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July 2008



**Wheels That  
Go Around**

**Respecting  
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**Champion  
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**Pages of  
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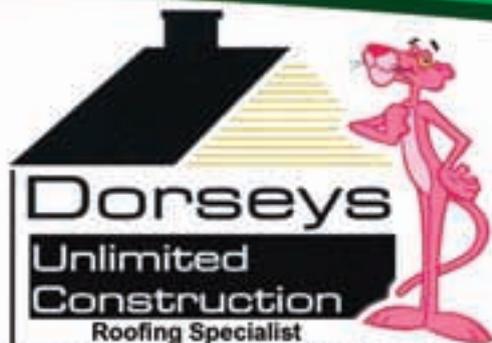


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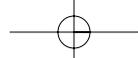
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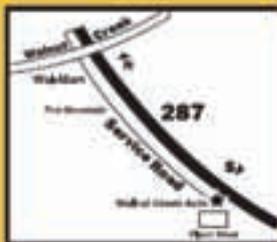
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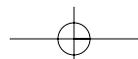
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Fireworks fill the night sky in  
honor of our freedom!*

*Photo by Mark Ashley.*

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# Mansfield NOW

## Editor's Note

*Dear Friends and Neighbors,*

As we celebrate the Fourth of July, it is all about fireworks, the backyard barbecue and the annual parade, right? At least, it can certainly seem that way. But the people in this month's issue are a reminder otherwise. The Declaration of Independence is more than just a piece of paper. It is a symbol of our freedom, determination and the ideals by which we aspire to live.



Historically, we are a people who care for one another in both our own community and around the globe. We try to raise people up and are grateful for what we have. On this note, there can be no better examples than 6-year-old Sami FitzGerald writing (and publishing) her "grateful" journal or the good works of Mansfield residents who continue to send refurbished wheelchairs to those in need around the world.

I am so proud to be a part of this wonderful community and am reminded of why our nation is so great each and every time I meet with those of you in the community.

Happy July Fourth! Be safe and take care of one another,  
*Alex Allred*  
MansfieldNOW Editor

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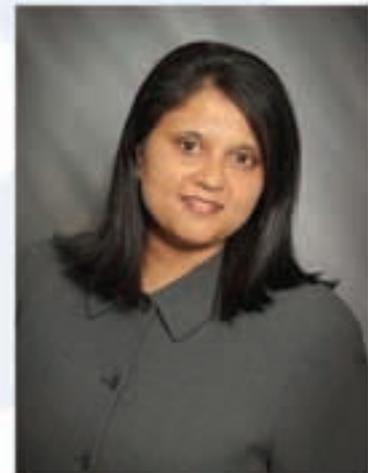
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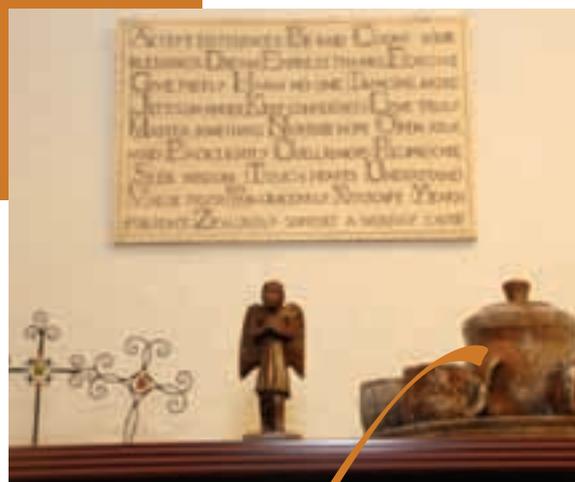
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# Wheels

## That Go Around

— By Alex Allred



Teresa Sherwood, Bill Eaton and Win Hatt share something in common. True, they hold a great devotion to their faith, church and community. Their real connection, however, is to strangers and wheelchairs. All three are members of the First United Methodist Church, and all three are strong community leaders. But when Bill took a pie in the face, that was when a great idea turned into a life-altering reality, and these three amazing people, along with so many others, set out to change the world.

When the First United Methodist Church in Mansfield connected with the international organization, Joni and Friends, congregation members scrambled to find the funds to purchase, rebuild and ship wheelchairs to those

in need. “Joni and Friends has a lot of different aspects,” explained Teresa. “They help families with disabled kids, churches in their international program and also provide walkers and chairs outside the U.S. to developing countries who just don’t have access.”

As the story goes, Bill had been in Mexico, “doing mission work with the church,” when the group learned about a little girl in need of a wheelchair. The Mansfield church is a ministry partner with the Juntas Servimos Ministry, where volunteer-in-mission Larry Cox doggedly works to distribute medical supplies, including wheelchairs.

“I was painting a house,” Bill said, “when Larry called me about another house.” There, Bill met a little girl

named Carla. Severely disabled, “she spent most of her days on an old van seat on her porch. When Larry asked if we had a wheelchair for her, I asked around a little bit.” It was simply that easy. Bill secured a wheelchair, had a physical therapist fit the chair to the girl’s measurements and made the delivery to Carla and her family who were living in a small town outside of Matamoras, Mexico. Their home was a shack made of material scavenged from a dump-site.

“What happened next was just incredible,” recalled Bill, likening it to nothing short of a spontaneous celebration. “People were crying and laughing and clapping.” In the middle of it all was Carla, grinning ear to ear. Bill had to walk away.

“Normally, I would have made a joke about it. That’s what I do, but there was no joke to be had there, and

**“They help families with disabled kids, churches in their international program and also provide walkers and chairs outside the U.S. to developing countries who just don’t have access.”**

it robbed me of my natural defenses. It was overwhelming.”

Even as Bill retold the story, he was overcome with emotion. He was not alone, as Teresa struggled to tell stories of her trips to Mexico and Africa and how her community has literally changed lives around the world.

“One of the most overwhelming realizations I had,” Teresa said, “is that in our culture, if I know someone who has a need like that [for wheelchairs], I know what to do, who to call. But in

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Mexico, you would see parents who were carrying a 10-year-old disabled child wherever they went, and once they can't carry them anymore, they just lay the child in the back room. So, it was distressing to know that there was a simple answer to bring that



**“He was not alone, as Teresa struggled to tell stories of her trips to Mexico and Africa and how her community has literally changed lives around the world.”**

person back into the world.” To do that, they needed to raise money. It was then that Bill became inspired. He and his wife, Kathy, challenged the children from their Vacation Bible School to a coin drive. “It was boys vs. girls,” Bill explained. “If the boys won, I got to hit my wife in the face with a pie!” Of course, should the girls raise more money, Kathy would have the honor of hitting Bill in the face with the pie! “Either way, everyone won,” Bill said. At the end of the drive, the children raised over \$1,000, and Kathy hit Bill in

the face with a pie “in front of the entire congregation.”

Today, the First United Methodist Church has sent over 800 chairs to both Mexico and Zimbabwe, hoping to set up permanent distribution sites, including one in Reynoso, Mexico. In

addition, Mansfield residents have traveled great distances to reconstruct homes, help supply those in need with proper medical equipment and educate each other about the world around us.

Teresa is insistent that the wheelchair mission covers far more geography than two countries. “This is about what we do right here in our own

community. It doesn’t have to be in Mexico or Africa.”

In this amazing process, wheelchairs are sent to prisoners who refurbish the chairs. From there, the chairs are loaded into a large U-Haul truck and driven across the border or shipped overseas.

“When I went to pick up the chairs from the prison,” Bill said, “I’m thinking it’s just a simple pick up and delivery.” Instead, inside the prison walls, Bill spoke with the prisoners who refurbished the wheelchairs. Equal to the stories of the chair recipients, Bill found himself incredibly humbled. Prisoners relayed stories of finding a purpose, rediscovering their faith and reconnecting with their communities.

According to Win, there are two components of their wheelchair service. “Of course, there is the receiving of the wheelchairs,” he said, but it is the other part that he never considered when he initially agreed to help. Perhaps it is for this reason that he is almost embarrassed to take any credit for good deeds and is quick to point out how much work others have done



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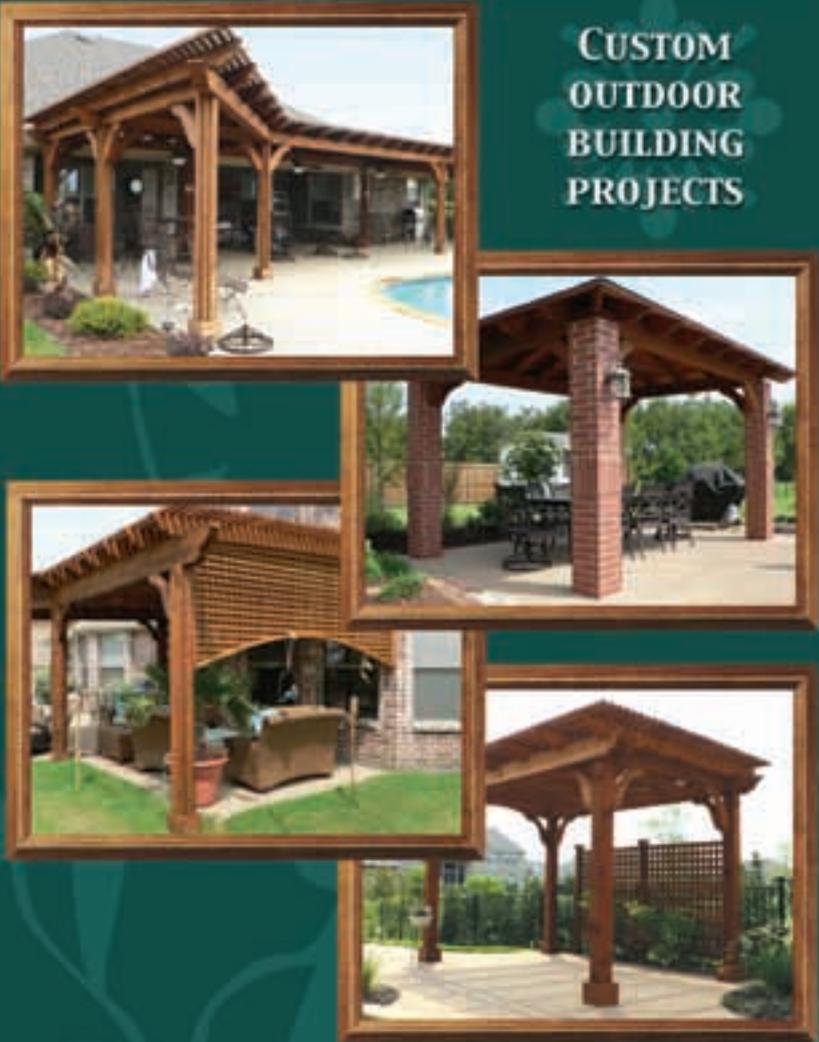
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before him. "When we took the wheelchairs to the prison," he said, "men with tattoos on their faces and tough demeanors were eager to be part of something so important." It was when the work was complete and the men reloaded the chairs into the truck that Win showed pictures to the prisoners. "I brought pictures of kids crawling in the dirt and an old fella who had calluses on his knees from dragging himself around." Then, Win offered pictures of those same people after they received wheelchairs the prisoners had refurbished. "It was an amazing thing to witness," he said. When the prisoners saw pictures of smiling people, they were moved to a



moment of silence and prayer in honor of those who needed help.

It was then that Win truly understood the "honor of being involved in the program."

Bill agreed. "I was just driving the truck down the road, thinking about where the chairs were going and how many lives they were going to change and [how many lives] already had [changed]," he said.

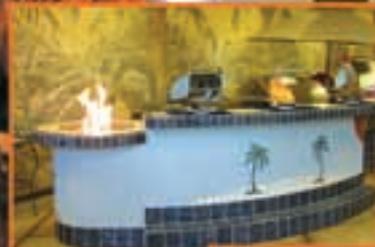
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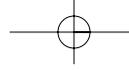
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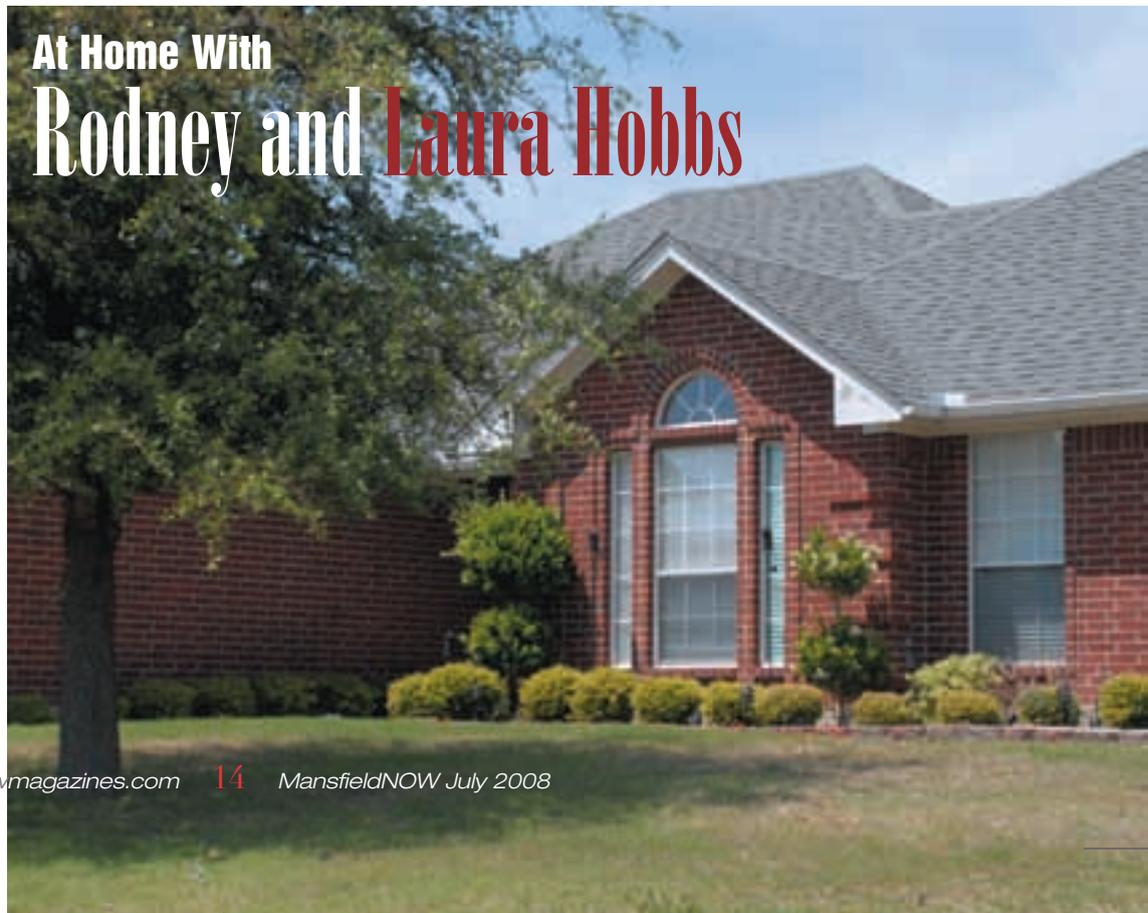


# Love Never Fails

— By Sandra McIntosh

Rodney and Laura Hobbs are avid sports fans. In fact, their game of choice is college football. As they reminisced about how they first met, Laura began to laugh aloud. “We met on a 15-passenger van on the way to a game between Oklahoma University and Notre Dame,” she said, also adding that the ride was not just down the road and around the block. “We traveled to South Bend, Indiana. It was a 14-hour round trip.” Rodney was a sophomore at OU, while Laura, being a couple years older, was what she called a “super senior.” “That just means she spent five years in college,” Rodney

## At Home With Rodney and Laura Hobbs



interjected, with a smile.

It was friendship at first sight for the couple. "Our friendship developed over a five- to six-month period," Rodney remembered. "I asked her out and we dated for about two-and-a-half years before we married." "He proposed at the Grand Canyon as the sun was setting," Laura explained. "It was so romantic." Rodney also recalled that period in life as being a time of great joy, interlaced heavily with a large amount of change. "I graduated from OU on May 12, 2002," he explained. "I moved to Texas on May 15, so I could go to work at my new job, and then we married on June 8. Yes, it was definitely a lot of change in a very short amount of time."

As they continued to smile at one another while memories replayed in their minds, they talked about the culture shock they felt when they first settled in Texas. They went from "breathing OU" to people asking them, "O who?" "We like to think of ourselves as

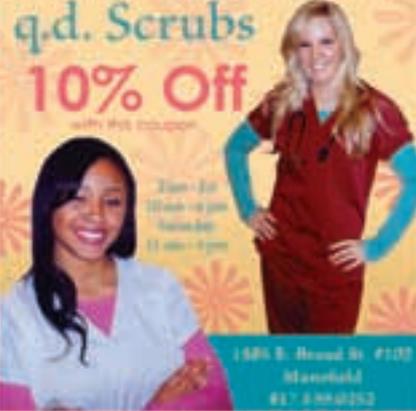
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missionaries who are getting people back to the 'promised land,'" Laura jokingly said, quickly adding that the 'promised land' that she is referring to is Oklahoma. "This is definitely home to us," Rodney said on a more serious note. "Mansfield has been great to us."

In fact, on May 15 of this year, Rodney celebrated his six-year

anniversary as the student pastor at Walnut Ridge Baptist Church where he ministers to youth in grades seven through 12. They remember spending their first year as husband and wife in an apartment in Arlington before relocating to their quaint three-bedroom, two-bath classical, yet very modern home in Mansfield.

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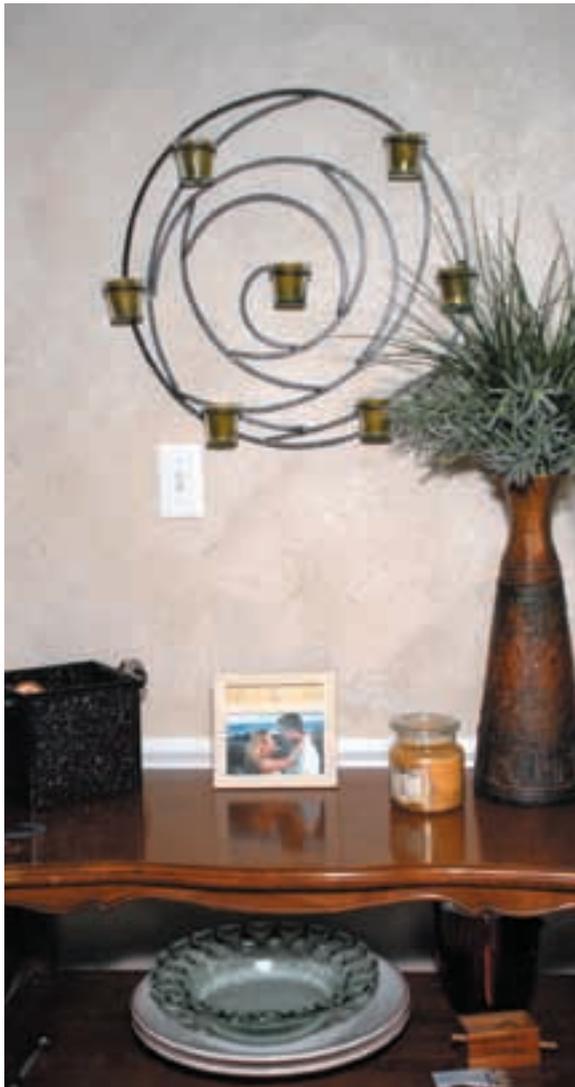
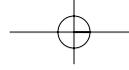
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their first weekend in the house. *While You Were Out* and *Trading Spaces* have nothing on them. In one weekend, they were able to repaint the home's interior, pull up the old carpet and tile and quickly replace them with selections that were more suited to their combined decorating styles. "We closed on the home [on a] Friday and got started

that very night," Rodney said. "Every square inch of the floors and walls got a facelift." They were also quick to give thanks where thanks are due. "A bunch of people from the church spent the weekend at our house," Laura said. "At one time, I bet we had 15 people with paintbrushes in their hands." In the upgrade, they also replaced sinks.

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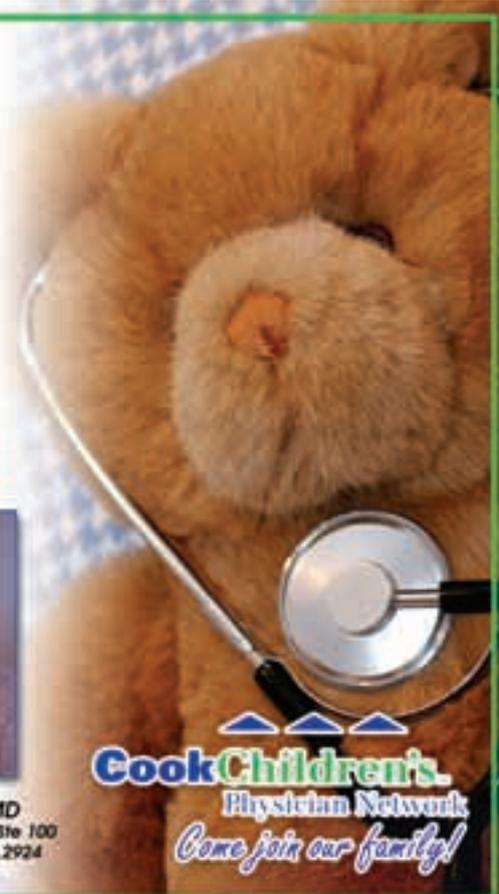
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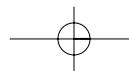
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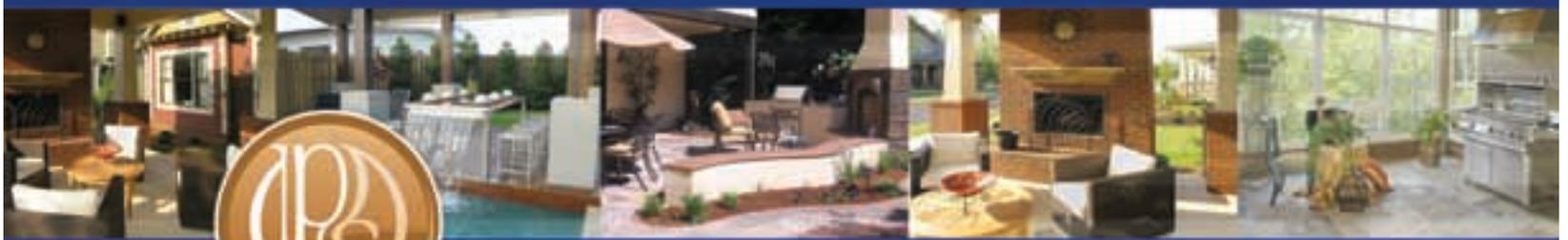
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“It was one unbelievable weekend,” she enthused. “We have been so blessed by what everyone has provided in the way of help.”

Just recently, the young couple had to put one member of the clan, Stoops, their chocolate lab, out back to accommodate for the safety and well-being of the newest family member — Hannah Grace — born in the wee hours of the morning on March 6. After a lengthy time of trying, the couple was unable to conceive. Following research and a great deal of prayer, Rodney and Laura decided the method of in vitro fertilization was an option they were willing to try. “Hannah was a three-year process,” Rodney said, as their bundle of joy napped the morning away in his lap. Her name was also prayerfully chosen from the story in the Bible of Hannah, who went before the Lord

when she was unable to conceive a child. “We both became ‘Hannahs’ during this process,” Rodney said, as Laura nodded her head in agreement.

The couple’s modest home is now filled with baby items: bottles, diapers, tiny articles of clothing, blankets and a wind-up swing that gives Hannah many moments of fun while allowing Laura a few moments to prepare for the day. When asked to show visitors the nursery, their joy over the room grows to an excitement they can barely contain. Wanting to be surprised at the birth, Rodney and Laura chose not to learn the gender of their child beforehand, but that did not stop interior designer Nola Casey, the owner of Lil’ Couture, from coming to the home a month prior to Hannah’s birth to prepare the nursery for her special homecoming. “I met Nola during a ribbon

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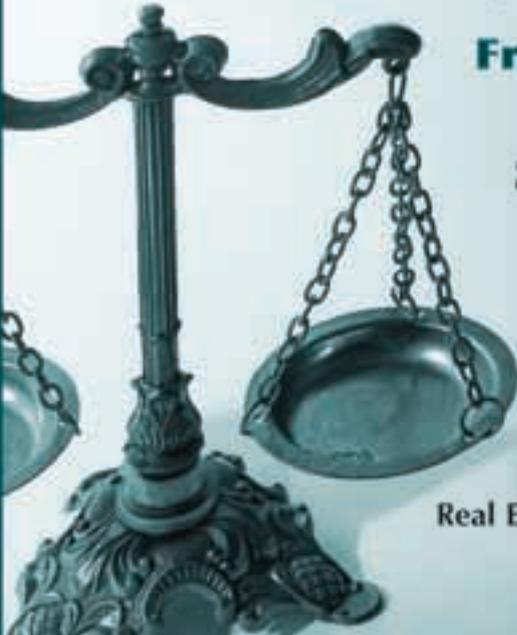
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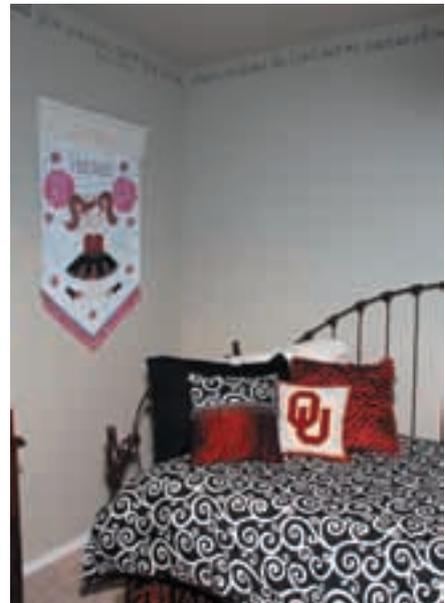
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cutting," Laura said. "She told me she did custom bedding and nurseries." Hannah's room was the first complete nursery that Nola designed. "She needed a model for her working portfolio," Laura said, also adding that Nola is now currently working



on her 20th nursery. "It's nice to know that Hannah's [nursery] was the first of many."

Needless to say, they were pleasantly surprised the day they brought Hannah home and were able to unlock the door to the beautiful room beyond. Hannah's space was ready for her arrival in shades of crimson, creme and black — the



traditional OU colors. Bible verses that the proud father and mother had chosen beforehand had been hand-painted around the ceiling, while a chandelier fit for a princess hung in the center of the room. "Nola thought of everything," Laura said, making it a point to show how the detail in the rocker's upholstery perfectly matched the bedding on the daybed and in the baby bed ensemble.

When asked about collectibles, the couple looked at one another and just smiled. "I guess you could say I collect power tools," Rodney laughed. "The garage is his all-in-one workshop," Laura said, adding that he loves woodworking. Since material items are not the most important thing to the couple, special items are few. The dining room table and chairs in the formal dining room once belonged to Laura's great-aunt. The cross in the wooden shadow box that hangs on the wall in the living room was handcrafted by Rodney as a gift to Laura. "It marked our one-year anniversary of dating," she said. Life for the couple has changed since Hannah's arrival, but Rodney and Laura would not have it any other way. For them, love never fails and blessings constantly abound. **NOV**

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# Pages of Gratitude

— By Faith Browning

“Don’t judge a book by its cover” and “Big things can come in small packages,” are sayings that clearly define the enormous spiritual character of 7-year-old Samantha (Sami) FitzGerald. Her simple desire to develop gratitude in her life has manifested into an accomplishment that now blesses the lives of many children.

When Sami was 6 years old, she wanted to have a gratitude journal like her parents, Rick and Caryn. They thought this would be a simple task, but discovered there was no such book geared toward children. This did not dissuade young



Sami, who innocently stated, “That’s fine, Mommy, we’ll just make our own.” That simple statement began the creation of her successful book *Fish Sticks, Books and Blue Jeans! Teaching kids to be thankful for everything (yes, even fish sticks) everyday!* Her book has only been available for a few months, but she has already sold over 1,000 copies.

From the clever mind of this big-hearted child, comes a unique visual of how to focus on being grateful. “It’s like turning binoculars around,” Sami said. “Instead of looking in them from the small side and seeing things big, you’re turning them

around and looking through the big side and seeing the small stuff.” “When you see things smaller,” Caryn added, “they are easier to handle.” Sami’s small, but powerful book stimulates children to think on what they do have and not on what they are lacking. It encourages them to express their

**ARTS  
NOW**

creativity by drawing their thoughts and provides positive affirmations to help build their self-esteem.

With no boundaries on her expectations of the world, Sami set out to create a workbook for children of her generation to focus on the importance of gratitude. After hearing Mark Victor Hansen speak a year ago on how he self-published



the first book he co-authored, Sami fearlessly decided that was what she needed to do with her gratitude journal. "At this age they do not see the road blocks," Caryn said. "Children do not think things can't be done."

The concept of the book quickly formed in her mind, taking only a month to put together. "She told us what she wanted and we went back and forth with different ideas," Caryn explained. "We then put Sami's ideas on paper without distorting them, because we wanted it put together from a child's view." In February 2008, just two months from the moment of Sami's brilliant concept, her book was available in bookstores.

Caryn is Sami's mom, publisher and Web site designer, while Rick is her

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dad, accountant and biggest fan. "I'll be there for the millionth copy sold," he proudly proclaimed. Rick is a corporate executive, which makes him the obvious choice to be the number cruncher for her growing career. Caryn explained the freedom of publishing your own book. "Parents are in control of how they want to promote the



book," she said. "There are no required book tours, and it does not cost a lot of money to publish your own book."

Being homeschooled allows flexibility. Sami has attended around a dozen book signings and has spoken to audiences of all ages. She speaks about how and why she wrote her book at public, private and religious schools of all denominations. "She has a presentation set up so the kids can participate," Caryn said. "It's interesting to see the energy that comes across the room when she is speaking." In March, WFAA's local morning show, *Good Morning Texas*, met up with Sami at Fort Worth Academy speaking to students about writing her book. Afterward, *GMT* invited Sami and Caryn to the studio for an interview.

Sharing the blessing of gratitude is just a part of Sami's caring heart. She also promotes the joy of giving to the children of St. Jude's Research Hospital. Before her 7th birthday, Sami decided she had everything she needed. "I did

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not want gifts given to me, when other kids didn't have any gifts," she said. The children of St. Jude had been on her mind, and after contacting them, she discovered their great need for art supplies. Sami now asks all her friends, family and anyone with a generous heart to send coloring books and crayons to the children. Her venture, "Colors Decorate

**"Instead of looking in them from the small side and seeing things big, you're turning them around and looking through the big side and seeing the small stuff."**

the World," has already benefited St. Jude's with over 600 boxes containing over 7,000 art-supply items.

Sami is currently collaborating with Debbi Chambers on a project designed to bring gratitude into the classroom called "Growing in Gratitude." Students grow plants while completing self-growing goals in a workbook. "They are watching something growing inside and outside," Caryn said.

Caryn encourages parents to assist their children in pursuing their ideas. She looked over at Sami with love-filled eyes and expressed her outlook on their hope. "Children are our future," she said. "In order to make this world a more peaceful and exciting place to be, without all the negativity and harm, we as adults have to make the difference. They mirror what we do." The statement decorating the T-shirt worn by this optimistic soul plainly expresses her infectious motto. "Sami says Gratitude Rules!" **ARTS NOW**

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Sports  
NOW

# Champion on Deck

— By Alex Allred

Today, Cody Huckabay is a proud aquatic director and coordinator of the new Mansfield Natatorium. It is a pool with eight 50-meter racing lanes, almost two dozen 25-yard lanes and two individual diving decks for Mansfield Independent School District (MISD) students and the public. With its launch in January 2007, Cody has already been surprised by its tremendous success. “We’ve only existed for one year,” he said, “but we already have over 200 members in the swim club and took our first swimmer to the Junior Nationals.”

For Cody, standing at the deck, coaching aspiring athletes is what he is meant to do. Just as a duck takes to water, Cody was meant for the pool. Although he was an all-around athlete in high school, finding great success in track, basketball and swimming, he did not discover his true passion or talent until college.

“Swimming,” Cody said of his

childhood, “was where I showed the most aptitude.” He competed in his first swimming competition at the age of 10. By his college years, however, he was looking for a greater challenge and began training for triathlons.

He liked the variation and the intense demands of the sport, “But I couldn’t make a living doing it,” he said. After three years as a professional athlete, he returned to his sport of swimming.

In 1988, Cody began coaching as a USA club coach in Amarillo. He moved to Pampa and later to Longview, Texas, serving as both high school and club coaches. When the call came a decade later, he made his move to the



# Sports NOW

metroplex, eventually making Mansfield his home along with his wife, Angela, and their two boys, 15-year-old Mitch and 10-year-old Christopher.

"There are two sides of him," commented Kimberly Henneman, office manger of the natatorium, speaking of Cody. "There is the personable side of him and then there is the coach out there on the deck with the teenagers." As a coach, Kim views Cody as the consummate professional and perfectionist. He wants and demands complete dedication from his athletes. No excuses. There is no crying in swimming!

It is that demand that keeps Cody coming back. "A lot of people say that swimming is only fun when it's over," he laughed. "That's true. On a day-to-day basis, it is hard work. But that's what I like about it. The self-discipline and motivation to be successful in our sport has always appealed to me. I enjoy trying to develop that in the kids. I like the kids who have that kind of work ethic."

At the natatorium, Cody wears two hats. He is both the head coach for the aquatic clubs and the director of the center. Many young athletes only swim through their high school years with



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## Sports NOW

MISD, while the more competitive swimmers work with Cody in the club. "Those are the ones," Kim said, "who you read about in the newspaper." Truly, Cody is building champions.

As a coach, he is competitive. "But there is a side seldom seen," Kim said, "and that is his passion for the kids." Cody puts in countless hours making sure children are simply comfortable in the water.

"One of the programs we are really

**"There is the personable side of him and then there is the coach out there on the deck with the teenagers."**

proud of is a third-grade water safety program," Cody said. The program allows each third-grade class within the MISD system to attend the natatorium. "We go over all the aspects of water safety," he explained. "We teach what to do and not do around a pool or a lake. We teach them how they should respond if a friend were in trouble without putting themselves in danger."

Cody is most proud of the fact that the program allows a trained professional to send a swimming assessment of each child home to a parent. "So parents know where their kid is in swimming ability." It is an important piece of information every parent should have. With summer in full bloom, Cody said,



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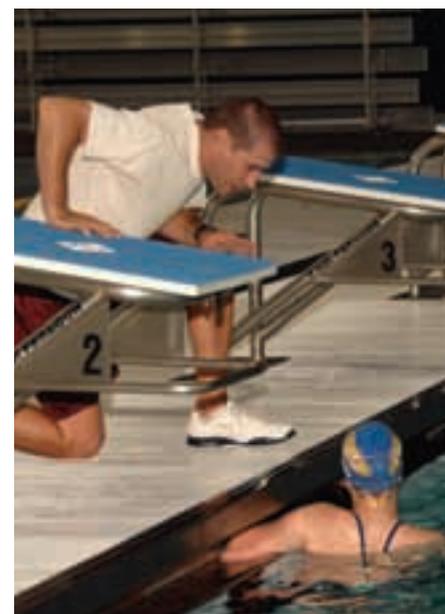
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## Sports **NOW**

“We hope to prevent any drowning accidents through information. I think where people get into trouble with water is they don’t have a healthy respect for it.” He also cautioned that many parents tend to overestimate the swimming skills of their children. “Maybe they have a backyard pool and their child can swim well there, but that doesn’t mean they can handle



water once it’s over their head or they are in open water. Our goal is to offer as many opportunities as we can to the students of our district. We want to expose as many people in our community to water and water safety as we can,” explained Cody.

If Cody had it his way, he would make every child comfortable around water, but still have a healthy fear of it. “It is,” he said, “about respecting the water and knowing your limitations.”

As for his athletes, there is already plenty of fear. But they love it! Under his guidance, the swimmers have great aspirations to be one of the best swimming and diving teams in the state, and what they may lack in passion, drive and dedication, their coach makes up for tenfold. He knows no limitations. **NOW**



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## Business NOW

# Coming Full Circle

— By Alex Allred

What goes around comes around. For Johnny Bratton, this is great news. He is a man who built his business and reputation on integrity and honor. This is clear when one takes a car ride with him through town. Everyone knows him and everyone waves. He can point out where he was born and the house he grew up in, telling stories about how Mansfield has changed over the years. A Mansfield High School graduate, Johnny likes to say he is “home grown,” but the Bratton roots go much deeper than his birth certificate.

Ancestor Richard Bratton is believed to be one of the first settlers to this area in 1852, after Ft. Worth was established as a military outpost. The Bratton family set up their home three miles outside of what is now historic downtown Mansfield. Homebuilding and carpentry have been a part of this family’s heritage dating back to Johnny’s great-grandfather, William Bratton, in the 1800s and spanning the generations through his grandfather, Ward Bratton, during the early 1900s and his uncle, Forrest Bratton.

It is not irony, but legacy, that more than a century later Johnny would get into the real estate business. After earning a bachelor’s of business administration in accounting in 1976, Johnny began a career with the U.S. Postal Service. However, after more than a decade of service, he knew where his heart lay. In the mid-to-late 1980s, he earned both his real estate and broker license.

Johnny established the Bratton Group Real Estate agency and, after tremendous success, sold it to a large franchise-owned real estate company. Still, he could not stay away, and in 2004, he created Bratton and Associates Realty.



Together Johnny and his wife, Sue, work to build the business, as did one of their four children. For many, the beautiful homes of Mansfield are just that — beautiful homes. For Johnny, however, many of those homes have a story or a connection to his family. Family has always been an important aspect of his business and who he is as a man.

As a real estate agent, Johnny is driven and determined to serve the public. He prides himself in always being available for questions and comments. But as an employer, his reviews are even more glowing. He is fair and understanding. He does not lose his temper.

“He really is unusual,” said Karen Pyle, an associate of Johnny’s agency, “in that he gives up leads [of potential buyers] to other people. I’ve never worked with any other



# Business NOW

broker who does that.”

In 2005, Karen sought out Johnny, and she put her license under Johnny Bratton and Associates. “It was [a] godsend!” Karen said. “All the sudden, my business just blossomed, and I know it had to do with being with such an incredible person. I knew I could always trust him.”

On this note, people who have dealt with Johnny concur that he is a man with great integrity. “It’s nice to know

**“All the sudden, my business just blossomed, and I know it had to do with being with such an incredible person.”**

that some things never change,” Karen said. “You know, people do change. Or, you won’t see them for a couple of years, and when you do, they’ve changed in some way. Not Johnny. He’s so stable. He never changes.”

The irony here, of course, is how much Mansfield has changed. Today, Johnny has sold more historic homes than any other real estate agency but also keeps a pulse on the new homes. He is always evolving, yet always the same. This sentiment would also include his new office.

“You now,” Johnny said, standing at the threshold of his newly refurbished office. “This right here used to be Lee Supermarket.” It was a place of business where Johnny worked as a bagboy in the mid 1960s. “I like to say I’ve come full circle.” What goes around comes around.

Bratton and Associates Realty is located at 208 E. Broad St., Suite 105. For more information, call (817) 896-2728 or visit [www.BrattonRealEstate.com](http://www.BrattonRealEstate.com). **BYD**



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# Respecting Old Glory

— By Alex Allred

surprise to this family when he enlisted in the army at an early age and began traveling around the world. His stateside posts included Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and his hometown in Michigan until 2004, when he received orders to come to Mansfield, Texas.

For Sgt. Voldarski, a recruiter with the U.S. Army, the American flag is much more than a flag bearing stars and stripes. It is a symbol of what his country, his home and his life mean to him.

Although it may seem cliché, he said, “People have died for that flag. They have fought for and died for what it represents.”

His ancestors, Sgt. Voldarski is proud to say, have a long history in serving this nation. “I was taught at an early age to honor my country and respect the flag.” So, it was of no



While Sgt. Voldarski grew up, the study and appreciation of American history “was a tradition in our house,” as were fundamental rules of handling the U.S. flag. For instance, in the raising and/or lowering of the American

flag, he would place his hand over his heart. The flag should never touch the ground. “But today,” he said, “a lot of people just don’t understand the rules of these traditions.” Nor do they understand the importance. Although his devotion to his country made him aware of such traditions, he never

## Education **NOW**

fully appreciated them until he toured overseas. "In countries, like Kosovo and even Germany, where once you turn 18 you have to serve six months in the military, you're always told what to do. But here," Sgt. Voldarski said, "we have a basic freedom and the right to make our own decisions. It really is," he said, "the land of the free."

When he joined the army in 1995, it was to fulfill the need to serve his country. But when he and his wife,

**"We have a basic freedom and the right to make our own decisions. It really is the land of the free."**

Rachel, had their daughter in 2002, his mission took on a new meaning. "I want things for my daughter now, too," he said. "When she gets older, she should have the same rights I do."

While he strives toward a double degree in business administration and mechanical engineering, the sergeant also gives lessons in flag etiquette. "Much," he said, "has changed for America in recent years, but the tradition of this great nation is one of resilience. The stars and stripes on our flag are evidence of that. It is," Sgt. Voldarski reminded, "what our ancestors stood and fought for." Today, there is no greater symbol of our freedom than our flag. For this reason, Sgt. Voldarski actually hands out flyers on flag etiquette.

**Sharon English Butler** REALTOR

**4231 Parker Ln. — Midlothian \$244,900**  
What a fabulous deal! This lovely 4/2.5/2 home sits on 1.9 acres, which is a very rare find, in prestigious Crystal Forest. Beautiful handscraped wood floors in living room and dining room add a touch of elegance, and a huge kitchen with granite countertops and pot spigot on wall just above the stovetop to fill those large pots with water for pasta. The split bedroom floorplan has jettied tub and separate shower in master bath, and Jack & Jill bathroom between 2 bedrooms. Best of all, an enormous backyard with plenty of potential.

**2861 McAlpin Rd. — Midlothian \$187,000**  
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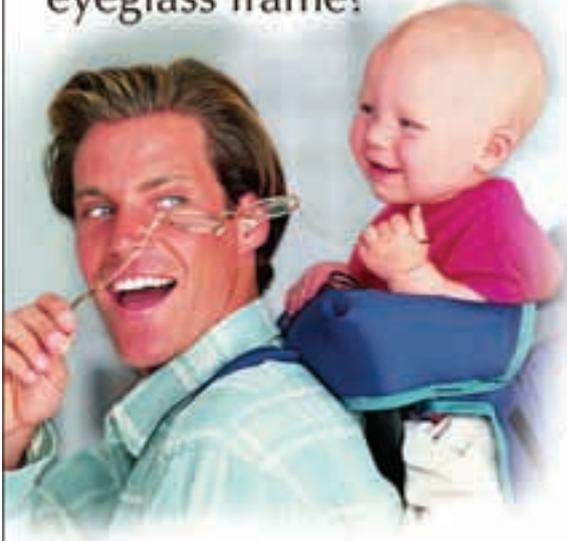
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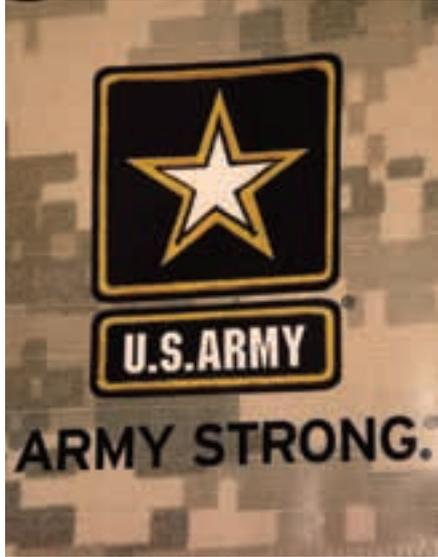
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# Education **NOW**

Although there are no formal laws regarding proper flag handling, some standards have been formalized to show respect to the flag and all it represents. For instance, the American flag must always fly above anything else; the Texas state flag should never be flown at equal height; and the American flag must always be first to be raised and last to be lowered if there is more than one flag.

It is also important to remember that the American flag must never be



used to cover anything, except for a coffin at a funeral. For example, you should not drape a platform or use a flag for decoration. Neither should any drawings or insignias ever be placed upon the American flag.

The American flag can be flown in all manner of weather, but at dusk, it should be taken down or have a light shining on it. As the flag is being lowered, you should either salute it or place your hand over your heart until the flag is all the way down. When the flag is coming down, all hats should be removed as a sign of respect, and if the American flag is displayed along a wall, be sure that the stars are on the top left (as you are looking at the flag) with the stripes running down the wall.

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## Education **NOW**

A flag can be washed or mended but if/when the flag is worn beyond repair, it should be destroyed in a dignified manner. Contrary to popular belief, the American flag can and should be burned rather than trashed. For more information, you may contact an American Legion Post near you. War veterans from the American

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Legion across the United States hold flag burning ceremonies, as do the Boy Scouts of America. The key point Sgt. Voldarski wants people to understand is that the flag deserves great respect.

Among his peers, Sgt. Voldarski is considered intensely patriotic but also a devoted family man. For these reasons, Independence Day holds a double meaning. While he intends to watch the fireworks and celebrate with friends and family, he also stands vigil for what our flag has meant for generations of Americans in peace and war — where it has been and how it has fared since 1776.

For more information about flag etiquette, contact the National Flag Foundation at (800) 615-1776 or try the Web: [www.usflag.org](http://www.usflag.org). You can also contact the local American Legion Post 624 in Mansfield at (817) 477-2207 or at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org). **NOW**

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# Around Town

## NOW



Alexia, top left, celebrated her third birthday with her sister, Alissa, at Hawaiian Falls. Students from Danny Jones Middle School, top right, celebrated the end of school with tropical sliding fun. The Texas Trust Credit Union and the Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce Golf Classic registration table, second row center, was manned by Sharon and Cheryl. A ribbon cutting, second row right, was held at Regal Staffing. Pirate wrestling, bottom left, was one of many fun activities students from Danny Jones Middle School enjoyed before school was released for summer vacation. Lifeguard Jake Edwards, bottom right, watched over swimmers at the opening of Mansfield's new Hawaiian Falls.



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# Around Town NOW



Several youngsters, top left, enjoyed petting the critters at the petting zoo that was held at the Mansfield Public Library. Volunteer parents for the 2008 senior class of MHS, top right, hosted a prom party called "Tiger Island" to ensure the safety of their children. A ribbon cutting, second row left, was held at Waddell Reed, Incorporated. Curtis Thomas, second row center, took turns pushing his children in the tire swing at Katherine Ross Park. The petting zoo, second row right, held at the library was a huge success with children, as well as adults. A large crowd, bottom left, attended an after hours gathering at Stevens Garden Grill. Another ribbon cutting, bottom right, was held at the Smoothie Factory.



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# Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

## IN THE KITCHEN WITH DEBBIE LAPLANT

**E**ighteen years ago, Debbie started her rewarding career in the Child Nutrition Department of Mansfield Independent School District. There she learned the art of making dinner rolls and giant cinnamon rolls from scratch. “I loved the fact that you could take flour and water and make breads and pastries,” Debbie said. “I found it gave me the creative outlet I needed.” Since Debbie loves to make bread, she is in charge of baking rolls every holiday. “My family loves them,” she said.

Debbie is very active in the Mansfield Association for School Nutrition. With her nutrition certification, she helps ensure nutritionally sound meals for the children in her school district. “We serve 17,000 lunches a day,” Debbie said. “We are the biggest fast food restaurant in Mansfield.” **NOW**

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

### CHICKEN QUESADILLA

2 lbs. 6 oz. cooked chicken, diced  
 4 oz. onion, diced  
 12 oz. tomato, diced  
 8 oz. bell pepper, diced  
 1 1/2 tsp. salt  
 1 1/2 tsp. black pepper  
 2 1/2 tsp. paprika  
 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin  
 2 cups Mozzarella shredded cheese  
 2 cups American shredded cheese  
 50 flour tortillas  
 pan spray (butter spray if desired)  
 Place chicken, onion, tomato, bell pepper and spices in a covered pan or dish. Cook in oven until vegetables are tender. Mix cheeses together in a bowl. Place flour tortillas, single thickness, on a sheet pan sprayed with pan spray or lined with an oiled pan liner. Place 2 oz. or 1/4 cup of chicken mixture on each tortilla and spread evenly. Sprinkle 1/2 ounce of cheese mixture on top of chicken. Place tortillas on top of cheese and spray lightly with pan spray. Place in a 400 F oven for 3 to 5 minutes. Serve with lettuce and tomato. Serves about 25.

### MANSFIELD SCHOOL ROLL DOUGH

1 qt. warm water (approximately 100 degrees)  
 3/4 cup vegetable oil  
 3 lb. 10 oz. all-purpose flour  
 2/3 cup powdered milk  
 3/4 cup white sugar  
 2 Tbsp. salt  
 1 1/4 oz. instant dry yeast  
 Put water and oil in a mixing bowl. Add flour, powdered milk, sugar, salt and yeast. Mix in at least a 5 1/2 qt. mixer with a dough hook for 12 minutes. You may have to stop and scrape the dough hook while mixing. Put dough in and oiled pan or bowl and let rise in a warm place until dough has risen to twice its size. Pinch rolls or use dough for desired purpose. Place rolls, with sides barely touching, in a pan. Place pan of rolls in a warm place to rise double again. Bake 350 F for approximately 12 minutes or until lightly brown. Butter the tops. Rolls can be frozen after they are pinched or made into cinnamon rolls. If wanting to freeze them, you can put them in freezer bags so you can pull out and thaw as many as you wish to use at one time. It may take as long as two hours to thaw in a warm place. Yields approximately 50 2-oz. rolls.

Other uses for the roll dough include the following:

### CINNAMON ROLLS

1 cup brown sugar  
 1 cup sugar  
 1/4 cup cinnamon  
**ICING:**  
 2 cups powdered sugar  
 1/4 cup milk (or to desired consistency)  
 1/2 tsp. vanilla  
 After dough has risen for the first time, take desired dough and put on a clean, lightly greased table or counter. Roll dough into a rectangular shape. Add enough melted butter to lightly spread over dough (approx. 1/4 cup). Mix brown sugar, sugar and cinnamon together. Spread sugar mixture over buttered dough. Roll long side toward long side to make a dough log. Slice cinnamon rolls out of the log with a knife or dough cutter. Place rolls on a greased cookie sheet and place in a warm place to rise again to double their size. Bake at 350 F for 12 to 15 minutes or until lightly brown. Whisk icing ingredients until smooth; drizzle over cinnamon rolls when slightly cooled. You can also use cream cheese icing in a can.



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# Who's Cooking **NOW**

## HOT DOG WRAP

After dough has risen for the first time, take approximately 2 ounces of dough and roll into a rectangle as long as a hot dog. Roll hot dog in dough. Seal sides together. Place on a greased sheet pan and cook for approximately 15 minutes or until lightly brown.

## CORN BREAD SALAD

6 cups corn bread, baked and crumbled  
 1/2 cup jalapeños, chopped (may be cooked in corn bread if desired)  
 1/2 cup onions, diced  
 1/2 cup bell pepper, diced  
 1 cup tomato, diced  
 2 eggs, boiled and diced  
 1/2 cup bacon bits  
 1/2 cup salad dressing  
 Put crumbled corn bread in a large bowl, add all ingredients, mix well and serve cold. Serves approximately 30.

## IRONMAN SALAD

1 1/4 lb. coarsely chopped lettuce  
 1 lb. spinach, chopped  
 4 oz. green onion, sliced  
 12 oz. cucumbers, sliced  
 12 oz. radishes, sliced  
 12 oz. tomatoes, diced  
 12 oz. carrots, shredded  
**DRESSING:**  
 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil  
 1/2 cup sugar  
 1/2 cup vinegar  
 1 1/2 tsp. salt  
 1/4 tsp. celery seed  
 1/4 tsp. black pepper  
 Mix all salad ingredients together lightly. Mix all dressing ingredients well, cover and chill. Add dressing (shake dressing just before adding to salad) and toss salad just before serving. Serves approximately 30.

## CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE

1 lb. butter  
 13 1/3 oz. brown sugar  
 13 1/3 oz. white sugar  
 4 eggs  
 1 Tbsp. vanilla  
 1 lb. 12 oz. all-purpose flour  
 1/2 oz. baking soda  
 1 1/4 tsp. salt  
 1 cup chocolate chips  
 Cream butter, brown sugar and white sugar together; beat about 10 minutes. Add eggs and vanilla; beat. Blend in flour, soda and salt. Fold in chocolate chips. Dip with No. 40 dipper for even-sized cookies (dip with spoon if you do not have dipper). Bake at 325 F for about 7 minutes. For nostalgia's sake, dip with No.16 dipper or 1/4 cup for large 5-inch cookies. Yields about 100 small cookies.

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# Score Big With Good Credit

— By Lezlee Liljenberg

Maintaining and understanding credit scores is more important than ever before. You may be more familiar with the term FICO scores which are used by financial institutions to determine whether they should lend money to a potential borrower and, if so, what interest rate to charge. However, having good credit, and reaping the benefits from doing so, does not stop with getting a loan. Credit affects multiple areas of our

lives and though we may not like this, it is a reality. Insurance is one of these areas where credit can matter in obtaining favorable rates.

In the state of Texas, the majority of the leading insurance companies still determine economic risk before issuing insurance. When an insurance company considers the risk it is what one might deem as a “soft hit.” It should not show up on credit reports that the mortgage company is considering for the loan.

Loan officers are often wary of this and will tell clients to wait for insurance while they are still attempting to get the loan solidified. This can prove detrimental or cause problems with closing on the home. You need to learn more about the home being purchased, so running the necessary reports and quotes is a good start in this process.

Let’s consider some other misunderstandings surrounding credit:

**“I have good credit because I always pay my bills on time.”**



Paying the minimums on credit cards or loans is not enough to give you high scores. If your list of minimum payments each month is extensive and everything is maxed out, then your debt-to-income ratio may easily be out of proportion. What this tells many companies is that you may be at risk of paying your bills. Credit scoring considers the potential of debt default

on payments due to illness, disability, job loss, etc.

**“I pay with all cash, no credit cards, so I will have a high score.”**

Credit scoring looks only at the past borrowing history and does not take into account a person’s net worth or income level. Though being debt free is a great concept, you need to establish a long-term borrowing history and paying only with cash will not get you there.

**“I closed all of my credit card accounts, so now my score should be higher.”**

Closing or consolidating credit cards

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is not always the best answer. It may decrease the amount of debt, yet, at the same time, increase the balances on fewer cards to the maximum credit limits. A good rule of thumb is to keep the balances between 25 percent and 35 percent of the available credit. In the short term it may not hurt your score, but over time it can diminish the positive effects of long-term credit history we all want to have established.

Keeping an eye on your credit reports is a great idea, and understanding exactly how everyday decisions can make a difference is instrumental for good scores. Remember scoring big means more money in your pocket to invest in your future. **NOW**

*Lezlee Liljenberg is a representative of Allstate with two locations based in Arlington.*

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**Health**  
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# Suffering With Arthritis

— By Betty Tryon

Do you have joint pain, stiffness and swelling for no apparent reason? You may have arthritis. An estimated one in three adults in America suffers from this affliction. The crowded field of sufferers lets you know you are not alone with this painful condition. Because so many people suffer from chronic joint pain of some type, much attention in the area of research focuses on treating this ailment.

Many think of arthritis (joint inflammation) as one disorder; however, the term covers over 100 medical conditions with symptoms including swelling, inflammation and joint pain. The spectrum for this disorder



can include mild discomfort to irreversible physical damage to any organ or system in the body. There are two common forms of arthritis: osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Osteoarthritis, also called degenerative joint disease, results in the breakdown and loss of cartilage in the affected area. The symptoms are related to the degenerative effects of the cartilage tissue loss: decreased function of the affected joint, swelling, tenderness to touch, pain and sometimes a grating sensation caused by bone rubbing against bone. Osteoarthritis is more likely to occur as we age; the repetitive use of our joints causes the cartilage to deteriorate. Obesity increases the risk factor of developing the disease and can worsen the symptoms. Heredity can be a factor in its development. Joint injury can also cause the beginning of osteoarthritis.

The second most common form of arthritis is rheumatoid arthritis. Unlike osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis presents itself as an autoimmune disease that attacks healthy joints, instigating the development of inflammation and resultant joint damage. Rheumatoid arthritis will usually exhibit itself bilaterally. The symmetrical pattern of the affliction helps to distinguish this disease from other types of arthritis. This disease possesses the potential to limit everyday activities such as buttoning a shirt or holding objects.

The encouraging news is that not everyone responds the same way with the same degree of severity. In addition, there can be periods where the symptoms may diminish or disappear.



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# Health NOW

At this time, the cause of rheumatoid arthritis is unknown. Something triggers the immune system to attack the body's organs or joints. There are many theories as to what precipitates the attack, including: the role of genetics, the environment, hormones and possibly an attack by a virus or bacteria.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for arthritis. Treatment consists of a combination of drugs and physical therapy. Some have found relief with holistic methods. Your physician can assist you in tailoring a treatment plan that is best for your needs. If you have joint pain, swelling or stiffness for more than two weeks, consult your doctor. **NOW**

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

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# July 2008 Community Calendar

**Monday - Friday**

The Young at Heart (ages 55 plus) meeting, Mansfield Activity Center (MAC), 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (817) 453-5420, ext. 2227.

**Every Monday**

Small business counseling provided by SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at the Mansfield Chamber offices, 114 North Main Street. Call (817) 473-0507.

**Every Tuesday**

Bouncing Babies story time for infants to 24 months: 10:30 - 11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

**Every Wednesday**

Mansfield Public Library is proud to offer a special events program for children ages 7 to 11 for the summer months, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

**Every Thursday**

Mansfield Public Library hosts Toddler Story Time for 2 year olds, 11:00 - 11:30 a.m.

**Every Saturday**

Thinking about getting a pet? Check out the City of Mansfield Animal Control. Weekdays: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Saturdays: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Volunteers to walk, bathe,

brush the animals and clean cages are always needed.

**Every Saturday in July**

Waxahachie Downtown Farmers Market, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Call Anita Williamson at (972) 938-2101, ext. 198.

**July 10**

Mansfield Child Care will discuss "Books, Books and More Books" at 7:00 p.m. in the Mansfield Library community meeting room, 104 S. Wisteria Street in the community room. [www.mansfieldchildcare.com](http://www.mansfieldchildcare.com).

**July 11 and 18**

Family movie night at the Mansfield Public Library, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. The title is a surprise, but we promise it is PG rated.

**July 11, 18, 25**

Teen book club, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Mansfield Public Library.

Kiwanis Club of Mansfield meeting: 6:45 a.m. at Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, 2700 East Broad St. (new location). (817) 473-9886.

**July 14 and 28**

City Council meeting, 7:00 p.m. at Mansfield City Hall, 1200 Broad St.

**July 15**

Adult book club at the Mansfield Public Library will be discussing the novel *Tin Roof Blowdown* by James Lee Burke.

**July 17**

Mansfield Park Facilities Development Corp. meeting, 7:00 p.m. at Mansfield City Hall, 1200 East Broad St.

American Business Women's Association (ABWA) meeting: 5:45 p.m. at the Waxahachie Civic Center. For more information, contact Stephanie Kinnison at (972) 938-0703 or [Stephanie@customcaregivers.com](mailto:Stephanie@customcaregivers.com).

**June 19**

Senior citizens will meet for a trip to the Frontiers of Flight Museum, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (817) 453-5420.

**August 3**

NBBC "Run Toward the Son" Motorcycle Rally: 10:15 a.m., New Beginnings Bible Church, 1970 FM 983, Ferris. Motorcycle games, contests and door prizes. Enjoy free hot dogs and bottled water. Register online at [www.newbeginningsbiblechurch.com](http://www.newbeginningsbiblechurch.com) or call (972) 842-2800.

*For more community events, visit our online calendar at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).*



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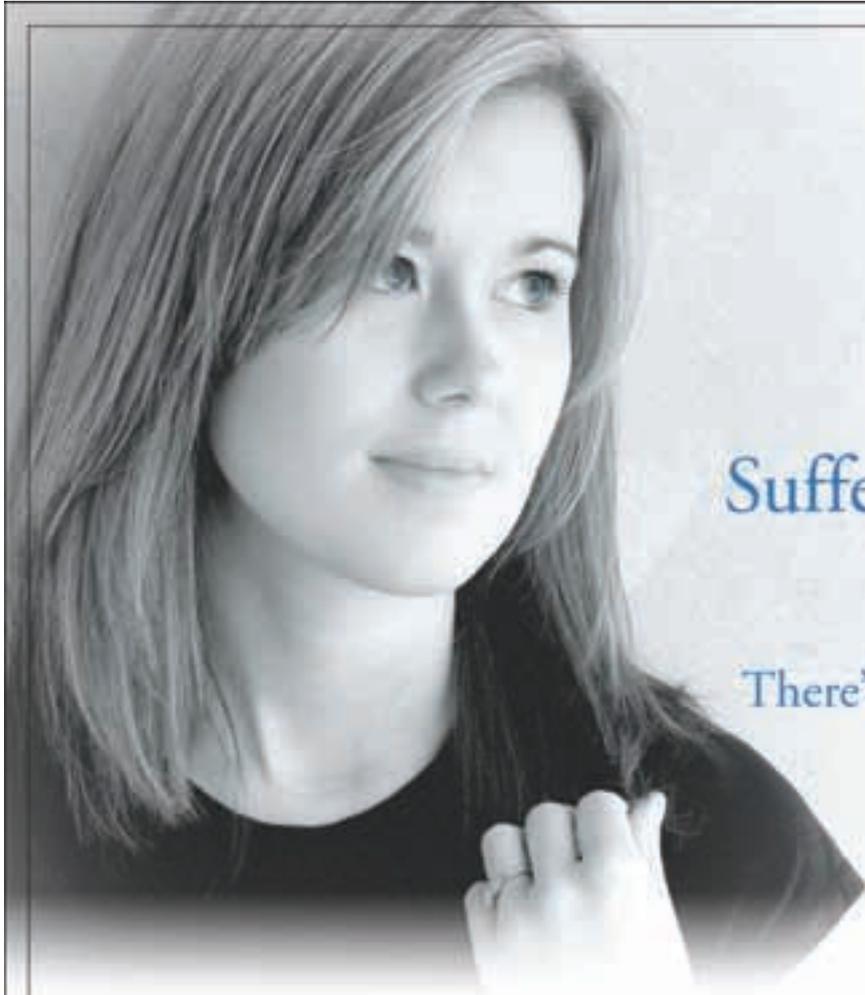


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