

# Waxahachie

# NOW

M A G A Z I N E

OCTOBER 2013

## Never Far From the Classroom

Eric Brewster's retirement plans  
include hanging out at Cliff

## In Tune With the Future

At Home With James  
and Jimylin Hightower

*Plus:*

Learning From a Horse  
Spurred to Imagination

A Hand Up

Metal Experts

In the Kitchen With Shirley Jones

# HOMECOMING 2013 HACHIE HEROES

OCTOBER 3-5, 2013

## WHS ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME BANQUET

Thursday, October 3, 2013

Waxahachie Civic Center - 7:00 p.m.

[www.waxahachieexstudents.org](http://www.waxahachieexstudents.org)

## HOMECOMING PARADE

Friday, October 4, 2013

Downtown Waxahachie - 3:00 p.m.

## HOMECOMING GAME

Friday, October 4, 2013

Waxahachie Indians vs. Lancaster Tigers

Stuart B. Lumpkins Stadium - 7:30 p.m.

## EX-STUDENTS ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON

Saturday, October 5, 2013

Waxahachie Ninth Grade Academy - 11:30 a.m.

[www.waxahachieexstudents.org](http://www.waxahachieexstudents.org)

*Looking for Reunion Information? Contact the  
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[www.wisdlegacyrun.org](http://www.wisdlegacyrun.org)

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Indians Care Enough to Wear Pink

Friday, October 25, 2013

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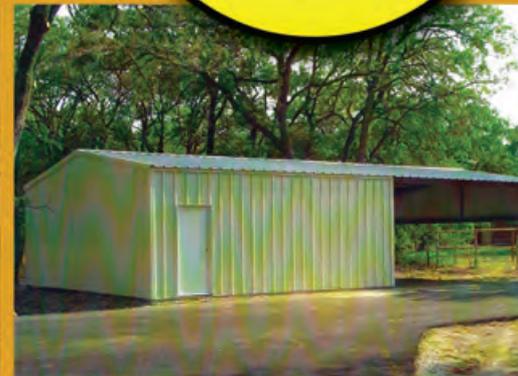
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## ON THE COVER



Even in retirement, Eric Brewster finds time to share a good book with Breanna Anderson.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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## Editor's Note

*Thinking positive thoughts!*

Attitude dictates the day you're going to have. Having a positive outlook is a decision I make on a daily basis. When I fail to thank God for another day, my hair becomes unmanageable, my clothes don't fit and my work becomes a burden. It is best if I stay out of the kitchen on "bad attitude days," or I may find myself dropping freshly baked chicken breasts, grease drippings and all, on the floor. Believe me, those kinds of days I can do without.

I find it much easier to tell the devil I'm up before my feet hit the floor. Although my hair still may be unmanageable, and my clothes still may not fit, everything else in life seems to fall neatly into place. A good attitude can make for a great day, and those are days I can definitely live with!

### Sandra

Sandra Strong  
WaxahachieNOW Editor  
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"Remember, let's be careful out there."

# From the CLASSROOM

By Sydni Thomas



"I will  
always be  
there for  
the kids."

*The days of career teaching may be over for Eric Brewster, former Clift Elementary principal, but he will always find a way to help aid in the development of young children. Eric retired in May 2013 after 40 years in the education field.*

Years of hard work left many errand lists uncompleted, but now that he is retired, Eric is finding time to complete them. From 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Eric makes his run throughout Waxahachie trying to make up for lost time. He's even found time to clean the garage. "Throughout the years I've always told my wife, Cheri, I'd get around to it," Eric said. "Now that I am retired, I better get around to it, since there is always something to do."

Eric was not looking for an easy, quiet retired life. It's his turn to become the student. He has plans to spend two months in Seville, Spain, studying the art and music of flamenco. His mornings will consist of attending flamenco schools, and the evening will be spent with Cheri at the clubs taking in the music and enjoying the dancers. "I love music and hope to spend a lot

of my time studying it," Eric said. "Flamenco has been a passion of mine for some time, and I can't wait to learn it all."

He and Cheri will be relocating to the Galveston Bay where he can sail all day if he chooses. That is where Eric began his teaching career and where he first began learning how to sail. When Eric leaves the Waxahachie area, the one thing he knows he will miss most is walking into a store or restaurant and seeing one of the many students he has had the pleasure of working with over the years. The kids he taught back in the Galveston Bay area are grown with grandchildren, but he has reconnected with them on Facebook. "I wouldn't run into old students down there like I do here," Eric said. "Although, Facebook has been a great way to stay connected with my past students. My first class of kindergarteners found me, and they keep up with me there."

Eric was one of, if not, the first male kindergarten teacher in the state of Texas. He switched from being a band director to elementary school teacher in 1973. Only a handful of school districts would hire male teachers at the elementary school level. With more rejections than he cared to admit, Eric finally found a job at the North Forest ISD in Houston teaching fifth grade.

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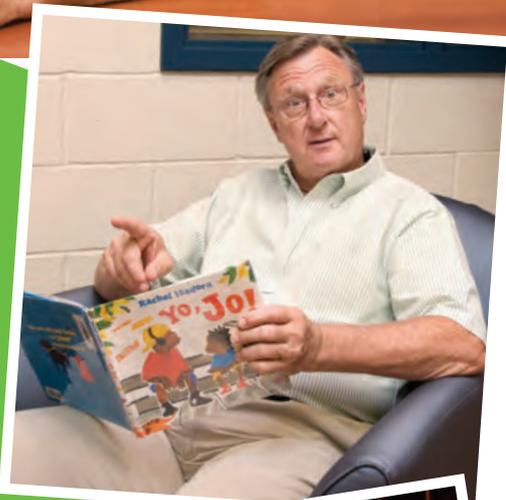
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Later, he moved to third grade and finally down to kindergarten. He was working on his doctoral degree at the University of Houston at the time. "I like to tell people I was teaching kindergarten long before Arnold Schwarzenegger," Eric said. "The idea of a man teaching kindergarten was so far out there, that the entire school board had to interview me before they'd let me have the job."

They gave him the job, and it caused a stir in the press. Soon all of the local newspapers and television stations were running stories on Eric's kindergarten class. Suddenly, all of the schools that once rejected him wanted to hire him. Eric moved to Humble and taught kindergarten for another four years. "I loved teaching kindergarten, but decided to leave the education field all together,"



Eric said, "I spent five years selling lumber. I made more money than I ever had before, was successful and had a great time, but I knew my true passion was in the classroom."

Eric credits his time in sales as preparation for his next career as a

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B's Texican is owned and operated by Executive Chef Brian Hennington and Lori Hennington, his restaurant and art-savvy wife. The Henningtons are known in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex for opening cutting edge restaurants such as the Deep Ellum Café, The Elm St. Winery, Ruby's Greenville Ave. Café, Christos Table Fine Catering and Hennington's at the Nutt House Hotel in Granbury.

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principal. Sales taught him how to build relationships. Before moving on to become a principal, Eric had the opportunity to be a prekindergarten teacher. Eric had never liked any other job as much as he liked being a pre-K teacher. He woke up every morning excited about the day. "I always tell people I was a miserable fifth-grade teacher," Eric laughed. "I was an OK third-grade teacher, but an outstanding kindergarten teacher. Then I tell them there never has been as good a pre-K teacher as me. That job was a hoot-and-a-half, and I loved every minute of it."



The time came for Eric to move on to administrative work. The Waxahachie assistant superintendent called him about working at Dunaway Elementary where he served for the next 15 years. Even as a principal, Eric wasn't too far away from the classrooms. He was a good sport with the students, allowing them to shave his head on three different occasions, so the school could reach their goal of 25,000 Accelerated Reader points. Eric left Dunaway two years ago when he had the opportunity to build a school from the bottom up. "One of the middle schools was being turned into an elementary school," Eric said. "They asked me to help with the transition. I can't think of a better note on which to have ended my career. Clift Elementary is a very special place to me."

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Eric took special care of the kindergarten classrooms at Clift, creating a place where they could learn through play. It was his dream classroom. The older grade levels received high levels of technology, where there was a laptop for every two children. Not only did Eric have to help remodel the school, but he had to bring in curriculum and staff. Seventeen of his former staff members followed him over to the new school. "I couldn't have gotten this school up and running in time without the staff we had," Eric admitted. "Christi Kubin was my assistant principal, and I will miss working with her. She was great at her job, and now she is the principal of Clift. I believe one of my jobs as principal was to help turn assistant principals into principals of their own school. Over the years in Waxahachie, I saw six do so."

Eric will not be a stranger at Clift during these early days of retirement. He was there on the first day to help the new kindergarteners find their classrooms for the first time and in the afternoon to help the parents find their children. Anytime the school needs him to read to a class or just help out, the retired principal is ready and willing to answer the call. "Until they tell me I'm getting in the way, I will keep on hanging around," Eric said. "I will always be there for the kids." **NOW**

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# Learning from a Horse

— By Carolyn Wills

*In April 2010, 20-year-old U.S. Army enlistee Heather “Bunny” Gaughan reported to Fort Leonardwood, Missouri, for basic training. The following year, she was deployed to Afghanistan’s Kunar Province and stationed at Forward Operating Base Bostick in the 27th Infantry Regiment, also known as the Wolfhounds. “I was trained as an ‘88Mike,’ which is a truck driver,” she explained.*

Known by her friends and family as Bunny, this accomplished young woman returned home last March. “I joined the Army to do something to be proud of, with full knowledge of the danger,” she said. “It was important to me to serve my country.” While profoundly changed by the experience, she has no regrets. “Anyone considering enlisting in the military should do it for the right reason, not for the money or training, but because you want to serve,” she said. “It’s good to challenge limits and important to have something in your life worth fighting, and possibly, dying for.”

Her important *some things* are faith, family, country and horses. “Eleven years ago, my family purchased 120 acres, named it the Flying G Ranch, thus fulfilling my mom’s dream of creating a Christian ministry on a horse ranch. My dream is to reach out to people, especially kids, and help them to learn about Christ through



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relationships with horses and, also, to develop an agricultural business,” she smiled. “While home on leave, I had the opportunity to buy 44 acres adjoining the Flying G Ranch.”

The property, an abandoned golf range with a club house, was perfectly located for extending the horse ministry and ideal for Bunny’s agricultural dream. “We prayed about it, and I managed to buy it while I was still in Afghanistan,” she shared. “I named it Trinity Grove and, in the following months, my mom was able to rent out the club house for parties and events.”

Since she’s been home, Bunny has resumed her responsibilities as a Flying G director and teacher. She’s also taken steps toward her agricultural dream for Trinity Grove. “I have two goats, a dog named Jack and a field of coastal and Timothy grass,” she smiled. “Soon I’ll have rabbits and chickens.” She rents out the spacious club house for weddings and other events and a portion of the building has become the Flying G gift and snack shop. Most importantly, she has reconnected with horses.

“My horse journey began when I was 9 years old,” she smiled. “My dad works for American Airlines, and when I was very



young, we moved a lot.” Texas became the Gaughan’s final destination when they moved to Lancaster in 1994. “My mom is a certified riding instructor and trainer,” Bunny said. “She grew up with horses, but I had never ridden or even met one until the day we decided to visit a riding facility and go for a family trail ride.”

As it happened, the trail ride ignited her passion and reignited her mother’s. Bunny and her sister signed up for lessons, her mother became the riding facility’s assistant equine director. By 2001, the whole family was spurred to a great new adventure.

“That’s when we bought the 120 acres near Ovilla. It was my mother’s lifelong



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dream,” she explained. “We serve groups and individuals from 6 years old to adult seniors. Our whole family helps with camps, lessons, trail rides, boarding and horse-keeping.”

Every staff member at the Flying G, including family, has a camp name. “My dad is Ace, mom is Sprite, my older sister is Pony, my younger brothers are Shepherd and Wolf, and I’m ‘Bunny,’” she smiled. “From the start, we’ve called each other by our camp names, and now a lot of people don’t know us by any other!”

Bunny admits her early equine experiences were marred by danger, pain and misfortune. “I made so many mistakes,” she said. “I loved horses, but didn’t know enough to be safe. My first time in an English saddle, the horse I was riding balked at a jump, and I went sailing over her head.” After that, Bunny decided to stick to trail riding. “That was fun until the day my horse avoided a muddy creek by sideswiping me against a tree.”

She would face her ultimate challenge at the Flying G. “We had driven to a ranch to look at a gelding,” she said. While there, the rancher pointed out four horses that were headed for the slaughter house. It seemed that two were crazy, and two were simply too old. “It broke my parents’ hearts to hear that,” Bunny said. “Also, I had already fallen in love with the pretty golden mare.” That day, the Flying G Ranch welcomed five new horses. For Bunny, it was the beginning of a long nightmare named Sassy.

“Sassy is a gorgeous Morgan mare with a golden coat and black mane and tail,” she said. Unfortunately, Sassy was also

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a striker, biter, crow hopper and buckler. “At 8, she was too dangerous to ride or even to touch. I couldn’t sell her so, basically, she became a lawn ornament.” Bunny knew Sassy was smart, but clearly, something or someone had brought her to this point. She sought advice from trainers and continued to struggle until a chance invitation delivered the answer.

“My mom went to a horse clinic,” she said. The clinic demonstrated Pat Parelli’s method of horsemanship, which relies on respect and understanding. “My mom knew it was the way to reach Sassy,” she said. “I studied the Parelli method and soon realized Sassy must have been treated badly by people for their purposes. Apparently, no one had ever taken the time to know her.”



With patience and a process of approach and retreat, her relationship with Sassy slowly improved. “Sassy taught me a lot about my faith in Christ, the importance of trust in every relationship and how effective a horse ministry can be,” she said. “Horses have big hearts and are very forgiving. Sassy was 8 when we met, and I was 12. It took time and work, but I helped her to learn she could trust a human. When I came home from Afghanistan, it was Sassy who helped me to heal from the realities of war.” Today, Sassy is 19, and Bunny is 23. Both are undeniably golden, and they have many more rides to share together. **NOW**

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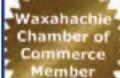
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# In Tune With the Future

— By Sandra Strong

At Home With  
James and Jimylin  
Hightower

“We knew when we built  
this home we weren’t  
going to move again.”

*James and Jimylin Hightower were Waxahachie High School sweethearts. Who will be celebrating 68 years of marriage this coming February. He was the captain of the football team, and as head cheerleader, Jimylin was his biggest fan. His parents were farmers who lived about 6 miles outside the city limits, while Jimylin's family, spanning back three generations, lived in town. His athletic ability and love for football earned him many accolades, which led to several scholarships, but Uncle Sam had different plans for James. "I was drafted into the Army instead of going to college right out of high school," James said. "I thought I was going to play football for Texas Christian University, but I ended up in the Army's field artillery division."*

Since the draft came so soon after James' high school graduation, he and Jimylin decided to marry before he deployed, which was one full year before she herself graduated from WHS. The years following his time in the service are neatly rolled into a short story of sorts. Upon his return, James did finally go to college, but it wasn't to play football. "I studied to be a lawyer," he said. "We moved to Dallas where I practiced law for 50 years."

During their time in Dallas, the couple had three children. Each of the children married and have blessed James and Jimylin with seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. And just like in most long, lasting marriages, life happened. "We lost one daughter," James said. "Our other daughter, Laurie Todd, is a retired teacher from Waxahachie ISD, and our son, Wesley Hightower, is a lawyer in Fort Worth."

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Returning to Waxahachie from the big city was a decision James and Jimylin didn't have to think long and hard about. "We wanted to be closer to our friends," Jimylin explained, "and we liked the country more than the city." Once their decision to move was finalized, Jimylin's quest for finding the perfect floor plan began. "We knew when we built this home we weren't going to move again," she added.

Jimylin saw a couple homes in Dallas



with features she liked. To incorporate these features into one abode, Jimylin hired an architect to draw up the plans. Arlin White, a local builder in Ellis County at the time, was contracted for the job. The building process took a full year from start to finish. The home began with the framework for a porte cochere that James' aunt said resembled the front edifice of a filling station from the old days. The oversized, yet inviting entrance grew to encompass 2,850-square-feet of

living space, including three bedrooms, three bathrooms, a formal dining area, breakfast nook and an open living room with a bank of floor-to-ceiling windows. Beyond the windows lies a lush, green backyard with a bench in the shape of a pig, colorful begonias and a garden beyond the fence.

Chicago brick is found both inside and out, while all the interior woodwork is a light ash. All the main doors inside the home are 2 inches wider than normal

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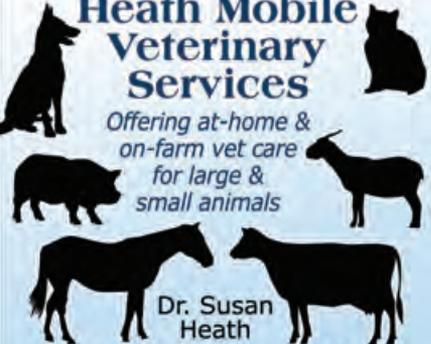
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to allow for wheelchair access, if and when that day should arrive. They each have their own deep, walk-in closet. The master bathroom was specifically designed for James and Jimylin. "The lavatory on my side is higher than the one on her side," James said, explaining Jimylin's idea was to make the sinks convenient for their individual heights.

Jimylin's vision has served them well. The pocket doors in the back guest bedroom offer a unique, space-saving touch from the past while the ceiling fans keep the air circulating no matter what the weather may be like outdoors. Two wood-burning fireplaces, in the master bedroom and the living room, were converted to gas logs several years ago. The story behind the fireplace in the master bedroom is one worth repeating. "Jimylin bought the antique mantel when we were still living in Dallas, long before we decided to move," James said, also indicating the mantel is one of his most special items. "She stored it in the garage. I can't tell you how many times I opened the car door and bumped that mantel."

The jester dolls, crosses, Oriental wood carvings and Santas Jimylin has collected over the years have found new homes on walls, open shelves and wall niches found throughout the home. They both have enjoyed collecting family photographs, but keeping them all in a photo album is out of the question. "I like to look at my family," Jimylin said, as she pointed to the wall on her side of the master bathroom. "These pictures represent both our families."

"I love the pictures of our son," James added, looking toward his side of the bathroom with a sense of pride. "These are photos of our son playing football at Texas Tech University."

In the past several months, James and Jimylin have added a new member



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to their family — Amanda Scott. She is the couple's new caregiver. "We call her Mandy, and she has been such a blessing," James said. "She is willing to do anything we ask her to do."

Jimylin's favorite room is the formal dining area. "I'm not sure why," she admitted. "Maybe it's all the plants and pictures, or it could be the china displayed in the cabinet that once belonged to James' aunt, Louise Cook." The living room is James' favorite room because that's where the TV is, and that's where he spends most of his time. The one room in the home that garners the most attention is the Red Room. David Raney, a New York painter, hand-painted the second guest room right before James and Jimylin moved in. "We've never done anything to this room," James stated. "The paint job is as old as the home, and we have lived here since December 1989."

A turkey James just recently named Tom takes his perch on the hearth in the living room. "I was hunting with several of my buddies. John Roebuck and I stayed behind one morning while the others went out to hunt," James remembered. "John told me to sit down at the table and remove the screen from the window while he made breakfast." That morning, outside the cabin window sat this big turkey, one that John had been feeding. James took his gun, aimed and shot. When the other guys came back and asked James how he got the turkey, James did what he does best. "I told them a big fish tale," he laughed. "It was so much better than the truth."

But the truth of the matter is simple. When Jimylin designed this home, she did so with their future in mind. "She has always been the decorator," James shared. "She knew what we needed and added everything we wanted." **NOW**

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— By Jon Peeler

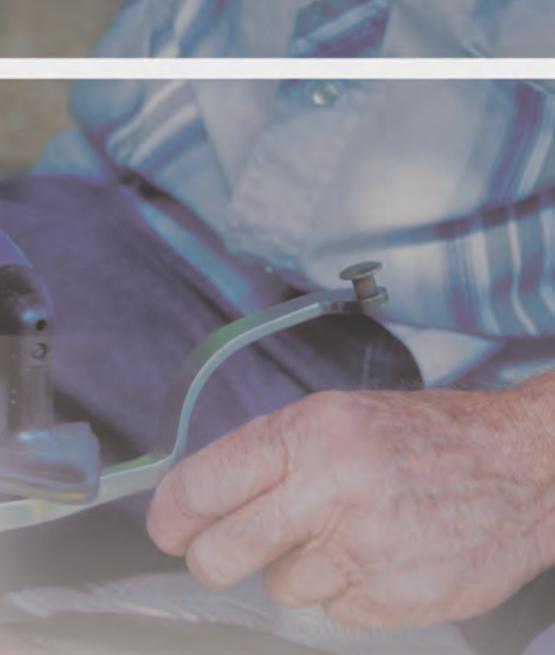


*Sitting in the yard under the graceful branches of a shade tree is easy for Burke Holmes. His property is full of them. The trees vary in type and size, but together they create an inviting environment to view the wild life, both real and welded.*

Burke became an imaginative craftsman at an early age. “I guess I started making yard art when I was about 6,” he said, as he moved his chair from one shade tree to the next as the sun traced across the sky. “I used an old hand saw to cut out wooden airplanes that you could put on a fence post. You could watch the propeller spin.”

Burke’s work has progressed a lot since then, but he is ever mindful to keep it simple. “I make all my work with an arc welder under that tree over there. It’s always been all I needed, so that’s what I use,” he said. Scrap metal and welding rods merely scratch the surface of the types and varieties of material that encompass one of his sculptures. A feeling of imaginative vision shows itself when peering into the eyes of a wrought iron buzzard. The piercing eyes were once bicycle reflectors, while the body was once a shovel.

Although his talents are many, Burke seems unaware of the



The best part of a visit to Burke's place is meeting the man whose ease of life and natural charm is hard to forget.

natural gift with which he's been blessed. Or at the very least he's very humble about them. "They're all made out of things most people just throw way," he said, as he pointed to a huge cactus bush made from old horseshoes that rests underneath one of the many trees. "I spend a lot of time in scrap yards looking for material. But it's not hard," he explained. "Most anything will do if you just know what to look for. I made that coyote and roadrunner out of old rail spikes," he added as he strolled among his collection of creatures.

Burke's eyes light up anytime he talks about his spurs. "I started making spurs for my daughters," he stated, referring to a pair he recently made with a look of justified pride. "It just sort of took off from there."

Lots of love and care go into crafting each pair of sterling silver and copper spurs. "I make them out of whatever material I have and polish them up before I sign them. If you have a pair of my spurs you know it," he said with a smile. "I sign every pair I make. You take a little more pride and take a little more time on something when you're going to put your name on it."

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Burke's handmade spurs have developed quite an underground following with collectors. "I don't know much about the Internet myself, but my daughters help me out by putting them online, and they fetch a premium price."

Those in the market for a set of custom-made spurs are out of luck, as Burke tells them to look elsewhere. In fact, he recoils at the idea. "People have asked me to make custom spurs before, but that's just not how I work," Burke confessed. "When you agree to make



custom spurs, folks have a tendency to tell you how they want them. I can't be creative like that. And then they're always calling asking when they will be done. Some people just don't understand that it takes however long it takes."

If it does take Burke a while to make a set of spurs, all someone would need to do is look at them to see where the time went. Each one is a piece of art, and he takes his art very seriously. "This is where my spur shop is going to be," he explained, as he strolled around his property. "I've never had a shop before," he admitted. "I've always just worked under that tree over there. But with a shop I'll be able to work year round."

Does working so much keep him young? "It's what keeps me alive!" Burke replied quickly with a grin. "My doctor always asks if I'm still working. I tell him



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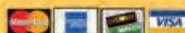
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“Some people just don't understand that it takes however long it takes.”

I work every day I feel able. And I feel able a whole lot more days than I don't. So he tells me to keep at it.”

But despite all of the work and improvements Burke has put into his place, he really sees himself as more of the caretaker for the creatures who lived there before him. “There are all kinds of wildlife out here,” he said with an all-knowing smile. “There are lots of rabbits and squirrels and a good number of roadrunners.” The amount and variety of wildlife shouldn't come as much of a surprise.

As much as Burke has done to improve his place, he has been careful to leave their natural habitat unchanged.

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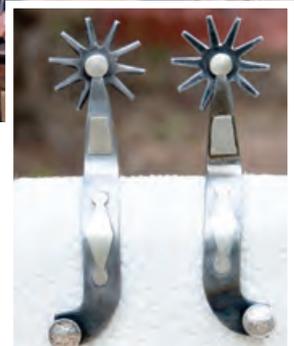
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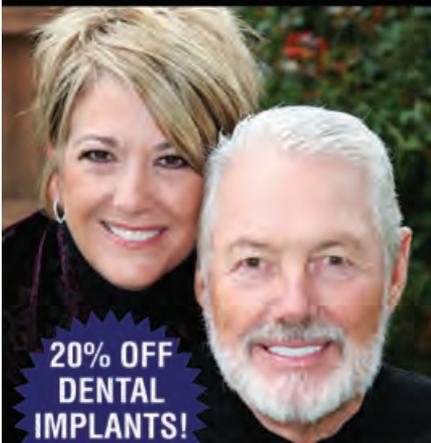


He's a very hospitable host to his wild neighbors. "There was one bunny abandoned by his parents, so I just started taking care of him. I'd leave food out for him, and he would come and play in my yard art," Burke said in much the same tone most parents describe their children. "I called him Harry. But I think he must have found himself a girlfriend. I haven't seen Harry in a few weeks."

If Harry did in fact elope, most of his family stayed behind to keep Burke company. "It's fun to watch them play. And they were all here way before I was, so I don't mind sharing," he said with his charming grin.

A person can get a lot from a visit with Burke. They can see some very imaginative art work, which will leave them smiling as they examine the unique blend of materials used to bring the pieces to life. They can see fine handcrafted spurs Roy Rodgers himself would be proud to wear. And if they look closely, they can observe rabbits, squirrels and roadrunners all playing with each other in a way seldom seen. But by far, the best part of a visit to Burke's place is meeting the man whose ease of life and natural charm is hard to forget. Burke leaves a lasting impression. **NOW**

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# A HAND UP

— By Callie Revell

*John Reynolds has lived in Ellis County since 1998 and works as a landscape architect and project manager for the City of Dallas Parks Department. He knows firsthand the importance of caring about how land is used, and is currently serving as the president of the Ellis County chapter of Habitat for Humanity. He first got involved with the*

*organization after attending a meeting in Midlothian when the chapter was first founded. Since then, he has assisted with construction on three houses. He meets with his fellow board members once a month to discuss how the organization can fill a vital need in Ellis County by providing adequate shelter for families in need.*



“Habitat for Humanity provides home ownership opportunities for people who might not have one otherwise by offering them a chance to use their own sweat equity,” board member Josh Davis explained, referencing the policy of Habitat for Humanity International that generally requires homeowners to put in 500 work hours toward building their



home. This encourages homeowners chosen by Habitat for Humanity to receive a house to be involved in every step of their home’s construction.

Habitat for Humanity does not necessarily seek to fight homelessness, but rather help those living in unsafe or inadequate housing to build a reliable home. The structure of the program means volunteers do not renovate houses, but build new ones, because a smaller chapter like Ellis County’s does not have the resources to do repairs, as well as construction. “It’s for people who can’t get financing by conventional means,” board member Kay Willingham said. “People think we’re giving away the house, but that’s not what it is. It’s not a giveaway.”

“It’s getting a hand up, not a handout,” added board member Teresa McNiel, who emphasized the houses are not free to the new owners. Instead, Habitat for Humanity allows those in need to buy a home, many for the first time.

“They do get a mortgage. It’s interest-free and at a rate less than what you would pay for a similarly sized home,” John explained.

“Most people don’t know that Habitat for Humanity is their own mortgage company,” Teresa added. “They fund their own houses. The homeowners pay Habitat, so the money from the houses

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we've built is there to build another house. Most of these people have never owned a house before. We're trying to educate them about home ownership."

The goal of Habitat for Humanity is simple: revitalize communities by eliminating substandard housing. "Our goal is to see a family grow and reach the



heights they want to in their home," said board member Felecia Warner. "Focusing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, we're starting off with shelter, a basic need of all human beings. That's why Habitat has grown the way it has since it was founded, because we are supplying that basic need of humans — shelter." However, she added that the houses are modest and described them as "accessible, affordable, and appropriate. We're not going to build a house with room for a pool and a pony," Felecia laughed. "We're building in economically disadvantaged areas, and it's revitalizing the neighborhoods."

Throughout the year, the Ellis County chapter of Habitat for Humanity participates in many fundraising events,



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including the Belk Charity Sale and the annual Lawn & Garden Expo hosted by the Ellis County Master Gardeners. "Getting the word out is really important to us," Felecia said. "We're trying to raise funds for our next family."

The main event they are hosting this fall is the Festival of Trees, a Christmas celebration that will help fund the construction of a new house for a deserving family. "It will be an event the weekend before Thanksgiving this year, and we ask local businesses and individuals to donate decorated Christmas trees that are then auctioned off to benefit Habitat," Willingham explained. "We



need donors to donate trees. We'll be looking for sponsors and volunteers to help with the event."

"We do want the public to come. It's open to the public," Teresa said, reiterating that community support is vital to the success of any nonprofit organization. An organization like Habitat for Humanity gives much to the community, and needs support in return.

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"I think a lot of people don't understand what it is," John said, expressing a desire to increase the visibility of the organization and educating the public about its mission. He remembered a certain project that demonstrated the great things Habitat for Humanity can do for a family. "I worked on the most recent project almost

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from the start. That particular family was there almost on a daily basis. Part of it was to get their hours, but part of it was also because they took pride in building their own house. Actually building a home and seeing who it's for is a very rewarding experience."

"I remember building a home for a handicapped individual, a single mom with two children who unfortunately had become paralyzed," Felecia said. She mentioned special cases like this one, which required the organization to construct their first handicap-accessible house, help Habitat for Humanity grow to better serve the community.

The Ellis County chapter of Habitat for Humanity meets the last Tuesday



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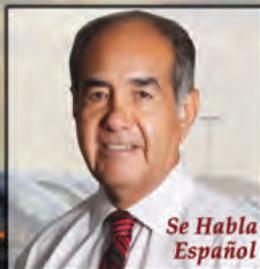
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of each month at Ferris Heights United Methodist Church at 108 Center Street. “Our monthly meetings are open to the public,” Felecia said. “We welcome all visitors to come and bring their ideas, to share what they’d like to see.”

“People can come to the meetings and become board members if they’d like,” Kay added. “We’re always looking for board members.”

“Right now, we’re looking for donations, and fundraising events like the Festival of Trees help build up our bank account to start our next house with plenty of money, so we don’t get to the point where we’re ready to put in cabinets and there isn’t enough money to buy cabinets. Once we start the house, we’ll need volunteers to help us build,” Kay added. Habitat for Humanity is always looking for volunteers to help build houses for families in need. A background in construction is helpful, but not required. They are also looking for a project manager for their upcoming house.

Habitat for Humanity is an organization that will hopefully continue to positively impact lives in Ellis County for years to come. Sometimes, all it takes to give someone in need a hand up is to raise your hand in the air and say, “Yes, I will help.”

*Editor’s Note: A schedule of fundraising events and building projects can be found at [www.elliscountyhfb@gmail.com](http://www.elliscountyhfb@gmail.com). You can also contact the local Habitat for Humanity office directly at (972) 937-2797. **NOW***

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# METAL EXPERTS

*Metal Mart is offering some of the shortest lead times in the industry.*

— By Sandra Strong

Metal Mart has earned a reputation for quality, both in craftsmanship and customer service, since opening its doors in 1986. What began as a retail factory outlet for material manufactured by their parent company, McElroy Metal Mill, located in Bossier City, Louisiana, has grown to include 41 current Metal Mart locations in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Colorado and New Mexico.

Metal Mart opened for business in Waxahachie in July 1986, as the third location of 41. As a retailer of metal building materials, Metal Mart specializes in metal roofing, metal buildings, carports, patio covers and other construction projects that use steel as a key component. Their product line includes metal roofing and siding panels, purlins, wide-flange

beams, square and rectangular tubing, metal trusses, insulation, walk doors, ridge vents, skylights, rollup doors, fasteners, pipe flashing, sealants, tools, structural steel, hardware and a large selection of accessories.

“We carry a complete line of bolt-together, pre-engineered metal buildings,” said Clif Loveless, general manager in charge of all Metal Mart operations. “Our company-owned fabrication shop allows us to offer custom buildings designed specifically to meet the customer’s size and engineering requirements, with some of the shortest lead times in the industry.”

“We have a sheet metal fabrication shop on location with the latest electronic fabricating equipment capable of shearing and bending 10-foot material,” explained Waxahachie Metal Mart

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store manager, C.J. Sparger. "We stock bare galvalume, plus 14 colors of flat sheets. We offer fast service, with most trim orders available in 24 hours or less."

As a geographically diversified company, Metal Mart prides itself in selling to contractors, do-it-yourselfers, farmers, ranchers, schools, municipalities and service companies. No customer is too large or too small for C.J. and his staff. "We are open to the public," C.J. added. "We also offer free price quotes, technical assistance, and there is no minimum order for any of our materials."

McElroy Metal Mill is a family-owned business. After 50 years, they are still one of the oldest and largest privately-owned metal component manufacturers in the United States. Clif, a lifelong Waxahachie resident and the first store manager for the Waxahachie location, believes the company's people-friendly, laid back business approach offers a unique atmosphere conducive to long-term employment. "The average tenure for store managers is 12 years," he stated. "We have several who have been with Metal Mart for over 20 years." Clif has been with the company for 27 years.

John Baker is the area manager for the Waxahachie location. He resides in Wichita Falls, Texas, and has been with the company for 19 years. John managed the Wichita Falls location before his promotion to area manager.

Senior assistant manager, Duke Ostrander, is a WHS graduate and began his journey with Metal Mart in 1995. Over the years, Duke has worked in numerous locations within the company as a fill-in and has also trained many new employees. "He is known as our goodwill ambassador for all of his good deeds over the years," Clif added.

C.J. is a native of DeLeon, Texas, a Tarleton State University graduate and has been with the company for 13 years. Before moving to Waxahachie to take over the managerial duties, he worked for Metal Mart facilities in Bryan, Texas, and Gonzales, Louisiana. He is very knowledgeable about the products he represents. "Working for Metal Mart is fun," he shared. "It's gratifying to see projects come to fruition." **NOW**

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Bonnie Underkercher, a professional make-up artist, puts the final touches on Piper Frye's geisha girl face at Shelley's Hair.



A ribbon cutting is held for Lost & Found Trendy Thrift benefiting Fulfilled Outreach Ministries.



A ribbon cutting is held for Crooked Creek Farms located on Main Street.



Case, Abigail, Benjamin and Eleanore, children of Robby and Vanessa Kinsala, pose for a pic on a sunny afternoon.



Yesenia Rodriguez, 18 months old, plays at Subway while waiting to share dinner with her family.



Women of Ferris Heights United Methodist Church in Waxahachie prepare a quilt for auctioning during the upcoming Annual Lord's Day Festival.



WISD Interim Superintendent David Truitt addresses those in attendance at an Adopt-a-Class meeting.



Excitement builds at the Waxahachie Downtown Merchants Association meeting.

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# How to Get the Best Auto Loan

*Tips to help car buyers optimize the value of their auto loans*

After a long search, you've finally found a car that suits your preferences, but this vehicle is just outside your price range. However, auto loans are available — you just need to make sure you get the best one.

Getting an auto loan can be fast and simple, but those who don't do their homework in advance might pay the price down the line. Here are some tips from Bankrate.com to help a car buyer get the best auto loan quickly.

### Make a Budget

Car buyers should have the total amount they are willing to pay in mind prior to starting their search for a vehicle. While many choices are available, those who are interested in owning a car should review their short- and long-term finances, so they can make informed decisions.

Studying the length of the auto loan is also important. Car buyers should feel comfortable with all the terms of the loan and, if there's a problem, consider alternatives to ensure they get the money they need.

### Evaluate a Credit Report

An auto loan can be tricky if you've encountered credit problems in the past. The best way to overcome various credit issues, however, is to understand why they exist in the first place. As a diligent car buyer, an individual can take steps to improve his or her credit score. Get a copy of your credit report, and if a credit score is lower than expected, you can boost this figure by paying off past debts.

It often takes time to improve a credit score, but the long-term benefits of doing so are worthwhile, especially for car

buyers. Do the legwork before purchasing a vehicle. In the long run, it could help you strengthen your credit score.

### Negotiate When Possible

Getting preapproved for an auto loan from numerous lenders can benefit car buyers when they visit dealers. Being able to negotiate with sellers is crucial, and those who have leverage can make the best deals possible.

Car buyers might feel pressured when visiting dealers, but people who have the necessary financing could gain a significant advantage. Those who can optimize their interactions with sellers may benefit, as they will be able to negotiate the best auto loan terms and ensure that they can pay off these allowances without delay.

When shopping around for the best auto loan rates, remember to do your research and don't overlook financing opportunities with community banks and credit unions in your neighborhood. They're frequently better than a car dealership can offer. Some financial institutions will preapprove loans with no obligation to use them, so you can compare rates once you talk to the dealership. **NOW**

*Aaron Penny is the branch manager at the Neighborhood Credit Union in Waxahachie.*

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# Planting for Spring

Every October, it seems as if I talk about it being the time to plant. Although it does seem odd, it really is the right time for planting almost everything. I found a sack of bulbs in my carport closet that need to go into the ground, and I am expecting an order of 200 bulbs to arrive any day. They will all need to be planted in order for us to enjoy the blooms in the spring. I have several small trees growing in my beds around the house that I would have dug up and cut out if a friend hadn't asked me for trees. I told her to send her husband over in October, and we would transplant the trees into their front yard. The trees will have a much better chance of surviving than those planted in the late spring or summer.

Planting in the fall gives the plants and trees a chance to develop roots and strength before the cold sets in. Allowing them this extra time to establish themselves also gives them an extra edge when the next summer hits. When planting a new tree, be careful to plant it just above the soil line. (Remember the ground will compact after planting.) Heavy mulch will help protect the roots from the drop in temperature as the winter sets in. This also slows the water evaporation in the root zone as our spring rains warm up the ground.

If you are planting seeds or small starter plants, read the directions on the packet or do a Google search to find planting directions. Watch to avoid planting too deeply. After the seeds come up, plan to water every day for a week to give them a good start. Small plants need about a 1-inch layer of mulch to start, and after they get several new leaves, you can increase the layer of mulch to 2 or 3 inches. Lettuce, radishes, parsley, spinach, English peas, turnips and carrots are all good cool weather crops and do well from seeds. Leeks, onions, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, chard and collard greens probably will do much better if you start with small plants. They all tolerate the cooler temperatures well and will tolerate a light freeze and continue to grow.

Good luck with your winter plantings. Check with the Ellis County Master Gardeners at (972) 825-5175 for more specifics on fall gardening plants for our area. **NOW**

*Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.*

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# Calendar

OCTOBER 2013

## October 5

Dentistry From the Heart: 7:30 a.m. registration begins for the first 50 patients, Waxahachie Family Dentistry, 125 Park Place Blvd. Special free event is for people ages 18 and over. Patients will be seen on a first come first served basis. Services include a choice of filling, extraction or cleaning. The event is slated to be held annually. Please see ad in the magazine for event details or visit [www.waxfamdent.com](http://www.waxfamdent.com).

Waxahachie Chamber Auction, *The Godfather*: 6:00-10:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. For tickets and info, call (972) 937-2390 or visit [waxahachiechamber.com](http://waxahachiechamber.com).

## October 12

Junk in the Trunk Sale: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie.

## October 17

Senior Services and Health Expo: 8:00-11:30 a.m., Waxahachie Senior Activity Center, 122 Park Hills Dr. For details on how to showcase your organization, call the center at (469) 309-4280.

## October 18 — 19

Waxahachie Lions Club Mini Grand Prix: downtown Waxahachie.

## October 19

Ride of Champions: 3:00 p.m., Campfire Creek Therapeutic Riding Center, 767 Bethel Rd. RSVP would be appreciated, but not required. For more information, call (469) 337-4569 or (972) 937-7265 or email [oliver@ectisp.net](mailto:oliver@ectisp.net). Visit [www.campfirecreek.org](http://www.campfirecreek.org) for directions.

## October 25

Texans Against Breast Cancer Annual "Kickin' for a Cause" fundraiser: 7:00-11:00 p.m., Western Kountry Klub, Hwy 287 and Lakeway Road, Midlothian. Tickets are \$15 at the door. For more information, call (214) 205-1798. For reservations, call (817) 800-4585.

## October 25, 26, 27

Waxahachie Community Theatre presents *Cinderella*. **Friday** and **Saturday**, 7:30 p.m.; **Sunday**, 2:30 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium, Getzendenan Park. Tickets are \$12 for seniors/students, \$15 for adults. Tickets are also available at the Waxahachie Chamber of

Commerce, Ellis County Museum and the offices of Jerry Ellis, DDS in Midlothian. For more details, call (972) 646-1050 or email [wct.texas@gmail.com](mailto:wct.texas@gmail.com).

## November 1— 2

Heaven's Front Porch: **Friday**, 7:00 p.m.; **Saturday**, 3:00 p.m., historic Chautauqua Auditorium. For more information, contact artistic director R. G. Huff at (972) 923-2709 or visit [www.WaxaOFS.com](http://www.WaxaOFS.com).

## November 2

Pre-Christmas Craft Fair: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Buffalo Creek Baptist Church, 2032 S. Hwy 77. For more information, contact Judy at [italygoatlady@yahoo.com](mailto:italygoatlady@yahoo.com) or call her at (469) 335-3573.

## November 9

Jog for Dogs 5K Benefit Run: 8:00 a.m., Midlothian ISD Multi-Purpose Stadium. Proceeds go toward the cost of Joshua Seller's diabetic alert service god. Visit [www.facebook.com/jogfordogsmidlothiantx](http://www.facebook.com/jogfordogsmidlothiantx) for further details.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com](mailto:sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com).*



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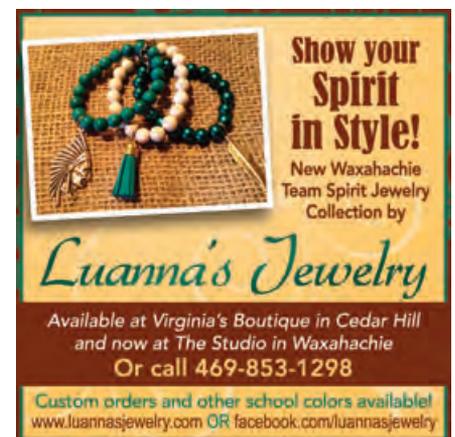
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## Be Breast Aware



Besides fall, football and Halloween fun, each year October marks Breast Cancer Awareness month. It's a good time to reflect on the millions of American women who have battled the disease — remembering those who lost their struggle and celebrating those who are now survivors.

One in eight American women will fall victim to breast cancer in her lifetime. However, through advanced detection technology and better treatments, more women than ever before are surviving their fight. The best way to beat breast cancer, though, is to detect it early. For women with no family history or risk factors for the disease, that means:

- **Monthly self-exams starting at age 20:** Check your breasts every month after your menstrual cycle, or on a date you'll remember, such as the first of every month.

- **Clinical breast exam starting at age 20:** Your doctor should examine your breasts every three years up to age 40 and yearly after that, or as recommended based on your risk factors.

- **Annual mammogram starting at age 40:** Often, doctors recommend a baseline mammogram between age 35 and 40 and yearly mammograms starting at age 40, or sooner if your risk is higher due to family history or other factors.

Should a mammogram reveal a suspicious area, a breast ultrasound or

breast MRI may be ordered to further evaluate the abnormality. A breast MRI scan can also screen women who are newly diagnosed with cancer and those with a 20- to 25-percent lifetime risk of the disease. If a woman has a suspicious mass, typically a biopsy — taking a sample from the lump to check for signs of cancer — is recommended.

### Risk Reduction

While there is no surefire way to prevent breast cancer, there are ways to manage risk. The most important steps match the healthy living advice everyone has heard many times before:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise
- Don't smoke
- Eat less fat, especially saturated fat
- Eat lean meat

But there are other ways to decrease breast cancer risk that many women may not be aware of, but over which they may be able to exercise a measure of control:

- Have first child before age 30.
- Reduce use of birth control pills.
- Avoid hormone replacement therapy if possible.
- Breastfeed for one-and-a-half to two years.
- Limit alcohol to less than one drink a day.

Women with a strong family history of breast cancer may want to consider genetic testing to see if they have the BRCA 1 and/or BRCA 2 mutation — which indicates a high likelihood of developing breast cancer — as well as other genetic mutations that correlate with a heightened risk of breast cancer. **NOW**

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## In The Kitchen With Shirley Jones

— By *Sandra Strong*

As the third of 12 children, Shirley Jones had her share of responsibilities growing up. “Chores and cooking were as natural as breathing in our house,” she shared. Preparing family meals became a special event, and many times friends would show up to share the family’s table. “Mom had the gift of multiplication, like Jesus when he fed the multitude with two fish and five loaves,” Shirley said. “Everyone who came to the house always left satisfied.”

Today, Shirley’s family and friends enjoy the heritage her mom left behind, but cooking large portions is still a habit Shirley is trying to break. “I also enjoy canning and making jellies and jams,” she said. “I’m a teacher by day and a canner by night.” **NOW**

### On-the-go Baked Chicken

- 6 pieces dark chicken**
- 2 Tbsp. seasoning salt**
- 2 carrots, chunked**
- 2 medium potatoes**
- 1/2 each red, yellow and orange bell peppers, chopped**
- 1/2 yellow onion, chopped**
- 2 Tbsp. corn starch**
- 1 cup chicken broth**
- 1/2 cup Jams, Jellies & More tomato jelly**
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**

- 1.** Coat the chicken with seasoning salt. Place into a 13x9x2-inch baking dish. Arrange vegetables around the chicken.
- 2.** Blend corn starch, broth, jelly, milk, salt and pepper over medium heat, bringing to a boil. Stir over medium heat until

sauce thickens.

- 3.** Pour sauce over the chicken and vegetables; cover with foil.
- 4.** Bake at 350 F for 55 minutes.

### Peach Smoothie

- 1 cup coconut milk**
- 1 pint peach preserves**
- 2 ripe bananas**
- 1 cup vanilla yogurt**
- 1/2 cup 2 percent milk**

- 1.** Combine all ingredients in blender; blend until fully mixed. Serve in a chilled glass.

### Tamale Pie

Serves 4-6.

- 1 lb. ground beef or ground turkey**
- 1/2 cup yellow onion, chopped**

- 1 Tbsp. cumin**
- 1/4 cup yellow and green pepper, chopped**
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning mix**
- 1 pint salsa**
- 1/4 cup black olives, chopped (optional)**
- 1 tsp. jalapeño jelly**
- 1 10-oz. can cream style corn**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- 1 pkg. cornbread mix**
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded**
- 1 cup sour cream**

- 1.** Brown meat and onion in skillet; drain grease. Add all but last 3 ingredients in bowl; add meat mixture. Stir well; pour into casserole dish.
- 2.** Mix cornbread according to pkg. directions; pour over mixture in casserole dish.
- 3.** Bake at 350 F until cornbread is done. Top with sour cream and shredded cheese.

### Red Beans and Cornbread

#### Red beans:

- 1 lb. dried pinto beans**
- 6-8 cups water**
- 2 small ham hocks**
- 1 Tbsp. sugar**
- 2 Tbsp. chili powder**
- 1 small onion**

#### Cornbread:

- 2 1/2 cups self-rising corn meal**
- 1/4 cup flour**
- 1 Tbsp. sugar**
- 1 egg**
- 1 cup milk**

- 1.** For beans: Sort beans; cover with water and soak beans in medium-sized bowl for 2 hours up to overnight; drain.
- 2.** Place the beans in a medium-sized pot filled with 6-8 cups of fresh water; add all ingredients except onion; cover. Cook over medium heat; add onion after 30 minutes. Continue to simmer on medium for another 2 hours. Beans are ready when they are tender and juice is thick.
- 3.** For cornbread: Mix all dry ingredients; add egg and milk; mix well. Pour into greased cast iron skillet.
- 4.** Bake at 375 F for 20 minutes.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

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