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M A G A Z I N E

November 2010



**All in the  
Details**

**ALSO INSIDE:**

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**The Pain Eliminators**

**Ministry  
of Many  
for Many**

**At Home With  
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Emily Oliver has turned therapeutic horseback riding into a ministry for many.

Photo by Terry Ozymy.

# Editor's Note



*Happy Thanksgiving, Waxahachie!*

Wow, this year has flown by! I cannot believe it is already November, and in just a few short weeks, we will be eating too much turkey, dressing, sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie. By the time I sit down with family, I will be another year older, too. Now that I am over 50, does that mean I am “over the hill?”

This is also the perfect time to reflect on the things in life we are thankful for. I am thankful to be able to interview wonderful people, then return home to write a story my community enjoys reading. I am thankful for the autumn breeze upon my face because it lets me know colder weather is just around the corner. But most of all, I am thankful for my Lord and Savior, my wonderful family and my caring friends.

This Thanksgiving, what is on your “thankful” list?

Sandra Strong  
WaxahachieNOW Editor  
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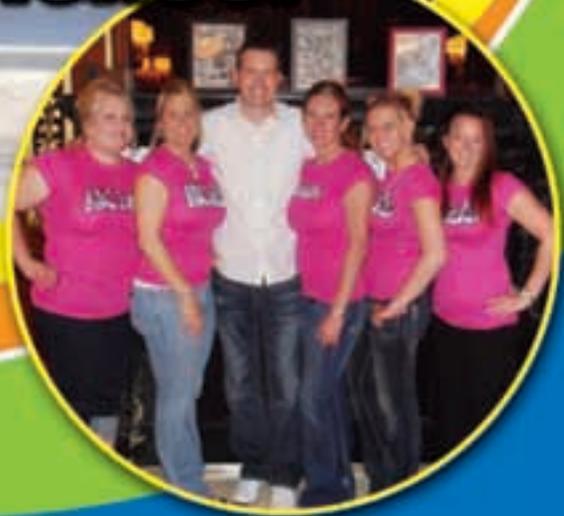
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# Ministry of Many *for Many*

— By Sandra Strong

*Emily Oliver loves lots of things about life. She loves spending quiet time in prayer. She loves relaxing with her oil and pencil portraits. She loves her horses. “But I’m passionate about people,” Emily confessed. “I just love people.” This passion to reach people on a higher level most surely was the main catalyst that inspired Campfire Creek Therapeutic Riding Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization designed to improve the quality of life for children and adults with physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, social and spiritual needs. “We do this,” Emily explained, “by providing activities through the interaction with the equine family and the agricultural environment.”*

Campfire Creek was founded by Emily on March 17, 2005. Almost immediately, the stable doors were opened for riders. The corporation is also a member of the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA). For those who may not know, therapeutic riding is an equine-assisted activity where the main goal is to improve the overall quality of life for participants, better known as students. Goals are reached as students learn proper riding skills and by practicing horse care skills. “Therapeutic riding uses a NARHA-certified, therapeutic riding instructor,” Emily said, also mentioning that until just recently, she was the only qualified instructor at the center. Therapeutic riding sessions can be conducted in groups or on an individual basis. They promote sport, recreation and education. “It all depends on the student and their needs,” Emily added, “and I could not do this without the help of my husband, Bobby. We call him the barn manager. He’s over anything to do with the horses.”

Jill Howard came on board a few months ago as the one other qualified instructor. Emily, Bobby, Jill and a long list of volunteers make the riding experience possible for students and their families. “I really have been blessed with great volunteers,” Emily said. “Some volunteers come out on a regular basis to work hands on with the students and the horses. Others work behind the scenes by giving monetary donations.” Emily admitted the hardest aspect of running her own charitable



organization is the fundraising. “We have to survive off the kindness of others,” she said, also mentioning administration comes in a close second. “You have to know when to release volunteers from service or change their responsibilities. I’m learning this as I go.”

Listening to her talk about the riders, their families and her volunteers, one can easily see this is Emily’s ministry. The venture has been faith-based from the start. “I continually ask God to let me be salt and light to those I come in contact with,” Emily emotionally stated. “The riding experience has to be positive every time they come to the center. God calls us to see their hearts. Campfire Creek students are really just cowboys and cowgirls with lots of heart.”



There are many advantages to therapeutic riding that begin with the horse’s unique movement. This movement becomes the most valuable of therapeutic tools. Research has shown therapeutically-trained horses produce three-dimensional rhythmic, repetitive movements that closely imitate the movements of the human pelvis while walking. When mixed with the heat generated from the horse, these movements cause physical benefits such as: increased circulation, relaxation of spastic muscles, strengthening weak muscles, development of balance, increased vocalization and improved posture, sensory perception and attention to task.

Children and adults of all ages with a variety of ailments and conditions can, and do benefit, from therapeutic riding. These impairments and delays in development can be found in many areas — gross motor skills (sitting and walking), fine motor skills (eating, dressing and writing) or speech, language or communication skills (language, articulation and memory). Some

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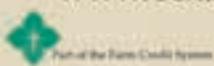
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common diagnoses Emily works with at the center include, but are not limited to: cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome, ADHD/ADD, traumatic brain injury, clinical depression and all forms of developmental delays. “We currently have two sets of twins who come on a regular basis to ride,” Emily shared. “One set has autism and the other set has cerebral palsy.”

Emily is always looking for new opportunities to further educate her students, often making a game out of it. Games designed to meet the needs of the rider include Pony Express, Hide and Seek and Build a Puzzle. “Pony Express teaches them to put a letter in the mailbox or take a letter out of the mailbox,” Emily explained. “They look for hidden magnets during Hide and Seek. When they find a magnet, they lead their horse, with the help of volunteer staff and trainer, to a magnetic board. Sometimes the magnets will spell their name.” The rules of Build a Puzzle are similar to Hide and Seek. Students will find puzzle pieces and begin putting a puzzle together. “All these activities are done on horseback,” Emily added. “The students use the correct riding skills they’ve been taught.”

Safety is the most important thing for the students, as well as the horses. “Safety standards are the priority,” Emily stated. “They are held firm. I teach the volunteers not to freak out if something happens. It’s best to deal with these situations with a calm demeanor. If we’re calm, the horses, the students and the parents remain calm.”

One specific rule at Campfire Creek Therapeutic Riding Center pertains to



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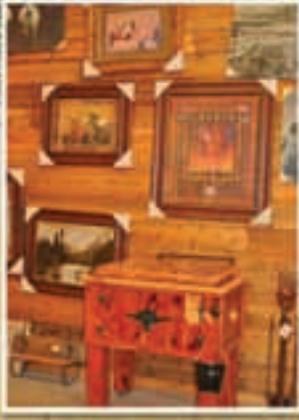
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the parents. "They must remain on the premises the entire time their child or family member is here," Emily shared. "It takes the families working together with us to make this experience work for the rider." In fact, many times Emily feels she is here, doing the job she loves, just as much for the parents as the children. The arena was designed to include the parents. They have a deck where they can sit and watch as their child rides. Currently, a multipurpose building is considered Emily's "work in progress." This new building will incorporate the center's offices, Emily's art studio and a large great room where families can sit down and share their individual stories with one another.

Currently, the center has approximately 30 students on its roster. They travel



Volunteer Angela Mixon poses with student, Daniela Morales.

from Waxahachie, Ennis, Red Oak, Palmer, Cedar Hill and Arlington to reap the benefits of therapeutic riding. Emily, Jill and all those who volunteer on-site push the students forward, always expecting them to do more each time. After being allowed to struggle, they gain newfound confidence. One mother said it best when she pulled Emily aside one day and told her how she felt. "She told me, 'It's nice to have people work with my son who love him unconditionally,'" Emily said with a tear in her eye. "I'm so thankful for the ministry God has provided. It's a ministry of many for many." **WAX**

*Editor's Note: For more information on Campfire Creek Therapeutic Riding Center, contact Emily Oliver at (469) 337-9187.*

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# Where the Vespa Is — By Sydni Thomas

## AT HOME WITH DANIEL AND LEAH SMITH

*Brightly colored art and a two-tone hot pink Vespa decorate the lawn of the Middleton House just off the square. Art teachers Daniel and Leah Smith bought the historic home five years ago and have since been bringing history back to life with their own artistic style. The inside is decorated with artwork created by the couple, their friends and former teachers, but the overall look stays true to history. Room by room the couple is restoring the historical aesthetics that would have been found in the home over 100 years ago. “We’d been looking for a historic home for quite a while,” Leah said. “This house is unique. I like the squareness of it and the kitchen is huge. There is a lot of character in this house and we hope to bring it out again.”*





As the new owners took over the home, they soon realized the previous owners had left a stack of documents hidden on a shelf in the back of a closet. These documents, photographs, newspaper clippings and genealogy reports are evidence of the home's history and the many lives that have been a part of it.

Thomas Jefferson Middleton, founder



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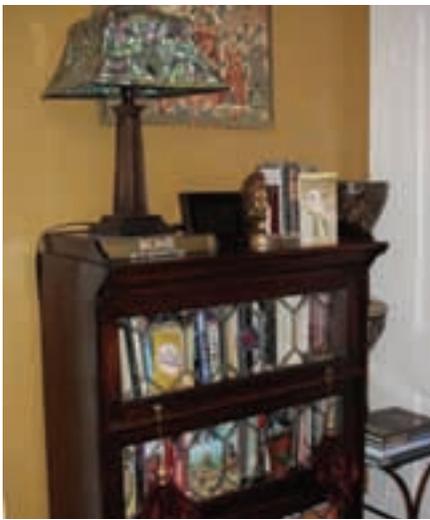
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- S. Bailey



of the *Ellis County Mirror*, was the first recorded owner in 1887. He was also the publisher and editor of the paper. Thomas had five daughters and three sons. One of Thomas' daughters, May, married U.T. Buckner Sr., and they inherited the home. A blood relation lived in the home up until 1982 when it was sold. "We are working on getting more history of the house," Daniel said. "We have a historical marker on the house, but we want to get the state plaque with a write-up about the family. The Middleton family deserves to be remembered."

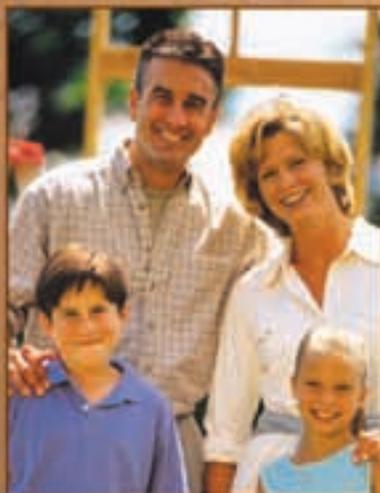
When the house was bought in the

1980s, it underwent major renovations. The wraparound porch was converted into a master bedroom, a pool was put in the backyard and a room was added on in the back. The front porch railing was missing when the Smiths bought the home and most of the original accents had been stripped from inside the house. Original light fixtures were replaced with ceiling fans and modern lighting. The fireplace that had once connected the dining room to the front sitting room had fallen through the floor, and after repairs, it was never replaced.

With a list that grew longer every day,

Daniel and Leah knew when they bought the home that they wanted to restore its original historical charm. They shopped at garage and estate sales, junkyards and thrift shops to find pieces matching the time period. Downstairs, all of the light fixtures were replaced and Leah painted details on each to bring out their character. Daniel found several mantels at garage sales, restored them and placed them in rooms with electric fireplaces. When Daniel's aunt was throwing away an old door, the couple saved it and turned it into a soda shop-like door for their game room.

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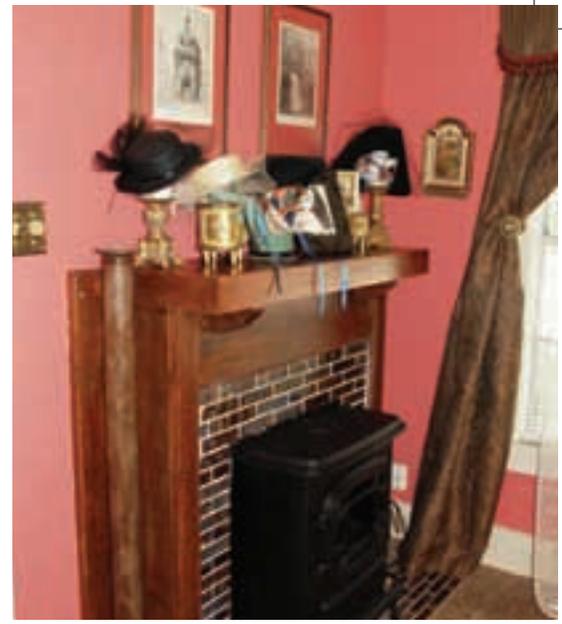
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The game room is one of the additions built on the back of the house in the 1980s. Inside, games are not on display, but the couple's many collections. A huge glass cabinet contains all of Leah's tin toys. This collection began out of a memory of a toy her father had when he was young. She also has a row of old doll parts that sometimes scare visitors. For Leah, the older less taken care of pieces are treasures. "It reminds me of the movie *Toy Story*," Leah said.

"Toys get discarded after they have no more use, and I like giving toys new life in a home after they aren't wanted and loved."

On the other side of the room is a larger collection of toys, photographs, artwork and replicas all centered around the Italian scooter, the Vespa. Daniel's collection of Vespa-related objects is inspired by his grandmother's heritage. Titiana Tifani was a World War II bride and met her future husband, Roger



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French, when he was a soldier stationed in her home country of Italy. She came to America through Ellis Island and, shortly after gaining citizenship, moved to Ellis County, Texas, where she married Roger, a cotton farmer. Daniel's family has lived in Ellis County ever since. "When they met, Daniel's grandmother couldn't speak any English," Leah said. "She told everyone she communicated with the language of love."

After his senior year of high school, Daniel traveled to Italy to visit family members who still live there. It was then that he drove his first Vespa, into a parked car no less, and fell in love. He started collecting Vespa toys and memorabilia. The collection has grown to over 1,000 items. Three years after his visit, he bought his first real Vespa. Since then he has bought over 50 that he drives, repairs and sells.

Daniel drove a Vespa around the Texas A&M-Commerce campus as an undergraduate student. Leah, a graduate student on campus at the time, was not



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crazy about scooters, but rode on the back of Daniel's after some persistence. Now they have been married for 10 years and took a tour of Italy this past summer to celebrate their marriage, Italian heritage and love of Vespas. "The first time I let Leah drive a scooter by herself she ran into the only parked vehicle in the lot," Daniel smiled.

"Now that I can drive, I won't ride on the back of Daniel's," Leah said. "Originally, I didn't want anything to do with scooters. But like anything you start there is a snowball effect, and it's what we do now."

The Smiths use their Vespas in the classroom to inspire their students' artwork. Daniel teaches at Ennis Junior High School and Leah started teaching at Ennis High School this year. Previously she taught in Mesquite, where they lived before moving to Waxahachie. "Moving into this house was a dramatic difference," Daniel said. "We have a long list of things to keep us busy."

"We ran out of room to be creative in our house in Mesquite," Leah said. "This house was a perfect fit. Old homes are about legacy. It's our job to keep it up so that others can enjoy it in the future when it's 200 years old, like we have been able to." **NOW**

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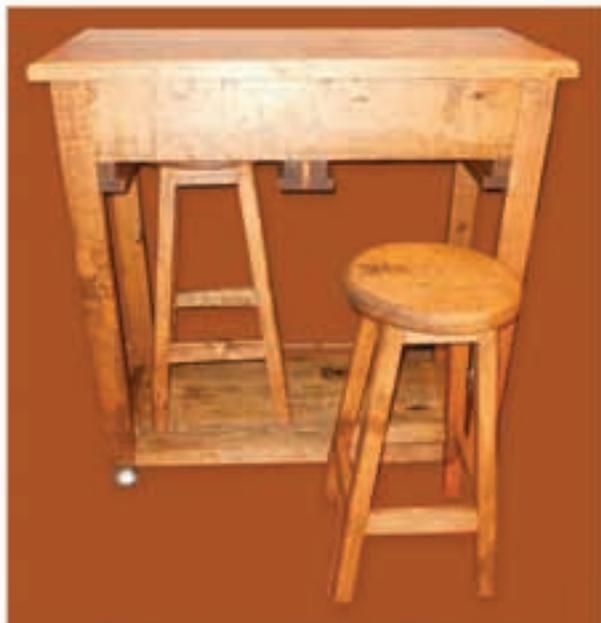
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# All in the Details

— By Sandra Strong

Every artist, no matter their medium and no matter the level of imagination they possess, is inspired by something. For Radonna Welch, ideas abound after she takes the time to simply look around her. “The things I see in nature inspire me,” she admitted. “I also love the textures seen behind the glass as I look through storefront windows. Even craft magazines offer a multitude of ideas, as they also teach me new techniques and different ways of doing things.”

Radonna is an artist with a vivid imagination who does not limit herself to any one thing. In fact, “I can easily get bored doing just one art project,” Radonna said. “For me, it’s important to keep more than one project going at all times.”

While most people find a room in their home where they can close the door to the world around them and create in privacy, Radonna finds comfort working from her kitchen table. She is able to gaze at the birds and butterflies in her backyard as she looks out the windows surrounding her work area. As her imagination is piqued, she begins to create some of the most beautiful greeting cards, shadow boxes, word books, floral arrangements and crosses from the huge supply of paper, ribbon, lace, buttons, bows, rubber stamps, ink pads, silk flowers, beads, pearls, costume jewelry and decorative stones she has stored in airtight containers along one wall.

Crafting “full time” started 10 years ago for Radonna. When she and her husband, Larry, moved from Waco to Waxahachie, she was finally able to stay at home. It was during this time she began to create wonderful floral arrangements using a mixture of dried and silk flowers. Her arrangements were very popular



“The things I see in nature inspire me.”

within the family. “My daughter, Amber, always wanted one as a Christmas gift,” Radonna said, explaining she enjoyed making them as much, if not more, than her daughter enjoyed receiving them.

The idea for greeting cards came five years ago after Amber introduced her mother to the world of scrapbooking. Amber is able to create up to 20 pages in one sitting, while Radonna is proud of the three or four she completes in the same amount of time. “It takes time to complete each page,” she confessed. “I’m all about the detail in everything I do.” As others enjoy “assembly line scrapbooking,” Radonna takes great pride in creating a single page at a time. “I have to make sure I choose just the right

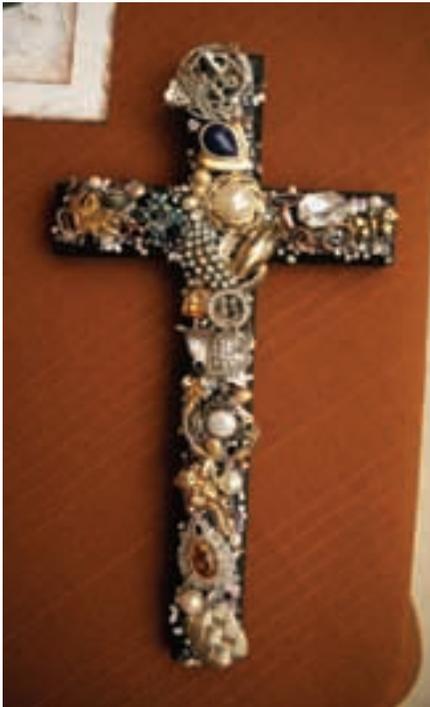
papers and embellishments for the page I’m working on,” she added.

She is also just as proud of each greeting card she creates, and there are many for family and friends to pick from when looking for the perfect greeting for that someone special. “They are all one-of-a-kind,” Radonna mentioned. “Some cards may have the same embellishment or the same stamped sentiment, but no two are ever exactly alike.” The tools used in card making include a large variety of scrapbooking paper, ink, stamps and embellishments galore. “And I stress,” Radonna laughed, “embellishments galore!”

Stamping is a fairly new technique for Radonna, as is “inking the edges.”

“Inking the edges is my favorite new technique,” she admitted. “It allows for a darker appearance around the edges, almost like an outline.” Radonna also tears some of the paper she uses to give the edges character before adding the ink. When Radonna’s techniques are mixed, her cards become shabby chic collectibles with an elegant flair.

Another of Radonna’s favorite crafts is making word books. These can take



several days to complete, depending on the word she is working on at the time. Since Christmas is right around the corner, she has been making “BELIEVE” books for several on her list. “There is a long thought process that goes into making word books,” she explained. “They are called word books, but they are actually small photo albums.” Others spell out words for BABY, FAMILY, FRIEND

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and HOME. “It doesn’t matter what I’m making,” Radonna said, “whether it’s a card, word book or shadow box, I personalize it for the person I intend to give it to.”

A day for Radonna does not pass without some crafting taking place. Whereas the act of creating can be daunting for some, Radonna finds it to be relaxing. “It takes me away from the stresses of the day,” she confessed. “Crafting to me is like Calgon to another.” Special orders from family and friends always come first. “The ideas that flow easily come afterward,” she stated. “I can create something from my imagination now that will magically fill a request later on.”

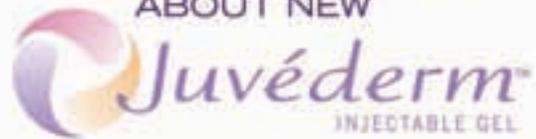
Radonna finds the greatest pleasure in giving her creations away; she refers to it as her ministry. “I believe it really is better to give than to receive,” she said. “To see the expression on someone’s face when they get something not expected is a good feeling. My one simple act can mean the world to someone else.” **NOW**



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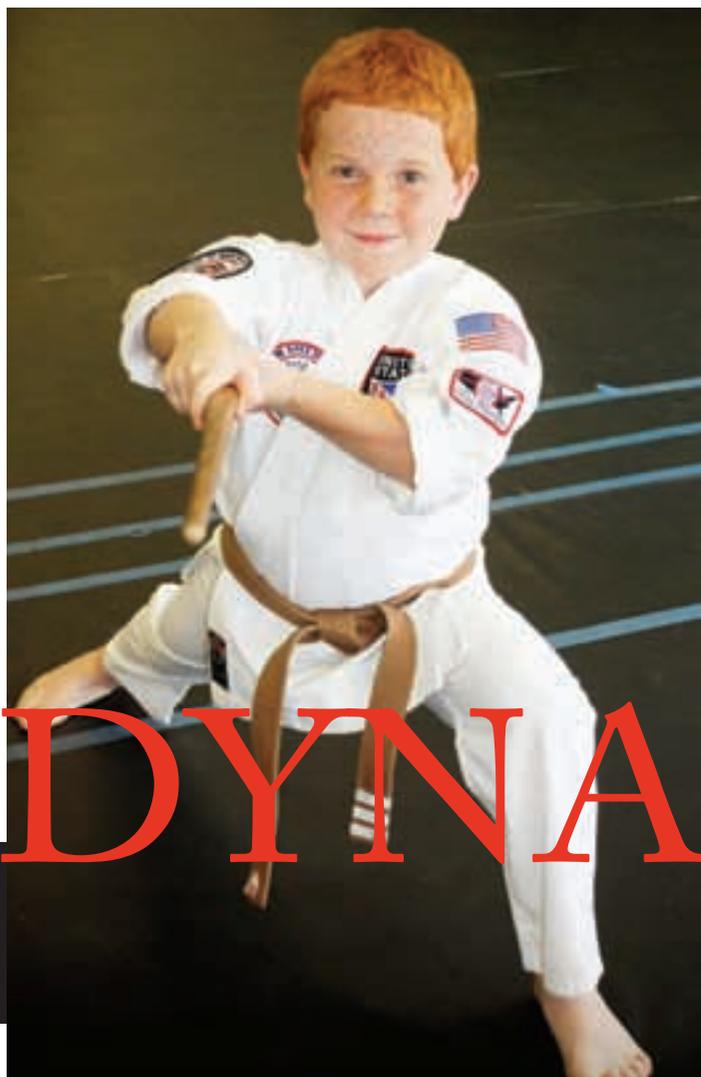
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# DYNAMITE

## in a Small Package

— By *Adam Walker*

Christopher Tramell is a typical, red-headed, freckled, energetic 8-year-old boy. Well, on second thought, maybe he is not so typical. You see, Christopher just returned from Ireland where he participated in his first international-level martial arts tournament. What were you doing when you were 8?

While still suffering from jetlag, Christopher explained that “the competition was a little hard,” while doing handstands in his chair. He fought other 8- and 9-year-olds who had gathered from 15 countries to contest titles in traditional kata, traditional weapons, musical kata and musical weapons categories as well as sparring. Christopher finished with all five gold medals.

These are not Christopher’s first awards — not by a long shot. When

asked what the best thing about competing is, Christopher replied, “The trophies!” and admitted his biggest is “6 feet tall.” His collection of medals and trophies has grown so large — “getting close to 200,” according to his father Ken — that his mother Tina said, “I don’t know what we’re going to do with them. We’re running out of room.” But Christopher does not like for his parents to show the trophies; he feels it is embarrassing. He just likes having them.

Christopher enjoyed Ireland where “the grass was really green,” even though it was “kind of cold.” But the castles made up for that defect. “There were a lot of castles. They were big,” he said. Both parents cringed just a bit, because as Ken informed, “Christopher has no fear. He started climbing the outside of one of the castles. He got about 12 feet off the

ground before we stopped him.” That would give any parent a jolt!

At the competition, his first fight in the sparring competition was against a boy from Wales. The score stood 5-4 in Christopher’s favor, but the announcer read the results backwards. The Welsh coach realized what had happened and wanted to have the result corrected, but neither Christopher nor his parents thought that was fair since the other boy had already celebrated victory. So they agreed to fight the boy again. This time Christopher won 7-5. They were impressed with the other coach’s integrity. For his third fight, Christopher faced another American boy from an Army base in Germany; this time he won 6-4 in overtime. And so his collection of medals grew.

Christopher currently holds a brown

## Sports **NOW**

belt with two stripes in tae kwon do, though he has only been learning the sport for three years. He had tried soccer and T-ball but, when his mother asked him if he wanted to continue with those, he told her, "No, I want to do karate." Eventually she gave in. He currently practices at a couple of dojos — Dale and Kristi's American Karate Academy in Duncanville and Lone Star Martial



Arts here in Waxahachie. "I thought this would be something we'd do a couple of nights a week," Tina confessed. "I, never in a million years, thought it would go this far."

His weapon for competition is the bo, a 4-foot-6-inch long wooden staff, which the 4-foot-2-inch, 85-pound boy twirls, jabs and slaps against the floor with impressive speed, accuracy and strength as he practices his kata, a standardized series of attacks, blocks and stances. He already has two national championships with this weapon in the 6-7 and 8-9 age brackets. So what is the attraction of this particular weapon? "I can spin it around," is Christopher's answer.

Christopher has competed in three different leagues at state and regional meets all over the Southwest, but it was his Texas state championship in the Amateur Organization of Karate (AOK) that earned him the invitation to compete for Team America in Ireland. Tina said, "We had to think about it for a while. Then we decided that it really was a great opportunity for Christopher to advance and get some international competition experience." They applied for passports for everyone and held fundraisers. It was a lot of work, but as Tina said, "If he decides he wants to go for the Olympics some day, he already has international

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## Sports **NOW**

experience.” And what could stop him? After all he is on track to be a 10-year-old black belt, and very enthusiastic.

He already knows over 30 katas and says he likes to compete last so he can choose which kata he needs to do to win. His father remembered, “Two years ago he learned a new kata on Friday night. He went home and practiced it and the next day he used it to win first place in a competition!”

One of Christopher’s instructors, Mr. Dunn, had plenty of praise for the champion. “He’s had a quiet confidence



**“The best thing about tae kwon do is you get to have fun.”**

since he began. He wants his stance to be perfect. He’s got a reputation among the judges at the tournaments as ‘the little kid who can shoot side kicks.’”

You might think so much success and attention would go to his head, but not Christopher. Recently, he gave one of his coaches a book. His dad asked him, “Are you going to sign your name ‘two-time national champion?’” Christopher answered, “No. That would be like bragging.”

Christopher added, “The best thing about tae kwon do is you get to have fun.” He must be having plenty of fun — he is already talking about competing next year in Wales. **NOW**

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# The Pain Eliminators

*Doctors at Leath Chiropractic & Decompression Clinic are eliminating back and neck pain one patient at a time. — By Sandra Strong*

High marks have once again been reported for chiropractic care. The Consumer Reports Reader Survey found that “hands-on” therapies, led by chiropractic care, were the top-rated treatments for back pain sufferers, with chiropractic receiving the highest satisfaction-with-care ratings. As a chiropractic care physician, these kinds of statistics make Dr. Michael Leath, D.C. very proud of the career path he chose over 30 years ago. “I’ve seen over 10,000 patients in my years as a doctor of chiropractic care. I’ve seen just about everything,” Dr. Leath said. “I’d like to think that wisdom comes with experience.”

Continued growth most always prompts some type of change. Dr. Leath realized the clinic’s growth

and the increased demand for spinal decompression treatments warranted the need for another physician within the clinic. “Dr. Stephen C. Johnson, D.C. came to us from Corsicana, but originally hails from Midland. I feel we offer the best of both worlds,” he added, referring to their age difference. “We are old and new combined.”

The “new patient experience” is fairly easy. The first thing the doctors will do is sit down with the patient for a “no charge” consultation. “This is the time when questions are asked and answered,” Dr. Leath stated. “We review the patient’s medical history, their symptoms and complaints and decide on a plan of action to determine the cause of their complaints.” The initial plan of action could include, but is not limited to, a

**From left:**

Dr. Leath in one of several examination rooms; Dr. Leath studies a spinal X-ray.

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complete exam with X-rays and possible MRI. “Once we determine the problem, and we feel we can help,” Dr. Leath said, “it’s up to the patient to decide to move forward with the recommended treatment or not.”

For years, chiropractic care dealt primarily with neck and back pain and the headaches associated with both. In recent years, Dr. Leath has seen an increase in the need for spinal decompression treatments, a non-invasive, conservative treatment method for disc problems. “A lot of patients come to us before they have to have spinal injections or back surgery,” Dr. Leath said. “They want to exhaust all their options before deciding on invasive treatment.” The doctors also have seen patients who have problems that have returned after their back surgery.

When spinal decompression treatment therapy is the plan of action chosen by both doctor and patient, it becomes a time of serious commitment for the patient. “Patients must be committed to this treatment,” Dr. Leath said, referring to the comprehensive six-to-eight week treatment program designed specifically for disc problems. “Anyone can operate the machine, but we work using the Decompression Reduction Stabilization (DRS) Protocol created by a neurosurgeon.”

The DRS Protocol consists of decompression treatments, spinal manipulation, physical therapy and nutritional support, along with specific stretches and home exercises. “Preferably, we like the patient to come in for four treatments a week for the first two weeks,” Dr. Leath explained, “then three times a week for the next two or three weeks. Treatments then decrease to two times a week for the remainder of the therapy program. Patients must be totally on board with this treatment if they want relief from their back pain.”

Dr. Leath and Dr. Johnson also recommend maintenance care. “Through the benefits of chiropractic care, patients have found that scheduling maintenance appointments keeps them up and moving,” Dr. Leath said. “Our bodies are like cars. We have to keep them maintained on a regular basis to keep them running.” **NOW**



## Preparing our Future

— By *Alana Williamson*

First Christian Day School has been in the business of preparing youth in Waxahachie both academically and spiritually for nearly three decades. From its humble beginnings as a ministry for the preschool children at First Christian Church, it now provides education to children through grade 12. “We want to prepare them academically to be successful in whatever venue they should choose and be confident as a whole person,” Director Mrs. Debbie Aday said.

Mrs. Aday, who also teaches second grade, became involved with First Christian more than 20 years ago after enrolling her son in the preschool program. She later joined the church and has taught various grades over the years. Her position requires her to oversee the function of both the preschool program and kindergarten through 12th grades.

The preschool serves more than 70 children between the ages of 2 and 4 in both part-time and full-time programs. Parents have the option of enrolling their children for two, three or five days per week. “We use developmental curriculum and focus on fine and gross motor skills,” Mrs. Aday said.

First Christian, with class sizes

averaging 10 to 12 students, focuses on providing quality education for its students, while helping them grow from within. “We are focused on finding the best fit for each child,” Mrs. Aday said. “I believe that there is something out there for every child.” She invites interested parents and students to come visit the school, speak with teachers and learn how their children will be taught.

Pastors Gary and Joanne Bronson founded the school in 1982 to serve the children of the church, but as requests came in, it soon opened its doors to the children of community. The school expanded to accommodate the students wishing to continue their education at First Christian and now provides a variety of academic instruction.

The church has continued to support the school over the years. In addition to the church, an active Parent/Teacher Organization provides a great deal of support for the school. One example is the fall carnival, an annual event where school staff members, parents and church members participate in various activities. Another example is the purchase of kites for each student to decorate and fly on Earth Day.

First Christian encourages students to take pride in their school. The mascot, Dolly the Dolphin, was created by a student and chosen by the student body. Dolly stands for peace, harmony and gentleness.

Every classroom is equipped with computers for supplemental education. A private afterschool computer class is also available. Classroom laptops provide even greater instruction for high school students. Teachers provide instruction to the upper grades, and they further their study on a self-paced schedule using online lessons, quizzes and tests. Students also have the opportunity to study music, Spanish, computer and physical education in addition to core curriculum.

Mrs. Aday attributes their academic success to the school’s versatile and friendly staff. The teachers, some of whom have been at First Christian since its founding, work hard to adapt their teaching to the various learning styles of their students. “As a staff, we have worked together along with the PTO and school board, which is comprised of church members, to make the school what it is today,” she said.

Even when school is not in session,

## Education **NOW**

teachers go above and beyond their duties to ensure the learning environment is a welcoming and tidy one. During the summer months, staff members and their spouses painted the corridors and decorated each preschool and elementary classroom with a fun and inviting theme. Teachers also gave tours and provided parents with one-on-one insight into the quality of education at the school.

The staff also recognizes the importance of serving the spiritual needs of their students. “We are a Bible-based school, so students attend chapel on Mondays and Bible history curriculum is taught daily in the classroom,” Mrs. Aday explained.

In addition to a weekly schoolwide chapel, students in grades kindergarten and up attend a daily morning devotional period. “If their day starts out wrong, this gives them an opportunity to start over again,” Mrs. Aday said. “Then, they are ready to get busy with their academics.”

**“The children make you want to come back every day.”**

She believes trust is fundamental to a successful education environment. “Once you develop a bond with a child and earn their trust,” Mrs. Aday added, “you can reach them.”

Reaching students is a job First Christian approaches with great care and concern. A curriculum committee chose the school’s instructional material, and updates are made periodically as needed. In addition, the material was chosen for multisensory use in order to appeal to all types of learners.

The staff recognizes the children come first and take joy in their duties as instructors. “The children make you want to come back every day,” Mrs. Aday said. “They are extremely encouraging.”

Mrs. Aday also recognizes the tremendous responsibility involved as the school continues teaching tomorrow’s leaders. “I take it as a great challenge; you never know which one of these students you will touch the most, of what they will take from your teaching and use for their future.” **NOW**

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## In The Kitchen With Brandelyn Morgan

— By Adam Walker

Waxahachie cook, Brandelyn Morgan, who enjoys running and coaching, views cooking as an outlet for her creativity. She grew up cooking with her grandmother and mother who were well-known for their desserts. Her Czech heritage means food is an important part of her life. She has a photograph of her first cooking adventure at age 4. As a 12-year-old, her

first attempt at bread making produced a loaf of sourdough she and her siblings used as a Frisbee! Now, Brandelyn likes to cook with her children, because they are more likely to eat meals they helped cook. She finds recipes from many sources. “I start by making the recipe like it says. Then I add or take away an ingredient.” **NOW**



### **TURKEY WREATH**

2 8-oz. pkgs. refrigerated crescent rolls  
1/3 cup mayonnaise  
2 Tbsp. honey Dijon mustard  
1/2 tsp. black pepper, coarsely ground  
2 cups cooked turkey, chopped  
1/4 cup celery, chopped  
3 Tbsp. parsley  
4 oz. Swiss cheese, shredded  
1 egg, separated

1. Preheat oven to 375 F. Unroll crescent rolls and separate into 16 triangles. With wide ends of triangle toward center, arrange 8 triangles in a circle, edges touching. Match wide ends of remaining triangles to wide ends of the outer triangles; seal seams.
2. Mix mayonnaise, mustard and black pepper. Add turkey, celery, parsley and Swiss cheese. Scoop filling over the seam of the dough.
3. From the center, lift one dough triangle across mixture. Continue alternating with outer triangles, slightly overlapping to form a wreath.
4. Lightly beat egg white and brush over wreath.
5. Bake 25-30 minutes or until golden brown.

### **MAPLE-ROASTED VEGETABLES**

2 Tbsp. canola oil  
1/3 cup real maple syrup  
1 each red and green peppers, cubed  
1/2 head cauliflower, sliced into 1 1/2-inch florets  
1 sweet potato, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes  
1 acorn squash, peeled and cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes  
4 carrots, peeled and cut lengthwise  
1 head of garlic, peeled and separated into cloves  
1 tsp. each salt and pepper  
1 Tbsp. dried basil

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. In a large bowl, mix together all ingredients.
3. Place mixture on a baking pan lined with parchment paper.
4. Bake for 40-45 minutes, stirring occasionally until vegetables are tender.

### **PECAN TOFFEE**

1 1/2 cups chopped pecans, divided  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup water  
1 1/2 cups butter, softened  
5 1.55-oz. milk chocolate bars, broken in small pieces

1. Line a 15 x 10-inch pan with foil, lightly grease. Sprinkle with 1 cup of pecans to within 1 inch of sides.
2. Bring sugar, water and butter to boil on medium heat, stirring constantly. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring constantly until candy thermometer registers 310 F. Pour over pecans; sprinkle with chocolate. Let stand 30 seconds.
3. Sprinkle with remaining pecans. Chill 30 minutes or until chocolate is set. Break up toffee. Store in air-tight container for up to 1 week, if it lasts that long.

### **ENERGY BARK**

1 cup old-fashioned oats  
1 cup sliced almonds  
1/2 cup coconut flakes  
1/4 cup wheat germ  
2 Tbsp. whole wheat flour  
1/2 cup raisins (optional)  
1/4 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 cup brown sugar  
3 Tbsp. butter  
2 Tbsp. honey

1. Heat oven to 325 F.
2. In a bowl, mix together oats, almonds, coconut, wheat germ, flour, raisins and cinnamon.
3. In a small saucepan combine brown sugar, butter and honey; bring to a boil and cook 30 seconds.
4. Pour over oat mixture and stir to combine.
5. Spread on foil-lined baking sheet and bake 20 minutes.
6. Let cool completely on baking sheet; then break into pieces.

### **VERY BERRY CRISP**

1 pouch Betty Crocker oatmeal cookie mix

1/2 cup cold butter

1 16-oz. bag frozen mixed berries  
Cinnamon to sprinkle

1. Heat oven to 375 F. In a large bowl, place cookie mix. Cut in butter using pastry blender or fork until mixture looks like coarse crumbs.
2. In ungreased 2-qt. casserole dish, place berries. Sprinkle cookie mixture over berries. Sprinkle with cinnamon.
3. Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until topping is golden brown. Serve warm or cool.

### **PUMPKIN BARS**

4 eggs  
1 2/3 cups sugar  
3/4 cup oil  
1 16-oz. can pumpkin  
2 cups flour  
2 tsp. baking powder  
2 tsp. cinnamon  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. baking soda  
**CREAM CHEESE ICING:**  
3-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened  
1/2 cup butter, softened  
1 tsp. vanilla  
2 cups powdered sugar  
Pecans (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Beat together eggs, sugar, oil and pumpkin until light and fluffy.
3. Stir together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, salt and soda. Add to pumpkin mixture and stir.
4. Spread batter in ungreased 15 x 10-inch pan. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Cool.
5. For Cream Cheese Icing, cream together cream cheese and butter. Stir in vanilla. Add powdered sugar (a little at a time), beating well until mixture is smooth.
6. Spread on cooled pumpkin and cut into bars. Sprinkle with nuts if desired.

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# Quality Claim Service Makes a Difference

— By Adam Rope

Headaches, hassles and unnecessary strain in life can be reduced by researching the quality of claims service a company offers before purchasing an auto insurance policy. There are a few key areas to research when grading the quality of claim service provided by an auto insurer: customer satisfaction ratings, customer choices and professionalism of claim representatives.

Customer satisfaction is probably one of the easiest to research. Independent firms, such as J.D. Power and Associates, often rank customer satisfaction for entire industries. Auto insurance is no exception.

Quality claim service means prompt response and payment for what is owed for damage and quality repair work. But after an auto crash, some other intangibles can make the claims process much less stressful. Some questions to ask when shopping for auto insurance include:

- Is the person who sells me the policy, the same person I can trust to report a claim?
- Will there be someone who can answer my questions if I have one?
- Will I have my choice of body shops to repair my vehicle?

Another measure of quality claim service is customer choice — not only choosing the auto body repair shop, but even the choices you have in communicating with the company. With today's hectic lifestyles, some companies offer options to report claims in person, on the phone or even online, 24 hours a day. Once the claim has been reported, you want to be kept informed and updated on the claim process. These multiple choice options

for communicating can go a long way to making sure the claims process is as quick and easy as possible.

Finally, professional claim handling can eliminate the unnecessary stresses related to an auto crash. Professional claim handling requires special skills. Claim adjusters need to empathize with the client's situation to establish good communication and assist them in making a claim. The professional needs to turn the anxiety of a customer not knowing what to expect into confidence that the claim will be handled fairly and quickly.

At the same time, they also need to investigate the facts of the claim. That means asking questions. This is where many

customers can become uncomfortable. But if viewed in the right context, the questions a claim adjuster asks should be welcomed. Unfortunately, billions of dollars are lost each year due to claims fraud. Obviously, the people committing these crimes don't wear nametags that declare their intent. They look just like you and me. The questions

asked by the claim adjuster can help keep your premiums lower, which is important to all of us.

A car crash is already a stressful time in anyone's life. But the quality of claim service can differentiate insurance company A from company B. Knowing that you've researched this before buying an auto insurance policy will give you an added confidence when the unexpected happens. Start by asking your agent about quality claim service. **NOW**

*Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.*



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# IS IT AN Emergency?

It could be a headache that's worse than others, a cough that won't quit or a cut that keeps bleeding. At some point, you've likely had to decide whether a trip to the emergency department is in order.

For many symptoms, it can be tough to tell. The tips below may help you decide if a trip to the emergency department is in order.

Symptoms that warrant an emergency department visit include:

- ⇒ Any trouble breathing
- ⇒ Pain or pressure in your chest
- ⇒ Feeling faint, dizzy or weak
- ⇒ Severe pain that comes on suddenly
- ⇒ Bleeding that doesn't stop
- ⇒ Excessive vomiting or diarrhea
- ⇒ Vomiting or coughing blood
- ⇒ Feeling suicidal
- ⇒ Having trouble speaking
- ⇒ Vision changes
- ⇒ Mental status changes
- ⇒ Unusual abdominal pain

It's important not to panic if you or someone else experiences these symptoms. While these signs can warn of serious medical problems such as heart attack or stroke, they could also result from other, less serious conditions.

Sometimes the answer isn't so clear-cut. While it is true the emergency department often sees individuals who do not have true emergencies, it's always best to err on the side of caution. But how do you know whether to call 9-1-1? If you think the medical condition seems life-threatening or might worsen before you get to the hospital, if you're worried about moving someone who has hurt their back or neck or if you live far away and may

confront serious traffic congestion or a construction delay, go ahead and call 9-1-1.

Children may display additional symptoms that require immediate attention, such as high fever combined with a stiff neck, confusion, headache or difficulty breathing; a bad choking episode for infants; or ingestion of household cleaning products or medications — even a single dose of a grandparent's high blood pressure medicine can be extremely dangerous.

For other conditions, call your primary care physician. Many doctors will return your call even after hours, and he or she can let you know whether a home treatment, an office visit or a trip to the ER is the best choice.

Since most minor accidents and injuries happen close to home, it's important to keep a well-stocked first-aid kit within easy reach. The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) recommends including the following supplies:

- ⇒ First-aid manual and local emergency phone numbers
- ⇒ Acetaminophen, ibuprofen and aspirin
- ⇒ Assorted bandages and gauze pads
- ⇒ Adhesive tape
- ⇒ Antibiotic ointment
- ⇒ Antihistamine
- ⇒ Antiseptic wipes
- ⇒ Cold packs for injuries and burns
- ⇒ Elastic wraps for sprains
- ⇒ Hydrocortisone cream
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- ⇒ Thermometer **NOW**

*Contributed by Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie. For more information, go to [www.baylorhealth.com/Waxahachie](http://www.baylorhealth.com/Waxahachie).*

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## READY TO PUT THOSE PERENNIALS TO BED?

— By Nancy Fenton



Now is the time to seriously think about fall and cooler weather. Central Texas usually gets its first freeze between the 15th of November and Thanksgiving. Those great perennials (plants that come back each year) will be even better next year with a little care now. Those that bloom in the spring need to be checked to make sure they are not too crowded. If so, they need to be thinned so they can grow to be large and luscious again.

Our most common perennial is the iris. Although it is tough, it can always benefit from a little care. Three to four years is about the longest they can just sit without care if you want them to thrive and bloom heavily. They do not die, but have to struggle for every drop of water and food. A small handful of slow-release nitrogen on the irises will feed them through the winter and make them ready to “burst out” come spring. Be sure to pull the dead leaves and mulch back from the iris rhizomes to avoid rot and/or disease, which are typical for irises.

Brown “sticks” of much-loved

blooming plants that freeze at the first cold snap need to be cut back severely — like into the ground. Leaving the dead foliage encourages disease, and you do not want that! Daisies, phlox and salvias can all be cut back without fear. A little balanced fertilizer and a light covering of mulch will protect the roots from cold and stimulate great growth next spring.

Crepe myrtles and other blooming shrubs should have been trimmed just for shaping in late September. They can also benefit from a check on their mulches. Make sure your sprinkler system is winterized or drained and turned off. You may need to water just a little bit in the driest winters, but not enough to merit the chance of frozen systems. The ice fountains are lovely, but only if they are in someone else’s yard!

Enjoy the cooler weather! Get your cameras ready and start taking pictures now — the Master Gardener photo contest is coming. More information will be provided next month on how to enter. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.





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# Happening **NOW**

## November - February

Master Gardener Photo Contest is currently underway. Deadline for entries is February 15, 2011. Entry categories include "single specimen" and "in the garden." Think about vegetables, summer gardens and fall and winter when taking pictures. There is no cost and individuals may enter as many as five photos. Prizes will be awarded. Enter online at [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com).

## November - December

Waxahachie Faith Family Academy: enrolling for a new 3-year-old Pre-K program, 701 Ovilla Road. Contact the school office at (972) 938-3996 for more information.

## Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms: 7:00 p.m. Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin, Waxahachie. For more information, visit [www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org](http://www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org).

## Every Tuesday

Waxahachie Sunset Lions Club: 6:00 p.m. The Dish in the Rogers Hotel in downtown Waxahachie. Questions may be directed to Laura Hargrove at (817) 673-0356 or by attending a meeting.

## Third Tuesday

Skyblazers of Waxahachie R/C Club: 7:30 p.m. Parks and Recreation Building in downtown Waxahachie.

## Saturdays

Improv Comedy Night: 8:00 p.m. After Hours Improv Theater, 100 N. College Street, Waxahachie. Also this month: **November 6**, 8:00 p.m., improv benefiting Malissa Allen Liver Transplant Assistance Fund; **November 12**, 8:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m., Improv Comedy benefiting Advantage Academy PTO; **November 19**, 7:00 p.m. Murder Mystery Dinner "Murder at the Deadwood Saloon, \$40 per person includes 3-course dinner. Call (972) 937-9839 or visit [www.AfterHoursImprov.com](http://www.AfterHoursImprov.com).

## Second Saturday

Songwriter Second Saturdays: 6:00 p.m. social time, 6:30-7:15 p.m. dinner and fellowship, 7:30-8:15 p.m. opening act, 8:30-10:00 p.m. featured artist. For more information, contact Randy Tredway at (972) 938-9990 or e-mail him at [randy@inthemusicroom.com](mailto:randy@inthemusicroom.com). Bring beverages for yourself and a covered dish to share. Seating is limited.

## November 6 - 7

Trade Days of Waxahachie: Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 W. U.S. Hwy. 287, Waxahachie. Free parking and admission. For more information, visit [www.tradedaysofwaxahachie.com](http://www.tradedaysofwaxahachie.com) or call Les Clemons at (972) 617-8156, James Scott at (214) 202-1788 or Jean Davis at (972) 816-3644.

## November 9

Seeds of Hope: 6:30-8:00 p.m. Waxahachie Civic Center, 1950 N. Interstate 35E, Waxahachie. Fundraiser benefiting the patients and constituents served at Hope Clinic. For more information, call (972) 268-1806.

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# Happening **NOW**

## November 11

Veterans Day Holiday.

## November 12, 13 and 19

Texas Theatre: 110 W. Main Street, Waxahachie. WWII News Reels, 8:00 p.m., November 12. WWII USO Show, 8:00 p.m., November 13, Patsy Cline Tribute, 8:00 p.m., November 19, \$10 at the door. For more information, call (972) 937-1773.

## November 13

Christmas in November: 9:30 a.m. registration. The Golf Club of Dallas, 2200 W. Red Bird Lane. The \$25 cost of this annual event, sponsored by the DeSoto Charter Chapter American Business Women's Association, includes brunch, silent auction, guest speaker, vocal entertainment, table favors and door prizes. For tickets, call Ann Ferguson at (972) 224-3049.

## November 13

Ellis County Veterans Appreciation Ceremony 2010: 10:00-noon. Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie. For more information, contact David Hudgins at (972) 937-1200 or Perry Giles at (972) 937-6171.

First Ever Holiday Craft Fair: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Knights of Columbus Hall, 325 Broadhead Road, Waxahachie. Hosted by Twice Blessed Relay for Life Team supporting the American Cancer Society. For more information, call (469) 774-9522.

Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in Concert: 7:00 p.m. Waxahachie High School Fine Arts Center, 1000 Dallas Highway, Waxahachie. For more information, contact Cindy Hess at (972) 814-3621 or Lynn Nolte at (903) 654-8675. For ticket prices, visit [www.waxahachiesymphony.com](http://www.waxahachiesymphony.com).

## November 24 - 26

Waxahachie ISD school-wide Thanksgiving break.

## November 26 - 28

Candlelight Home Tour: 2:00-8:00 p.m., first weekend of three, four homes seen per weekend, \$15 per weekend or presale tickets at \$12 per weekend until November 12. For more information, contact (972) 937-2390.

## November 25

Thanksgiving Day Holiday.

## November 26

Community Tree Lighting: 7:00 p.m. historical courthouse square.

## Month of December

Ennis Public Theatre presents *Light Sensitive*. December 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 2705 N. Kaufman Street, Suite C. Friday and Saturday evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., afternoon matinee performances begin at 2:30 p.m. For information or to order your tickets, call (972) 878-7529.

**For more community events, visit our online calendar at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).**

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November 6-7

**TRADE DAYS**  
of Waxahachie

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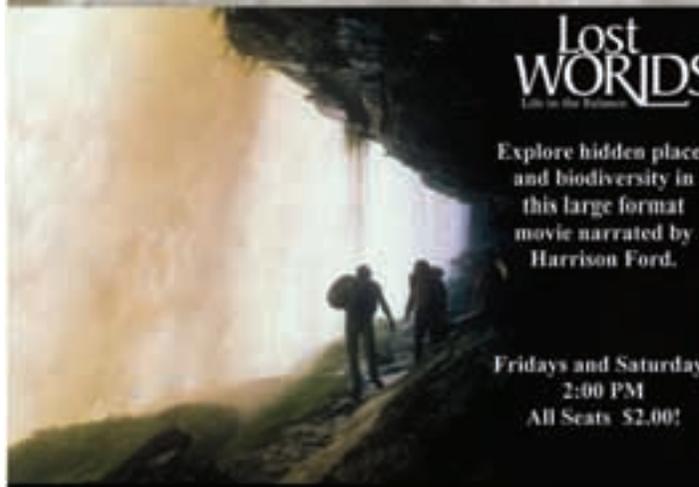
From Left to Right: Dr. Andrea Thomas, MD/MSW, Dr. Emily Green, MD/MSW, Dr. Sarah Smith, MD/MSW, Dr. Jennifer Brown, MD/MSW, Dr. Elizabeth White, MD/MSW, Dr. Michael Black, MD/MSW, Dr. David Gray, MD/MSW, Dr. Lisa Adams, MD/MSW

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