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# Midlothian NOW

M A G A Z I N E

December 2007

**The Gift  
of Self**

**The Heart to  
Persevere**

**Voices  
in Unity**

**A Work in  
Progress**

**The Real Agent**

*At Home With*

**Chad and  
Gina Adams**

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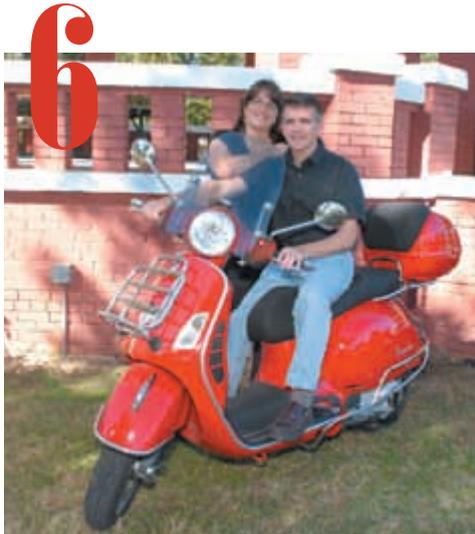
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# Midlothian NOW

## Editor's Note

### Merry Christmas Midlothians!

Three gingerbread men ornaments grace the Christmas tree every year in our home, crafted by each of my children when they were in kindergarten. They all had the same teacher and this was her contribution for their Christmas gift to Mom. The special touch each child put to its gift makes each one a little different. Many years later, they remind us of cherished times.



Everything related to this marvelous season is a part of it for a reason. The fantastic light displays, the beautifully decorated trees and incredible music give homage to that most holy day, the birth of Jesus Christ.

Ellis County Judge Chad Adams and his wife Gina, share some precious Christmas memories handed down through their families in this issue. Celebrate this Christmas by joining the MHS choir for their Christmas musical program on December 13. Call the high school for more information.

From all of us at *NOW Magazines*, we want to wish you beautiful memories this Christmas, and peace and happiness in the New Year.

Betty Tryon  
Midlothian Editor



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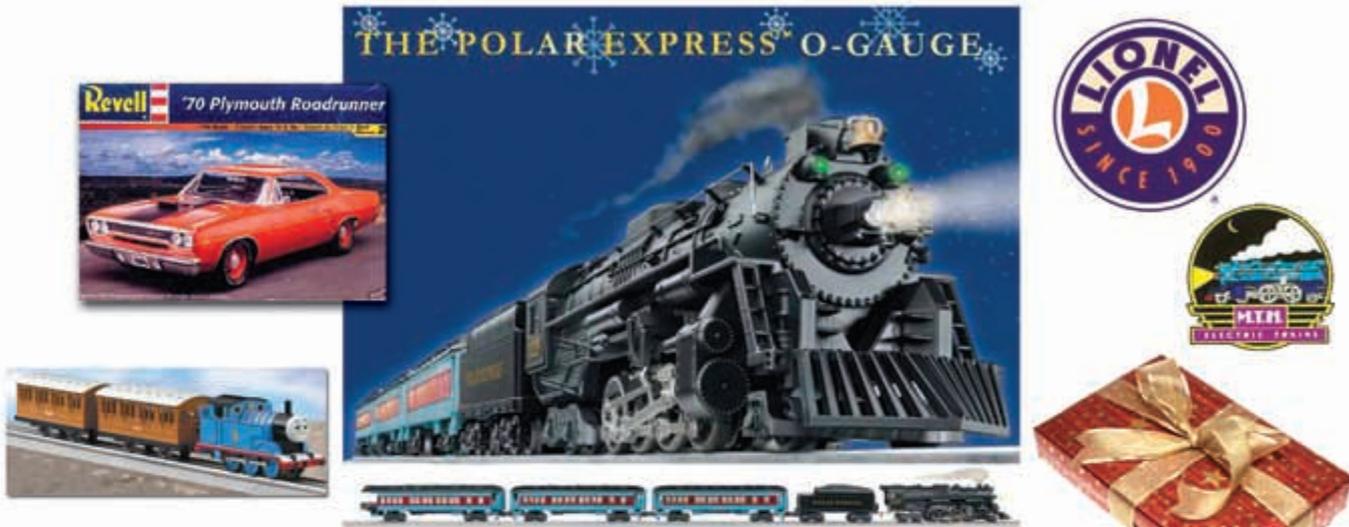
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# The Gift of Self



— By Betty Tryon

“Go ahead, make my day.” If offered \$100 unexpectedly, with no strings attached, many people would probably say that. The Pantherettes of Midlothian High School were given just such an opportunity last Christmas — courtesy of Billy and Renee McElheney and their company, Automation Support Inc. Their daughter, Krystal, is a member of the squad. Renee said, “I thought it would be cool to see what the girls would do.”

The stories that emerged were warm and heartrending. “At first the girls were really excited, and several of them wanted to go to Mexico, buy a bunch of toys and donate them to an orphanage,” explained Renee. “After they started looking at the cost with the travel and everything, they knew that idea wasn’t practical. The girls got creative and came up with good ideas. One girl took her grandma who is on a fixed-income, out to get her nails and hair done and then took her out to lunch.

“Some of the squad members went to a retirement home for special needs. The residents made arts and crafts to make extra money for the home. The girls donated their money to the home

and spent the day helping them. One girl knew that one of her teachers had cancer and she donated her \$100 in gift certificates to the family. The director of the squad donated her money to the Susan B. Komen Foundation in honor

would seem to be enough, but not for the McElheney. Billy said simply, “We’ve been blessed.” Their charity also reached out to the Christmas Angel Tree that resides in the school during the holidays. The children in



of her mother, who is a cancer survivor. She now wants to do it every year.”

In the estimation of some, to give \$100 to 30 girls during the Christmas holiday in the hope of good works,

the school choose any of the items off the tree they wish to purchase and donate to a needy family; inevitably, there are always unselected gift items left on the tree. Renee remarked, “We

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want to make sure that everyone is covered, so we take any items left that need to be purchased. Usually, they are the big-ticket items like bicycles and game systems. Also, we try to take care of any family that we hear about in need.”

Christmas is not the only date on the calendar which captures their generosity. Renee said, “When school starts, we donate tons of backpacks. Other people donate many of the items that go inside as many people in Midlothian give generously every day.”

Few have the history in this community that Renee does. She explained, “My family traveled by covered wagon from Tennessee. Charlie and Theola Lawson were my great-grandparents. Garland and Ilamae were my grandparents and Patsy Lawson Davis is my mom.” Yet instead of resting on her laurels as a member of one of the first families of Midlothian, Renee and her husband, Billy, have woven themselves into the fabric of this community by their hard work and good deeds.

It all began one day during their high school years when Billy, behaving recklessly as a teenager, wrecked his car. He was stuck at school since he no longer had a vehicle, so he hung out in the school office where Renee had an after-school job. After Billy purchased another car, he would give Renee rides home from school. She started to have tender feelings for him, but Billy did not have a clue. She said, “After awhile I started to wonder, why won’t he ask me out? Even the vice principal took Billy aside and asked, ‘Don’t you know this girl likes you?’” Taking the bull

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by the horns, Renee invited Billy to her home to watch a movie. His enthusiastic response was, "I don't know. What's on?" That response has become a punch line for the couple. Billy said, "Whenever something comes up, we now say, 'I don't know. What's on?'" They were married in February 1985.

Since their marriage, they participate in everything together. Billy stated, "One of my life's goals was to be president of my own company. At the time we started Automation Support Inc. to do business as technical support, there was no way should we have made it." Renee explained, "I was working full time for a doctor, part time for our business, and working with a lawyer at night to pay off the start-up fees. But it was important to do this because Billy was always away from the family." Billy agreed and said, "I don't like to be in debt. You have to be away from your family, and it can destroy the core. Owning your business gives you control of your life."

One of the miracles the McElheneys like to share is how their business came to reside in the old Ivey studio building. According to Billy, "We had been forced out of our old building, which used to be the old post office. This is where God turned a bad situation into something good. We needed a new place downtown, and I wanted the Ivey building. ... We had [approached] Janie Ivey twice before to purchase the building, but it was not a good time. Then, one day while driving through the desert to a job, I felt God directed me to call Ivey again. We were reluctant because we had asked twice before, but

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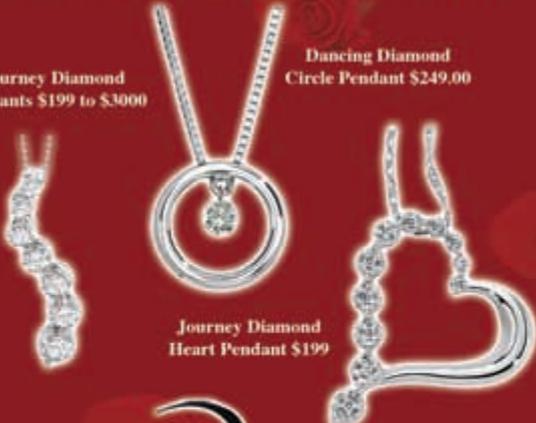
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what we didn't know was that Janie and her husband had prayed the night before about selling, and their one stipulation to God was that someone would have to call. We made contact at 8 a.m. the next morning, and Janie said, "Yes!"

In addition to working their business full time, they still make time for things that are important to them. Renee said, "I knew when we had kids that we would be involved." The next time you are at a volleyball or basketball game, you can thank the Pantherettes and dedicated volunteers like the McElheneys for the concession stand. Renee gets the food, helps prepare it and stock it and many times stays to serve it. "I enjoy the interaction," she said.

Erma Bombeck gave Renee one of her favorite sayings. "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would have not a single bit of talent left and could say, 'I used everything you gave me.'" Renee, with a big smile on her face said, "When I stand before God, I hope I made a difference." **NOW**

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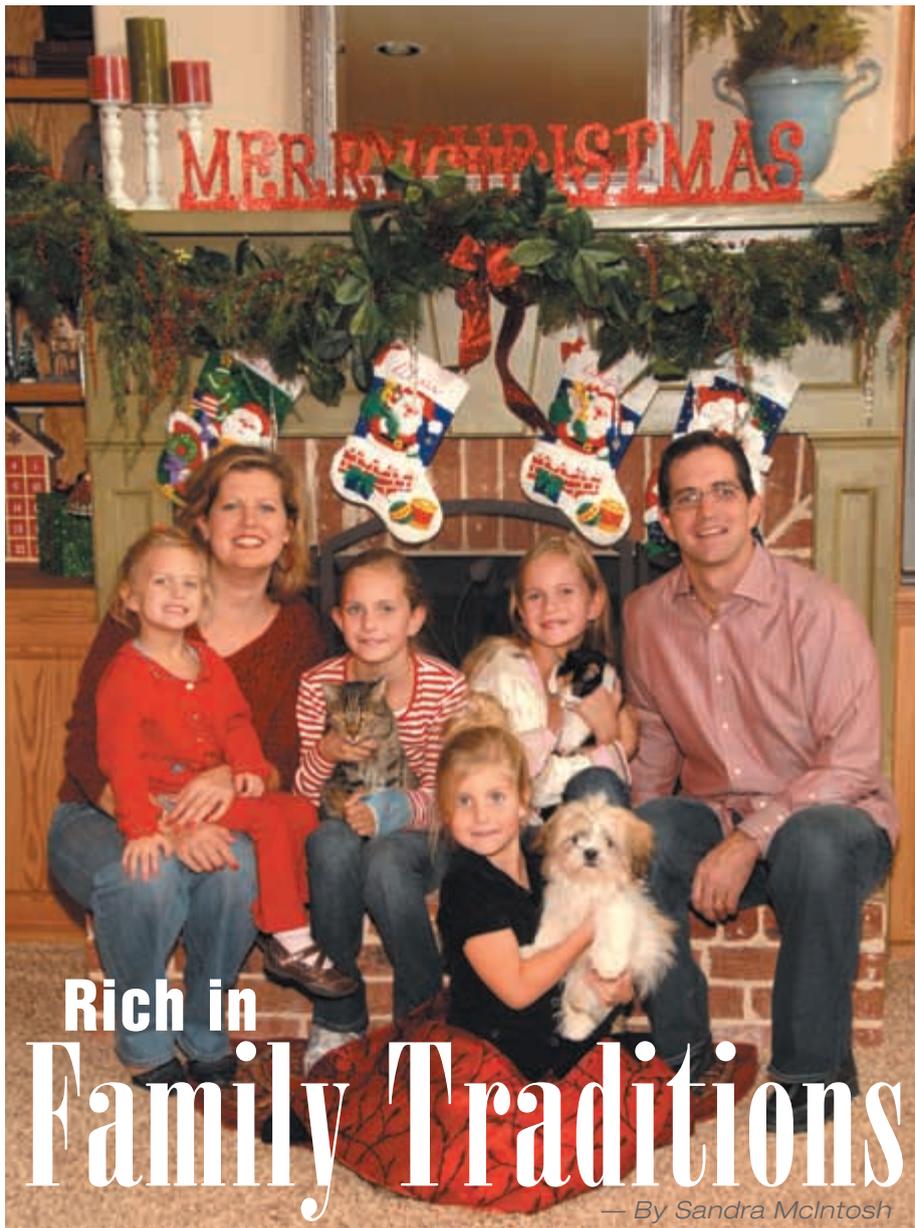
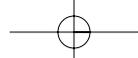
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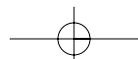
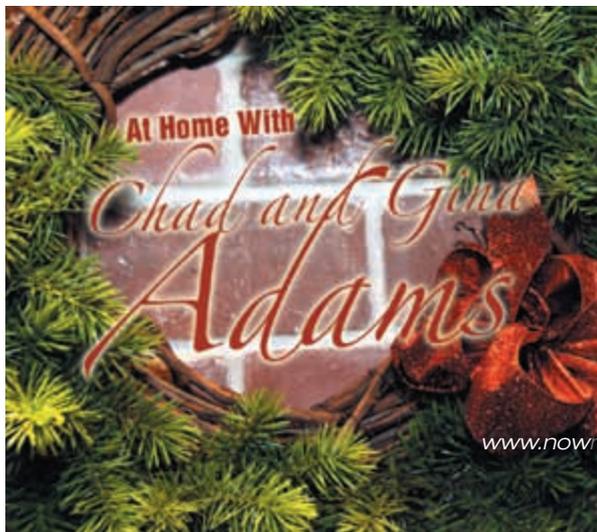
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# Rich in Family Traditions

— By Sandra McIntosh

When stockings are hung from the mantle with care, it can only mean one thing for Chad, Gina, Abbie, Lexie, Mandie and Mollie Adams — the spirit of St. Nicholas will soon be there. The history behind the wonderfully intricate, handmade stockings goes back 36 years ago to the time when Gina was born. “My grandmother, Helen Amelia Ricketts, who is now 87 years old, spent hours making stockings for each





of her grandchildren. She sewed every sequin on by hand,” Gina said, adding that each great-grandchild born is still honored today with a personalized stocking they can call their very own. “They are three-dimensional and some even have removable pieces that come out of Santa’s bag.”

Gina is proud to say that her grandmother did not stop with just one family tradition. “She also made matching tree skirts for each of her grandchildren,” Gina explained. “She has handcrafted 10 skirts decorated with five snowflakes and five sets of bells. It’s special to me when I see it under the tree because I know it was made with love.”

Helen seems to have thought of everything to make Christmas merry, as well as memorable, for her family.



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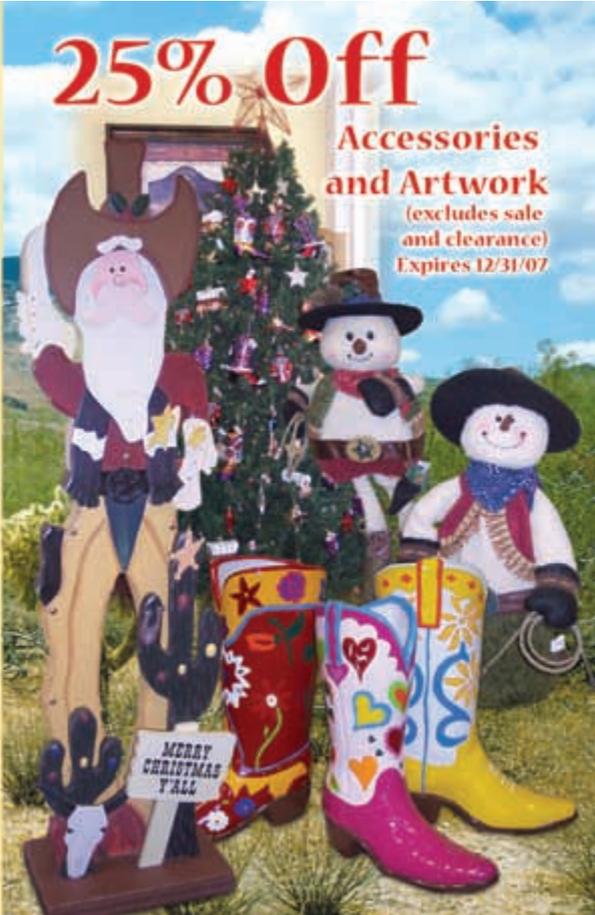
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Without ornaments, she knew that a tree would remain a mere tree. It only became a Christmas tree when it was dressed in beautiful decorations, so she also started giving a new ornament to her grandchildren each year. "She bought us the Beatrix Potter animal ornaments," Gina said, adding that each ornament came packaged with its own storybook. "Grandma loved the stories growing up, so she thought the ornaments would be a great idea." Gina went on to explain that the last Beatrix Potter ornament was received

in 1988. "After that, she started giving us an ornament of one kind or another," Gina added, also mentioning that the ornament giving has tapered off a bit as the years have gone by.

This year, as the family settled into their new five-bedroom, two-and-one-half-bath, French Country-style home, which they built and designed as a family, they are really looking forward to baking cookies. Christmas cookies

are a tradition passed down to Gina from her mom, Nancy Prikryl. "I plan to carry this one on down the line with our four girls. We love to bake cookies and quick breads," Gina said, as County Judge Chad Adams smiled in agreement, knowing full-well he was going to enjoy the tradition of eating them. As they preheat the oven and add all the ingredients to their mixing bowls, you can be sure they will be wearing the aprons that Chad's mother, Alvena Adams, handcrafted for the annual event. "She is such a wonderful seamstress," Chad said. "She sends

handmade costumes to the girls all the time, too."

Each year, Chad takes his family back to his hometown in Nebraska, working around everyone's schedules to get there. "It's something we never miss," he said. Gina and the girls also love the time

spent up north, not just for the promise of snow, but for the annual performance



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they have all played a part in from year-to-year. "Chad was the baby 37 years ago," Gina said, further explaining that the Nativity scene is performed every year and the baby of the family gets to play the part of baby Jesus. "The year the twins (Abbie and Lexie) were the youngest, we switched them out halfway through the presentation."

Gina, feeling that further explanations were needed to fully understand the play's magnitude, added, "Everything for the play is kept in the basement, but we act the scene out each year in the largest room we can find. Sometimes, we even rent a room at the church. It's so big that each year a director is appointed. When Chad's family does something, they do it up right."

To fully comprehend what the holiday season means to Chad and Gina, you have to go back to church camp where

they first met as teenagers. When camp was over, they shared letters to one another for a decade, until it came time for Chad to travel to Ethiopia for an internship/mission trip that lasted 12 months. Upon his return, the pair had agreed to meet at his sister's house in Kansas. As Gina was making final preparations for her trip, her sister

showed up. "It was Christmas day. I was ready to be done with Christmas so I could see Chad," she said, still smiling at the memory of the gift her sister delivered that day. "The top of the refrigerator box begins to come off. All I see are someone's feet. I didn't know it was Chad until I saw his face. Chad was the best Christmas present ever!"

Christmas reminds this family of how it all began. Chad said it reminds them of all the good times. Other good times that have been shared with the girls include visiting the Rancho



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Poco Loco Tree Farm in Midlothian, where the family not only picks a live Christmas tree, but also enjoys all the fun events the farm has to offer. "We take a Christmas hay ride," Gina said. "We sip apple cider and the girls play games and pet the farm animals." Gina stated that this will be the first year they take the trip, but come home without a tree, since they purchased an artificial one after Christmas last year.

The artificial tree, with a lifetime of decorations and memories, will take

its place in the family room. As Chad and Gina sit back and relax, the girls will probably be performing in song and dance from one of the two opera house balconies that look down 24 feet into the open area where the family spends most of their time. Or maybe Gina will be standing in one of the balconies looking out at the nature surrounding their home, while Chad and the girls are getting out sleeping bags for their night under the Christmas tree. "Chad



has always let the girls sleep under the tree at least one night before Christmas comes," Gina said.

The girls' bedrooms and oversized playroom are also located upstairs, leaving the master suite, the study and an indoor mudroom downstairs. Since the home building process began nearly three years ago, the majority of the girls' toys have been stored away. "Needless to say, they have been so excited to see them again," Gina said, referring to the feat of getting all the boxes unpacked.

The Adams family is rich in tradition, but as parents, Chad and Gina believe the holiday should still be centered on the true reason for the season. "We want to keep the fun and imagination alive. We want the girls to get excited as they leave cookies and milk out for Santa," Gina said, "but the focus needs to be on Jesus Christ." **NOW**

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# A Work in Progress

— By Betty Tryon

Many of us will look at a seashell and see, well, a seashell, beautiful in its simplicity but still just a seashell. Smitty looks at it and sees a canvas. Known only as Smitty by her many friends, she explained, "My family traveled a lot as a child. We would drive to the shore in a motor home and I collected shells and sand dollars. I would take a toothpick and paint detailed pictures on them. I like to look at something and think, *What could it be if it were something else?*"

Even as a young girl, Smitty remembers looking at life with an artist's eyes. "When I was younger, I loved to color," she said. "It was not about scribbling. I was always trying to make something out of nothing. When I was in high school, I worked for a florist. That gave me the idea that what I do could be appealing to the public. I liked the idea that I could get to do something with my hands for a career. I thought about painting, designing or cutting hair.

"After high school, I had two scholarships to Navarro in art and in choir! I only went one semester and thought art would just be more of a hobby for me. I'm glad I went, but I learned I was more interested in



creating what I liked. I knew I didn't want to be on a marketing team or a commercial designer."

Feeling the need to be more interactive with people, Smitty decided to go to cosmetology school in search of a career. "I love people," she said passionately. "I



love to see something in progress so I went to Ogle School of Hair-Skin-Nails in Arlington, Texas. When people come to you, they have a need. The thing about my job is it isn't about hair or nails, but when it's done, they

feel better about themselves."

It is not always easy to create something that others will enjoy. Smitty acknowledged this saying, "It is a hard thing to step into someone's personal space. But, I still enjoy what I do at my business, Smittydidit. This

is the second salon that I have owned. We have been in the Industrial Park for four-and-a-half years."

Smitty's talents excel in photography also. "I have done wedding and family portraits for six years," she said. It all started when, as a teenager, she worked as the editor of the Annual at Midlothian High School.

"When traveling on trips, I would take lots of pictures. I learned photography strictly by just doing lots of different things. Friends would see my stuff and like it. I had a friend who was not going to have a photographer at her

**ARTS  
NOW**



wedding. I offered to do it for free as a gift to her and it snowballed from there.”

Window painting allows Smitty another expression of her artistic talent. She stated, “I was working at Changes in town and got the idea for Halloween that we should all dress up like the characters in *Wizard of Oz*. This was when Midlothian started doing the business Halloween stuff. One of us dressed as a Munchkin, another as the Cowardly Lion, and [another as] Auntie Em.

“I decided to paint the Emerald City on the window. You can’t have the *Wizard of Oz* without a tornado, so I took window screen and wire, made a tornado out of that and hung it on the eaves outside the building. I love Halloween. People get out of their norm to be someone they’re not. They let their hair down. Life is so fast and furious that it is fun to see grown men be silly, a little boy be superman and a little girl become a princess.”

Smitty’s creativeness caught the attention of other business owners. “I was approached by Tami Tobey because she wanted me to paint her husband’s business’ windows for Christmas. After

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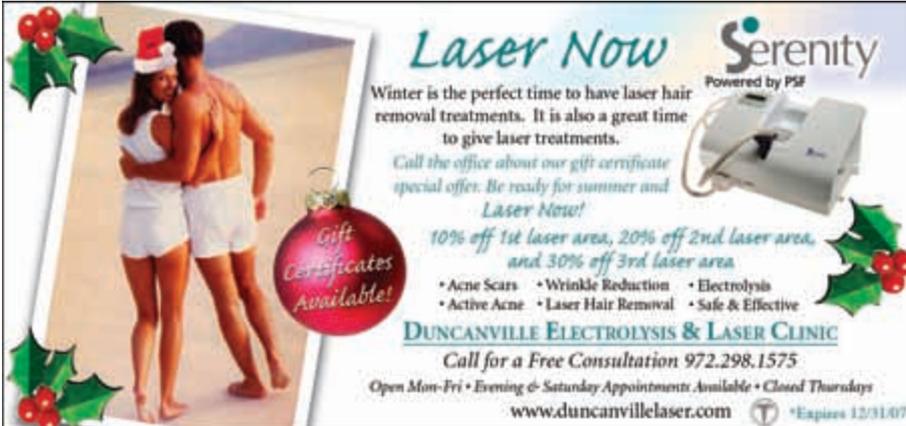
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that, the bank called and other businesses called for me to paint their windows. I still paint windows, but I also paint murals. I enjoy that more because I am out of the elements and it is permanent. When I paint holiday windows, after the holiday they take that stuff down. Murals get to stay. When I do the murals, I feel as if I am capturing something to give them, something to keep.”

One of Smitty’s most recent projects now graces the walls at the Children’s Palace. “I was able to paint entire rooms there,” she said. “It is most gratifying to have the kids look at a lion or tiger and start interacting. It changes how they play. It helps them be more creative.

“I love doing animated and kid-oriented themes. I don’t want to grow up anytime soon. I work because tons of people think I have a gift. Whether it’s cosmetology, photography or painting, without my hands I don’t know what else I would be doing. I am so lucky.” **NOW**

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# The Heart to Persevere

— By Betty Tryon

Sport watchers are no longer shocked when athletes with diverse levels of talent behave badly. How does a sports program begin to change that perception? The football program at Midlothian High School may have the answer. The coaches work diligently not only to put a great team on the field, but great men into society. One of the caretakers of this philosophy is assistant head coach and defensive coordinator, Craig Carpenter. He said, “We have an awesome coaching staff. The athletes are unbelievable. I have never been a part of a program where the word love is used so much. Our number one goal is for the athletes to love each other. The coaches love the kids. It is like a family atmosphere.”

**“It is gratifying to see it pay off as the kids buy into your philosophy, which is family.”**

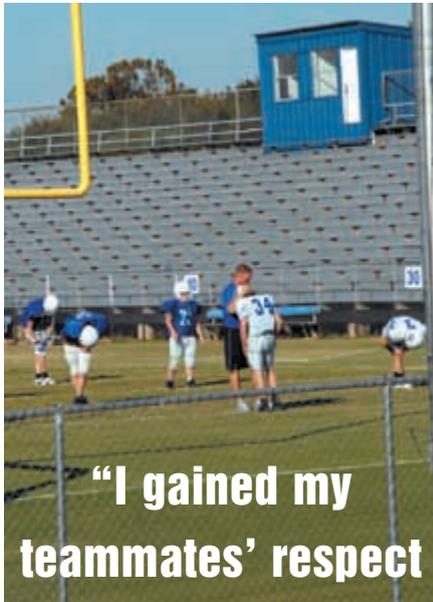


In addition to teaching playing skills, they teach life lessons. Craig explained, “We have focus words of the week. A coach comes in at the beginning of the week, presents the word and gives an illustration on it; the other coaches look for teachable moments throughout the week to reinforce it. We have words like perseverance, pride and focus. For example, this week’s word is focus. Consistently throughout the week, we teach what it means to focus and

# Sports NOW

prepare yourself. It is gratifying to see it pay off as the kids buy into your philosophy, which is family.”

Craig knows a lot about persevering your way to success. As a freshman at Sam Houston State University, he walked on to the team without a scholarship. “I earned a scholarship after being there a year,” he stated. “But, that first season, I didn’t play at all. I was the sixth or seventh tight end. It was a good time to refocus and persevere.”



**“I gained my teammates’ respect being a backup, then a starter, then a leader. That production WON their respect.”**

“My last two years, I started for the defense. In my senior year, the players at Sam Houston voted me in as MVP. I gained my teammates’ respect being a backup, then a starter, then a leader. That production won their respect.” Winning MVP as part of the defensive team is a difficult award to achieve.

Many other honors awaited Craig before he finished his football career at Sam Houston. For his junior and senior

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## Sports NOW

year, he won All-Conference. The entire team voted him captain during his senior year. When presented with the Stan Blinka award at the football banquet, Craig realized he had come a long way from being a walk-on,

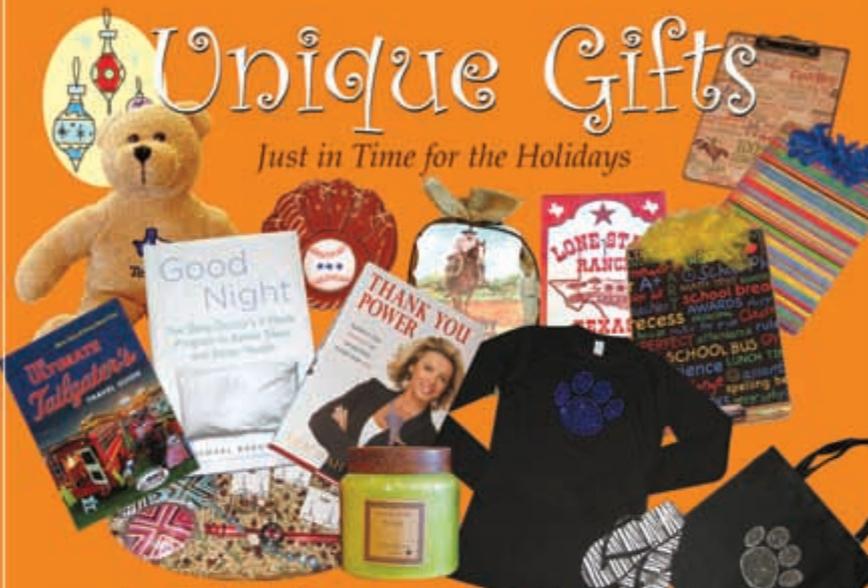
**“When I came here I knew this was a community waiting to explode for football. We are in a very competitive district; every game anyone can win. It is a big challenge to coach in a district as competitive as this.”**

non-playing teammate. “I was honored to receive that award. It is the highest football award given at Sam Houston,” he remarked.

Craig graduated the summer of 1998 with a degree in kinesiology and physical education with a minor in history. He also earned his teacher’s certification. “I wanted to coach and work with athletes. My first job was in Pittsburgh, in northeast Texas. I was there for one year as assistant varsity coach. I went with the head coach to Alvarado for two years and to Brewer. Both positions were as assistant varsity coach.”

During his earlier coaching years, Craig made the acquaintance of Robbie Clark, now the head coach of Midlothian Panthers, and moved to Midlothian. “I love this community,” he said. “When I came here I knew this was a community waiting to explode for football. We are in a very competitive district; every game

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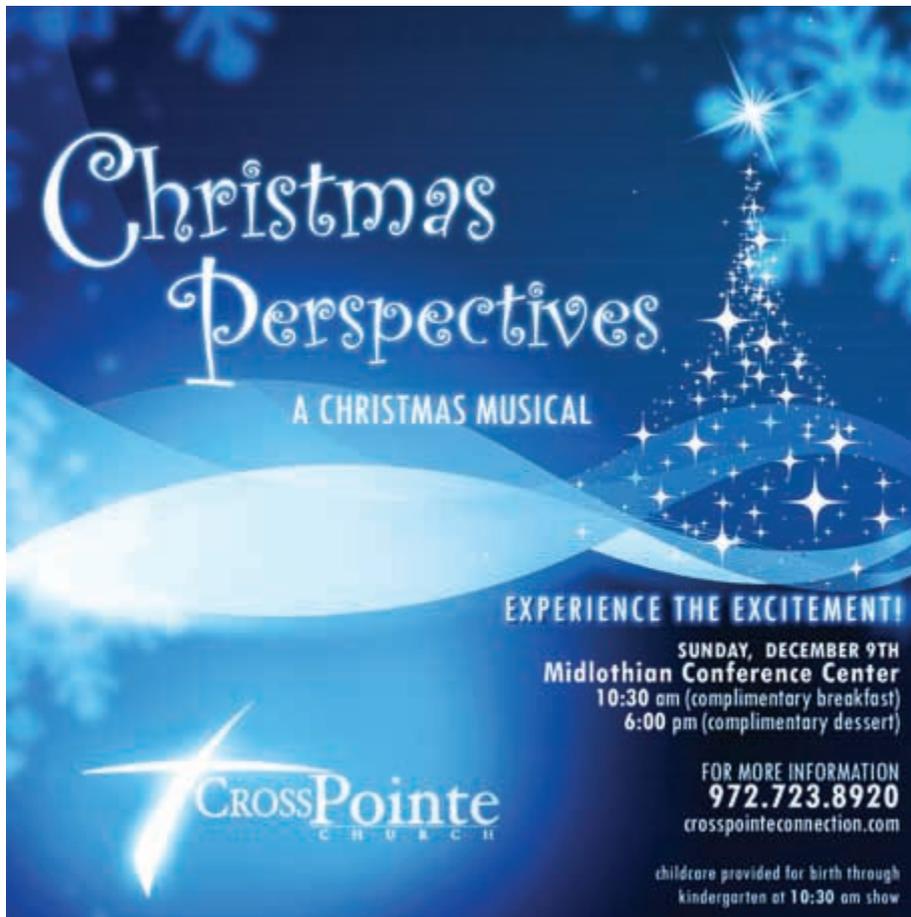
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anyone can win. It is a big challenge to coach in a district as competitive as this.”

In response to a previous game in which the team won in the last few minutes, he said, “We made mistakes on all phases we need to clear up. But to come from behind and win is a big thing. There is a lot of excitement in a game like that, but immediately afterward we are already getting their



**“Our whole staff wants this program to be successful.**

minds into the next challenge. Our team does a great job of not overlooking the opponent. Sometimes, we have the seniors get the kids focused. If you don’t bring your A game, you can lose it.”

Since being a member of the team, Craig appreciates its discipline. His nine years of experience as a coach comes in handy when assisting Coach Clark. He stated, “There are 2,000 students in this school. With a school of this size, you have to have the ability to run smoothly. Coach Clark has to be away sometimes, giving speeches out in the community; it’s nice to know his routine is being carried out even when he is away.”

Craig grew up in Teague, Texas, a town of three to four thousand people, which is a far cry from Midlothian with its school district numbering in multiple thousands. However, Craig still thinks the city has a small town feel to it. Part of his pride in being a part of this community is his contribution to it. “Our whole staff wants this program to be successful. We want to live our lives in a way to help them become productive citizens.” They are all great role models for our students. **NOW**



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# The Real Agent

— By Dia Catalani

People who hire a Realtor to sell or locate their property are smart to do so for two reasons: Learning and applying the knowledge required would be akin to taking on a second full-time career for you, and secondly, only a licensed real estate agent can truly protect your interests.

Donna Lasater, an accredited Realtor with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in DeSoto, also knows your neighborhood and what it takes to sell your home. Donna has experienced 27 years of this area's trends and, along with her team of professionals, uses proven strategies to help sell your home. It is how Donna became Coldwell Banker's top-selling agent for several years, and was twice named Best Realtor by *D Magazine*. Coldwell Banker named Donna among their Presidential Elite (top one percent of the entire company) and was presented with The Dozen's Award,



*Realtor Donna Lasater is one of Coldwell Banker's best in the nation.*

awarded only to the top five percent of all agents in the United States.

Donna said a key to success — and her average of selling 120 homes each year — lies in extreme organization. Telephone calls and e-mail correspondence is shared with Kathy Miller, a Realtor and former client of Donna's, for example.

Donna's daughter and 15-year assistant, Kenya Carr, works with client correspondence to plan and coordinate all of the marketing;

and Louise Spencer helps to provide home tours, represent the office during local Chamber of Commerce functions, handle mailings and more. "We feel

like we can give more to our clients this way; no one will feel their questions weren't answered or something wasn't taken care of for them," Donna said.

"We want each of our clients to know they're important to us, no matter what the value of the home they're buying or selling is —

and that someone will help them with whatever it is they need."

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*Louise Spencer, left, and Kenya Carr, part of the Lasater team.*

## Business NOW

all the tools needed to help her clients succeed too, including certifications as a home staging agent, as a negotiations specialist and as an e-marketing specialist. Perks which Donna offers on her own virtue set her apart from other agents though, such as complimentary use of her new moving van, a movers' kit packed with all the necessities and help with every step of the sales and financing path. Coldwell Banker Mortgage Company is also a valuable asset to Donna's clientele, who can apply for and obtain pre-approval for their loan in just 20 minutes. Donna's guidance through the financing process can make the transaction less stressful, too.

The Lasater team lists homes and land throughout the southwest Dallas region, Ellis and Tarrant counties. Donna noted that Midlothian and Mansfield are among the fastest-moving real estate markets in this area, which can be attributed to quality school districts and an increase in commercial and retail development. "Midlothian and Mansfield are hot areas. The cities are doing a good job of providing the infrastructure, and they have the stability that people are looking for," Donna said, of city and tourism officials. "The fairs and carnivals, the great schools ... those are some of the reasons families choose to live in these areas. It's also why we live in Midlothian — we also love the small-town feeling."

Donna and her team of professionals enjoy helping families and new residents find the home that fits their needs, lifestyle and budget. If you are considering the sale or purchase of Texas real estate, consider the Donna Lasater team at Coldwell Banker, located at 1510 North Hampton Road at Wintergreen Road. Donna can be reached at (469) 567-1421 or toll free at (888) 330-8553. To view listings, Donna's monthly market newsletter and invaluable information about buying and selling, log on to [www.DLasater.com](http://www.DLasater.com). **NOW**

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## Education **NOW**



# Voices in Unity

— By Betty Tryon

**“For me to have the opportunity to help mold the future, to help shape them into what they will become, is exciting.”**

The voices from the singing choir fill the room. Then with measured control, the students' voices swell and capture tremulous emotion as David Vehon, choir director for Midlothian High School, works his magic. He personifies each note with his arms directing the way. Clearly, this is something he enjoys doing. David said, “I got my teacher's certification in 1996. I regret I didn't do it earlier.”

David graduated from Harding University in Arkansas in 1981 with a degree in piano performance and a minor in vocal emphasis. He stated, “I didn't even know I could sing until college. My instructor encouraged me, and I started taking lessons.” After graduation, David taught private piano and voice lessons for 15 years. He served in churches in Duncanville and DeSoto as choir director and also as a youth minister.

Soon after he married, David looked for employment providing more financial security. He said, “When times get hard, private lessons are the first to go. My wife, Terri, is a teacher, and I decided to go for my certification. Terri is now a counselor at Duncanville High School. When the position of choir director opened up in Midlothian two years ago, I came here.”

One of David's goals when he first came to Midlothian took the form of unity — uniting the choirs. There are five separate choirs in the program: almost-Broadway show choir, women's select varsity choir, men's non-varsity, a cappella mixed choir, and treble non-varsity. “Our theme this year is unity for all of the choirs to work together. No one choir is better than the others. No choir is the best. I have seen a change in the students since the beginning of the year. Students are more positive about choir and our upcoming concerts. I believe in making choir something the kids look forward to. In class, I want them focused on the task, to have rehearsals be enjoyable. Hard work pays off. When they work as hard as they do, they see the result when they see how the audience responds. We now have a more positive atmosphere of working together. One of the changes I made at the beginning of the school year was to have every member of each choir wear the same shirt that says Midlothian choir instead of for example, ensemble choir.”

Another goal David pursues is the same one every teacher strives to accomplish — more parental involvement. He elaborated, “I am really striving to get the parents involved.

# Education **NOW**

There is more ownership in choir if parents get involved. Some of the things we need their participation in are fundraising, chaperoning with events and with any upcoming trips



**“I believe in making choir something the kids look forward to.”**



the choir makes — anything to have parents involved. We even have shirts for the parents!”

The choir performs for special holidays. The next one will be a Christmas musical. “I had been thinking about what to do for the Christmas musical and then the choir received a special gift. A \$40,000 organ was donated to the school, so I rethought the program. You can really do ‘O Holy Night’ with an organ,” he said enthusiastically. “The Christmas Holiday Concert will be a musical variety program on December 13. It will include a silent auction to raise money for students to travel for competition this year. Participants will be able to make bids on different items. Last year, we had an air conditioning company donate a complete system worth \$5,000. Other items from past auctions were oil changes and restaurant coupons. We

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Jana Holmes, Asst. Director and son, Hunter,  
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## Education **NOW**

hope to have items to auction off from the Cowboys and the Mavericks.”

Several of the choirs will travel to Galveston and New York this year. David said, “The women’s select choir will go to Galveston in April to sing at the Performing Arts Festival. They will



compete for trophies for best in class. This will involve their division with choirs all across Texas. Another category is for the rating of outstanding choir. This is the first time for this festival.”

Travel to New York will involve the almost-Broadway show choir and the a cappella choir for another Festival of Music. They will compete for ratings and best in class.

The show choir functions as a public relations vehicle for the school. David Vehon explained, “This is a smaller ensemble and we do a variety of popular, swing and Broadway music. We are also doing dancing. Our choreographer is Laurie Flores of Stage Door School of Dance. We have performed for the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, luncheons and football games. People call the school and want performers for a function. This is the group to do that.”

David looks at his students and sees great potential. He said, “They are the future of America. For me to have the opportunity to help mold the future, to help shape them into what they will become, is exciting. Singing is a lifelong tool, unlike some subjects in school that they learn but may never use.” The future in the multiple voices of the Midlothian Choir sounds good. **NOW**

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# Around Town **NOW**



The Chamber held ribbon cuttings, at left from top to bottom: Media 21, Whispers Boutique, Alpha Promotional Products and The Flower Shoppe. The User Friendly Phone Book, top right, opened for business after a recent ribbon cutting ceremony. Members of the Midlothian High School Choir enjoyed a game during a school picnic. Mackenzie Wilfong, Hunter Guin and Cody Conklin, bottom right, diligently worked on learning about continents and oceans in Kim Bull's second grade class at J.R. Irvin Elementary.

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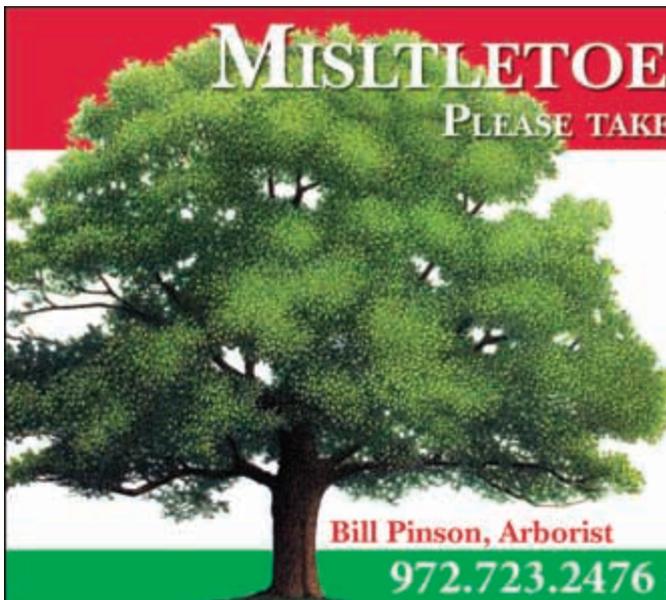
# Around Town **NOW**



The 2007 Midlothian Fall Festival proved to be a time of fun, as evidenced by all the photos at left, from top to bottom: game booths, bounce houses, live music and crowds of people, as well as those who were clowning around in the photo at top right. The Midlothian Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors, directly above, recently hosted a ribbon cutting for the new MidTowne development. City officials and Ambassadors joined Options Real Estate Development for the monumental groundbreaking ceremony.

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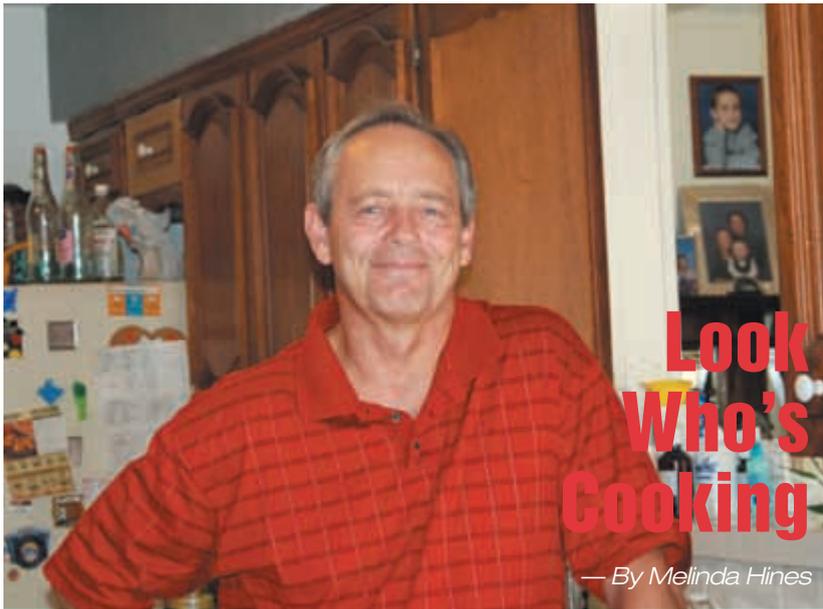
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## Look Who's Cooking

— By Melinda Hines

**K**en began cooking for pleasure in 1980. “It was my response to working as a firefighter. Once every two weeks or more, I had to cook for the crew,” Ken said. Ken picked up some culinary skills and some of his favorite recipes from his friends, other firemen and his mother. “One of the firefighters I learned from owned an Oriental restaurant, and I also self-taught by trial and error,” Ken said. Ken also enjoys fresh juices he creates using his juicer. Ken’s specialties include the recipes below, including his most requested dishes: chile rellenos and fried rice, as well as lasagna, spaghetti and chicken and broccoli. “I enjoy eating Oriental and Spanish foods, and cook mostly for family and some friends,” Ken said. **NOW**

### IN THE KITCHEN WITH KEN KRAFT

#### CHILE RELLENOS

(Quantities appropriate for number served)

Anaheim peppers  
 Monterey Jack Cheese  
 Mexican 4-cheese shredded mix  
 egg roll wraps  
 flour for sauce, enough to cover skillet  
 1 cup hot water  
 1 4-oz. can diced chile/jalapeños, not pickled  
 salt, to taste  
 pepper, to taste  
 garlic powder, to taste  
 cumin, to taste  
 lime juice, to taste  
 cilantro, fresh to taste

Steam peppers until soft, but not mushy. Cut stems and stuff peppers with Monterey Jack cheese, about 2/3 full. Roll peppers in egg roll wraps, one per wrap, corner-to-corner folding corners. Deep fry till golden brown; drain. Cover

skillet in white flour; brown and mix with hot water; get all lumps out. Add diced chilies/jalapeños and season with salt, pepper, garlic powder, cumin, lime juice and cilantro to taste. Heat and mix to gravy consistency. Melt Mexican 4-cheese mix over top of deep fried rellenos; smother with gravy. Serve with refried beans.

#### SPANISH RICE — KINDA

2 cups regular or Minute Rice, cooked according to package directions  
 1 6-oz. can corn  
 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel Original, heat by preference  
 1/2 bell pepper, diced  
 1 small chicken breast or pork chop/loin, fried, grilled or baked and cubed  
 salt, to taste  
 pepper, to taste  
 cumin, to taste  
 garlic powder, to taste  
 fresh chopped cilantro, to taste

Mix cooked rice with corn, Ro-Tel, bell pepper and meat of choice. Season to taste with remaining ingredients.

#### EGG ROLLS

package of 20 egg roll wraps  
 broccoli head, cut small enough to roll in wraps  
 1 - 2 cups purple and/or green cabbage, shredded  
 raw eggs, 1 per 2 cups of final mix  
 1 large carrot, diced  
 8 - 12 green onions/scallions, use a good portion of green  
 1/2 golf ball size fresh ginger root, shredded  
 small pkg. bean sprouts, optional  
 3 - 4 Tbsp. soy sauce  
 optional meat: chicken, pork or shrimp

In a large mixing bowl combine shredded cabbage, broccoli, carrot, scallions and bean sprouts. Grill, fry, bake, or steam (shrimp) meat choice; cut into cubes small enough to roll in

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# Who's Cooking **NOW**

wraps. Add eggs, ginger root and soy sauce to the rest; mix well. Roll mix in wraps, corner to corner seal with egg-milk paste; deep fry till golden brown. Drain; serve with soy sauce and/or sweet and sour sauce.

### FRIED RICE

chicken breast, pork chop/loin or shrimp  
 5 - 7 eggs  
 2 - 3 cups regular or Minute rice, cooked according to package directions  
 2 - 3 Tbsp. oil  
 small head broccoli, chopped  
 2 - 4 carrots, chopped  
 1 - 2 stalks celery, chopped  
 8 - 10 scallions/green onions, chopped  
 1/2 - 1 golf ball size fresh ginger root, shredded  
 soy sauce, to taste  
 black pepper, to taste  
 garlic powder, to taste

Prepare meat by frying, baking, grilling or steaming and cube. Scramble eggs in wok, leave moist, not runny. Combine eggs in large mixing bowl with meat and rice. In wok, heat oil to hot; add broccoli and carrots. Stir and cover wok for 2 minutes or until vegetables start to get soft. Next add celery and scallions; stir 1 minute. Turn off heat; mix in the meat, eggs, rice and ginger root. Add soy sauce, black pepper and garlic powder to taste. Mix, cover and let sit 5 minutes. Check seasoning and enjoy.

### 3 FAVORITE QUICK SANDWICHES

#### NUMBER ONE

1 plain bagel  
 cream cheese  
 1 avocado, sliced  
 1 sliced tomato  
 1 cucumber, thinly sliced  
 fresh alfalfa sprouts  
 Toast plain bagel; top with cream cheese, avocado slices, fresh sliced tomato, thin cucumber slices and fresh alfalfa sprouts.

#### NUMBER TWO

Oroweat Oatnut Bread  
 peanut butter  
 3 - 4 cooked bacon strips  
 Toast Oroweat Oatnut Bread; top with peanut butter and 3 - 4 cooked bacon strips.

#### NUMBER THREE

Oroweat Oatnut Bread  
 mayonnaise, to taste  
 1 sliced garden tomato  
 salt and pepper, to taste  
 Toast Oroweat Oatnut Bread; top with mayonnaise, thick-sliced fresh garden tomatoes and salt and pepper.

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## Finance **NOW**

# Future Dreams Take Financial Planning

— By Clay Money, CLU, LUTCF

I have never met a mom who was not working — or any other woman for that matter. More than ever before, women are handling their own or their family's finances. It is not about what you have; it is what you do with it to secure your future.

We all have unique needs and resources, but everyone wants to protect what they have worked so hard to acquire. It is all about taking what you have, making the most of it and building a solid financial future that is uniquely yours.

A woman has different financial needs than a man. Everyone must face the good news that women live longer and the potentially bad news that they will spend more years in retirement than the last generation. Why is that bad news? More years in retirement could mean potentially outliving your nest egg. Women, having greater life expectancies than men, must place a greater emphasis on planning for retirement and long term care to ensure they have saved enough to last through their golden years.

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# Finance **NOW**

education, protect your business interests or save for a comfortable retirement, you should work with a trusted professional who can be your long-term resource for help with your financial goals. Schedule a meeting to explore your goals and begin building a road map for your financial future.

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*Clay Money is a State Farm agent based in Midlothian.*

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## Health NOW

### The Picture of Health: Advanced Imaging Technologies Women Should be Aware Of

In their busy lives, women can sometimes neglect their health, but waiting until symptoms develop can be dangerous — especially when it comes to serious illnesses, such as heart disease, cancer or even osteoporosis. It is important to know what tools are available to “take a peek inside” before a serious problem develops.

Here are six common imaging procedures — available at the Baylor Imaging and Diagnostics Center at Red Oak — of which you should be aware:

**Mammography:** Annual mammograms are recommended for women over the age of 40 to check for breast abnormalities that could potentially be cancerous. Women in Ellis County now have access to digital mammography.

“With digital mammography, the image is ready in seconds. Physicians can adjust the brightness and contrast

to help detect small calcifications, masses and other changes that may be early signals of breast cancer,” said Ronny Rose, director of radiology services at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie.

**CT or Computerized Tomography:** A CT scan is a more advanced version of a traditional X-ray. CT scans use a large X-ray camera that circles the body piecing together images, known as “slices,” to create a three-dimensional view of the inside of the body.

“The images produced by our 16-slice CT scanner are phenomenal. It’s almost like having an internal camera that shows us exactly what’s going on in your body,” Rose said.

**Calcium Scoring:** Calcium is vital for good bone health and aids in many cellular functions throughout your body, but a significant calcium buildup in the heart and coronary arteries can be an early sign of cardiovascular disease (CVD). A diagnostic test known as a computerized tomography (CT) heart screening can detect the amount of calcium buildup in your arteries by computing a “score” to help determine your risk of CVD.

“Patients with a high score should see their internist or cardiologist for a stress test,” said Mark Fulmer, radiologist

on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie.

**Chest CT Scans:** We all know that significant exposure to tobacco smoke puts us at risk for lung cancer. Once a smoker quits, their risk for lung cancer is lowered significantly, but unfortunately, the damage has already been done to their lungs.

“CT scans of the lungs can detect pea-size cancerous growths before any symptoms develop. Studies have shown that CT scans are beneficial for detecting lung cancer at its earliest stages,” Dr. Fulmer said.

**Ultrasound:** Ultrasound imaging has been around for many years and continues to become more advanced. Using high-frequency sound waves, ultrasound can produce images of the organs and blood vessels and can be used to identify the source of pain, swelling or infection, or provide the first pictures of a growing baby during pregnancy. Physicians may recommend ultrasound scans to check for thyroid problems, and it is often used in addition to mammograms or to view the inside of the pelvis to check for cervical or ovarian cancer.

**Bone Densitometry Scans:** Of the 40 million Americans who suffer from



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# Health NOW

osteoporosis, 80 percent of them are women according to the National Osteoporosis Foundation. A simple bone density scan can detect osteoporosis early on and determine your rate of bone loss long before any fractures or breaks occur.

"A bone density test is recommended for all women over age 65, those considered at high risk for osteoporosis and women who suffer from frequent fractures," Rose added.

For more information about any of these imaging procedures and those available at the Baylor Imaging and Diagnostics Center at Red Oak, consult with your physician. **★☆☆**

*\* Physicians are members of the medical staff at one of Baylor Health Care System's subsidiary, community or affiliated medical centers and are neither employees nor agents of those medical centers, Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie or Baylor Health Care System.*

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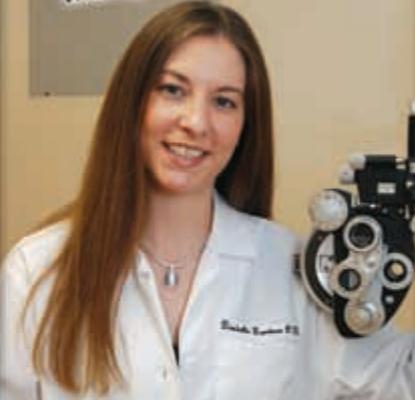
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### NEW THERAPY FOR SWALLOWING DISORDERS NOW OFFERED AT Renfro Healthcare Center

Renfro Healthcare Center in Waxahachie has introduced an innovative new treatment for patients who suffer from dysphagia, a painful and often debilitating swallowing disorder.

Known as VitalStim® Therapy, the treatment uses non-invasive electrical stimulation to help re-educate the throat muscles needed for swallowing. Cleared for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, VitalStim® Therapy is applied externally and delivers small electrical currents to the neck to stimulate inactive or atrophied swallowing muscles. With repeated therapy, throat muscles are retrained until the patient reaches an optimum level of swallow function.

"VitalStim Therapy is truly a breakthrough in treating dysphagia", said Sara L. Brimms, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist at Renfro Healthcare Center. "Since introducing VitalStim at Renfro, we have seen some exceptional outcomes that probably would not have been possible with traditional approaches to therapy. Patients have shown dramatic improvements in their ability to swallow and have returned to more normal diets...and a better quality of life...much sooner than we've seen in the past. Even patients on feeding tubes have responded well to the therapy."



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# Christmas 2007 Gift Guide

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Here's a glimpse at some of the fine merchandise available.*



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# December 2007

## Community Calendar

### First and Third Tuesdays

Training Academy for Dental Assistants holds free informational sessions at 5:30 p.m. For details, call (972) 842-2999.

### First and Third Thursdays

Midlothian Lions Club meets at 7 p.m. at Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th Street. For more information, call (972) 775-7118.

"Leads to Success" Leads Group meets at 8 a.m. at 2nd @ Main Place.

### Second and Fourth Mondays

Texas Ladies Networking meets from 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Ryan's Grill in Waxahachie. For more information, call (214) 587-1221.

### Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Toastmasters meets at 6:30 p.m. inside Baylorworx, 507 N. Hwy. 77 in Waxahachie.

Midlothian City Council meets at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

### Every Tuesday

Midlothian Rotary Club meets at noon at Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th Street. Call (972) 775-7118.

### December 1

The Theatre III-IV Production will present *Crucible* at 7 p.m. in the Midlothian High School auditorium. Admission is \$2.00 for students and \$5.00 for adults.

### December 3

The Midlothian Chamber of Commerce's Holiday Light Up

Parade will take place at 6 p.m. This year's theme is Christmas Carols. The parade will begin at the Midlothian High School, travel West on George Hopper Road, turn right onto 14th Street and end at the new football stadium. The event will feature a staging area along George Hopper Road where an emcee will announce each entry as it passes. Parking is available at Frank Seale Middle School and at the Midlothian Football Stadium. Awards will be given for Best Use of Theme, Best Use of Lights, and Most Creative Float. Call the Chamber of Commerce at (972) 723-8600 for more information.

### December 5

Business Over Breakfast, 7:30 a.m., Midlothian Conference Center.

### December 6

Small Business Committee Meeting, 9 a.m. at the Chamber offices.

Navarro Small Business Development Center will sponsor a combination workshop entitled "How to Get Government Contracts" from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the Citizen's National Bank Community Room at 310 N. 9th Street. Normally priced at \$75, the workshop will be offered for \$40 to the first 15 registrants, and our speaker will be available for free counseling for two hours after the seminar! To register, call Dottie Ueberroth at (972) 937-2174 or e-mail [dottie.ueberroth@navarrocollege.edu](mailto:dottie.ueberroth@navarrocollege.edu).

### December 9

MADD-North Texas Annual Candlelight Vigil to honor victims and survivors of drunk driving, 4 p.m. at the Rogers Hotel 103 E. Main Street Waxahachie. For more information contact

Suzette Pylant, victim specialist at (972) 938-9444 or e-mail at [Suzette.pylant@madd.org](mailto:Suzette.pylant@madd.org).

### December 11

Leadership Midlothian - County Government Day. Navarro Small Business Development Center will sponsor a session discussing copyrights and patents, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. in the Citizen's National Bank Community Room at 310 N. 9th Street. The cost of this workshop is \$20. To register or for more information, call Dottie Ueberroth (972) 937-2174 or e-mail [dottie.ueberroth@navarrocollege.edu](mailto:dottie.ueberroth@navarrocollege.edu).

### December 13

Transportation Committee Meeting, 9 a.m., at the Chamber offices.

Chamber Board Meeting, 11:30 a.m. at the Chamber offices.

### December 16

An original Christmas musical will be presented at The Lighthouse, 1400 N. 9th Street at 6 p.m. with refreshments following.

### December 17

Santa Claus will visit the Midlothian Whataburger to take free pictures with local children, 5 - 8 p.m.

### December 24 - 25

Chamber offices closed for Christmas Holiday.

### January 1

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