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September 2007

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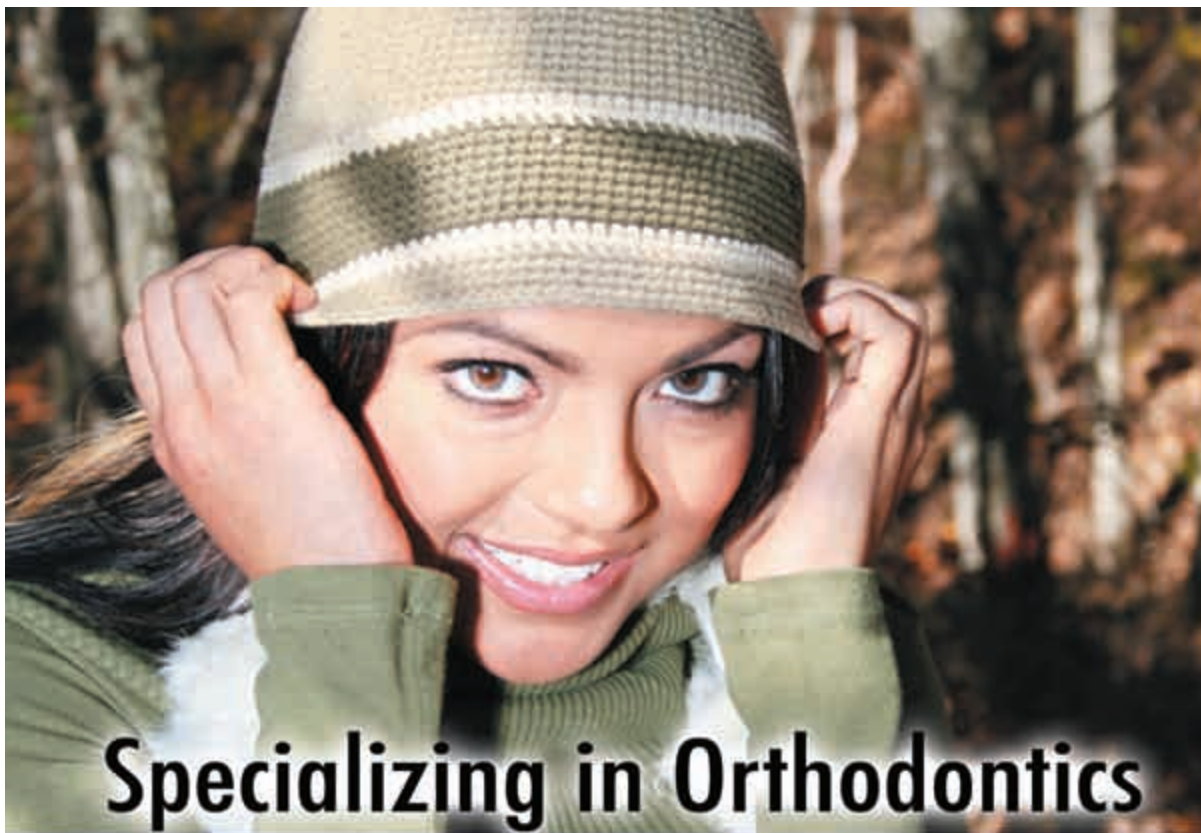
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# Burleson **NOW**

## Editor's Note

*Hello, Burleson!*

Investigating Burleson has proven to be fun. What I am hearing from you all is inspiring! For instance, I had the pleasure of hearing words of wisdom from Mr. Les Todd and his wife, Peggy, whom we feature as a team who have enabled all sorts of individuals and civic groups to become what they were meant to be. Thirty years after Les helped get Meals on Wheels rolling, they are still growing. On September 13, they will host their 20th annual golf benefit at Hidden Creek. For more information about Meals on Wheels, visit [www.servingthechildrenofyesterday.org](http://www.servingthechildrenofyesterday.org).

Continue reading for more insight into the hearts in Burleson: a piano instructor, a soccer lover, a muralist, a healthy cook, a yard artist and two fish lovers. You will be awed by the independent people in your midst, who recognize that it takes community effort to help others prosper.



*Melissa Rawlins*  
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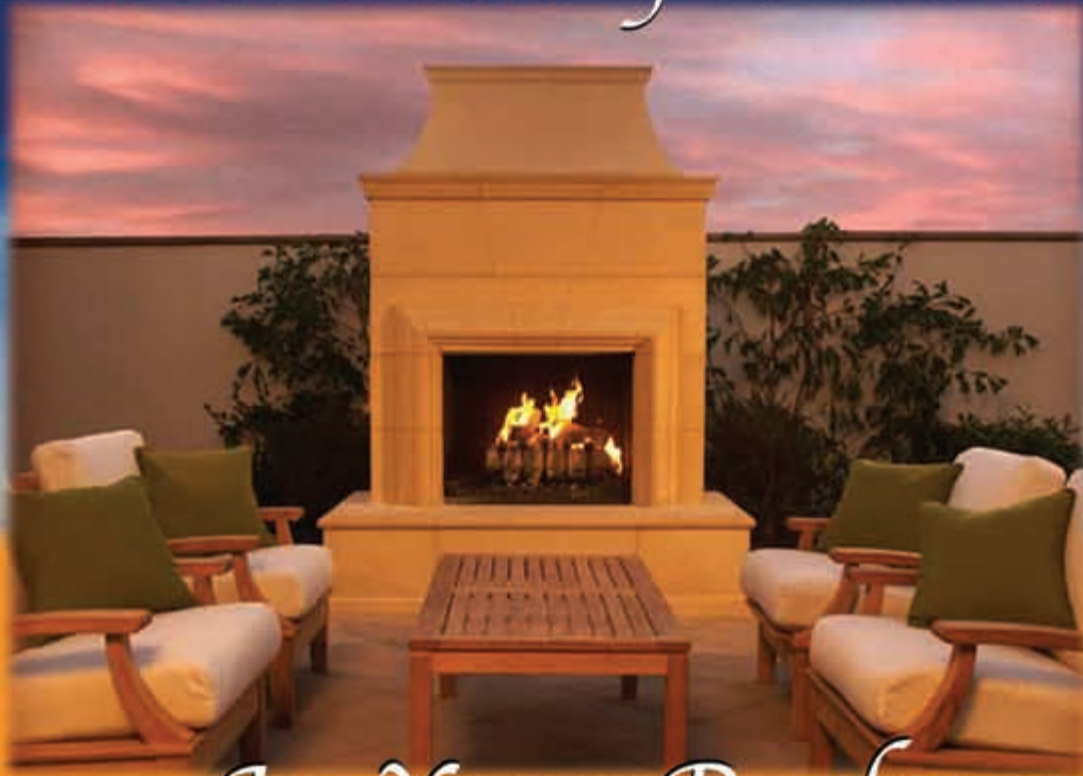
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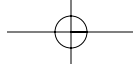
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# Driving the Routes

— By Melissa Rawlins

Half a century ago, Leslie (Les) Todd lost his hearing on the gunnery range, where he taught other Air Force men to get out and fight their battles. “Now,” joked the 89-year-old, “between my hearing and my memory, I don’t know what’s going on!”

Les keeps going, however. He has a heart to help people, and it is his heart for people that will keep him driving routes for Meals on Wheels of Johnson & Ellis Counties (MOWJEC), which he helped form in 1976. “I remember meeting the Johnson County Judge in a little office on the courthouse square in Cleburne,” he said, “but what our philosophy was I can’t recall. Whether we charged anybody, I can’t recall. Where we got our funding, I don’t remember. But I know we wanted to help those old people live in comfort.” Thirty years later, Les is an admirer of MOWJEC’s continued work on behalf of the elderly. “I admire Vinsen Faris [MOWJEC’s executive director] because he’s done a wonderful job. He’s in charge of feeding hundreds of people and getting enough volunteers to drive the routes.

“Since I don’t work now, and I have time,” Les said, “I’ll occasionally drive to deliver Meals on Wheels.” His wife, Peggy, who married Les in June 1957 said, “Once Les drove a route, but had trouble finding an address for a woman with a tiny marker. So he came home, built a larger address marker, and installed it for the woman. She was glad for it.”

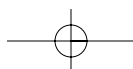
“These people really need our help,” Les said. “Once I

delivered a meal to a man whom I found laying on the floor in his bathroom. He’d fallen the night before. People who volunteer for Meals on Wheels have the chance to do a lot more than deliver food. The meal becomes secondary, usually, because the people we help just want to talk.”

Les sends MOWJEC about \$6 per month, “Just for the heck of it,” he said. In Johnson County, the charity he helped to create celebrated its 30th anniversary this summer. In August, the organization dedicated new offices. This month, MOWJEC hosts their 20th annual golf tournament fundraiser. The nonprofit organization has clients of all sorts, and people with all kinds of resources donate to the cause. “The truth is,” Les said, “it’s natural for MOWJEC to grow, because there’s getting to be a larger and larger section of old age people in our society.”

The Todds have watched Burleson grow since moving here from Fort Worth in the early years of their marriage. “The only red light in town was where the CVS is now, on Wilshire and Renfro. Burleson had a small town atmosphere, and it was the center of my territory,” Les said of 1950s Burleson. “We came because the school system was good, taxes were low and we knew that if anything happened at the nuclear plant, it would be easy for us to get on the highway and evacuate quickly.”

At this point, the Todds are not going anywhere. The couple lives with the absence of their youngest son, Barry,





who was killed 14 years ago in an Army accident. They are surrounded by their two children, Gary and René, and two grandchildren who live in Burleson. The Todds have developed great friends through church and community activities. Les has been a member of the Burleson Lions Club for more than 50 years! "I joined the Lions originally because what few business people there were in Burleson were all in the Lions Club. I wanted to associate with all of them. They're good people," he said. "As an organization, we've put together close to 100 bicycles and given them to the Salvation Army. We've taken kids down to the crippled children's camp, furnished eyeglasses to people who needed them. I just got interested in what we did for people, so I stayed in the club. With their objectives, I could respect them."

Peggy's attention to keeping the home fires burning allows Les to get out there and contribute to the community. It has always been that way for them according to Les. "She's fantastic! We met at the electric

company, where we both worked. I talked her into waterskiing with me. I kept checking on her, and found she was honest and dependable." Throughout their 50 years in Burleson, Peggy took care of the children and the home while Les investigated the community. Because of his job with the electric company, for whom he managed the southern half of Tarrant County, plus a bit of Johnson County, Les traveled and met with other city and county officials. He learned what worked and what did not, and brought that information back to aid in the formation of Burleson civic groups. He had a hand in developing all kinds of groups intended to support the growth of Burleson, from the Lions Club to the Chamber of Commerce, of which he was president in 1970 and 1976. He even helped write the Home Rule Charter, which the city of Burleson adopted in 1969. He wanted the area to grow, and gained a lot of wisdom from the elderly as he worked to make that happen.

"I always thought old people were wonderful," Les said. "I was raised by

my grandparents." His wife laughed when she explained, "When Les was in his 70s, he was still calling people older than himself 'elderly!' He is still young."

"I tell everyone not to get old," Les said. "Getting old is no fun. I don't know any old people who are badly incapacitated, though. Most of my friends are getting around. The others are dwindling. But you know, old people are a whole lot smarter than people think they are. A lot of people don't want to listen to old people, because they think they don't know what they're talking about. Maybe they don't. But they're not stupid."

"If MOWJEC lets me, I'll keep driving food over to old people on my route. I feel sorry for them, and I love them. You know, there are only about seven or eight people on a route, which could take about 45 minutes if you zip door-to-door. I spend at least an hour chitchatting with one or two or three of them every Friday when I drive. I only leave one's house because I'm wondering if the next person on my list might be getting hungry," he said. **NOW**

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# Garden Paradise

By Sandra McIntosh

## At Home With Jerry and Margaret Mullen

Jerry and Margaret Mullen moved to Burleson from Fort Worth over 18 years ago. While most couples looking to relocate go through the rigors of finding the perfect Realtor, all Jerry and Margaret did was make a trade. "I knew the original owners since the beginning of my teaching career at Tarrant County College," Jerry said, referring to the couple, who happened to be best friends with Jerry and Margaret at the time of the swap. "They were experiencing the 'empty nest syndrome' and we still had two of our four children at home." The Mullens soon realized their friends desired what they were wanting to leave behind. "They wanted the city," Margaret said, with a smile, "and we wanted the country."

When "trading spaces," one might think the three-bedroom, two-bath home would have to be totally redone, both inside and out. For Jerry and Margaret, that was not the case at all. "We totally gutted the kitchen and two bathrooms," Jerry said, adding that their taste in furniture and decor was much different than their friends, but the floor plan, colors and design proved to compliment what they brought with them.

The locations for the sink and major appliances remained the same, while the layout for the cabinetry changed to include a built-in pantry with its very own working countertop. "I don't have to go out into the hallway to get cooking items anymore," Margaret said, referring to the hall closet that was used as a pantry prior to the remodel. The colors found in



the ceramic tile flooring and the countertops are light, making the space appear much bigger than it is in reality.

On September 24, the Mullens will be celebrating 31 years of marriage. In all those years, they have taken great pride in "doing things" themselves. The kitchen remodel is the first job of this kind they contracted out. "Jerry gutted the room himself," Margaret explained. "They [contractors] came and put it back together." Margaret also noted it was nice when she and Jerry came home from their respective teaching jobs during this process. "It was wonderful to see what they were able to accomplish each day," she said. The beams and the arched, open doorways going from the living room to the kitchen area give the home an adobe look, allowing Jerry and Margaret to decorate in such a manner that visitors think they have just entered a home in Santa Fe,



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New Mexico, one of the couple's favorite locations to visit. The leather furniture, Southwest decor and massive fireplace, which takes up the better part of the back wall, are inviting, to say the least. All this, when mixed with family photographs, including those of eight grandchildren, makes for a cozy place to curl up with a good book, which Jerry and Margaret do quite often.

As comfortable and inviting as the inside of the home may be, it is the view to the backyard that takes your breath away. "The outside has been completely transformed," Jerry said, referring to the fact that the old owners had horses. "You'd never know they were the same yards."

When turning into the tree-lined driveway, visitors get a small glimpse of the beauty yet to come. The flowerbeds in the front yard are wonderful, but they do not begin to prepare visitors for the backyard garden paradise Jerry and



Margaret have created for themselves, as well as their family and friends.

As you stand on the deck, which is really the wooden cover to an in-ground swimming pool, you feel as if you are looking down onto one massive garden. Take a few steps into the garden, however, and you soon realize this is not the case. What began as pastureland has been transformed into an area encompassing not one flowerbed, but many individualized areas offering beauty that is truly magnificent; so much so, that it is nearly impossible to experience it all



in one visit. Jerry planted separate areas to help control the natural erosion and also to make mowing somewhat easier. There is a simple reason behind this undertaking, which began in 1990 and continues as a constant work in progress. Jerry loves his wife, and as a practicing Master Gardener, granting her wish seemed an easy thing for him to do. "Margaret grew up in the city, and she dreamed of having her own park one day," Jerry explained. "I wanted her to have her park."

The butterflies that flutter all around, as well as a multitude of colorful birds, including hummingbirds, add even more life to the garden. Jerry and Margaret do not discriminate when it

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comes to plants found throughout their personal "Garden of Eden." "We have annuals and perennials," Jerry said. "We try our best to have color in the garden all year long." They do have their favorites though. Jerry loves the leatherleaf mahonia, a bush that resembles holly with bluish-purple berries. "When the berries are ripe," he said, "the mockingbirds have a feast." The loropetalum bush is Margaret's favorite because of the unique way it cascades as it matures.

Each area, space and trail has been aptly named, most after the couple's grandchildren. There is Jack Knife, Delaney Lane and Pop's Playground, to name only a few. Jerry spends many



enjoyable moments in his playground. "I love to swing," he said, referring to the city park swing set that holds a pair of swings. The game of hopscotch is also found in the playground area where inlaid stones make the game much easier to follow. The younger children enjoy the built-in sand and pebbles boxes.

Looking around, watering comes to mind. This could easily be the most miraculous thing about the gardens which take up the better part of the two-acre lot. "We do all the watering by hand or with soaker hoses and




## "We plant, we water and He provides the harvest."

sprinklers," Jerry said. "A watering system is out of the question because of all the trees. It would take forever to dig out and around all the roots."

This is the first year in a long time that school started in Burluson without Margaret. Last year, she made the decision to leave her first grade

teaching position behind and start sharing retirement with Jerry, whom she considers to be "a keeper." "The past four years were difficult," she said, referring to Jerry's retirement. "It was hard to go to school and know Jerry was home in the garden." Now, she also spends her days working the soil, planting and watering.

"We often stop and say, 'Thank you God,'" Margaret said, referring to their many blessings. "We plant, we water and He provides the harvest." **NOW**



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**“Art should be in  
everyday life.”**

# Behind the Burleson Wall

— By Alex Allred

Brad Smith has an amazing office. It is open and inspiring. Chances are, if you live in Johnson County, you have already seen it. It is Old Town Burleson; it is restaurants and retail stores. For this artist, the world truly is his canvas. The backdrop for his art can be anything — the side of a building, walls, canvasses, even tabletops. There are no boundaries to his immense talent which he credits to his parents.

“They really encouraged me,” Brad said. “I wasn’t expected to be anything more than what I am today.” Yet, he was taught to believe all things were possible. It was a delicate balance, in which his parents allowed both Brad and his older brother, Craig, who is now a design architect in Houston, to explore and discover their own creative talents.

Growing up in the ’60s, Brad honed his skills “traveling in a station wagon.” To pass the time, Brad and his brother drew “everything we saw out the window.” While children today cannot

even look up long enough from their Gameboys to consider the landscape, Brad was imprinting the scenes into his brain.

While in the fifth grade, Brad sold his very first sketch. It was a picture of Spiro Agnew that earned him enough lunch money, he said, to last several weeks. Upon high school graduation, he was accepted into the prestigious American Academy of Art in Chicago, but his real break came while visiting his brother at Texas A&M University.

Together, the two had critiqued a mural on the wall of a local restaurant. Brad was never critical of other artists’ work, but on this day, “I was bragging to my brother. Basically, I was saying I could do better,” he admitted. When the owner of the restaurant heard the artistic challenge, he countered, asking Brad to showcase his talents, and he did.

When the owner saw Brad’s finished creation, he quickly hired the young artist to paint murals in each of his 20 restaurants/bars throughout the state of Texas. It was a break as important as an

actor being discovered in Hollywood, and one that would eventually lead him there. Today, his works have appeared on the ever-popular *American Idol*, MTV and VH1, as well as a series of Hollywood movies. Yet, fame has never been Brad’s motive.

For Brad, art is simply that — art. It is social commentary. It is self-expression and exploration. It reminds of the past and gives glimpses into the future. It is





**ARTS  
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joy, reflection, solitude and celebration. "As long as I've known him," said Randi, Brad's wife of 20 years, "he's always been an artist in the truest sense of the word." His talents, she said, are evident, but he is also humble and selfless, no doubt qualities he has passed on to their son, Cameron. While he is loath to discuss himself, one cannot help but draw comparisons between father and son, as Brad gushes over his only child.

"He is the sweetest, kindest gentleman you could ever meet," Brad said of Cameron. He's fun-loving and laid-back, friends with everybody and every type of person. He's exactly what I thought he would be like, even before he was born."

Like his father, Cameron has shown great artistic promise at an early age, having already entered his first film at the Sundance Film Festival. Like his father, art stands representative of something far greater than monetary success or winning contests. "Art should never be a contest," Brad said. "It is," he added, "about sharing and growing."

On a personal level, Brad is mostly interested in challenging himself. One week out of every month, he creates artwork for his own collection. This time allows him more creativity with colors and style, and just as it is with his murals, setting is everything. Rather than working in a lavish studio, his is



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an old barn overlooking a picturesque pasture, complete with his horses, a rogue bobcat and other wildlife. It fills Brad with a sense of peace and serenity evidenced in his works.

Unlike many artists, Brad does not need to market himself as such. He receives requests from around the state and nation, from both private and corporate collectors. Rather than turn away from his small-town roots, he remains faithful. "I have this theory," Brad explained. "I'm trying to make Johnson County a museum without walls. Art should be in everyday life."

Art allows children to see beyond "the walls," and is a gift he receives as much as he gives. "I'm always surprised by how many people have watched my paintings over the years," Brad said. Neighbors, friends and strangers-turned-fans approach him to say how much his murals have meant to them. "I can't imagine a better town than Burleson. This is such a great town," he said.

Ironically, while he would like to think of Burleson as a city without walls, it is those very walls which have opened the minds and imaginations of so many, and we are indebted to the man who has used them as his canvasses. **ARTS NOW**

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# Around Town NOW



A ribbon cutting, top left, was held at American National Bank of Texas. Dr. Kim Tyler, top center, explained coursework to student Henry Johnson. The Burleson Chamber of Commerce Mini Golf Challenge, top right, was held at the Old West Mini Golf course. A ribbon cutting, middle left, was held at Big Willy's II Shell gas station. Customers, middle right, enjoyed snow cones at Yellow Rose Sno Cones. Several members of the Purple Heart Association, bottom left, attended the ribbon cutting at the bank on Thursday, August 16. The Chamber held another ribbon cutting, bottom right, for Mark Wilson, agent for Keller Williams.

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**Sports**  
**NOW**

# Life Lessons on the Soccer Field

— By Melissa Rawlins

John Van Horn's eldest son, 17-year-old Seth Ruffu, started playing soccer when he was 8 years of age. Since that time, John has volunteered his time and talents to support the Burleson Independent Soccer Association (BISA). Why the word "independent" in the name of this recreational soccer league? The spirit of independence seems to describe all the people involved — from players to parents.

"When I was a new parent, there was a vacant facilities coordinator position for almost three seasons. I kept suggesting things to do, but there was nobody to suggest them to," said John, who became the official BISA director of facilities seven years ago. His philosophy: "There are always people who will help, but somebody's got to take ownership and do what needs doing."

That is the lesson being learned by one of BISA's competitive players, Harlē Williams. At the ripe old age of 12, Harlē has learned through soccer to work hard in order to accomplish her goals. "Sometimes, the other team will start calling you names to catch you off guard," Harlē explained. "That just

makes me play harder. One game, they called me a 'freak show,' and I think that day I made a goal!" With a grin, Harlē described another moment where she pushed herself for the sake of the team: "Last time I played in a tournament, I was trying to get the ball away from a girl and she got mad and slapped my glasses off my face. I knocked her down the legal way and got the ball."

How do you know what is legal? John said, "Some of the rules are harder to understand than others. But BISA uses videos to teach the rules to parents who volunteer to referee or to coach." BISA's main goal, he said, is for kids to have fun. "They don't even keep score officially in the younger teams," he said. "Early on, there's often no goalie. They're just learning the basics of soccer. It's more of a team sport, so it's harder for one person to dominate. Like my son, who always played defender.

He never made a lot of goals, but he definitely contributed. What's great about BISA is that everybody gets equal playing time." Even adults! BISA hosts eight adult, coed teams.

This month, play time starts in earnest. That means hard work for players like Harlē. "We do a lot of running. Sometimes, if we have to run more, I have to talk myself into it," Harlē said. "That's something I have learned to do with housework. I talk myself into it." According to her grandparents, she sings while she works. "I like Hannah Montana from the Disney Channel," Harlē explained. "I like to sing the song 'Make Some Noise,' which basically says: 'Don't let anybody tell you you're not strong enough.' It says you deserve to have an opinion."

Harlē likes that thought because it is like what her grandmother taught her. "Gan Gan always tells me, 'If it's



*Keeper of the facilities, John Van Horn, shares the goal of excellence with Burleson soccer players like Harlē.*



# Sports NOW

to be, it's up to me.' Gan Gan has helped me see there are choices you have to make," said Harlē, who has lived with her grandparents for the past four years. "That wasn't really a choice," Harlē said. "I could have lived with my grandparents or foster care." With her grandparents' love and the chance to play soccer, Harlē's grown into a confident, healthy young woman. She explained that she was a little plump, and said soccer practice is the reason she changed from a size 16 to a size 10. "I noticed it right off the bat!" Everything's improved for Harlē since joining BISA – from schooling to attitude. "Whenever I wasn't in soccer, I had nothing to build to," Harlē said. "Now, it's made me a lot more happy, and given me more things to accomplish."

"A lot of parents have never experienced how neat soccer is," John said. "A lot of that is because we're independent. At this time, we get no support from the city. We do our own maintenance. We pay full price for water, etc. ... Everything we do is through teamwork." John is looking forward to 2010, when the fruits of the recent bond election will be given to the community. "We currently have nine available fields on our 18 acres on South Dobson. The city worked with BISA and will build a \$3 million complex on the land, so the city will have a soccer park with 18 fields, all lighted, with restrooms and everything." Then, he said, BISA will be able to host tournaments.

By then, Harlē will be a 15-year-old 10th-grader at Bursleson High School. The idea of larger, grander facilities appeals to her. "I love soccer. My grandparents always say, 'We hope you do better,' and I always do. Last year, I ended up scoring two goals in one game. This year, I want to try to do higher than that." With such a desire to exceed her own standards, just think what Harlē and her team will do on 18 fields! **NOW**



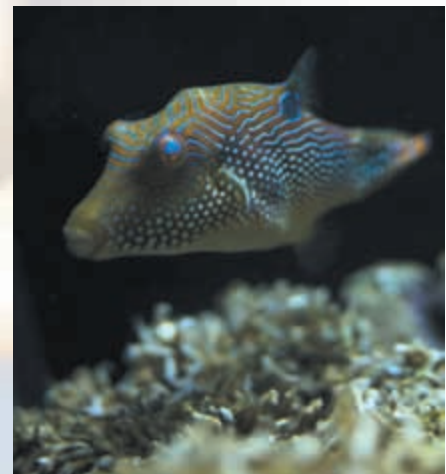
# A Fish-eye View of the Fish House

— By Melissa Rawlins

# From Puff Daddy's Perspective



*Store owner David Hopkins said Puff Daddy will bite your finger off, no matter how sweet he looks.*



Puff's no magic dragon. He is the colorful, calm puffer fish in the middle rear tank in The Fish House. From his perspective, Puff Daddy watches all sorts of Burleson families and business owners come in with questions, point at fish and coral in other tanks, and learn about their care and feeding from Paul Farris.

"Every year, millions of reefs are downed by man's pollution," Paul said. "The propagation of coral is a big part of what we do here." Two years ago, Paul added 10 pieces of coral, called frags, onto one rock in which bacteria live. The coral in the nano-tank has grown into a piece of art. "Both fish in its tank were captive-born," he said. Next to the nano-tank is a sweet, young bird-of-paradise and Paul's four-year-old violet, which is perfectly happy tucked

## "Every year, millions of reefs are downed by man's pollution."

in with a variegated ivy given to him by a customer.

Some of The Fish House's first customers were walk-ins who noticed the new business on their way to shop at Albertson's on Northeast Alsbury. Those customers keep coming because of Paul's passion to educate people for the sake of fish. "The more kids and young adults who get into this hobby, the more potential there is for good biologists who will understand the ecology of oceans," he said. His interest in fish started when he was a child, and has continued since selling fish for his first job out of high school in

Lubbock, where he graduated just three years after his business partner, David Hopkins. "We probably lived a mile-and-a-half from each other and never knew it," David said.

Ten years later, they are in business together in Burleson. They met in Arlington through a sales job: David was buying equipment from Ocean View Aquariums, where Paul sold tanks. Now, they stock some of their fish in those same aquariums. David had been buying, breeding and selling fish as a hobby for over 20 years — the same length of time that Paul had been in the industry. Their mutual interest



## Business **NOW**

in tropical fish clinched the deal. Now, David takes care of the financial aspects of The Fish House, while Paul takes customers from an interest in fish to an understanding of handling a tank full of them. David hired Andrew Turner to be The Fish House's service guy, the technician who goes to people's homes and businesses to do maintenance on tanks, decorations, coral and fish.



Paul Farris and Andrew Turner know the value of clean tanks.

Andrew also takes care of the spotless tank where sloe-eyed Puff Daddy hangs out. "Everyone who walks into this store has a bond with Puff," David said. "I adopted him almost four years ago from one of my customers, when his tank got too much for him to care for."

Taking time for personal hobbies is tough. The business is open seven days a week; on five of those days they offer service calls. "I can't remember the last time I went fishing and caught anything," said David, who enjoys bass and crappie fishing at the coast or at area lakes (Cleburne, Alvarado and Benbrook). "We work together to give each other time to get away from The Fish House," Paul said. "But when we come back," David commented, "we have fun." So much so, they are considering putting a waterproof Web cam in Puff's tank so they can broadcast the shenanigans in The Fish House on the Internet, a la *EDTV*. But the catch here is the fish-eye view, from Puff's perspective. **NOW**

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# Developing Passion

— By Melissa Rawlins

Burleson's busy piano instructor, Rebecca Brown, does more than play. She knows how to talk, too. In a recent conversation, she explained a simple truth, rarely put into words: "Teaching someone else to do something that you love to do is very satisfying." Rebecca has taught various things in the past: math, soccer, Sunday school; and she has homeschooled a bit. "By far, the thing I've enjoyed teaching the most is piano, and it is, therefore, the subject I am most effective at as a teacher," she said.

"I'm up, talking, moving, teaching them intervals, scales and chords," Rebecca said. She focuses on the fundamentals, and her three children have grown into accomplished artists under her tutelage. Angie, 12, paints, plays French horn in band and takes voice lessons, while her parents

encourage her passion for drama. Ashley, 10, draws, sings, plays sports and writes her own music. "Allie, my 5 year old, rewrites 'the book' every day," Rebecca said with a laugh. "When working with her, I throw away the rule book without giving her complete freedom to rewrite all the rules."

Freedom in discipline is a concept that dawned on Rebecca while taking college music education classes, where she earned a degree in piano pedagogy. "I realized someone else was going to tell me how to teach. I wondered how anyone could teach with a predetermined curriculum," she said. "That is about the time I was teaching private lessons and realized how completely different every child, is and how my approach to each one has to be different. My goal is to inspire a child to use their own mind, and to develop what they've

already been given an ability to do," said Rebecca, who credits much of her current instructional approach to her mentor, Nancy Brown. "I studied with her while I was away at college, and she was everything for me — my 'mom,' counselor and friend. As well, she taught me to play piano beyond my ability. I developed my work ethic under her."

As a piano teacher, Nancy taught Rebecca to expect great things from every student. "You never know what might be hiding inside someone that just hasn't been discovered yet," Rebecca said. "And if you allow your students to be content with mediocre, they may never find their greatness."

"Mrs. Brown also taught me to care about my students far beyond their piano playing," Rebecca said. "The things that are going on in their lives



## Education **NOW**

— or have taken place in the past — will greatly affect every lesson and/or performance. For instance, there was a piece by Chopin I was learning in college. It was very challenging for me — a different style of composition



*Grouped around Mrs. Brown in her teaching studio, Angie, 12, Ashley, 10, and Allie, 5, sing "Maybe" from Annie. On the wall is 16th Note, painted by Ashley.*

than I was used to. Mrs. Brown kept telling me 'You're just playing notes. This is Chopin. It has to be more than just notes.' During that time, my great-grandmother finally began showing her age at nearly 90 years old. She had several heart attacks and was not expected to live much longer. I began grieving before she was ever gone. This piece by Chopin began to really allow me to connect with my emotions, and express them in a way words just would not allow. After that, I had a difficult time playing it without tears coming to my own eyes. 'Now it's music,' Mrs. Brown finally said.

"The opposite can happen, though," Rebecca said. "Difficult times in a student's life can create a block, and they lose their motivation. Or they just can't seem to connect with the image the composer was trying to paint with the music. Or they may actually have to quit lessons for a while. This is when I, as a teacher, have to be their friend more than their teacher and be understanding, and sometimes talk them through stuff."

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## Education **NOW**



**“I avoid pointing at the notes on the page, because I want them to learn to read along.”**

For Rebecca, music is a soul thing. “I come up here at night after my kids are in bed, and I lose myself in the music. I pour every care into the piano. To have that emotional outlet is invaluable. God made us musical beings,” she explained. “You can use music to express how you feel to others when words do not work.”

The huge thing Rebecca hopes to give to her students is her passion for music — both for listening and performing. “I try to help students develop this same passion,” she explained. How does she do it? “I am very particular about form and technique. I don’t let them give an inch on accuracy in notes or rhythm. I encourage them to perform publicly as often as possible — in front of judges at times, even. We learn about composers, their biographical history as well as their individual styles.”

As their interest grows, her students’ assignments require more practice time, and their lessons become longer and perhaps more frequent. She also talks with them from time to time about what opportunities are available for pianists. “I encourage them to begin thinking of ways they might be able to use their music when they grow up,” she said. **NOW**



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# Look Who's Cooking

— By Melinda Hines

**S**herry retired after 20 delightful years as the children's librarian at the Burleson Public Library, and now devotes more time to her love of cooking. "I learned to cook from my mother who came from a large family," she said. Sherry grew up at a time when families cooked more and eating out was a treat. "We ate things like hamburgers or pizza on Saturday only," she said.

Sherry describes herself as a physical fitness guru, who was brought up eating fresh fruits and vegetables. "That's the way our three children grew up, too. We always had our own garden, and I only cook healthy dishes," Sherry stated. When not cooking, Sherry enjoys her small puppeteering business and making presentations for Operation Life Saver. **RedOakNOW**

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### OVEN-FRIED CHICKEN

- 6 chicken breasts
- 2 eggs or 2 egg whites
- 1 cup skim milk
- 1/2 cup light olive oil
- brown bag with 1 cup white flour inside
- black pepper, to taste

Wash and dry chicken. Mix together eggs and milk. Dip chicken in eggs and milk mixture. Put chicken in paper bag with flour and shake. Heat oil in frying pan and quickly brown chicken on both sides. Place in baking dish and bake at 350 F for 40 - 60 minutes, until done.

### SWEET CHICKEN SALAD

- 4 chicken breasts
- 1 cup green grapes
- 1 cup nonfat Miracle Whip
- 1/4 cup walnuts

Boil chicken breasts until done and cool. Cut or shred into small pieces. Add green grapes and Miracle Whip and walnuts. Serve on bed of lettuce with sliced tomatoes or make delicious sandwiches.

### HEALTHY CATALINA CHICKEN SALAD

- 4 chicken breasts

- 1 head of iceberg lettuce, washed, dried and torn into small pieces
- 2 fresh tomatoes, diced
- 1 15.5-oz. can dark red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- fresh cilantro, to taste
- Kraft light or fat free Catalina Dressing
- 1 bag Tostitos Scoops
- 1 jar Pace Picante Sauce

Boil chicken breasts until done. Drain and cool. In large bowl, layer lettuce, tomatoes, kidney beans and cilantro. Tear or shred chicken and place on top of salad and add dressing to taste. Serve with chips and picante sauce.

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## SWEET POTATO PIE

- 2 - 3 sweet potatoes, boiled, cooled and skinned
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 cup skim milk
- 2 eggs or 2 egg whites
- 1 cup sugar or Splenda
- 1 tub Cool Whip

Mix together the first 5 ingredients and pour into your favorite 9" pie crust and bake at 350 F for 45 minutes. Top with Cool Whip.

## ZUCCHINI BREAD OR CARROT BREAD

- 2 garden zucchinis or 1 cup carrots (grated)
- 3 cups flour
- 1 Tbsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup light olive oil
- 1 cup brown sugar or Splenda
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Grate zucchinis or carrots in bowl and set aside. In another bowl add flour, cinnamon, salt, baking soda and baking powder. Mix well; add olive oil, brown sugar or Splenda, vanilla and the freshly grated zucchini or carrots. Mix all together; place into olive-oiled pan and bake at 350 F for 45 minutes or until done.

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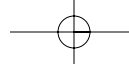
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# Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

— By Sharon Robinson

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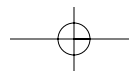
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Your credit report may also contain your credit score – a number between

## “What is a credit report, anyway?”

300 and 850 – that is used to predict whether you will repay a loan. Your credit score is based on your payment history, total amount you owe, length of your credit history, any newly acquired credit and the types of credit you are using. Many lenders use this number to determine whether or not to approve your loan. Oftentimes, this number also correlates with the interest rate on your loan; a higher credit score will often be granted a lower interest rate on the loan.

A lot of valuable information is contained on your credit report, and lenders rely heavily on this tool. As a customer, you should also give your credit report the attention it deserves. After all, it can affect your ability to build the life you desire.

Effective September 1, 2005, all consumers in the United States are entitled to one free credit report every year from each of the three major credit reporting companies – Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. For more information on ordering your free credit reports, visit [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). **NOW**

*Sharon Robinson is a State Farm agent based in Burleson.*

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# DIABETES:

## Millions Suffer From It and May Not Know It

Diabetes is a chronic disease affecting more than 20 million people in the United States. It is a condition that results from the body's inability to produce or properly regulate insulin, a vital hormone needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy.

Common symptoms of diabetes include an increased thirst, increased urination or change in appetite. Other frequent symptoms include fatigue, blurred vision, slow-healing infections and impotence in men. Diabetes can be caused by genetic and environmental factors, such as being overweight and inactive.

**There are three common types of diabetes:**

**Type 1** - The pancreas fails to produce insulin. Roughly five to 10 percent of Americans with diabetes have Type 1.

**Type 2** - The body fails to properly use the insulin that it produces. Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes, affecting adults and sometimes children.

**Gestational diabetes** - Four percent of all pregnant women or about 135,000 cases are diagnosed in the United States each year.

"All patients with diabetes or pre-diabetes should work with their physician to develop a healthy diet and exercise program, as well as discuss medication options," said Dr. Jeffrey Astbury, internal medicine physician on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie and the volunteer medical director of the Baylor Diabetes Center at BaylorWorx Fitness Center in Waxahachie. He teaches his patients that "learning about diabetes is essential in managing

you blood sugar," recommending all diabetic patients attend a diabetes education program.

Over time, high blood sugar can damage the blood vessels, nerves and organs and, if left untreated, can eventually cause serious complications or death.

Following is a list of some of the most common complications:

- Increased risk for heart disease, heart attack, heart failure and stroke. According to the American Diabetes Association, over 65 percent of people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke.
- A diabetic's risk for a heart attack is as high as someone who has had a previous heart attack.
- Increased risk for diabetic retinopathy, a condition linked to blood vessel problems in the eyes. Diabetes is a leading cause of preventable blindness; cataracts and glaucoma.



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- Increased risk for peripheral neuropathy, a condition caused by reduced blood flow to the nerves. This condition, brought on by high blood sugar, can cause nerve pain, burning and numbness.

- Development of serious leg and foot infections due to poor blood circulation, lack of oxygen and nutrients to tissue and nerve damage.

- Diabetic nephropathy, or kidney damage can cause kidney failure.

### Risk factors for diabetes include:

- A parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- Age greater than 45 years
- Ethnicity (particularly African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders and Hispanic Americans)
- Gestational diabetes or delivering a baby weighing more than nine pounds
- High blood pressure
- High blood levels of triglycerides (a type of fat molecule)
- High blood cholesterol levels

“While there is no cure for diabetes, treatment usually involves medication, a healthy diet and exercise to control blood sugar and prevent symptoms and complications,” Dr. Astbury explained. “But the good news is that complications are not unavoidable. With proper management of the disease, diabetes can be controlled.”

If diabetes is left untreated, serious complications can develop. Some people can go for years without knowing they have diabetes, so if you are considered high-risk or begin to experience some of the symptoms mentioned above, do not wait — consult with your doctor right away. **NOW**

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

#### Every Tuesday

Making It Happen Network Group, 11:30 a.m., Blue Mesa in Fort Worth.

#### Every Wednesday

Breakfast Club Networking, 8 a.m. Call the Chamber for information.

#### Every Thursday

Toastmasters, 7 a.m. at the Chamber.

Making It Happen Network Group, 11:30 a.m., Fire Mountain on Hwy. 174.

#### September 1

Vendor registration has begun for Midlothian Chamber of Commerce's Annual Fall Festival to be held October 20. For information, contact Mary Rustin at (972) 723-7919 or Amanda Miller at (972) 723-8600.

#### September 3

Labor Day - schools and city facilities closed; no trash collection; golf course is open.

#### September 4

Burleson Lady Elks Play Summit Volleyball, 5:30 p.m.

#### September 4 and 18

City of Burleson Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., City Hall.

#### September 5

Friends of the Library meeting, 10 a.m., Burleson Public Library.

#### September 7

Burleson Runnin' Elks compete in track at the Cleburne Invitational, Byron Stewart Park.

Burleson Elks Play Justin Northwest — Texans Football, 7:30 p.m.

#### September 9

Burleson Community Chorale's first fall practice at St. Matthew Presbyterian Church, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

#### September 11

Burleson Heritage Foundation Meeting, 7 p.m.

#### September 13 and 27

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

#### September 14

Burleson Elks Play Keller Central — Chargers Football, 7:30 p.m.

#### September 15

Trash Bash, 9 - 11 a.m., Warren Park. Call in advance of the event to register and to get a cleanup location assignment. Volunteers of all ages are welcome. Adult supervision required for youth participants. Call (817) 447-5410, ext. 269 after Sept. 4.

Grand Opening of National Bank of Texas, in B&G Plaza at Renfro & I-35W, 9 a.m. - noon.

#### September 13

20th Annual Meals on Wheels Benefit at Hidden Creek Golf Course. Contact (817) 558-2840 to register; golfer fees are \$100 per individual or \$400 per team.

#### September 14

Burleson Lady Elks Play Timberview Volleyball, 5:30 p.m.

#### September 18

Sign-up deadline for Miss Burleson Pageant; contact Greg Solomon at (817) 295-6121.

#### September 21

Burleson Lady Elks Play Legacy Volleyball, 5:30 p.m.

#### September 22

E-cycling event at 1st National Bank, Alsbury and I-35 W, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Most materials accepted and recycled at no charge, but a few items will require a recycling fee: TVs (27 inches or larger) - \$20; TVs (25 inches or smaller) - \$10; passenger car tires (3 - 18 inches) - \$1.50 each; pickup truck tires (20 - 22 inches) - \$2 each; window A/C units - \$15 each for Freon disposal; erasing computer hard drives - \$3 per drive. Call environmental services at (817) 447-5410, ext. 269.

The Lights of Ennis Fundraiser Gala @ La Galleria.

#### September 23

Miss Burleson and Miss Teen Burleson Scholarship Pageant, 5 p.m., Burleson High School Auditorium. Cost is \$15. Contestants arrive at 10 a.m. for rehearsal; interview portion is at 1 p.m. This pageant is a preliminary pageant to the Miss Texas and Miss America Pageant. Call (817) 295-6121 for details.

#### September 24

Burleson Lady Elks Play Granbury Volleyball, 5:30 p.m.

Book Discussion Group at Burleson Public Library, 6:30 p.m.

Adult Softball League games, 6:30 p.m., Softball Complex, 295 Hidden Creek. \$300 fee per team. Contact the community center at (817) 295-8168.

#### September 27

Hot dog cookout at Senior Activity Center, noon.

Burleson Elks Play North Crowley — Panthers Junior Varsity Football, 5 p.m. / 7:30 p.m.

#### September 29

Holiday Extravaganza! Christmas Decorating Seminar at Burleson High School sponsored by the Chamber, 1 - 4 p.m.

Burleson Lady Elks Play Keller Central Volleyball Tournament