if he would be willing to speak to her students. "I told her I would be more than happy — I would be ecstatic." He had already participated in Burleson's Adopt-A-Street and Keep Burleson Beautiful programs, and it was through his connection with the city's environmental services division that Donna heard about him. He has now spoken at Career Days, special school events and Green Clubs.

"I encourage kids to open their minds, to accept that the only dumb idea is one that stays on paper," he said. "I think it's good for them to hear about the opportunities available in the area of renewable energy, and that whether their next step is to go to college or study a trade, they are the future of the planet." He has an enclosed trailer with exterior solar panels, which he likes to use for demonstrations. "I bring the energy with me," he said. "I can show kids that we can turn on a lamp or run a circular saw from the sun." He can also bring the sun into the classroom. "I've created a 'solar hat' that powers a little fan. When I spray water and the fan blows, I can stay cool. The kids love it!"

While his mission is quite serious, Ryan includes a lot of fun facts, sound effects and a PowerPoint presentation to keep the kids tuned in. His biggest attention-getter, without a doubt, is his ally and faithful companion, Duke. Duke of Earl is a 3-year-old Border Collie/Blue Heeler/Aussie mix and 110 pounds of pure energy. His favorite activity is jumping into the spring-fed water hole near Ryan's house, and his overriding purpose is to help Ryan. "He's energy efficient," Ryan smiled. "He carries a solar screen backpack that charges my cell phone. I've also put pockets on the sides to hold gel packs to keep him cool. He goes everywhere with me. I call him my solar dog."

Beyond his solar-paneled trailer, solar-powered hat and Duke the ever-faithful solar dog, Ryan shares a special kind of energy. It's the power behind the little boy's dream of becoming a hero and the source of this man who is out to change the world. "I'm a life coach when it comes to teaching people to live cleaner, greener lives, providing the resources for them to learn more and encouraging everyone to unplug, recycle, reuse and renew." **NOW**

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Getting Crowley into the Spirit

— By Melissa Rawlins



AT HOME WITH
Dave and
Carey Richardson



This is the month when Dave and Carey Richardson's backyard pool begins to lose its appeal. Carey and her daughter, Ashley, still head out there whenever they get the chance, but Dave, their chief pool cleaner, has already turned his attention to Halloween. So the ladies do, too. "We'll have a whole movie night of Halloween movies. Gets you in the spirit," Carey said, sitting contentedly on her living room couch across from the collection of stuffed ducks and deer that her husband neither shot nor killed. "He got them at a cheaper rate because he got them at a garage sale."

Dave considers himself a little bit of a redneck. "I know some would disagree," Dave said, with a grin. "But it's a good sign you may be a redneck if you make your second car in your driveway. And I've made two smokers, a dune buggy, picnic tables and front porch swings out there in the driveway." That is also where he makes all the haunting equipment and Halloween decorations for the annual scare night that he and Carey will host on October 31, and for the Haunted Hayride that the city of Crowley helps host on October 22 in the woods behind Bicentennial Park.

“My driveway is like my evil workshop,” Dave said. Ever since July’s Celebration of Freedom in Crowley, he has been renovating his flame thrower and building new machines for scaring people — sometimes working late at night. “One thing I love about our home is my neighbors, who put up with everything and watch my house while I’m on vacation. While I’m out there working at midnight banging on steel making stuff for the Haunted Hayride, they don’t call the police.” In fact, Dave’s across-the-street neighbor, Michael Rodriguez, has been helping him since 2004. Over 50 volunteers, friends of all ages, help Dave. In 2002, he began producing the Haunted Hayride, which originated in Crowley in the 1980s and is currently coordinated by Crowley Library Director Gwen Hopper.

While Dave stays busy making new props, Carey coordinates life inside their home and keeps supper on the table. The



rustic Texas kitchen was totally decorated by Carey. Several trips to paint and fabric stores, as well as to Antique Alley, resulted in a lovely blend of copper, tan, rust, gold and iron accents. “If I see something and it yells at me, then I grab it,” said Carey, who used to enjoy cooking when she was a stay-at-home mom. Now she works nights. “If I do not get enough sleep, Ashley automatically cooks supper, or Dave will. We get along very well. Kind of like playing soccer: when one moves up with the ball, another takes over.” In this family, everyone picks up

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each other's slack, and when they do things together — whether it is four-wheeling, swimming, camping or hosting the Haunted Hayride — they always have fun.

They went to Antique Alley and bought a doll Dave thought would come in handy for scaring people. "That ugly plastic doll was over in that living room rocking chair for the longest time," Carey said, with a laugh. She loves to scare people as much as Dave. "It's so awesome to ride on a trailer and hear the stories of the people who are coming back year after year. People love it. I'm trying to listen without saying, 'Yeah, that's my husband who does this.'"

During the Halloween scare night at their home, Dave grabs a chain saw and chases the 300-400 people gathered in his street all over the neighborhood, through all the yards. Meanwhile, Carey stays in the background. In the master bedroom, resting on cool black and white checkerboard floors, a PA system shares space with the heavy mahogany dresser and four-poster bed that Dave selected and modified to the height he



likes best. Carey makes sure haunted noises continually emanate from her lair. She also keeps track of the actors on the lawn. "Adults are more apt to stay in their position during the event, but the kids get bored doing the same thing so they tend to wander around," Carey said. For the fifth year in a row, Ashley helps

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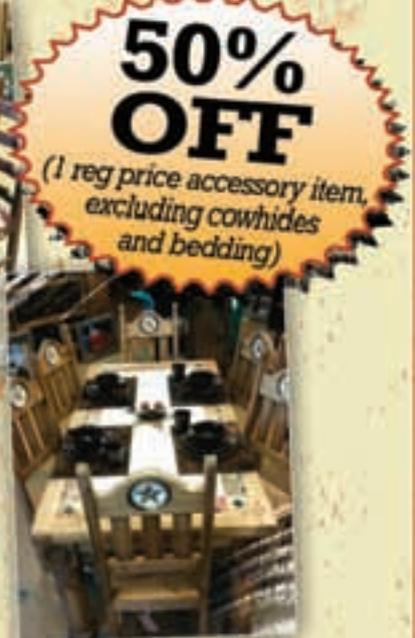
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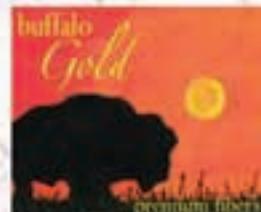
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The Goodnight Buffalo Ranch Headquarters itself has undergone a million-dollar renovation under the care of the dedicated folks at the Armstrong County, Texas Museum. The Museum, in Claude, Texas, is open now (as it has been for almost 20 years), and the Goodnight, Texas Buffalo Ranch Headquarters will open to the public before the end of this year. Our retail store should be open in November. Plan to come interact with bison history yourselves. We're all just between Clarendon and Claude in Goodnight, Texas — right on your trail to Colorado, New Mexico and all points north and west.

Just south and across the Palo Duro Canyon from our place is the Texas State bison herd located in the Caprock Canyons State Park. The Caprock herd, free-roaming within the park, is the last of the Goodnight bison herd itself. This makes a great place for a family getaway.

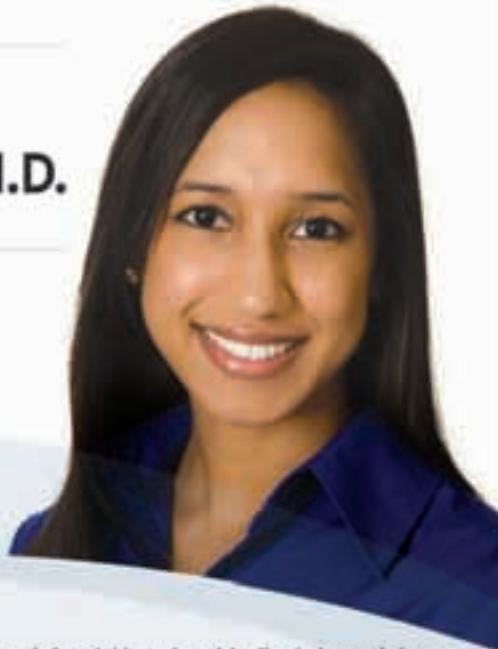


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Chandra Chellappan, M.D., has joined Huguley Medical Associates and opened an obstetrics and gynecology practice. She cares for women at all stages of life, including pregnancies and well-woman check-ups. She offers various treatment options for both medical and surgical problems, including several minimally invasive procedures performed in her office.

Dr. Chellappan completed her obstetrics and gynecology residency at John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth. During her training, she also provided obstetrical and gynecological medical care for Tarrant County facilities. She earned her medical degree from Texas A&M University Health Science Center College of Medicine, and she studied nutritional sciences at Texas A&M University.

Fluent in both English and Spanish, Dr. Chellappan welcomes new patients and accepts most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid.

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keep everybody in line. She dresses up as a scary clown, and follows people and screams at them. Later, she and Carey work with the volunteers to clean up the yard.

When October ends, Carey and her family retreat into their comfy, private home away from the rest of the world. Despite their hospitality at Halloween and even Christmas, when the family goes all out to decorate the lawn, the Richardsons do not often have people over. "We like to separate ourselves and be in touch with one another, catch up on each others' days, hear whatever happened," Carey explained, grateful for



the stability she and Ashley enjoy on the street where Dave grew up — only four doors down from the house where his mother still lives. "Dave's our big secure teddy bear."

"I provide a comfortable atmosphere by supplying their needs, financially and emotionally," Dave said. "That's a big part of what this family is: if you say you're going to do something, you do it. You don't lie. On top of that, you



trust in God and let Him do whatever you can't do. You can only do so much." Those are wise words, learned through experience since Dave makes his living as a handyman. "I spoil my customers, and even the neighbors. That's just how I was raised, to try to help people." He sets the example for Ashley, who will be a junior at Crowley High School this year.

Over the summer Ashley painted her bedroom hot pink and black, adding a vibrant matching curtain over the window. She hangs out there when she is alone. But when her friends come over, they enjoy listening to music and playing arcades in Dave's game room. He programmed some of Ashley's CDs into the jukebox that came out of the old Sideline Club on Crowley Road. "I started collecting those arcade games in 1992," Dave remembered. "Most of them I got broken, and then I repaired them. There are only two I bought that actually were working when I bought them."

Inside and out, the Richardsons' home inspires fun and relaxation. Whenever it rains, Carey sits on her front porch swing, gazing at the neighborhood she and Dave love so much. That's where the couple will be if the weather postpones their Haunted Hayride or their Halloween fun — patiently waiting out the rain, planning their next chance to inspire screams. "It's addictive," Dave admitted. "It's an adrenaline rush for me and those who come get scared. I love scaring people!" **NOW**

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SPARTAN TOUGH

— By Carolyn Wills



In 2010, Centennial High School opened its doors to an incoming class of freshmen and sophomores. This year, the student body includes freshmen, sophomores and juniors. Next year, Centennial High School will welcome all four grades and celebrate its first graduating class.

Before the first door opened, Athletic Coordinator and Head Football Coach Kyle Geller was at work purchasing equipment, hiring coaches and growing more excited about the years to come. “I could be here 24 hours a day,” he smiled, “and not get everything done. To have this opportunity to build an athletic program and create a culture is amazing.”

Today, Centennial High School has 25 coaches, nine of whom are women, and one athletic trainer. “Each of our coaches teaches five classes a day,” Coach Geller said. “We have some of the best teachers in the industry. We also have great kids, and it’s very rewarding to see the athletic program come together.”

The staggered enrollment schedule for the new school posed an interesting dilemma for the athletic department. “Last year, we had one junior varsity and two ninth-grade teams,” Coach Geller said. With the exception of individual sports, in its first year, Centennial High School was not assigned to a district



by the University Interscholastic League (UIL), the organization that administers athletic competitions for Texas public schools. "Now in our second year, most of our competitions are aligned with District 7-3A which includes Bridgeport, Decatur, Fort Worth, Castleberry, Lake Worth and Mineral Wells. Soccer is competing in District 16-4A and swimming in District 15-4A. Football is on a 'renegade' or 'outlaw' schedule, which means we had to find the teams to create our own schedule."

Although the formula sounds complicated, the outcome is that Centennial is playing varsity in every sport this year. "The kids put in a lot of hard work in the off-season and even though we're competing with bigger, more mature teams, this year is good for us," Coach Geller said. Next year, with a full complement of students, Centennial High School will likely be assigned to District 4A. "We expect to be competing with Burleson High School," Coach Geller said. "They are a 4A school, too. Phil Anderson is the athletic director for the Burleson Independent School District and Jason Tucker is Burleson High School's athletic coordinator. They're both great to work with, and I'm looking forward to a long-standing tradition between our schools."

Kyle spent his early years in Salinas, California, a small city located at the



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mouth of the Salinas Valley in central California and a stone's throw to the Pacific Ocean. In the outdoor-friendly environment, this son of a high school football coach was destined to lead an active life. He grew up loving sports, especially football, wrestling and baseball. "My dad coached me throughout high school," he said. Their relationship proved to be motivating. "Most athletes say they have three or four significant influences in their careers," he said. "I've had a lot of good people to look up to, but there has never been a doubt that my dad is the greatest."

In junior college, Coach Geller was approached by a recruiter from Missouri State University and presented with the chance to play quarterback for the Missouri State Bears. At the age of 19, he said good-bye to California. "It was



quite a change,” he said. “California and Missouri are dramatically different cultures. The change, though, turned out to be great.” He quarterbacked for the Bears for three years, received his Bachelor of Science in education and stayed on as a Bears’ assistant coach for two years.

Coach Geller’s next stop, and the beginning of his high school coaching career, took him to Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, for two years. “California to Missouri to Oklahoma and then to Texas,” he said. “So far, it’s been a fun ride.” Growing up in California, he had little reason to imagine that he would one day live in North Texas with its hot summers and even less reason to think he would ever call himself a Texan. “I do consider myself a Texan,” he smiled. “I’ve been here for more than 10 years, and this state has really been good to me. Most importantly, I met my wife, Megan, here. This is where we had our children and where we want them to grow up.”

Coach Geller’s initial destination in Texas was R.L. Turner High School in Carrollton where he was assistant coach for two years. In 2002, in a move that ultimately prepared him for his current job, Coach Geller became the first offensive coordinator at Mansfield’s Summit High School and was promoted to head football coach in 2005. He spent seven years at Summit in his first experience on the ground floor of a new school. “We competed so hard in the first year,” he said. “By the next year, we were ready to go and were very successful.” In 2007, Coach Geller was named District 4-5A Coach of the Year. He left

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Mansfield to become the head football coach at Creekview High School in Carrollton and, the following year, he was named athletic coordinator of Centennial High School.

“Our goal at Centennial is to turn out competitors,” Coach Geller said. “Whether it’s in athletics, a job or college, we want students to be the best they can be with class and professionalism.” To hear him speak at a team practice is to know that he exudes confidence, hope and respect for his students. Centennial’s principal, Lance Campbell, reflects the same qualities. “Principal Campbell cares about kids,” Coach Geller affirmed, “and that’s what he expects everyone here to care about. I believe we’re on the right path. We’re



on the same page top to bottom and everyone is looking at the big picture.”

Coach Geller’s goal is for Centennial High School to be a state-recognized competitor. “I tell parents that when people think of Spartan sports, I want them to think of winners. Regardless of whether we walk away with a title, I want us to compete hard and for parents to say ‘I want my child to go to that school.’”

At home, Kyle is father to 8-year-old son, Hayden; 4-year-old daughter, Jocelyn; and Kiwi, the family rabbit. “Between Hayden’s piano, karate and swimming and Jocelyn’s gymnastics and ballet, Megan and I keep pretty busy,” he smiled. “The kids and I like to go fishing, and I enjoy jogging, weight-lifting and cooking. My favorite thing to do on a weekend is to make everyone breakfast.” It is also rumored that he makes one terrific brisket taco. **NOW**



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— By Carolyn Wills

Nicole Sisk is 13 years old, slender, soft-spoken with long blonde hair, and she stands a few inches over 4 feet tall. In some ways she resembles a softer, younger version of her favorite celebrity, Dakota Fanning, yet over the last three years, Nicole has clearly developed the talent and skill to power her own spotlight. When she was very young, she loved to play on the monkey bars. When she watched women's gymnastics on television, she was captivated. Then, at the age of 10, Nicole's shyness gave way to enthusiasm, and she stepped into the gym. Life for her and her family has not been the same since.

Now in the eighth grade at Joshua's Loflin Middle School, Nicole is into her fourth year of competitive gymnastics. Last May, she placed first for her level in three events at the state championship meet in Corinth, Texas, and also received her gym's annual Achiever of the Year award. "I train at Lucas Gymnastics," she said, "with Coach Marti Lucas."

Unquestionably, gymnastics takes enormous time, energy and discipline,

especially when fueled by an Olympic dream. In Nicole's case, the investment comes from her whole family. "Except for summer, I practice from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays," she explained. "We go to at least five meets in the year and some are as far away as Alvin, Texas, which is near Houston." Her grandmother, parents and brothers, 14-year-old Brian and 12-year-old Austin, are her steadfast supporters.

"We are extremely proud of her," Nicole's mother, Kelly Bill-Sisk, said. "She's an excellent student, member of the National Junior Honor Society and a magnificent artist. She loves to write stories, design dresses and she draws and paints."



"My favorite and best event is the uneven bars."

Nicole trains at a gym that specializes in women's gymnastics. The girls are encouraged to be friends and have fun at the gym parties, annual Halloween sleep-over and the awards ceremony. They respect their coach and applaud their teammates. "The gym is very family-oriented," Kelly explained. "Coach Lucas has five children and is also a gymnast."

One of Nicole's favorite gymnasts is Olympic star, Shawn Johnson, but

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another role model is much closer to home. “I really admire Avery Steppick,” she said. “She trains at our gym and started gymnastics when she was just 3 years old. She’s 11 now and has advanced to Elite status.” After a gymnast has moved through the Elite category, she is eligible to compete nationally and internationally.

Nicole’s scores at the state championship qualified her for Junior Prep 5, the last tier in the beginning category of competition. From Junior Prep, she has the opportunity to move through five “junior” levels and then on to seven “senior” levels ending with Senior Elite. Gymnastics is judged on a point system based on skill level and criteria for each of four events including vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise.

“My favorite and best event is the uneven bars,” Nicole smiled. “The floor exercise is where I need the most improvement and the balance beam is the scariest.” The vault takes focus and spatial awareness. The uneven bars necessitate flexibility and precision. The balance beam requires tumbling and dance skills and overcoming the fear of falling. The floor exercise can either be in a power or artistic form. Nicole’s is the artistic form which uses more dance moves. “Last year, my music was called ‘CatMix’ and the dance was Egyptian,” she said. “My coach designs the choreography, and I keep the same exercise all year. The floor exercise is the most difficult because it takes so much memorizing, and we have to stay inside the borders.” Each event requires balance, flexibility and power, and the hope of every gymnast



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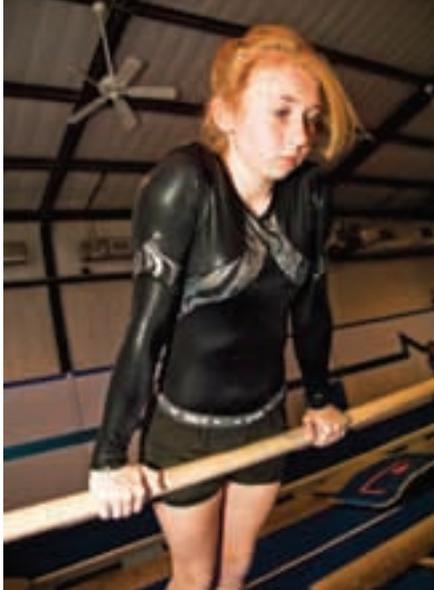
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in any performance is “sticking the perfect landing.”

Practice at the gym begins with stretching and conditioning exercises. “Then we do the events, usually starting with what we’re weakest at,” Nicole said. “Our practice leotards are black, silver and pink,” she explained. “We can also wear regular leotards but, in competition, every girl from our gym wears black and silver leotards with matching pants and a jacket.”

In competition, the rules are very important because points can be deducted if they are not followed. “Hair must be pulled back,” Nicole explained, “or it could be dangerous. Jewelry and shoes are not allowed and no undergarments can be seen. We always say the Pledge of Allegiance and sing the national anthem, and it’s important to remember to salute the judges.” Multiple gyms typically enter the meets, allowing opportunity to compete with teammates as well as others. The use of categories ensures that everyone competes against the same skill sets and has room to excel and grow. The categories are based on points so, on a good day, it’s possible for a gymnast to advance two to three levels.

Other than a slight emphasis on protein and not eating a lot of sweets, at this point, diet is not a major concern for Nicole. And, while she is aware of safety and the importance of having a spotter at each event, she realizes injuries can happen. “I broke my finger once while learning to do a back flip,” she said. “I landed on it sideways and had to take a month off.”

At home, Nicole’s room is decorated in her favorite color of lime green and, other than a collection of medals and

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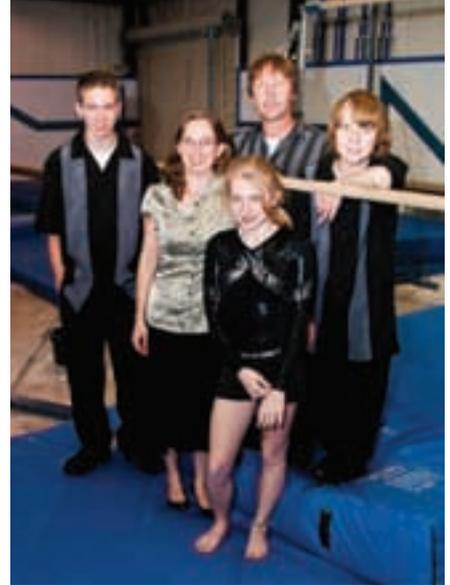
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trophies, it looks like the room of a teenage girl. Her family has lived in their house in Joshua for nine years. They have accomplished a fair amount of renovation and are usually involved in a do-it-yourself project. Nicole's father is self-employed. Her mother works full-time and goes to school at night to become an echocardiograph technician. Her younger brother, Austin, plays football. Her older brother, Brian, is involved in ROTC. The family's two white Labrador retrievers are mother and son, 14-year-old Roxy and 13-year-old Prince. Oh, and Traveler, the iguana, lives in his special inside home. "He got out the other night," Nicole smiled, "and fell asleep on my brother's pillow."

"I believe there are life changers for each of us," her father, Randy Sisk, said. "For me they were the Army and marriage. I think gymnastics is a life changer for Nicole. It's giving her structure, teaching accountability and consequence, as well as the values of determination, challenging fear and working together. She may not feel it's a life changer now, but I think she will one day."

For now, it's enough for Nicole to be enjoying her spotlight! **NOW**

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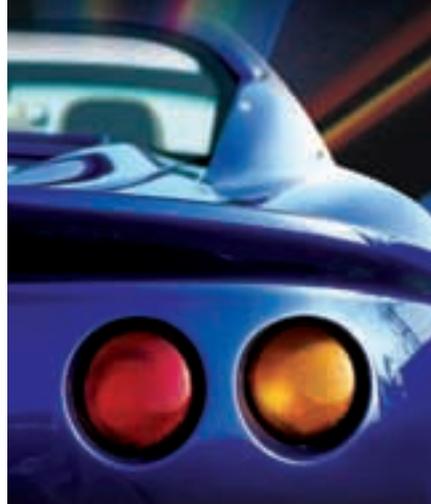
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Krys Davis enjoys the double blessing of a great job and a life of service as she trains women of all ages to be stronger and healthier.

Life is an Adventure

Metroplex Adventure Boot Camp trains you for the adventure of life! — By Melissa Rawlins

When Metroplex Adventure Boot Camp first started, people would call and ask the trainers to whip their teenagers into shape. “That was before every YMCA, every church, every Dunkin’ Donuts started a boot camp,” Krys Davis said. Krys launched the nationally accredited Metroplex Adventure Boot Camp (MABC) in 2006 with her husband, Sam, and their partner, Dee Henry. The boot camp provides women a customized fitness program that works their whole body through 12-20 workouts during four weeks. Losing fat and building muscle, women receive general and customized nutritional counseling in addition to the strenuous guided workouts.

MABC offers boot camps in other, larger areas of the Metroplex, but Burleson is one of their most thriving. “As a whole, we have one of the most successful boot camp programs

in the world,” Krys said. “Our retention rates in Burleson and Mansfield are the highest. Our average client in Burleson stays for one-and-a-half years, and we usually have an average of 40 or more women in boot camp at all times.”

Energized women energize others. With 40-something people working their bodies as hard as they can, there will be moments when Krys is not the only one encouraging her students. “There is always someone about your age who you will be able to watch and say, ‘Look how hard she’s working.’ Then you get the sense of community,” Krys explained. “There are people who will be your sisters, and some who will help guide you like a mother. It’s amazing; this community of women is a powerful force.”

Most women will not admit they have a problem working out with men. But there is a real sense of freedom at Metroplex

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Adventure Boot Camp. Nobody wears fancy clothes or makeup to the 5:30 a.m. sessions. They focus on working hard. “We are regimented,” Krys admitted. “Early in the morning, you commit to yourself as if you were committing to a real military boot camp. The difference is we are not trying to get 19-year-old boys ready for war. We’re trying to get women in shape for the rest of their lives.”

Krys was a high school athlete and a collegiate athletic trainer, then managed a Curves location and worked for 24-Hour Fitness, eventually working a high-powered corporate job. Since making the commitment to focus on helping people, Krys has found herself enjoying the double blessing of a great job and a life of service. “I recently got an e-mail from a new person saying, ‘I’ve never worked so hard, never felt better, never had so much fun doing it.’ That type of feedback is my reward,” Krys said.

“I didn’t know Metroplex Adventure Boot Camp was going to impact people’s lives like this. They came to lose five or 50 pounds. They stay for a year-and-a-half because the energy they soak up every morning, from this group feeding off each other, is all positive,” said Krys, who gets a happy smile when she crunches the numbers and reports that she has trained between 600-800 women just in Burleson, and thousands throughout all of MABC’s six locations.

“The next three months are great opportunities to get up, get out and get fit.”

“The next three months are great opportunities to get up, get out and get fit,” Krys said. “Exercising in your own backyard just for 10 minutes will give you a lot more than you expect. Go outside, walk around the neighborhood, go to the park, play Frisbee with your dog. Challenge yourself to try boot camp for 30 days, four weeks, and see how good it feels and how it changes you for the rest of your life.” **NOW**



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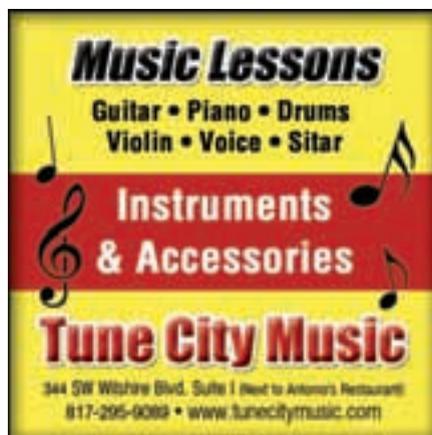
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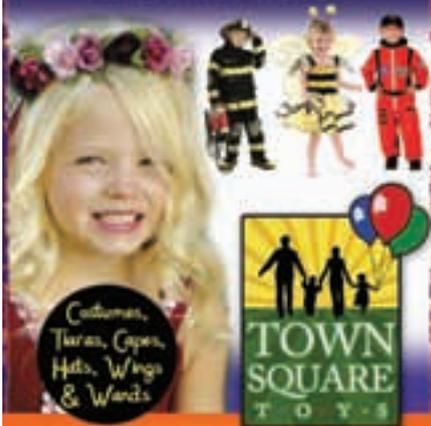
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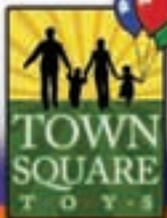
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Screening for Breast Cancer

— By Jackie Mitchusson

Every October, women are flooded with information about breast cancer, the second leading cause of cancer death in women according to the National Breast Cancer Awareness Month organization. That's because awareness and early detection can help save lives.

This year, an estimated 230,480 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be found in women, according to the American Cancer Society. About 57,650 new cases of carcinoma in situ (a non-invasive, early form of breast cancer) will be found. Early detection through screening mammograms and self-checks can help physicians catch the cancer earlier before greater complications may arise.

But what are the current recommendations on breast cancer screening for women? This has been a hot topic in the news lately. The American Cancer Society recommends these screening guidelines for most adult women:

- Yearly mammograms are recommended starting at age 40 and continuing for as long as a woman is in good health.
- Clinical breast exams should be performed about every 3 years for women in their 20s and 30s and every year for women 40 and over.
- Women should know how their breasts normally look and feel and report any breast change promptly to their health care provider. Breast self-exam (BSE) is an option for women starting in their 20s.
- Women who have a family history of breast cancer and/or women who are

at higher risk for breast cancer should consult with their physicians about whether they should begin screening at an earlier age and how frequently they should receive a mammogram.

Thanks to improvements in treatment and early detection, millions of women are surviving breast cancer today. For example, one advanced tool that is quickly becoming the standard in breast cancer detection is digital mammography.

A digital mammogram uses a special detector to capture and convert X-ray energy into a digital image. The image can be adjusted or magnified for further evaluation, making it easier to detect subtle differences between tissues. Images obtained through digital mammography are amazingly clear, much like the difference between high definition television and standard television.

Film mammography has been used for more than 35 years, but has been shown to be less sensitive for women who have dense breasts. Studies have shown that approximately 10 to 20 percent of cancers detected during physical examination or breast self-examination are not visible on film mammography.

Check with your local hospitals and health centers to find out whether digital mammography is offered in your community. Breast cancer can affect any woman as she gets older. The earlier it's detected, the greater the chance of experiencing a better outcome. To find out more information about breast cancer visit www.komen.org, www.cancer.org or www.nbcam.org. **NOW**

*Jackie Mitchusson, Mammography Technician
Texas Health Harris Methodist Outpatient
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What's the Alternative?

— By Scott Brown

The increasing complexity of the world's financial system has many people scratching their heads wondering what to do with their savings. The investment markets seem to make no sense and the "safe" places to keep your savings don't seem very safe anymore. More and more people feel like they must choose between an unpredictable stock market or cash in the bank earning next to nothing.

The ease of investor access to public stock markets has created an opportunity for average investors to own a piece of a business much larger than they could ever buy privately, while utilizing professional executives to deal with the complexities of running these large businesses. Yet despite this access, many people find themselves buying into investments that they simply don't understand and potentially end up with investments that



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are unsuitable for their needs.

Ostensibly, this is the reason why most individuals hire professionals to manage their money — because they have the training to analyze these complexities and direct them to the right investments. But do you really trust these people whom you have hired to work for you? When your life savings has been entrusted to them, it's easy to question your own judgment in trusting theirs. This lack of trust frequently causes people to second guess their recommendations, and they end up making decisions based on emotional factors, not rational ones.

Enter alternative investments. Generally, alternative investments are more traditional investments. Their values are usually not correlated to the swings of the stock market, and their business models often cater to niche investors who desire specialized tax or income benefits. Most are geographically regional in nature and small enough in size that they never capture the attention of the Wall Street investment bankers. Management is usually quite accessible, and the business concepts are generally much easier to grasp. But perhaps most importantly, one doesn't get seasick every time they check their investment statement as valuations are far less frequent and thus tend to be more stable. People are more likely to buy an alternative investment and forget about it than they are to do the same thing with a publicly traded investment. Remember to do a reality check and consider the motivation behind those who are offering you shares in these investments. If it's too complex to understand, it's generally a good idea to walk away.

There are no perfect investments. However, if the only kind you have considered is that which can be bought or sold with the click of a mouse button, you are likely robbing yourself of some opportunities for stability and growth that may well provide the emotional foundation for being able to hold your public investments through periods of market instability.

Scott Brown is a finance officer with Superior Retirement Strategies based in Burleson.

Look who's found a new home at First United.

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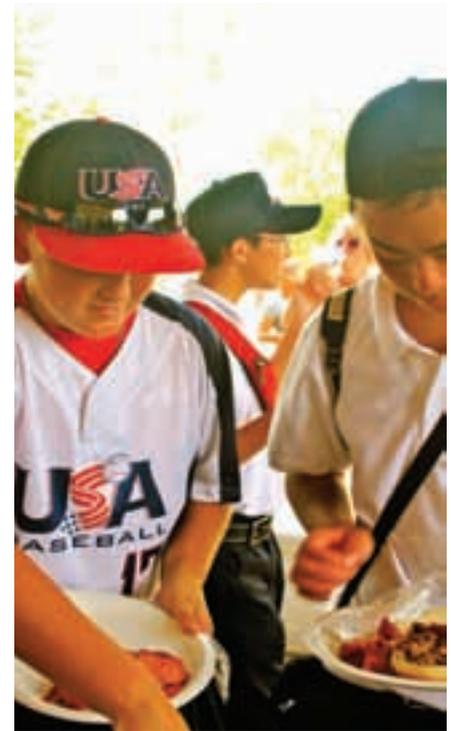
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Volunteers, Cyndi and Lee Cobb, sell T-shirts at the Hearts on Fire benefit concert.



BISD school psychologist, Crystal Beadle, wins a free consultation at Joshua Health Center during the New Teachers Appreciation Luncheon.



Friendly competitors from Team USA and Team Japan share a hamburger meal hosted by Burleson Youth Association.



Crowley Public Library hosts a carnival for children in their summer reading program, where Tobin and Zane Wong learn that reading is fun!



Charles Williamson, volunteer, helps get Rail Car #330 ready for Founders Day.

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October 4

National Night Out: 6:00 p.m.-midnight, throughout Crowley. Residents will work together to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness. Contact Officer Chris LaChance at clachance@ci.crowley.tx.us or (817) 297-2276, ext. 6205.

October 6

Careity Foundation's 3rd Annual Johnson County Pink Lunch — *Muy Caliente!*: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., St. Matthew Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The Athena Society of Burleson hosts this event to benefit the Careity Breast Care Center in The Center for Cancer & Blood Disorders at Huguley Memorial Medical Center. Contact Careity Foundation at (817) 882-4100.

October 8

3rd Annual Speak Up For Kids CASA 5K: registration: 3:00 p.m.; first run at 5:00 p.m., CASA of Johnson County, 210 Featherston, Cleburne. Call Cheryl Price or Meghan Richardson at (817) 558-6995 or visit www.casajohnsoncounty.org.

19th Annual Founders Day: 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Old Town Burleson. Mock gunfights and great food, arts and crafts, carnival rides and

entertainment will take place on Ellison Street between Johnson Avenue and the railroad tracks. Contact David McDowell at (817) 426-9104.

October 11

Business After Hours Networking: 5:30-7:30 p.m., Fidelity National Title, 111 N.W. Newton, Suite A. Free for Burleson Chamber of Commerce members; \$10 for nonmembers. Call Terri Trefger at (817) 372-1622.

October 13, 14 and 15

Texas LST Amphibious Association Reunion: Noon Thursday-10:00 p.m. Saturday, Holiday Inn Express, Burleson. All living WWII and Vietnam Veterans (and their wives) who served on landing ship tanks will gather. Event closes Saturday evening with a banquet at The Rig. Call Richard Opperman at (817) 447-6415.

October 13

Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church. Sponsored by Huguley Memorial Hospital. RSVP Members-\$20, Nonmembers-\$25, Late RSVP-\$30. Call Mary Slaney at (817) 343-2589.

October 14

Drive Away Child Abuse Annual Golf

Tournament: Morning Flight: 7:30 a.m. Afternoon Flight: 1:30 p.m. Both are shotgun starts at Hidden Creek Golf Course. For sponsorship and other event details, visit www.casajohnsoncounty.org. E-mail golfinfo@johnsoncounty.org or call Meghan Richardson at (817) 558-6995.

October 15

Joshua Fall Festival & Health Fair: 8:00 a.m.: "Blue Inferno" 5K Race benefiting the Jr. ROTC; 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., festival begins, Joshua High School Stadium. Fun, food and vendors promoting health and wellness, free flu shots and blood pressure screenings, children's costume contest, annual dog show, car show and several concerts! Contact Joshua Chamber of Commerce at (817) 558-2821.

October 29

Boo Bash: 6:00-8:00 p.m., Old Town Burleson. Free games, candy, costume parade, vendor booths and entertainment. Contact David McDowell at (817) 426-9112. Sign up for booths by contacting Neal Jones at (817) 447-3552 or (817) 343-2589.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to melissa.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.



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In The Kitchen With Laura Gibbs

— *By Melissa Rawlins*

At the ripe old age of 6, Laura Gibbs grated and fried hash browns for breakfast in her family's Sacramento, California, galley kitchen. That was the beginning of a lifetime of cooking huge, delicious meals for others. All the recipes she shares here are tried-and-true for potlucks and holiday get-togethers, because Laura has a lot of practice cooking for work luncheons and large dinners for friends and family.

Laura loves cooking Southern, Mexican and Italian food, and, following in her mother's footsteps, She makes incredible, mouth-watering pies and cakes from scratch. "I really enjoy cooking. It's one of the ways I show love," Laura said. "After an enjoyable meal, the dessert is kind of like the icing on the cake!" **NOW**

Mom's Old-fashioned Pie Crust

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 cup shortening
1/4 cup ice cold water

1. In a large bowl, add flour and salt. Cut in the shortening.
2. Pour in water. Mix with hands; form into a ball; chill.
3. Roll out on floured waxed paper; form to fit into a 9-inch pie plate.
4. Preheat oven to 350 F; bake 30 minutes.

Mom's Chocolate Cream Pie & Whip Cream Topping

1 5.1-oz. box cook-and-serve

chocolate pudding
3 cups milk
1 cup sugar (divided use)
4 tsp. vanilla (divided use)
1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream

1. Cook pudding according to package directions with milk, 1/4 cup sugar and 2 tsp. vanilla. Pour into already cooked pie crust. Chill.
2. With mixer on high speed, make topping by blending heavy cream, 3/4 cup sugar and 2 tsp. vanilla together until whipping cream is stiff. Place topping on chilled pie and serve.

Crusty Baked Pork Chops

30-40 club crackers
1 8-oz. pkg. shredded 3-Italian cheese blend
3 eggs

5 cups milk (divided use)
6-8 pork chops
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp. each salt and pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350 F
2. In food processor, blend crackers and cheese. Place mixture in storage bag.
3. In a small mixing bowl, beat eggs and 2 cups milk.
4. Dip pork chops in batter, place in storage bag and shake to coat.
5. In a large skillet, heat olive oil to medium high. Fry battered pork chops on each side until golden brown. Salt and pepper to taste.
6. Place chops in oven-proof pan and bake an additional 30 minutes.
7. To make the gravy, place remaining cracker crumbs and cheese into skillet on medium heat. Add remaining 3 cups milk, stirring to make a roux. Transfer gravy to blender, blend until smooth, and then return to skillet to simmer. Pour over pork chops.

Hummingbird Cake

3 cups flour
2 cups sugar
1 tsp. soda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
3 eggs, beaten
1 1/2 cups cooking oil
1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple, undrained
1 cup chopped pecans
2 cups bananas
2 tsp. vanilla

Cream Cheese Frosting:
1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
1 box powdered sugar
2 tsp. vanilla
1/4 cup milk
1 cup nuts

1. Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl. Add beaten eggs and oil. Stir only until dry ingredients are moist.
2. Stir in pineapple, nuts and bananas. Add vanilla and mix. Be careful to stir lightly. (*Do not use mixer.*)
3. Gently spoon into 3 greased 9-inch pans. Bake at 350 F for 25-30 minutes.
4. Make frosting by mixing the first 4 ingredients in a mixer. Then add the nuts. Frost the cake and serve.

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