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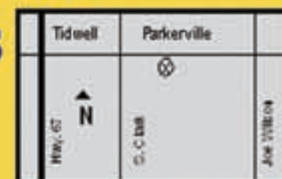
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Ivey Photography . Sandra McIntosh
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Cedar Hill NOW

Editor's Note

Hello, Cedar Hill Residents,

Welcome home from your vacations! It is back to school time for many students and teachers. It is also time for the Education Foundation's Gala to raise funds for school- and teacher-initiated grants, which bring creativity and innovation into the classroom. Find out more in *EducationNOW*.

Randy Johnson shows us how to cook fireman-style, while our gymnastics coach, Alexander Douglas can teach you some "stunt moves." For those who still have a travel bug, meet George Gonzalez, who travels the Amazon River bringing humanitarian aid, practical trade education and medical clinics to tribes, some of whom have never met outsiders. Find out how you can be a part.

Perhaps you can inspire your daughter to design a home for you, as did the Chastain's daughter. Read more about that in our home feature.

Cedar Hill Editor,
Beverly Shay



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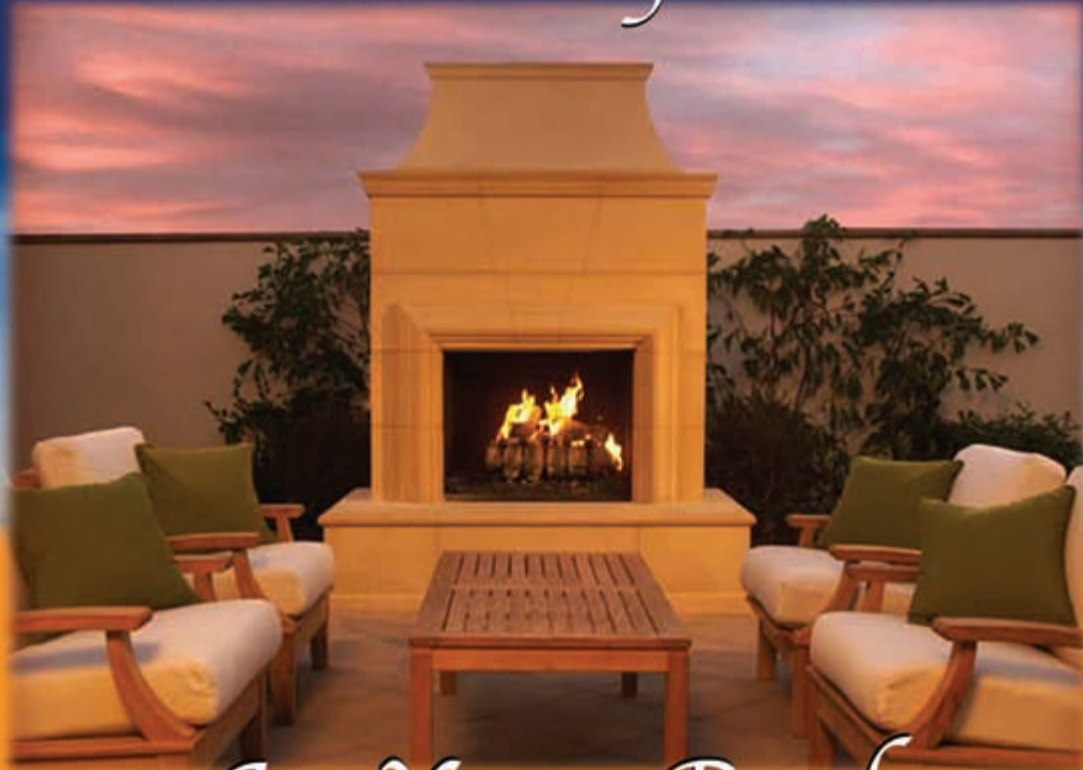
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From Cedar Hill to the Corners of the Amazon Jungle

— By Beverly Shay

Travel. Adventure. Boat rides. The Amazon rainforest. Hard work. Miles and miles of river — some 4,300 miles of river to be exact. George and Edilma Gonzalez have not quite traveled that entire distance, but although they are in their 50s, this couple has made more than 60 trips up the Amazon River into the equatorial jungle, bringing in supplies and people to aid national tribesmen in Peru, Columbia and Brazil.

“Once you have gone and seen the need, you have to go back,” George explained.

“In just a few days, I will be taking a team into the jungle; two are going back for a second time — one for three months, another for a year, and a family is going with us to live there for the next five years.”

George and Edilma have lived in Cedar Hill for three years. Their lovely, spacious home also houses their office. From there they coordinate the gathering of humanitarian aid in the form of food, medicine, medical supplies and equipment, tools, computers, sewing machines and other items for use in their vocational training school, as well as teams of people: doctors, dentists, nurses, mechanics, carpenters — anyone who is willing to work in the jungle. “We have so much to give of our time and knowledge and skills, to which many of these villagers have never been exposed,” George explained. “Their lives are controlled by the floodwaters of a river that can fluctuate up to 34 feet in a given year.” Faced

with the ever-changing riverfront on one side, approximately seven miles wide when not in flood, and the nearly impenetrable jungle behind, these villagers eek out whatever living they can manage.

George and his coworkers were able to provide a wood mill where logs have been transformed into lumber from which at least 10 medical clinics, three or four schools and some 38 churches have been built. “The needs of the children in this part of the world really grip your heart,” George confessed. “To see the difference food has made for the children enrolled in our feeding program is so gratifying; yet each place has a long waiting list of children who need our help, but we don’t have the facilities, food or servers to meet their needs.”

For this trip, George has been given 42,000 pounds of a mixture of rice, soy, dried vegetables and 21 vitamins, in 13-oz. packages. Mixed with water either to the consistency of a casserole or soup, this ultra-nutritious meal will feed six children. This particular food product has been distributed worldwide in places like China, Africa, India, the Philippines, Russian orphanages and among Tsunami survivors. Shipment will cost around \$2,000 and take 28 days to arrive at the main distribution center in Leticia, Columbia.

“The humanitarian aid we provide, which includes three feeding stations that provide a main meal for 550 children daily, a children’s home with 24 full-time residents [and] VBS programs that include tutoring, are mainly serving children who were at high risk of malnutrition and major disease. Within four to five months, the children from our feeding programs, once lagging academically, have improved so dramatically that they are now receiving academic acknowledgment as top-of-the-class students. In fact, in one school the whole academic program had to be revised to accommodate their advanced capacity to learn,” George proudly stated.

Leticia is also the home of their vocational training facility. Here they teach carpentry, mechanics, sewing and clothes design, cosmetology, baking, computer skills and poultry farming. Each of these includes small business management courses, and upon completion, the graduate is given a start-up kit of tools or machinery pertinent to their chosen trade. This is in an effort to equip the Indian young people who come out of the jungle and have previously been so unskilled and linguistically deficient that many ended up in prostitution or suicidal.

“What medical facilities are available,

such as the hospital in Leticia, are so small in comparison to here; yet that is the largest medical facility within a 700-mile radius," George explained. "Over Thanksgiving week, we will bring in a team of doctors, surgeons, an optometrist, who is bringing 6,000 pairs of reading glasses. We'd like to have a gynecologist and two more surgeons, who will perform operations unavailable there. The team will take over the hospital, providing needed treatment for hernias, infections, female problems and care for amputations," George continued.

The rate of infant mortality along the jungle/riverfront is 30 percent. "Some of the families won't even name their children until they have reached two years of age, in an effort not to become too attached to a child that might die," George commented, stating the tragedy almost matter-of-factly. Much of the problem is river related. "The water is so contaminated from debris that washes in, human waste and decaying dead animals who have

drowned. This is not a river of life. When you scoop up a handful of water, most of it is sediment ... contaminated sediment," George related.

His group ventured digging a few wells, but they are so expensive and when the river rises, the wells are often flooded and contaminated, rendering them useless. More functional would be water purification stations. "To provide such a station for a village of 3,500 would run around \$12,000 and would include a pump to get the water from the river, a filter, storage facility, a purification system involving reverse osmosis or chlorination of some sort and a generator to run it."

Parts of the jungle they would like to serve are off-limits. *National Geographic* was able to record the life of these very isolated villagers, but non-Indian groups are not free to travel into many jungle regions. George and Edilma are determined not to remain mere residents of the fine community of Cedar Hill, Texas. They are committed to sharing freely of the bounty they

enjoy within the American lifestyle. "When people are willing to travel nine to 20-something days down the often treacherous Amazon to receive the type of training we take for granted, it can be overwhelming. But that same bigger-than-we-can-meet need is also what draws people back."

"I am very excited to be traveling with Steve Saint on this trip," enthused George. "He has developed what he calls the backpack dental clinic. It's heavy, but doable. When opened and set up, you have a dental chair, lights and dental tools, all solar-powered. We hope to train some workers who will be able to take this in and provide basic dental care and eventually move on to more preventive care."

Anyone interested in traveling to the Amazon or volunteering in setting up a local center for the collection, packing and shipment of food and goods to be distributed along the Amazon can find more information on their Web site at amazonxpeditions.com or can e-mail them at amazonxpeditions@aol.com. **NOW**

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Simple Elegance

— By Sandra McIntosh

Jim and Vivian Chastain still act like newlyweds even though they recently celebrated their second anniversary. “The new feeling hasn’t worn off,” Jim said, as he smiled at Vivian. “It feels like we exchanged vows just yesterday.”

On the same day they married, July 23, they also moved into their new home in Cedar Hill. The celebration would not have been complete without including the couple’s new four-bedroom, four-and-one-half-bath home overlooking Joe Pool Lake, since that is where the love story for Jim and Vivian grew into the life they share today.

They had what many would call “a long, long, long distance relationship.” When they first were introduced to one another, Jim worked for Owens Corning and his home was in South Carolina. Vivian was settled comfortably in Ovilla and today still owns the Bienvenidos restaurant in Lancaster. “Jim had been working a job in Waxahachie when a mutual friend introduced us,” Vivian explained. “There were lots of phone calls, and we’d see each other about once every two weeks. Thank goodness for long-distance calling cards.”

After dating for five years, Jim and Vivian finally came to the realization it was time to “tie the knot.” After making the decision to wed, a place to reside as husband and wife posed the next problem. “When we decided to marry, a new home just seemed appropriate,” Vivian said.

While Jim and Vivian were in the process of selling their homes, plans for the new house were taking shape in an office off Ovilla Road. “My daughter, Gina Balderrama, owns Southern Progressive Homes. She designed the house and the pool,” Vivian said. “She has always been design-oriented. She just always had a desire to build things.”

Before the foundation could be poured, the lot itself had to be cleared of a multitude of mesquite trees. Vivian was hopeful that once the lot was cleared, she would have the view she envisioned. “It’s more than I could have hoped for,” she said. “The view is priceless.”

The Chastains were quite flexible during the house-building process. There was only one feature in the two-story dwelling they were not willing to give up, modify or alter from the



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Jim and Vivian Chastain



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original plans. "I wanted a circular staircase so I could walk down to meet my new husband," Vivian said, still blushing at the memory. "That's the main reason we built the house before we married. It was a romantic way to start our life together as a couple."



Upon entering the home, the first thing you are drawn to — after the magnificent backyard view through a bank of floor-to-ceiling windows in the formal living room — is the circular staircase. It is massive, yet simple in design. The ornate, black wrought iron railings were custom-made to the couple's specifications, the decorative twists and turns intertwining to make a heart pattern. Even though decorating a home this size proved to be a daunting task last year, Jim and Vivian are already looking forward to the holidays with excitement. "Christmas here is beautiful," Vivian said. "Last year, we wrapped the staircase and bridge railings with garland and twinkling white lights. We added silver and

white bows and ornaments. That's really all we needed."

The great room area downstairs is where the most indoor, at-home time is spent. Whereas the formal living and dining areas are elegance in its simplest form, the combined kitchen, den and casual dining area is more rustic in design. The colors Vivian used to decorate are deep, rich and warm, lending the comfortable feel she wanted the room to offer when family and friends come to call. The leather furniture is perfect for relaxing. Custom Roman shades blend well with the Tuscan gold walls. The island, designed from one solid slab of granite in a Bourdeaux pattern, serves three purposes in one — kitchen sink, countertop and a bar area, perfect for the couple's five grandchildren. "It's a room where everyone can be together," Vivian said.

The Mediterranean-style home boasts of several specialty rooms — all but one are located upstairs. The area downstairs that is unique to the home

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is the wine cellar with its two racks and large cooler. "Jim loves Cabernets," Vivian said, referring to one of Jim's two collections, the other being miniature clocks. "When he retired, he was presented a year's membership to the Wine of the Month Club."

The media room, home gym and his-and-hers home office are located on the second floor. As an avid NASCAR fan, Jim spends a lot of time in front of the 10' x 8', flat-screen TV during racing season, which proves to be year-round. It is also a room made for movies. "Every time my daughter sends me a care package, she includes at least one DVD," Jim said. "She's been helping us build our personal movie collection."

Many would wonder, why put the master suite upstairs? "That's simple," Vivian said. "We wanted it here for the view. We can see for miles and miles. The towers, the lake, the countryside and the annual fireworks show. All we have to do is step out on the balcony

to grab a front-row seat."

The bedroom furniture is unique with the leather insets trimmed in brass rivets. Vivian laughingly said it seemed much smaller on the Internet. The suite also boasts of a pass-through gas fireplace, one of three found in the home, a Jacuzzi tub with heater and Vivian's very own upstairs coffee bar. "I don't have to go far for that first cup of coffee," she said.

Others things worth mentioning in the home are Vivian's nutcracker collection, the framed movie posters in the media room, the pool's infinity edge, the intercom/music systems, the crystal accent pieces, the lighted niches, featuring artwork and florals, and last, but not least, the parking. "He has his two-car garage," Vivian said, with a laugh, "and I have my two-car garage. It just seemed to balance the house when drawing up the plans."

Jim and Vivian have several hobbies between them from reading the same mystery novels to taking an evening



swim, but the one they most love to do together is travel. They always try to combine Jim's business trips into a vacation filled with rest, relaxation and fun.

Looking back over the past two years brings a smile to both their faces. Married life and a new home are all they had hoped it would be and more. "It's everything I dreamed it would be," Vivian said, referencing the simple, elegant style she was hoping for all along. "I have trouble getting up to go to work. I'd much rather stay home." **NOW**

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**ARTS
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Following Creativity

— By Beverly Shay

Where It Leads

Creative people work at giving expression to what defines them, yet they often find themselves in what they create. They seek to make a tangible art form of what they “see” within themselves or in the world around them, whether it is something spontaneous or something they have pondered on for a while. “I tend to be in the moment when I paint,” explained artist Theresa Brooks. She also admitted, “Painting quiets my mind more than anything else.”

However, according to her, working with glass is a different matter. “When you do glass, you have to have something in mind before you start. Glass is more expensive and definitely harder to adjust. Painting is more forgiving. People are generally more impressed with glass; glass takes technical skill

more than talent,” she said.

Theresa finds glass fascinating. “You can’t always control the outcome because colors change during the firing,” she indicated. Having her own kiln has enabled her to determine what affects the finished product. Her fused glass art ranges from jewelry pieces to plates and masks created by slumping the glass over a mold. The fusing process requires cleaning all the debris from saw marks or grinding. As well, stress fractures can occur if the glass does not cool slowly enough. Bubbles can form when air is trapped between layers — controlled bubbles are formed on purpose for a specific effect; others occurring inadvertently may or may not enhance the piece.

Dichroic glass is made with ultra-thin crystalline layers of metal oxides,

enhancing reflections through various wavelengths of light. “I sell a lot of jewelry and even glass plates,” Theresa commented. “Tac firing simply fuses the glass, but full firing produces a smooth finish,” she said of various pieces.

Theresa has never sold a painting, although she would like to. “I’m still a fledgling artist; it takes being known as an established artist to sell paintings,” she explained. Some of her paintings and photos, with the signature “Kudra” on them, were displayed at City Hall during the month of June. Such a display gains her name recognition, which she hopes will interest more people in her art.

“Kudra is a character in Tom Robbins novel *Jitterbug Perfume*. I identified with her fight against an imposed lifestyle. Having met the god, Pan, she wanted to define her own life — one

**ARTS
NOW**

that was not predestined. So when I started doing art, I signed my work with the name Kudra,” Theresa commented.

“Although I grew up in Cedar Hill, raised my children here and worked here for 11 years, a lot of people don’t know I am an artist. It was almost as if



Life is a Rainbow of Chaos painted by Theresa Brooks.

they think I should [wear] a badge or some kind of ID indicating I am an artist. That doesn’t happen anywhere else I display my art,” Theresa explained.

Her move into the field of art began with membership in a group called The Enclave. “We started out with movies, but we became more artistic and creative as we read Julia Cameron’s book *The Artist’s Way*. We challenged each other with different mediums and prompts, such as the quote, ‘Life is a rainbow of chaos.’ I painted a canvas and attached glass and beads to the canvas to create ‘chaos.’ I wouldn’t say it was good, but it was pretty freeing,” she admitted.

While creating, she often paints over or removes paint, adjusting the color range until she is happy with it. “Occasionally, I wake with a vision in my head that I try to execute,” Theresa reflected. “My emotions at the time

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always come out in my paintings.” Her husband is always trying to make sense out of her abstract art. “In my ‘Isolation’ series, you can see that I was feeling lonely at the time. They reflect how people stay isolated from one another. My husband calls them my Parcheesi figures,” she mused. “Abstract



art allows people to see what they can in the picture. Sometimes people are frustrated because the title doesn’t reflect what they see.”

As part of the Visual Artists of Cedar Hill (VACH), Theresa gives a different perspective of what can be done. “You don’t always have to follow the rules,” she explained. “I have probably tried everything there is to try. But I want to incorporate glass and metal (rusty) into more of my works. My attitude comes through my hands into whatever I do. That’s probably why I have a hard time maintaining a pattern when I’m knitting,” she laughed. For Theresa, art is not a hobby.

A display is a good venue for those who like to create art but are unfamiliar with the business of selling it. “I give away a lot of pieces — swapping among friends. My husband is very supportive. He let all his sales reps know I was the featured artist on the VACH Web site,” Theresa said.

Theresa is currently working with Caroline Shaw Ometz, in a life drawing class where Caroline teaches the technical side of drawing and how to control a medium through working with charcoals. “The short strokes, as opposed to continuous lines, allow for better perspective and a less rigid look,” said this developing artist. **ARTS NOW**

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Around Town **NOW**



Frances Boyette, president of the Cedar Hill Chamber of Commerce, top left, visited with Troy Ketchen of Budget Yellow Pages. Three area children, top center, attended the Taste of Cedar Hill with their parents. The Northwood University support staff, top right from left, are Roy Wilson, Leslie Dailey, Larry Balagna, Angela Mosley and Dr. Kevin Fegan. Trios Grill, middle left, celebrated their grand opening with a ribbon cutting held by the Cedar Hill Chamber of Commerce. Another ribbon cutting was held, middle right, at Legacy of Cedar Hill Apartments Phase III. Several individuals went home happy, bottom left, after winning door prizes at the recent Chamber Night Out event.

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Sports
NOW

Something for Everyone

— By Mary Pritchard

On the bulletin board near the reception desk at the Cedar Hill Recreation Center is a large poster advertising Alexander's School of Acrobatics. Alexander Douglas of Cedar Hill teaches these classes three days a week. "Stunt (or acrobatic) gymnastics is gymnastics performed on the floor and on each other," Alexander said, "whereas Olympic-style, artistic gymnastics is performed on bars and other equipment."

"Stunt gymnastics is a team sport," Alexander continued, "so it has the advantage of helping kids learn to work together and to get along." This, in turn, helps prepare the young people for functioning well in the adult world.

Alexander got his start in artistic gymnastics as a high school student in Danville, California, where he grew up. After graduation, and while attending college in Seattle, Washington, Alexander was introduced to stunt gymnastics when he performed in various theatrical venues including The Floating World Circus. It was there that Alexander saw the potential in stunt gymnastics.

In 1984, Alexander went to New Jersey. While coaching acrobatics there, he saw Igor Ashkinazi, a Russian Jewish immigrant who had performed with the Moscow Circus, in his appearance



Alexander helps Alexa Jackson practice a stunt.



John Mark Moran and Seth Michael Moran learn to depend on their teammates as they perform stunts like this one.

on The Mike Douglas Show. Alexander called Igor, who was not interested in helping him then, but in 1985, when Igor started a new program in New Orleans, "He told me to come on down," Alexander related.

Igor trained Alexander as part of an elite, mixed pair in sports acrobatics for the 1986 Nationals, where Alexander was a silver medalist on the regional level. Igor, who had become a Jewish Christian, led Alexander to Christianity. In order to get his religious bearings, Alexander quit training and came to Dallas in 1990. "I attended Christ For The Nations Institute and got a degree in practical theology," he said.

Another life change occurred in 1992, when Alexander was invited to a Fourth of July picnic, where he met Linda Jerritts. They were married the next year and have made Cedar Hill their home.

Alexander decided that gymnastics was a more appropriate ministry for him, rather than the pulpit. "My goal was to be in theater acrobatics, but my priorities changed. The most important thing to me now is the kids," Alexander explained. "They are the next generation

of leaders. It is the responsibility of this generation to prepare the next one."

When asked to define success, Alexander said, "There is success in training to win and to make money; but for me, success is in helping kids to become healthy, wholesome, disciplined adults — ones who can get ahold of their destiny."

"The gymnastics industry has had some bad press — some of it legitimate," he explained. "Some coaches were abusive, especially in the 1980s, when they were more interested in what they could get out of it. Many more coaches understand the import of the sport on families. Indirectly, I am a servant to the parents. I am helping both [children and parents] to realistically understand what kids are capable of and keep their talents in perspective. Gymnastics is not a measure of their worth," Alexander continued. "I encourage kids to try different sports — one at a time — to get a sense of where their talents lie, then commit to that sport."

When asked what he expected of his students, Alexander said, "I expect faithfulness to the time they sign up for.

Sports NOW

Stunt gymnastics depends on partners showing up. I ask for a one-year commitment for competition gymnastics students. If kids can learn to commit, they are more likely to finish college or stay married. If you quit, you cannot succeed," he stated. "I'm always trying to get kids to see the positive."

Alexander began coaching with Trevino's in 1995, and left there in 2006 to come to the Cedar Hill Recreation Center. At Trevino's, he coached the first competition acrobatic team in Texas. "Carly Patterson's coach, Evgeny Marchenko, was a world-champion, mixed pair gymnast in Russia before he coached artistic gymnastics in the U.S.A.," Alexander said. "Now, a former student of mine, Brandy Lewis, coaches an acrobatic gymnastic team in a group overseen by Evgeny.

The enthusiasm of Alexander's bright-faced, young students testifies to his rapport with them. Kriscian Summers, 10, said, "Our mother asked my brother and I if we wanted to take a break for summer from gymnastics, but we said no, because we love it so much." Joshua Lyons, 11, and his 13-year-old brother, Daniel, of Grand Prairie, left the program they were in to come to Cedar Hill. "This program teaches more acrobatics and stunts," Joshua enthused. "It is more of what we had hoped for in gymnastics."

Sisters Alexa, 10, and Christa Jackson, 6, of Glenn Heights, said they started gymnastics during the summer and will probably continue into the fall. "I've learned stunts I can do with Christa at home," Alexa said. Linda Caster, mother of students Jade and Grace, is happy that Alexander offers a homeschool class that meets on Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. "I like doing this in the daytime, when it is not as crowded," she said. Other students include cheerleaders wanting to improve their skills. It seems that Alexander's classes offer something for everyone. **NOW**

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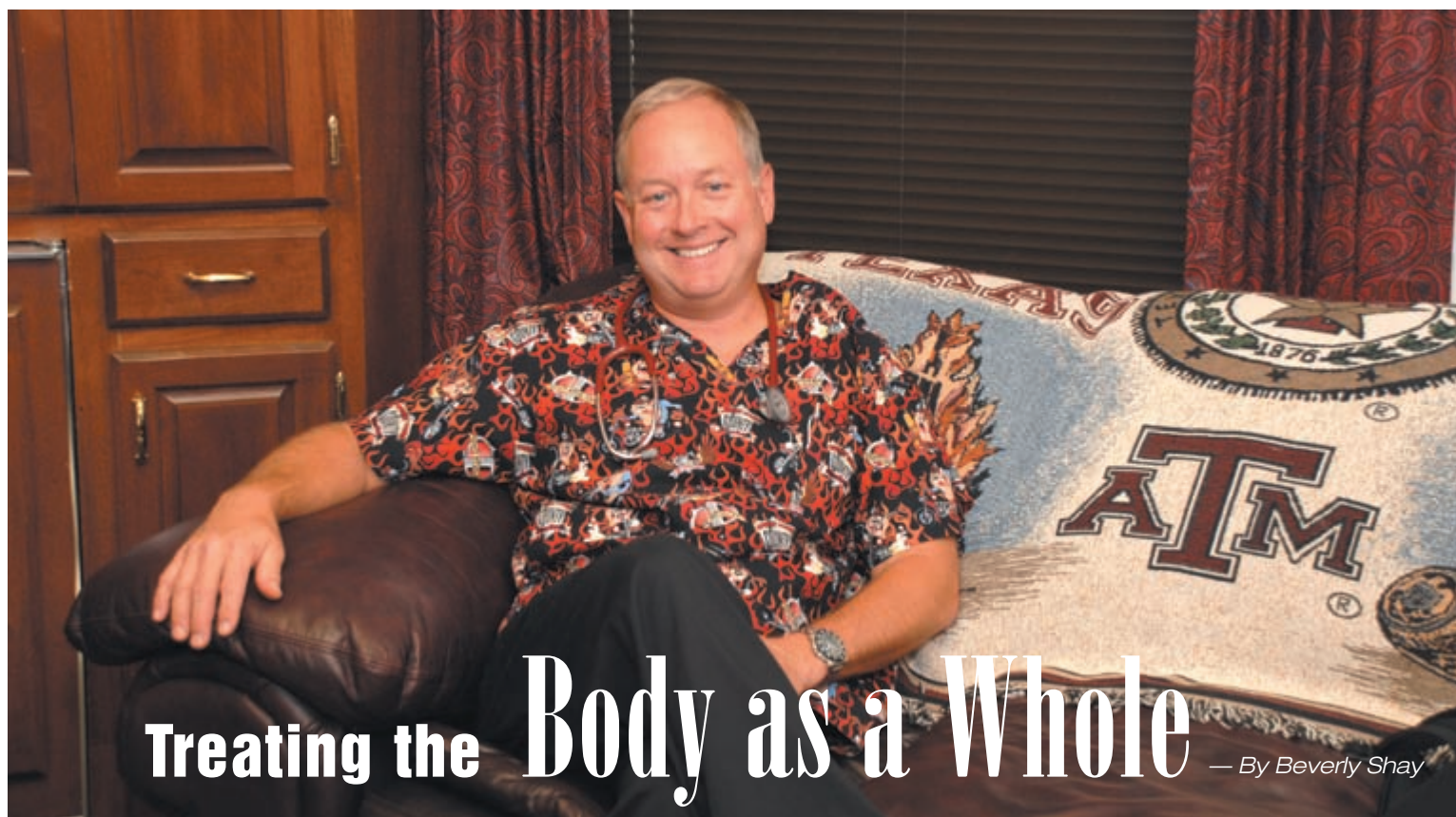
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Treating the Body as a Whole

— By Beverly Shay

Dr. Michael D. Williams, known to most as Dr. Mike, has been called “Doc” since high school, in reference to his Dr. Doolittle-like care of animals. “My parents always planned for me to be a doctor, naming me Michael David Williams, so my initials would be M. D. Williams, M.D. I sort of blew that by becoming a D.O. [doctor of osteopathic medicine] instead of an M.D. [doctor of medicine],” the good doc quipped.

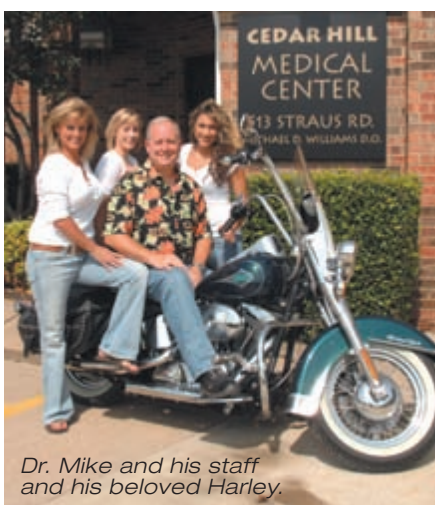
“Although my parents pushed me toward medicine, I went through five majors before settling into premed: biology, computer science, microbiology, radio/TV and pre-dental. I am just interested in so many things,” he admitted. His great-grandfather was a doctor of medicine, having received his degree from the University of Georgia College of Eclectic Medicine. Eclectic medicine involved whatever would benefit the patient in alignment with nature. Herbal remedies were used in opposition to the common medical practices of that time (late 1700s – early 1800s) of bloodletting, purging and use of mercurials.

“Initially, my interest in osteopathic medicine came as I worked as an EMT in the ER the summer before my junior

year of college. I worked with both M.D.s and D.O.s and the D.O.s were just more friendly and personable with their patients. They seemed to care more about the person than the illness. That lined up with what I felt,” said Dr. Mike of his decision to be a D.O.

“The more I studied osteopathic medicine, the more I realized it was based on the philosophy of Hippocrates: the treatment of the body and mind as a whole. That was and is what I want to do,” stated Dr. Mike. The word osteopathy comes from two Greek words: *osteon* meaning “bone” and *pathos* meaning “to suffer.” The term was coined by a Dr. Still, who recognized the importance of a properly functioning musculoskeletal system to the total well-being of an individual.

Disruption in the musculoskeletal system can lead to illness, thus the physical integrity of the whole body is one of the most important factors in both health and disease. Osteopathy looks for a chain of events that has altered the



Dr. Mike and his staff and his beloved Harley.

Business NOW

relationship between structure and function, and then works with the self-healing capacity of the body.

"I believe what Hippocrates taught about physicians being men of honor," commented Dr. Mike. "So I implement his philosophy in my practice. I listen

This man does not know the meaning of "I can't."

a lot, because worries play out in the body in the form of illness." Hippocrates believed that patients who were kept in good spirits heal faster. He also believed in stewarding the health of the body through moderate intake of food, moderate exercise and cleanliness.

"One of the aspects I like most about my practice is we are all family. I have watched kids grow up and some of them bring in their kids to see me now. If one of my patients can't make it into the office, I'll go to their home. They're family, and when people are hurting, they need help," he firmly stated.

This man does not know the meaning of "I can't." His electrician, carpentry and plumbing skills have come in handy as he renovated, rewired and painted the office he moved into in 1999. When not doctoring, he flies, rides motorcycles, scuba dives and plans on skydiving before the year is out. Perhaps this zest for life and adventurous streak comes naturally to this doctor with ancestors like Frank and Jesse James and the Sicilian mafia. He is definitely *not* boring! He has an infectious sense of life that has endued him with an overwhelming interest in serving people.

Dr. Mike's office is located at 513 Straus, suite A. Office hours are Monday, Wednesday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Tuesday 9 a.m. - noon. Call Dr. Williams at (972) 299-6045. **NOW**

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Education
NOW

Money + Innovative Ideas = A Huge Difference

— By Beverly Shay

Members of the Education Foundation pose before taking the Prize Patrol bus to CHISD schools to award grants.

Have you ever thought, “If only I had some money, I could make a difference”? Many teachers and schools have such thoughts as they determine to enhance their students’ learning experiences. “Students are the future of our schools and our world,” stated Mary White, current president of the Education Foundation. In August 2002, 45 school and community representatives met to discuss the concept of creating an education foundation for the Cedar Hill Independent School District (CHISD). They formed an organizing committee, applied for 501(c) (3) nonprofit status and established a board of 12 – 15 people consisting of parents, local business people and volunteers.

Due to the extensive efforts and wise input of many people, combined with the skillful advice and invaluable experience of Elaine Free, an education foundation consultant and former school administrator, they were under way. Their goal was to provide individual grants of up to \$1,000 to teachers and \$3,000 to schools with creative and innovative teaching ideas. These ideas are researched, developed and presented to the school principal. Following approval, the teacher or school follows strict requirements to present their ideas in a well-written grant application.

The next step is a “blind” assessment, meaning the names of the teacher and the school are removed from the application so as to dissuade any favoritism or accusation of such. Grant review committee members read through each application according to a pre-determined rubric and score the applications.

The committee then provides the board with their recommendations. No grant has ever been refused up to this point due to lack of funds; some have been returned to the schools or teachers along with recommendations and

assistance to rewrite it in a manner that will bring not only the grant application, but the idea and program, up to a standard that will truly improve the education proffered.

While all this can be intimidating, many involved in the foundation have worked tirelessly to make this all work. “Linda Patton has been such an asset to Cedar Hill in so many ways. Her passion to support the school district is near legendary. Linda served as the first executive director from January 2005 - June 2007. Her

knowledge of everyone in Cedar Hill and her ability to bring the foundation into the public eye is one reason for the success we are now enjoying,” explained Mary.

September is the month for the main fundraiser for the foundation: the annual gala/auction. This year’s gala theme is “Under the Tuscon Moon.” It will be a time of celebrating



Education **NOW**

the successes of the past year and raising funds for the next year, celebrating the teachers and schools, celebrating learning and growth — all in an atmosphere of fun and festivity with that rare opportunity to dress up!

“One of the best parts of all this work is being part of the Prize Patrol,” enthused Teril Woodward, current foundation executive director. “We make up these oversized checks — 2' x 12" — with the teacher/school's name as payee and the grant listed on the

**“Students are
the future of our
schools and
our world.”**

memo line. Lots of us from the foundation, board members and friends, administration team and other representatives, get on our bus with its 10-foot Prize Patrol banner, carrying balloons and noisemakers and drive out to the schools. The principals know we are coming, but they don't know which grant or which teacher will be awarded. It's great fun!” Teril said.

Mary went on to tell how some teachers laugh and others cry when the checks are presented in front of their students. Everyone is so excited. “It is such a great way to encourage the teachers and students that learning is a worthwhile adventure. Our teachers in Cedar Hill are all so committed to students and education; it is a great privilege to help them accomplish their goals,” said Mary of the grants that are awarded K-12.

The over \$88,000 of grant funding distributed during the foundation's four-year existence has covered the gamut of educational experiences: art, science/math, even credit recovery for students needing to replace missing

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Linda Patton (second from the right) and the Prize Patrol at work.

credits to get back on track. The grants enable students, teachers and principals to move on to the next step of learning, engaging the students' attention and interest, not only in various subjects, but in the art of learning itself.

Sometimes, such as in a recent Carolyn Hunt Memorial Grant, the end result is more publicly demonstrated. Students, acting as docents, hosted an exhibit of the artists they had studied and art they had created. Many of the same people who awarded the grant came to appreciate the hard work students and teachers implemented through the innovative study made possible by the grant. By the end of the year, grant awardees submit a report delineating use of funds, whether they met their objectives and reporting what both teachers and students have learned.

Celebration seems to be a key element for the education foundation, whether raising money, dispersing funds or rejoicing in seeing those funds at work. "Anything we can do to honor them [the teachers] and make their job easier, we are delighted to do," Mary summed up.

For more information about the Education Foundation or the gala call Teril at (972) 291-1581, ext. 4047 or visit their Web site at http://www.chisd.com/CH_foundation/index.htm, or call Teril at (972) 291-1581, ext. 4047. **NOW**

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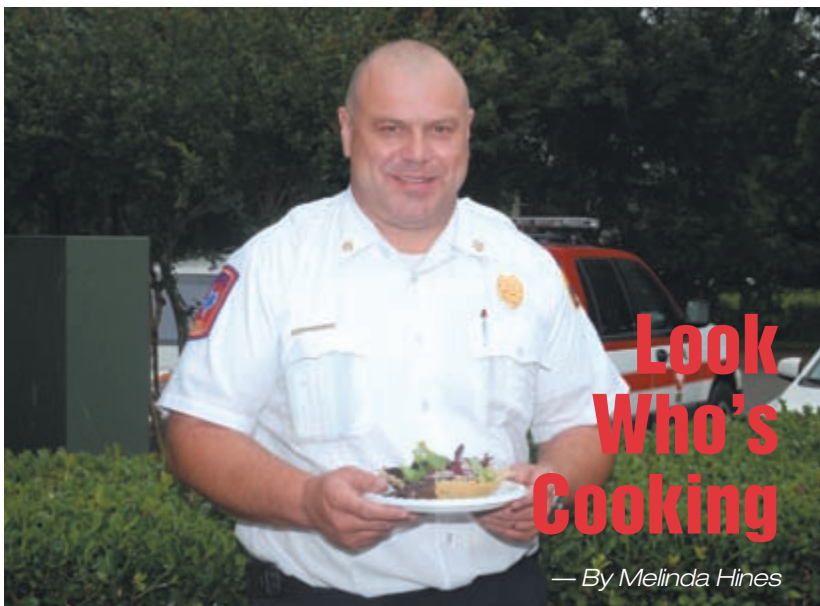


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Look Who's Cooking

— By Melinda Hines

IN THE KITCHEN WITH RANDY JORDAN

Randy Jordan, Cedar Hill Fire Marshal, first learned to cook while growing up in a household filled with influential women, but it was not until after he married that he honed his culinary skills. “My wife, Angela, and I married when we were young,” he said. “We kind of learned how to cook together.”

Cooking for his family whenever he can is something that gives Randy tremendous pleasure, but his greatest influence is probably the guys at the station. “I try to cook cheap at the station,” he said, “because the firefighters all chip in to buy the ingredients. That’s the main reason I have several semi-homemade dishes.” Randy is particularly fond of gumbo and TexMex, and he takes pride in preparing most meals without recipes. **NOW**

MY GUMBO

1 large whole chicken
1/2 cup cooking oil
1/2 cup plus 1Tbsp. flour
1 large diced onion
1 medium diced bell pepper
2 stalks of celery, diced
1 bundle of green onions, diced
1 16-oz. pkg. frozen okra
2 16-oz. cans stewed tomatoes
1 10-oz. can of Ro-Tel tomatoes
1 pkg. smoked sausage, thinly cut
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1 Tbsp. Cajun seasoning
3 Tbsp. parsley flakes
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
Tabasco to taste
1 lb. shrimp, shelled and cooked

Boil chicken. Once chicken is cooked, remove from pot and reserve broth. Pour oil in another pan and heat. Add chicken and flour and stir. Heat on a higher heat and stir constantly for about 15 minutes or until copper in color. Pour the broth of the chicken you boiled into the roux carefully, then add everything else but the shrimp. Cook for an hour or so or until the pepper and onion are tender. Let simmer and add shrimp about 15 minutes prior to eating. *I serve it on a bed of rice with French bread on the side.*

SEMI-HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE CAKE

1 box cake mix
1 16-oz. carton of heavy whipping cream
1 box of Jell-O chocolate instant pudding
1 small tub of your favorite frosting
1 small chocolate bar

Make cake as directed in two round pans and cool on a cake rack. When cake has cooled, slice horizontally with a bread knife so you will have four round cakes. In a mixing bowl, start whipping the

whip cream and slowly add the pudding mix. Be careful because this will set up quickly. Layer cake, pudding, cake, pudding, cake, pudding and cake, then cover with frosting. Lastly, grate chocolate from the bar over the top. *It's quick and easy and looks like you went to a lot of work. You can also play with different flavors like lemon.*

POTATO SALAD

1 lb. bacon
1 bundle green onions
2 - 3 lbs. new or red potatoes
3 - 4 heaping spoonsful Miracle Whip
salt and pepper to taste

Cut bacon into small pieces, cook and drain. Dice 4 - 5 onions (or as many as you prefer). Wash potatoes and cut into 1/2 - to 1-inch pieces then boil until tender and drain. Mix in Miracle Whip, onions and bacon. Salt and pepper to taste.

HEAP BISCUIT CAKE

2 sticks of butter
1 cup sugar
1 Tbsp. cinnamon
1 cup nuts, optional
3 cans biscuit dough

Prepare a Bundt pan by oiling or spraying it. Melt a stick of butter in a bowl and place sugar and cinnamon in a separate bowl. Place a few nuts in the bottom of the Bundt pan. Take one can of biscuits and stretch each biscuit to the point of breaking. Dip them in the butter, and then in the sugar mixture, and layer in the bottom of the pan. (One can of biscuits will usually make one layer.) Sprinkle nuts on top of dough and begin the next layer repeating what was done on the first. After the third layer, leave off the nuts. Cook in a preheated 350 F oven for 25 minutes. When it comes out of the oven, place plate on bottom and flip. Be careful

as the butter and sugar will be melted and some will run out.

CHICKEN SCALOPPINI

I love Macaroni Grill's chicken scaloppini and this is my spin-off of it.

2 - 3 chicken breasts
1/2 stick of butter
1 cup sliced mushrooms
1 15-oz. can artichoke hearts
2 Tbsp. capers
2 - 3 slices prosciutto ham
1 8-oz. container heavy whipping cream
1 8-oz. pkg. Parmesan cheese
angel hair pasta,
cooked according to package directions

Place chicken breast between two layers of plastic wrap and pound until thickness is consistent. Melt 1/2 stick of butter in skillet and cook chicken until done. Add mushrooms, artichoke hearts, capers and prosciutto; cook until mushrooms are tender. Add whipping cream and 2/3 of the cheese, stirring and deglazing the pan. Serve over angel hair pasta and top with cheese.

SEMI-HOMEMADE BLACK FORREST CAKE

2 pkgs. brownie mix
1 21-oz. can cherry pie filling
1 8-oz. container Cool Whip

Cook the brownies in two round cake pans and cool. Place 3/4 of the cherry pie filling between the brownies then frost with Cool Whip. Drizzle the remaining pie filling on top and refrigerate.

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Save Early, Often and Wisely for College

It is that time of year when college students across the country reach for their backpacks and head back to campus — while their parents reach for their checkbooks and head for the Tylenol. If your children are still quite young, though, you can take steps now to reduce the headaches that may come from those big college bills.

Just how expensive is it to send a child through college these days? It is pretty expensive. In fact, it costs more than \$16,000 for one year at a four-year public college or university, according to the College Board. College costs have been rising considerably faster than the general rate of inflation, so the high costs of higher education are, in all likelihood, only going to get higher.

Of course, you may not have to foot your child's college bills all by yourself.

Scholarships and loans are available, and many students work part-time jobs, both during school and on summer vacations. Yet, you may need, or want, to help pay for a sizable percentage of college expenses. To meet this obligation, you need to save early, save often and use the right savings vehicles. Fortunately, you have some attractive options. Here are some of the most popular ones:

- **Coverdell Education Savings Account**

Depending on your income level, you can contribute up to \$2,000 annually to a Coverdell Education Savings Account (ESA). Your Coverdell earnings and withdrawals will be tax free, provided you use the money for qualified education expenses. (Any non-education withdrawals from a Coverdell ESA may be subject to a 10 percent penalty.) You can place your contributions to a Coverdell ESA into virtually any investment you choose — stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit, etc.

- **Section 529 Savings Plan**

In a Section 529 savings plan, you put money in specific investments, managed by an investment professional. Contribution limits are quite high — more than \$200,000 per beneficiary in many state plans, although special gifting provisions may apply. All withdrawals will be free from federal income taxes, as long as the money is used for a qualified college or

graduate school expense of your child or grandchild. This tax benefit was scheduled to expire in 2010, but it was made permanent by one of the provisions in the Pension Protection Act of 2006. Withdrawals for expenses other than qualified education expenditures may be subject to federal, state and penalty taxes. (Also, Section 529 distributions will appear as income on the child's tax return, which could affect financial aid calculations.) Contributions are tax deductible in certain states for residents who participate in their own state's plan.

- **Permanent Insurance**

If you own some type of "permanent" insurance policy, such as whole life or universal life, you will have a chance to build cash value. Your earnings have the potential to grow on a tax-deferred basis, and you can take policy loans for virtually any reason you choose — including paying for college. Keep in mind, though, that if you do not fully repay the loan, your policy may lapse, and if you pass away before repaying the loan, the total amount owed, including interest, will be subtracted from the death benefit.

Before making any of these moves, please consult with your tax and financial advisors. But do not wait too long — your children may be young now, but time flies. **NOW**

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More Than a Migraine — What Headaches Can Tell Us!

— By Dr. Lesa Ansell

You may be among the 28 million Americans who suffer from migraine headaches. Chances are if you are in the group, you are a female, as women are three times more likely to get migraines than men. These headaches are classified as a type of vascular headache.

Vascular headaches are those involving the blood vessels. Common migraines are caused by an initial constriction, then dilation of these vessels, most commonly the temporal artery. This dilation causes a stretching of the nerves that coil around it, which in turn, leads to a release of chemicals that cause inflammation and pain. This process commonly activates the sympathetic nervous system as well.

The sympathetic nervous system is the part of the nervous system responsible for the “fight or flight” response caused by stress. When this

system is activated, it causes increased sympathetic nervous activity in the intestine, causing nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. It also causes delayed emptying of the stomach contents into the small intestine, preventing oral medications from being absorbed and making the treatment more difficult.

Treatment is usually aimed at abating the symptoms associated with migraines. Other symptoms include: facial pallor, cold hands and feet and sensitivity to light and sound. The pain is generally on one side, but will change from side to side depending on the episode.

A typical episode will last between four to 72 hours. Some attacks are preceded by a premonitory warning that can last hours to days. These



symptoms include: sleepiness, irritability, fatigue, depression or euphoria, yawning and cravings for sweet or salty foods.

Over-the-counter medications are frequently of little use due to their lack of absorption. Prescription medications frequently have the same result. Alternative treatments have shown good results in both treatment and prevention of migraines. These include massage, acupuncture, aromatherapy and chiropractic manipulation.

With a few treatments, the migraines and their associated symptoms can often be resolved for good. A few words of caution though; headaches that consistently occur on one side must be evaluated further. These can be considered possibly pathologic, such as in the case of a brain tumor. As always, check with your doctor before beginning any drug therapies, even over-the-counter ones. **NOW**

Dr. Lesa Ansell is the CEO of Pro-Adjuster Chiropractic Clinic and is a member of the Texas 4 Disaster Medical Team under the direction of the Department of Homeland Security.

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September 2007 Community Calendar

First Tuesdays

Readers on the Hill book club — CH library: 7 p.m. (972) 291-7323.

First and Third Tuesdays

Training Academy for Dental Assistants' free informational session: 5:30 p.m. (972) 842-2999.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Cedar Hill Lions — Good Shepherd Church, 915 Old Straus Rd.: noon - 1 p.m. (972) 291-0651.

Second Tuesday

The Dallas Area Writers Group — CH Library. Visit dallaswriters.org.

Every Wednesday

Rotary Club of Cedar Hill — CH Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd.: 7 - 8 a.m.

Every Wednesday and Friday

Preschool story time — CH Library: 10 - 11:45 a.m.

Second and Fourth Fridays

Fellowship of Christian Singles' game/movie night open to all — First United Methodist Church, 127 Roberts St.: 7 p.m. (972) 291-1711 or visit cedarhillumc.org.

Every Third Saturday

Cedar Hill Star Party — J. W. Williams Park, 1605 High Pointe Ln.: sunset - midnight. (972) 800-6000 or visit tasoberserving.org.

September 1

"Get to Know the Trees" — CH State Park, 2 - 3 p.m. Learn to identify area trees by looking at leaves, branches and bark.

Learn some of the stories behind the trees as well. Park entrance fee: \$5.00/adult, free/children 12 and under. (972) 291-5940.

"Reptiles – Our Scaly Skinned Friends" — CH State Park, 7 - 8 p.m. Hear about area reptiles; look and feel some live ones, too. Park entrance fee: \$5.00/adult, free/children 12 and under. (972) 291-5940.

September 4

CH Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors' Lunch — Veracruz Café, 11:30 a.m.

September 10

Neighborhood Advisory Board — City Hall Conference Room: 6:15 p.m. Patty Bushart (972) 291-5100, ext. 1084.

September 11 and 25

City Council Meeting — City Hall Council Chamber: 7 p.m.

September 12 and 26

Business on the Hill — CH Chamber: 7:30 a.m. (972) 291-7817.

September 13

Chamber Night Out — ASAP Mail & Pack, 420 E. Pleasant Run Rd. #346: 5:30 - 7 p.m. Catering by Red Robin. (972) 291-7817.

September 15

"Wildlife Tracking" — CH State Park, 10 - 11:30 a.m. Dwight Wilson who has studied under some of the best trackers in the United States, will enthusiastically teach a variety of ways to track wildlife; learn how to identify tracks and other animal signs. Park entrance fee: \$5.00/adult, free/children 12 and under. (972) 291-5940.

September 18

BSW Quarterly Luncheon — MCM Grand Hotel Fundome, 1515 N. I-35E, DeSoto: 11:30 a.m. Speaker: Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert.

September 20

Ribbon Cutting — Trinity Church, 1231 E. Pleasant Run Rd.: 11:30 a.m.

September 22

Art in the Park — CH Pioneer Park, 600 Cedar: 12:30 - 5 p.m. Barbara Bailey, VACH (972) 291-8056.

"Penn Farm Tour" — CH State Park, 2 - 3:30 p.m. Learn what life on the farm was like from the 1850s - 1950s. Park entrance fee: \$5.00/adult, free/children 12 and under. (972) 291-5940.

Cinema on the Square — CH Council Chamber: 2 p.m. *An Affair to Remember* and 5 p.m. *The Big Show*.

"Fighting Wildland Fires" at CH State Park — 7 - 8 p.m. Join Sam Franconi as he shares his experiences as a forest firefighter for California and Oregon and how wildland fires are fought. Park entrance fee: \$5.00/adult, free/children 12 and under. (972) 291-5940.

September 24

Education Council — CH Chamber: 4:30 p.m.

Main Street Board — City Hall Conference Room: 6 p.m. Patty Bushart (972) 291-5100, ext. 1084.

September 29

CHISD Education Foundation Gala, Ruth Jackson Center, 3113 S. Carrier Pkwy., Grand Prairie: 7 p.m. Teril Woodward (972) 291-1581.

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