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November 2007

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Mansfield NOW

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Traditionally, November is our month of giving thanks. As we gear up for the holiday season, what better time to celebrate family and the act of giving? In these pages, you will find wonderful people who embody a commitment to both community and home. It was family that called world traveler Curtis Callaway back home to Mansfield and there is a tremendous giving spirit at the Wesley Mission Center. In our sports profile, Pat Senn reminds us that family can, and does, extend to our animals. Her devotion to her horses is truly beautiful.

Of course, what would Mansfield be without Dr. Percy and Avena Cook? Together, they made remarkable changes for this city. Let their story inspire you to do something for your family and your community this year. As Mayor Barton Scott can tell you, one person really can make a difference.

Happy Holidays. Be safe!

Alex Allred
Mansfield Editor




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Mayoral Magic

— By Alex Allred

With Barton Scott, what you see is what you get. Or, is it? In the blink of an eye, with the slight of hand, the mayor of Mansfield can perform magic. Literally.

He is a practicing magician, able to perform such parlor tricks as making an item vanish or effortlessly pulling a rabbit out of a hat. His political performances, however, have not always been so successful, but this is what makes our mayor so interesting and endearing.

He is a former computer software executive-turned-schoolteacher, a magician-turned-politician with one goal in mind: focusing on the welfare of our children. By his own admission, this was not always top priority.

“I didn’t understand this until I became a father. Having a child changes everything.”

When Barton and his wife, Amy, were expecting their first child, Barton had been putting in long hours, traveling around the globe selling software. Suddenly, he was forced to re-evaluate what was most important in his life. The answer was easy. He quit his job and began teaching, while Amy continued her practice as a labor



employment attorney. Truly, the Scott family had settled quite nicely into the Mansfield community.

Reared in Rendon, Barton has strong Mansfield roots, which can be traced back to his great-great-grandfather, who traveled from Arkansas to the Mansfield area in 1906 in a covered wagon with 12 children.

“In fact, when we bought our first home in Heritage Estates,” Barton said,



“it was interesting because it was on the very land my family used to farm. My great-uncles and great-great-grandfather had plowed and picked cotton there.”

At that time, Barton was simply happy living so close to his ancestral roots and teaching middle school science. But when Barton heard rumors of an adult novelty store moving to Mansfield, “I knew I had to do something. It’s just not the type of thing this community needs, nor did I believe my forefathers would want this.”

Using this as his platform, Barton began talking to neighbors and was encouraged to run for mayor. Once again, he embraced his family roots, using good old-fashioned door-to-door campaigning, getting to know his neighbors.

Once elected mayor, his first course of action was to make a motion to create a new registered sex offender ordinance.

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“I want to say that this city has done everything in its power to legally ensure the safety of our children,” Barton said. But concerns that tougher laws would push pedophiles into hiding or that the rights of registered sex offenders, geographically discriminated against, could result in lawsuits, caused the ordinance to be voted down twice by the city council.

“My response on the litigation issues is I certainly don’t want Mansfield to spend money on lawsuits, but I also don’t want to legislate for fear of lawsuits. Is there nothing worth fighting for in our community?” Barton asked.

With the sex offender ordinance seemingly dead, Barton refuses to give up, saying his efforts will once again be grassroots — “as a citizen, not mayor.” Barton has drafted an ordinance that would require sex offenders to be 2,000 feet from all private and public parks, bus stops, churches and schoolyards. “My goal is to have 1,000 signatures to put the ordinance on the May ballot.”

Barton is a pragmatic politician, a practicing magician, a mentor to children and an avid volunteer in the community. Today, he also teaches at a lower socio-economic middle school, working with children from single-parent homes, many of whom come from non-English-speaking families. It is a position he holds with great regard.

His students are interested in what his responsibilities as mayor involve.

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Specifically, they are curious about how much the job pays. "I get guesses anywhere from \$50,000 to \$150,000," Barton chuckled. "When I tell them nothing, their jaws drop." For him, it is an opportunity to impress upon a group of lower-income children that history, community pride, familial ties and volunteerism do not have price tags.

What intrigues his students the most, Barton said, is that as mayor, he can write laws. For fun, he tells his kids, "I could write a law to put a curfew in place so that you have to be in bed by 10 p.m. and their eyes get really big," he laughed. "But, seriously, it does make them think about what kind of laws they would want in their own city, and it makes them realize citizens can have a voice in local government." For Barton, this is all he wants.

It is his hope to share that same message to his fellow citizens. "I hope when people meet me, they know I'm speaking from the heart, that I base my decisions on what my spirit and my heart are telling me, that regardless of their income or where they live, I am here to represent everyone in the community."

At City Hall, he is perceived as doggedly determined. In school, he is an entertaining and imaginative educator, who gets children excited about learning. At home, he is something else still. Friends and family describe him as funny, a practical




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joker, spiritual, thoughtful and loyal.

“He’s very curious,” added Amy. “He’s analytical in nature and won’t typically make a statement about something unless he’s done his homework.” In fact, when the question of urban sprawling was posed to Barton, he immersed himself in the subject. “I’ve got more books on urban sprawling than I care to have,” Amy mused. But his true gift is children. “We all have a gift and Bart’s is children.”



Concerning this, Barton is almost embarrassed, stating that his devotion to teaching and the children in the community is for our collective future. “I try to emphasize to my students that you have to believe in yourself and take a stand” he said. It is a lesson this magical politician and teacher is taking to heart.

Recently, while performing a trick for his students, things did not go as planned. “You know,” Barton laughed, “children are so caught up in the magic, it kind of blows the mystery on how things are done when the trick doesn’t work.” Barton had forgotten how the trick should be executed. “The kids were like, ‘Well, that wasn’t very magical!’ and all I could say was, ‘You’re right. Let’s go on to the next trick.’”

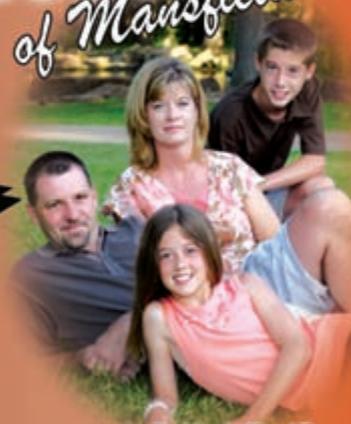
Just as life imitates art, this is one mayor who has many more tricks up his sleeve. They are not illusions, but genuine, innovative ideas for our future. The reason Barton ran for mayor in the first place comes in a very small package. She is his daughter and her name could not be more telling of the kind of man her father is. Lauren has the beautiful, but unusual spelling to her middle name, Abbagail, which means, “Father’s Joy.” 

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Memories

Made in Mansfield

— By Sandra McIntosh

"Mansfield proved to be a great place to raise our family. It meant a lot to us then and it means even more today!"

Dr. Percy and Avena Cook moved to Mansfield in 1951, when the city population was only 800. Now 56 years later, the population has grown to well over 49,000, and the memories the couple has made during their 65-year union take up the better portion of their four-bedroom, four-bath home. "We married in 1942," Percy said. "We didn't move to Mansfield until 1951 after one of the two doctors in town passed away. We moved here so I could take over the practice."



Percy worked out of one side of the building located at 315 S. Main Street alongside his mentor and friend, Dr. Joe Ellis, while taking up residence in the other side of the building with his wife, his son, Miles, and the family's steadfast rock, Lillian Robertson Sutton. "Everyone in town knew my mother as 'Mama Sutt,'" Avena said. "We couldn't have done it all without her."

After living in the clinic building for several years, and following the birth of their second child, the family moved to a small, white house on Graves Street where Carol was born. The home in which they now reside was built in 1958. Everything from the 4,500 square feet of living space to the terrazzo flooring found predominantly in the large sunken den area is original to the home. The covered carport has been the home's only addition. "We designed the home together," Percy said, as Avena affirmed his answer with a

At Home With
Dr. Percy and Avena Cook





smile. "We added the extra footage to the den area to allow for collectibles and my African Safari keepsakes."

The traditional style home with formal living and dining areas is in mint condition. Its position sitting back off the main road allows for privacy and a lack of car noise. The home boasts of two fireplaces. The one in the small sitting area of the den is similar to a



wood stove inset, while the large wall-to-wall brick fireplace in the sunken area of the den is designed for cords of wood measuring no more than four feet in length. The larger fireplace is flanked by built-in bookcases, which house only a small portion of the books collected by the couple over the years. Percy is proud of the many things found in this one room. "A large viewing screen equipped to show 35mm film movies comes out of the ceiling in front of the fireplace," he said, pointing to the back wall while walking to a



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large, wooden storage cabinet. "We have a large collection of film, both 8-millimeter and 35-millimeter, and also several drawers filled with slides from our many vacations and travels."

As a World War II veteran, Percy has a fascination with the Holocaust, as evidenced by photograph albums filled with propaganda cartoons with captions written in German, several daggers with the swastika emblem and display boards he takes to area schools

when asked to do demonstrations on World War II.

"We have lots of collections," Percy said. "We have keys, harmonicas, rolls for the antique player piano and an abacas from the Orient." As a doctor, his collection would be missing something if he did not have shadow boxes filled with old medical instruments. "Each of the children have a shadow box of their own," he said, pointing to several more he created following his retirement.



The formal dining area is home to Avena's favorite antique. "It's the love seat there in the bay window," she explained. "Percy acquired it from one of his patients where he made house calls in his helicopter." A hand-painted, paper wall mural takes up the entire back wall of the dining area. An antique French provincial cabinet serves as the display case for several porcelain baby feeders. The china cabinet, also located in the formal living/dining room combination is home to Avena's large collection of china. "Hold this cup up to the light," Percy said. "If you see the face of a geisha girl, that means it is authentic." Needless to say, everyone

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who has held a cup to the light has seen a beautiful face looking back at them.

Two of the four bedrooms have been turned into home offices — one represents the medical field, while the other has become home to the genealogy projects Percy finds himself enjoying



these days. The third bedroom, Mama Sutt's room, is exactly as it was on the day of her passing. A walnut bedroom suite mingles with several antique pieces, making for a comfortable, inviting room filled with memories that will, no doubt, last a lifetime in the Cook family.



Other collections found in key locations throughout the home include apothecary jars, thimbles and dolls in the den's display cabinet, a

white glass collection of bird decanters, "swanky swig" glasses once filled with cheeses, an elephant's foot at the backdoor and a Louis Lamar book collection that is second to none.

The fondest memories for the couple can still be found in Mama Sutt. She was instrumental in helping Percy and Avena rear their three children, Miles, Cindy and Carol, until her passing in 1970, while the two youngest children were students at Mansfield High School. Without her help, the Cooks feel certain they would not have

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been able to accomplish all they were able to in Percy's medical practice, as well as in the opportunities to grow the Mansfield community they lovingly call home.

Looking back over their lives together in Mansfield, they are proud of what they have accomplished.

Not only was Percy able to make house calls in a helicopter he flew himself, he, along with five other men who were quite active in the community, purchased 200 acres of land that quickly became known as Mansfield Industrial Park. "The first big business that moved to the area was Carnation Can Company," Percy said. "Not long after, Trinity Forge opened its doors." Many others soon followed. The goal,



Percy said, was to bring business into Mansfield to help carry the tax burden. New businesses opened up the job market for the community, as well as being good stewards by giving back through charities and fundraisers. "We had to fight the battle for growth,"

Percy said. "We envisioned what we are seeing today, and it was all well worth it!"

Avena feels that Mansfield was the perfect place to rear her family. "I truly believe we instilled values in our children that they are now instilling in their own children and grandchildren," Avena said. "Mansfield proved to be a great place to raise our family. It meant a lot to us then and it means even more today!" **NOW**

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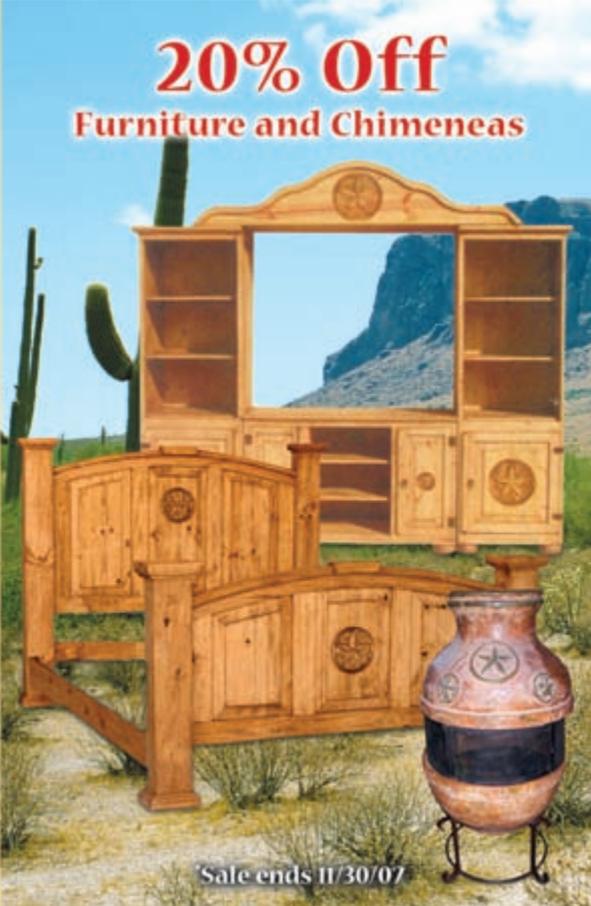
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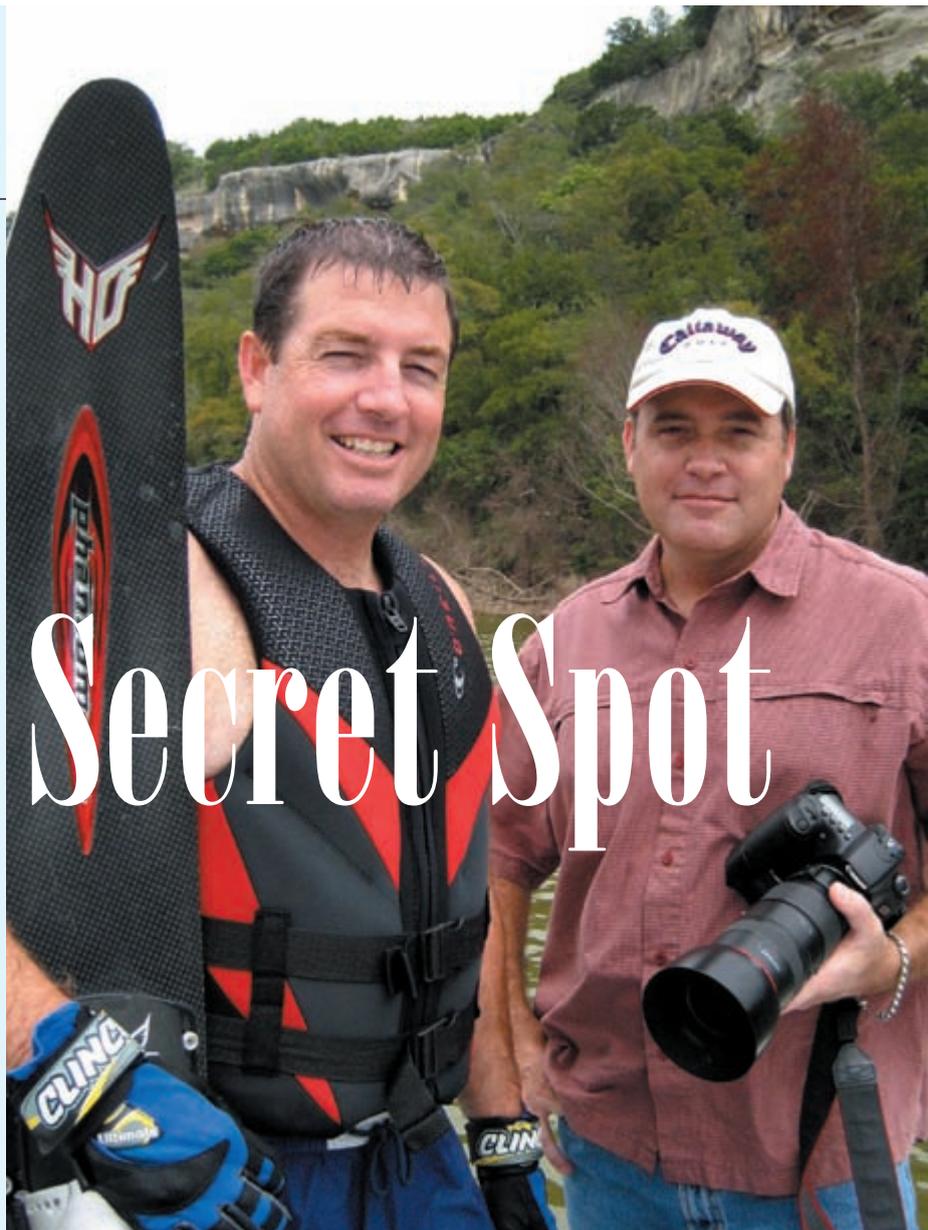


Their Secret Spot

— By Alex Allred

In scouting out the perfect location, Gavin Callaway came closer than he had ever hoped to a rattlesnake, but he found the secret spot. He also endured extreme heat, insect bites and more hours away from home than he could have ever imagined. In turn, his brother, Curtis Callaway, was tossed and turned in the water at speeds up to 44 miles per hour and, on several occasions, narrowly missed being struck in the head by water skis and wakeboards. He was ravaged by poison oak and, like his brother, was left burned and exhausted by the sun.

“There were too many hours to count,” Gavin said of the two-year project of filming their award-winning film, *The Secret Spot*. It had begun as a dream. By profession, Gavin is a real estate broker and investor. Also an avid skier, he does everything with great intensity and passion. As the second oldest of five brothers, he is a natural leader and visionary. Taking charge of a project and seeing it through to the finish is his modus operandi, be it the construction of a new environmentally green home, a shopping mall or a one-of-a-kind film



on extreme water sports.

Gavin credits his creative genes to his parents, noting that he had once considered commercial art as a profession. But when a real estate opportunity availed itself, Gavin jumped in. Still, the need to create and design was so powerful, “I had to make something,” Gavin said. “I wanted to make something with my hands, from start to finish.”

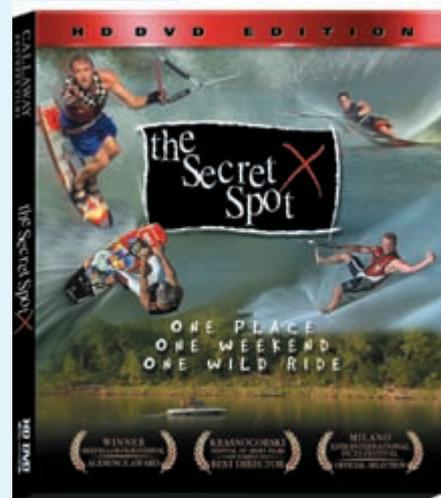
That was when fate intervened. While Gavin thrived at home in Mansfield, his younger brother was busy traveling the world. As one of a few underwater professional photographers,

Curtis quickly gained notoriety as a talented artist. He worked with Jean Michel, the eldest son of Jacques

Cousteau, on passenger cruise ships, giving lectures on such things as coral reef ecology, sharks and marine mammals, as well as live broadcasts from underwater.

Curtis was one of the first American photographers

to be allowed back into Vietnam, but as he continued photographing sea life, he became known as one of the “best



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handheld cinematographers in the business,” according to Gavin.

“But my family had been calling me to come back home to Texas and start my own business,” Curtis said. Gavin had bigger ideas. “Gavin had been bugging me since the day I came home,” Curtis said regarding *The Secret Spot*.

What is *The Secret Spot*? The location is just that — a secret. The premise is something else. That part was something Gavin wanted to share with everyone. He wanted a movie his own children could watch. He wanted to express the exhilaration, the raw power, the commitment and talents of water sport enthusiasts. He wanted to capture these things in a manner, which had never before been seen on film. For the entire Callaway family, it is as much the lure of the water, the surrounding wildlife and sunsets as it is the sport of water skiing.

From the beginning, Curtis was intrigued. “I’ve produced films,” he said, “from start to finish, but I have never done my own documentary. I’ve never been able to show what I can do.” Professionally, this was a point of contention for Curtis, who would spend weeks, even months, of his life



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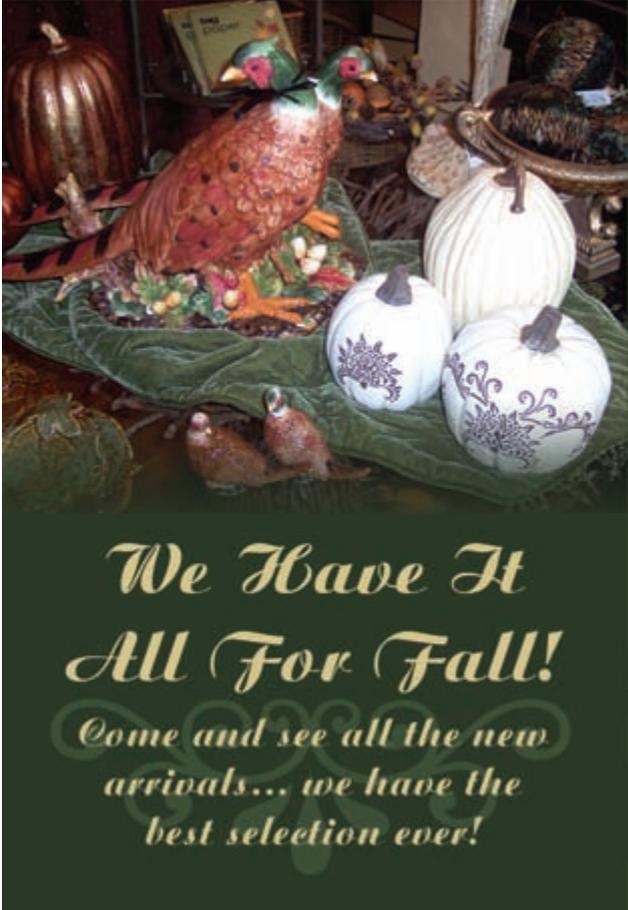
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working on a project only to have a producer lose the integrity of the film. "A lot of times it made me sick not to have any control over the footage. I would just hand over the tapes and never get to see how it's put together."

As a nature enthusiast, having control over his work was very important. "We [family] grew up watching *Jacques Cousteau* and *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* every Sunday." Ironically, however, Curtis was always "terrified" of the water. But when Gavin got certified in scuba, Curtis signed up, forever changing both of their lives.

Together, the brothers enlisted regional, national and world champions in the sports of skiing: wakeboarders, trick skiers, knee boarders, hydrofoilers and even barefoot skiers to perform outrageous stunts for the camera.

"We got some incredible angels," Curtis said modestly, not mentioning the harrowing close calls of athletes nearly landing on top of him in the water. In fact, when they began the project, they could not know all that would be involved. Their job titles spanned far beyond producer and director. They became stunt coordinators, pilots, drivers, editors, music producers, talent scouts, chauffeurs, managers and, for Gavin, "a grill chef and cabana boy." All of this, Gavin said, would have been impossible without the support of his wife, Angela.

To their amazement, this little start-to-finish project took them to Moscow, Russia, for the Krasnogorski International Film Festival, where they were nominated for Best Director and on to the Oscars of the sports world, the Sports Film Festival in Milan, Italy. Never could they imagine earning worldwide acclaim for their artistic works. It was simply their desire to share their love of friends, family and adventure through sport. Or, as Gavin explained, "to capture the magic," which they did, from start to finish. **NOW**



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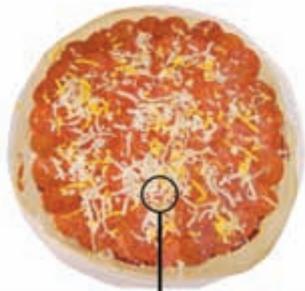


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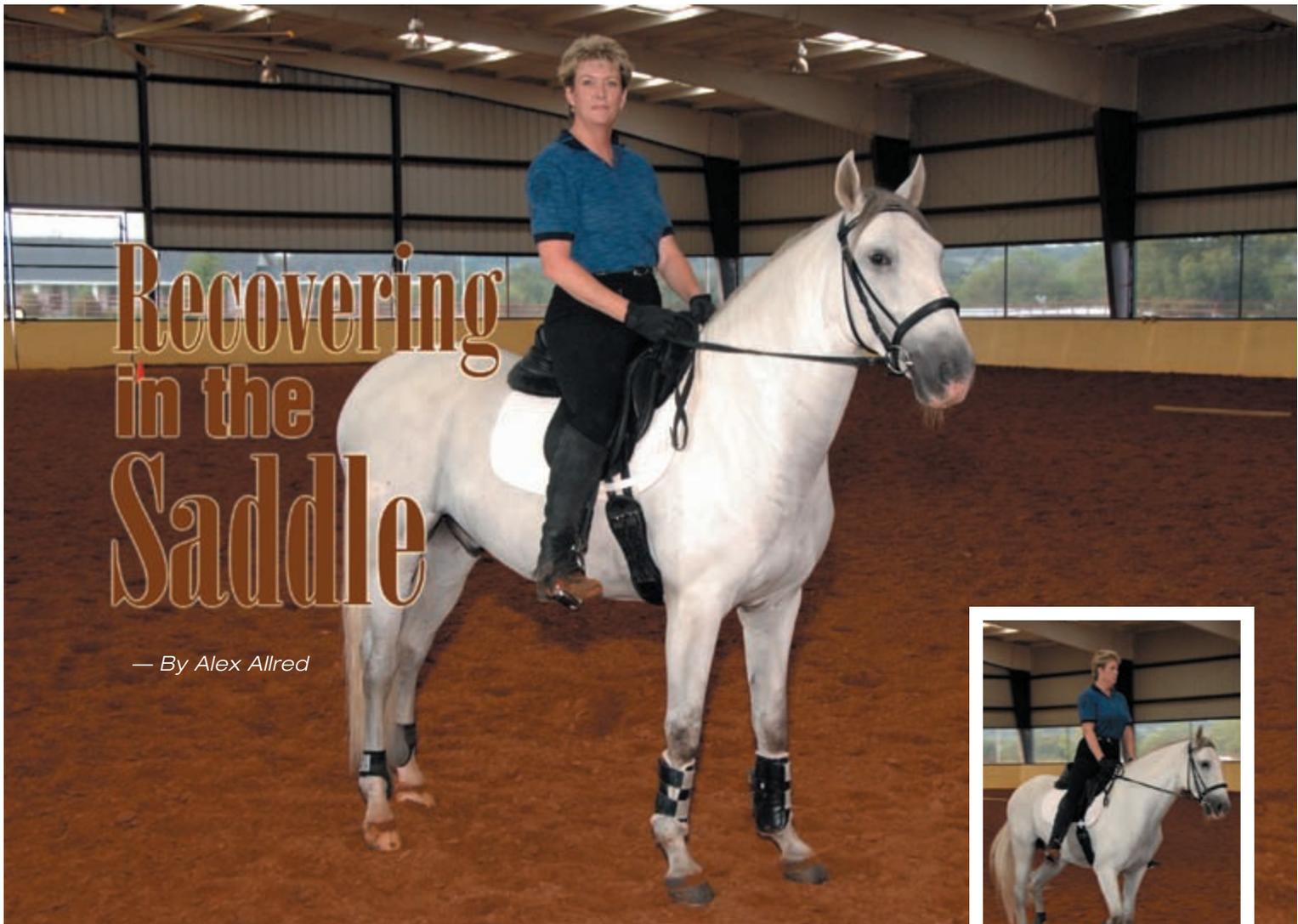


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Recovering in the Saddle

— By Alex Allred



Pat Senn fondly remembers the old song, “The hip bone’s connected to the leg bone and the leg bone’s connected to the knee bone.” These days, however, her knowledge of the human anatomy has advanced beyond what is connected to the knee bone. She can tell you that the talus is located above the heel bone, deep in the ankle, joining with the shinbone to form what we know as the ankle joint. She can also tell that when she shattered it beyond repair, it was not part of her retirement/birthday party plan.

The plan had been virtually full

proof. Through nothing short of sheer discipline, Pat had saved her money while working as a high school counselor at Mansfield High School. She had determined that she would quit her



job at the age of 45 to ride horses competitively. She had the grit and the skill, but she needed a champion horse.

Pat started riding horses when she

was 4 years old, and in high school she was leading trail rides as a summer job at the White Pines Ranch in

Oregon, Illinois. Throughout her adulthood, her love both for horses and riding never waned. It was only fitting that for her 45th birthday, she decided to treat herself to a beautiful, strong horse that could win championships.

After all, she had been planning for this day for a long time.

“Instead, I blew out my ankle,” she said. After what she called an “ill executed” leap from the saddle of a

Sports NOW

“high spirited” horse, Pat looked down to find her ankle grossly contorted. On a breakaway, the horse had charged back toward the barn on a downhill slope. Pat had tried everything possible to stop the large animal as he plowed toward a closed gate. With asphalt on the other side of the fence, only one of two things could have happened. Both



“She is so determined. She’s definitely not going to give up.”

horse and rider would crash on asphalt or into the fence. “But there was no way he [the horse] would be able to stop in time before the fence,” Pat said.

Four surgeries later, her prognosis is not good. Although her heel has been fused to her ankle, she still requires another surgery in which doctors hope to infuse a titanium rod from the ankle into her shinbone. Her range of motion is minimal, her pain still intense. Yet, she continues to ride.

“She has a wonderful spirit,” said Terri Crayne, a pilates instructor, who has worked with Pat to build core strength and flexibility. “She is so determined. She’s definitely not going to give up. This is her love and her passion.”

So much so that she traveled overseas last year to find that next perfect riding partner. While attending a horse show in Ft. Worth, Pat became smitten with the Lusitano breed and, after much research, visited a ranch in Brazil



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where she met a 3-year-old stallion named Virtuoso.

"I can no longer jump," Pat said, noting that with Virtuoso, dressage is her new sport. The sport covers all skills of a horse and rider, from the most basic to the most difficult patterns, in



which the horse and rider are judged on technique, position, movement and direction. It is a sport that dictates an unspoken communication and trust between the two athletes. Based on a point system, dressage has many difficult levels in which the rider can earn medals. For Pat, this is her golden ring. "I would like to work on getting my medals," Pat said.

Ironically, the word dressage comes from the French verb meaning "to train." It is a philosophy Pat adopted long ago. In or out of the saddle, she is singularly focused on the training.

"It's key," Pat said. "In fact, I was walking crooked," she said, not realizing how off-center she has been in the saddle and how greatly her ankle



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Sports NOW

affected her position as a rider. For this reason, pilates is very much a part of her training regimen. "That balance and core strength has really helped me in the saddle."

"Most people would have given up," Terri said. "But you can't tell Pat she



can't do anything. It's the love of the horse and the love of the sport that drives her." Plus, Terry added, "Pat has a different perspective than most people."

Take the day of her 45th birthday. She spent it in the emergency room where she was quickly informed that her ankle was so damaged she would have to be transported to a different hospital, where a trauma surgeon could look at it. When she was transported, the back doors to the ambulance suddenly flew up. "I thought I was gonna be doing the luge on Rosedale Street on a gurney! Naked! Cheeks up, man!" Pat laughed out loud at the memory of it all.

Her road to recovery has been no laughing matter, but her spirit is indomitable. For Pat, her road to recovery is being in the saddle. Where most would have retired from the sport, it is not an option for Pat.

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Serenity NOW

— By Alex Allred

For Vivian Tran, it was a leap of faith. Some might question why a woman with her master's in accounting, working toward her CPA license, would open a nail salon, but Vivian never did.

"It's just something I've always enjoyed. I like connecting with my customers, one-on-one," Vivian said.

Initially, Vivian enrolled in cosmetology classes in high school when a family member opened her own salon. The idea was that Vivian would be able to help out after school. For something that started simply as a "why not" venture, Vivian quickly realized that she enjoyed the camaraderie among the women in the nail salon. So, when she continued her education in college, she also kept her clients.

"It's been with me since high school," Vivian said. "I always kept it on the side." She took classes during the day and tended to her customers in the evenings.

Even after graduation and when she landed a job as an accountant with a construction company in Fort Worth, she remained faithful to her clients. In fact, Vivian realized that she could blend both her passion and her college degree.

"During tax season," Vivian said, "I do my clients' income taxes and at their next appointment, I have it all ready for them." Anyone who thought that Vivian might give up the cosmetology degree once she earned her master's in accounting, never counted on the human aspect. "I'm a people person," Vivian said. "If I just did numbers all the time, it would get pretty boring."

Instead, she loves the interaction between her clients. In many respects, her relationship with her clients can be likened to that of a patient/therapist. "But," Vivian is quick to point out, "I don't try to fix anything or solve problems. I just listen. It's amazing

how many people just want to be able to talk, to vent, to release all their stresses and have someone listen."

For Vivian, it seemed that the nail care industry had lost "the personal aspect." Her clients looked to her to find it. For years, in fact, they had been telling her that she needed to open her own salon. "Then, one day," said Vivian, "my husband was laid off."

Hung had been working as a machinist when he was temporarily laid off, but today, both husband and wife see this as a positive. "It was our leap of faith," she said. Because of the excellent relationships she held with her clients and her very own strongly held views on quality service, Vivian knew what she wanted to develop in a salon.

"In the past," she said, "salons have always been a pick-me-up, a place where girlfriends would come together for their own little retreat. I wanted it to be a

Business NOW

service rather than a must-have." For Vivian, her task was to put the joy back into giving and getting customer service.

Before she ever opened the doors to Serenity Nails, she wanted to be sure the salon lived up to its name. Rather than a traditional, overcrowded nail salon, Vivian only placed eight stations for nail technicians in the front. Along with serene murals on the back wall,



she also put in a large water fountain to create a more intimate and private setting, where the massage and footbath chairs offer the most luxurious treats and, just as Vivian had hoped for, a miniature retreat for friends.

The combination of arched doorways and the waterfall are perfect. "You can see around, but can't hear what other people are saying," Vivian said. "It makes it so much more private and relaxing."

Certainly, relaxation is something Vivian appreciates. As the owner of her own salon, a part-time accountant and the mother of two young boys, no one appreciates serenity more than Vivian. But for her, offering a service to others is far more gratifying.

"It brings me joy to bring joy to others," said Vivian with great satisfaction. "When customers leave smiling, I know I've done my job." Serenity Nails is located at 1219 E. Debbie Ln., Ste. 115. For more information, call (817) 539-0099. **NOW**

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— By Ashley Carlino

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Almost two years have passed since “Debbie” (anonymous) hit rock bottom. Her husband of 23 years had beaten her so badly as to create an inoperable brain tumor on the left side of her cerebellum. Her retinas became detached. She was left with no job, no money, no medical insurance and an endless pile of bills. The transmission went out on her car and her home became condemned. To make matters worse, she was diagnosed with heart and lung disease. She was alone and terrified. That is when she turned to the Wesley Mission Center for help. “I don’t know where I’d be without them,” Debbie said. “They are my angels here on Earth. The Center helped me pay my utility bill and get the transmission fixed on my car. They even gave me food from the food pantry.”

Debbie’s life began to turn around with the help of the Mission Center. She was fortunate enough to receive pro bono



legal assistance from a local attorney who had compassion for Debbie’s traumatic life experiences. Soon she will be legally divorced from her estranged husband, which has brought her great relief and peace of mind. “Now I live in an apartment and am beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I’m beginning to get some peace.”

Debbie’s story is a powerful one. According to Peggy Kiger, director for the Center, there are many people in need. “Families come in who are in crisis; they are struggling financially and sometimes spiritually. Our goal is to light a path toward self-sufficiency,” Peggy explained.

The Center was created in 1979 as a United Methodist Women’s Project. Its origin was a classroom filled with donated clothes. By 1999, the project had grown



Education **NOW**

enough to warrant a new building. What then began as 5,000 square feet has more than doubled in the last two years. The facility now measures at an astounding 11,000 square feet.

Peggy's interest in this field began when she started working in an emergency aid shelter over 20 years ago. She served several years in training and counseling at the Bridge Emergency



Youth Services, now known as All Church Home. During this time, she occupied a satellite office at the Mission Center, where she eventually became the director. "I want to help people in crisis," Peggy said. "We have two licensed, professional counselors who lease space at the Center and offer reduced rates."

Clients are assigned a case manager who sits down with them and assesses where they are having trouble in their lives. The goal is to promote independence and education. Sometimes it is as simple as helping someone with a budget, or updating a resume. The job program at the Center has been very helpful for these families in need. "We teach them problem solving skills," Peggy explained. "Our job coordinator, Gracie Nelson, holds job orientation Thursday at 1 p.m. and by one-on-one appointments on Thursdays and Fridays."

At these meetings, Gracie assesses what the client's needs are and discusses what the Center has to offer. She helps

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with resume writing and interviewing skills. The Center collaborates with the Workforce Commission, as well as with various businesses in the area, to stay in tune with job openings. A current job log is kept in the front office for easy accessibility. "We have a computer lab," Peggy noted. "We are trying to collaborate with another region for computer classes." Some clients have no computer skills, so the addition of computer education would be more than beneficial. Clients and case managers work together to develop and implement an action plan, complete with dates and goals, to assist the client in becoming self-sufficient. "Our goal is to partner with the families to create solution-focused goals to help them get back on track," Peggy continued.

If the Center has helped in all ways possible and there is still a need, the staff will refer the family to wherever they need to go. "There are so many resources available — you just have to know where to go to get them," Peggy added. The youth program at the church is an excellent resource, along with divorce care and a local outreach program. There are groups of churches, whose participation in projects like Angel Tree and Hands of Christ, have significantly contributed to community members in need. The Mission Center is made possible by the selfless giving of volunteers. "Our volunteers are at the heart of our Center," Peggy noted. Volunteers work in two-hour shifts at the thrift store, so it is easy to get involved. "Our greatest need right now is for people to shop in our store," she added. The sales from the store allow the Center to provide financial assistance to these families. Sometimes all they need is a little help with a bill and some goal-driven direction. "It's amazing how spending a little," Peggy said, "can change a life forever." **NOW**

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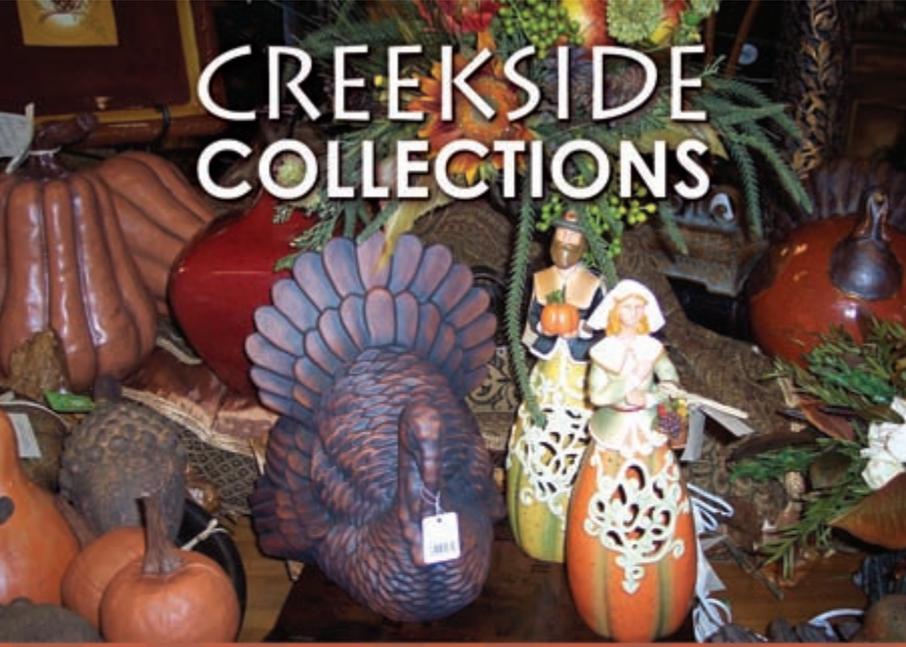
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Around Town **NOW**



Several girls, top left, had trouble deciding which golf ball belonged to them. A ribbon cutting, top center, was held for Allstate Lezlee Liljenberg. The smallest cheerleaders, top right, asked the crowd to give them an "M" for Mansfield. Several more ribbon cuttings were held, at left from top to bottom: Belinda's Pet Salon, Denitech Fort Worth and Kingsmill Dental. A family from Mansfield, bottom center, spends a wonderful day at an area park. Residents, bottom right, rode their bike, while also enjoying the weather the day before the annual Pecan Festival.



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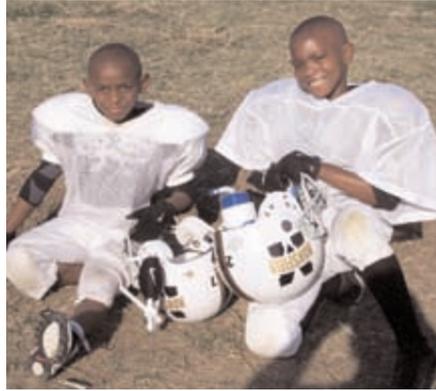
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The Chamber held ribbon cuttings, at left from top to bottom: Mark R. Danielson, The Parenting Center, Tuscan on Walnut Creek, Vintage Place and Workforce Solutions. Local youth, top center, warmed up for football practice by taking time to stretch. Soccer practice, top right, is fun for the children. Walking tall, bottom center, came easy for this young man as he walked the dog. Local skateboarders, bottom right, pose for the camera while doing the "tennis shoe boogie."

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IN THE KITCHEN WITH RHONDA RAMSDELL

“My grandmother was a great cook; when I married, I sat down and wrote out her recipes as she told them to me,” Rhonda said. Rhonda has since measured ingredients to get the taste almost like her grandmother’s. She has taken cake decorating classes and is looking forward to private lessons from an executive chef. “It will be a lot easier than going to a culinary school, and I can pick and choose what skills I want to learn and what foods I want to learn how to cook,” she said.

Rhonda recently put together scrap cookbooks for her daughters and future daughter-in-law. “They are filled with recipes from family members. I included stories and photos to tell where the recipes came from,” Rhonda said. **NOV**

PICADILLA

1/2 green pepper, chopped
 1/2 onion, chopped
 2 lb. ground beef
 2 Tbsp. olive oil
 1 clove garlic, minced
 1/4 cup golden raisins
 1/4 cup Spanish olives
 1/2 jar capers
 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce
 salt and pepper to taste
 Sauté the peppers, onion and ground beef in olive oil. Cook until onions are clear, peppers are tender and the meat is no longer pink. Add the garlic, raisins, olives, capers and tomato sauce. Salt and pepper to taste. Simmer for about 15 minutes and let sit a few minutes before serving.

GRANDMA SEDOT'S YELLOW RICE AND CHICKEN

2 1/2 lb. chicken thighs
 1 onion, chopped
 1 sweet green pepper, chopped
 1 Tbsp. garlic powder
 1 tsp. oregano
 2 - 3 bay leaves

salt and pepper to taste
 2 tsp. yellow rice flavoring*
 1 1/2 cup white rice, rinsed
 Wash chicken thighs and do not add oil. It will taste better without oil. Put chicken in water (cover chicken and have enough to cook rice according to package directions) and boil. Cut onion and sweet pepper; add to meat with the rest of the ingredients. When the chicken is almost done, put in washed rice. Cook until rice is done. Remove bay leaves before serving.
 *There are several companies that make this. My favorite is Bijol and the other is Goya.

CUBAN BLACK BEANS

From Mrs. Atiqua Henriquez (Cuban neighbor of the Knowles family)
 1 large onion, diced
 2 cloves garlic
 2 large green bell peppers, diced
 3 Tbsp. olive oil
 2 lb. dry black beans, sorted and washed
 2 bay leaves
 2 tsp. salt
 2 tsp. pepper
 2 tsp. oregano

1 16-oz. can crushed tomatoes
 1 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
 salt to taste
 In 5-quart pot, sauté onion, garlic and 1/2 bell pepper in olive oil over medium heat until onion is clear and bell pepper is tender. Add beans, bay leaves, salt, pepper and oregano. Add enough water to cover the ingredients (about 1 1/2 quarts). Bring to a boil; simmer and stir occasionally. Cook until beans are soft and water begins to thicken. If beans begin to stick to the pot add 1/2 cup of water at a time. When beans are tender, add tomatoes, vinegar, salt to taste and the rest of the bell pepper. Stir and cook another 15 minutes.
 VARIATION: Cut the bell pepper and onion in fourths. Cook with the beans then discard before serving. Add another onion and bell pepper to the beans, cook until tender. The onion and bell pepper cooked with the beans absorbs the gases from the beans.

GRANDMA SEDOT'S FISH STEW

1/2 lb. bacon or lean pork
 5 medium potatoes, chopped
 1/2 onion, chopped
 1/2 green pepper, chopped



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Who's Cooking **NOW**

1/3 can diced tomatoes
 2 Tbsp. flour
 2 lb. fish
 salt and pepper to taste
 Fry bacon until no longer able to get grease out. At the same time, cook potatoes, onion, green pepper and tomatoes in boiling water. Drain pork from grease, then add flour and keep flour very wet. Cook the flour until very brown. Set aside until cool. When the potatoes are almost done, add the gravy, a spoonful at a time, to the potatoes. Continue adding the gravy and when it is all mixed well, add the fish and cook until it flakes. Salt and pepper to taste.

RHONDA'S LASAGNA SUPREME

1/2 cup bell pepper, chopped
 1/2 cup onion, chopped
 3 Tbsp. olive oil
 1 1/2 lbs. ground beef, 5 - 10 percent fat content
 2 cloves of garlic, mashed with salt
 1 1/2 cups water
 3 6-oz. cans tomato paste
 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
 1/2 tsp. chili powder
 1/4 tsp. pepper
 1/4 tsp. salt
 12 oz. lasagna noodles or precooked noodles
 1 lb. mozzarella cheese, shredded
 1 lb. small curd cottage cheese
 1 lb. grated Romano cheese
 In a large pan, sauté bell pepper and onion in olive oil. Add the ground beef and cook until the red disappears. Add the garlic and salt mixture, water, tomato paste, Italian seasoning, chili powder, pepper and salt; mix well. Simmer for 30 minutes. Skim off excess fat. If using regular noodles, cook them according to package directions. In a separate bowl, combine the mozzarella and cottage cheeses. Spread 1/4 of the meat mixture in the bottom of 9 x 12-inch baking dish. Layer lasagna noodles, then the cheese mixture, then the Romano cheese. Repeat until all of the meat, lasagna and cheeses are used. The last layer should be Romano cheese. If I am in a hurry, I mix all of my cheeses together and layer them at one time.

CUBAN FLAN

1 cup sugar
 2 cans condensed milk
 1 12-oz. can evaporated milk
 1 tsp. vanilla
 6 - 7 eggs (I use 7 eggs.)
 Preheat oven to 325 F. Spread the sugar evenly in custard cups or other baking dish. Bake until the sugar turns brown. Cool before putting custard into baking dish/custard cups, approximately 10 minutes. While the sugar is browning, prepare the custard. Combine the milks, vanilla and eggs. Mix until the eggs are well blended. Pour the custard through a strainer. When the sugar is cool in the baking dish/custard cups, divide the custard evenly into the bowls if using the custard cups or pour all of the custard into the baking dish. Place dish or custard cups into a pan. Pour water around the dish until it reaches evenly with the custard. Bake at 325 F for about 1 hour or until a knife inserted in the custard comes out clean. This can be served warm or refrigerated. When cool, turn the custard out of the pan/custard cups onto another plate to serve. Pour caramelized sugar over the top of the custard that was in the bottom of the pan/custard cups. If you desire, you can top it with some whipped topping.



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Annuiti es 101:

Some Basics About a Misunderstood Product: Part 2

Below is an overview of fixed annuities. For more information about how annuities are structured and how they can fit into your investment portfolio, please talk to a financial professional.

Fixed Annuities — the Less Risky Alternative

The most easily understood annuity is a fixed annuity, which — depending on its structure — can promise you a guaranteed lifetime income, regardless of how long you live. Factors, including

the amount of money deposited, the payout option chosen and credited rates will determine the payment amounts, which may or may not be enough to meet your income needs.

The main advantage of this product is its relative safety, which depends on the claims paying ability of the company you buy the annuity from. Your principal (initial contribution) will not diminish over time, unless you withdraw it. It may also provide a reliable (if conservative) rate of return over the life of the contract. These contracts generally offer a choice between various guarantee periods, with one-, three- and six-year guarantees being most common.

In addition, there are fixed annuity products that can provide investors with a higher rate of return, forbearing

interest rate risk associated with changing interest rates, if they take withdrawals prior to the end of a

The main advantage of this product is its relative safety.

guaranteed period. These are called market value adjusted annuities and generally have crediting rate guarantee periods ranging from five to 10 years. Other annuity products tie the crediting rate to external market indices, like the S&P 500 or the five-year Treasury rate.

As you can see, fixed annuities come in many different variations to suit the diverse tastes of individual investors. While fixed annuities are considered



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the safer annuity product, please remember that fixed annuities are subject to the claims paying ability of the issuing insurance company.

Considering Annuities

Is an annuity right for you? The answer may depend on your individual financial situation and savings goals. In any event, do your homework before you invest. Ask for the assistance of a financial professional who can help you match the right product to your needs. **NOW**

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Surviving Diabetes Requires More Than Just Managing Blood Sugar

For the nearly 20 million Americans living with Type 2 diabetes, monitoring their blood sugar levels is a critical and daily task. While keeping blood sugar numbers in check is essential for managing the disease, paying attention to cholesterol and blood pressure levels is just as important.

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), about 73,000 diabetics die each year from diabetes-related complications. Topping the list of complications is cardiovascular disease. In fact, the ADA estimates that two out of three diabetics will eventually die from heart disease or stroke. While cardiovascular disease is a serious and common complication of diabetes, only 18 percent of diabetics are aware of this, according to a survey done by the ADA.

So what is the link between cardiovascular disease and diabetes? Jeffrey Astbury, M.D., internal medicine physician on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie said that over time, high blood glucose levels can lead to increased fatty deposits on blood vessel walls, affecting blood flow and increasing the risk of clogging and atherosclerosis (hardening of the blood vessels) ultimately increasing the risk for a heart attack.

“While high blood sugar is indeed dangerous and can cause other complications such as damage to the eyes, kidneys and nerves — unchecked cholesterol and blood pressure levels are even more so,” Dr. Astbury said. “Even if a diabetic is meticulous about controlling their blood sugar, they are still at risk for heart disease.”

Dr. Astbury said to help prevent heart disease, diabetics should work with their physician to determine the best treatment plan. He recommended the following guidelines:

- Maintain normal blood glucose levels. “Blood glucose levels vary depending on the time of day, what and how much you have eaten, as well as if you have exercised or not, but a ‘normal’ blood glucose level is in the low to mid 100s.”
- Keep blood pressure under 130/80, using medication if necessary. “High blood pressure puts diabetics at risk for heart attack, stroke, eye problems and kidney disease. Have your blood pressure checked regularly if you are a diabetic. It can usually be controlled with medication and lifestyle changes.”
- Keep cholesterol levels under control, using medication if necessary. “There is no

way to tell if your cholesterol levels are high without a blood test. It is recommended that diabetics keep their LDL (bad) cholesterol levels below 100 mg/dl, their HDL (good) levels above 40 mg/dl and their triglyceride levels below 150 mg/dl.”

- Maintain a healthy weight. “In most cases, weight loss can lessen the symptoms of Type 2 diabetes and in some cases keep it under control without the use of medication.”

- Exercise regularly. “Regular exercise is crucial for Type 2 diabetics and it is never too late to start. Exercise can lower your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels and actually increase your energy level.”

- Maintain a heart-healthy diet that is low in fat and salt. “Try to avoid food that is high in fat as this can increase your cholesterol levels and anything high in sodium can increase your blood pressure. Try to eat a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and choose lean meats and low-fat dairy. Most importantly, Type 2 diabetics should avoid sugar.”

The most common signs of a heart attack include:

- chest pain or discomfort
- Pain or discomfort in your arms, back, jaw, neck or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating or light-headedness



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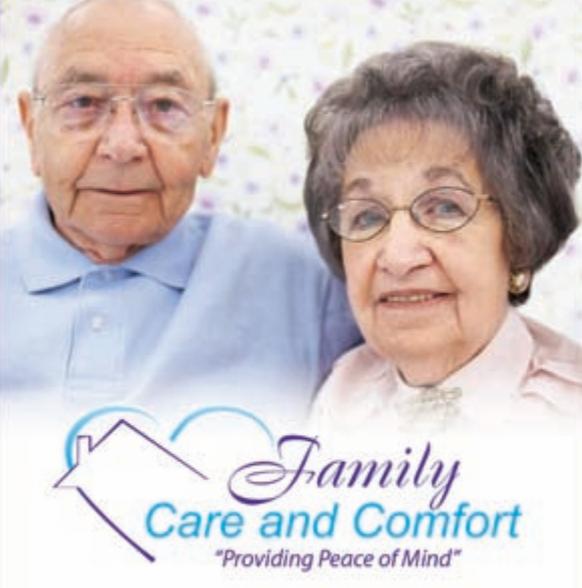
Health NOW

- Indigestion or nausea
- Fatigue

"If you experience any of these symptoms, take them seriously and call 9-1-1 right a way," Dr. Astbury said. He added that Type 2 diabetes is manageable, especially if it is detected in the early stages before any significant damage has been done. "Common symptoms of Type 2 diabetes include frequent thirst and urination, weakness and fatigue, blurred vision and tingling or loss of feeling in the hands or feet to name a few. If you suspect you may have Type 2 diabetes, talk to your physician about taking a blood glucose test." **NOW**

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Great Outdoors

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Time to Plan Ahead

— By Nancy Fenton

November is here, and we can look forward to some cooler weather for a while. It is time to look at the yard and make some decisions as to what we want it to look like next year. Have you split up those perennials yet? Have you planted those spring blooming bulbs? There is still time to get to it. I like the ones that naturalize, like the narcissi, crocuses and jonquils. I have just enlisted my grandsons' help to put in another 300 bulbs in our natural area across the creek. The boys are a lot closer to the ground than I am!

It is too late to trim back those shrubs and trees, but not too late to

plant new ones. Try some that might be new ones to you, like the possum hall holly or vitex which will survive our hot and dry summers.

The *Farmers' Almanac* is predicting another hot, dry summer for northern Texas. With our changing climate at the poles, it could happen. Bed preparation with shale and compost, plus the selection of plants that can tolerate the heat, will help your landscape maintain the look you want. The trees that shade us absorb 2,250,000 tons of CO₂ per tree each year and produce oxygen for us. Think about planting a tree for every member of your family. Just remember to plant it high, mulch it heavily and give it a weekly watering even through the winter.

Christmas is coming, and if you are already thinking about your gardener friends, order magazines like *Birds and Bloom* (birdsandblooms.com) or *Texas*

Gardener (texasgardener.com). It takes six weeks or longer for the magazines to get it together, so you need to start working on it this month if you plan on giving them as Christmas presents.

It is also the time to take a look at your tools to see if any of them need repair, replacement or general cleanup. As the shorter days approach, a brief swipe with sandpaper and a little oil will make those tools shine and last for another season! The mower can stand a cleanup, blade sharpening and oil and air filter change before it turns cold. Let's pass up the frustration of a mower that does not want to start next spring by spending a little time with it this month!

Have a great Thanksgiving, and plan ahead for a glorious spring! **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.

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From left to right: Martin Fielder, M.D., Robin Johnston, M.D., David Russell, M.D., John Jeffers, M.D., Baron Atkins, M.D., Keryn Dias, M.D., Ellen Parrill, M.D., Russell Dickey, M.D., Byron Kallam, M.D., John Paul Wood, Jr., M.D., Mary Finke, M.D.

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November 2007 Community Calendar

First and Third Tuesdays

Training Academy for Dental Assistants holds free informational sessions at 5:30 p.m. For details, call (972) 842-2999.

First Tuesday of Every Month

Visit the Mansfield Masonic Lodge # 331 AF & AM. Meal is served at 6:30 p.m. Meeting at 7:30 p.m. Visitors welcome.

Second and Fourth Mondays

Texas Ladies Networking meets from 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Ryan's in Waxahachie. For more information, call (214) 587-1221.

Kiwanis Afternoon Club meets at Ryan's on Hwy. 287 in Mansfield. Visitors welcome. (817) 453-0872.

Mansfield City Council meeting, 7 p.m. at Mansfield City Hall, 1200 East Broad Street.

Every Tuesday

Small business counseling provided by SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Mansfield Chamber offices, 114 North Main Street. To set an appointment, call (817) 473-0507.

Mansfield Public Library hosts Bouncing Babies Story Time for infants up to 2 year olds from 10:30 - 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. - noon.

Every Wednesday

Mansfield Public Library hosts On My Own Story Time for 3 to 5 year olds from 10:30 - 11 a.m.

Every Thursday

Mansfield Public Library hosts Special Kids' Story Time from 10 - 10:30 a.m. Please register for this special-needs program in advance by contacting Annette at the library at (817) 473-4391.

Mansfield Public Library hosts Toddler Story Time for 2 year olds from 11 - 11:30 a.m.

Every Friday

Kiwanis Club of Mansfield meets at 7 a.m. at Ryan's. Membership and other information can be obtained by calling (817) 473-9886.

November 3

Fourth Annual Fall Carnival from 2 - 5 p.m. at Martha Reid Elementary, 500 Country Club Drive Mansfield. Admission is free and tickets will be sold for carnival games and food. Enjoy carnival games, a petting zoo, pony rides, train rides, bounce houses, a silent auction, a vendor/craft fair and much more. For information, contact Annaca Palmer at (817) 480-7713.

November 6

Free financial seminar "Freedom Debt" by Sue Falter with Primerica, 7 p.m. at the Midlothian Health Center.

November 8

Mansfield Home Child Care Association "Early Concepts Fostering Classroom Community" from 7 - 9 p.m. in the meeting room of Mansfield Public Library. For more information, visit www.mansfieldchildcare.com.

November 9 and 10

Second Annual Shopping Event sponsored by the Methodist Mansfield Medical Center Auxiliary. Friday, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. The event will benefit the special care nursery and other hospital projects and will include: holiday shopping, refreshments, a raffle and music. For information, e-mail Connie Trail at constrit@aol.com.

November 13

The American Cancer Society will sponsor a Look Good, Feel Better event for women receiving treatment for cancer. Complimentary makeup kits, wigs, hats and scarves will be provided. 6:30 p.m. at the Midlothian Health Center.

November 26

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meets at 7 p.m. at St. Paul Episcopal Church, Hwy. 287 at Ovilla Road, Waxahachie. Visit CQGuild.org for more information.

To have your events posted in the community calendar, e-mail alexallred.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.



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