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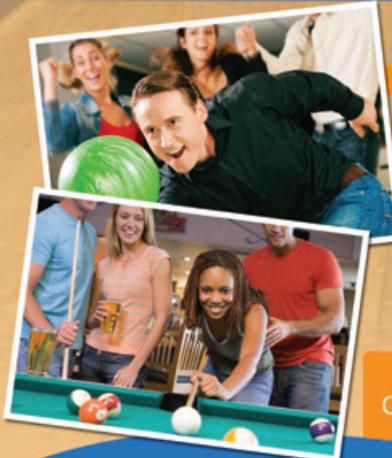
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ON THE COVER



DeSoto Junior Lifeguards help keep the pool a safe place for fun in the sun.

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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Editor's Note

Dear Southwest Friends,

As we work well in advance of our publication deadlines to write our articles, I find myself writing this editor's note on the day following the tragic storms that wreaked havoc across several of our communities in mid-May. Watching the devastation and its aftermath on TV, I am struck both by the magnanimity of the destruction and the rallying response of communities — those affected and those less damaged.

Working for NOW magazines has been a true lesson in what community really is. Webster defines community as a unified body of individuals, people living with common interests in a particular area, and a body of persons having a common history, social and/or political interests. As we celebrate the wonders of living in the United States of America this month, may we appreciate and guard zealously the freedoms and rights we have as one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Happy Fourth of July!

Beverly

Beverly Shay
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Countdown to Classes



It's not too early to get ready for the 2013-2014 school year. The first day of school is Monday, August 26, 2013. With online registration beginning in July, we want to help your family be

prepared. Detailed information and instructions are available on the district website at www.duncanvilleisd.org.

Three Easy Steps

- 1** Go online to the district website, www.duncanvilleisd.org
- 2** Complete Online Registration
Returning families will use their Home Access Center (HAC) parent accounts to open the returning student online registration module. From HAC, parents will submit the required online registration information. New-to-district families will use the new-to-district student online registration module. Follow instructions on the district website.
- 3** Attend Registration Document Review
Registration Document Review for the 2013-14 year will be held for each campus in August. District families are required to verify residency each year. This will require parents to attend Registration Document Review to finalize the registration process by submitting current utility bills and other needed documentation such as updated immunization records. A full calendar with dates, times, and locations is available online.



Scan the QR code to the left to connect to the Back to School website.

Summer Meal Program



Free meals will again be provided to children aged 18 and younger at two Duncanville ISD schools through July 31. Breakfast will be served Monday through Friday from 8-9 am; lunch will be served from 12 - 1:30 pm. Please be aware that schools will be closed on July 4 and 5, and meals will not be available. For more information, contact the Nutrition Services Department at 972-708-2328.

Summer Meal Program locations:

- Duncanville HS East Cafeteria – 900 West Camp Wisdom, Duncanville 75116
- Bilhartz Elementary – 6700 Wandt Drive, Dallas 75236

District Teachers of the Year Announced



Congratulations to our District Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year! The winners were announced at the annual Employee Appreciation Event on Tuesday, May 28. Elementary Teacher of the Year: Elizabeth Hunter – Acton Elementary
Secondary Teacher of the Year: Kimberly Baker – Duncanville High School.

District Sees Gold Stars

For the third consecutive year, Duncanville ISD has been awarded the Gold Leadership Circle Award from Texas State Comptroller Susan Combs. The Leadership Circle Program recognizes local governments across Texas that meet a high standard of online financial transparency. It gives taxpayers a closer look at where their money is going, and holds public officials accountable for the way tax dollars are spent.



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The Season for

— By Katrina D. Lewis

Every year, teenagers around the country anticipate the lazy days of summer. Lounging by the pool, relaxing in front of the television with the hum of air conditioning keeping them company or maybe heading off to summer camp or drudging through summer school — these are summer dreams. Others enter the workforce, flipping burgers or running amusement park rides. But for some, there comes a different calling.

Ritchie Johnson is a first-year volunteer with the DeSoto Junior Lifeguard Program. Sponsored through the American Red Cross Association, the Junior Lifeguard Program serves as a feeder program for youth who someday want to become full-fledged lifeguards. The young adults are in training, assisting certified lifeguards with various duties around the pool, while they also learn basic lifesaving skills, develop leadership skills and work on their physical fitness. Junior Lifeguards are also introduced to in-water rescues and at some point, shadow lifeguards to gain a real-world perspective on how it will feel once they become one.

For Ritchie, a DeSoto West Middle School student, becoming a part of the program was a no-brainer when he was figuring out how he would pass the summer months. “I’ve always been interested in swimming,” he said. “I try to go at least twice a week throughout the year.”



Saving Lives

After his aunt told him about the program, his interest in developing his aquatic habit into something he could potentially use to save lives was piqued. "When my aunt told me about the swimming program, I thought, *OK, I like swimming. I might as well give it a try,*" he said. "Plus, it would get me out of the house."

Ritchie thinks of himself as a lifeguarding intern and has spent the last two summers shadowing full-fledged lifeguards. And though he has not participated in a rescue, he has one piece of equipment that casts no doubt on his



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authority at the pool. “We get whistles, so if the lifeguard doesn’t see something happen, and we do, we just blow the whistle,” he said.



From a parent’s perspective, Ritchie’s mother, Tina Johnson, sees nothing but positive outcomes as a result of Ritchie’s participation in the DeSoto Junior Lifeguard Program. “He’s fearless in the water,” she said, beaming. “He’s been active, and it gives him something to look forward to. If we can just get him to do better with the sunblock, we’ll be good to go,” she added with a laugh.



One of the lifeguards Ritchie works with is Kristin Etienne, a junior at DeSoto High School. Ritchie considers himself a casual swimmer, but Kristin, who is a fully accredited lifeguard with the program, is a member of competitive swim teams, as well as her high school team. “I swim for my life,” she said. “When I was a kid, I loved playing in the water. It just gets you away from school, homework, everything. You feel free being in the water.”

Kristin began working with the Junior Lifeguards after her swim coach advised

her about the program. "Initially, it was something for me to do in the summer," she said. "But, it went on from there."

With her 16th birthday coming, Kristin decided to become an accredited lifeguard with the American Red Cross and was hired on as a full guard with the DeSoto Junior Lifeguard Program. She is often shadowed by and supervises junior lifeguards like Ritchie.

As one can imagine, becoming a



certified lifeguard through the American Red Cross is not an easy feat. Not only do lifeguards have to learn lifesaving skills, but they must stay in top physical condition, be observant and quick-thinking. "I had to learn CPR, first aid, how to back-board people and make sure they were OK," she explained, referencing a method of removing victims from the water. "Before the pool opens, we have something called in-service where our manager talks to us about lifeguarding."

As far as the differences between her duties and those of a junior lifeguard with Ritchie's experience, Kristin takes on a more intense role, while still ensuring she observes swimmers in the water.



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“I’m teaching them. Even though I’m sitting in the chair, I’m teaching. If I blow my whistle, I explain to them why we’re blowing the whistle at them.”

Kristin spends about five hours at the pool each day, between her own personal swim time and working her shift. But, the water is like a second home for her. “I just like looking at the water,” she said. “I’ve gained more confidence. Before, I was quiet and didn’t really say much, but now, I’m blowing whistles at people, and I’m more responsible.”

For assistant pool manager Laura Lopez, a busy Texas Christian University student and a DeSoto native, having team members like Ritchie and Kristin make her job just that much easier. Though she loved swimming as a child, Laura



never saw it as more than something she enjoyed, until a coach saw her at DeSoto’s Moseley Pool and told her and her mom that Laura was quite the swimmer. “I’ve been swimming since my freshman year of high school,” Laura shared. “I loved the feeling of gliding across the surface. It gave me time to release tension and unwind from school. Swimming was the only sport activity I ever participated in.”

In her role with the Junior Lifeguards, Laura views herself as an instructor and a mentor. She assists in teaching the volunteers and junior lifeguards, breaking down their lifeguard manuals into

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Fran Young

Debra Plymel



understandable chapters and sections. The DeSoto Junior Lifeguard Program provides priceless experience for the lifeguards under her watch. “I think it’s a great opportunity for youth to have, especially for potential lifeguards, so they will have at least a bit of experience before taking certification classes when they reach the age of employment,” she explained. “Personally, I wish the program had existed before I signed up to be a lifeguard at Moseley.”

Although her collegiate schedule keeps her busy, Laura is extremely appreciative of the experiences and lessons she has gained during her years with the program. “Whether you’re looking



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to pick up volunteer hours or you’re planning on becoming a lifeguard later on down the line, the DeSoto Junior Lifeguard Program is a great opportunity to learn new things, not just in the lifeguarding aspect, but lessons such as being dependable, trustworthy and hardworking,” she stated. “Even if you don’t plan on becoming a professional lifeguard, at least you can take these lessons home and apply them to your own lives, especially when you look for other jobs.” **NOW**



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The DeSoto High School Class of 2013 graduated over 525 students on June 7 at the Dallas Convention Center. This class eclipsed the scholarship record with over \$7.5 million in offers including military appointments, 35 student-athlete signees, 30 full academic scholarship recipients and hundreds of partial scholarships. Students will be attending Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Vanderbilt University, TCU, Texas A&M, University of Miami, UNT, Ohio State, U.S. Air Force Academy, Purdue University and many more! The new alumni were joined by 78 students who graduated in the WINGS program this year.

Track reigned the past three years as the girls won a three-peat state title. Football reached the semifinal round of the playoffs and had six 5A All-State players. Both boys and girls basketball teams made deep playoff runs again this year. The DHS choir and band both earned sweepstake ratings in competitions and students earned recognition at academic UIL events for debate, robotics, FFA, theater, journalism and much more!

This Class is the first to matriculate in the current building as DHS students began using the new 160,000 sq. ft. of educational space last fall as the five College and Career Academies opened in full force with rigorous curriculum, certifications and dual credit. Starting in the fall DeSoto students can earn Associates degrees while in high school.

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Saturday, August 10
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DHS Academy Cafeteria

Calendar

July 1-5 - District Offices Shutdown

Mon., July 22, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting, Board Room

Sat., August 10, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. - DeSoto ISD Back to School Fair, DHS Academy Cafeteria

Mon., August 12, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting, Board Room

August 13-23 - New Student Registration at each school

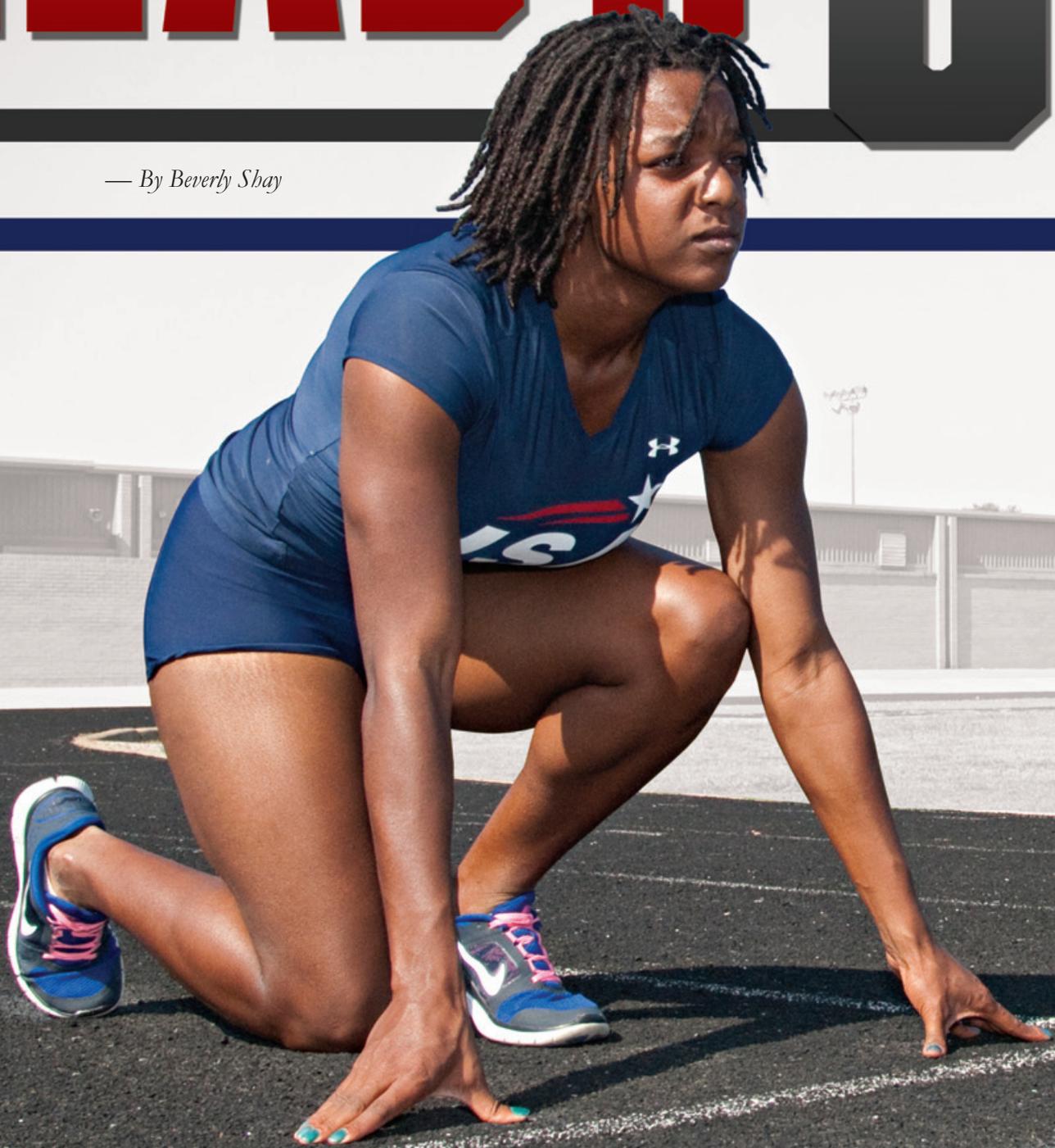
Mon., August 26 - First Day of School for 2013-14

Mon., August 26, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting, Board Room

Mon., September 2 - Labor Day; No School

READY. **S**

— *By Beverly Shay*



ET, GO

“I was born with sports in me,” began Saria Webb, a 17-year-old, all-round athlete who will be competing for USA Deaf Track & Field in the 22nd Summer Deaflympics. The event will be held in Sofia, Bulgaria, July 26-August 4. “My favorite sport is soccer, but I have played volleyball, basketball and, of course, track.” Saria is beautiful, lithe, full of energy and fast. This Duncamville resident is a junior at the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin, where her 7-year-old brother, Jabari, is in second grade. The school has about 500 students ages 0-22, as well as a parent/infant program.

Saria ventured into sports in elementary school. Her career began with soccer. Initially, she attended Jean Massieu Academy (JMA), founded to serve deaf students throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. As an open-enrollment charter school, JMA now serves over 175 students, approximately 10 percent of whom are deaf or hard of hearing. In third grade, Saria transferred to Lee Britain Elementary School in Irving, a hearing school with a deaf program designed to mainstream deaf students in with hearing students.

“I have been running track since seventh grade. My track coach, Larry Smith, saw me running and told me I was very good,” Saria shared, managing to convey both humility and pride at the same time. Her qualifying times gained her notice when she was a freshman. She runs the 100-meter with an average time of 12.7 seconds and the 200-meter at an average of 26.5 seconds. “But I am always trying to go faster,” she added. She also runs relays. “You have to balance focusing on practices and relaxing with friends.” Traditionally, the start of a competitive

“I was born with sports in me.”

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race is signal by a gunshot, but for deaf competitors, there are lights where they position their hands on the ground — red for *ready*, yellow for *set* and green for *go*.

Saria was born deaf. Both of her parents are also deaf. Their deafness is genetic, but that's not the only family trait they share — athleticism literally runs in the family. Saria's mom, Robbye McGilvery, played basketball on the Dallas Deaf Club basketball team. In fact, that is where she met her husband, Frank, who was in the process of becoming a certified deaf interpreter. Although his major had been in computer science, it took Frank two years to find a job. "Once I was hired by the Dallas Housing Authority, they asked if I would learn sign language," Frank recalled, noting that one of his sign language class assignments was to visit the Dallas Deaf Club, where he started playing basketball and met the women's team. "I noticed Robbye right away," Frank remarked. "And not because of her basketball skills," he quipped, as Robbye smacked him on the arm.

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“I said hi to her and learned she was really nice, but it was over 10 years before I saw her again at a deaf basketball tournament in Dallas. As soon as I saw her, I remembered having spoken to her. We started talking again, and I found out she had four children.” Frank had two children. After dating for three months, Frank and Robbye married in September 2004, and they now have a son, Jabari, and a daughter, Maya, age 5. Robbye, who was also born deaf, had attended a school for deaf children who needed to learn speech, so she wasn’t taught sign language. Later, once she had completed an American Sign Language course, sign became her preferred way of communication.

Saria has two older brothers — Tony is 23, a student at Texas



Tech in Lubbock, and AJ, 21, who attends Lamar University in Beaumont. Her sister, Ilena is 13. Her stepbrother, Ivory McGilvery, 24, lives in Lubbock. She has a stepsister, Kennedy, who is 12 and lives with her mother. Kennedy enjoys spending time with Saria, Maya

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and Jabari as often as possible. Saria's stepfather, Frank, works as a community interpreter and staff interpreter at El Centro College in downtown Dallas interpreting for deaf students in any class they take. "This semester, we have 15 deaf students, so I am interpreting for sewing, cooking, swimming, English and math classes," Frank stated.

All eight of their children are fluent with sign language. Saria can read lips with some people. "It's so much easier if I know someone, like with Frank," Saria remarked with her hands while Frank interpreted. Her beautiful, blue eyes flash with expression as her hands slice the air. She is quick to laugh and smile, "I have never felt handicapped," Saria proclaimed, looking almost puzzled at the thought. Neither Robbye nor Saria have ever felt like others treated them differently because they are deaf, perhaps due in part to having been around deaf relatives all their lives.

Saria, whose favorite class is English, admits attending a boarding school is sometimes good and sometimes bad, but she won't have as difficult a time transitioning to college as some kids might on their first time living away from home. "I haven't decided yet where I want to go to college, but I'd like to be a vet. I love animals so much. We have a Chihuahua named Brown Sugar," Saria stated. "I'd like to work with all kinds of animals, especially exotic ones."

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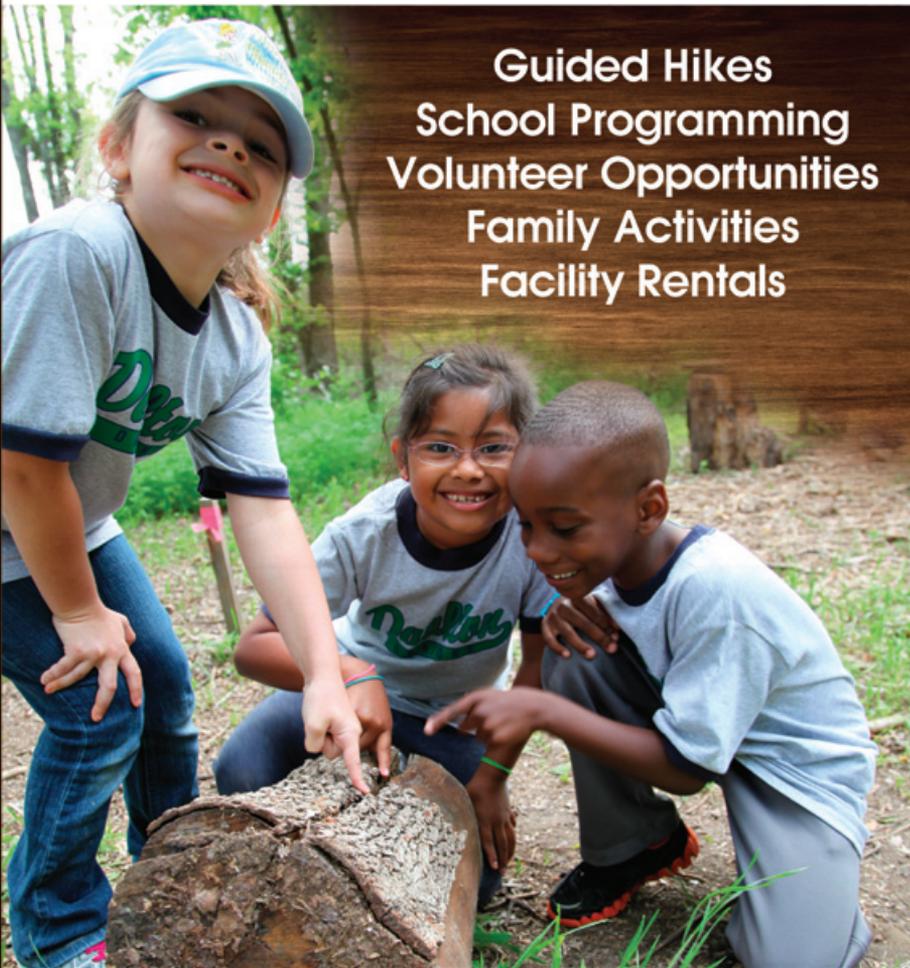


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Currently, Saria is considering either Rochester Institute of Technology, an entirely deaf school in New York, or Texas A&M University.

Meanwhile, Saria is busy preparing for the Deaflympics. The whole family is excited about her participation in the event this summer in Bulgaria. The Deaflympics is held every four years. About 5,000 athletes from 80 countries are expected to compete in 18 different sports. "Our team includes 14 athletes and coaches," Saria commented. "We



have been practicing two hours a day. And I have been training with Jon Drummond." Jon won gold in the 4x100-meter relay in the Summer Olympics in 2000. He is known as one of the world's best starters. During the games, the Congress of the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf will convene in Sofia with dignitaries from 100 countries expected.

Besides her coaches and trainers, Saria wants to thank her dad, Anthony Webb. "Without him, I wouldn't have this opportunity," she remarked, referring to the chance to be in the Deaflympics. "He pushed me to work hard in sports. Mom says school is the most important," she added, flashing a grin at her mother. Saria is committed to running her fastest and giving her best, both at the Deaflympics and in life. **NOW**

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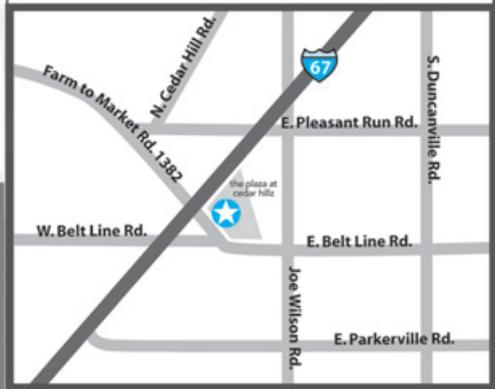
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At Home With Wayne and Nell Cheek

— By Katrina D. Lewis

As empty nesters, Cedar Hill residents Wayne and Nell Cheek are in search of a barn. Although the generations that have come after them have long flown the nurturing nest of their home, it's still the gathering spot for a whole new group of people they think of as family. Originally from Midlothian, Wayne's journey to Cedar Hill started when he moved to Dallas in 1956. "I worked for the Santa Fe Railroad at the time," he said. "They sent me to Dallas, and I bought a house in Cedar Hill that same year. Cedar Hill was a small town at that particular time — about 1,100 people — and it was closer to Dallas." Nell is originally from the Cedar Hill area.

Though both were previously married, the Cheeks have been together for 30 years and have reared an entire mixed brood of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. "We have an awesome blended family," Nell emphasized. Both she and Wayne are retired from their respective careers, a local district attorney's office and what is now the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, leaving lots of time to enjoy their family.

Pulling up to their 2,600-square-foot home, "charming" is probably the first word visitors would utter. The expansive front porch is a nostalgic throwback to days when family and friends could gather in fellowship and is complete with a

porch swing and sets of white wicker furniture. Nell has a green thumb as evidenced by the colorful and vibrant foliage and flowers surrounding the front porch and in the backyard.





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Inside the home, where they've lived happily since 2000, the Cheeks' master bedroom is located on the ground floor, along with the kitchen, a cozy living room area, two bathrooms and two additional bedrooms. Upstairs is a converted bonus room, along with a bathroom. When they first decided to build their home, Nell remembered how divine intervention showed her they were making the right moves. "When we were building this house, I turned to Scripture," Nell explained. "The Scripture I turned to said, 'Unless the Lord builds a house, the builder builds in vain.' We've had people come here and tell us it's the most peaceful place, and I think it's because of that."

Frequently, when people come to visit, they want something cold to drink. "We just tell them to go get it," Wayne said with a grin. "Just do what you do at your own home. We enjoy people coming."

Walking through the Cheek home, treasures can be discovered in every room. Collections and family pieces store



memories and always cause smiles when Wayne and Nell speak of them. For instance, in the kitchen, a collection of crosses — all different sizes, colors and composed of various materials like hearty wood and earthy stone — surrounds a collage of family portraits. Stained-glass pieces colorfully adorn windows, flooding the rooms with color while bringing the outside in with flower motifs. "She took stained-glass lessons and taught me, but she's actually better than I am," Wayne

confessed. Though he is modest, Wayne has designed several small replica stained-glass churches he loves to present to people as gifts.

In another room that can only be described as any girly girl's dream bedroom, is a collection of dolls. The dolls peek out from every corner with heads full of curls and delicate dresses made up of fine lace and soft cotton. On a bedside table, a display box shows a sepia-tone photo of a baby girl gazing



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with wide eyes at the camera. On the other side of the box, a ruffled pink dress lies preserved behind a pane of glass, alongside a pair of classic white baby shoes. The photo and the dress have an extremely special meaning to Nell, as the photo is of one of her daughters who passed away at the young age of 25. "This was my daughter's dress," she said, gesturing toward the pristinely preserved frock. "This is her granddaughter in the same dress," she said, pointing to another photo of a beautiful baby girl. "I just kept it."

Musical magic occurs in the living room, next to the couple's master bedroom. And though neither of them tout themselves as musicians — "I play the radio and just get static," Wayne playfully shared — the piano resting in one corner of their living room has been the catalyst for the gathering they have each month in their home. And it's also the reason they're now dreaming of owning their own barn.

During a dance, the Cheeks met a couple, Gina and L.D. Morris, who have become great friends. L.D. was a former singer on the country-themed variety show *Louisiana Hayride*. When visiting the Cheeks, he would pluck out tunes on the guitar and before they knew it, the Cheeks had a steady rotation of visitors who wanted to join in on the country fun. "He would come and play for us,

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and then someone else wanted to come,” Nell gushed. “We can have anywhere from five to seven musicians here at one time, and they’re all super-talented.”

“It’s a big celebration,” Wayne said. “Some people we know and some people we don’t. We’ll have Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Church of Christ members and Pentecostals here. We usually average anywhere from 25 to 35 people here now.”

“That’s why we need a barn,” Nell said laughingly. “It fills up in here pretty quick. I would have 200 here if I could.” Nell has even chosen a name for her future barn — the Barn on Nutting Hill. Nutting is her father’s last name. In fact, on the staircase leading to their second floor, one of the couple’s daughters had a charming sign with old, gold lettering made for them, that lists the Nutting name, alongside an establish date of December 25, 1925 — the marriage date of Nell’s mother and father, along with the words, *Where the story began*. Imagining the sign hanging over the doorway to the future Barn on Nutting Hill is easy.

Nell envisions a barn adjoined to their home, where the twang of guitars and a backing piano can spill out into the night air. But for right now, it’s all about the quality of their new friendships and not the quantity of people they wish they could accommodate. “The fellowship and the music are what we enjoy most,” Wayne admitted.

“They’re awesome people who care about each other,” Nell added. “They really are.” **NOW**

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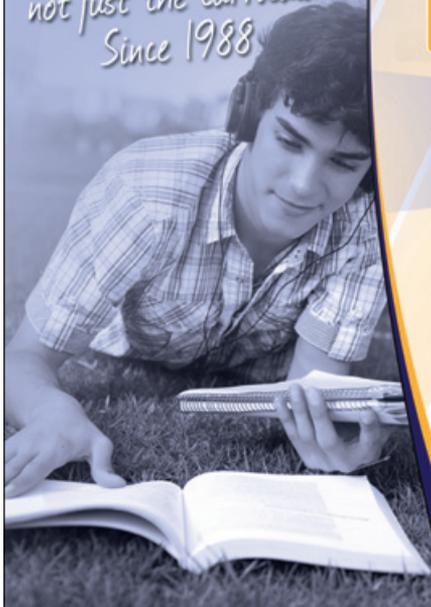
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Fort Davis sits at an elevation of 5,050 feet giving it the designation of "Highest Town in Texas." The climate of the area is pleasant year-round with average summer highs around 88 F and average winter lows hovering near 30. When visiting the mile-high town, hotels,





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bed and breakfasts and even cabins on a working cattle ranch are available to rest your head. The cuisine of the area will also tempt your palate at the many local restaurants, which are devoid of typical fast-food fare.

Warm and sunny days with little humidity give visitors an abundance of outdoor activities to pursue. Birders flock to the town that has been proclaimed the "Hummingbird Capital of Texas." Fort Davis serves as home to several varieties of the species including: Lucifer, Anna's, Black-chinned, Ruby-throated, Calliope and Broad-tailed hummingbirds. Hikers can take either an endurance test or a leisurely stroll when in the mile-high town. Trails run through several of the area attractions including the Madera Canyon Trail on the grounds of the Nature Conservancy. Hunting excursions and jeep tours are even available through area ranches that offer everything from elk and aoudad to deer and antelope.



Beautiful days turn into incredible, star-filled nights when the sun sets in the Davis Mountains. With no major populated city within a hundred miles, very little gets in the way of stargazing and seeing the reality of the lyrics “the stars at night are big and bright,” especially in Fort Davis. The University of Texas chose this area for its McDonald Observatory, one of the major astronomical research facilities in the world. The Observatory Visitor’s Center is open daily and has exhibits, a theater, a gift shop and cafe. Solar



viewings and tours of the facility are also offered on a daily basis, but for those truly wanting the celestial experience, on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday nights, the Observatory holds its famous Star Parties. This outdoor extravaganza gives visitors the opportunity to look through multiple telescopes, view video presentations on astronomy and speak with experts who work at the Observatory — all under some of the darkest night skies in the continental United States.

The Davis Mountains State Park, considered by many to be the crown jewel of the Texas State Park System, is located just about five minutes from downtown. The park contains abundant wildlife, camping, RV hookups, mountain biking and miles of hiking trails along with a pueblo-style hotel complete with restaurant and pool right on the property. The Indian Lodge hotel was built in 1933 by the Civilian Conservation Corps

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and remains a visitor favorite among the many accommodations available in Fort Davis. The breathtaking views at the park offer photographers hundreds of opportunities to capture the essence of the area in print.

A visit to Fort Davis would not be complete without seeing the town's name sake, the Fort Davis National Historic Site (FDNHS). Established in 1854, the FDNHS remains one of the country's best examples of a restored frontier fort. Named after Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, the Fort played a major role in the protection of the Southwest along the San Antonio-El Paso section of the Southern Overland Trail. Buffalo Soldiers were stationed at Fort Davis from 1867-1885, and exhibits at the fort reflect the huge contribution they made in the settlement of western Texas and southeastern New Mexico. The self-guided tour takes you through the 474-acre site which offers hiking trails, a museum and visitor's center.

The flora and fauna of the area are highlighted at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanical Gardens located just four miles from downtown Fort Davis. The educational programs and tours available give visitors a true feel for what exactly grows and lives in this part of Texas. The greenhouse contains over 200 species of Chihuahuan Desert cacti, and the Leaping Lizard gift shop has plenty of items to take a little piece of your experience home.

The 75-mile Scenic Loop takes travelers through the entire range of the Davis Mountains. This ride, a favorite of both motorcyclists and endurance bicyclists, has been called one of the most spectacular rides in the state. The majestic views are plentiful with areas along the way to stop and picnic or take advantage of the unbelievable photo opportunities.

Fort Davis may not have a single traffic light, but artisans and merchants abound. Handmade crafts, western art, custom cowboy hats and even homemade fudge can all be found, offered by a whole bunch of friendly people. The next time you are looking for a place to get away from it all, consider a scenic road trip to the Davis Mountains of West Texas. **NOW**

By Robert Alvarez; Photography by Max Kandler.

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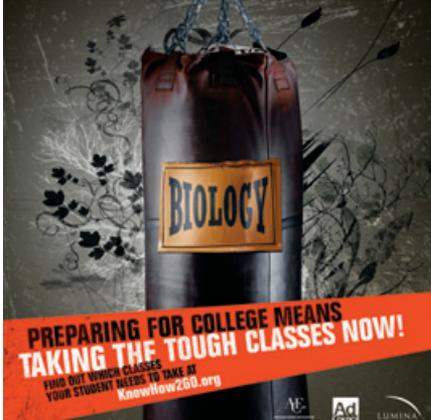
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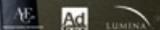
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From left:

Tenia Thomas, LaQuita Cannon, Maricela Riley, Marquisha Daniels, Dequatta Cannon, Vivian Cardenas, Jane Nettles, Brittany Webb and De'aetrie Merida. Owner Gay Baker shown with Cedar Hill director, Jackie Smith.



Much More Than Day Care

Children who attend Where Kidz Connect aren't merely entertained, they are infused.

— By Beverly Shay

Gay Baker never thought about starting a day care center until her daughter was born. Needing to return to work, Gay looked for day care with a homelike environment. “Not finding what I was looking for, I considered opening a center to provide what I wanted my daughter to receive,” she recalled. She drew on her 17 years of experience in customer service while brainstorming ideas.

“I envisioned designing a home away from home, with a kindergarten readiness program. Dr. Michael Williams, my landlord, gave me the opportunity to make my dream come true,” Gay reported. Where Kidz Connect Academy opened its doors in June 2008. The center — much more than mere babysitting — provides a full kindergarten readiness

program from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. each weekday for children 18 months and older. “The children wear uniforms, learn phonics and spelling and have field trips just like they will experience in school,” Gay remarked.

The academy’s three locations provide year-round, intentional programs with pre-K care at two centers for children ages 6 weeks-5 years, and before- and after-school care for children ages 5-13 at the third center. They have a capacity for about 360 children with a teacher/student ratio of one to 11 for those 2 years and older and one to four for babies. The staff consists of 31 teachers, bus drivers, directors and cooks. Their motto is: “Building strong minds through imagination, creativity and diversity, while preparing

for a positive future.” Nutrition and exercise are both provided and taught.

“I wouldn’t have the centers I do without our program directors, Jackie Smith, Charlisha Jefferson and Rochelle McDaniel and all of my wonderful staff,” Gay said appreciatively. “All of our employees have background checks through the state of Texas and fingerprint checks through the national database. Each employee has been trained in CPR and first aid, with teachers receiving an additional 24 hours of training per year and the directors 30 hours per year.” Every 90 days, the staff goes through an evaluation, both of their job performance and personal goals. Parents are welcome to tour the facilities at any time. They are also interviewed to make sure they are a good fit and that the center will be able to provide for their child’s needs.

“I am especially proud of our after-school program, where we ask the children what they want to be, so we can look at careers and determine what kind of education they will need. We teach them life skills, such as budgeting and take them to restaurants, where they learn how to sit, read a menu and make selections. We also take them on the DART rail to Ft. Worth,” Gay stated. “Jane Nettles does an amazing job coordinating our summer program and year-round crafts for the 6-weeks to pre-K campuses and in-house training for the teachers. Darwoner Baker and Rochelle McDaniel handle crafts and field trips for the before- and after-school campuses.”

Perhaps one of the most innovative features of Where Kidz Connect Academy is the exposure the children receive to community, national and even international awareness through nonprofit organizations. The children have donated clothing, food, blankets and shoes to shelters and for those in need of disaster relief. They have raised money to build a water well for a village that had none, and each April they participate in the St. Jude’s bike-a-thon. Where Kidz Connect Academy isn’t just day care — it’s an adventure. **NOW**

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Sandra McMillen (far left) and Sharon McGinnis (far right) of Xi Rho Beta Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi of Duncanville present scholarships to graduating PACE seniors, Jessica Miranda and Esmeralda Benavidez.



This was the 4th Annual Duncanville Fire Truck Pull, that is a Law Enforcement Torch Run event that benefits Special Olympics Texas.



Kal-el Cullen enjoys a beautiful day at the park in DeSoto.



Co-Salutatorian Brittany Green, Valedictorian Juan Gurola and Co-Salutatorian Alayna Garner, from Cedar Hill, smile for the camera.



Front row left to right; Mivah Spears, Omiya Chandler, Imani Matt, Sacha Knight, Tievica Jenkins, and Breuna Preston. Standing left to right; Jasmine Brown and Jenaie Franke, wife of Cedar Hill Mayor Rob Franke.



Officers of the Duncanville Police Department and citizens paid their respects to fallen law enforcement officers across the United States on National Police Memorial Day. Duncanville lost two officers in 1979 in a motor vehicle accident, Sgt. Michael Poe and Officer Roger Hobden.



DeSoto High School senior Cortevious Allen signs his scholarship acceptance to MIT. He is shown here with his girlfriend, Emerald Tanner, and Superintendent Dr. David C. Harris.



Peyton Dampier and Mariab Heyerdahl do class work on their iPads.



Canterbury senior, Claire Metoyer, (center) signed to play for Seattle University Redhawks women's basketball for the 2013-14 season. Pictured with Claire are Ted O'Connor, Claire's mother, Helene, and father, Winn, and Coach Jeff Ellis.



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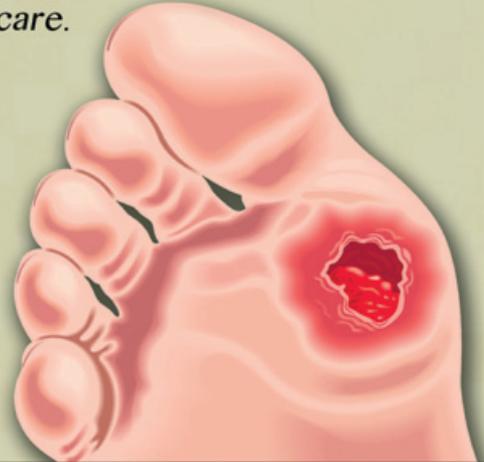
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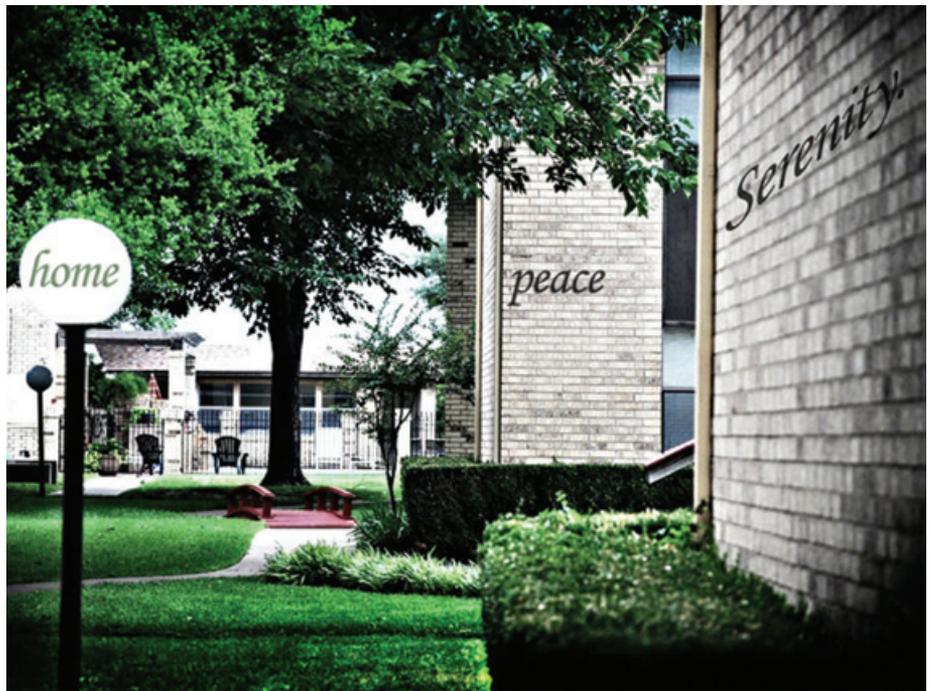
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Investment Outlook:

With the stock market at or near record highs for much of the year, and bond yields at or near record lows, one question that comes to mind is: Why? The primary reason for low bond yields is the Federal Reserve Bank's (Fed) policy of keeping interest rates low (by buying billions of dollars a month of Treasuries and mortgages). Very low interest rates encourage investors to shift money out of low-yielding bonds into higher returning stocks.

Another reason for higher stock prices is earnings' growth. While the U.S. economy is growing slowly, corporate earnings are growing relatively fast, in part due to overseas earnings. Higher earnings lead to higher stock prices.

Finally, more investors are investing in the market, pushing up stock prices. Which gets to the next question: When the stock market is at or near record highs, how should investors manage their investments?

Investment Strategies:

One strategy is to sell some of your stock holdings (locking

in your profits) and buy bonds. Of course, the yield on these bonds is very low, and you have the risk of higher interest rates negatively affecting your bonds.

Another strategy would be to reallocate some of your stock investments that have done well into sectors that have not done well over the last year. For example, sell some of your Index 500 fund and use the proceeds to buy an energy fund. The sector fund may have more risk, but the return potential will be higher.

Finally, you could consider selling some of your stocks and investing the proceeds into annuities that are linked to the stock market. Many of these annuities allow you to participate in the returns of the market when the market rises and provide a guaranteed return if the market does not perform well. You do have to shop around, because some annuities have high expenses, thus reducing your total return. **NOW**

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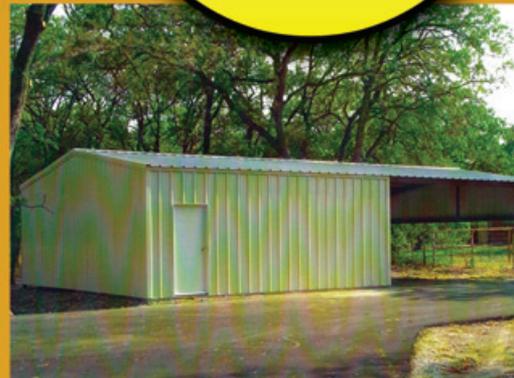
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Understanding Ulcerative Colitis

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

After going to the bathroom for four to 10 times a day for the second straight week with painful bloody stools, the afflicted person may wonder if they will ever get their life back. They suffer from the disease ulcerative colitis (UC). There are two states of being with this illness — flare-ups and remission. Flare-ups are when symptoms are present and the disease is active, and remission is when there are few to no symptoms. UC is a chronic disease that is classified as being one of the forms of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). The other form is Crohn's disease. With many of the same symptoms, the most defining difference between Crohn's disease and UC is that the latter primarily affects the lining of the large intestine (colon). It becomes inflamed and develops ulcers or sores.

Symptoms may become severe in about half of those afflicted with UC. The condition may at times require hospitalization, or it may go into remission for a time. The most common symptoms of abdominal cramping, persistent and urgent diarrhea containing blood and/or pus should be monitored by your doctor. During flare-ups, too much blood loss can lead to anemia and weakness. Some patients must receive blood transfusions, because they have lost so much blood from the colon area. The constant diarrhea with the loss of many valuable nutrients and fluids leads to fatigue. Loss of appetite and weight loss are common.

UC has no definitive cause, but research has yielded a few theories. Although no clear line of inheritance exists, there is a distinct familial tendency for developing UC. Some discussion has taken place regarding the role bacteria and viruses may play in this. Another possibility is the immune system may be functioning abnormally. While stress does not cause UC, stress will aggravate the situation.

A varied range of treatment modalities for UC are available depending upon the severity of the illness. The goal is to reduce symptoms and aim for remission. Medications are prescribed to help reduce inflammation and improve the immune system. Diet and good nutrition play an important role. Although certain foods do not cause UC, there are some that might trigger symptoms, such as spicy food, raw veggies, popcorn, caffeine and alcohol. Dietary counsel and awareness of what you eat is necessary. If conservative treatment does not work, surgery may be necessary with the removal of the colon. The type of surgery will depend upon many factors your surgeon will discuss with you. UC can affect every area of your life. For your emotional health and coping strategies, support groups can be a great resource, as is receiving encouragement from family and friends. **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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June 1 — July 31

DeSoto Art League Annual Art Show, City Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd.

Youth tennis lessons: \$35/student/session (4 lessons/session). Register: www.cedarhilltx.com or Cedar Hill Parks & Rec. office, 285 Uptown Blvd. (972) 291-5130.

July 3

Creative Careers presented by the Art Institute of Dallas: 3:00-4:00 p.m., DeSoto library. Teens come and learn about careers in interior design, graphic design, fashion retail, culinary arts and photography. (972) 230-9663.

July 4

Duncanville Lions Club presents the Fourth of July parade "Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue": 9:00 a.m. beginning at Reed Middle School with the Pantherettes as Grand Marshals. Don: (214) 918-9981 or Kasey: (682) 556-0240.

Red White & Pool: 1:00-5:45 p.m., Crawford Park Pool, 401 Straus Rd., Family-friendly games and competitions. (972) 291-5318.

July 5

The whole family is invited to check out board games for all ages: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., DeSoto library. Throughout the library, you can sit down at tables and enjoy games such as Candy Land, Chutes and Ladders, Monopoly, Uno, Catch Phrase and many more! You can also check out your favorite books, movies, and magazines. (972) 230-9663.

July 8 — 11

Benjamin's Basketball Camp for ages 8 and over: 1:00-5:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Rec Center. \$100. (972) 293-5288 or cedarhilltx.com.

July 9

Harriet the Spy: 2:00 p.m., DeSoto library. (972) 230-9963. For additional summer movies at DeSoto library: www.ci.desoto.tx.us/calendar

July 9, 16

Advanced Vehicle Contraband class taught by HITS: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., 714 E. Belt Line, DeSoto. Learn how smugglers hide their drugs and money to avoid being caught during vehicle searches. Awesome actual video of seizures along with excellent supporting media. \$250/16-hour course includes disc

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July 10

Elementary crafts with VET for first-sixth graders: 2:00 p.m., Duncanville library. Limited to 35 children (first-come, first-served). VET is a local artist who incorporates environmental/recycling awareness through artwork and workshops.

July 11

Treasures of the World: 2:00 p.m., CH library. Children use their imagination to travel and learn about great treasures of Japan, Africa, America and more!

July 13

Mexican Folk Art Workshop for all ages: 2:00 p.m., CH library: create tin ornaments and one-of-a-kind monotypes.

July 15

Ronald McDonald will encourage children to read: 10:30 a.m., CH library. Don't forget your camera!

July 18

Talent Show: 2:00 p.m., CH library. Think you have talent? Show it off! Register: (972) 291-7323 ext. 1312.

July 22 — 25, 29 — August 1

Rockin' Reading Camp (K-2nd grade): 10:30 a.m., CH library. Children learn to enjoy books through rhythm and rhyme. Registration required: (972) 291-7323 ext. 1312.

July 23

Join co-author Evelyn Addis for a reading/book signing of her book, *Monday Morning Leadership for Kids*: 7:00 p.m., Duncanville library. Family-friendly event sponsored by the Friends of the Duncanville Public Library. Children welcome.

July 25

Asian Martial Arts Show: 2:00 p.m., CH library. Learn about the ancient art of Karate and Tai Kwon Do.

Southwest Lupus Support Group: 6:30-7:30 p.m., Trinity Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville. (972) 291-8786 or deheus@sbcglobal.net.

Cedar Hill Parks & Rec Outdoor Movie Night under the stars featuring *Escape from Planet Earth*: 8:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Rec Center, 310 Parkerville Rd. Bring lawn chairs and blankets. (972) 293-5388.

July 26 — 28

Annie presented by Love Your City Theater, 1231 E. Pleasant Run Rd., Cedar Hill, benefitting Bridges Safehouse and Hope Mansion: **July 26**: 2:00 p.m.; 7:00 p.m.; **July 27, 28**: 7:00 p.m. tickets: www.loveyourcitytheater.com

July 29 — 31

ABC's of Keyboarding basics for children: 5:30 p.m., CH library. Registration required: (972) 291-7323 ext. 1312.

July 30

Teen SRP Poetry Slam Finale: 2:00 p.m., CH library. Teens can listen to or share spoken word, win prizes and more!

August 1

Children's Summer Reading Program Finale: 2:00 and 6:30 p.m., CH library. Celebrate your completion of the summer reading challenge with a variety of cultural stories, African dancing, prizes and more!

August 5 — 8

Hoop Workshop Basketball Camp for ages 6 and over: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Rec Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. \$150. (972) 293-5288 or cedarhilltx.com.

First and Third Mondays

Dances from around the world for adults: 7:00 p.m., CH library: learn the dances or just enjoy the music.

Wednesdays

Juggling class for children second grade and up: 4:30-5:30 p.m., CH library.

Third Fridays

Duncanville Senior Dances: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Hopkins Senior Center, 206 James Collins. **July 19**: Jimmy Gomez (c&w); **August 16**: Gary Lee (ballroom); **September 20**: Final Showdown (c&w); **October 18**: Bill G. (ballroom). (972) 298-0667.

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

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In The Kitchen With Michelle Carter-Pope

— *By Beverly Shay*

Michelle Carter-Pope grew up in San Diego, California, in a family of mixed heritage: African-American, Spanish/Filipino, which exposed her to various ethnic dishes. “My mom loved to bake and has a collection of several of my grandmother’s scratch pound cake recipes,” Michelle shared. “I really didn’t start cooking until I was married, and I learned a lot from my husband’s family of awesome ‘dump’ cooks!”

Michelle likes cooking ethnic and down-home foods, baking and grilling, and she loves cooking with garlic. Now that her son has been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, she is concentrating on sugar-free recipes for the whole family. “I love church cookbooks,” she said, “since some of the best recipes can be found at church dinners and picnics.” **NOW**

Mama Flossie’s Easy Chocolate Cake

- 2 cups cake flour**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 4 Tbsp. Hershey’s cocoa**
- 1 tsp. baking powder**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**
- 1 cup mayonnaise**
- 1 cup cold water**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F. Blend first 5 ingredients in a large mixing bowl with a spoon. Add in mayonnaise, cold water and vanilla; blend thoroughly with a mixer.
- 2.** Grease and flour a Bundt pan or spray with Bakers Joy. Pour batter into pan; bake for approximately 1 hour. Cake is done when toothpick comes out clean.

Michelle’s Banana Puddin’

- 1 6-oz. pkg. vanilla pudding**
- 3 cups cold milk**
- 1 12-oz. container Cool Whip**
- 8 oz. cream cheese, room temperature**
- 1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk**
- 1-2 boxes Nilla wafers**
- 6 (or more) bananas, sliced**

- 1.** Combine pudding mix and milk. Prepare according to package directions. Refrigerate until firm.
- 2.** Blend Cool Whip, cream cheese and sweetened condensed milk. (Do not use entire can if you like it less sweet). Combine the two mixtures together until smooth.
- 3.** Layer baking/serving dish with whole cookies and bananas. Cover cookies and bananas with blended mixture. Continue to

layer: whole cookies, crumbled cookies and pudding, ending with crumbled cookies. Chill until ready to serve.

Mom’s Buttermilk Coleslaw

- 1 4-oz. can pineapple tidbits**
- 1/2 cup sugar**
- 1 cup Miracle Whip**
- 1/2 cup raisins**
- 1/4 tsp. celery seed**
- Pinch of seasoning salt**
- 1/4 cup buttermilk**
- 1 bag coleslaw mix**

- 1.** Drain pineapple juice, setting aside 1 Tbsp. Cream sugar and Miracle Whip together; add pineapple tidbits, raisins and celery seed. Add salt, buttermilk and reserved pineapple juice. Mix well.
- 2.** Mix in coleslaw; refrigerate. Toss before serving.

Fresh Fruit Salad

- 1 cup each: cantaloupe, honey dew and pineapple, cubed**
- 2 peaches, sliced**
- 1/2 lb. whole grapes**
- 2 oranges, peeled and sectioned**
- 1 11-oz. can mandarin oranges, drained**
- 2 bananas, sliced**
- Maraschino cherries, for garnish**

Sauce:

- 1 16-oz. container sour cream**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- Juice of 1 orange**
- Juice of 1/2 lemon**
- 3 Tbsp. pineapple juice**
- 1 tsp. cinnamon**

- 1.** Combine fruit, except bananas and cherries. In separate bowl, combine sauce ingredients. Refrigerate separately. Add bananas before serving in individual glass dishes; top with sauce; garnish with maraschino cherries.

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



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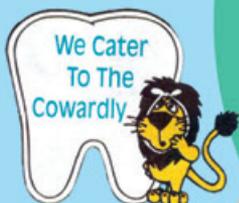
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