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October 2008

**From Boys
to Men**

**Strongly
Rooted**

**Modern Day
Drama**

**Noticed and
Appreciated**

At Home With

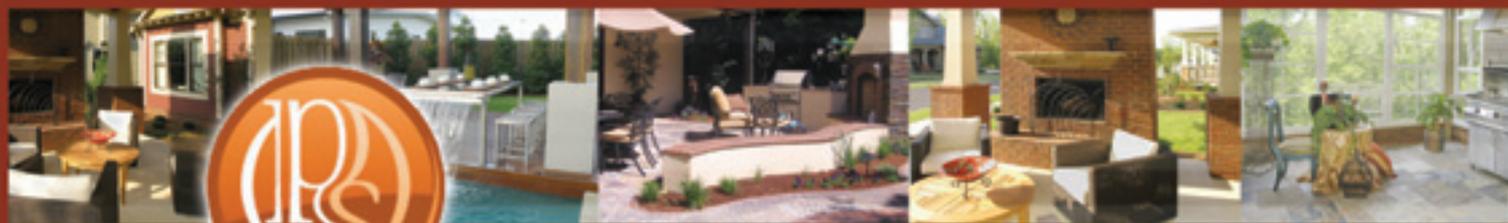
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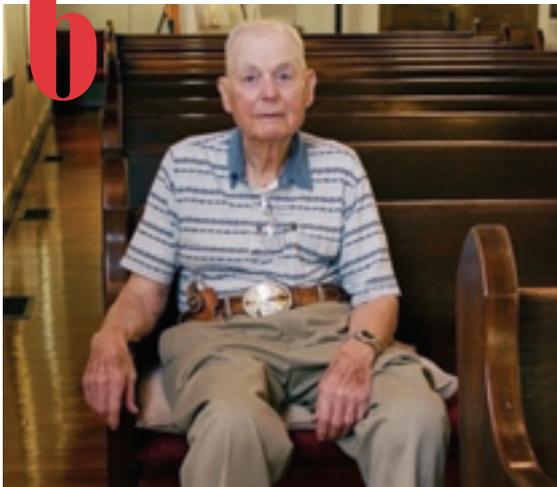
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Bethel United Methodist
Church celebrated its 155th
anniversary this year.*

Photo by Natalie Busch.

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Waxahachie
NOW
The Community Magazine
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the Surrounding Area
MAGAZINE

Editor's Note

Hello, Waxahachie,

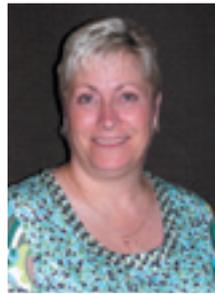
The change in temperature, as well as the change of colors to orange, brown and gold, confirms autumn has arrived. The same squirrels that were burying nuts a few months ago, are now digging them up for the cold, winter days ahead.

October is also the time a community comes together to celebrate life after breast cancer. The fourth annual Dinah Weable Breast Cancer Survivors Event will be held on October 18 at the First United Methodist Church. The purpose behind this gathering is to give all local survivors the opportunity to share their stories with one another. It is also the perfect time for these same individuals to celebrate another season in their lives — the season of survival.

For those interested in attending the luncheon, call (972) 938-3059. I know from experience, they will welcome your call.

Sandra McIntosh
WaxahachieNOW Editor

P.S. Please submit your feature ideas to smcintosh-nowmag@sbcglobal.net.





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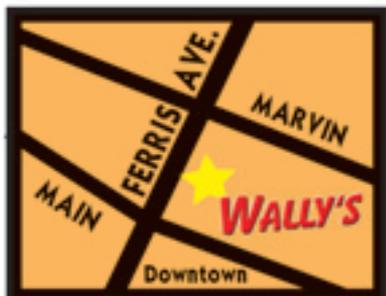
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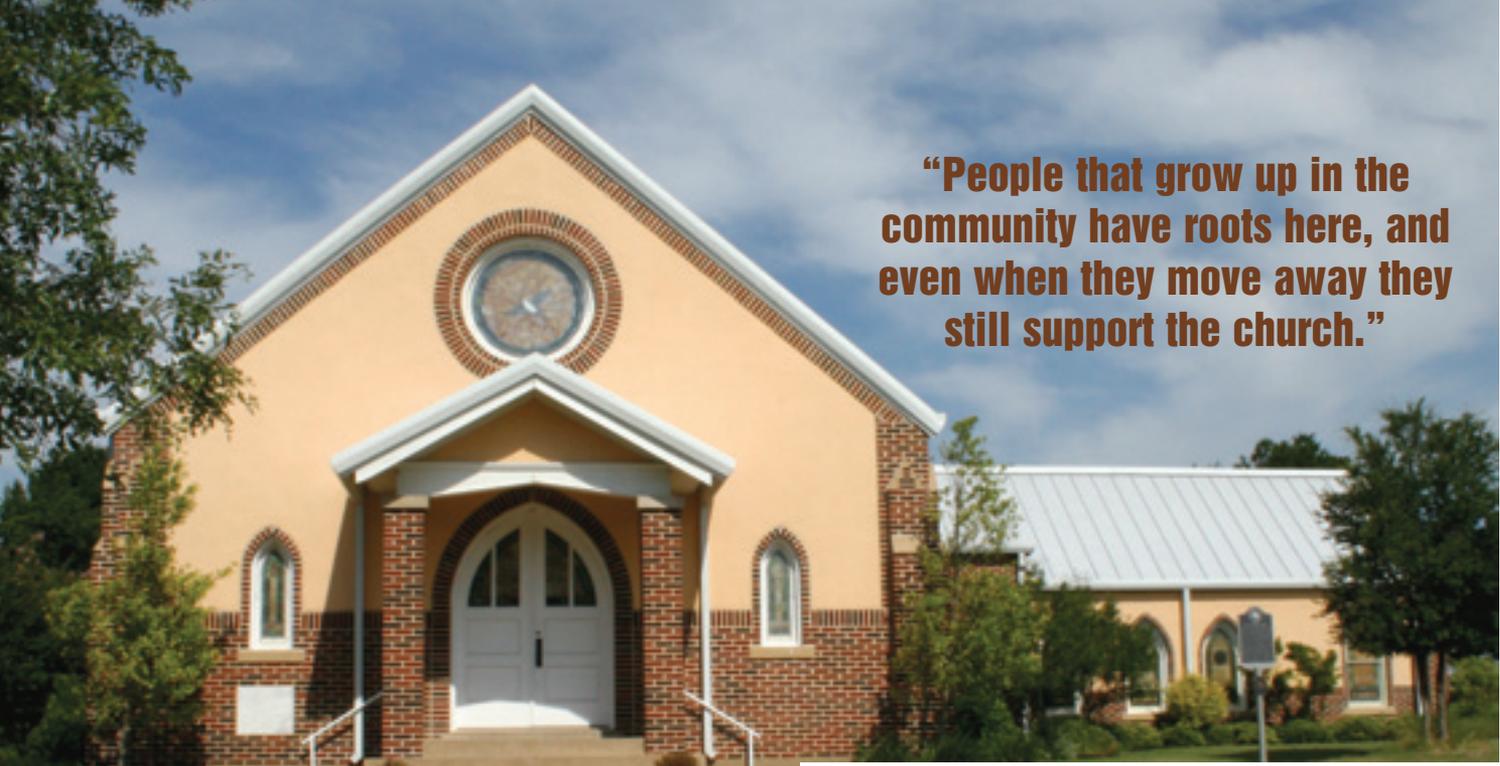
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“People that grow up in the community have roots here, and even when they move away they still support the church.”

Strongly Rooted

— By Katrina D. McNair

His words take you back to the days of church picnics held by a local pond, where a young man might court a young girl over a sweet slice of watermelon. They recall the days of church bazaars, which featured a variety of wares, like colorful quilts and homemade desserts. For Harry Hitt, previous generations and, he hopes, generations to come, the church which has stood the test of time and become a central part of their lives is Bethel United Methodist Church (Bethel UMC) near Waxahachie.

The church was founded in the summer of 1853, when several pioneer families in the area felt they should establish a place of worship for themselves. Over the years, various buildings have been erected, destroyed and rebuilt, all on the faith and staying power of steadfast members. Government projects and even the bright lights of Hollywood have influenced the ebb and flow of the church and put its beautiful buildings at center stage. Through it all, the church has remained and this year celebrated its 155th anniversary.

Born and reared about eight miles outside of Waxahachie off FM 876, Harry is a lifelong member of Bethel United Methodist Church. At 87 years of age, his personal perspective on the growth, challenges and joys that the church has endured and experienced is invaluable. “When I was small, we lived, I



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guess, a mile from the church. As long as I can remember, I went to church there," Harry said. Like any child, his mind would wander during services, but his family's guidance kept him in line. "They instilled in me that [going to church] was the thing you needed to do," he added.

As he grew up, Harry was present for the establishment of several church traditions, which are carried on to this day, including their popular Lord's Acre Sale. The Lord's Acre Sale is an annual fundraising event. The program



Avon Butler with sons Billy, Bobby, Tony and Joe — one of the first families to contribute an acre of cotton crop to the Lord's Acre in 1952.

began under the leadership of the Reverend James H. Ellison, in 1952. The funds raised from the first Lord's Acre Sale in the state of Texas were used to move the parsonage, located two miles from the church, to its present location on the church grounds.

The parsonage was also redecorated and landscaped. A section of a former schoolhouse built just before the Civil War was also purchased and moved to the church property, where it underwent a full renovation. A modern kitchen and restroom facility were added for community use. In December of 1952, the Reverend L. S. Williams dedicated this building as the church's fellowship hall.

Harry recalls the first Lord's Acre Sale with fondness. "We'd never had or seen anything like that before. Everybody was just having a big time. People got to bidding against one another 'cause it's all auction," he said. "The members



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bring something to sell, either of their creation, farm products or something that they've invested in. Cakes, pies and a lot of them make quilts." Harry himself brings wares for sale, traveling to Golden, Texas, to pick up sweet potatoes for the festivities.

Bethel UMC, which traces its roots back several generations, has withstood the test of time; a walk around its grounds is a real-life Texas history lesson. In 1978, the Texas Historical Commission recognized the church's cemetery with a historical monument. Located nine miles southwest of Waxahachie on the banks of Bakers Branch, the cemetery has graves which date back to 1873, and even serves as the final resting place for two female slaves. In 1979, the Commission recognized the church as a historical structure and an official marker was placed at the church.

In 2001, the church began a very detailed process of applying for a Registered United Methodist Historic Site marker through the Commission on Archives and History within the Central Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. The process included a lengthy questionnaire, a written essay and photos, along with other supporting and background material. The application was approved in November of 2001, and the church officially dedicated the marker during its 150th anniversary weekend in 2003.

Its recognition as a historical landmark may or may not have influenced the church's unexpected visitors in 1983. That year, the grounds were used for several scenes in the movie *Places in the Heart*, which included a honky-tonk scene filmed in the church's tabernacle. Burial scenes were filmed in the cemetery and the closing scene, which depicted a worship service and communion, were filmed in the sanctuary. Dairy Queen also filmed a commercial on the property, as wells as portions of the TV show *An American Cowboy* with Charlie Pride. Most recently, shots of the church were seen on the television show *Walker, Texas Ranger* with actor Chuck Norris.

As a lifelong member, Harry has

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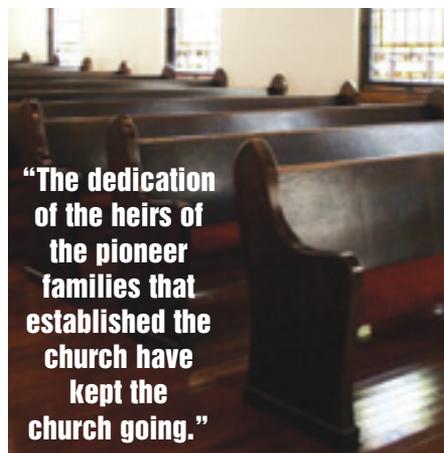
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seen changes in his community that directly influenced the church. One of the biggest was the announcement of the Super Conducting Super Collider in the late 1980s. During the planning phases of the failed project, much of the land, home to many church members, was bought and members moved away. Attendance dropped significantly and the church's own literature refers to this as a bleak time for the congregation. However, once the project was cancelled, Harry and the church saw an influx of young families who breathed new life into the community and church. "The Super Collider collapsed and all this land went back on the market," he explained. "Well, people are moving out there and building, and that's what they're looking for. They're looking for a place to worship."



Harry believes the church has withstood for over a century because of its strong founding roots. "The dedication of the heirs of the pioneer families that established the church have kept the church going," he said. "People that grow up in the community have roots here, and even when they move away they still support the church. That support, combined with the movement of new members into the church has held the church together to the present time."

As he speculated on the church's future, Harry's wish is very simple. "I'd like to see it carried on," he said. "I think there's a lot of use for country life, country style and people. I think it's the place to be. And I hope it carries on." **NOW**

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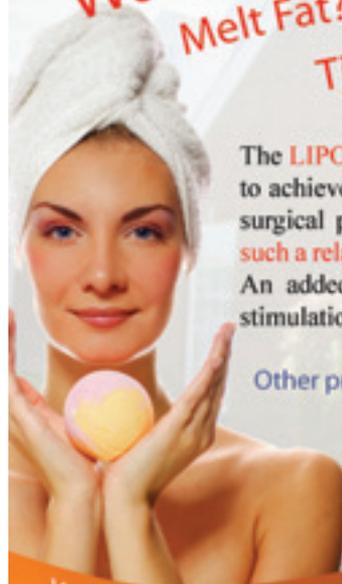
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At Home With
Mike and Tess Reed

Family Togetherness

— By Sandra McIntosh

Family, as defined in the dictionary, means a mother, a father and a child who coexist happily with one another. For Mike and Tess Reed, family is this and so much more. “We love to watch movies and cook as a family,” Mike explained. “We just love hanging out together as a group,” Tess added. “We enjoy each other’s company.”



The decision for the young family to move from Midlothian to Maypearl less than a year ago also had a great deal to do with the couple's three children — Maylian, Abrey and Brigden. Relocating to the country meant all the children would be attending one campus, while the six acres of undeveloped land allowed for the open space where they could safely flourish. "We currently have three dogs, three cats, seven chickens and five ducks," Mike laughed, as the dogs greeted visitors with loud barks and one of the cats meowed at the back window. "One day, we hope to also have a horse or two."

The couple modified the floor plans specific to a few of the family's needs. "We knew what we didn't want," Tess said, referring to problematic areas they left behind in their old home. The building process took 18 months due to complications from wet weather, and because Mike, one very talented individual, did most of the work himself. "I hired out a small portion of the electrical, the roofing and the stucco work on the back porch," he said. "It took nearly two full months just to frame the house." Reason being, all the ceilings are 10-foot except for the family room, which measures 11 feet from floor to recessed ceiling. "The brick work was hired



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out,” Tess added. “Someone installed all the molding, but we painted it.”

While the four-bedroom, two-and-one-half bath, Old World European-style inspired home was nearing completion, the family made the actual move to Maypearl, and took up housekeeping within the close constraints of a recreational vehicle. “As the winter winds began to blow through the RV,”

Tess interjected with a smile, “we decided to move into the one room in the house that was complete.” The young family of five moved two queen-sized beds into the back bedroom, which is Maylian’s domain today. They lived in this one room for the final two months of the building process. One of the bathrooms was complete except for wallpaper and the

kitchen and utility rooms were ready to be put to use. “The worst thing during this time was the cold, unfinished concrete floors,” Tess remembered. “We’d run from the bedroom to the kitchen and back again.”

The floors and the electrical work seemed to be the hardest part of the overall undertaking. The Reeds elected to stain the concrete floors and also

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added detailing with a star in the entryway floor, as well as a second, much larger star in the center of the atrium/mud room. The stars were stained several shades darker for effect. Mike commented that the electrician did some strange wiring, so it took extra time for him to figure it all out.

Their newly completed home has an open concept with simple lines and

black wrought iron accents. The cozy shades of brown, beige, green and red complement one another, reiterating the importance of family and Old World charm. The kitchen is open to the breakfast nook, as well as the oversized family room. "The bar stools are for the audience," Tess laughed. "Whoever is cooking puts on what we refer to as the 'cooking show.'"



In most homes, the room directly across from the formal dining area would either be a library, study or home office. Not so with the Reeds. "That's the café," Mike said. "The table was handmade by my grandfather. It's probably close to 30 years old." The café curtains may have been purchased, but Mike's handiwork is found in the bench by the front door, which is

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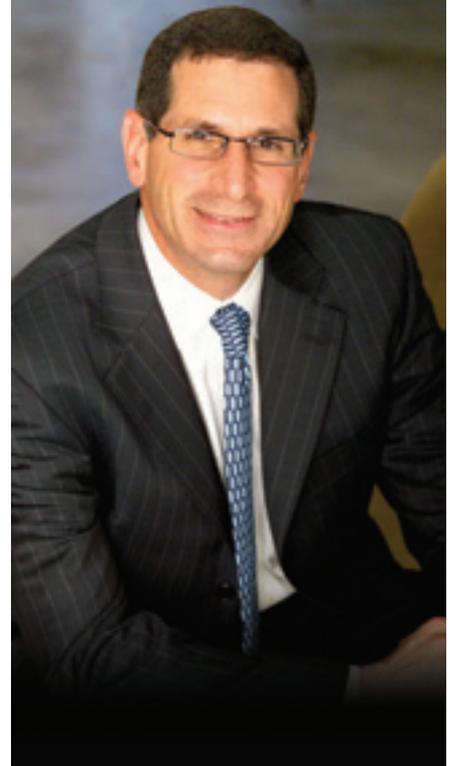
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constructed of salvaged doors, the refurbished apothecary which holds a massive collection of CDs and the stenciling found in key places throughout the home.

The chalkboard on a floor easel at the entrance to the café makes a great conversation piece. “We fill the menu board out every week,” Tess said. “We go by the menu on a daily basis.” On this particular evening, the Reeds planned to partake of a meal including small game hens cooked by Mike on the outside fire pit. When asked, Tess quickly admitted that Mike does the majority of the cooking. “He jazzes it up,” she said. “The kids and I just help.”

With three children ranging in age from 9 to 13, the move, the build and getting settled has proven to be a team effort. When talking with the children, it is understood that their voices were heard throughout the process, especially when it came to their bedrooms. “We got to pick our own ceiling fans,” Maylian said, also stating they had a strong influence on the themes found in each of their respective bedrooms.

Maylian’s room went from polka dots to a “girlie girl” room fit for a teenager in a shade that closely resembles Merlo grapes. She wanted a couch, so Mike made her one that also serves as a queen-sized bed. Abrey’s passion is



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... Otherwise, the close-knit family patiently waits for dad to design and construct it, whatever it may be.

horses, so her room is a tribute to that passion in brown with bright white trim. Her headboard, still a work in progress, looks just like a pair of barn doors, as do the blades on her ceiling fan. Brigden, the rock collector, has a room that resembles a camouflaged oasis in green and deep khaki. Mike constructed his platform bed from rejected plywood, and his fan is crafted from parachute-like material.

Everyone, including Brigden, played an important role when it came to “rolling paint.” His handiwork is still seen months later in the formal dining room. “We were ‘cutting in’ when Brigden decided to help out,” Tess said, describing a large smudge of ceiling paint on the wall and vice versa. “He was all the way up on the top of the ladder. All I saw was his feet.”

There is much they still want to accomplish before saying the home is complete, including: a stage in the media room for the children’s perfect performances, a fence in the backyard and a headboard with matching cabinetry to anchor the master bedroom. “It’s all about sweat equity,” Mike interjected. “We only purchase items when we get a really good deal or because we need it right now!” Otherwise, the close-knit family patiently waits for dad to design and construct it, whatever it may be. **WAXAHACHIE**

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Noticed and Appreciated

— By Sandra McIntosh

Art is an expression of life as seen through the eyes of the artisan. Many times, it is the window to their heart and soul. Such is the case with the artists David Lozano represents. Through their artwork, in every medium imaginable, David has learned there is much more to Columbia, South America, than the violence and drugs, which was all he heard about through the American media. “It was September 14, 1998, and I had just arrived in Bogota, Columbia,” David said, remembering how skeptical he was on that first journey abroad. “I traveled there to see firsthand what Columbia was really like.”

He found beauty on his first night in Columbia — her name was Maria Victoria Palacio Villegas. “We were married seven days later,” he stated proudly. “Vicky introduced me to a country that greets a stranger as a member of the family.” Everything seemed to factor into the couple’s desire to bring Colombian artists to America. “The country’s natural, untouched landscape is as beautiful as a painting depicting an imaginary place filled with peace and tranquility,” David explained. “This is one of the main reasons Vicky and I embarked on this journey to bring some of the finest and most talented Colombian artists to the United States. We wanted the American people to see the other side of Columbia.”

The idea blossomed into reality as a journey, which started in November of 2006. Currently, David handles the artwork



Danilo “Daper” Marin and Daval Lozano hold a painting of David’s son, Daniel and Lady, the family dog.



of 62 artists from Columbia, and that number is honestly a drop in the proverbial bucket when it comes to the talent

still yet to be recognized. “My wife’s family is filled with talent,” David said. “Pereira is a very small town, but it’s filled with talented individuals. There’s at least one artist or musician per family.” Vicky’s family is politically affiliated, so they have been instrumental in helping David recognize the talent the country has to offer. David will be the first to admit he has no artistic talent, but his appreciation for those who do is limitless. “These artists enjoy what they do,”

he said, “and they paint and create without much effort. They make it look so easy.” Maria Cristina Romero paints surrealistic abstracts. Her canvases seem to represent something

different for everyone, especially the women — from *Soledad*, a painting of an abstract giraffe, who is crying over the lack of respect people have for the earth in general, to *Annabella*, a painted woman who pays homage to all the suffering women in Columbia. “You can see the pain in her eyes as one tear begins to fall,” he added. Ortega Toscano is another painter, who loves painting abstract personalities. David has already acquired paintings of Marilyn Monroe, John Lennon and Angelina Jolie.

While David handles many artists, the one he has grown to love as family is Danilo “Daper” Marin. “He is like a brother to me,” David said. “We have a closeness I never had with my own real brothers.” Danilo is not only a



first class painter, he is also a singer, guitar player and comedian.” Since partnering with David, Danilo no longer goes to work in a Columbian factory, his asthma is under control and his hands are better cared for. “He’s much happier,” David enthused. “Everyday in Columbia is much like a vacation to Danilo. His passion goes well beyond the canvas and the pastels.”

Like Ortega, Danilo also paints personalities. His painting of a young Elvis dressed in a gold jacket, looking as if he is about to twist right off the canvas has received rave reviews. Then there is Dallas Cowboy Quarterback Tony Romo as *The Matador* and another Dallas Cowboy, Terrell Owens, encouraging the fans to get “their popcorn ready.” His latest offering is

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The painting that causes the hearts of visitors to skip a beat hangs majestically in the Lozano living room. Years after they actually exchanged their wedding vows, Danilo used a wedding photo and turned it into a life-sized oil painting of David and Vicky. Danilo also added their 3-year-old son, Daniel, to the family portrait, angel wings and all. On another wall, Danilo used a photo of Daniel and the family dog, Lady, and painted them into a landscaped



background of outdoor greenery. "It's amazing what he's able to do with a picture, a paintbrush and some oil paint," David enthused. "Danilo loves life and you can see that in his paintings."

David and Vicky have spent many hours and a great deal of their own money, as well as blood, sweat and tears, to make their artistic journey come to fruition. Based on a higher calling, David even went so far as to leave his job of 23 years in the criminal justice system, to pursue his dream of making a difference in how others view Columbia. "In Columbia, artists can emerge if they are assisted by someone who is politically connected," David said, referring to the research he has done. "But that leaves so many gifted and talented artists behind. Our ultimate goal is to open an art gallery in Waxahachie to display the works of those artists in Columbia who might otherwise go unnoticed and unappreciated." **ARTS NOW**

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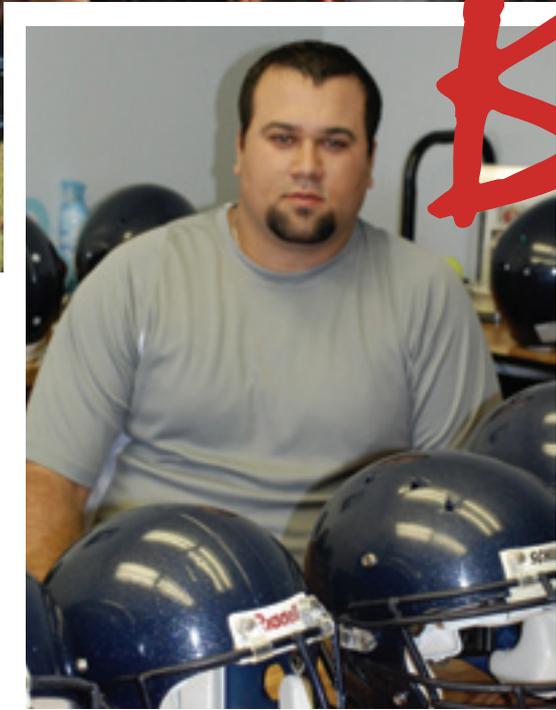
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From Boys to Men

— By Sandra McIntosh



Chad Trinkle grew up in Oklahoma. He moved to Waxahachie to play college football at Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU), while he worked on his bachelor's degree in professional development. As he puts it, "I'm an educator with a minister's degree." Chad's college football career only lasted two years. "I played defensive end," he reminisced. "A serious knee injury put an end to playing football."

The injury may have sidelined Chad until college graduation, but thanks to an opening at Eagle Advantage Academy, formerly Cornerstone Christian Academy, Chad was offered the wings he needed to soar as the head coach of the school's six-man football team. "I came on board as the defensive coordinator when the school was still privately

owned and operated," Chad said, explaining that the school has had a six-man team since 1980, when its educational doors first opened. "My second year, I was promoted to head football coach."

Chad, now deep into his third year at Eagle Advantage, comes to the field on a daily basis with one main goal in mind. "I love football and the impact it has on the kids," he enthused. "I want

to be that positive influence. I want to teach them the game of life after sports. Life is much like football; it's full of ups and downs, and highs and lows."

There is a responsibility, Chad stated, that comes with being a member of a football team which is quite similar to being a member of a team in the workplace. "We are a brotherhood," Chad said. "I'm teaching them to be responsible and know that their actions don't just affect them." Chad is a firm believer that choices can change lives. "My goal is to help them change their lives for the better," he added. "I'm not just coaching football, I'm teaching boys to be men before graduating."

Currently, Chad, along with defensive coordinator Neil Rodriguez and special teams coach Gordon Mattison, oversees both the varsity and junior varsity teams. Players come to the game as

ninth-graders, many never having played football prior to this time. Last year, only the varsity team was in place. By the time the season started, Chad had 16 active players remaining on his roster. "This year, I started with 38, but I lost a few when two-a-days started," he explained. "There were 20 open spots on varsity. All the rest went to junior varsity."



Every morning before practice starts, time is reserved for character building. "The first 15 minutes are spent teaching them not only about being responsible young men," Chad said, "but also sportsmanship, understanding and patience. They learn that winning is the icing on the cake, but it's not all about winning. It's more about how they play the game."

The differences between six-man and 11-man football are many. Chad decided the easiest way to explain the nuances found in a six-man game would be to list what he considers to be the top four. "The field is 100 yards in 11-man and only 80 yards in six-man," he explained. "In 11-man, players have to run 10 yards for a first down, while those on the six-man team have to run 15 yards for the same first down." The reason for the extra yards is simple to understand once Chad fully explained. "On offense, all six players can receive or run the ball," he said, "where on an 11-man team, only the wide receivers can run with the ball to score points."

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the overall speed of the six-man game. "On 11-man, when a field goal is kicked the team earns one point, and when the ball is run in, they score what's called a two-point conversion," Chad stated. "With six-man, if they run it in, they earn one point, but kicking it for a field goal will get them two points. Fewer men on the team means a bigger chance to block the kicked ball." Chad also explained the "mercy rule." "If a team is ahead 45 points at halftime," he said, "the game is over."



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Chad may have played 11-man in high school and college, but he has found his niche with six-man. "The pace is so much faster," he said. "The strategy in six-man is attacking, where 11-man is more about defending." He also shared that six-man games are generally high-scoring games. "The winners in the state playoff game last year scored in the 90s," he said.

The first game of the season was held on August 28 and the Eagle's final game is slated for November 7. Chad's goal is to beat last year's record of seven wins and three losses. With fans like his parents, his wife, Valerie, and soon-to-be 1-year-old son, Maverick, cheering from the sidelines, that should be an easy feat as he teaches his boys to be men, both on and off the field. "We focus on one game at a time," he said. "We always strive to do better, and for us, Richland Springs is always the team to beat!" **NOW!**

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Family Secrets

— By Alex Allred



Owners Richard Landis, Jim Ensinia and Ryan Rodriguez are ready to scare up a great meal for you!

Rumor and reputation swirl around the Catfish Plantation in Waxahachie. Its reputation includes trademark recipes made with all fresh produce and batter, making it a Cajun favorite among the locals. New owners, Richard Landis and brothers, Ryan Rodriguez and Jim Ensinia, have expanded the menu to include “the best down-home cookin’ that will melt in your mouth.” The perfect blend of Cajun and Southern style cooking has earned the restaurant “The Top 10 Favorite Catfish Restaurant in the State of Texas,” according to the 2006 *Texas Highways* magazine.



Catfish is not the only reason people travel from all over the United States to visit this Victorian-style, historic home-turned-restaurant. It is said to be haunted. To be specific, three individual spirits haunt it. In 1984, when original owners Tom and Melissa Baker opened the Catfish Plantation, odd things began to occur. Silverware and pepper shakers moved, spoons disappeared, teacups were precariously stacked in unusual places and doors randomly opened and closed. When the couple hired a team of parapsychologists, they learned of Elizabeth, Will and Caroline. The residence of 814 Water Street,

believed to be built in 1895, was once home to Elizabeth, a young bride killed by an ex-lover on her wedding day. Will, a farmer who lived in the home during the same time period is reputedly the reason many female customers feel a cool sensation on their knee. He does like the ladies. “But Caroline is the lady of the house,” Jim said with a smile. While the Catfish Plantation does not serve alcohol, customers are welcome to bring their own. The staff, pleased to see their customers celebrate a special occasion, will provide wine or champagne buckets. “And that’s when we see the most activity,” Ryan said. Caroline was a devout Southern Baptist woman, so her spirit is most active when she is disapproving. Jim, who began working as a busboy

when the restaurant opened, has seen many strange things over the years. Initially, he would not tell anyone of the strange occurrences, yet he was never concerned for his safety. "They are gentle spirits," Richard said. "They are part of the ambiance, and we'd never try to change that."

When Ryan learned the Catfish Plantation was for sale, he called Jim and family friend, Richard. He knew they needed to buy the restaurant because there is yet another untold secret about this captivating culinary delight. "We are so much more than them [the ghosts]," Richard said.

While all three men talk about their love of their hometown and of their newly acquired restaurant, more secrets come tumbling out. As they point to the historical marker on the building, share stories about previous residents and of the old ways of Waxahachie, it is clear that the Catfish Plantation is about family, preserving history and tradition. "It takes a concerted effort," Richard said, "to preserve the downtown history. We're the only three-star restaurant in direct support of the square!"

The men are excited about the future. They extended their business hours, began a brand new catering service and introduced the clever ideas of a "family pack," a preordered meal to-go and "family-style dining," an economical way for the entire family to dine, including appetizers, drinks, main course and dessert. The entrepreneurial trio hopes to make the experience of good food, family and dining the tradition it once was in this country. "With us," Jim said, "the sky's the limit." Just ask the ghosts.

Catfish Plantation, located at 814 Water Street is open Wednesday – Saturday, 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. and Sunday, 11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. For more information, go to www.catfishplantation.com or call (972) 937-9468. **NOW**

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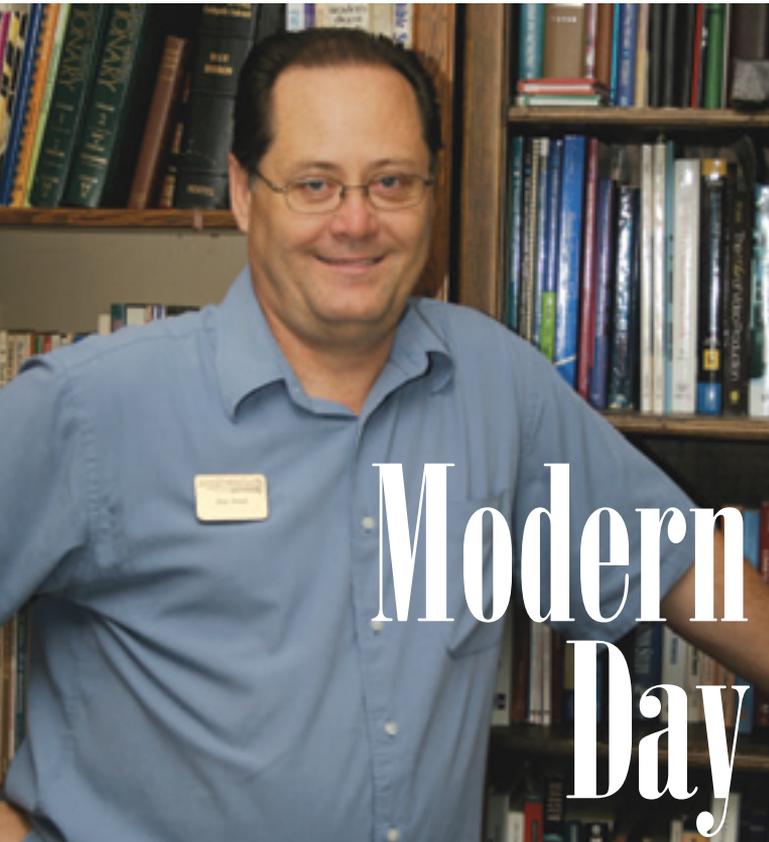
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Modern Day

Drama

— By Michelle Powe

When Dr. Skip Redd directs a play for the Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) drama department, he blends classics with contemporary, traditional with modern, stage acting with 21st-century technology. The result is fresh, enjoyable, exciting and high-quality dramatic productions.

Skip said audience members are pleasantly surprised by the caliber of SAGU's plays. People also are often surprised to learn that SAGU does not only perform religious plays. Last year's plays were *The Crucible*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This year, the theatrical team will perform *It's a Wonderful Life* in December. The spring plays have not yet been decided.

Before the *The Crucible* was performed, Skip partnered with the English, history and theology departments to give presentations to the students. The English department discussed the play itself and the literature. The history department explained the historical context of the Salem witch trials, while the theology department explained what the Puritans and Quakers believed at that time about demon possession. All of this gave the students a much deeper understanding of the play they were performing.

For *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Skip took the students to the Holocaust museum in Dallas. "It changed their lives," he said. He also scheduled a 5:30 a.m. Saturday rehearsal so that students would feel what Anne Frank experienced getting up so early to go with her family into hiding. "They realized

this was a real person's life," he said. "It was amazing to watch their development. It was a life lesson."

Jumping headlong into projects is nothing new for Skip. An ordained minister from Colorado, Skip was a minister of music with his church back home. That was not enough for him. "I wanted to know what the schools were teaching kids, so I got a master's in music education and my teaching certificate." He became a music teacher and a minister of music, media and drama. He also has a master's degree in communication with an emphasis on TV production and film and a Ph.D. in communication arts. "The path God has kept me on has kept me innovative," Skip said. With a sly smile, he added, "And it's been fun."

That path has also kept SAGU's drama department state-of-the-art, by integrating media into its productions. "I see how it's a tool and it's a craft," Skip said. "Society has changed so much that we have to be cognizant of that view. I had a phenomenal pastor who mentored me to go beyond the typical. But at the same time, I am very sensitive to our audience. The plays, after all," he added, "are our gift back to the community."

Another way Skip has gone beyond the typical is by creating a dramatic team of students called Dramatic Pause. The team is made up of eight students who travel around the state and nation, visiting prisons, children's homes, psychiatric hospitals and retirement homes. They tell stories through skits,

Education **NOW**

monologues and “human videos” — movement choreographed to music. “The stories reach people; they touch people,” Skip explained.

In addition to being drama director, Skip is director of media services and communications arts departmental chair. He has directed more than 40 productions. He came to SAGU in 1998. Coincidentally, his oldest daughter started as a student there the same year. “Melody accused us of following her to college,” Skip laughed. Three of his four children have graduated from SAGU. He and his wife, Claudia, also have two grandchildren.

When he talks about his children, grandchildren and students, Skip reveals the same compassion and humanity that comes across in his dramatic productions. He speaks of the life lessons that drama provides and the benefits of being involved. He talks about people’s choices having consequences, but at the same time he believes people deserve second chances. He also speaks about keeping up with societal changes, staying relevant, so that the plays’ messages are meaningful and powerful.

That contemporary compassion and forgiving nature may be the reason his students work so hard for him. It also may be why his plays touch so many people. Yet he gives the credit to his students. “We have a thriving program,” Skip said. “It’s phenomenal entertainment for local people at a professional level. I’m really pleased with the students. They really work hard. They are very creative and very aggressive. They want to be on the cutting edge of the whole craft, so they’re exciting to be around.”

Indeed, students are responsible for every aspect of the productions — from set and costume design to lighting. Remarkably, while some students do have dramatic backgrounds, many have never been involved with plays before. “I’ll find their gift and put them to work where they’re best suited and where they will learn the craft,” Skip said. **NOW**

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Around Town **NOW**



Dr. Joe Green, top left, delivered music and a program on Texas Cowboy Poetry during the Chautauqua Spring Preview held in the backyard gardens of the home of David and Pat Smith. Cori Morgan, top center, started school at Discovery Montessori Preschool at College Street Church of Christ. Rotarians, top right, are faithful when it comes to putting flags out to recognize specific holidays. Daphne Brewer, second row left, was chosen as Woman of the Year by the ABWA Empowering Women Express Networking group. Jakob Morgan, Waxahachie youngster, second row center, was happy to return to school as a second grader at Life School located in Red Oak. Several Waxahachie residents, bottom left, attended the Chautauqua Spring Preview. The Dallahachie Boys, bottom right, performed at Red Moon. Kyle Venable, of Waxahachie, is shown at far right.

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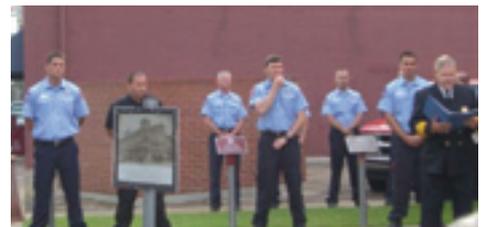
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Members of the city of Waxahachie and the Chamber of Commerce, top left, welcomed the troops home at DFW Airport on September 11. A ribbon cutting was held at Marble Slab Creamery, top center, to introduce Vish Patel, the new owner. A ribbon cutting, top right, was held at Horizon Industries. A groundbreaking ceremony, second row, was held recently for the city of Waxahachie and WISD Ag Project Barn. July's Friendliest Employee of the Month was Emily Foster, bottom left, of Chick-Fil-A. NFL Champion Bill Bates, third row right, offered encouragement during a motivational speech he gave at the Bates and Burgers Dinner held at the Boys and Girls Club of Ellis County. The Waxahachie Fire Department's Sept. 11 Ceremony, bottom right, honored the fallen firefighters of Waxahachie, FDNY, NYPD and the Port Authority.



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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH RHONDA BRIDGES

Rest assured the nutritional needs of Waxahachie Independent School District (WISD) students are in great hands with Rhonda Bridges. Over 17 years ago, she started as a cook for WISD and worked her way up to the director of the Child Nutrition Department.

“We try hard to improve the school food for our students,” she proudly explained. “We still cook many menu items from scratch.”

Spending time with her children, Ben, Matt and Sarah, is Rhonda's top priority. “It's very important to me to have family meal-time,” she expressed. She also enjoys opening her home as a gathering place for many holidays and birthday parties. Although she really, really likes to make desserts, the beans and brisket recipe is her favorite recipe. She claimed, “It's easy, delicious, hearty and crowd pleasing!” **NOW**

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

- 1 whole chicken
- 1 16-oz. can chicken broth
- 1 8-oz. can diced green chilies
- 1 10-oz. can chopped Ro-Tel tomatoes
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 to 3 lbs. Velveeta cheese

Boil, debone and dice whole chicken (or just breast if you prefer white meat). Add chicken broth, green chilies, Ro-Tel tomatoes and onion. Simmer for about 1 hour. Add Velveeta cheese to taste just before serving; just long enough to melt well. Serve hot with tortilla chips. Soup is one of our most requested dishes for catering.

APPLE BREAD

- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 cup sugar

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 Tbsp. sour cream
- 1 cup apple, freshly shredded

Blend shortening, sugar and eggs until good and smooth. In a separate bowl, blend flour, soda, salt and cinnamon; blend into egg mixture. Add sour cream and apple. Pour into greased and floured 9-inch loaf pan. Bake 1 hour and 20 minutes at 350 F. Makes one loaf.

EASY MEXICAN BRISKET AND BEANS

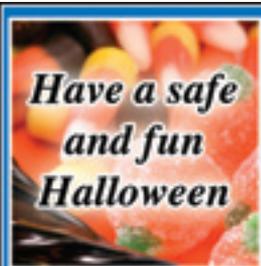
- 1 lb. dry pinto beans
- approximately 4 to 5 cups water
- 1 3 to 4-lb. trimmed brisket
- garlic salt to taste
- pepper to taste

- 1 14.5-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel chopped tomatoes

Wash beans and spread out in bottom of 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Add enough water (4 to 5 cups) to cover beans. Season brisket with garlic salt and pepper to taste. Place in baking dish on top of beans, fat side up. Pour soup on top of brisket. Pour Ro-Tel tomatoes on top of soup. Cover with foil and bake in 275 F oven for about 12 hours or until beans are soft. Serve with flour tortillas, cheese, diced tomatoes and onions. Makes great brisket tacos or a great one-dish meal. It is very easy and tasty, too!

BAKED POTATO SOUP

- 2 large baking potatoes (8 oz. or so)
- 6 Tbsp. green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour



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- 2 tsp. snipped fresh dill or 1/4 tsp. dried dill weed
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 4 cups milk
- 3/4 cup shredded American cheese (3 oz.)
- 4 slices bacon, crisp-cooked, drained and crumbled

Scrub and dry potatoes. Prick with fork and bake 40 - 60 minutes or until tender at 425 F; let cool. Cut potatoes in half and scoop out each potato; discard skins. In large saucepan cook 3 Tbsp. green onions in butter until tender; stir in flour, dill, salt and pepper. Add milk; cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir 1 more minute. Add potato and 1/2 cup cheese; stir until cheese melts. Garnish each serving with the remaining cheese, green onions and bacon.

PRALINE BARS

- 15 graham cracker sheets
- 3/4 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 3/4 cups brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 cup butter
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate morsels
- 1/2 cup white chocolate morsels

Separate each graham cracker sheet into 4 crackers. Place in a lightly-greased 15 x 10-inch jellyroll pan. Sprinkle chopped pecans over graham crackers. Bring brown sugar and butter to a boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat; boil 2 minutes. Pour brown sugar mixture evenly over graham crackers. Bake for 10 minutes at 350 F. Quickly remove graham crackers to wax paper using a spatula and let cool completely. Microwave semi-sweet chocolate morsels on high for 30 seconds. Stir and microwave at high for 30 more seconds or until smooth. Drizzle chocolate evenly over cooled bars. Repeat with white chocolate morsels. This is the most requested dessert for the WISD Child Nutrition catering department.

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Preheat oven to 350 F. Prepare cake mix as per directions. Stir in coconut pecan frosting. Pour into greased and floured Bundt cake pan. Bake 45 - 50 minutes or until inserted toothpick comes out clean. This is undoubtedly the easiest coconut/pecan coffee cake you will ever try.

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Maximize Your Wealth With a Financial Team

— By John D. Hale, Attorney at Law

Whether you realize it or not, you have a financial plan. If you are like most people, your plan is confusing, unorganized and inefficient. You might call it the result of numerous encounters with various “financial professionals.” Each sold you something, whether it was car insurance, mutual funds, a house, a simple will, life insurance and the list goes on. Could they have done a better job designing and implementing your financial plan had they worked together as a team?

The importance of teamwork is clear in the home, at church, on the field and in the office. Teamwork is just as important when it comes to your financial life. If you truly want to maximize your wealth, you need to bring coordination to your planning. By assembling a team of professionals, including an attorney, CPA, financial advisor, insurance agent and Realtor, you can obtain expert advice uniquely tailored to meet your individual financial needs.

Each member of a financial team is integral. You should



appoint a leader to guide your financial team, ensuring all financial decisions are made with a complete understanding of the financial picture. The leader is, in effect, your financial quarterback. Without this kind of leadership, your financial plan will almost certainly fall short of your expectations.

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Everyone should have a financial team to aid them in growing and preserving wealth. The right advisors, with a team approach to financial planning, will help you sleep at night and achieve your financial dreams. **NOW**

John D. Hale is an attorney with The Hale Law Firm, P.C. and a former financial advisor located in Waxahachie, Texas. This information is not intended to constitute legal advice, or a substitute for obtaining legal advice from a licensed attorney.



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The Amazing Liver

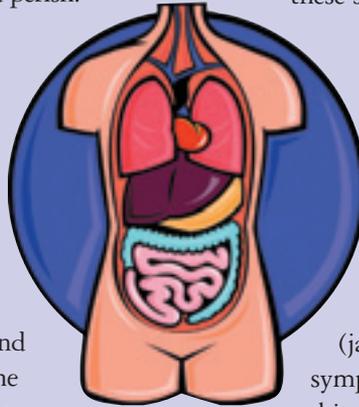
— By Betty Tryon

The largest organ inside the body reveals remarkable regenerative properties. You can lose a majority portion of your liver and the remaining tissue can grow into a whole organ once again. Amazing. This vital organ performs numerous functions and without it, the body would perish.

It is located in the upper right side of the abdomen and below the diaphragm. One of its more important jobs is to remove waste products from the bloodstream by performing as a filter. Drugs, alcohol and environmental substances are just a few of the substances removed or neutralized by the liver. The liver produces and regulates cholesterol, manufactures clotting factors for the blood and other proteins. It helps to maintain the balance of hormones. Making and secreting bile and storing some vitamins and minerals are some of the more well-known functions. The liver also helps to regulate blood sugar levels by storing glycogen.

There are many things you can do to keep your liver healthy. Excessive intake of alcohol is the leading cause of liver disease, so drink in moderation. Use over-the-counter medications and herbal or natural remedies with caution. Your liver still has to process it whether it is man-made or “natural.” Even high doses of certain vitamins can be harmful. Follow your physician’s instructions on any prescribed

medication. Limit or avoid any exposure to environmental hazards and toxins such as certain cleaners and insecticides. If you can breathe it, consume it or have it penetrate your skin, it will eventually reach your liver. So, use gloves and a mask in a well-ventilated area when handling hazardous chemicals. Try to avoid foods that are high in unhealthy fats. The diseases of Hepatitis A, B and C can cause significant damage to the liver, but there are vaccines available for Hepatitis A and B. Since the virus is spread by contact with another’s bodily fluids or blood, try to avoid contact with these substances.



Although it can regenerate itself, the liver is not indestructible. Some of the signs and symptoms that your liver may be headed for trouble may at first be too vague for a diagnosis. Nausea, weakness, lack of energy and a change in appetite can be attributed to a host of diseases. The more specific indications that are cause for alarm are yellowing of the skin, eyes and urine (jaundice). Advanced cases would present with symptoms such as unexplained itching of the skin, abdominal pain and swelling, in addition to the previous presenting symptoms.

These symptoms are cause for concern and warrant monitoring by your physician. Many liver ailments can be treated. The best course of action is to protect yourself and keep you and your liver safe. **NOW**

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

An advertisement for an orthodontic practice. It features a large photo of a smiling woman, Laura Morgan, D.D.S., on the right. On the left, there are four smaller photos of smiling children and a young man. The background is light blue and white with colorful circular accents. Text includes: "Creating Smiles In Waxahachie for over 10 years!", "Office Open For Appointments Monday - Thursday", "School Friendly Schedule", "Interest Free Financing", "Care Credit", "Most Insurances Accepted", "American Association of Orthodontists", and contact information: "Call Today For Your Complimentary Consultation 201 Ferris Avenue • Waxahachie • 972-938-1688 www.morganortho.com". A map in the bottom right corner shows the location at the intersection of Ferris Ave and Main St.

Shade Gardening

— By Nancy Fenton



Are you ready for fall yet? October, pumpkins and falling leaves are all sure signs that the seasons are changing once again. It is time to put a bit more nitrogen on that lawn area and decide if those great containers are going to have to find a warmer place for the winter. I usually cut container plants back severely and put them in the garage from Thanksgiving until after Valentine's Day, but there is a limit to the amount of space my husband is willing to share, so I need to put in my request early!

Once this year's plants are taken care of, it is time to look hard at those shady places in my yard. They never seem so shady in the spring, since it takes a while for the leaf cover to reach its full maturity. If we can plant now for color next year, the plants will have a better chance to grow strong root systems before it heats up in July and August.

Columbine perennial flowers, both Wild Red and Texas

Gold varieties, are good for dry shady areas. Daylily, irises and coral bells will all bloom in the spring shade if they are put in the ground now. Oxalis, both purple and green, will bloom early and still add color all summer long. Inland Seaots, Turks Cap and Cast Iron plants are among my favorites for the dry areas under trees. Once they get going, they will add late summer color and flourish on neglect!

Take a look now at that landscape and see what you have room for, or where you would like to see more color next year. It is never too early to start dreaming and planning! **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.

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*We make no claim that this result is representative of all patients on the program. For many dieters, weight loss is only temporary.

October 2008

Community Calendar

First and Third Monday

Women in the Waxahachie area are invited to "Reconciled to Pray," a gathering of Christian women praying in unity regarding specific topics that impact our lives and community. Meetings are held at the Bent Tree Townhomes Clubhouse, located at I-35 northbound service road at Exit 1446, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. For more information, visit www.reconciledtopray.com or call Laurie Whitlock at (214) 796-9602.

Second and Fourth Tuesday

Get Smart: Strategic Marketing and Research Technologies (formerly Waxahachie Business Interchange Networking) is held from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Call (972) 937-2390 for location of the next meeting.

Third Thursday

ABWA - Empowering Women Express Network meeting, 5:45 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle, Midlothian. Please RSVP to Daphne Brewer at (972) 723-6551 or visit www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org for more information.

October 5 - 31

The annual pumpkin patch hosted by the First United Methodist Church in Red Oak is open to the public. Hours of operation are Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until dark and Sunday from noon until dark. The annual "Party in the Patch" will be held on Saturday, October 10, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. The annual "Trunk or Treat" will be held on Friday, October 31, from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

October 15

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection monthly luncheon, Waxahachie Country Club, located at 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East, Exit 401B. For reservations, contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984 or e-mail Kay at windchime@charter.net no later than Sunday, October 12.

October 18

The fourth annual Dinah Weable Breast Cancer Survivors Event will begin at 11:00 a.m. in the banquet hall of the First United Methodist Church, located at 505 W. Marvin Street. For

more information or to make reservations, please call (972) 938-3059. The deadline for reservations will be October 10.

October 19

The Frontier Chuckwagon Breakfast will be held at Frontier Cowboy Church, located at 2032 S. Highway 77, with a cowboy coffee and breakfast beginning at 9:30 a.m. and a service in the arena beginning at 10:30 a.m. To purchase tickets, call Brandon at (214) 949-5725.

October 31

The Waxahachie Community Theatre presents the musical, *The King and I*, in the historic Chautauqua Auditorium located in Getzendaner Park. Tickets may be purchased online at www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com or by calling PJ Searsy at (972) 723-6976.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.

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