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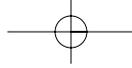
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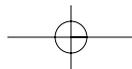
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Burleson **NOW**

Editor's Note

Happy New Year, Burleson!

Four years ago, our community numbered almost 27,000 people. Within a few more years, we will total 34,000 people. During this time of growth, we are building great foundations! This month's main feature tells the story of Dr. Gery Smith, who is just one member of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates of Johnson County), which works to strengthen the fabric of our community by helping the children who will one day grow to be the adults in Johnson County!

As CASA wraps up their Kidz Klubhouse fundraiser, another group of caring individuals is preparing for their big fundraiser on behalf of both children and adults in Johnson County. Mark your calendars for February 21, when the Athenas will host their Annual Mardi Gras Gala. Check out more details at: www.athenasocietyofburleson.org. This year, may you enjoy health, wealth and love — plus the time to enjoy them!

Melissa Collins
BurlesonNOW Editor



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For the Kids' Sake

— By Melissa Collins



Looking back on the last couple of months, Dr. Gery Smith just has to smile. He and a countywide team of people, who dream of a pain-free world, have brought in over \$23,000 to help abused and neglected children in Johnson County. Over, for now, are the hectic, hopeful days selling raffle tickets to provide support for volunteers and caseworkers for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Johnson County.

Dr. Smith — whom admirers say has been the backbone of CASA's Kidz Playhouse Project for three years — not only designed trailers to haul five different locally built playhouses, and convinced 10 high school shop classes to build trailers and playhouses, he also helped deliver the miniature castles, chapels and homes to children's families. "The wood shop students are getting very creative about designing these playhouses," beamed Gery. "The fun, for me, is to see all the kids having a place to play and get out in the sunshine."

First, CASA had to get people's attention. "We wound up showing them [the playhouses] off in four or five parades around Christmas." For Gery, filling CASA's coffers translates into loving the hurting Johnson County children.

"I don't think child abuse will stop. But I think you'll have a good start on slowing the process if you can reeducate the children," said Gery, explaining that CASA does this in two ways. "First of all, the children are being introduced to normal people. They're meeting citizens in our community who have volunteered to take the time to help take care of

these children." This takes quite a commitment. Even after 30 hours of training, some CASA volunteers have bowed out after they learn of the extent of violence the children have experienced. "Second, the children are introduced to ordinary activities of daily living," Gery said. "The children have to understand that you wake up and take a shower, and that normal people care about you during the day, and that you eat three meals every day. Some of these kids don't get fed for two or three days or a week. When they get food, they will hide it."

Memories of a similar childhood, coupled with his own work as a surgeon in trauma centers, spurred Gery to action in 2002, when he was invited by Johnson County Judge John Neill to help build CASA. "I knew Judge Neill through church, as well as through Rotary, and he knew I was a physician, that I treated traumatic injuries." Gery understood that some children are brought repeatedly to the emergency room. He knew that most hospitals do a kiddie scan, which includes full body X-rays, which allow doctors to see the history of multiple breaks in bones.

CASA volunteers become very emotionally involved in the cases. "It can be very depressing, but also very rewarding when they see the children change," Gery said. "Remember that cover of National Geographic, with the girl from Afghanistan who had eyes that were completely empty? Some children Child Protective Services pick up look that way, empty. When the kids have gone through the program with CASA advocates, they



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A CASA volunteer can make a lasting impression in the life of an abused child. The next available volunteer training classes will take place during the month of February. Two months later, CASA of Johnson County hosts its biggest fundraiser, the Clay Shoot, which Gery loves since it provides a form of entertainment; last year they raised over \$54,000. “I think the biggest thing that makes a difference to me is it involves a majority of males, and gives us an opportunity to get them interested in becoming male volunteers,” Gery said.

Surprisingly, Gery does not shoot guns more than twice a year (in practice for the annual Clay Shoot) even though he and his wife, Carla, reared their two children on a working farm. “We helped our children, Ellie and Erin, learn the value of a dollar by raising cattle,” Gery said. “Every year, we would buy them a heifer, and they’d show it. They would keep the heifer, which became a mother — and those babies became the majority of their college education.” Gery — who joined the military and benefited from the GI Bill — believes a good education makes you mobile, flexible, capable of trying to achieve your dreams. “Having not graduated from high school, I had to go back, get a GED and assume a lower role at a junior college to prove I could do things,” Gery said. “I met other regular people who were there trying to better themselves.”

Working his way through school, and then going to foreign countries with the military, Gery saw how very fortunate Americans are. “You may not make it, but you can set your goals

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high," he said. "In many European countries, when children are 10 or 12 years old, the parents decide whether they're going to be a mechanic or a teacher. In this country, you can pick where you want to go."

Thirty years after the military opened his eyes, Gery and the other Rotarians give scholarships of up to \$5,000 to help Burleson students go to college and technical schools. Gery has also volunteered to raise money for the Child Advocacy Center and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Some older students close to his heart are those who are trying to get their GEDs. "In a recent speech to almost



"The fun, for me, is to see all the kids having a place to play and get out in the sunshine."

200 kids, it was fun to see so many smiling faces out there who were really interested in getting an education," Gery said. "I hate for them to have to stop for financial reasons."

The holidays may be over, but Gery is still smiling, filled with memories of Christmas with his own children, as well as with those he's dedicated to helping. Last month, a host of local service organizations threw a big Christmas dinner for Johnson County children, who are in foster homes, awaiting adoption. "When you see them there, playing like average kids, you can't help but tear up with joy," Gery glowed. "Children have a big resiliency, and if you can take that resiliency and transfer it into a positive environment, there's a chance that they won't grow up and abuse when they're older." **NOW**

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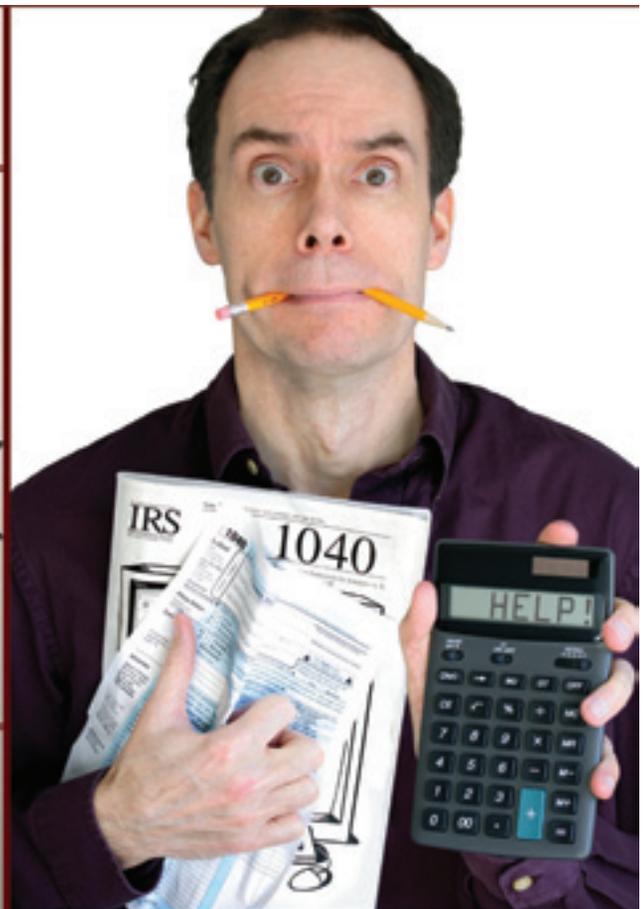


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The Country Life — By Jaime Ruark



At Home With **Larry and Vonna Pool**

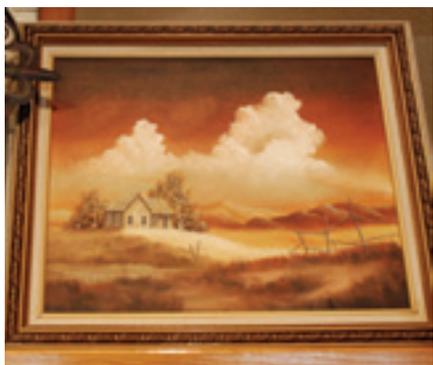
Larry and Vonna Pool's lovely four-bedroom, three-bathroom home sits on 12 acres. Surrounded by greenery, a pond and trees — many planted since they moved in, the Pools love to spend time outside in nature. The country life is the life for them. "I was raised on a farm and ranch, so I'm definitely country. I farmed and ranched for 35 years. I was used to living on 500 acres. When I first moved here from New Mexico, I lived in an apartment for six months and I thought I was in jail!" Larry laughed, as Vonna added, "We met in a Sunday School class and he told me later, 'I knew I liked you from the start because I could tell you had sand behind your ears.'"

With three children grown and out of the house, Larry and Vonna are "empty nesters." An empty nest and an easygoing husband have given Vonna free reign when it comes to decorating decisions, making every room an original Vonna work of art. "We moved here about five years ago, and she's pretty much redone every room in the house. She's the decorator — the creative one," Larry said. "I get real antsy when she goes to art shows because I know that means we're gonna be redoing some rooms. Usually, I just try to stay out

of the way," he added with a wry grin.

Having bought the house from Richard and Cindy Bransom, who had it built in 1985, Vonna has updated each room with her own creative spin, from denim curtains made from her son's old jeans to artwork fashioned from winged statues or curtains. She may describe her style as traditional, but it actually is truly her own. "The Bransoms really made good choices when they built this house. It was originally a three-bedroom, three-bath house, which can be rare to find a home with a bathroom for every bedroom," Vonna shared. "We enclosed the garage to make another bedroom."

Vonna is not only creative; she is also a do-it-yourself kind of person who is willing to try anything. After



purchasing the home, wallpaper came down, replaced by textured and faux-finished walls in many of the rooms. There is one room, however, she cannot bring herself to touch. "I know the paneling in the living room is not really the 'in' thing, but it's too beautiful to get rid of. There's a lot of craftsmanship in that paneling," she pointed out. "I'm just going to wait for it to come back in fashion." Having chosen calming earth tones for the space where the busy couple spends most of their time, Vonna accented the room with a swirling black and gold carpet. "Everything in here is beige, beige, beige, so I went with a wilder carpet. Larry was unsure, but I love it," she said. A beloved painting, done by her grandmother, takes the place of honor over the mantle.

The light and airy breakfast room

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opens onto the back porch, bringing close the nature they so enjoy. "One of the main reasons I loved this house was because it has what I call the breakfast porch. It's so pretty out here with the three pecan trees that surround the house," Vonna said. A fountain she made from bricks found in the barn gives a serene effect with sounds of running water. Inside, Vonna replaced the linoleum floors with tile and hand-painted the words of a hymn across the walls above the cabinets.

The formal dining room, located off



the living room and separated by stained glass openings she had installed, is the site of many dinner parties. The textured walls are the perfect backdrop for gorgeous floral arrangements — made by Vonna, of course. "She loves to decorate, and when we have dinner parties she really goes all out," Larry smiled. Two cute butler statues, named Henry and George, add a bit of fun and flair to the space.

The master bedroom makes a bold statement, again showing Vonna's flair and style. She chose black and gold for



her decorating scheme and artfully arranged black frames along one wall; a postcard, an Alfred Hitchcock stamp and a magazine ad are transformed into original and eye-catching art. The master bath offered Vonna another opportunity to make some changes. "When we bought the house we thought the countertops and tub looked old, almost like they had yellowed, because everything else in here was really white," she recalled. "When we took out the carpet and the wallpaper, put in the Italian tile and painted the walls,

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suddenly the tub and countertop looked great. It was so cool.” Her collection of delicate Lennox princess dolls keep watch over the room from a shelf above the bathtub. “I like them because they have so much personality,” Vonna said, as the little girl in her shone in her eyes.

Vonna is not afraid to take chances. Nor is she adverse to using color; the guest bedroom, home of her grandmother’s treasured piano, is bright orange and pink, and the walls leading to the office are painted a pretty aquamarine blue. The “Texas room,”

where the Pools spend time with their children, Katie, Sam and Myles, on holidays when they come for a visit, is rimmed with vines Vonna twisted together and coiled around barbed wire. Boots, cowboy hats and the denim jean curtains complete the look.

The couple’s pool and backyard create an oasis of nature. “We love it out here, just about any time of year. We’re close to town, but out here it’s hard to remember we even have neighbors,” Larry said, pointing out the huge trees ringing the property. “We have big plans for out here too, of course. We

Welcome Adil M. Choudhary, M.D.
Gastroenterology



Award-winning gastroenterologist Adil M. Choudhary, M.D., has opened a practice at Huguley Memorial Medical Center. Board certified in both internal medicine and gastroenterology, Dr. Choudhary treats inpatients and outpatients for conditions of the liver and digestive tract.

Dr. Choudhary has extensive training in gastroenterological and biliary endoscopic procedures. He is one of only 277 Fellows of the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. The American College of Gastroenterology and the American Medical Association, among other organizations, have honored Dr. Choudhary with many awards and recognitions.

Dr. Choudhary completed his residency in internal medicine at Bellevue Hospital Center and New York University Medical Center in Manhattan. He did a three-year fellowship in gastroenterology and hepatology at Yale University Gastroenterology Program in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and he received advanced training in therapeutic gastrointestinal endoscopy at Tulane University Medical Center in New Orleans.

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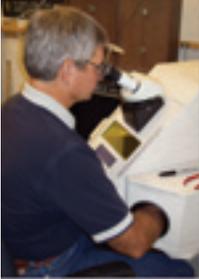


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Jason W. Neef, M.D., has opened an obstetrics and gynecology practice at Huguley Memorial Medical Center. A board-eligible obstetrician and gynecologist, he cares for women at all stages of life, including pregnancies and well-woman check-ups. He offers several treatment options for both medical and surgical problems including multiple minimally invasive procedures.

Dr. Neef completed his obstetrics and gynecology residency at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, where he received the 2006 Academic Excellence award. He earned his medical degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Medical School. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in finance from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

Dr. Neef holds memberships in the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Texas Medical Association. Located in the Huguley medical office buildings, he accepts most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid.

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want to put in an outdoor kitchen, because we spend so much time outside.”

The Pools are civic-minded; community is important to them. Larry resides on the board of directors for the Chamber of Commerce and is also a member of the Rotary Club, which he is quick to call “the best civic organization in Burleson.” He said, “We like doing business with local people. We really feel blessed to have moved to a place with such a great community.”

The country life truly is the life for the Pools. “I need my home time, my quiet time. We both love people and we love working with people, but when we come home, we like to be by ourselves and be surrounded by nature. This is our sanctuary,” Vonna expressed. “We’re both from small towns and we just feel at home here. Burleson has everything we need.” With a smile, Larry added, “If you can’t get what you want here, you’re pretty darn picky!” **XXXX**

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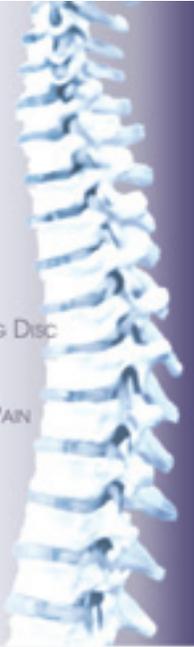
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So Gifted

— By Jaime Ruark

Every parent thinks their child is talented and special. Some children are gifted athletes, while others show promise in academics or art. Indeed, children are amazing, and it is fun to watch them grow in their gifts. Ten-year-old Colleen Garza, with her bright eyes and eager, yet shy, smile is one such amazing child.

Whether she is singing with a voice like an angel, playing baseball or football better than some of the boys in her class or drawing animals with quickness and ease, this is one young lady whose talents grow daily.

Colleen is an energetic girl, which is good because this busy child has a full schedule with all her activities and clubs. Her list of favorite school subjects is as long as her list of talents. "I like science, social studies, reading, art, music and Spanish — everything but math," she said. "If I had to pick one, I'd say my most favorite is art."

Her bedroom is filled with her creations; notebook after notebook contains drawings and doodles that come from her busy imagination, and a large box stores her endless supply of markers, colors and pencils. "I like to draw everything: horses, dragons, mermaids, fairies — tigers are my favorite. Sometimes, my teachers get mad at me because I'm always drawing in class," she admitted with a smile. "I like to draw weird things that I just come up with on my own." A Narnia book, from the popular children's fantasy series by C. S. Lewis,



provides Colleen with inspiration, but she is also inspired by the world around her. "There are some wild horses behind our house. I like to feed them and pretend like they're mine," she said. "I watch them and then draw them. I like to make them look like they're galloping on the page."

Colleen is truly talented with a pencil. Her drawings come to life in seconds as her hand speeds across the page, but she is also talented with paints. One painting, a replica of a Georgia O'Keeffe work that she did for school, shows this budding virtuoso's innate skills. "That one was hard, because the leaves are all green. It was hard to get the right shades," she shared. Sue, Colleen's grandmother, is one of her biggest fans. "She's really creative. She loves to draw; it's all she does," she proudly stated.

When Colleen can be lured away from her drawings, she excels in practically everything else she tries. Prize ribbons gathered together on a dresser in her bedroom showcase her athletic talents, from school field days to jump rope competitions, while others display her abilities in music. "My first grade music teacher told me I was a really good singer," Colleen recalled. "I get my talent from my dad and my mom."

When Colleen sang for the Texas Girls' Choir judges, who had come to the Academy at Nola Dunn to hold auditions, her beautiful voice earned her a spot instantly. "She's going on her second year now, and she'll be in concert choir. Those

ARTS NOW

girls get to travel all over the world and people pay to go to their concerts. There are even costume changes," Sue explained. "It's just the best organization for girls who love to sing. They do awesome things. Last summer, Colleen had too many camps to do; we couldn't do them all, so she was going to miss the choir camp. When they saw she wasn't there, the director herself called me asking about Colleen. She told me, 'We'll give her a scholarship. Just get her here.' I thought that was really amazing."

Colleen's angelic voice won her first place at the Texas Girls' Choir talent show, and she proudly displays that ribbon among the myriad of others. "I get shy when I have to sing in front of people, but I love performing. I sang a solo by Carrie Underwood called 'I Ain't in Checotah Anymore,'" Colleen said, explaining that when she listens to music she tries to picture what she thinks the song is about. "I like country music the most. I really like the song by Johnny Cash called 'The Devil Went Down to Georgia' because the words are really fast and it's hard to say."

Colleen also sings with the praise and worship group at her church and is often picked to sing solos. "She's really active in the church at Calvary Cathedral. She's involved with Kids For Christ, which they call KFC," Sue said. Colleen interjected with a laugh, "One girl on her first day asked, 'Where's the chicken?'" Quite the comedian, Colleen's bubbly personality establishes her as a born leader as well. "Her teachers have always told me she has leadership abilities. They saw it when she was little," Sue added.

"When I grow up I want to be a cryptozoologist. They study things that no one knows if they exist. The kids in my class think I'm crazy," Colleen declared. Perhaps, with a classmate so gifted at everything she tries, those who call her crazy now will be asking for her autograph someday! **NOW**



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The Perfect Walk!

— By Melissa Collins

Bernice Williams agrees with good ol' Webster, whose 1828 dictionary states walking is more than moving — it is a way of life! These days, Bernice walks for sport locally and, sometimes, around the world! She remembers days, however, when walking was merely the method for getting from point A to point B.

“At 6 years old, I walked about one-and-a-half miles to school and back. We all walked. Nobody rode cars to school,” Bernice said. “When I worked, for many years we only had one car. I walked a mile to work and back. Interesting thing about that,” Bernice grinned, “I was working as a secretary, and in those years you wore heels and hose. I sort of trotted to work most of the time, because after I got four kids off to school, I was running late. I think I developed the right muscles for walking during my later years.”

Walking fits Bernice perfectly. At the age of 65, Bernice walked 20 miles a day for three days in a row to help raise funds for breast cancer research. She challenged herself to do this after joining the American Volkspart Association (AVA) in the early '90s and participating in two 10K walks around Honolulu.

Bernice caught the walking bug a few years earlier, when her daughter and son-in-law suggested she go on a Volksmarch with them through the German countryside. “We went up and down, over two mountains. It was exhilarating because the march involved a huge number of people, and they had a live band playing,” Bernice said. “Even though I was very, very sore from that experience, I did it the next weekend.”

Volksmarch is a German word translated walk of the people. Folks like Bernice can choose to join others in group-walks marked with streamers or take independent walks like the



new one in Burleson's historic district. Last fall, Bernice helped fellow Volkswalker John Smith inaugurate the AVA's new Burleson walk. “I was happy to learn that John had worked out a 10K walk here in Burleson, part of it being a historic walk in conjunction with the heritage center,” Bernice said. “It is designed for any visitors, not just Volkwalkers.”

The 10K route John marked out takes walkers through and around Bernice's neighborhood. “I've enjoyed walking the 10K,” said Bernice. “We've gotten great feedback from other walkers, who say it is interesting, relaxing and a beautiful place to walk. They like that the walk is easy, level, without any challenges — and Burleson usually has great weather. Volkwalkers like the walk because we've got a lot of historical places noted in the guide that John put together.” Those sites vary from a 10-acre pecan orchard planted in 1945 by Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Salem, to the oldest brick building in town — a former post office, which now houses A Perfect Fit Alterations. “I've lived here since 1975,” said Bernice, “and I didn't know the domed building which is part of the Nola Dunn Academy was built by the WPA in 1936.”

“This historic walk is more than I hoped it would be,” said Bernice, who is an active member of both the Kiwanis and Burleson Heritage Foundation, where people taking the 5K historical stroll can sign up and get directions. For the 10K walk recognized by the Volkswalking organization,

Sports NOW

walkers sign in at the service desk at City Market. "I've been aware that John was developing the walk since spring of 2008. It's kind of surprising how much detail and information can be developed when everybody pulls together. John has done a great job and contributed a great deal to this effort."

Such organization is part of what attracts Bernice to Volksporing. She

"This historic walk is more than I hoped it would be."

also likes that it is a noncompetitive, low-key sport. "No special clothing. No stretching exercises. Just walk. There is no speed involved," Bernice said. "There are limitations to daylight hours, but you can start when you wish. It's not like there is a gunshot and everybody heads out. It's a very laid-back process — easy to do for anybody."

Just getting outdoors is therapeutic for Bernice, who will slip on her walking shoes for a break from everything else. That break is even more fun with other walkers. "If you're in a group walk, it's enjoyable to associate with other people and meet new friends," said Bernice, who said Volkswalking is for people of all ages.

Bernice said walkers need only gear up with a standard athletic shoe, and after that, there is no technique involved in walking. "Some walk slower, some walk faster. Some want to stop and rest; get a Coke or something. There's nothing special about the walking at all. Being properly prepared would be making sure you have a drink or a sun hat or sunglasses. Sometimes," warned Bernice, "it may rain while you're out walking." Maybe Bernice would also agree with *avant-garde* songstress Laurie Anderson, who said walking is just falling and catching yourself from falling. **NOW**

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Creating Community

— By *Melissa Collins*

Have you ever wanted an old-school doctor who treats a little bit of everything? Well, Angelo Vu is your man! “I’m an internal medical physician, a primary care doctor treating everything from diabetes to toe stubbing,” grinned Dr. Vu, who practices out of his own office near Huguley Hospital.

Angelo was reared in Arlington by his father, Dr. Niem Vu, a family man, as well as a family practitioner. “I remember going after school or on Saturday mornings and sitting in his office, watching him. I liked the idea that this was his office, and he could shut down to watch an important game of mine,” said Angelo. “I told myself during med school I wanted to be able to be my own boss, to make my own decisions.”

From this inspiration came Angelo’s desire to settle down in Burleson with his wife, Julie, and open a practice that enables him to help people in his way. Angelo’s way is to follow his patients as they improve from being completely healthy to being sick to being back to healthy again. “My patients like that,” said Angelo, who sees people outside of his clinic, at both Huguley and at Crowley Nursing and Rehab, where he is the medical director. “My patients are seeing me every step along the way. I see patients here in my clinic between 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. every day and go to the hospital around my schedule.”

Although Angelo never learned about business in medical school, he had a touch of it watching his parents run their practice. Angelo’s strategies for success are old-school, too: maintain a good bedside manner, hire helpful staff and know your stuff. “It’s important to stay up to date with medical knowledge,” said Angelo, who credits the medical community around him for much of his wisdom. “I have interaction with a lot of specialists, since I work at Huguley, and I can discuss particular patients and that always leads into discussing the



boundaries of medical knowledge.”

He also credits his three full-time employees, Teresa, Laine and Liz, who run his front desk and back office. “If you have staff who are rude and ignore patients, the practice will fail,” Angelo observed. “I surrounded myself with people I could trust and whom I knew the patients would like.”

“You’re seeing these patients at their worst, [some] who are even on their death beds, and you’ve got to be able to talk to them and to their families,” Angelo said. “I do my best to spend as much time with my patients as I can. Some of my patients and nurses at Huguley have said, ‘You’re new. That’ll wear off.’ My goal is to keep the quality, take time with patients and communicate and care about each of them.”

“Rather than practicing defensive medicine, our goal is to keep people as healthy as possible. You help them prevent poor health by screening for cholesterol, [providing] colonoscopies, diabetes screening, well-woman exams, prostate exams, vaccinations — including flu and pneumonia,” said Angelo,

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who opened his practice in August, 2007, after completing a three-year residency at Plaza Medical Center in Fort Worth.

“My dreams measure up to reality,” Angelo said. “What I did is becoming rarer because of the economy. I wanted

“Rather than practicing defensive medicine, our goal is to keep people as healthy as possible.”

to have a group of patients who appreciated me — who would be growing old with me, really. Some of the younger ones I hope to see when I’m 60 years old — growing old with me.”

Dr. Vu’s practice, located in the brown and tan Doctors Surgery and Imaging Center at 12001 S. Freeway, Suite 200, operates Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and is closed from 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. for lunch. They take same-day visits and appointments. Call (817) 568-8700. **NOW**

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Every other Friday, Rodger Isom enters his classroom with one of his 20 guitars. He tells the high school class, “God’s been good to me. And, I have a wife willing to follow my foibles!” Then, he plays rock ‘n’ roll, jazz and blues for the class. “It’s powerful. So I tell ‘em, ‘I can play like that. I’m not on drugs, I don’t drink and I got college degrees. You can do all that too, just like me.’ I play for ‘em, and one of them asks, ‘Mr. Isom, why did you go to college?’ I tell them, ‘So I could have this stuff and share it with you.’ I show my students you don’t have to follow conventional wisdom. Get up in the morning and decide to have a good day — because bad stuff is going to happen to you.”

Despite heart disease, Rodger has a ball teaching his business class at Crossroads High School, Burleson’s alternative high school. Government, economics and technical writing are intertwined in Rodger’s classroom, as in real life. With multiple computers hooked into the Internet, Rodger has the ability to help the students study the stock market through research on all kinds of financial Web sites. Research online into real-world stock market data helps them prove the classroom problems they are solving. *Learn* is the operative attitude. “I got kids coming out of backgrounds you wouldn’t believe, who will look you right in the eyes and say, ‘Gasoline prices are low right now because supply is higher than demand.’ I ask, ‘How do you get rich?’ And they say, ‘Spend less than you earn.’ That’s my children,”

Rodger said with pride. “If they feel they’re college-bound, they’ll take English IV,” Rodger explained. “If not, they’ll take technical writing, which is research-based business writing.”

“They didn’t offer economics when I was in high school in 1966. I wanted to be a businessman. I did that,” Rodger remembered. By the time he was 40, and his own children had left the nest, he and his wife, Judy, had enough resources that Rodger did not have to work. “I went back to school to take the stuff the state said I had to have in order to teach, did student teaching, and was pleased to see they were using things in education that [I was used to though they] went by other names than what we were using in business management. I took a year off for a heart attack, but then got started back.”

Rodger was only planning to teach five or six years. But while teaching at Hughes with Peggy Barnes, they started looking at the idea of an operation like Crossroads. “When it began, Ms. Barnes was the first principal, and asked if I wanted in on this. I said, ‘Heck, yeah!’ Eleven years later, I think it’s going to work.”

What makes it work? “It’s one kid at a time, one day at a time,” explained Rodger, adding that the school district and administration have always supported the work of the Crossroads teachers. “We’re like firemen. We got the hoses rolled out, the engine clean and we’re waiting for the crisis.” The water in the hose involves more than hugs. Rodger also uses a multitude of slogans which reflect his attitude:

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- It is okay to be wrong at Crossroads.
- It is not OK to do nothing; but it is OK to be wrong.
- Nobody ever gets it right the first time. You can fix wrong!
- When your work is not right, redo your work.
- There are no deadlines here. When you understand this part, go to the next part.
- You are safe here.
- I am going to help you. When you need something, you may ask, and I will get it for you. When I ask you for something, I expect you to get it for me.
- You have got problems; I understand that. Leave them outside the door. You can pick 'em up on the way out.
- People who get upset when you do something inappropriate, care about you.
- It is no sin to make a mistake.
- Ben Franklin said: "Good judgment comes from experience, and good experience comes from bad judgment."

"We teach these kids the way we teach walking. You don't flunk walking," Rodger laughed. Because of his strict and loving approach, Rodger's students stay in touch. Bookshelves full of gifts from former students attest to the fact that teaching is a rewarding, two-way street for Rodger. "These aren't traditional students. What works is to be consistent and available," he said. "And you must be empathetic. I tell them, 'I understand. I know what an abusive household is. I know why you weren't able to work or bathe last night. We're going to do the best we can today. If you don't feel good, or if you're tired or stressed, work slower, but keep working.' If you can't get the student to buy into you, the education is pointless anyway. If they don't know you care, they could care less. Is that an education thing? I don't know. It's a human thing." **NOW**

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Around Town

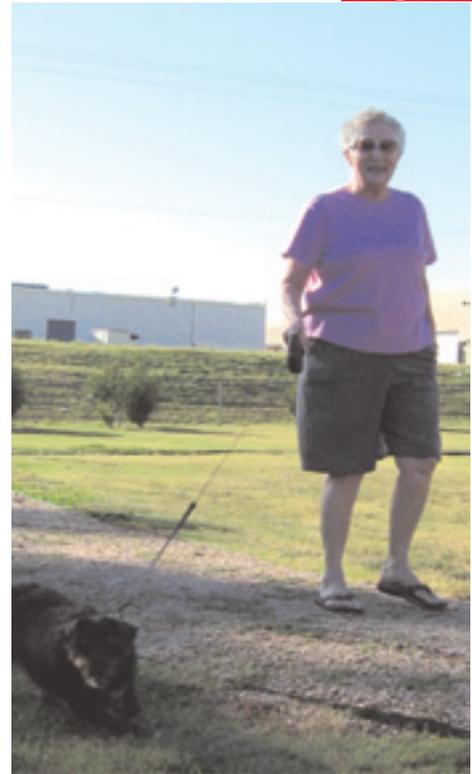
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Two of Burluson's motorcycle traffic officers, Sgt. Sean Bolton and Officer Robert Sorrels, top left, competed in the Celebrate Roanoke Police Motorcycle Training and Rodeo event. Everyone, top right, seemed to love the Founders Day Parade. Pony rides, second row left, were also part of the fun for the children who attended the Founders Day Parade. David Creed, JR Edmondson, Kip Turner and Bob Herriage, second row center, brought the reality of 1881 to life for spectators during the parade. Volunteers, second row right, who cleaned litter and debris from retail corridors, residential drainage channels and streets were treated to a pizza lunch at Warren Park. Ribbon cuttings were held at: Playtime Shuttle, third row center, and A Team Hope Company, bottom right.



Around Town **NOW**



Several people, top left, recently graduated from the Burleson's Citizens on Patrol training event. Graduates on the front row, from left to right, are Lana Tadsen, Linda Brasher, Kristy Gilbert, Caty Atkins, Carolyn Carminati-Mitchell and Jerri McCallum. Graduates on the back row, from left to right, are Sgt. Diron Hill, Rusty Reece, Blayne Hallmark, David Sinzinger, Bill Ayars and Police Chief Tom Cowan. Laura Burnett, top right, took Jaxs, her 9-year-old poodle-terrier, for a walk. Ribbon cuttings were held at: Accents of Burleson, second row left; Accurate Business Solutions, second row center; CASA, third row left; Moonlight Cruise, bottom left; and Budget Rent-a-Car, bottom center.

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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH BRENDA HUSKINS

Brenda has a lot to be proud of when it comes to her family. With three grown sons, her family has grown to include their wives and a combined total of nine grandchildren. “My boys are all great cooks,” she said. “I am already trying to teach my grandchildren to cook.”

Brenda has been cooking since she was about 12 years old. “I started cooking for my family, and my mother let me experiment in the kitchen anytime I wanted,” she recalled. “My grandmother was a great cook, and she taught me to make pies and homemade rolls.” Brenda enjoys preparing casseroles and placing them in the freezer so they can be available with short notice. “I enjoy making desserts most of all,” she expressed. “I also love new salad recipes!” **NOW**

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

CRANBERRY RELISH

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 12 oz. bag fresh cranberries
- 1-2 jalapeños, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 tsp. cumin
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 1 Tbsp. lime juice

In a saucepan, bring water and sugar to a boil. Add cranberries; return to boil. Cook without stirring for 10 minutes; cool. Add jalapeños, cilantro, cumin, onions and lime juice; stir well. Serve chilled or at room temperature. Serves 8.

DIVINITY

- 4 cups sugar

- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3 egg whites
- 1 tsp. vanilla nuts, chopped

Cook first 4 ingredients in microwave dish at full power for 20 to 22 minutes until hard-ball stage, stirring once or twice. Beat egg whites until stiff; pour mixture over egg whites while beating. Beat until mixture loses its gloss (about 12 minutes). Blend in vanilla and nuts. Spoon onto wax paper.

NEVER FAIL PEANUT BRITTLE

- 3 cups white sugar
- 1 cup white Karo syrup
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 cups raw Spanish peanuts

- 3 tsp. butter
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. baking soda

Boil sugar, syrup and water until thread spins; add peanuts. Stir continually after peanuts are added. Cook until it turns brownish gold (hard-crack stage). Remove from heat; add butter, salt and soda. Pour onto buttered board.

CHICKEN ENCHILADAS

- 1 whole chicken
- 1 stick margarine
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced
- 1 Tbsp. chili powder
- garlic salt to taste
- 1 12-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 1 12-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes

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chicken broth, if needed
12 flour tortillas
8 oz. cheddar cheese, grated

Boil and debone chicken. Melt margarine in pan; sauté onions and mushrooms until soft. Add chili powder, garlic salt, soups, Ro-Tel and chicken; add chicken broth if needed to make a thinner sauce. Place a little chicken and sauce in each tortilla. Roll and put in a casserole dish. Pour remaining sauce and chicken over tortillas. Top with grated cheese. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 F. Sauce and chicken are also great poured over spaghetti.

HOMEMADE HOT ROLLS

2 pkgs. yeast
1/2 cup hot water
2 eggs, room temperature
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup Crisco
pinch of salt
1 1/2 cups milk, lukewarm
6 - 7 cups flour

Dissolve yeast in water; add eggs, sugar, Crisco and salt. Alternate adding milk and flour until mixture can be kneaded. Let rise to double the size; punch down dough and divide evenly into a greased muffin pan. Bake for 15 - 18 minutes at 400 F, until golden brown. Brush with melted butter just before they are done.

BLACK FORREST CAKE

CRUST:
1 stick margarine, melted
1 cup flour
1/2 cup nuts, chopped

FILLING:
8 oz. cream cheese
1 cup Cool Whip
1 cup powdered sugar

PUDDING:
1 small pkg. instant chocolate pudding
1 small pkg. instant vanilla pudding
2 1/2 cups milk
1 tsp. vanilla
extra Cool Whip for topping

Mix together crust ingredients; press into a pan. Bake for 20 minutes at 350 F. Combine filling ingredients; spread over crust. Beat together first 3 ingredients of pudding mixture; add vanilla. Spread pudding mixture over filling. Top with additional Cool Whip.

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Is CD Laddering Right for You?

— By Sharon Robinson



With the recent volatility in the stock market, people are hesitant to put their entire nest egg into the market. Additionally, with the economy creating tight times for families, it's often necessary to make sure funds are available if and when we need them. For those investors who are either reluctant to jump head first into the market or those who may have a need for cash, the strategy of laddering Certificates of Deposit (CDs) may be appropriate.

CD laddering is the process of structuring your investment into CDs to take advantage of the higher rates afforded by longer-term time deposits, yet maintaining liquidity by arranging it so that equal portions of the invested money is available periodically. To accomplish this, you begin by buying numerous CDs with various maturities.



Sharon Robinson, Agent

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For instance, let's say you have \$25,000 to invest. Rather than investing the \$25,000 in one CD that matures at a designated time, by laddering CDs, you may choose to invest \$5,000 in each of five separate CDs. In this example, you would then purchase a 1-year, 2-year, 3-year, 4-year, and 5-year CD in equal amounts of \$5,000. After one year, when your first CD matures, you would invest it in a new 5-year CD. Each year, a CD will expire and, if the funds are not needed, they will be reinvested in a new 5-year

With the economy creating tight times for families, it's often necessary to make sure funds are available if and when we need them.

CD to take advantage of the higher interest rate typically offered by a 5-year CD as compared to the 1- or 2-year CDs.

This approach allows you the comfort of knowing that a CD will mature each year in case you need the money, yet still take advantage of the higher rates typically offered for longer maturities. Staggering your maturity dates also helps smooth out the volatility of the market. If interest rates rise during the year, you will have money available to invest in a higher rate CD. Or, if rates fall, only a portion of your investment dollars will need to be reinvested at the lower rate.

CD laddering may be a strategy that's appropriate for your lifestyle. Plus, with the guaranteed interest rate offered on CDs, you will be able to plan your future with confidence. Talk with your insurance agent or financial expert for more information. **NOW**

Sharon Robinson is a State Farm agent based in Burleson.

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Going Too Fast

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.



Do you sometimes feel as if your world is moving at a frantic speed? If you looked up the word *hyper* in the dictionary, would your face be there in lieu of words? Everyone feels this way at some point in his or her life, but for those who have hyperthyroidism, their internal speed is taken to the extreme and their body pays the price. The thyroid hormones are in charge of the metabolism of the cells. They determine whether the body has too little of the hormones (hypothyroidism), too much (hyperthyroidism) or produces a normal output.

Hyperthyroidism is caused by an overactive thyroid gland secreting an overabundance of the thyroid hormone. This hormone greatly affects the metabolic rate in the body. While the promise of weight loss with an increased metabolism may be seductive, unfortunately one does not get to pick and choose all of the side effects which come with the disorder.

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The glut of hormone being secreted into the body manifests itself in many signs and symptoms such as: nervousness and agitation, excessive sweating, palpitations (rapid heart beat), increased bowel movements, tremors (usually in the hands), insomnia, hair loss and of course — weight loss.

Diagnosis is an easy matter. The physician is initially clued to the possibility by clinical presentation of the person. Blood tests can confirm the diagnosis. The blood tests will test the levels of TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone), T3, T4 and T7. Once the blood tests have confirmed the diagnosis, the physician will want to examine the cause of the abnormality. A radioactive iodine uptake test measures how much of the iodine tracer the thyroid gland absorbs from the blood. Another useful tool is a thyroid scan, used to check the gland's shape, size and the presence of lumps or any other abnormalities.

Treatment for hyperthyroidism can be very effective, and there are several options. Medication aimed at relieving the symptoms is sometimes prescribed. Anti-thyroid drug therapy can be administered to block the production of hormones in the gland. Radioactive iodine proves to be very successful as part of the treatment plan. It works by stopping the function of some of the cells in the thyroid. If the cells no longer produce the thyroid hormone, the symptoms lessen and/or disappear. The most drastic treatment is surgical removal of part of the thyroid. This treatment is usually reserved for those who are not candidates for the other treatments, such as a pregnant woman or those with very large glands. Although hyperthyroidism can be disruptive to everyday life, this disease can be easily diagnosed and treated. **NOW**

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

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Leaves and More Leaves

— By Nancy Fenton



The leaves just keep falling! If you are as allergic to raking as I am, I have some thoughts on what to do with those leaves. The easiest is to run your mower over them with the mulching blade working away. I set the height on the mower one level down from where I usually mow, so it gets all the bits and pieces. Even if you do not have a mulching mower, just block the throw vent or let it spread the chopped leaves for you. These bits and pieces will compost themselves over the winter keeping your grass roots warm and feeding them, too! The mowing part speeds up the decomposition and keeps the bigger leaves from forming a water repellant mat on your lawn and beds.

I do use my rake to pull the bigger leaves from my beds onto the yard so I can get at them with my mower. I do not catch my own leaves, but I do chop and catch my neighbor's bagged ones to put back on my flowerbeds! I throw them out on my driveway, set my mower down as low as it will go and chop away. The chopped leaves go straight onto the flowerbeds or into an old 30-gallon trash can to end up as part of my compost pile. I have even been known to pick up a few extra bags from good looking (leaf-free) yards around town to put beside my out buildings for future use. If the leaves are bagged, they can be chopped and used any time.

If chopping is not your thing and you want to make compost, try the "bag method." Add one cup of high nitrogen fertilizer (21/0/0) and one to two gallons of water to a black bag of leaves (heavy duty sacks only). Tie up the bag, place it out of the way and let nature work wonders through the winter! The leaves will begin to compost, and can be used come spring on most new beds by digging them in or just dropping them on top. Using leaf compost is important because the leaves themselves contain most of the missing nutrient elements, providing the reasoning that local composts and mulches are the best kind for our plants. Think about the forest and how well it uses its leaves for compost! **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.

January 2009

Community Calendar

Every Tuesday

Professional Power Team networking group meeting: 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Blue Mesa on University Dr., Fort Worth. (817) 295-2161.

Every Wednesday

Breakfast Club networking group meeting: 7:30 - 9:00 a.m., Cracker Barrel. (817) 295-2161.

Burleson/Crowley Network Connection meeting: 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Spring Creek Barbeque. (817) 295-2161.

Second and Fourth Wednesdays

Burleson Lions Club meeting: noon - 1:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church. (817) 980-9436.

Every Thursday

Burleson Making It Happen Network Connection networking group meeting: 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Sammy's Italian Restaurant. (817) 295-2161.

Job Fair: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Burleson Senior Center. (817) 558-7020.

Fourth Thursdays

ABWA Burleson Charter Chapter meeting: 6:30 p.m., location TBA. RSVP to Linda Houst at (817) 295-7060 or ljh67@sbcglobal.net or Sue McKnight at (817) 295-3220.

Every Friday

Burleson Business Builders networking group meeting: 8:30 - 9:30 a.m., JJ Mocha's. (817) 295-2161.

January 1

New Year's Day. City offices and Chamber closed. BISD schools closed.

Sponsorships offered for Athena Mardi Gras Gala. Monies raised go to support the Careity Foundation, which helps cancer patients and their families in Johnson County; the Cook Children's Palliative Care Program; the New Journeys Christian Women's Job Corps. www.athenasocietyofburleson.org.

January 2, 5

BISD holiday. (817) 245-1000.

January 5

Burleson City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., City Hall. (817) 447-5400.

January 6

Kickoff Party for American Cancer Society Relay For Life. Everyone interested in forming a team of eight - 15 people to join the fight to eradicate cancer can sign that team up for just \$25. After Jan. 6, the sign-up fee is \$50. The come-and-go event, held at the Nashville

Party Barn at 137 Wilson St. in Old Town Burleson, will take place between 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Call Melanie White at (817) 295-1306 or (817) 891-3997. Team captains may also sign up online for \$25 through Jan. 6 by logging on to www.relayforlife.org/burlesontx.

January 15 - February 15

Alamo Images: Changing Perceptions of a Texas Experience, an exhibition hosted by the Burleson Public Library, surveys the Alamo of the Texas imagination through illustrations drawn from historical documents, paintings, sketches, cartoons, comic books, TV and movie interpretations. (817) 295-6131.

January 19

Martin Luther King Day. City offices closed. BISD holiday.

January 20

Burleson City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., City Hall. (817) 447-5400.

January 26

BISD board meeting: 6:30 p.m. (817) 245-1000.

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