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NOW

FEBRUARY 2015

In the Present

Angela Madison stays positively connected

Family Means Everything

At Home With Ritchie and Katrena Johnson

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Before You Tie the Knot

Fitness the Fun Way

In the Kitchen With John and Marcia Trepagnier



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DeSoto ISD offering students academic choices; enhancing safety

"We have re-created DeSoto ISD as the premier district in the Best Southwest by offering students, and parents, academic choices that individualize the educational experience for every child," exclaimed Dr. David Harris, superintendent of schools.

MAGNET PROGRAMS

Starting in the fall, DeSoto students will be able to choose their program of emphasis from elementary through high school. Applications for elementary and middle school magnet programs are being accepted through February 20. The DHS Collegiate Magnet Program and Early College High School also close in February, and middle school iSTEAM3D is open March 30-April 21. Program descriptions and links to the applications are online at www.desotoisd.org.

NEW EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMY

DeSoto ISD is finalizing the plans to transition Amber Terrace Elementary into an Early Childhood Discovery and Design Academy, also starting this fall. The ECDD Academy will include all Pre-K students from across the district and Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) for ages 3-5. Students will then attend their neighborhood school for kindergarten through grade 5. A demographer will outline the best plan to redistribute current ATE students to the other six elementary schools. Long-range plans call for a new elementary on the south side of town to replace Amber and alleviate crowding at all elementary schools.

ENHANCED SAFETY AT CAMPUSES

Starting later this spring, all elementary and middle school campuses will have entrance buzzers and two-way communication monitored by a camera to further enhance the security at our schools. During school hours, all guests will buzz the receptionist and state their business at the campus before being permitted into the school. In addition, fencing will be enhanced or added to at several elementary campuses to further secure the grounds.

NEWS TO KNOW

Board Member Election

The candidate filing and voting dates have been set for the 2015 DeSoto ISD Board of Trustee election scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2015. Candidate filing dates for the election will be January 28 through February 27.

Positions up for election:

Place 6 — Warren Seay, Jr. (i)

Place 7 — Donald Gant (i)

Interested candidates may pick up and submit a candidate packet at DeSoto ISD, 200 E. Belt Line Road, from 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Elected board members will serve three-year terms.

Hall of Honor Nominations

Nominations will be accepted January 30 through April 1 for the DeSoto ISD Hall of Honor. Forms are online for both the DHS Alumni Hall of Fame and Distinguished Service Award categories. The Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony will take place Friday, May 1 at DeSoto High School. For more information, visit www.desotoisd.org.

Coffee & Conversations

Join Supt. David Harris for candid conversations about your campus and DeSoto ISD.

- Tuesday, Feb. 17 - 7:30 a.m. East Middle School
- Tuesday, March 17 - 7:30 a.m. Ruby Young Elementary

Ruby Young 50th Anniversary

Ruby Young Elementary will celebrate their 50th Anniversary on Friday, March 20 at the school. All alumni, parents, former teachers and community members are invited to attend this wonderful event. Please call the campus for details at 972-223-6505.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

2015 Program Application Windows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Collegiate Magnet Program | Jan. 26-Feb. 13 |
| • Early College High School | February 13-20 |
| • Magnet Academies (MS & ES) | Jan. 5-Feb. 20 |
| • iSTEAM3 Middle Schools | March 30-April 21 |

Calendar

Jan. 28-Feb. 27 - Board Candidate Filing Window
Monday, February 9 - Student Holiday; Staff Development Day
Monday, February 9, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting, Board Room
Tuesday, February 17, 7:30 a.m. - Coffee & Conversation, East MS
Monday, February 23, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting, Board Room
March 9-13 - Spring Break
Tuesday, March 17 7:30 a.m. - Coffee & Conversation, Ruby Young ES

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ON THE COVER



Angela Madison has learned to take life's lesson, build on them and go on.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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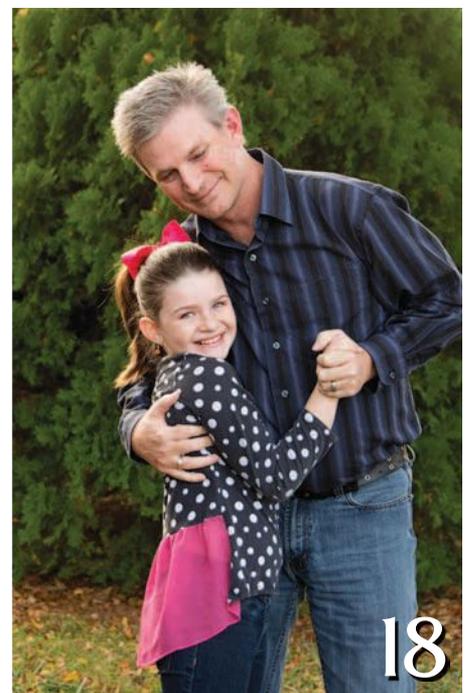
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Editor's Note

Greetings Southwest Friends,

Seems we have settled into yet another year, school and life is well-underway again, and spring may or may not be in the air on any given day. Once again, we are told this is the month of love ...

Long ago, when my children were young, Valentine's Day was a time for expressing my love with homemade cards resplendent in hearts. I used to love crafting personal written missives, but seldom do anymore. A handwritten note, or forbid, a full-length letter is positively archaic! Actually, when it comes to my kids, receiving an actual phone call is a treat. But I have been known to save those sentimental texts my kids send. And, yes, my grandsons' drawings decidedly and unapologetically grace my refrigerator. What could be a better rendition of love?

Perhaps, you can join me in an effort to pen an actual letter this month!

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Beverly Shay
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ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS THROUGH FEB. 27 FOR NEW COLLEGIATE SCHOOL PATHWAY



Cedar Hill Collegiate Prep (CHCP) is a Pre-K through 5 elementary choice school within the Cedar Hill Independent School District. Opening in the fall of 2015, CHCP gives highly motivated elementary students an opportunity to experience academic excellence in a technology-rich environment. CHCP provides an engaging school environment through a thoughtful and intentional approach to academics, as well as exposure to an eclectic mix of extracurricular activities and community service opportunities.

Cedar Hill Collegiate Academy (CHCA) is a 6-8 middle school that will open with an inaugural class of 6th graders in the fall of 2015. Located on the campus of Cedar Hill Collegiate High School, CHCA is a small learning community made up of passionate educators and purposeful students. CHCA students engage in an intensive and inspiring curriculum with a strong focus on college prep and community involvement.

Cedar Hill Collegiate High School (CHCHS) is a nationally recognized Early College High School. CHCHS opened in 2008 and earned an Exemplary rating from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for four consecutive years. In 2014, Collegiate High School earned six out of six Distinctions from TEA, was named to the Best Schools list by *U.S. News and World Report*, and was ranked as the 6th best Early College High School in the Nation by *Newsweek*. CHCHS provides motivated students the rigor, depth and intensity of college-level work in a smaller, learner-centered environment. CHCHS also helps students and their families save time and money by integrating high school and college. Through a partnership with Cedar Valley Community College, students are able to complete 60 hours of college credit tuition-free and earn an associate degree prior to high school graduation.

INNOVATING OUR "TRADITIONAL" SCHOOL PATHWAY

CHISD will begin to introduce Signature Programs in our traditional elementary schools starting in the 2015-2016 school year. Some of these programs already exist and others will be developed over time based on existing strengths of the campus, as well as the interest of parents and students in the schools' home attendance zone. As the Signature Programs are put in place, families will be able to apply for an intra-district transfer if the program of their choice is not offered at their home campus. Signature Programs **may** include:

PRE-K - 5TH GRADE



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COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Cedar Hill ISD has two traditional middle schools offering excellence in education and a wide variety of extracurricular activities including: band, athletics, drama, visual arts, orchestra and numerous clubs and special events. Permenter Middle School serves residents living south of Mansfield Rd/Bellline Rd/FM 1382. PMS earned 6 out of 7 Distinctions from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in 2014. Coleman Middle School has a home attendance zone residing north of Mansfield Rd/Bellline Rd/FM 1382. CMS earned 3 of 7 Distinctions from TEA in 2014.

IN THE PRESENT

— By Sara Edgell

The journey called life is filled with joys, complications, lessons and experiences. Based on their personal interests, aptitudes, desires and dreams, every person has the power to experience life on their terms and find their footing through trial and error. Essentially, this is the definition of self-discovery, and it's exactly how Angela Madison leads her life. Through the ups and downs of life, Angela has established herself as a positive, influential woman.

Her journey has been an eventful one thus far, filled with many hurdles along the way. Angela takes great pride in her journey, as it has led her to a great understanding about human nature, character and perseverance in a fleetingly shifting world. "The journey to get where I am now took so many detours, but I don't believe in saying I don't have any regrets in life," she stated. "That's cliché. I have many regrets, which have taught me many things, and in this space of my life, I'm grateful for that."

Throughout her life, Angela has filled a diverse array of positions in public relations, publishing and broadcast media, some of which were beneficial while others were valuable learning experiences. Over the years, she has worked with famed

rappers in Chicago, illustrious entertainers in Las Vegas and influential power players in Dallas. She has also authored books and research about the NFL, NBA and NCAA pertaining to marketing and reputation management. Essentially, Angela's work has been heavily focused on strategy, helping stars and athletes create and maintain positive, constructive images.

Within her field, Angela's extreme love for sports only made the job that much more enjoyable.

Angela is a die-hard Texas Christian University Horned Frogs football fan and a proud member of Cowboys Nation. She fully supports all of her North Texas teams. "Every fall I paint my nails Cowboys-themed and watch every game I possibly can," she admitted.

Further feeding her love for sports, she did sports radio in Chicago, before making a career change and relocating to Texas.

But before all of this, Angela created *IMBUE* Symposium about 10 years ago. Imbue is a term meaning to inspire with a feeling of quality, and it embodies Angela's goal in life. Through presentations and workshops, she strives to inspire, educate and motivate individuals to successfully reach both short- and long-term goals in life. She has hosted countless sessions

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Angela Madison poses with WFAA social media manager, Nick Blackhall.

across the country, bringing in guest speakers and teaching strategies to create healthy public relations and imaging. An extension of sharing this positive branding was formed in 2013 when Angela and her best friend, Ardenia Gould, formed A2 Consulting, a small boutique firm specializing in public relations, image consulting and marketing. This is simply another way for Angela to share her “whole being” beliefs in significant ways. “It isn’t enough to be talent-focused in this world. A person has to be a whole being in order to be their best, in order to be truly successful.”

Therefore, Angela’s goal is to help people realize their true potential through honesty and positivity. “I don’t lie to





Co-workers and friends, Siovhan Bolton, Angela Madison and Kirsten Osborn enjoy each others' company.

myself with clichés,” she stated, “and I feel if we were all original, deep thinkers, we would realize how damaging clichés can be.” So, creating a character based on integrity and honesty rooted in one’s deep desire is Angela’s formula for success. However, it demands dedication and diligence because, alas, the most worthwhile things in life are not easy.

Angela knows this firsthand. She has reached her personal success only after enduring the difficulties that came along with it as she practiced her own theories for life religiously. After working for many years on various degrees in fields like kinesiology, strategic marketing and broadcast journalism from institutions including Hampton University, Columbia



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College-Chicago and Texas Woman's University, she was finally ready to take a major risk. She applied for an internship with WFAA TV, Channel 8, and it paid off in life-changing ways.

Currently, she is one of five assignment editors for the news station, working the frontline of the chaotic and often frenzied breaking news coverage. Her job requires receiving news tips and leads, conducting follow-up research and deciding if the story moves forward or not. While some stories are interesting to the small group of editors, Angela's task is to determine what is newsworthy

"I'M VERY SPECIFIC AND CONSISTENT WITH MY CRITERIA, BECAUSE I WANT TO SHARE THE BEST OF THE BEST WITH THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY."

enough to be aired, and if so, she sends out a crew to cover it. In essence, she is in charge of deciding the news. "I'm a competitor, and the pure nature of the job is about competition. If another station airs a story that I didn't know about or that I chose not to air, then that's my fault," she stated matter-of-factly. "But I love a challenge. That's what drives me."

One of Angela's biggest moments was being a part of the news team that broke the story about a house, which was being demolished in Lake Whitney. She received a tip, and after some research,

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her instinct told her there was more to this story. Once again, she took a risk, and once again it paid off. "It turns out a lot of fighting had gone on over the building of this house. It was such a trifling situation," she said. Because she followed her instincts, the team was able to uncover more than a simple house story. Ultimately, she uncovered truth and broke a story that ended up becoming a sensation covered not only by local stations, but by stations around the nation.

Furthermore, Angela also hosts a weekly broadcast called *Angela's A-List*, where she shares family-friendly, free and iconic or definitely unique-to-Texas-culture local event information with her viewers. "I'm very specific and consistent with my criteria, because I want to share the best of the best with the people in the community." In every area of her job, she has been impressed by the amount of support she's received from her fellow co-workers. She believes the powerful women she works with are second to none. "I'm surrounded by the most supportive and uplifting women in the industry," Angela confirmed. For her, this simply perpetuates her desire to promote positivity.

At the end of the day, it isn't about meeting famous people or being on television — it's about making a positive, lasting impact in the world and in the lives of others. In all that she does, Angela strives to pour positive energy into the community while raising the bar in every aspect of life. By living life according to her dreams and desires, she is blazing her own trail and reaching her goals. "It feels good to be where I am in life," she stated, "because I know I'm on the right track. I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be." **NOW**

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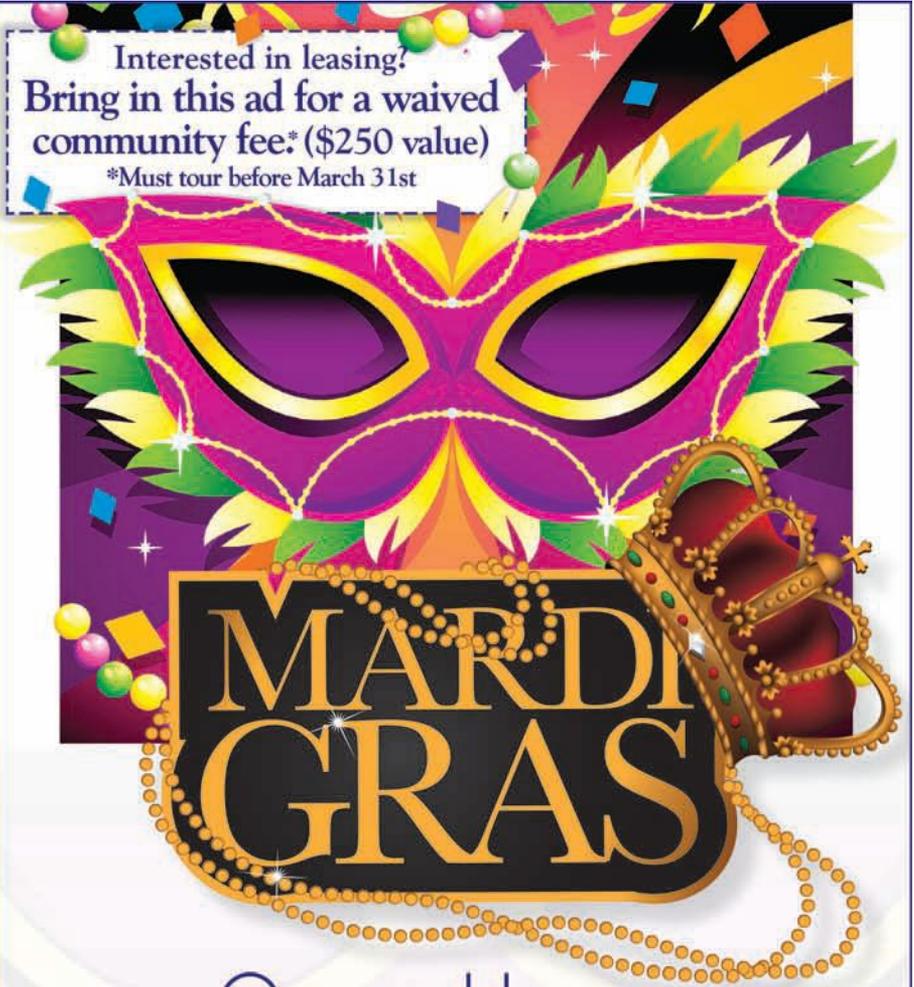
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May I Have This Dance?

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

Every year near Valentine's Day, many businesses and organizations host dinners, dances and events for couples to have a nice, romantic evening. The city of Cedar Hill has chosen to focus attention on fathers spending a night with their daughters, and this year will be no exception as Cedar Hill hosts their annual Daddy Daughter Dance once again. As John Hurst and his daughter, Hannah, can attest, it is a great night and a special event for everyone.



John grew up in West Texas and moved to the Metroplex in 1986. "Back then, there wasn't much opportunity in my small town," he shared. He has lived in Cedar Hill since 1997, and works in DeSoto at Solar Turbines as a supply chain coordinator. He has other ambitions, though, as he explained. "I went back and got a degree in education a few years ago, and I might try to teach and coach eventually."

John married his wife, Rachel, in 2007, and they have a large yours-mine-and-ours family with 11 children total. "I have Brittany and Hayley, who both have kids of their own," he said. "Then the twins, Jonathon and Kristopher, and Jagger. They don't live with us, but they're here all the time."

Rachel has two daughters in Florida, Mikaela and Angel. Together, John and Rachel have Hannah, Elijah, Matthias and Roman. "It's been fun seeing how we have all come together as one big family," Rachel beamed. "The older girls will come over and take Hannah to give her a break from all the boys, or we will just all hang out together. It's great!"

A few years ago, an ad online for the Daddy Daughter event piqued Rachel's interest, but Hannah was not old enough yet. "The next year, we made sure they could go," she recalled. While John and Hannah spend their night on the town, Rachel has a fun evening with the boys. "We usually get pizza and watch a movie," she said.

"They have similar events all over the area," John remarked. "We had friends who came to the Cedar Hill one last year, because the event in DeSoto was full. Last year, even our event was full." John attributes the success of the evening to a couple of key factors. "It's great for dads to spend that quality time with their daughters. The other thing I like about this is people from all walks of life can come and enjoy it," he explained. "You





can tell there are people from different economic levels, and we all have a good time together.”

Hannah has as much fun as John at the Daddy Daughter Dance every year. “I like it. I want to go back again,” she quietly spoke. For most of the year, Hannah spends time going to Life School in Cedar Hill, drawing, playing with and reading to her brothers. “I like Junie B. Jones. She’s my favorite author,” Hannah added. Hannah used to participate

“The girls start dancing with their dads, but they end up dancing with each other, while we watch them just having fun.”

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in baseball and softball, but has moved on from those activities. She does cheerleading, but does not take any dance classes. She gets her fill of that with John, as she said, "I like dancing with Daddy."

This one special night is a great break from life as the only daughter in a family with so many boys. During most of the year, Hannah ends up coming along

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Daddy Daughter Dance 2013.



as the family goes from one baseball game to another, as baseball is a passion of the boys, as well as being John's. "I am really active in the Cedar Hill Baseball Association," he said. "I was the president for nine years, and currently I'm the vice president." John has been part of the organization as it has grown to its present status as a large, thriving league. "We started bringing the USSSA Rec. World Series here a few years ago, which creates a lot of revenue for our association and our city and showcases our talent," he explained. But with his slightly smaller role, John is able to focus more time on coaching, "which is what I signed up for all those years ago," he added.

Rachel has even gotten involved by serving on the board as well. "It seems like we are always at or going to games," she laughed. "Sometimes we have to be in two cities at the same time, so we do baseball together, but it also makes us split up some of the time." Rachel takes advantage of those times when she only has a few of the kids to do something fun. "If I just have one or two of the boys, we will go for ice cream afterward.



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When they are not at home or involved in baseball activities, they are often at DeSoto Christian Church. "We have been going there for seven years," John recounted. "The pastor was one of my professors in school, but I had forgotten that until one day it came up. I'm sure he's had students say they were going to visit just to get points, but we have been there ever since."

With such a full plate, it's hard for the kids to get individual time, which is why the Daddy Daughter Dance is so perfect. "I didn't know what to expect," John admitted, "but I look forward to it every year now." John makes sure Hannah has a special day. They dress up — John in



his Sunday best, and Hannah wearing formal clothes. "We make sure to get there early to get a good seat, but we never know who is going to sit with us," John explained.

The event has a unique theme each time. In past years, it has been everything from a masquerade ball to a princess' festival. "They take a photograph, we eat and then the dancing begins, and every year it's the same thing," John recalled.



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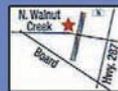
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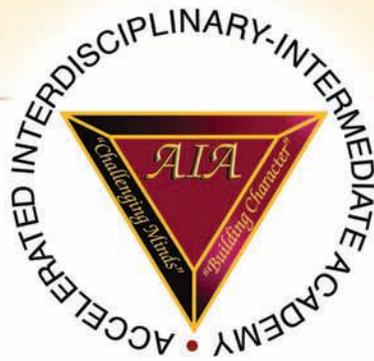


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"The girls start dancing with their dads, but they end up dancing with each other, while we watch them just having fun."

John loves the time he spends both dancing with Hannah, and watching her have fun with girls she has never met before. "One year, she did something amazing," he outlined. "There was a girl in a corner alone, and Hannah grabbed her and got her dancing, too. I figured it was a friend, but she had never met her. Hannah just knew the other girl could use a partner."

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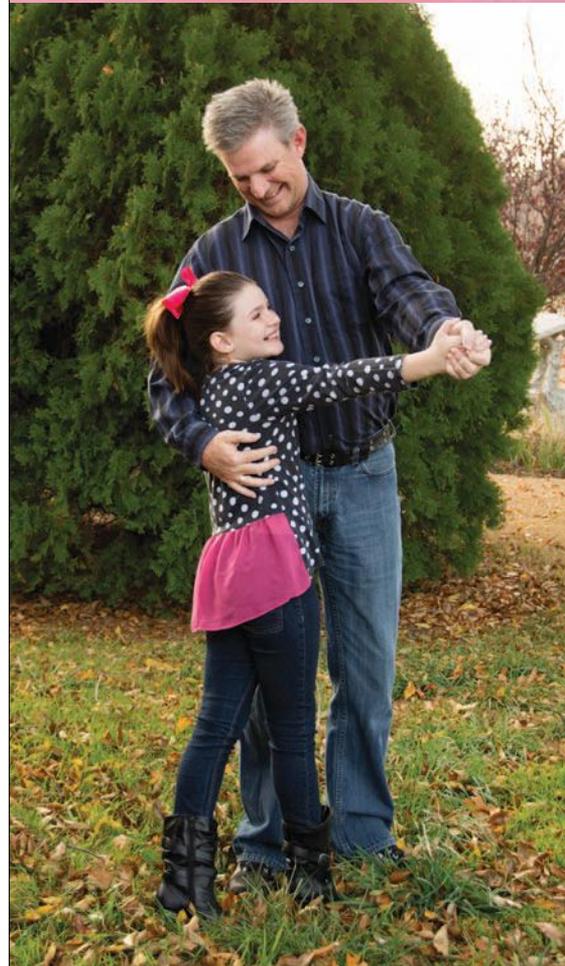
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The most important part of the evening for the majority of the dads is teaching their daughters life lessons — mainly how a woman should be treated. Seeing his daughter's act of kindness was more valuable than any themed photo or catered dinner. While the theme is not always princesses, John uses the night to make sure Hannah knows she will always be *his* princess. **NOW**



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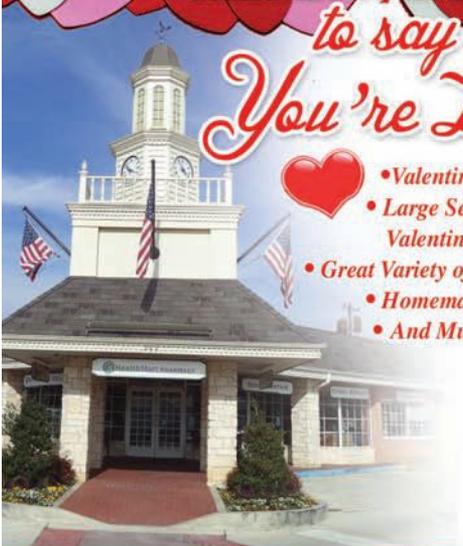
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— By Beverly Shay



At Home With Ritchie and Katrena Johnson

Katrena Johnson's military upbringing equipped her for marrying a military man. She returned to her birth place, Wyoming, after graduating high school in New Jersey. Mutual friends introduced her to Ritchie, who was serving his first tour of duty at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne. After dating for eight months, they married on May 29, 1993. "I am happy to be spending my 22nd Valentine's Day with Ritchie!" Katrena beamed.

"We have lived many places while I served 13 years as a military policeman and seven years as a project manager in communications squadron," Ritchie explained. Four years were spent in Germany, six in Albuquerque, New Mexico, four in Bossier City, Louisiana, before spending the last few years in San Antonio. "I retired as a technical sergeant in 2011," he added.

Their home is decorated with many mementos of places they've lived. "We chose to live in DeSoto, because I have a lot





of family here,” Ritchie remarked. “We wanted something new and clean. As soon as we saw the model, we knew this would be home.” Being back with family is so important to them.

The three-year-old, 2,160-square-foot, one-story home is built of reddish/orange brick and features three bedrooms, two baths and an office. Throughout the house are arches — windows, openings between rooms and others built into the almond-colored walls. “Before I would let anyone move in furniture, I painted the inside arches of the dining room walls and under the bar chocolate brown to set them off,” Katrena said with a smile. The chocolate accents are picked up in the tan suede sectional couch with chocolate leather base. “We call our couch the pit, because we push all the pieces together



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into a huge square where we can all pile together to watch movies,” Katrena admitted. “We’re always looking for ways to be together as a family.”

Family includes RJ, who swims for DeSoto High School Magnet Program, and whose main passions (according to his mom) are girls and gaming, Vivica, who is all about arts, crafts and pink, is a fifth-grader at Life School in Cedar Hill and a cheerleader for the DeSoto Panthers. The other two family members are Koko, the Papillon dog, and Snickers, the cat, “who wouldn’t know her name if we used it, because we always call her

Fat Cat — because, well, she is!” Katrena said with a very straight face. The family also enjoys gaming together — Super Mario Bros. and bowling, Ritchie is looking forward to teaching Vivica how a gentleman should treat her at the daddy/daughter dance this year.

With Ritchie’s large family nearby, entertaining is a constant activity. Extended kitchen counters work perfectly for a buffet line. “The breakfast nook table functions as additional serving space. Dark wood cabinets are balanced by the dark walnut dining room table across from the kitchen. Neutral tones

in the diamond-shaped stone backsplash and the light tan ceramic tile flooring provide contrast. Area rugs in both the dining room and living room continue the neutral color scheme with added splashes of red in one and moss and steel blue in the other.

Three open window arches between the living and dining rooms serve as a display area for various curios purchased in the different countries where they’ve lived. Included are some Egyptian pieces. Across from the couch is a beautiful fireplace trimmed out with white varnished wood. Above the mantel is a

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beautiful portrait of Ritchie and Katrena taken on one of the many cruises they have enjoyed.

Unlike the main portions of the home, Vivica's bedroom is anything but neutral, starting with the Hello, Kitty! door. The hot pink room features black and white zebra stripes and silver mesh animal-striped curtains. Vivica's name is stenciled on the ceiling, while round mirrors fill one wall. Wicker furniture holds cheerleading trophies and a fuzzy pink telephone. All manner of girly things can be found tucked into the open box shelves.

RJ's room is once again more neutral but spruced up with brown and turquoise stripes painted on the top and bottom of the walls, one of which is filled with crosses. "I really enjoyed painting the rooms, and I love collecting crosses," Katrena remarked. RJ's room also boasts his swimming ribbons and a certificate for having completed the mayor's leadership program.

The round foyer is truly the most unique feature of their home. Perfectly centered in the foyer is a circular brown and beige rug with a pattern of leaves. Large candles on pedestals of varying heights line the entryway, and one of the rounded walls displays favorite artwork. Even though the foyer is at the front of their home, every room in the house branches off of it.

Their master bedroom is large and furnished in dark wood and black leather. Their arched headboard fits perfectly with the arch theme found throughout the house. Katrena calls their master bath the Angel Room. Everywhere you turn whimsical angels and cherubs are perched, even on a ledge above the closets and along the garden tub. A separate shower holds no angels,



however, although a few framed ones keep an eye on everything.

Ritchie has made two significant imprints on their home. He installed eight surveillance cameras as a security system inside and outside. He also displays his military history in the office where a large walnut desk is set diagonally. The front is lined with 18 commander coins, representing all of the different bases where he has served throughout the world. One of the coins is on a rock from Kyrgyzstan. A shadow box displays his medals, outlining his military career. On top of the bookshelf are his battle helmet and his retirement cap. His retirement orders are framed along with both of their diplomas. Katrena has an associate degree in business management from American InterContinental University. Ritchie has an associate in criminal justice and another in information technology and a bachelor's in business administration with a concentration in information technology management from Trident University International. He also proudly displays two swords and a plaque with his beret.

Other than decorating, the main change Ritchie and Katrena made to their home was to add a large, backyard pool. "This is where we live," Katrena smiled, as Ritchie flipped the remote releasing a delightful waterfall over the grotto with its bench. "That's Ritchie's side of the pool!" Katrena remarked, indicating her side features a tanning ledge complete with a refreshing fountain. The 8-foot depth and luxurious size provide plenty of room for the children as well. Brown wicker furniture adorned with orange cushions is scattered about the patio. "If we're not in the pool," Katrena admitted, "we'll be around the fire pit, making s'mores and enjoying each other." **NOW**

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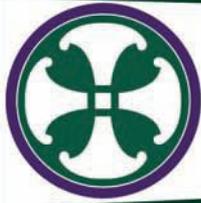
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Before You Tie *the* Knot

— By Shannon Pfaff

From the dress to the favors, the cake to the invitations, a wedding has many components that need to come together. There are countless options to choose from. You may find yourself overwhelmed trying to narrow down the scope of your choices in order to help you decide on the individual pieces of your big day. A great way to do that is by choosing a theme for your wedding.

A theme ties all of your ideas together, so your ceremony and reception flow with each other. You can choose a song, season, pattern, color, etc. around which to build your wedding. What type of wedding do you want to have? Would you prefer a more modern wedding or something rustic? Maybe your dream-come-true wedding is a fairy-tale style affair. Perhaps you would like to create your special day around your favorite color. Maybe you have already found the

perfect dress, and you'd like to design the wedding around its style. The theme of your wedding can be anything you desire it to be.

Choosing a theme can also be a creative way to illustrate who you and your husband-to-be are as a couple. Are you an adventurous pair? Did you meet in an unusual way? Do you have a mutual passion, such as music or food? The things you enjoy together can create a unique theme. Your individual family heritage can also be a beautiful backdrop for your wedding.

Once you have decided on your theme, you can have the wedding professionals you employ help you incorporate that



theme into each aspect of your wedding. When you are choosing your wedding gown, a bridal consultant can help you with dress options that coordinate with your theme. They can also help you with attire options for the wedding party that will complement your dress. The consultant can also advise you on hairstyles and accessory choices for your gown. Your hairstylist can offer hair options, as well as showing you how to pair those options with any desired accessories.

If your theme is related to color, a florist can help you incorporate that shade into flower arrangements, bouquets and table settings. Even if your theme is

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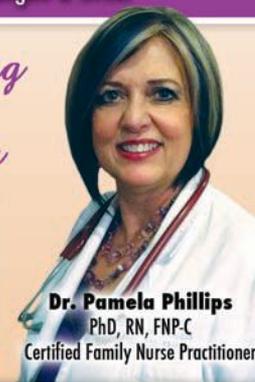
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You will want to be sure the theme you choose will fit the time of year you desire for your big day. If you have an idea about the season for your nuptials,



you will want to be certain the venue is appropriate. If you don't have a wedding planner, you can contact the person who coordinates events at your chosen venue. They can inform you of the ideal seasonal conditions for their location.

After your theme has been selected, there will still be several decisions to

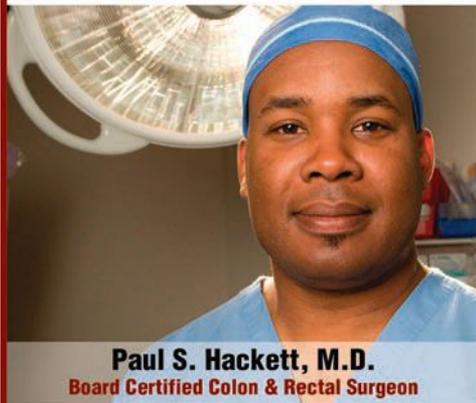


make about the wedding. You will, however, have a better understanding of what your selections should look like. Here are a few theme examples to get you started:

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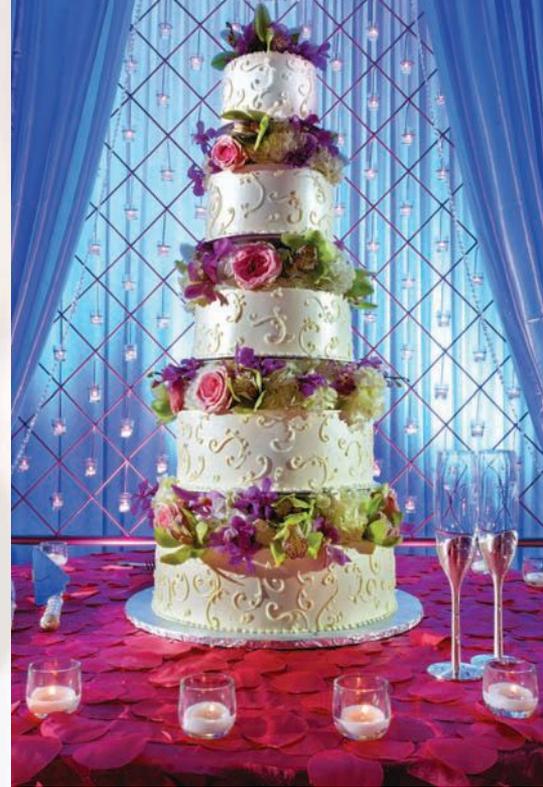
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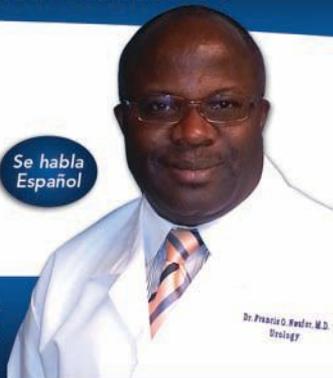
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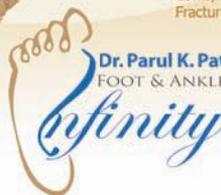
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for your dress, because you can add rustic touches to any gown you choose.

However you decide to define your special day, there will be no shortage of wonderful options to create your perfect wedding. The wedding professionals you choose will provide options and show you examples to help you along the way. Selecting a theme is an important step to making the planning process more manageable and can be the best way for you to tie your ideas together before you tie the knot! **NOW**



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Fitness the Fun Way

Milton and Lisa Noey are committed to both the discipline and the enjoyment of fitness. — By Beverly Shay

Milton and Lisa Noey have participated in various types of fitness programs to some degree throughout their lives. But when Milton underwent quadruple bypass surgery in 2002, the need for consistent, doable exercise became imperative. “We joined a gym for one year, but I found the workouts boring and tedious, allowing me to continue thinking about stressful things,” Milton recalled. Previously, Lisa had practiced Kung Fu, and Milton had been involved in Tae Kwon Do, so they decided to give martial arts a go again. “What I like best is not only does your body get a workout, your mind gets a rest, because you don’t think about work or worries for a solid hour,” Milton admitted.

Both Milton and Lisa earned their black belts by 2005. Now they have about 130 students ranging in age from 4 to mid-40s

meeting in the 2,400-square-foot open room lined with mirrors. “We teach and practice Olympic-style sparring,” Milton said of himself and the six instructors. “We offer a very encouraging environment with discipline and structure. Tae Kwon Do holds your interest, because it’s a never-ending sport. You’re always growing and learning something new, something more.” The three-year program teaches kids and adults skill, leadership and confidence. “I show people how to stand up for themselves. It’s progressive growth, so you aren’t peddling instant gratification.”

Attending one-hour classes twice a week and practicing at home regularly can move you from white to black belt (10 belts total). “You can usually earn a new belt every three months once you have mastered the moves, although it takes about six months on the final belt to prepare for a black belt,” Lisa said. “We make

sure each of the students knows the material before we allow them to test for a belt, because we don't want them to fail."

With an opportunity to acquire additional studio space next door, they decided to open a dance studio featuring Zumba dance fitness classes. "Zumba has a proven record in 156 countries," Lisa explained. "The workouts are predominantly cardio agility dance fitness with Latin moves. The international music provides good rhythm."

With both martial arts and Zumba, the Noeys' goal is to see people become less-stressed, more confident and healthier.

Since Milton and Lisa both agreed they should know what is being taught, they both became licensed Zumba dance fitness instructors, as are seven other instructors. What Milton finds most refreshing is how several of their women have lost significant weight in just a year. "It's so much fun to lose weight in this manner. We turn on the party lights, which pick up the beat of the music and watch people enjoy themselves," Lisa shared. "We offer 14 one-hour classes a week with between eight and 20 students per class. Classes can be joined on any day of any month."

With both martial arts and Zumba, the Noeys' goal is to see people become less-stressed, more confident and healthier. "I want to see the children develop into confident leaders, knowing they can become whatever they want," Milton added. "I would do anything for these kids. And for our women, we want them to keep moving, so they can enjoy better longevity. We have one Tae Kwon Do student who, although she has cerebral palsy, has earned her second-degree black belt." Tae Kwon Do and Zumba dance fitness have one important thing in common — the moves can be adapted to any limitation, special need or current fitness level. **NOW**

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Physicians on the Methodist Charlton medical staff, along with employees and President Jonathan Davis, are among the golfers participating in the CardioShack Golf Tournament.



Cedar Hill Neighborhood Services teammates, Leah Walker and Stacy Graves, participate in an open house at Fire Station 3.



Tanya Torres and Mark Aguilon welcome Tony, first baby born at Methodist Charlton in 2015. He arrived at 12:58 a.m. to join siblings Aviery and Justin (shown) and Jacy, Arriana and Marc (waiting at home).



DeSoto ISD Spelling Bee winner Courtney Smith, East Middle School, and alternate Maya Hill, Woodridge Elementary, show off their awards.



Supt. David Harris and Principal Wesley Pittman honor Yabaira Martinez, her sister and parents, Mr. and Mrs. Luciano Martinez; Yabaira suggested the winning name for Frank D. Moates Elementary School's new cafeteria: Frank D's Café.



Duncanville Chamber of Commerce welcomes House of Style with a ribbon cutting.



DeSoto High School senior Vicky Yeung was named a Commended Student in the 2015 National Merit Scholarship Program (shown here with DISD Board President Warren Seay Jr., Superintendent David Harris and board member Aubrey C. Hooper).



Damion Frazier, a West Africa drumming specialist, entertains and educates others about his instruments during the Kwanza Celebration.



Duncanville Women's Club president Barbara McComb poses with recent guest speaker Dave Lieber and program chair Lucy Robinson.

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15 Great Ideas for Your Tax Refund

When Uncle Sam gives back, make the most of it. Instead of spending your tax refund on some new gadget or other source of instant gratification, consider improving your life, well-being and even your financial future with these investing ideas for your tax return this year.

Invest in Your Future

- *Save for retirement* — Contribute to your existing IRA or start a new one.
- *Pay down/refinance your mortgage* — Pay off your home sooner or reduce your monthly payments.
- *Start a rainy day fund* — Open a high-yield savings account to earn interest and still have cash for emergencies.
- *Save for your kids' education* — Put your refund in a college savings plan to prepare for tuition and related expenses.
- *Create a will* — Ensure your legacy and see that your loved ones are cared for.

Invest in Yourself

- *Get a gym membership* — Get healthy now, and you will look and feel better.
- *Start a sunny day fund* — Not all funds have to be for emergencies. Plan a vacation and have it paid for before you go.
- *Adopt a pet* — Studies show that pets reduce stress and elevate moods. Bring a little love into your life.

• *Attend a college course* — Next to a healthy body, a healthy mind is vital to a happy life.

• *Take a healthy cooking class* — Combine learning with a healthy lifestyle choice and live happier, longer.

Invest in the World

- *Give to a charity* — Support that group you have always wanted to.
- *Invest in a socially responsible manner* — Ask your advisor about socially responsible or “green” investments.
- *Go energy efficient* — Save money on energy expenses through home renovations, a new hybrid car or joining an energy co-op.
- *Join a food co-op* — Support local farmers and enjoy healthy fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy products produced right in your own community.
- *Grow your own garden* — Reduce your carbon footprint, and save money, by growing healthy fruits and veggies in your backyard.

Make the most of your tax refund. Talk to your financial advisor about these and other investment opportunities. **NOW**

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Todd Simmons is a Raymond James Financial Advisor based in Duncanville.

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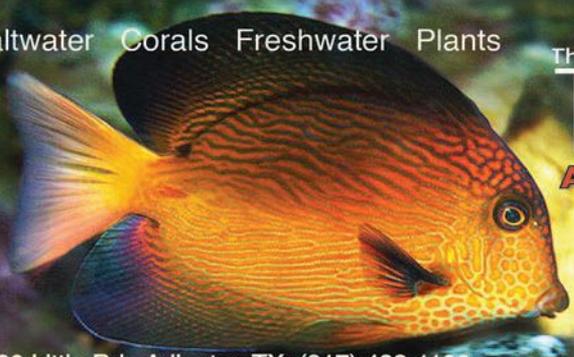
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More Sugar Necessary

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

You don't have to be a diabetic to have hypoglycemia. Although it is commonly associated with the disease, there are other conditions that can cause it. Hypoglycemia is the medical term for low blood sugar. Glucose, or blood sugar, is necessary for the body to have enough fuel or energy to carry out its normal functions. So when levels fall below normal, it is an issue that must be addressed.

Some symptoms associated with hypoglycemia are trouble thinking clearly, headaches, visual disturbances, heart palpitations, sweating, shakiness, weakness, anxiety and fatigue. Your body needs glucose to function as it has been designed to. If deprived of it, your body will experience consequences. For example, if the brain is not receiving glucose, it cannot function properly and leaves the person susceptible to seizures and even coma. Many conditions can cause these symptoms, so it is important to be diagnosed by a physician rather than guessing at what might be wrong.

If you have been diagnosed with hypoglycemia and think you may be having symptoms, it is crucial to take immediate action. Because it's possible to lose consciousness with hypoglycemia, your first step should be to make sure you are in a safe place when you begin to counteract the effects of low blood sugar. If you pass out you certainly don't want to be behind the wheel of a car or injure

yourself falling. Follow instructions given by your physician. Some of the things that might be a part of your management plan are to test your glucose level if possible, and if your blood sugar is low, start taking some form of carbohydrates. Some food items suggested for this are hard candy, raisins, sugar, juice or milk. The amount should be determined with the help of your health care provider. Glucose tablets and glucose gel are available prepackaged. Eat or take the prescribed or recommended amount and test your blood sugar again. Some people may require an injection of glucagon. Glucagon is a hormone that quickly raises blood sugar levels. Based on the severity of your reaction and/or if your glucose level does not rise, you may have to call 911 or your doctor.

If you have hypoglycemia because of diabetes, it is important to follow the diabetic management plan set up with your physician and monitor your food intake and medication. If your hypoglycemia is from another condition, then the underlying problem needs to be corrected or managed. Careful planning can help avoid a catastrophe with hypoglycemia. **NOW**

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

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February 3, 17

Coffee and Conversations with Supt.
David Harris: **Feb. 3:** 7:30 a.m., East
Middle School; **Feb. 17:** 7:00 a.m.,
Freshman Campus.

February 4 – April 15

Free tax assistance to elderly/low-income
citizens: **Wednesdays**, 11:00 a.m.-3:00
p.m., DV library. Bring: 2013 tax return,
SSN cards for all on return, 1099 and
W-2 forms.

February 5

Black History Month showing of *Selma*,
Lord, Selma: 4:30 p.m., DS library.

February 5 — 7, 12 — 14

Things My Mother Taught Me: 8:00 p.m.,
Duncanville Community Theatre.

February 7

Beaus & Belles: A Western Valentine
Daddy Daughter Dance: 6:00-9:00 p.m.,
DV Rec. Ctr. Cost: \$40 includes meal
and photograph.

Pretty in Pink Daddy Daughter Dance:
6:30-9:30 p.m., Alan E. Sims CH Rec. Ctr.
Cost (meal/photo) through Feb. 4 only:
\$40/couple; \$10/ additional girl.

Frozen Daddy Daughter Dance:
7:00-9:00 p.m., DS Civic Center.
\$30/couple; \$15; reserved table:
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February 7, 8

Cedar Hill Race Festival:
Sat: 6:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.;
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February 12, 17

DeSoto High School culinary arts full
menu dinners: 5:00-8:00 p.m.
One-hour/cash only; reservation
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February 15

Gospel Fest 2015: The Art of Praise:
4:00 p.m. Faith Bible Chapel, DS. Brittany
Johnson, DeSoto HS Choir and church
worship team. Cost: \$10. (972) 230-4243.

February 18

Smooches for Pooches (benefits Friends
of Tri-City Animal Shelter): 6:00 p.m.,
Visual Expressions, 1425 N. Hwy 67, CH.

February 20

Special African musical story time with
Melody Bell: 4:00 p.m., DS library.

Hopkins Sr. Ctr. Dance with Billy G:
7:00, DV. Cost: \$5. (972) 298-0667.

February 27

Dallas Black Dance Theater
Performance: 7:00-10:00 p.m., DeSoto
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February 28

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In the Kitchen With John and Marcia Trepagnier

— *By Beverly Shay*

“Marcia is an innately good cook, fixing good old country food like fried pork chops, mustard greens, fresh purple hull peas and cornbread dressing,” explained John Trepagnier. “Good food doesn’t have to be complicated.” Marcia also enjoys making and canning jellies and preserves. Both John and Marcia enjoy seasonal foods like acorn squash in the fall and lighter, spicier seafood fare in the summer.

Although John never formally studied cooking, he also cooks. “I have been surrounded by good cooks my entire life,” John shared. His mom, grandmother and older men in the Bonnet Carre Rod & Gun Club all influenced him. Their Louisiana background can be seen in their cooking. John cooks Creole style more than Cajun. Creole is more multicultural with French, Italian and German influences. **NOW**

Corn Soup

- 6 heaping Tbsp. flour**
- 6 Tbsp. oil**
- 2 onions, chopped**
- 1 large bell pepper, chopped**
- 2 stalks celery, chopped**
- 4 toes garlic, chopped or 2 Tbsp. garlic powder**
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped**
- 1 15-oz. can diced tomatoes**
- 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce**
- 2 cans whole kernel corn**
- 2 cans cream-style corn**
- 4 chicken bouillon cubes**
- 3 quarts water**
- Salt, to taste**
- 2 potatoes, peeled and diced**
- 2 lbs. raw shrimp, peeled**
- 1 can string beans**

- 1.** In a 6-quart pot, make a roux by mixing flour and oil together. Stir over medium-high heat until roux becomes caramel in color. Do not allow to burn.
- 2.** Add onion, bell pepper, celery, garlic, parsley, tomatoes and tomato sauce; cook over medium to low heat for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 3.** Add all corn, bouillon, water and salt. Bring to a boil; lower heat to medium and cook 10-15 minutes.
- 4.** Add potatoes; cook 10 minutes more. Turn off heat; add shrimp and string beans.

Crawfish Étouffée

Serves 4.

- 1 rib celery, chopped**
- 1 small bell pepper, chopped**
- 1 onion, chopped**

- 1 stick butter**
- 3 Tbsp. flour**
- 1 lb. crawfish tails, with fat**
- 1 14-oz. can chicken broth**
- Favorite seasonings, to taste (I use Slap Ya Mama Hot Sauce.)**
- 1 cup green onions, finely chopped**
- Hot cooked rice**

- 1.** Sauté celery, bell pepper and onion in butter. Stir in flour, but do not brown.
- 2.** Add crawfish, broth and seasoning; mix well. Simmer for 25 minutes.
- 3.** Stir in green onions and serve over rice.

Cranberry-stuffed Acorn Squash

- 3 acorn squash, halved lengthwise, seeded**
- Nonstick cooking spray**
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds**
- 12 oz. pork sausage**
- 3/4 cup celery, diced**
- 1/2 cup brown sugar**
- 14 oz. chicken broth**
- 1 6-oz. pkg. cornbread stuffing mix**
- 1 cup dried cranberries**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F. Cook squash halves in microwave-safe dish on high for 8-10 minutes, or until flesh softens. Scoop out pulp, leaving 1/4-inch thick shell. Coarsely chop pulp and set aside.
- 2.** Spray a 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray; place shells, cut side up, in baking dish. Spray large skillet with cooking spray; toast almonds and set aside.
- 3.** Cook sausage and celery in a large skillet over medium-high heat until sausage is crumbled and no longer pink. Add sugar and broth to pan; bring to a boil. Remove from heat; gently stir in stuffing mix, squash pulp, cranberries and almonds. Cover; let stand 5 minutes.
- 4.** Fill each squash loosely with equal portions of stuffing mixture. Bake for 30 minutes, or until golden.

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

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