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**Lift Off for
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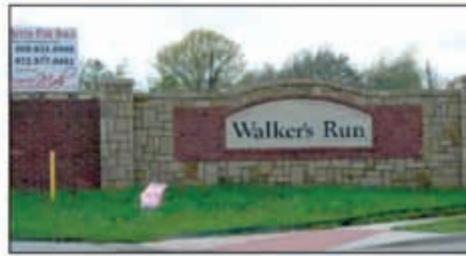
Ideal family home situated on corner lot in established neighborhood within walking distance to fitness and tennis center. Built in 1977 and updated in 2007 this 1969 sq.ft. home has 4 bdrm, 2 bth, 2 car garage and 2 car carport, w/bp. Call Laurie for a showing. 469-831-6946



What an Extreme Makeover! This 1978 home with 2003 sq.ft. has been renovated inside and out. Home has 3 bdrm, 2bth,w/bp, formal din & eat-in-kitchen, updated appl. convy with home, 2 car garage & 3 car carport with workshop, office & storage. A lot of house for the money! Call Laurie for a showing. 469-831-6946



Beautiful 2006 custom built home in prestigious Walker's Run Subdivision. This 2386 sq.ft. home boasts 3 bdrm, 2.5 bath, 3 car garage, stone w/bp and the conveniences of town. Walking distance to exemplary elementary school. Call Laurie for more info and showing.



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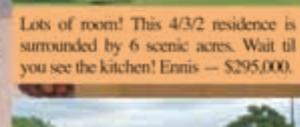
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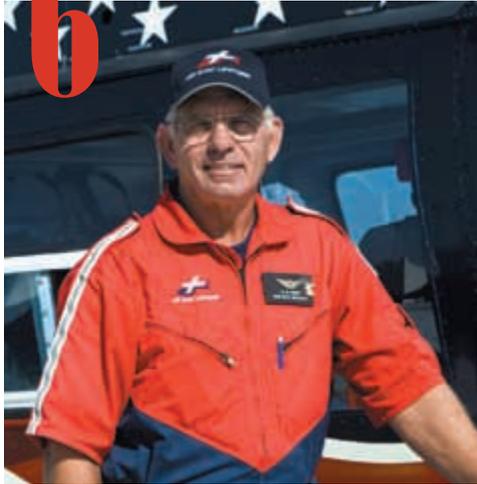
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Photo by Terri Ozymy.

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Ennis NOW

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Here we are — beginning another exciting season together. Whatever 2008 holds for you, I hope we can frequently give you an entertaining break as you read the articles and ads in *EnnisNOW Magazine*.

Start January off on a high note by finding out who is manning those helpful helicopters that are providing emergency aid for our area. Speaking of aircraft, did you know that a world-class airplane painter makes his home in Ennis? Turn to ArtsNOW to read more.

Flapjack Fever is here again! Buy your Flapjack Fever tickets from local fifth-grade students as a continued show of support for Intermediate Principal Lori Redning. She is meeting the challenges of this school year with a smile on her face. When you read about how much fun her innovative Weekly Kids News Network group is having, you may wish you were in fifth grade again. Shall we all try to turn our challenges into opportunities this year?

Happy New Year!
Kelly Kovar
EnnisNOW Editor

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Lift Off for Lifesaving

— By Kelly Kovar

Don Coker has spent many years in rewarding fields such as law enforcement and corporate helicopter piloting. His current undertaking, as the Ennis Air Evac Lifeteam base pilot supervisor, is the most gratifying of his career. “It is a very rewarding job,” Don said, “We opened here at the Ennis hospital in mid-July and it is a good experience starting up a new base.”

As one of four Ennis-based helicopter pilots, Don teams with four registered nurses and four paramedics to provide rapid transport when there is a critical medical situation. “Pilots work 12-hour shifts, seven-days-on and seven-days-off,” Don explained. “The medical crew works 24-hour shifts. As a result, I get to work with all of the nurses and paramedics. We really operate as a team.” Don’s main interest is flying. “I love to fly, and I’m kind of a workaholic, so on my days off, I like to pick up extra shifts when they are available. With 11 other bases in Texas, there are often shifts when people need to take vacation.”

Don is used to traveling around Texas. “I am from Corpus Christi, and I started out at age 20 working for the Texas Department of Public Safety (TDPS) as a state trooper in the Houston area.” He first spent eight years as a highway patrolman. “I really wanted to learn to fly,

but I thought flying was a rich man’s sport. My DPS partner had a pilot’s license, and he told me that I could finance flying lessons with a second job. So, [I] got a job as bank security and I earned money for lessons.” After Don got his pilot’s

license, he became a state trooper helicopter pilot.

“As a pilot/inspector for DPS, I flew rescue missions. You get to really test your skills on rescue missions. I picked people up that were trapped on roofs from hurricanes or floods. That is a really great feeling.” He also was assigned to fly dignitaries on occasion. “One of my very first assignments was to fly the secretary of energy to a geothermal well outside of Houston.



That was an experience. I just thought, ‘Here am I, a regular guy, taking a United States cabinet member in my helicopter.’” He even flew Bing Crosby’s wife once. “I picked her up at the

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airport and took her to a charity event.”

After six years as a DPS pilot, Don made the leap to the corporate world, as a helicopter pilot for Grant Corporation and then Mac-Carey Properties. He was drawn to this area when he accepted a pilot position with



R. E. Hable Construction Company in Corsicana. “We moved to this area, and bought a house in Blooming Grove.” Don reared twin daughters and a son there. “They turned out to be great kids. I am extremely blessed,” Don said. Don decided to go back into law enforcement, since he really wanted the stability of a long-term job while he was rearing the children. “I spent 14 years with the Navarro County Sheriff’s Office. At the same time, I did maintenance for the Blooming Grove Independent School District, helping build the baseball and football fields, and working security for ballgames.” While the children were growing up, Don was vice president of the Corsicana Girls’ Softball League. “My twins, Brittney and Courtney, played high school softball and they went to state all four years. They graduated second and third in their senior class and went to college on academic and softball scholarships. I really like getting to see my son, Clay,

and his wife, a school teacher, a lot now, because he lives close to me. Clay enjoys working in the Avalon area as a heavy equipment operator.”

With the young Cokers on the way to adulthood, Don began to explore his flying options again. “I thought I



had put that behind me. I really never expected to fly again.” Then, a former DPS state police pilot recommended Don as a helicopter pilot with an air ambulance service called Critical Air. “They hired me, and I really liked working for Critical Air; they are good people.” After three years, when Air Evac Lifeteam bought Critical Air, Don stayed on and eventually became a base pilot supervisor in West, Texas. “Air Evac Lifeteam told me they were going to open the Ennis base, and asked me if I would like the job,” he said. Don is happy for the shorter commute to work. His wife, Terri, also works in Ennis, at Alliance Data. Don and Terri have just been married a few years, and Don is now the proud dad of two grown stepdaughters, Jennifer and Corey.

“Air Evac is very safety conscious,” Don said. “We are very community-minded. What makes it possible for us to do our job is our cooperation with local firemen, policemen and medical

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personnel.” The team’s base-life at the Ennis hospital functions much like a fire station. “We each have our own crew-quarter room, and we have a living area where we have a refrigerator and a microwave. During off-times, we can work on continuing education, but when a call comes in, which is usually from one to three times a day, our job is to be ready to go.”



The team makes transports from hospital to hospital whenever a patient needs to be moved quickly. They also answer emergency calls, especially providing rapid transport for people in rural areas. “I like scene calls the best. It may be at night, and we go into different kinds of loading zones (LZs). I have an 875,000 candlepower light to use for illumination to watch for wires, cell towers and obstacles. We move into the LZ and orbit a couple of times to make sure it is safe to land. Then, the medical team gets out quickly and goes to work.”

Some calls are especially gratifying. “We got a call to transfer a lady from Hillsboro to Waco. I landed, and the medical crew went inside the hospital. Before transport, she went into cardiac arrest. The Air Evac medical crew saved her life.”

“Flying is a passion for me. I’ve really enjoyed it — this is a good occupation. I am working with true professionals; it is a great experience to be involved in seeing someone’s life saved.” **ANDY**



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McBeth Spencer's career began at Ennis Care Center 40 years ago. She has never been hurt on the job. She has never been late and she has never missed a day. She also added that she has never been written up, nor has she ever received a pink slip. "Ennis Care Center is the best place to work," she said, with the smile her patients and co-workers have grown accustomed to over the years. "but of course, I've never worked anywhere else!"

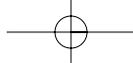
Her first day on the job as a nurses aide with no previous experience, and the hundreds that followed, began at 5 a.m. The facility, under the administration of Dan and Elsie Pomykal, had just celebrated its second anniversary. "I was so scared that first day," she reminisced. "They told me I did a good job. I loved everybody and everybody seemed to love me."

Under the Pomykal's direction and with the help of a seasoned aid, McBeth learned her job and performed on a daily basis to the very best of her ability. So good in fact, that she was Ennis Care Center's first employee of the year, as well as the first nurse's aid of the year. McBeth is celebrating what many would see as her retirement party, when in reality she is making the necessary preparations to transition into her new position as hydration aid. This job change will cut her hours down some, while still giving her the opportunity to care for 25 patients in the North Hall where she has been stationed throughout her 40-year career. At age 70 and after rearing five children of her own, McBeth said her new job will be much easier, but it will keep her in contact with all the people she has grown to love. She will also be the first to admit that she has given her life and gotten back just as much, if not a little bit more.

One of the fondest memories that still comes to McBeth's mind is the time she and several co-workers got caught behind the soda machine. "We used to hide behind the soda machine and drink our sodas," she remembered. "Our administrator always wore high-heeled shoes, so we could always hear her coming in time to get back to work." One particular day still stands out in McBeth's mind because it was the day the administrator had bought a pair of new, low-heeled shoes. She smiles as she says, "We never heard her coming!"

Troy Washburn, Administrator
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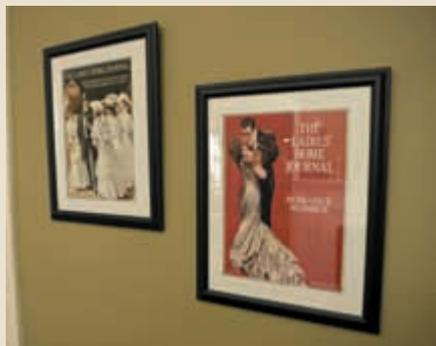


A Restorative Journey

— By Sandra McIntosh

At Home With
Rusty and Linda

Rudd

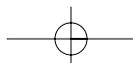


Living in a rental home on Highway 34 for a year while their new home was being refurbished to its original state was part of the plan for Rusty and Linda Rudd. In retrospect, settling into the three-bedroom, two-and-one-half-bath home, originally built by the five Sanger brothers of Sanger-Harris department store fame, turned out to be the easy part of their journey through the restoration process. “This is our 10th home together. I’ve designed and we’ve built nine homes from the ground up since getting married on [a] Valentine’s Day,” Linda said. “The styles have ranged from log cabin to Victorian, traditional and rustic western. This is the first home we’ve ever refurbished, and it feels the very best.”

The long driveway leading to the home kept drawing Linda back time and time again. As a natural decorator, she could envision the “diamond in the rough,” although Rusty was unable to wrap his mind around what he considered to be an insurmountable undertaking. For several months, Rusty remained on the “picket”



fence, unsure of purchasing the 2,000-square-foot house that came with two overgrown acres, a two-car garage and wood floors which he described as “wavy.” That same picket fence kept calling Linda back. “The setting just felt like home,” she explained. “The flagpole and uneven sidewalks, which still remain untouched, add character, while the jonquils, when in full bloom, line both sides of the driveway.”



It's a warm home that takes me back to my roots."

Linda made several trips to the house before she seriously began talking to Rusty about the possibility of one day calling it home. It was during these early visits that she mapped the home's layout on a grid. "I drew out the floor plan as it actually was and started making changes," she said. "I



Linda did not leave out a single detail when it came to creating the comfortable, cozy atmosphere she had envisioned when first driving down the lane nearly a year ago.

had to know what I was working with so I could get bids."

Rusty, going against his better judgment, gave in to his wife's wishes. "I followed her," he said, smiling at his wife of nearly 27 years. When asked if he would do it all over again, he answered quickly and firmly in the negative. It was at this point that Linda got the chance to smile back at her husband, because she knew what he was recalling when he said, "No." Before they were able to gut the home's interior, the vegetation and brush which had overtaken the exterior following the passing of Wilma Nesuda, the home's former owner, had to be removed. That, in and of itself, was a daunting task, but it helped prepare Rusty and Linda for the challenges that followed.

In her schematic drawings, Linda removed the "skinny" doorways throughout the home and incorporated windows in the formal dining room

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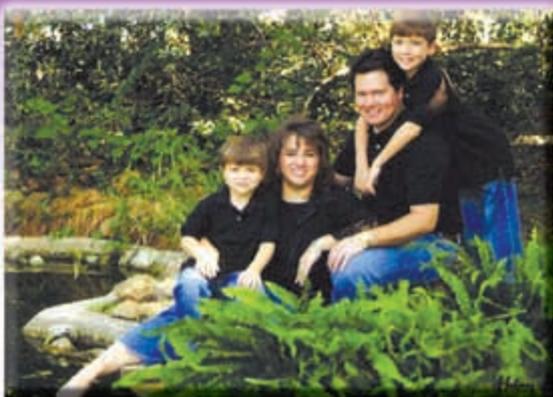
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designed from mission doors that had once been found in an old mansion in Fort Worth, Texas. She opened up the dining room and kitchen by removing a large portion of the main wall which separated the two rooms prior to the makeover, turning it into a serving bar with aged, black granite countertops matching those found throughout the kitchen and butler's pantry. Most of her ideas remained intact, even after she got a local involved. "The only way Rusty would agree to buying and restoring the house was if we hired someone to do the work," Linda said. "Thankfully, the home had good bones, and we were able to keep the skeleton of the home intact."

It was important to Linda to keep the home's integrity intact, while restoring it to its original, primitive, cottage-like state. "I wanted the home to look and feel like it did when it was built in 1920," she said, referring to the salvaged beadboard and the white octagon tile floors in both the master bath and the utility room she was successfully able to incorporate into the home. The original pine floors were replaced with salvaged oak flooring. Doorways were also enlarged. "We recycled the baseboards that we removed from around the doors," Linda said, as Rusty gave a heavy sigh, remembering too well the job of cutting those baseboards into 36-inch lengths to create wainscoting in the weight room located at



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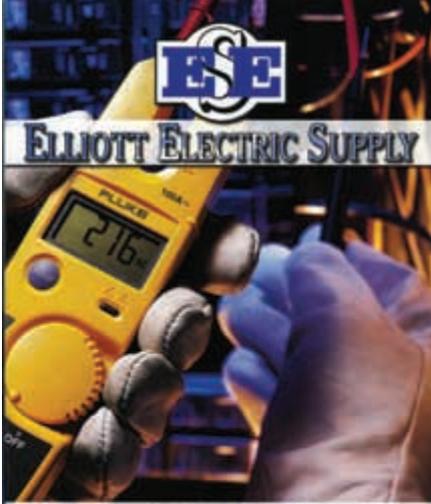
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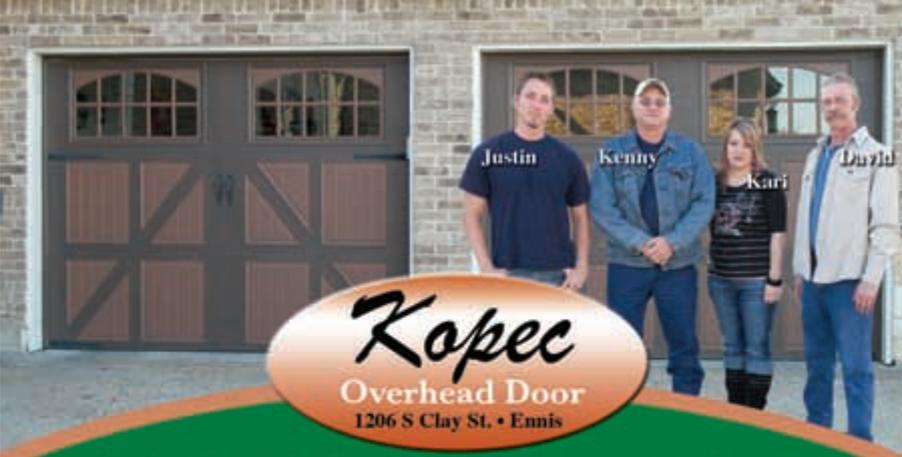
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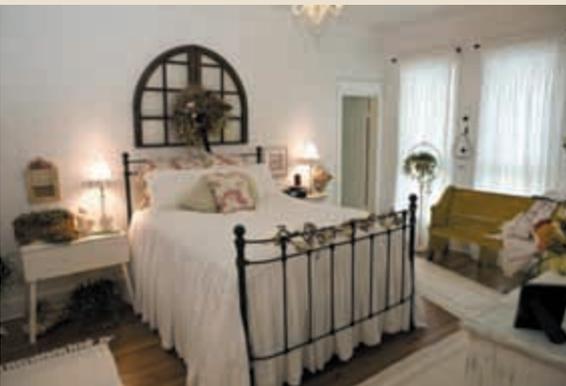
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the north side of the garage.

Linda's love for red and black is found in every room throughout the house, from the Ralph Lauren red walls in the dining room to the touches of black and red found in the master



bedroom. On first glance, the master bedroom appears to be all white. "Some people have said the master bedroom is too feminine," Linda said. "I'm a romantic, and I think it's a romantic room." Always the jokester, Rusty laughingly replied, "Me, too!"

Several very special wall hangings in the dining room, as well as the family room, add a touch of red and black while also holding great sentimental



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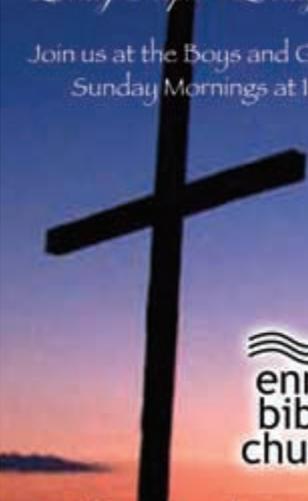
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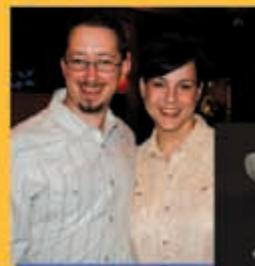
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value to the couple. "Six of the framed magazines belonged to Rusty's late mom, Robbie," Linda said, fondly remembering the mother-in-law who was more like a best friend. "I've mixed Robbie's 29 cent magazines, with the mailing labels still attached, with a couple of framed magazine covers dating back to 1908 and 1910 that I found on a shopping trip to Round Top, [Texas]."

So many wonderful things are found at the Rudd home from the dining room table which was handcrafted exclusively for the room, to the cabinetry in the kitchen and the unique wall treatment in the master bath. Linda did not leave out a single detail when it came to



creating the comfortable, cozy atmosphere she had envisioned when first driving down the lane nearly a year ago. The backyard is also a place where memories are being made. "We removed the screened-in porch and added the patio. We drink our morning coffee with Chip and Dale," Rusty said, referring to the wildlife that makes daily appearances. "When weather permits, we eat our evening meals out here, too."

As a blended family with five grown children, three being the well-known

Rudd triplets, Linda has worked very hard at keeping the family unit together. "Family is very important," she said, adding that if you were to look the word "mother" up in the dictionary, her name would be there. A new year brings resolutions which Rusty said are made to be broken. This year, Linda said things will be different. "We've always said we were going to slow down," she explained. "I believe this is the year we are going to make good on our promise." **NOW**



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Art on the Wing

— By Kelly Kovar

Francis Poplawski, like his father Frank before him, is a renowned artist. He paints right here in Ennis, and his work can be seen all over the world. You will not find it in museums, or even hanging on the walls of fine homes, because the canvases for Francis' extraordinary talent are airplanes. "We've been painting airplanes for 50 years," he said. "We've painted airplanes from Bolivia to Alaska to California."

Francis just finished painting a 1976 Beechcraft P58. The owner chose a paint design that is typical of a newer model Beechcraft, in a light blue and silver. "This one took about seven weeks to paint," he said. "Beechcraft is a high-dollar aircraft builder and the company spends good money on designers, and they do a pretty good job. So, when people have their Beechcrafts repainted or restored,

they usually go with a standard color combination, because it sells better," Francis explained.

"But, on experimental aircraft, people choose whatever they want; everyone



tries to outdo everyone else. People come in and I start pulling color charts out. Some people know what they want; others don't. So, I take pictures of airplanes that I have painted, showing different color combinations." He keeps

photo files of all his painted planes, and there is an amazing variety. One looks like a spaceship, in bright red, yellow and blue. One is lime green, another calypso red with white and blue trim.

Maroon and blue are the most popular colors. "It is important that the design of the paint compliments the design of the airplane," Francis commented.

His specialized artistry is in such demand that he has a two year waiting list. The variety of customers is as wide as their design choices. "One guy from Round Rock is a military pilot; he teaches formation flight and he does air shows," Francis said. One plane Francis painted has traveled far and wide. "That plane has been around the world a bunch of times. It holds four people,

**ARTS
NOW**

and he has flown people all over.”

Francis’ office walls are lined with photographs bringing to mind the different clients Francis has done painting for, such as Columbia space shuttle astronaut David Brown. Tom Landry, former Dallas Cowboys coach, had his plane painted by Francis.



“Tom Landry was flying across Ennis in bad weather,” Francis remembered. “He burned a hole in one of the pistons and lost all his oil. The engine quit, and he landed behind the new high school. It was raining and muddy, but he got down safely.” They brought the plane to the Ennis Airport, where Francis has had his studio for 40 years. Landry’s mechanic used the Poplawski shop to put a new engine in the plane. “Tom Landry talked to us and said, ‘I’d like to get it painted someday.’ So, he came back in a year or two, and we painted his plane.”

Francis painted for aviation pioneer Edna Whyte. “She used to race airplanes. She and Amelia Earhart used to run around together. We’ve known her forever, and we painted, I guess, five airplanes for her — pink on every one of them! Edna got famous in her Cessna 140; then she got into Pipers and Bonanzas, flying cross-country races.”

Francis has to get high-grade urethane paint for his work. “Some of the paint is \$1,000 a gallon,” he said, since it contains ultraviolet barriers. When a plane comes in, Francis strips it down to the metal. “You do a section at a

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would get contaminated." On the experimental planes, there is a lot of fiberglass, as well as aluminum to be painted, and that takes extra care in the priming [stage]. "It is a lot of work. You could paint an airplane in probably half the time if you wanted to, but I like to get them nice."

His attention to detail pays off. Out of several hundred airplanes, one of the planes Francis painted won first place in craftsmanship at Oshkosh, a large airplane competition in Wisconsin. Another plane he painted won for its paint job at Fun in the Sun in Florida. "We won an international award at Randolph [Randolph Paint Company] for a paint job we designed."

"I paint one side of a plane freehand, and then I make paper templates, so both sides of a plane are the same," Francis explained. "My favorite part is when you get to the part where you pull all the paper off, get your stripes cleaned up, put it together, and you can just see it blossom out." A Poplawski-painted plane is widely sought after by private airplane owners, and valued the world over. "In the aviation world, we have really put Ennis on the map." **NOW**

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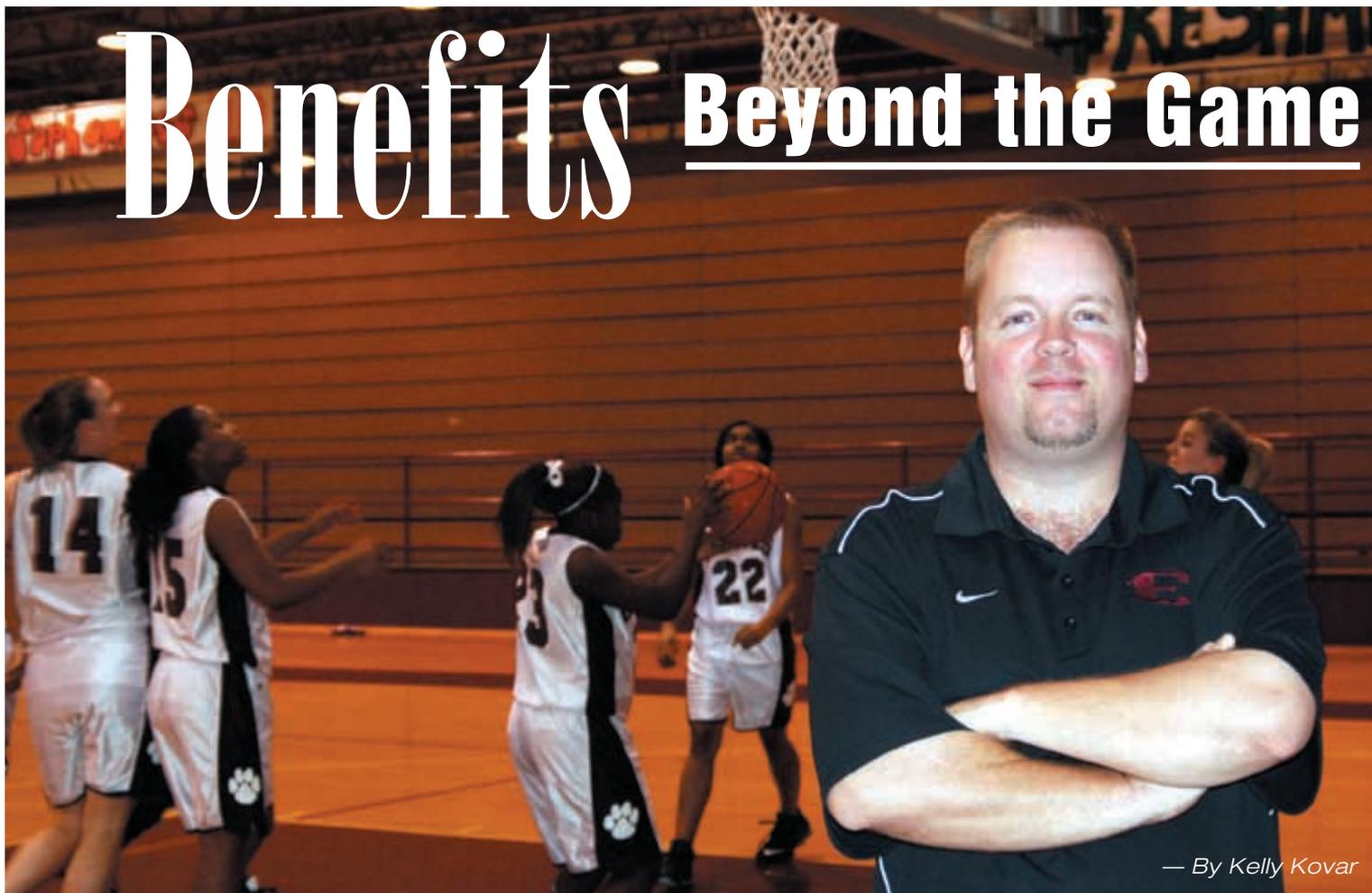
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Benefits Beyond the Game



— By Kelly Kovar

David Kilpatrick is the Lady Lions Girls' Basketball Varsity Coach. "Our team motto is play hard, play smart and play together," David said. "That came from Dean Smith when he was coaching in North Carolina. It encompasses everything that we are trying to do." Last year, the Lady Lions went 20 and 13, finished third place in the district and made play-offs. "I think we can make a nice run for the play-offs this year if everything falls into place. The girls on the team have a real good relationship with each other and they have very positive attitudes."

When David attended Texas A&M, he began with a business/finance major, but soon realized accounting was not where he wanted to spend his life. "At the time, I was coaching a youth



Sports NOW



basketball team and also, in the summers, a youth baseball team. I said, "This is what I like to do. Why not be happy?" David switched to education, getting a double major, so he is certified in secondary English and history and in physical education and health.

David played high school basketball for his hometown of Hillsboro and really enjoyed it, but it did not become a career goal until he had the opportunity to work with an inspiring head basketball coach. "He just did a really good job, and after assisting him, basketball became my passion." David began his career 14 years ago as head baseball coach at Bynum High, a small 1A school, and has also coached softball. Coming to Ennis brought David a better opportunity with a bigger school than he had taught in before. "I love Ennis; the people are good and the administration is really supportive. They really buy into what we are trying to do with the basketball team."

"I really enjoy coaching girls because they are eager to learn," David said. This year's team has about eight returning players and there was a good field to select the rest of the team from.

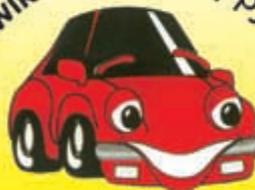
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“There is a great junior high basketball program,” David said. “Girls in the junior high get a good foundation. We would like to get them even earlier. We have plans to get in with the fifth- and sixth-graders in the spring and get them started on basketball. We are talking about putting together a team that



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could travel and do tournaments. For these kids to get to the highest level, they really need to learn as much as they can.” Traveling to tournaments provides really good competition for the players.

One of David’s students from last year, Shabrina McAdams, is playing at Ranger Junior College now. “There are not a lot of opportunities for girls in basketball after college. But, basketball gives them the opportunity to get an education for free if they are on a basketball scholarship,” David explained. “It is not really hard to get a basketball scholarship for girls; there are lots of opportunities. You have to go to some tryouts and get your name out there. You just have to be willing to put in the effort. We drove Shabrina to

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Sports NOW

Ranger so she could try out with their team and the coach could see her.”

David encourages the girls to be involved in league games, when the school team is out of season. That keeps their skills up so they are ready for the Lions basketball season. “I stay busy year-round,” David said. “The kids need to know I am behind them, so I go to their league games. Most of the varsity girls have played in between 30 and 35 games since last season. Games go on spring, summer and fall. Basketball is a very competitive sport compared to where it was 15 years ago.”

The first 2007 - 2008 Lady Lions basketball varsity game was November 6, and the last regular season game is February 5. Games, between 30 and 35 a season, are on Tuesdays and Fridays, with tournaments on weekends. The girls practice during the athletic period, and after school, every day except game days and weekends. “Practice is pretty balanced between regular drills and scrimmaging,” David pointed out. “At the beginning of practice, I blow the whistle and all the girls come to the center of the court and high-five each other. I told them that all the Supreme Court chief justices shake hands with each other before a case. I tell the girls that these gestures symbolize that they may have a difference of opinion, but they are putting all that behind them and working for the common good of the team.”

“I learned early in my career, that the relationship end of it is the most important part of coaching. You have to let these kids know, on a personal level, that you care about them,” David said. “The things that we are trying to do, go far beyond basketball games. We try to teach these kids discipline, loyalty — and we try to instill the work ethic that will benefit them far beyond school. You spend so many hours with those kids; coaches can really have an impact on them.”

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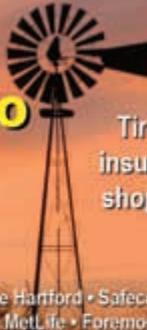
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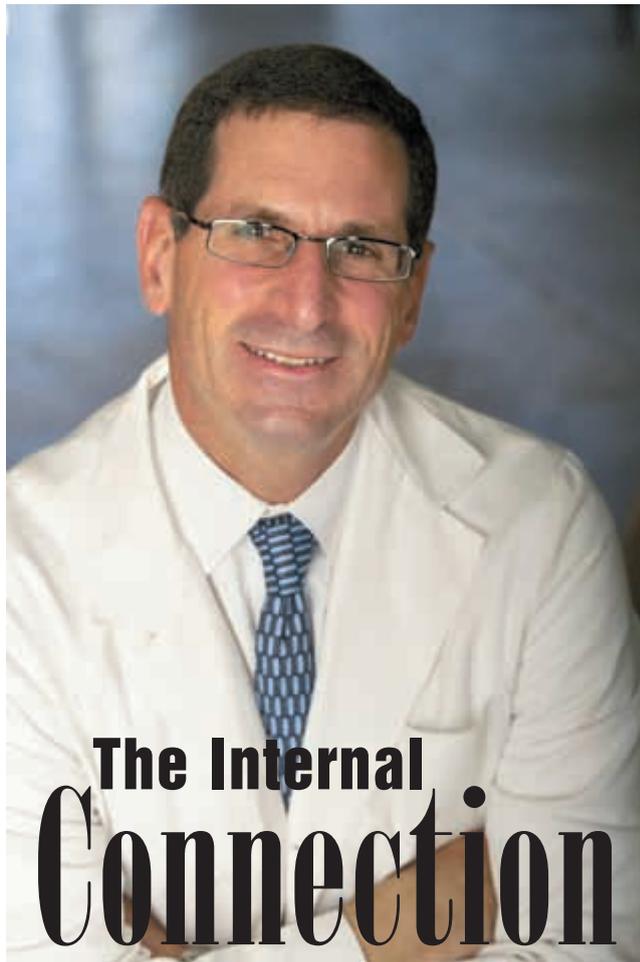
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Pictured above are Laura Garcia, Gina Chavez and Terrie Martinez staff members with Southwestern Digestive Health Physicians.



— By Dia Catalani

experience unexplained symptoms are often referred to a gastroenterologist, who has specialized training in internal medicine that can pinpoint an exact cause of an illness, disease or life-threatening condition.

Dr. Abdulian works closely with other specialized and primary care physicians to provide the best diagnosis and most effective treatment based upon each individual's health care need. Many times, a gastroenterologist will perform an endoscopy or colonoscopy to examine the gastrointestinal tract. Dr. Abdulian is the only physician in this area to utilize a non-invasive, in-patient procedure called a capsule endoscopy. A pill-sized, passable video capsule that has its own lens and light source is swallowed, and displays its images on a video monitor. The procedure is especially helpful in determining bleeding from an unknown source. "We are always available and try to accommodate everyone as quickly as possible. We strive to provide a very high level of service to our patients at all times," Dr. Abdulian said. "We also work with an electronic medical records system, which enables doctors to receive a consultation the same day that the patient is seen."

Southwestern Digestive Health Physicians offers a full

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range of services which manage issues that are directly associated to the gastrointestinal system. Indigestion, abdominal pain, colon cancer screenings, liver disorders, poor appetite or unexplained weight loss and frequent heartburn are just a few of the reasons a person sees a gastroenterologist. "I like to talk to people, take our time learning about the problem and put the person at ease," Dr. Abdulian said. "We have

"We strive to provide a very high level of service to our patients at all times."

good feedback from patients who say they appreciate knowing that they can take their time in talking to me and learn how certain procedures, followed by lifestyle changes, can help them feel better physically and mentally."

Dr. John Abdulian is a graduate of St. Louis University. The Ennis resident completed postdoctoral training at Loma Linda University Medical Center and completed his internal medicine residency at San Diego's Mercy Hospital & Medical Center. Dr. Abdulian and his wife, Linda, have two children.

Ask your doctor if a consultation with a gastroenterologist is recommended. Southwestern Digestive Health Physicians has an office in Ennis at 601 S. Clay St. in Suite 108, and in Midlothian at 1441 Midlothian Parkway in Suite 100. Most health insurance programs are accepted. Dr. Abdulian is affiliated with Ennis Regional Medical Center, Baylor Hospital in Waxahachie and Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. To set an appointment with Dr. Abdulian, call (972) 875-1800. **NOW**

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Education NOW



Transforming Obstacles Into Opportunities

— By Kelly Kovar

Principal Lori Redning enjoys working with her Weekly Kids News Network (WKNN) team.

This year, Intermediate School Principal Lori Redning has risen to the challenge of providing a positive learning environment for her students. With only a two-week window after the Ennis Intermediate School (EIS) was deemed structurally unsafe, the fourth-graders were relocated to the elementary schools. Lori and the fifth-graders, after a brief stay in a local church, were all housed in the Sixth Grade Center (SGC). “Half of them are in the building, and half of them are in portables which were made available by high school teachers sharing classrooms,” Lori said.

She attributes much of the success of the transition to the school district and the community. “We have learned that we can survive difficult situations, and work together to accomplish a goal. It has been a district-wide effort. Pretty much everybody kicked in. A lot of people have done a lot to make this successful.”

“I so miss the fourth-graders. They

come in really little and you get to watch them grow up. Mostly, I miss the teachers that I have worked with for 10 years. But, for this year, I think we are settled.” Sharing space in the SGC means four lunch periods, sharing nurses, art teachers and computer lab and office people. “We already shared librarian, Penny Boston. She worked the SGC and the EIS. Penny and her team divided the EIS books, shipping some to every elementary school and bringing the fifth-grade type books to the SGC. She is somebody else who did a big job very quickly.”

Lori is no stranger to transforming challenges into opportunities. While the

single mother of teenagers Amanda and Jared, Lori took tae kwon do in order to have something fun to do with her son.

“I got my orange belt, and I met my husband, Lonnie, at tae kwon do classes.” Lonnie and Lori, married seven years now, have a 6-year-old daughter, Audrey, who is in kindergarten at the Early Childhood Center. Amanda and Jared are now grown.

Lori’s mother JoAnn Muirhead, a SGC reading teacher, mentioned that students had trouble adapting to the sixth-grade bell

schedule. So, Lori phased in a team teaching approach at the EIS.

“Students have a math, language arts,



Education **NOW**

and a science/social studies teacher. Each teacher has students for 90 minutes," she explained. "It has helped kids become more organized and more prepared for sixth grade and for junior high, and enables teachers to become more expert at their area of teaching. And with TAKS [Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills], that is critical."

This is Lori's 18th year in education, and her 10th as a principal. Seeing the

"We have learned that we can survive difficult situations, and work together to accomplish a goal. It has been a district-wide effort."

need to provide leadership to her teachers, she implemented a new program. "I have a retreat with all my teachers before school starts. It gets us focused and gets us ready for the school year." Each year, they go somewhere different. "We did the rope training a couple of years ago, where you have to really trust your teammates. It was an incredible experience."

When EIS was first established and the time came to determine what to do for an annual PTO fundraiser, Lori, who was then the assistant principal, was there for the birth of the pancake breakfast. "We came up with Flapjack Fever from a brainstorming group," she recalled. "The first year, we set off every fire alarm in the building. We had people lined up for miles outside the front door. We couldn't make pancakes fast enough. It was seriously the most stressful morning of my life. It was basically a disaster that turned out to be great, because everybody loved the new building and loved the pancakes.

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After it was all over, we realized we had fed 7,000 people," she said. Average sales are usually \$25,000, with a \$20,000 profit. The event also boasts up to 50 raffle prizes which are donated by various businesses around town. This year's event is January 26,



and for two weeks prior to that, children will be scouring the community selling \$6/adult and \$4/children breakfast tickets and \$1 raffle tickets. "We award the students for selling, because without them, we can't have it." Funds raised finance field trips, teacher appreciation, school improvements and accelerated reading (AR) incentives. "Reading is one of the most important life skills. I love to read. You have to be able to read if you are going to be successful," Lori stressed.

Of all the challenges Lori has met, her most original solution has been the establishment of a student group to make the morning announcements. "One day it just came to me, 'The kids should do the news!' So, I talked to my gifted and talented teachers, Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Burns, who became co-sponsors with me of a student news group. "We had tryouts; we did a workshop, and Weekly Kids News Network, WKNN, was begun." This is the third year for WKNN, and the students really like it. "They are having to learn to speak in [public] and it lets me be involved with a group of kids that belong to me and are excited about what they are doing. I love it." **NOW**

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'08 Resolution — Save a Tree!

— By Nancy Fenton

Are you planning some remodeling or new construction for your home this year? Let us consider how to do it while protecting those big trees you love. If you are thinking about expanding your home or your driveway this year, consider looking at it from the tree's point of view. Our gracious, old trees have had a lifetime to put out those roots past the edges of their drip line using them to absorb water and

14 essential nutrients. When we pave or add soil, it really fouls up the absorption. Protect the tree from those big machines by creating a barrier with that ugly, but effective, orange fence as far out from the trunk as you can. A four- to six-inch layer of mulch over the area will protect it from the compacting of large machinery that knocks down your fence. Avoid the fill dirt around the tree as much as possible since it will slowly strangle the tree over a period of several years. Those pavers with holes in them offer some help in getting the moisture and air down to the roots if you must cover part of the area.

If you are putting in irrigation or underground lines, tunnel two to four feet below the surface rather than trenching. It will avoid most of the feeding roots. Root pruning is a last-gap measure, but necessary if you want a

level surface area. It will promote a rush of new growth and reduce the chance of root rot.

The tree canopy of the earth is quickly diminishing. We can see it as we drive down the highway and notice the dozers knocking down second growth trees in preparation for yet another shopping mall or housing addition. When the rains have no place to be absorbed, they tend to run into our homes, etc. Not a pretty thought! Less noticeable is the oxygen that those destroyed trees were producing and the CO₂ they were taking out of the atmosphere. Let us all do our share by planting trees, taking care of the ones we have, and encouraging the builders to think before bulldozing building sites with trees. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.

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Around Town **NOW**



Czech Heritage Folks, top left and top center, from the Ennis Czech Heritage Society offer information and history to visitors at the Fall Festival, including demonstrations of a Czech post hole digger. In November, Jennifer Fiedler, Miss Teen Ellis County, 2008, top right on the left, and Lana Luise Thomas, Miss Ellis County 2008, appeared together in Ennis in November. Several girls have a “dancing good time” bottom left, while manning the girls’ volleyball booth at the Ennis Fall Festival. Karlan and Jayci Hightower, bottom center, along with their little Aunt McKenna Moffet, dressed in black, enjoyed face painting, hair painting and snowcones at the Fall Festival. Chris and Melony Rebuck, bottom right, enjoyed an outing with daughter, Megan.

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Around Town NOW



Peggy Hunter, top left, greeted guests to her home for a Christmas home tour. Kelly Kovar, Dana White, Diane Barker and Jennifer Colburn, top center, enjoyed the holiday decorations at Sondra Bennett's home. Rachel Bishop and friends, top right, manned a Women's Resource Center booth to encourage community support. The Circle of Friends Home Tour, bottom left, had delightful surprises for visitors including an authentic 1950s soda fountain. Ennis Care Center, bottom center, hosted a retirement party for 40-year employee, McBeth Spencer. Ennis Regional Medical Center's Dr. Basem Jassin, middle right, welcomes new CEO, David Anderson at a reception in Anderson's honor at Ennis Country Club. Friends Randell Kelly, Guy Pierce and Greg Brown, bottom right, wear matching "Kelly Manor" shirts depicting the Kelly's haunted house.

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Look Who's Cooking

— By Stephanie Brewer

IN THE KITCHEN WITH NINA WALKER

CHICKEN TOMATO SOUP

6 mushrooms sliced or 1 4-oz. can sliced mushrooms
 1 medium onion, chopped
 3 - 4 stalks celery, chopped
 2 - 3 Tbsp. chicken broth
 2 10 3/4-oz. cans tomato soup
 1 pt. half-and-half
 1 pt. whipping or heavy cream
 1 tsp. lime juice
 4 - 5 slices crisp bacon, crumbled
 3 boneless skinless chicken breasts (cooked, cooled, chopped and/or shredded)
 salt and pepper to taste

In Dutch oven, sauté mushrooms, onions and celery in chicken broth until tender. Add soup, half-and-half, whip cream, lime

juice, bacon and chopped chicken breast. Salt and pepper to taste. Heat thoroughly and serve.

CORNMEAL MEATBALLS

1 lb. ground beef
 2 Tbsp. chopped onion
 1 tsp. chili powder
 1 1/2 tsp. dry mustard
 1 1/2 tsp. salt
 1 1/2 tsp. pepper
 1/2 cup milk
 1 egg
 1/4 cup cornmeal
 1/2 cup cornmeal (to roll meatballs)
 2 cups V-8 juice

Combine first 9 ingredients. Mix well and form into 1-inch balls. Roll meatballs in

cornmeal and quickly brown on all sides in lightly greased pan. Remove meatballs from skillet and place in saucepan. Add V-8 juice and simmer on low for 45 minutes.

APPLE SALAD

1 cup sugar
 2 Tbsp. flour
 1 egg, beaten
 3/4 cup water
 1/4 cup vinegar
 2 bananas, sliced
 3 apples, cored and sliced
 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Mix sugar with flour. Add egg, water and vinegar. Mix with dry ingredients in saucepan and heat on medium heat. Stir as mixture comes to a boil and thickens. Let cool and



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Who's Cooking **NOW**

refrigerate 1 hour. Pour cooled sauce over sliced bananas and chopped apples and toss. Sprinkle with chopped pecans.

SESAME BREAD

1 pkg. dry activated yeast
 1 1/2 cup warm water
 1/4 cup sugar
 1 tsp. salt
 3 1/2 cups flour
 2 eggs (set in warm water to bring to room temperature)
 1 stick margarine
 1/2 can sesame seeds

Mix yeast and water together and set aside according to directions. Add sugar, salt and flour to yeast mix. Let rise one hour. Stir down. Pour into greased 9 x 13-inch pan. Melt margarine and pour over top. Sprinkle with 1/2 can sesame seeds. Let rise 30 minutes. Bake 20 minutes in preheated 400 F oven.

RITZ CRACKER PIE

3 egg whites, beaten
 1 tsp. vanilla
 1 cup sugar
 20 Ritz crackers, crushed
 1 cup pecans
 1 cup Cool Whip

Mix egg whites with vanilla and sugar. Add crushed crackers and pecans. Pour into pie pan and cook 20 minutes at 325 F. Cover with Cool Whip to top.

CHEWY CHOCOLATE COOKIE

1 1/4 cup margarine, softened
 2 cups sugar
 2 eggs
 2 tsp. vanilla
 2 cups unsifted flour
 3/4 cup cocoa
 1 tsp. baking soda
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1 cup finely chopped nuts

Cream margarine and sugar. Add eggs and vanilla. Blend. Add remaining dry ingredients. Drop onto greased baking sheet and bake at 350 F for 8 - 9 minutes. Cookies will puff and then flatten during cooling. Cool at least 1 minute on cookie sheet.

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Will Presidential Election Year Affect Investors?

— By Angie Wingo-Juenemann

As you are no doubt aware, 2008 is a presidential election year. As a citizen, you may well have a great deal of interest in the election. But how about as an investor? How does an election year affect the investment climate? And — again from the perspective of an investor — does it matter who wins?

To begin with, let us examine how the stock market reacted in the past to the selection of a president. The Dow Jones industrial average rose in nine of the past 11 presidential election years, with an average gain of slightly more than nine percent. So it is clear that, for the most part, the market has done pretty well when America goes to the polls.

Does the election or re-election of a president just make us more optimistic, leading us to invest more heavily and thereby drive up the markets? Probably not. In reality, many factors — such as corporate profits, geopolitical concerns, interest rates and inflation — drive stock prices. This is true in all years, whether an election is held or not. Consequently, stock returns from past presidential election years, while impressive, cannot serve as a reliable predictor of what the market might do in 2008.

Now, let us turn to the next question: As an investor, how will the outcome of the election affect you? There is not really a simple answer. In the past, the stock market has performed well — and performed poorly — under both Democrats and Republicans. Of course, candidates of both parties will have different priorities and try to enact different economic agendas, and these priorities may have some impact — although one that is notoriously hard to predict — on different market sectors. In short, no one can accurately forecast the effect of this November's election on the financial markets, and that will not change even after the

nominees are known.

Instead of pondering the “what-ifs” involved in a presidential election, you are much better off following some tried-and-true investment strategies. Here are a few to consider:

- **Keep on investing.**

World events may be good or bad, and the stock market may be up or down — but no matter what happens, the most successful investors stay in the market. Look for quality investments and hold them until either your needs change, or the investments themselves undergo some type of transformation.

- **Know your risk tolerance.**

If you are losing sleep at night over your investments, you are probably taking on more risk than the amount with which you are comfortable. At the same time, if your investments are putting you to sleep, they may be too conservative, which could mean they are not providing the growth necessary to help you meet your goals. Strive for a balance that fits your investment personality.

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Heart Health for Women: The Cold “Heart” Facts

Heart Disease is the number one killer of American women. One out of three women dies of heart disease. I hope that I now have your attention. We are women, the fairer sex. Men are the ones who die of heart attacks, are they not? Sorry ladies! And for those of us who were told that it is unfashionable to sweat, sweat should now be your goal! Teach this mantra to your children (especially your daughters) so that we may delay/prevent cardiovascular fatalities and disabilities.

Let us learn some common facts of heart disease, and let us begin by addressing this problem at its beginning: young women and pre-adolescent girls. Physical activity drops dramatically as girls become teenagers, and about 14 - 15 percent



of girls, teenagers and young women are physically inactive. Of girls ages 6 - 19, almost 15 percent are overweight. Did you know 30 percent of girls in grades nine — 12 reported using tobacco products in 2001 and that 80 percent of current smokers began before the age of 18? Parents, it is time to have a talk with your girls.

Okay, so you are no longer a girl. You have reached middle age. Welcome to life at/after menopause. This is a huge milestone! It is also where your heart disease risk starts to rise significantly. Read carefully. Approximately 88,000 women ages 45 - 64 have a heart attack each year. About half the women who

have a heart attack before age 65 die within eight years. Heart disease incidence rates are two — three times higher for postmenopausal women than for those who have not yet begun or are undergoing menopause.

Here are some statistics about older women and those who have already had a heart attack. About 372,000 women aged 65 and older will have a heart attack each year. Most have their first at about 70. About 35 percent who have a heart attack will have another in six years. Women are more likely to die than men within weeks of a heart attack and about half of those who live will be disabled with heart failure.

Take Home Lesson:

You cannot change your genetics or your age, but you can exercise at least 30 minutes three times a week (please consult your physician first). You can

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watch your diet. You can get your cholesterol checked and take active measures to lower it, i.e. the first two measures written above. If you do not smoke, do not start, and if you do — stop. You can get your blood pressure measured and take active steps to lower it, i.e. the first two measures written above. (Getting the picture?) If you are overweight or obese, and 62 percent of women fall into one of those categories, see the first two recommendations! Last, but never least, if you are a diabetic, controlling your blood sugars is of paramount importance. Taking an active role in this with diet and exercise can help reduce blood sugars, and in those who are genetically predisposed, these measures may prevent or delay onset. **ADVIS**

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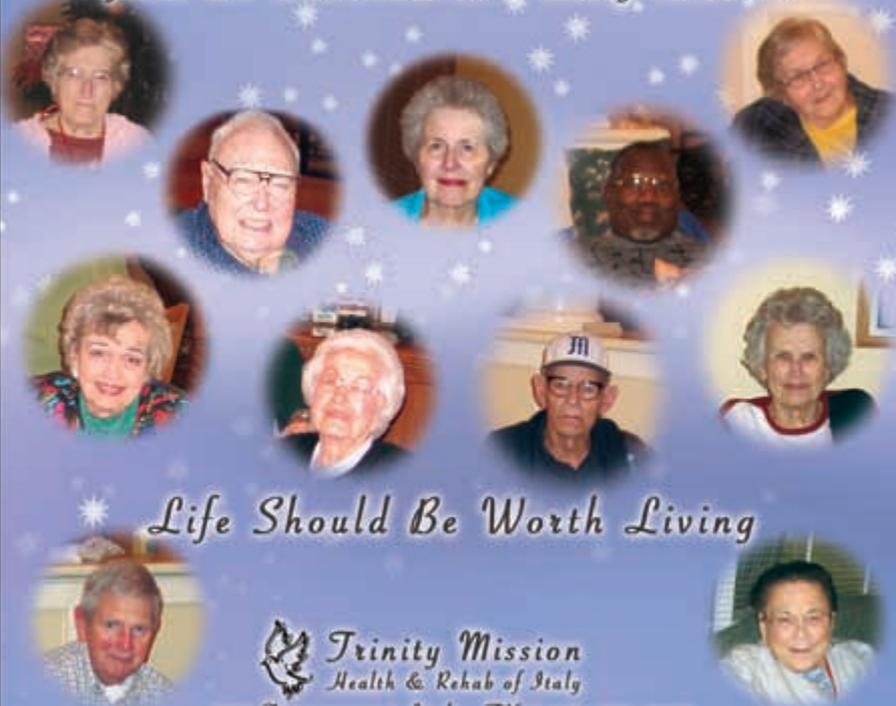
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January 2008

Community Calendar

Every Monday

Ladies' Bible Study, "Redeeming the Tears"; Men's "Round Table Bible Study and Topical Discussion"; Arena Barrel Practice (weather permitting), 7:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ennis.

Every Wednesday

Youth Group (grades 7-12) and Pre-teens (grade 3-6), 7:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ennis main church area.

Every Thursday

Team roping practice, 7:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ennis outdoor arena, weather permitting.

Every Friday and Saturday

Live Bands at Red Moon Cafe. For upcoming events go to www.theredmooncafe.com.

Every Saturday

Men's Saturday morning breakfast, hosted by the Cowboy Church of Ennis, 7:00 a.m. Location: The Ranch House Cafe, I-45 at Exit 242 in Rice.

Tuesday - Saturdays

Ennis Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, 8:00 p.m., 1301 S. Kaufman.

Daily

Grace Recovery Group, 8:00 p.m., 107 S.W. Main Street. This is a support group for recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. (972) 921-3275.

January 2

"Live Karaoke With Doc," 8:30 p.m. - 12:00 a.m., Red Moon Cafe. For more information, log on to their Web site at www.theredmooncafe.com.

January 3

Circle of Friends monthly meeting, 7:00 p.m. Circle of Friends is an Ellis County Women's Group that meets the first Thursday of every month. New members enthusiastically welcomed. To confirm date and location call (972) 878-0740.

January 5

Corsicana Opry at Martin's Music Hall. Dining: 6:00 p.m. Show: 7:00 p.m., 201 South Beaton in Corsicana. Spotlighting: Zanada Tally, Dave Young, Matt Siwinski, Roy Sykes, Michael McCluney, Billy Lewis and Virginia Martin. Show tickets \$10. For more information call (903) 872- 8226.

January 7 and 21

Ennis City Commission. Workshop: 6:00 p.m. Meeting: 7:00 p.m., City Hall Commissioner's chambers at 115 W. Brown St. Open to the public.

January 8

Ennis Masonic Lodge # 369 Monthly Stated Meeting. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. Meeting: 7:30 p.m., 209 N. Dallas Street.

Ennis Independent School District Board of Trustees meeting, 7:00 p.m. Citizens welcome. Notify Kathy Willingham at (972) 875-9027 if you wish to address the board.

January 9

Curbside Recycling second Wednesday of each month. Obtain free yellow recycling bags at City Hall. (972) 875-1234.

January 12

Ennis Brotherhood Breakfast (Interdenominational

men's group), 7:30 a.m., Baylor Baptist Church. Visitors welcome. For more information contact George Schneider at george.schneider@corsicanatech.com.

January 15

Ellis County Republicans monthly meeting. Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce building, 102 YMCA Drive. Call (972) 937-2390 for time of meeting.

January 17

Lodge SPJST No. 25 members meeting, 8:00 p.m. For more information, call (972) 875-5571.

January 19

Ennis' Martin Luther King Celebration. Community Fest and Health Fair. 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Bowie Elementary School, 501 Jeter Drive. For more information, contact Ennis Convention and Visitor's Bureau (972) 878-4748.

January 24

Ennis York Rite Bodies. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. Meeting: 7:30 p.m., 209 N. Dallas Street.

February 1 - 2

Always, Patsy Cline. 7:30 p.m. each evening, Palace Theatre in Corsicana. To purchase tickets from the Warehouse Box Office call (903) 872-5421. Tickets prices: \$30 for orchestra, \$20 for lower balcony and \$15 for upper balcony.

February 1 - 3

CASI-sanctioned chili cook-off benefiting the Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center and Gingerbread House. Ellis County Expo Center in Waxahachie. Lots of activities and fun. For more information contact Kay Lefler at (972) 646-5159 or Theresa Haskovec at (972) 938-0075.

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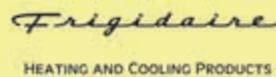
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