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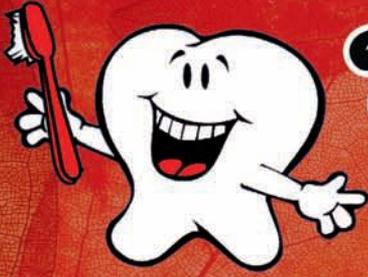
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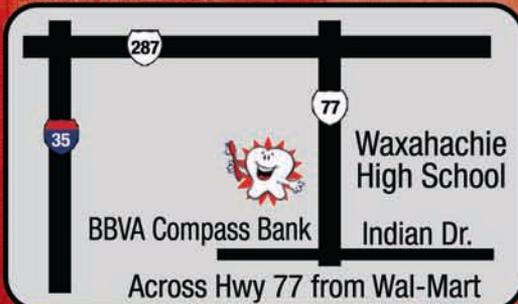
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General Manager, Rick Hensley

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Managing Editor, Becky Walker

Waxahachie Editor, Sandra Strong

Editorial Assistant, Beverly Shay

Writers, Amber D. Browne . Abby Rich

Adam Rope . Betty Tryon . Carolyn Wills

Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony

Randy Bigham

#### GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla

Artists, Kristin Bato . Julie Carpenter

Morgan Christensen . Martha Macias

Keisha McDuffie . Brande Morgan

Shannon Pfaff . Felipe Ruiz

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rose

Photographer, Amy Ramirez

#### ADVERTISING

Advertising Representatives,

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## ON THE COVER



*Brad and Blaine Shotts are on a mission to honor fallen veterans.*

*Photo by Amy Ramirez.*

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## Editor's Note

*Thankful for my blessings!*

I can't believe I'm about to be another year older. I'm still alive at 55! As a little girl, I thought 50 was ancient. Surely I wasn't going to live *that* long, but here I am — happy, thankful and blessed. I'm happy with the way my life has turned out. I'm blessed with a family who loves me unconditionally. I have the job of my dreams. I'm thankful for my grandsons, who bring youthfulness to what I consider my old age.

They *are* the sunshine in all my days!

Thanksgiving is only a few weeks away! There's so much to do: get a headcount, finalize the menu and clean the house. But first, before I get busy and forget, I need to share my wish for you. Enjoy this time with family and friends, making sure to count your blessings along the way. I have no doubt, you'll find many!

### Sandra

Sandra Strong  
WaxahachieNOW Editor  
sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com  
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P.S. Although the company celebrated its 10-year anniversary in March, I'm proud to say this edition marks the 10th year for *WaxahachieNOW*. I look forward to the next 10!



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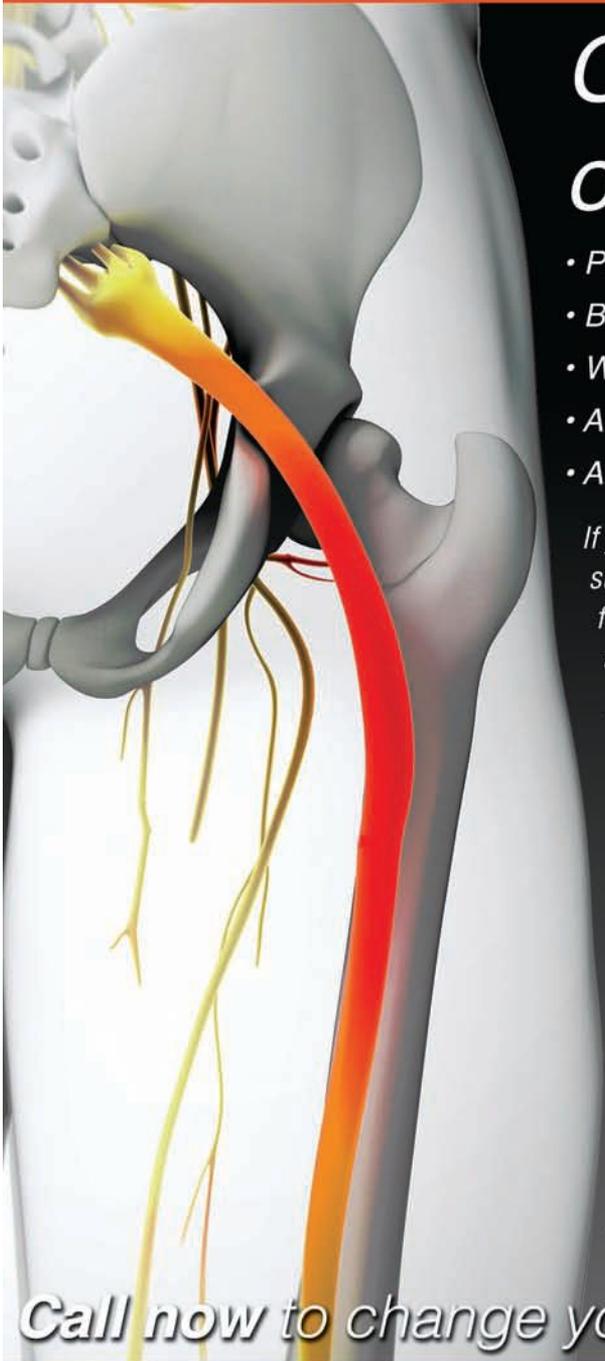
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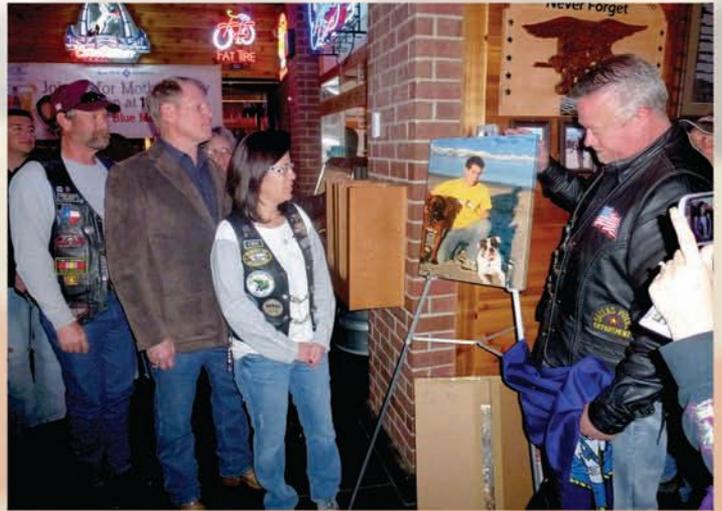
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# ORCHESTRATED FROM ABOVE

— By Sandra Strong



*Brad Shotts enjoys spending quality time with his son, Blaine. As they do quite often, the duo went to the movies one Saturday afternoon shortly after Lone Survivor premiered in theaters around the country. They bought their tickets, purchased their customary concessions and found their seats, but something profound happened during this particular outing, which changed their lives and the lives of so many others forever. "Halfway into the movie, I knew we needed to do something," Blaine said, "but I didn't know what." Unbeknownst to Blaine, Brad was*



Blaine and Brad Shotts, Rick Crabb and Wayne Boze honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

*having the same thoughts, but they came to him within the first five minutes of the true life story of Michael Murphy, Danny Dietz, Matthew Axelson and the lone survivor, Marcus Luttrell.*

Being so affected by the movie, they were unable to leave the theater until after the final credit ran slowly across the screen. They walked to the car and drove home in utter silence, all the while keeping their thoughts to themselves. Their mutual thoughts rested uncomfortably within them for several days. "Ridiculous or not, I was the one who threw my thoughts out there first," Blaine remembered. "I was stumped as to *what* to do. I just knew *something* had to be done. I felt a strong urgency to act."

Brad grew up in a patriotic, military family where reverence for God, country and veterans had been learned by example. "This movie impacted me more than living in a military family ever did," Brad admitted, with emotion heavy in his voice. "This movie was personal. I'm still not quite sure why. *It just was.*"

They could have gone back to things as usual, but the question of what to do continued to burn holes in their souls. As a director at Wayne Boze Funeral Home, the one idea that seemed to take precedence in Brad's mind was Memory Portraits, a service offered at the funeral home in which a loved one's photograph is transferred to canvas. Once Blaine learned more about the portraits, he was sold on the idea, too. "After getting the OK from Wayne Boze, I wanted to pitch the idea to Rick Crabb, a longstanding member of the Patriot Guard Riders," Brad explained. "I knew we had to do something to honor these

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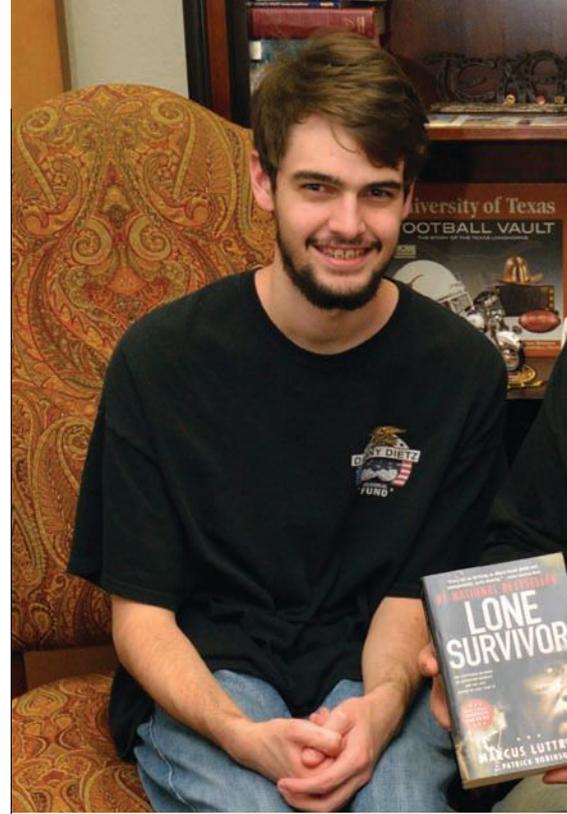
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heroes, and I wanted Rick and the PGR to be a part of whatever we did. We needed to do something to show how much we cared about the fallen heroes and their great sacrifice. We didn't want them to be forgotten."

"Brad called and only asked one question, 'Is there any way you could get in touch with the families from the movie?' I told him I'd try to see what I could do to help," Rick shared. Before long, Rick started emailing members of the SEAL community.

After getting the nod from Rick, Brad then called the owner of Memory Portraits, President David Dunigan. Brad asked David if he was familiar with the PGR, which he answered in the affirmative. "I explained we wanted the portraits delivered to the three killed in the line of duty and possibly, also to the survivor," Brad remembered. David was



**"These portraits are making a huge difference in keeping loved ones' memories alive."**



intrigued with the idea, but he told Brad he would need to think more about it. "He said he'd get back to me," Brad said. "He called back within three minutes. He said he'd supply the portraits to us free of charge."

Now that everything was in place, it was time for Rick to make the necessary phone calls to get the presentations



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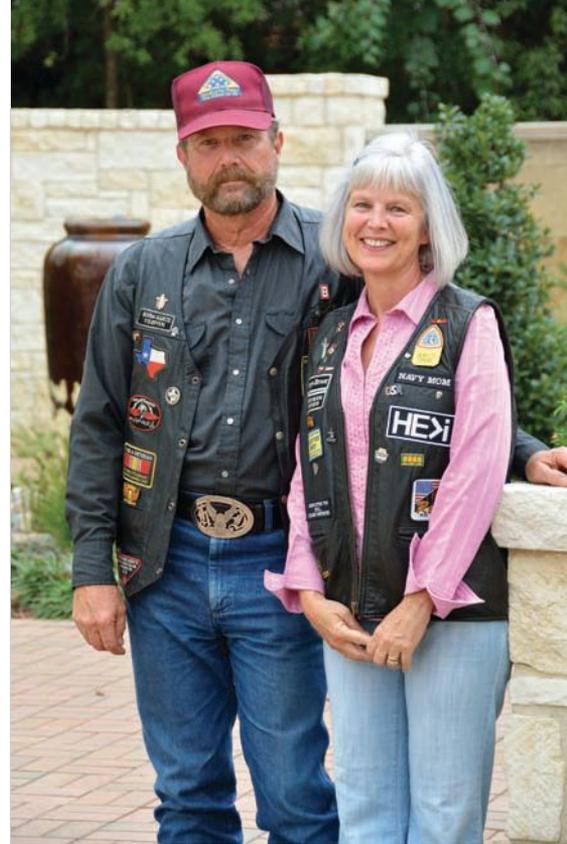
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started. Brad, Rick and several of the local PGR flew to Long Island, New York, in March to make the portrait presentation to the family of Michael Murphy, and what a moving presentation it was. "It was so incredible," Rick confessed. "These men signed the papers to go to work for the military, but their moms and loved ones did not. Honoring them by presenting a portrait is the least we can do for their ultimate sacrifice." After this first presentation, David made the gracious offer to provide a portrait to the families of all active-duty military deaths nationwide. He also requested that each portrait be delivered by a PGR representative.

On the flight home from New York, Brad was so humbled by the experience. He thought nothing would compare to that first presentation. He soon found out he was wrong when a group traveled to Denver, Colorado, in April to make the presentation to Danny Dietz's parents. "Cindy Dietz was so gracious," Brad said, with tears in his eyes. "We were taken aback by her open spirit and her humble nature. We spent the entire day with her. This second trip was every bit as meaningful as the first."

Cindy shared her son with the group in a very personal way that day, a way only a mother could do. Brad vividly recalls a photograph on a shelf in a curio cabinet that means the world to Cindy. "It was

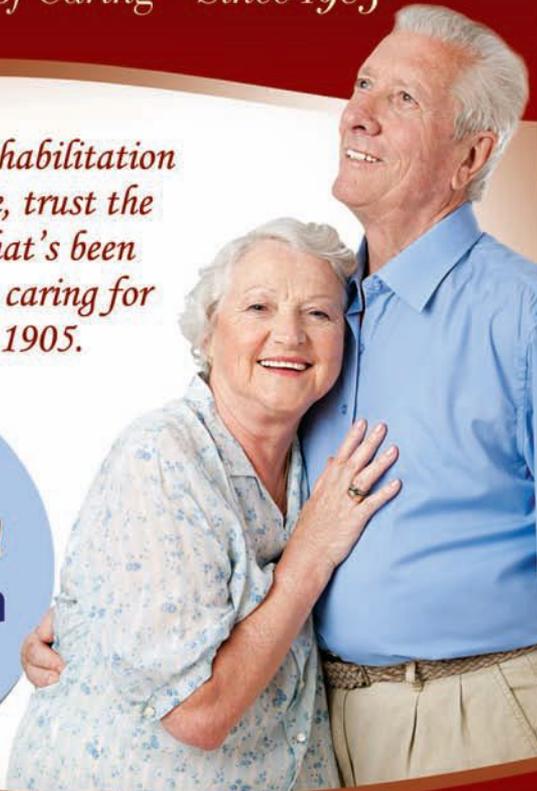
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a photo of several guys,” Brad shared. “She told us, ‘This picture is very special to me. These are the Navy SEALS who brought Danny home.’” She shared her heart and soul with the group because she also wants Danny and his brothers to be remembered for the heroes they are.

Although Blaine had the initial yearning to do something for the three who lost their lives in the failed U.S. Navy SEALS counter-insurgent mission known as Operation Red Wings, he was unable to make the first two trips. “It was a decision my dad and I made together,” Blaine said. “I was in my junior year in high school at the time. I didn’t want to miss three days of school and then worry about the ‘what-ifs’ if I should get sick and have to miss additional days.” His goal as a high school senior is to make the next trip.

That Saturday started as just another afternoon at the movies — just another father/son outing. Brad and Blaine quickly realized that day would forever change their lives as the depth of the movie rocked their souls to the core. “Little did we know what God had planned for us,” Brad said. “God knew this was going to be our new ministry.”

“Every phase of this venture — from Blaine’s desire to the overwhelming response nationwide, has been orchestrated from above,” Rick stated. “These portraits are making a huge difference in keeping loved ones’ memories alive.”

Blaine, being the tenderhearted, old soul that he is, feels emotions can be so large at trying times like this that no one wants to talk about their loss, or they’re so large they don’t ever want to forget. “What we are doing now is changing lives and making a difference,” Blaine said. “It’s keeping memories alive.” **NOW**



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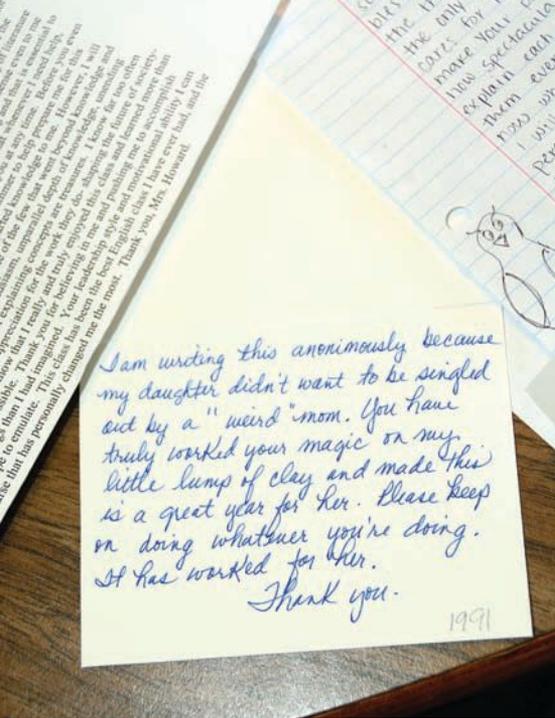
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# Wheel of earning

— By Sandra Strong

*You're sitting at a local restaurant, enjoying the meal set before you. You take a moment to look around the room, and as you do, you notice a table with some very familiar faces. Those same faces recognize you. The ensuing smiles show the love and respect the ladies have for one another.*





This scenario is exactly what happened when Nan Burluson looked over to see her former Waxahachie High School colleagues — Wanda Cain, Ruth Ballard, Margaret Morgan, Karen Jenkins, Anne Tuley, Mona Choucair, Lynn Stockman, Linda Berrey and Judy Howard. As soon as the pleasantries were completed, Nan had an idea that would bring them all together in an atmosphere where they could talk about the “good ole days” in the English department at WHS.

“Nan was so kind to invite us all to her home for a Catching up on Memories luncheon,” Judy shared. “She was our substitute English teacher extraordinaire. She was absolutely the best.”

Many fun facts were gathered from this luncheon. The collective number of years these women had taught was 259.5, with 200 of those years spent in the WHS English department, where they had averaged 150 students per year. One woman had served as an assistant principal for three years. Three were named WHS Teacher of the Year. Four had been chosen multiple years as Honor Teacher. One had earned the Peter O'Donnell Advanced Placement Teacher of the Year Award.

The women share memories spanning 63 years of educational development. The beginning salary had been \$2,400 per year. In the '60s, it climbed to \$4,000. “Many of us began our teaching careers in schools without air conditioning,” Judy remembered. Ruth taught in a district that was considered rich. “They had an entire room dedicated for paper,” Judy

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explained, "and Ruth could have any amount she wanted at any time. Being a minister's wife, Ruth was sure she was already in heaven." In her former school, she had been limited to two reams of paper per each six-week period or sometimes per one semester.

Writing with chalk on a black or green board was the only means of getting visual information to the students in



those early years. "That was unless we used an old, heavy, upright, manual typewriter," Anne explained. "We typed the information on a hectograph or mimeograph form. We'd then put the form on the 'purple machine' copier and turn the drum by hand."

"We hoped we could get enough copies printed before the original form gave out," Judy laughed. This antiquated form of reproduction graduated to overhead film up until the '90s and moved into the 21st century of visual technology before any of them reached retirement.

Grading papers also started out slow and tedious, and then moved into the technical world where a more streamlined method of posting grades is used today.



“Some of us said, ‘Yes,’” Judy recalled. “Some of us were hesitant. But, we all embraced the positive changes that led the classroom into the future. The teachers in the English department were willing and ready when it came to technology.”

The walk down memory lane for this group could go on and on. In actuality, they could fill a spiral notebook from

*“I love seeing former students around town who are now hardworking and successful parents and citizens.”*

cover to cover. But, the one constant in the conversation was the students. What the students meant to them was obvious as they recalled the good days, the bad days and all those wonderful days in between. As they remembered, they all came into agreement that Wanda was their fearless leader. “Wanda had the most experience. She was our beloved guide,” Judy stated, as the others nodded in agreement. “She allowed us to have space, but she always kept on top of what we were doing.”

Wanda wanted her fellow educators to be just as successful as the students they taught and she mentored. The one comment Wanda wished to share was a quote from Alfred Lord Tennyson that

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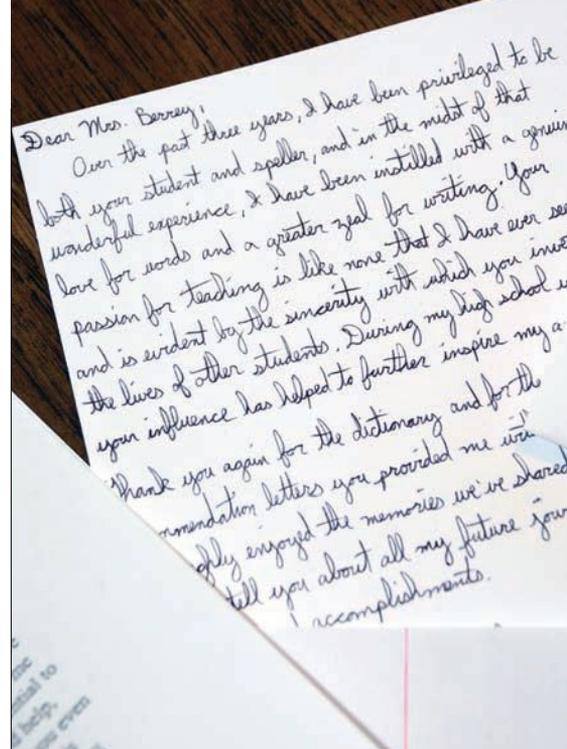
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she believes is the essence of who she is. "I am part of all I've met," Wanda humbly said.

For Ruth, no other job in the world could have compared to teaching. Although the work was hard and the hours were long, the memories still bring joy and meaning to her life. "As long as I live I will be grateful for the thousands of students who graced the journey of my life," Ruth confessed. "Each student was a blessing."

Margaret had three quotes that reflected her teaching career. "Teachers have three loves: love of learning, love of learners and the love of bringing the first two together," Margaret said, quoting Scott Hayden. "Benjamin Franklin said, 'Genius without education is like silver in the mine.' And my final quote is from Albert Einstein: 'Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think.'"

Karen spent four years under the tutelage of Wanda. Once she had her teaching degree in hand, she returned to the district where her love of English was first realized. "Every teacher in this group was a cog in the wheel of learning," Karen stated, "who worked together to provide the best for our students. Students believed in us, because we believed in each other."

Mona continues to teach today at Baylor University. She remembers the friendships forged during her time at WHS. "I am blessed to have had a group of teachers who loved me, enveloped

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me and helped me to become a good teacher,” Mona said. “I have always believed that as teachers we must meet students at their varying ability levels, and the classroom must be welcoming and safe.”

The best teaching memories for Lynn are experienced on a daily basis. “I love seeing former students around town who are now hardworking and successful parents and citizens,” she said. “Many of them are teachers, coaches, librarians, nurses, lawyers and doctors. It’s rewarding to know I played a small part in their development.”



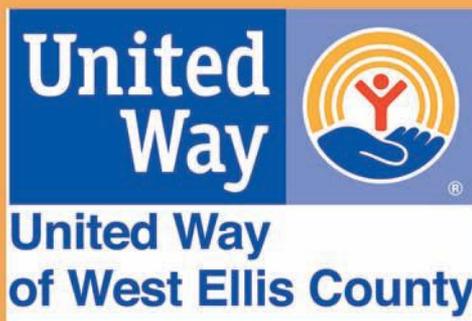
Even though Linda came aboard with a teaching degree, she continued learning through her colleagues, her students and continuing education classes. “One of the most important goals I had for my students was to teach them to think for themselves and have the confidence to do so,” Linda confessed. “I am humbled and proud to have been a teacher.”

“The students in my classes throughout the years were the highlights of my career,” Anne said. “I loved teaching creative assignments. And we were blessed with several wonderful student teachers. Edmond Gomez was one of many who learned alongside us.”

Judy’s teaching philosophy closely mirrored those with whom she taught. “I was a teacher in order to touch lives in a positive way,” Judy said. “We were a family who worked together, shared ideas with one another and never forgot to care.”

The love of English and the desire to educate others is what their teaching careers were all about. The collective years spent in the classroom will always be remembered as wonderfully productive years. **NOW**

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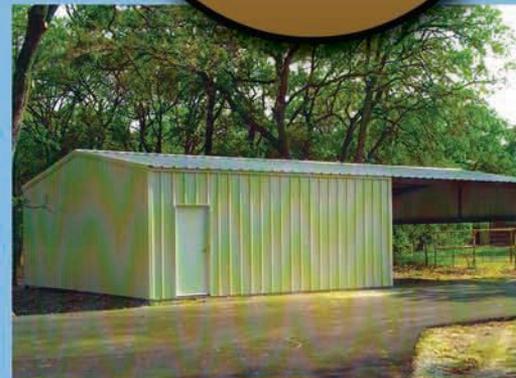
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# Little Bungalow, BIG PERSONALITY

— By Carolyn Wills

*On an oversized tree-towering lot in midtown Waxahachie, Carolyn Mixon's charming 1936 bungalow packs a big personality. This delightful 1,300-square-foot home is welcoming, whimsical and, at times, quite surprising. From the street, it appears much as it likely did when first built. The siding and front roofline are original.*

"These bungalows were made like little squares," Carolyn shared. Bungalow-style implies a compact front and, in Carolyn's case, includes a small central front porch topped with a brief curved pitch as if her house is smiling.

"I've been here for nine years," she said. Before a career move took Carolyn to Dallas for 13 years, she had lived in Waxahachie. She eagerly accepted the opportunity to return. "I love this city," she said. "I grew up in Nacogdoches County, and Waxahachie is similar. I was so happy to be back, and although I never planned on living in an older home, I love it."

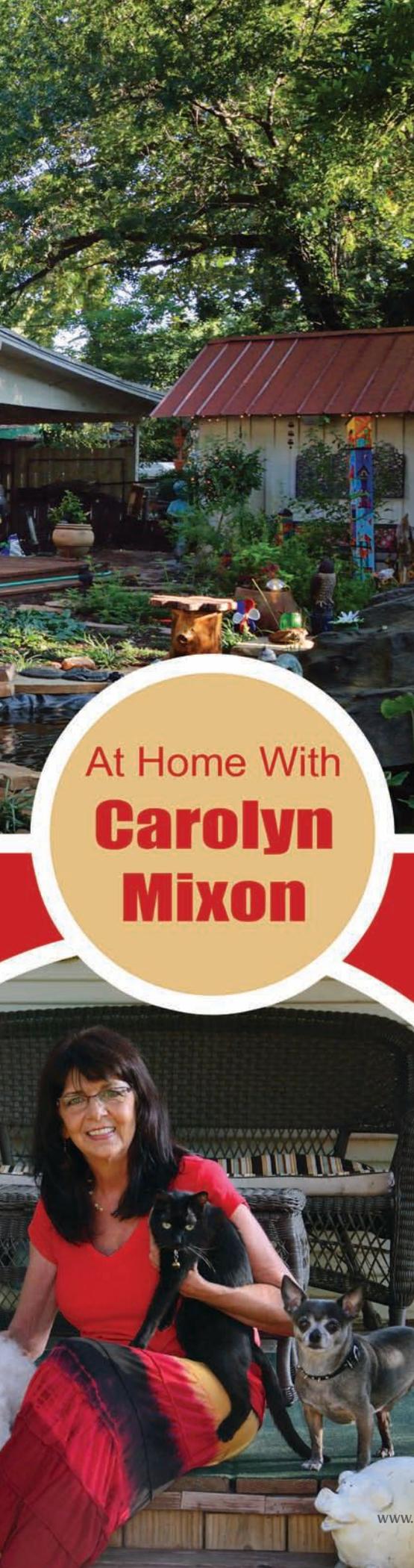
Something about her bungalow suggests others have loved it, too. On the walls in its once-small garage, now a tin-roofed toolshed, are inscriptions from past owners. Some have become too faded to read, but with scrutiny, it's possible to distinguish signatures dating from the 1940s. Carolyn is

continuing the chain of tradition. "I enlarged the master closet and have so enjoyed the added space that I decided to put my inscription in there."

When she purchased her home, two bedrooms had already been added. The living and formal dining room stretch side-by-side across the front portion of the house just inside the entrance and are furnished comfortably and elegantly. The wood floors are original. In the living room, two richly-covered green sofas with carved wood frames flank a large wood coffee table and beautifully complement the stunning oval dining table with carved legs.

"An old house is an ongoing project," Carolyn smiled. "When I moved in, the living and dining rooms were closed off





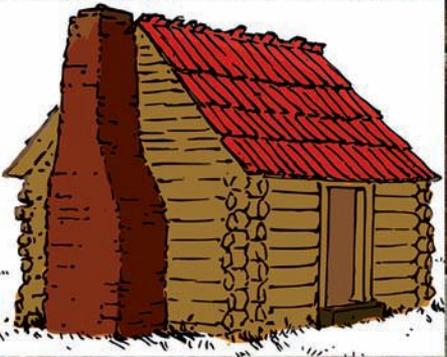
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from the rest of the house, and there were seven doors in one area of the hallway.” The wall behind the living room has since been removed, allowing a clear view to a colorful kitchen, creating a much brighter space all around. Other than replacing the kitchen floor with floating wide-planked wood laminate and brick inlays, the kitchen remains close to

its beginnings. “The cabinets were pink, and I painted them white,” she added. “The pink and burgundy tiles, though, are original and the built-in ironing board is still here.” This delightful kitchen is one of those rooms that simply elicits a smile. A big, round clock hangs next to the refrigerator, and a tiny church pew with decorative pillows occupies one corner.

“Just about everything in my house has a history,” Carolyn commented. “The dining room table is from a garage sale, and the church pew is from another find. I love treasure-hunting for bargains.”

Beyond the kitchen to the far left of the house is a tile-floored guest room, one of the two added bedrooms. “At one time, this room was a beauty shop,” she



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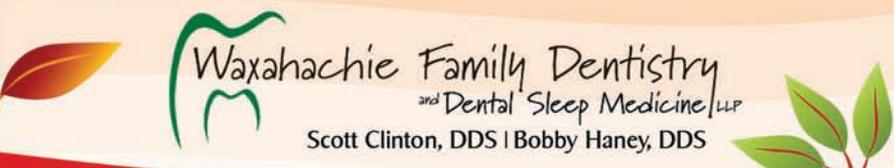
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said. Between the kitchen and guest room is a laundry room.

A small hallway on the other side of the kitchen allows access to the single bath and two other bedrooms. The bathroom features the same pink and burgundy tiles as in the kitchen, along with white fixtures, white-tiled floor and a large oval mirror above the vanity. Next to the vanity, an antique garbage bin serves as the perfect place for storing toilet paper.

The master bedroom, located at the far end of the hallway, is backed by a wall of windows with gorgeous views. Painted a deep taupe, the room is furnished with a huge oak bed and armoire. “The closet was just wide enough to hang clothes before it was extended by 22 inches,” Carolyn said. “It made all the difference. Now there’s room for a matching oak chest and for hanging clothes.” The windows, draped in fabric, are adorned with hanging glass beads.

The third bedroom, now Carolyn’s office, is as special as her bedroom. “The office is really my hangout,” she smiled. “I work from my home as an advertising representative for *WaxahachieNOW Magazine*, so I picked this room for its access to the back deck and its many windows. Her desk, another treasure, was purchased here in Waxahachie, where she takes great pride in shopping locally. Her swivel chair is a bright, happy yellow. Natural light, essence of lavender oil, a computer and spectacular views add up to one exceptional work space.

Curb appeal, charm and function — Carolyn’s bungalow has it all, and if it seems it couldn’t get any better, it’s time to step outside for the biggest surprise of all. Through the glass door of her office is a small deck overlooking the back and side yards, which by any measure, are virtual works of art. “The yard is my oasis,” she smiled. “Over the past two years, every time I went back to Cushing to visit my



family, I brought 10 to 12 of the red rocks back that make my pond so special. I enjoy having part of home here — what I mean by home is where I grew up.”

The eye is immediately drawn to a large pond and waterfall in the center of the backyard, and as Carolyn kneels to touch the water, a school of exquisitely colored fish rushes to greet and kiss her hand. The fish are koi, an ornamental variety of carp popular in Japan and also a passion for many people all over the world. “People actually show them, and they can be extremely valuable,” Carolyn explained. “Champion Koi can be worth thousands of dollars. For me, they are a hobby. I think they’re beautiful. They know me now, and I just love them.” Carolyn’s koi have become pets. Although it’s generally considered bad luck to name them, she admits her friend from down the street has assigned nicknames.

“The backyard is my favorite part of this home,” she smiled. “I can enjoy it from my bedroom and office, as well as being outside.” Wind chimes, pinwheels, waterfalls and birds supply the music, while plants, herbs and giant pecan trees, whimsical statues, fat little ceramic animals, a resident gnome, twinkling lights and paving stones, plus the very special pond, strike a profound landscape. All of this is to be enjoyed from the comfort of big wooden and metal swings and rocking chairs, which, not surprisingly, are found treasures.

Other than monthly trips to Cushing to see her daughter, Angela, and to visit her mother, Carolyn is content to be at home these days. Whether working, treasure-hunting, spending time with friends or simply enjoying her yard, she is accompanied by her beloved Maltese, Hannah; feisty Chihuahua, Taco; and black cat, Tessie. “Inside and out,” she smiled, “this home is my little piece of heaven on earth. For all this, I’m thankful!” **NOW**

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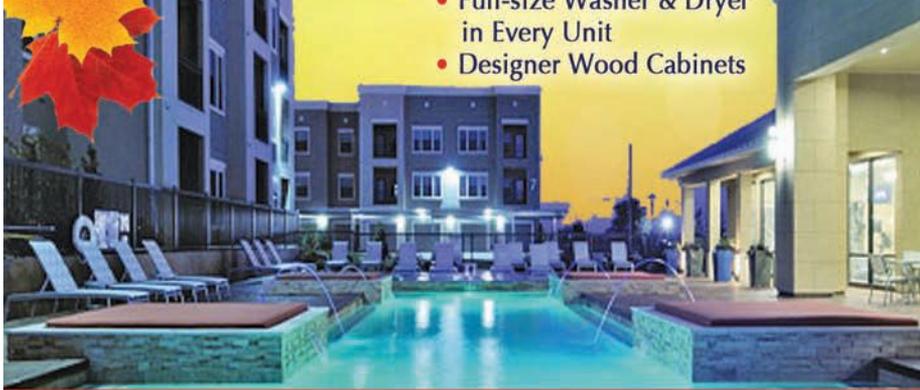


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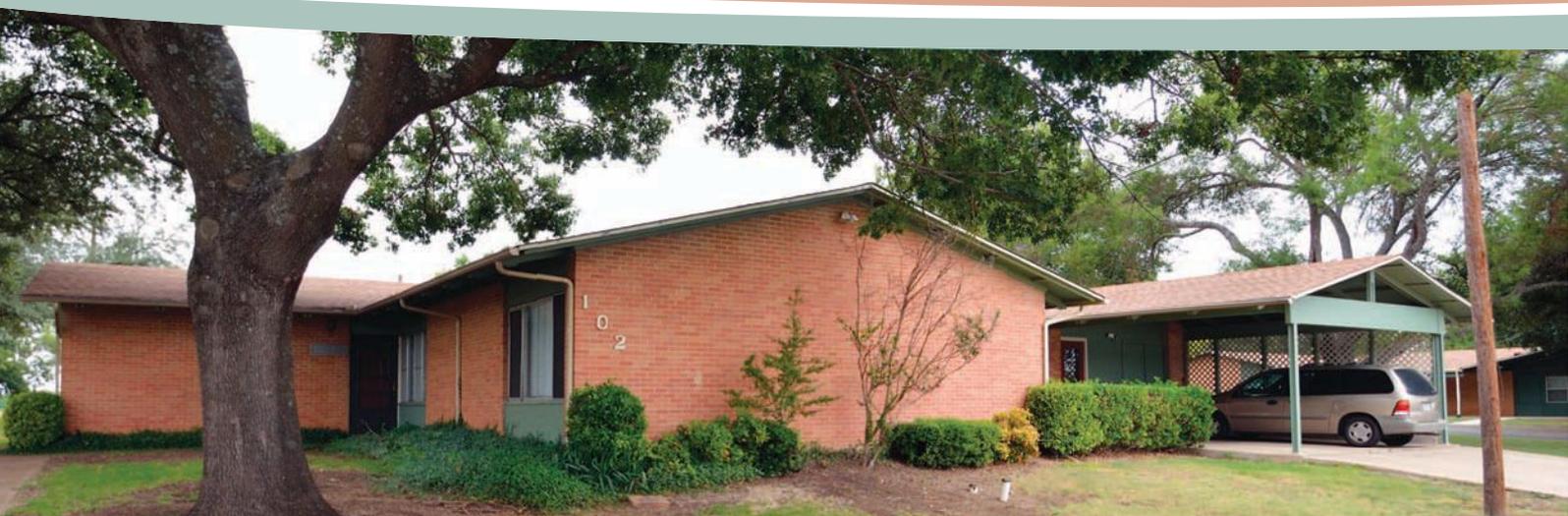
Cyndi Fuller (second from left) is so proud of the Stokes family, Autumn, Jennifer and Alyson, who have successfully participated in the program.

— By Abby Rich

*Presbyterian Children's Home and Services in Waxahachie recently held a grand opening for its new, enlarged Single Parent Family Program. One of the improvements to the program is room within its housing facilities to care for nine families, instead of four.*

Although it's been open and helping families since May 2013, PCHAS' Single Parent Family Program expanded in May 2014. By opening the new location in Waxahachie, the program is able to serve single mothers and their children who are facing homelessness due to unforeseen circumstances. "There was a need for our nonprofit services, especially in the Dallas/Fort Worth area," explained Cyndi Fuller, the program's administrative supervisor.

The program is designed to help single





mothers who are facing homelessness due to poverty, abuse, divorce, incarceration, abandonment, violence or some other crisis — with the goal of giving the women a chance to become self-sufficient without constant fear for their own and their children’s survival and safety. Women who live in the residences located in Weatherford, Houston, San Antonio and Waxahachie are able to stay anywhere from 12 to 18 months, as they work to achieve their personal goals and independence. The program provides housing; employment assistance; counseling; money-, life- and time-management skills; and parenting skills, as well as other community resources like transportation, counseling and education. “And, there’s no age limit for the mothers who need our services,” Cyndi said. “However, a lot of people in Waxahachie don’t even realize these services exist.” Ongoing aftercare services also are available after families leave housing, including help with school tuition or other training.

With most housing projects only allowing families with children ages 12 and under, the Presbyterian Single Parent Family Program was the only beacon of hope for current resident Jennifer Stokes, who is mother to three girls: Ashlie, 14; Alyson, 13; and Autumn, 11. Originally from Fort Worth, Jennifer has been through some troubling times, yet she is overcoming her obstacles and benefiting from the program in a major way.

After Jennifer lost custody of her children in 2012, she began the

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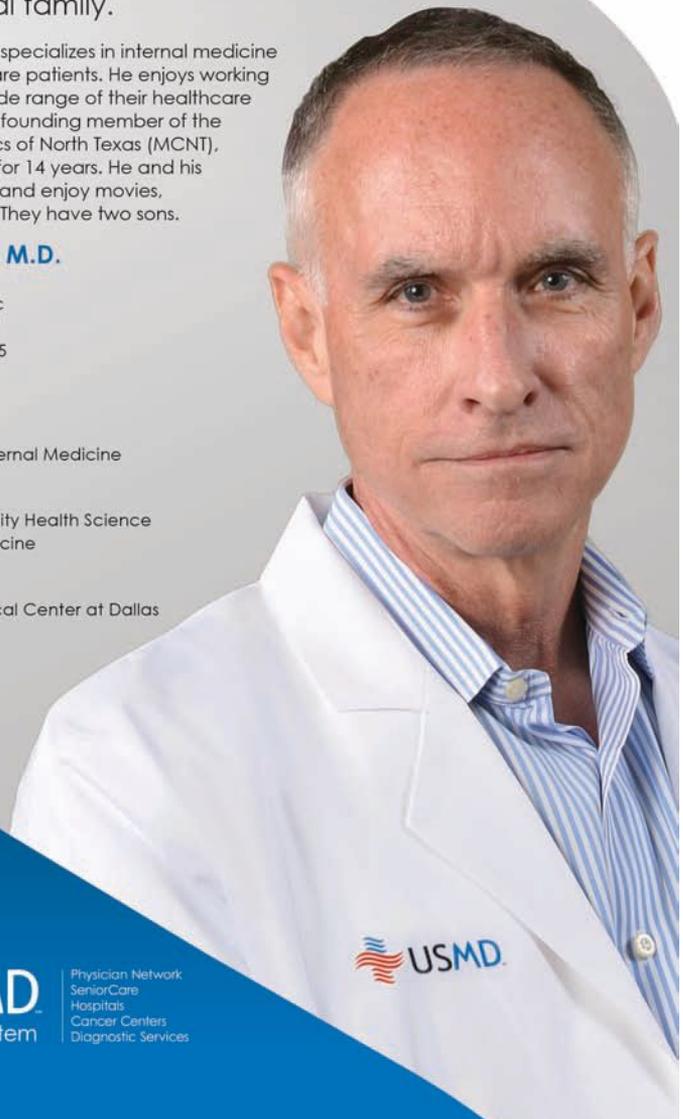
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painstaking process of doing whatever was necessary to get them back. Child Protective Services had placed her children into Presbyterian's group home for children in Itasca. In only three of the six months she was allotted by the state, she completed all the necessary requirements to get her girls back. Knowing she had to provide a home for them after their return from the state, Jennifer's job at the time didn't



pay enough for her to afford housing and everything else that goes along with it. That's when she took the offer to participate in the program.

Jennifer and her family moved into the Waxahachie Single Parent Family Program home with the goal of eventually affording a place of her



own. Jennifer is a star of the program, according to Cyndi. "She was, and still is, willing to do whatever she can to produce a positive future for her and her family," Cyndi explained. "She needed to get her children back and was able to accomplish that in only three months." She has proven how much she loves her kids and deserves to be with them. Cyndi also touts Jennifer with going above and beyond to further her career by attending courses to



become a medication aide, which is a step up from her current position as a certified nurse aide. And, the program is helping her to pay for her continuing education.

The program also helps instill self-esteem in the women and their families, as well as providing an ongoing boost of encouragement for what the women

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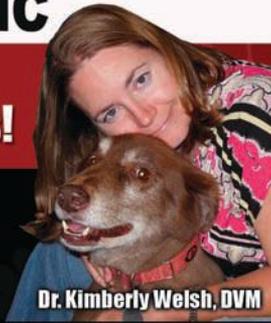


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are accomplishing in their daily lives. However, Cyndi has learned that most people who are in need of the program and its services aren't aged 18-25, but a little older. The Single Parent Family Program has even included a grandmother who had custody of her grandchildren but needed a place to live. Many of the participants have had their own homes, jobs and cars in the past, or had it "together," so to speak. Yet, somehow unfortunate life circumstances crept in and suddenly rendered them homeless. Frequently, women and their children are also fleeing an abusive environment.

Once a family enters the program, Cyndi assesses their immediate needs, as well as helps plan their future goals, like

JENNIFER'S  
MAIN HOPE IS TO  
HAVE HER OWN  
HOUSE AND TO  
RESIDE IN  
WAXAHACHIE.

continuing their education or learning new skills that can launch careers. Volunteers in the community teach the residents new skills and offer relevant classes, and Cyndi coordinates with other resources and organizations to help the women find jobs, so they can immediately begin working 20 hours per week. Rent for housing is paid by mothers once they are employed. The money then goes into a savings account to be given back to the mothers when they leave the program. The savings can help with rental deposits and other future expenses. In addition, every three months, if they are able, program participants are encouraged to save even more.

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home and share common areas with other families in the house. They work together and swap duties, like laundry, cleaning and cooking in the home. Moms pay for their own food and child care, but the program can provide some financial assistance in approved situations.

Jennifer's main hope is to have her own house and to reside in Waxahachie. Her beautiful girls are performing great in Waxahachie schools, and they are so proud of their mother and ready



to contribute in any way they can. By offering to help clean and do chores, they are showing their gratitude. "I'm so grateful for this program and for having someone help me at a time when I thought we were going to have to live in a shelter," Jennifer admitted. And by the determined look in her eyes, she will follow through with all she has committed to and all she has already accomplished through the home's program for single parents and their families. **NOW**

*Editor's Note: To learn more about the program and volunteer opportunities at the Waxahachie location, email Cyndi at [cyndi.fuller@pchas.org](mailto:cyndi.fuller@pchas.org).*

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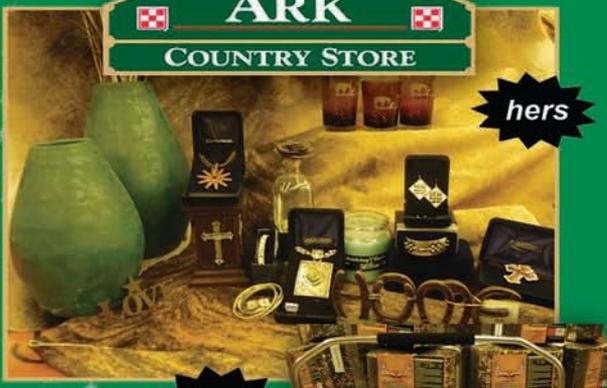


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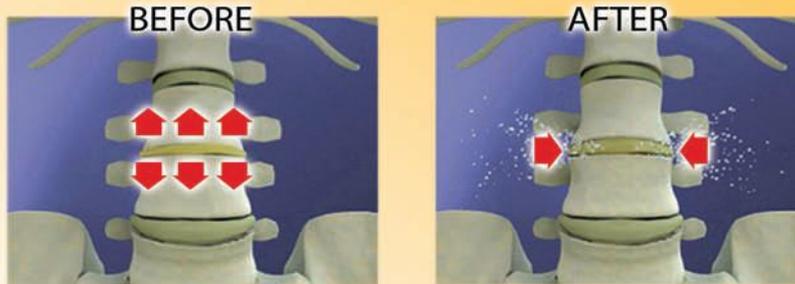
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# Giving Back

## Big in Ways



— By Sandra Strong

*The main room at the Waxahachie Bible Church is once again being transformed into a holiday wonderland filled to overflowing with one-of-a-kind Christmas trees, wreathes and home decor. In its second year, the 2014 Festival of Trees event, benefiting Habitat for Humanity of Ellis County, promises to be bigger and brighter than last year's event. "We are building on our previous success," admitted Felecia Warner, family selection chair and board member of Habitat for Humanity. "The things we learned have inspired us to include many new offerings in the festival."*



**“We each have a love for people and a love for the community in which we all serve.”**

The Festival of Trees staff is made up solely of volunteers who donate their time and talent for a worthy cause — giving back to future generations. As the capital fundraiser for Habitat, 100 percent of the money raised at the Festival of Trees helps to build decent, affordable housing for low-income families in Ellis County. “In order to continue our mission of eliminating poverty in Ellis County one home and one family at a time,” Felecia stated, “we offer the fundraising event as a way to make money for another Habitat home, but also as a way to introduce the community to the unlimited talent we have here.”

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prior to the actual event. Felecia estimates there will be more than 100 volunteers this year. Based on the calculated numbers of donated items, she feels even more volunteers will be needed for the event to run smoothly and without problems. “We have a 12-member board of directors,” Felecia explained. “We each have a love for people and a love for the community in which we all serve. Our family and friends are always eager to help in any way they can, especially since they understand the importance of this single event. It’s our biggest money maker throughout the year.”

As aforementioned, the Festival of Trees committee learned many lessons from last year’s event. “Running out of wall and floor space taught us how to better utilize the area Waxahachie Bible Church has graciously allotted to us again this year,” she said. “We are using wreath stands as a way to offer more silent auction items as a whole.” Last year, the silent auction

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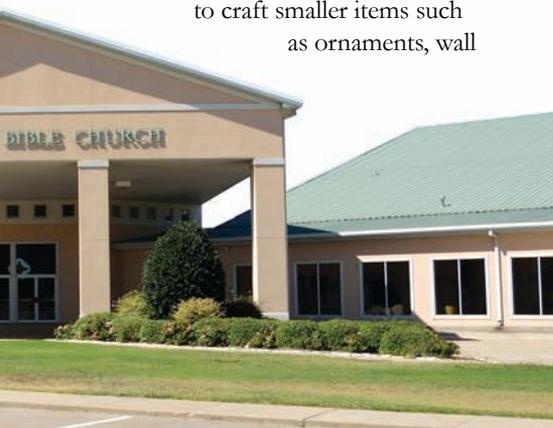





boasted approximately 80 trees and 50 wreaths. This year, Felecia is hoping for 150 trees and an unlimited number of wreaths and holiday decor items.

A new offering this year is The Christmas Store. "The store will offer cash-and-carry or debit card purchasing of items for those in the community who want to give, but who don't want to have to return at the end of the day to see if they were the top bidder on a silent auction item," Felecia explained. "We saw a need last year for something more immediate for those coming out to support our cause. The Christmas Store is a great idea for consumers, as well as those donating items."

The store allows everyone the opportunity to give back. Many individuals want to donate their talent, but they don't feel led to decorate a tree for the silent auction. The store allows these same giving individuals the opportunity to craft smaller items such as ornaments, wall



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hangings, table decorations and stockings. "It's a win-win for all concerned," Felecia stated. "The sky is the limit on items that will be donated."

Donations for the silent auction will include decorated trees and wreaths in all shapes, sizes, colors and themes, as well as traditional, whimsical and many promoting the business making the donation. The



Christmas Store will also offer smaller selections such as ornaments, home decor items and an array of holiday goodies. "All donations are welcome," Felecia shared, mentioning Santas, snowmen, angels and crosses. "All donations with holiday cheer are welcome!"

Who Loves Christmas, an owl tree crafted by Kay Willingham and Suzy Keane, received the top bid overall last year. The natural, live tree was unique and well-thought-out. "The donor got real creative," Felecia remembered. "The 7-foot Beanie Baby tree, created by John and Diane Szymczak, also brought in a very high bid." This year, Felecia is hoping more people think outside the box when creating their holiday donations. "Items can be bought and donated, or they can be handcrafted," she said. "Woodworks, art from metal, environmentally friendly art and recycled Christmas ornaments will be available. Outside the box means outside the landfill. Just let your imaginations soar!"

Hints for designers include: Theme and colors should be appropriate for homes and/or businesses; be sure all items are secured to tree or wreath;

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bring a tree skirt for your tree; if you have lights, be sure to bring a 9-inch extension cord; and don't forget to give your entry a catchy, creative title. Memorable titles from last year's event were Glitter and Gold, A Heavenly Holiday, Wee Ones Wonderland and Snowflake Symphony. Once again, let your imagination go.

Another new offering will be The North Pole Experience. This area is geared toward the youngest Festival attendees. "There will be story time, photos with Santa and a cookie craft for the children," Felecia said. "There's a small fee, but it will be worth it for the fun the children will have." Live entertainment will also be part of the holiday experience with local schools and church groups coming to share their musical talents.

Friday, November 21, from 5:00-9:00 p.m., offers a sneak peak of what's to come the following day. Friday's event, by special invitation, will be a fancy dress-up affair for those choosing to make it a special night. Saturday, the doors to the Festival of Trees will open promptly at 9:00 a.m. Final bidding will end at 3:00 p.m. Best tree and wreath awards will be announced as another way to honor those who donate so much of their time, money and talent to Habitat for Humanity.

The Festival of Trees event is appealing to busy families. "We all live hectic, busy lives," Felecia stated. "Come out and buy your decor all in one place, while enjoying fellowship, fun and holiday cheer. Decorating your home with items from the Festival of Trees will help to build a home for another."

The goal of Habitat for Humanity is to eliminate poverty housing in Ellis County. The nonprofit organization is committed to building houses and building relationships to ensure a better future for our community. "Using volunteer labor, as well as donated funds and materials, Habitat for Humanity builds a home based on the three A's," Felecia explained. "They are appropriate, accessible and affordable. The Festival of Trees event allows us to continue our mission." **NOW**

*Editor's Note: For more information on volunteering or making donations, call Teresa McNeil at (214) 244-0711 or email elliscountyhfb@gmail.com.*



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# Planning the Perfect Party

— By Amber D. Browne

*The hustle and bustle of preparing for the holiday season can be quite all-consuming. Adding a dinner party or overnight guests to the equation can increase the stress. Whether you're taking on the challenge of hosting friends for dinner or family in the guest room, having a plan in place is the key to a fun-filled occasion.*

When planning a holiday get-together, first decide who is on the guest list. You could choose to invite a few of your closest friends or a group of 20 or more. Or family

could stay for the extended holiday. In either scenario, plan the date and set a time for the holiday dinner.

Incorporating a theme is a key component to any event. The holiday itself can be used in planning for decorations, music and games, but if it's a dinner for friends, choosing a fun theme may be a good choice. Pinterest or event-planning blogs feature a variety of theme options.

Keep the following in mind if you choose to host a holiday dinner:

1. What is your budget?
2. Will it be a sit-down or buffet-style dinner?
3. What type of decor will you use?
4. Is the dinner adults-only or will children also attend?
5. What type of music and entertainment will be incorporated?




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## Budget:

The budget should include funds for food, beverages, decor and entertainment. If you plan to hire a caterer, a printer for invitations or even a cleaning crew, include those costs in the budget as well. If you don't want to host the event at your home, a local restaurant or rental facility may be the perfect place to gather. Include any rental fees in the budget. Setting aside additional funds for last-minute costs is also a good idea.

## Food & Beverage:

Planning the menu ahead of time is a priority. Cookbooks, the Internet or cherished family recipes offer delicious choices for holiday meals. If you are planning a themed meal, stick with recipes that fit the motif.

If you don't want to spend time prepping and cooking the food, hiring a caterer is an option. Many caterers provide dinnerware, serving dishes and utensils, flatware and related items. On-site caterers can help with cleanup, too. For easier cleanup or a more casual event, purchase disposable dinnerware and flatware, and make trash cans readily available to guests.





When hosting a party, you may decide to serve alcoholic beverages. You can stock the bar yourself or advise guests to bring their own alcoholic beverages. Hiring a licensed bartender to serve drinks during the event is another option. Don't forget to provide nonalcoholic beverages and have extra ice on hand. For guests who may overindulge, have a taxi service phone number available.

## Venue, Decor & Entertainment:

Preparing your home for guests can be an undertaking, but a clean home creates a relaxed atmosphere. Stock the bathrooms with toilet paper, soap and clean or disposable hand towels. Offer guests a safe place to leave coats and purses. Lighting the fireplace or candles throughout the home creates a cozy ambience, but don't forget to extinguish the flames after the party!

Fresh flowers can brighten any table. You may choose to purchase arrangements from a local flower shop or buy seasonal flowers to create your own arrangement. Cranberries are popular this time of year and can be incorporated into



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the arrangement. Add one to two bags of fresh cranberries to a clear vase. Fill the vase about three-quarters full with water. "Using a sharp knife, carefully cut the ends off the fresh flowers at a 45-degree angle. Add cut flowers to vase, arranging as needed," explains a how-to page at [OceanSpray.com](http://OceanSpray.com).



If children and teenagers are invited, set a separate table for them. Using real dinnerware will create a more formal atmosphere and adding amusing trinkets to the table will keep the younger crowd entertained. Place holiday crackers, which hold small toys, at each table setting as a fun addition.

For entertainment, themed music can play during the event. You can incorporate games, too. For a guessing game, you can purchase a nice container and add individually wrapped candies.

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**Overnight  
Holiday Guests:**

Find out beforehand what types of snacks and drinks your guests prefer, and stock the cupboard and refrigerator. When planning the meals, get your guests' input. Be sure to find out if they have any food allergies. Many overnight guests may want to help out in the kitchen and chip in on food.

An inviting guest room is a necessity. You want your guests to feel at home when they visit. Provide clean, comfortable bedding, a night light and a couple of bottles of water on the night stand. The guest bathroom should include everyday grooming items, including soap, shampoo, conditioner and cotton swabs. Include plenty of fresh towels, extra toilet paper and air freshener.

Keeping your guests entertained during their stay can be a challenge. Why not plan a shopping trip with your female guests and send the men off to play golf? Whatever you choose, don't stress! Your guests will be happy to spend quality time with you.

Hosting parties and overnight guests can take a lot of time before, during and after, so ask for help. Many hosts and hostesses often find themselves too busy to enjoy their hard work. Don't let that happen to you. Take time to sit back, chat with your guests and enjoy yourself! **NOW**



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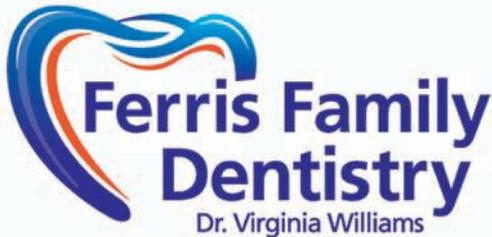
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Make the Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum one of your first stops. You'll learn all about Leonidas Carrington Hill, an adventurous attorney from Beeville, Texas, who set out on a long stagecoach business trip to Brownsville, Texas, in 1901, not realizing the trip would forever change his life. While in Brownsville, he explored the brush country to the north, known as the Wild Horse Desert, and soon realized it was fertile land. With the Rio Grande River just a few miles away, water could easily be accessed by fields via the intricate system of canals he envisioned. He discovered 500 acres of land on an arroyo that shed into the Gulf of Mexico (later to become



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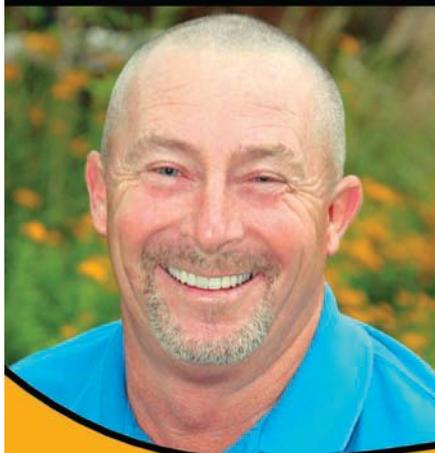


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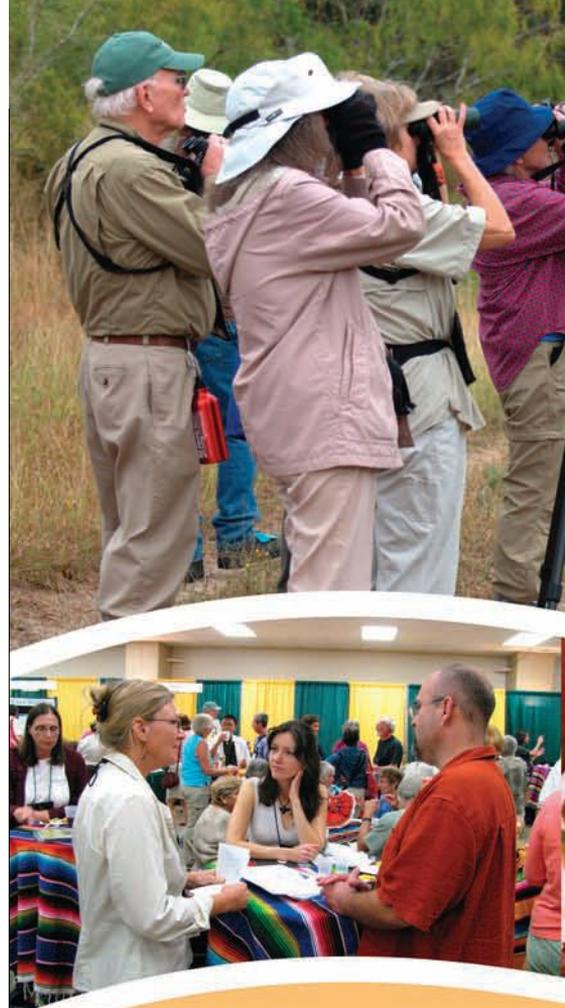
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the Port of Harlingen). The land was perfectly located in the center of a future agricultural paradise. But there was one problem: The railroad had not reached this far south yet.

Hill's relentlessness led him to railroad builder Col. Uriah Lott, who was connecting South Texas with the rest of the country via the St. Louis-Brownsville-Mexico Railway. The line stopped at Hill's town — known then as Six Shooter Junction — on July 4, 1904, with a spur extending west. Col. Lott had family roots in a harbor town in the Netherlands called Harlingen. Hill's gratitude led him to incorporate the American city of Harlingen on April 15, 1910.

The Rio Grande Valley is among the top fastest growing destinations in the country, but in Harlingen, people experience a slower pace. Nature parks and walking trails appeal to nature lovers and active seniors, while its exclusive military academy lures young, aspiring cadets from all corners of the world. The city was named as the cheapest place to live in the country, prompting retirees and birdwatchers to stay longer and enjoy authentic South Texas hospitality.

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This hospitality comes in the form of plenty of smiling faces and mom-and-pop Mexican restaurants that actually serve Tex-Mex food, a cuisine with roots in the late 1700s when Spanish missionaries left behind acculturated Spanish-speaking Native Americans known as Tejanos. Cheese enchiladas, chalupas, hard-shell ground beef tacos, cumin-spiced rice and chili con carne are among the most popular dishes. Visitors savor generously portioned plates and love the low prices. Visits to Harlingen are not complete without sampling good Texas barbecue. Restaurants serving sweet, tomato-based sauces smothering beef cooked over hickory or mesquite wood, are easily found.

A must stop is the Iwo Jima Memorial & Museum, where you can admire Felix de Weldon's original plaster model of the famous Iwo Jima Arlington bronze monument inspired by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal's acclaimed photograph. The memorial grounds hold a special meaning to Valley folks, for it is the resting place of Corporal Harlon

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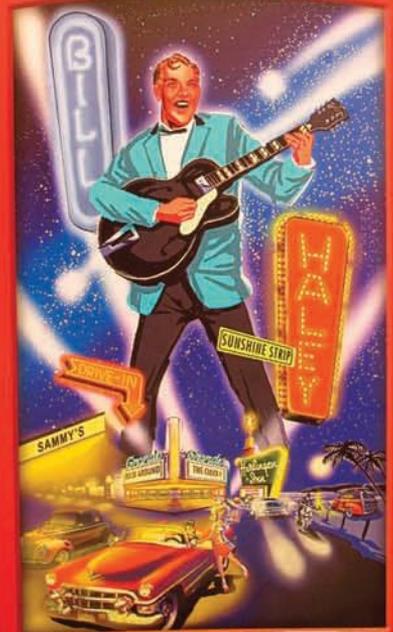
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**MURALS**  
AND ARTISTRY OF HARLINGEN



Block, one of the men planting the flag, who is a native of the nearby town of Weslaco. Block was killed in action during the battle. Battalion-size parades, including the only Iwo Jima parade held in the United States on the battle's anniversary, add to the experience.

The Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum allows visitors to walk into three historic homes meticulously decorated in period style. Lon (as Leonidas was known) C. Hill's Victorian house, the city's first hospital and a stagecoach inn surround a brick-paved shaded courtyard. Both museums are located on the grounds that once housed an Air Force base.

Two cultures merge in downtown Harlingen. The *Placita* (a small public square) is ideal for leisure afternoons and for festive, traditional Mexican celebrations held in May and September. Jackson Street is where Americana abounds. A soda shop, live blues and rock-n-roll, a tea room and a New York deli await. Over a dozen artistic murals, from the whimsical to the sublime, adorn the streets of downtown. Antiques, art and live music welcome visitors every first Saturday of the month during Market Days.

Harlingen's Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival is touted among the top three



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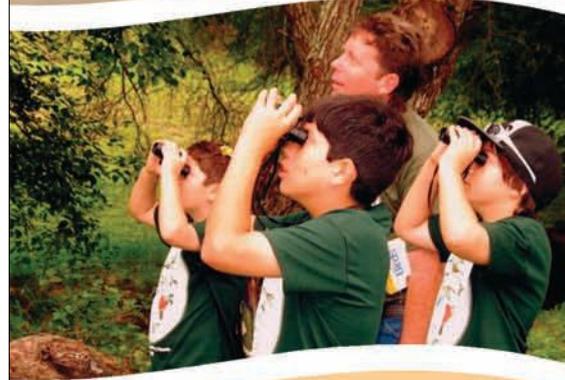
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best birding festivals in the world by different international publications such as *Birdwatch UK*. Every November, birders from around the globe travel to Harlingen for the amazing experience of meeting world-renowned birders and authors. Participants relish the opportunity to spend a day bird watching with these A-listers and networking during afternoon cordials. The festival began 21 years ago, when even the concept of birding was unfamiliar to most. Currently, few places boast the number of species that the Valley does. There are over 900 species of birds recorded for the entire United States, and 500 of them can be found in the Rio Grande Valley from November to April.

Harlingen's Valley International Airport provides travelers easy access from any part of the country through Southwest, Sun County and United Airlines. Harlingen's lodging options revolve around popular franchise hotels. People can also wander east and west for an amazing good time, returning to enjoy the peace and quiet of nights in Harlingen. A century after his discovery, Lon Hill's vision of a centralized community has become a colorful, energizing reality. **NOW**

*By Nydia Tapia-Gonzales. Photos courtesy of The Harlingen Convention and Visitors Bureau.*

*Editor's Note: [www.visitbarlingentexas.com](http://www.visitbarlingentexas.com) offers great vacation planning tools.*

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# Essence of Life

*Waxahachie Family Dentistry gives back to the community in a big way. — By Sandra Strong*

Dentistry From the Heart was once again a huge success this year, not only for the patients who showed up early and stayed late, but also for the staff at Waxahachie Family Dentistry. The day of free dental care allows Dr. Scott Clinton, Dr. Bobby Haney and their staff an opportunity to share their skills as a way to give back to the community that has been so wonderful to them. “We were unable to say no,” Dr. Clinton said, referring to the more than 50 people who showed up to take advantage of the day of free dental care the first year. “It was the best feeling to know we were able to see all 64 people.” This year’s event, also held in early October, left the group with the same feeling of accomplishment.

The idea for Dentistry From the Heart originated in Florida. When Dr. Clinton heard about a doctor in Florida who had

laid the groundwork for a day of nonprofit dental care, he was intrigued by the overall concept. He shared the idea with his staff, and as a team they agreed to host the same type event here. “I felt we needed to do something similar here in Waxahachie,” Dr. Clinton admitted. “The event in Florida gave us the perfect example to follow. In the two years we’ve hosted Dentistry From the Heart, it’s proven to be a good thing for Waxahachie Family Dentistry as a team.”

“It’s the most exhausting day of the year,” Dr. Haney confessed, “but it’s also the most fulfilling.” To be able to share their skills as doctors of dentistry and dental hygienists brings a blessing to each of them, so it’s a win-win situation for all concerned.

The overwhelming success of the second year has now made

## Business **NOW**

Dentistry From the Heart an annual event for Waxahachie Family Dentistry, and, hopefully, also for a colleague from Ennis, Dr. Pedro Franco. "He came on board this year," Dr. Clinton explained. "As an oral surgeon, he added to the care we were able to provide."

The event, held the first Saturday in October from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., guarantees the first 50 patients registered will be seen, but the goal is to also provide free dental care, if possible, to the overflow by the end of the day. Patients 18 years and older who are unable to get dental care elsewhere are offered a choice of a filling, extraction or cleaning, with the most requested choice being extractions. A total of 74 patients were seen at this year's event.

"It's the most exhausting day of the year, but it's also the most fulfilling."

So many stories were shared, and not a single person left these events without a smile of gratitude. One college student thought she had a cavity. She ended up having her teeth cleaned. Another lady had been suffering from a toothache for 18 months. Needless to say, she was a new woman as she hopped in her car to return to her home.

Dr. Clinton can't say enough about Dentistry From the Heart. "We are meeting their essential needs," he stated, "and that's a great feeling!"

"This is also a great experience for the staff," Dr. Haney added. "It means something to them."

Serving others is definitely the essence of life, or at least it is for those at Waxahachie Family Dentistry who feel Dentistry From the Heart is their ministry. Dr. Clinton said it best. "Our hearts are in this event." **NOW**

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Carolyn Reichle and Gene Jones enjoy a meal at Cattleman's Steakhouse during an outing to the Fort Worth Stockyards.



Alicia Taylor-Harris and Lena Bollman oversee signups and renewals at the Waxahachie Senior Center.



J.D. and his sister, Olivia, play and have fun during a Hidden Miracles Respite Night event.



Good friends, Carolyn Mixon and Joel Skipper, share a hug and smiles during the Chamber auction.



Wendy Middleton enjoys a small gathering for her birthday.



Eddie Irving and The Classic Swing Band provide the musical entertainment during the 40th Annual Waxahachie Chamber Auction.



Kristi Autrey, Waxahachie Junior Service League president, presents a \$15,000 check to Barbara McNeely, director of Hidden Miracles, as participants, families and volunteers look on.



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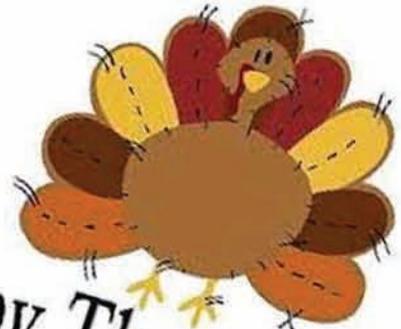
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*Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.*

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# Calendar

## NOVEMBER 2014

### Through December

Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market:  
**Saturday**, 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., S. Elm St. For more information, call (469) 309-4111.

### Through December 18

Lighthouse for Learning Community Education fall/holiday semester begins: 6:00-8:00 p.m., all classes taught at WHS on Monday and Thursday evenings, 1000 Hwy. 77N. There are well over 50 classes to select from. For class information and registration details, contact Melissa Cobb at (972) 923-4631 or visit [www.wisd.org](http://www.wisd.org).

### November 7, 8

Waxahachie Veterans Weekend & WWII Reenactment: Two-day event in and about downtown Waxahachie during Veteran's Day weekend. Call (972) 937-2390 or visit [www.waxahachiechamber.com](http://www.waxahachiechamber.com) for more detailed information.

Waxahachie Old Fashioned Singing: **Friday**, 7:00 p.m.; **Saturday**, 3:00 p.m., historic Chautauqua Auditorium. Contact artistic director R.G. Huff at (972) 923-2709 or visit [www.WaxaOFS.com](http://www.WaxaOFS.com).

### November 8

Free Children's Nature Event and Pie Social: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Settles Science and Nature Center located at Pettigrew Academy, 806 E. Marvin Ave. For more information, call (972) 923-1633.

Ellis County Veterans Appreciation Day: 10:00 a.m.-noon, Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln. Event is a countywide tribute to all veterans, including speeches and patriotic music. For more information, call (469) 309-4040.

### November 18

Girl Scout Monthly Volunteer meeting: 7:00-8:30 p.m., Brown Street Church of Christ, 2471 Brown St. For more information, visit [www.joinus@gssu251.org](mailto:www.joinus@gssu251.org).

### November 29

Junk in the Trunk and Small Business Saturday: downtown square. Call (469) 309-4111 or visit [www.waxahachiecvb.com](http://www.waxahachiecvb.com) for more details.

Community Tree Lighting.

### December 4

Christmas Parade of Lights and Lights of

Ennis Block Party: 7:00 p.m., downtown Ennis. For more information, contact the Chamber at (972) 875-2626.

### December 5

Waxahachie Junior Service League Christmas Market Preview Party and Shopping Event: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Dr. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at [www.waxahachiejls.org](http://www.waxahachiejls.org).

### December 5 — 7, 12 — 14

Bethlehem Revisited: 6:00-9:00 p.m., 402 N. College St. Free admission, but donations are welcome. Performances are repeated every 30 minutes. For more information, call (972) 937-2390.

### December 6

Christmas Market and Gift Show: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Dr. Unique gifts, entertainment, fabulous food and photos with Santa. Call (972) 825-6077 for further details.

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

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## An Indulgent Brew

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Umm, the smell of hot coffee brewing is the best wake-up call. It is even better than the smell of sizzling bacon, because with coffee you get a little extra something. Caffeine is a central nervous system stimulant, which means it can change the way you feel and behave. That little zap to your system makes you feel more awake, focused and alert. Studies now show caffeine's benefits go beyond increased energy to providing some protection from diseases such as type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's and dementia.

But as with anything affecting your brain and your heart, there is always the possibility of too much of a good thing. With caffeine, overindulgence is easy. Since the FDA identifies it as a drug and a food additive, the products in which you can find it are endless. Caffeine is in prescription and over-the-counter medications, such as headache tablets and diet pills. You can find it in certain teas, energy snacks, soft drinks and candy — particularly those with chocolate. You can also find caffeine in some ice creams and yogurts. If you need to lower your daily intake of caffeine, it is necessary to read labels to be sure how much you are taking.

Generally, caffeine does not cause difficulty if consumed in safe amounts. A moderate amount of 100-200 mg. caffeine, which is roughly two cups

of coffee a day, is considered to be reasonable. Regular sized soft drinks, such as Coke and Pepsi, contain approximately 35-55 mg. The total of what is safe for individuals may depend upon body type, size and health. Taking over 600 mg. of caffeine a day can be detrimental to your health. The amount of caffeine children consume should be greatly limited. A safe amount for adolescents is considered to be no more than 100 mg. per day. Pregnant women should check with their doctor before consuming caffeine.

Symptoms of consuming too much caffeine are increased heartbeat, feeling jittery, nervousness, increased blood pressure and headaches. Those with heart irregularities may want to check with a physician to determine a safe level of caffeine to consume. Drinking caffeinated drinks too close to bedtime can cause insomnia. Caffeine is a diuretic as well as a stimulant. A diuretic increases the output of urine — meaning you lose more fluids. That is why caffeinated drinks should not be used to quench your thirst.

There is a lot of good along with some risk in caffeine. Pay attention to your intake before you enjoy! **NOW**

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



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*Brittany M. said "I decided to get braces because my teeth needed to change. I didn't realize how different my teeth would look. They are perfect!"*



## In the Kitchen With Matt Pittman

— By Sandra Strong

Matt Pittman grew up in Tennessee and Alabama, moving to Texas at the age of 13. “I grew up on pork,” he laughed, “but beef is king with me now.” His granny, June Tipton, taught him the fundamentals of cooking, but he is a self-taught BBQ Pitmaster and owner of Meat Church, who named his competition pit June in honor of his granny.

He primarily cooks barbecue on an offset stick burner with post oak and hickory. “But my competition team is sponsored by Big Green Egg,” he shared, “so I’m a huge ‘egghead.’” He and his fellow “eggheads” tailgate at every Dallas Cowboys home game and have been doing so for the past 15 seasons. “Cooking for 40-50 people per game is a huge part of what I do.” **NOW**

### Smoked Thanksgiving Turkey

- 1 1/2 cups kosher salt**
- 3/4 cup all-purpose barbecue rub, (divided use)**
- 1/2 cup sugar**
- 1 tsp. black pepper**
- 1 tsp. tarragon**
- 1 gallon water**
- 1 turkey**
- Brine bag**
- Salt and pepper, to taste, or 1/4 cup barbecue rub**
- 1 stick butter, melted**

- 1. For brine:** Thoroughly mix salt, 1/2 cup rub, sugar, pepper and tarragon. Add the dry ingredients to the water, mixing well.
- 2. Place turkey in a brine bag.** Fill the bag with brine liquid. Refrigerate overnight or for an average of 1 hour per lb.

- 3. Remove turkey from brine, rinse thoroughly and pat dry.** Season outside of turkey with salt and pepper, or 1/4 cup barbecue rub.
- 4. Smoke the turkey at 250 F,** basting periodically with melted butter. Turkey will be done when the internal temperature reaches at least 165 F in the thickest section of the breast. Let turkey sit for 20 minutes before carving.

### Bacon Wrapped Onion Rings

- 4 sweet onions, sliced 1/2-inch thick**
- 1 bottle Sriracha sauce**
- 1 lb. bacon**
- Skewers**
- 1 cup your favorite barbecue rub**
- 1/2 cup your favorite sweet barbecue sauce**

- 1. Prepare smoker to 250 F.** (Rings can also be prepared in an oven or grilled directly. However, when grilled directly, the onions are often not as tender.)
- 2. Pop middles out of onion slices** leaving the 2 outer rings. Brush the Sriracha sauce liberally on each of the larger rings.
- 3. Wrap bacon around the onion rings,** using approximately 2-3 pieces of bacon for each ring. Secure bacon to ring by running a skewer completely through both sides of the ring.
- 4. Lightly season the outside of the rings** with rub. Smoke or indirectly cook rings for 90 minutes. Lightly sauce rings with your favorite barbecue sauce 10 minutes prior to removing them from cooker. (You will know they are done when the bacon looks nicely cooked.)

### Smoked Pecan Cobbler

- 2 pie crusts, rolled and softened**
- 2 1/2 cups brown sugar**
- 2 1/2 cups light corn syrup**
- 1/2 cup butter, melted**
- 4 1/2 tsp. vanilla**
- 6 eggs, beaten**
- 2 cups pecans, chopped**
- 2 cups pecans, halved**
- Blue Bell vanilla ice cream**

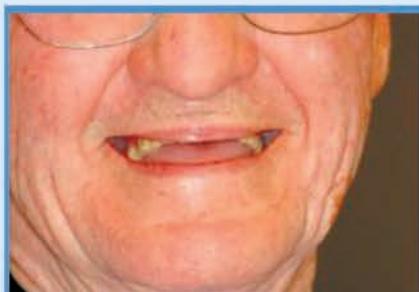
- 1. Prepare smoker for a 45-minute** smoke at 350 F. (A light wood, such as pecan, is recommended.)
- 2. Spray half-sheet steam pan with** butter-flavored cooking spray. (A cast-iron skillet can also be used.)
- 3. Unroll one of the pie crusts.** Lay it in the bottom of the pan, trimming the excess so it fits neatly. Combine the sugar, syrup, butter, vanilla and eggs in a large mixing bowl. Mix well. Fold in the chopped pecans.
- 4. Pour half of the mixture into the pan.** Unroll the second crust. Lay it on top of the mixture. Smoke for 15 minutes.
- 5. Pour remaining mixture into pan.** Lay pecan halves neatly on top. Smoke for an additional 30 minutes, or until set.
- 6. Cool for at least 20 minutes** so as not to burn your tongue. Serve warm with ice cream.

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

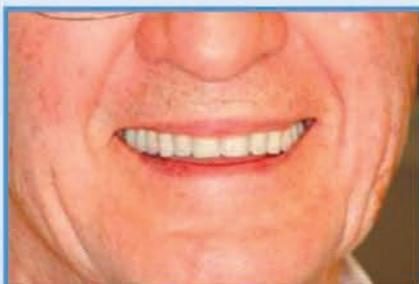
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