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SEPTEMBER 2011

AN OLD TIME CHRISTMAS

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Also Inside

Love at First Autograph

Secrets of a Sweet Life

Brushes With Reality

Building the Herd

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In the Kitchen With Melissa Graham

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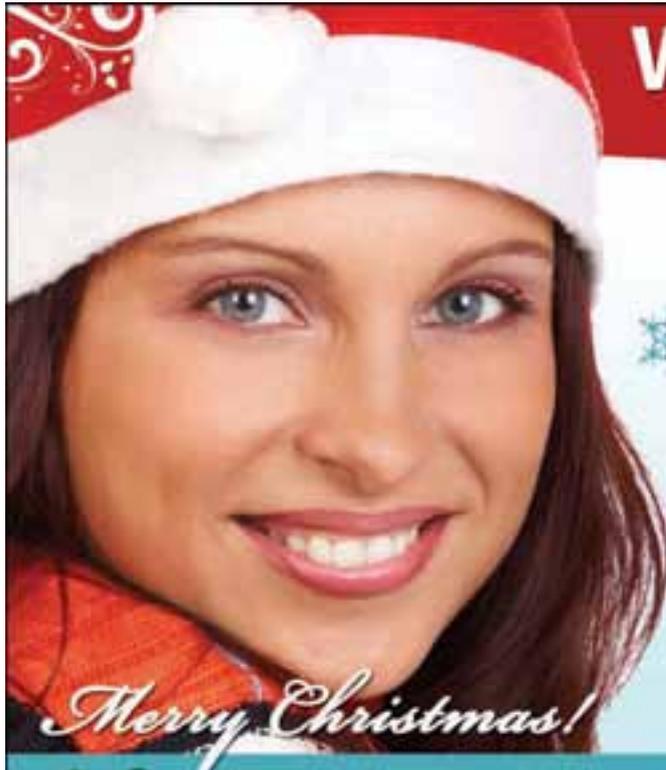
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On The Cover



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at the Jacoby home.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The lights in the house are off. The only illumination comes from the Christmas tree in my living room. I could sit on the couch for hours, relaxing and gazing at the ornaments as they sparkle in the twinkling white lights – all 1,100 of them. I know that sounds like a lot of lights, but it makes “reading the TV guide in the dark” so much easier.

It won't be long before the beautifully wrapped presents are nothing more than torn paper, disheveled bows and wrinkled ribbon, but for me all the “little extras” are worth it. I've said it before, and I'm going to say it again, Christmas is my favorite holiday. Even though by the end of the day, I find I've eaten way too much, and I'm worn out physically and emotionally. But, isn't that what Christmas is all about?



Sandra

Sandra Strong
WaxahachieNOW Editor
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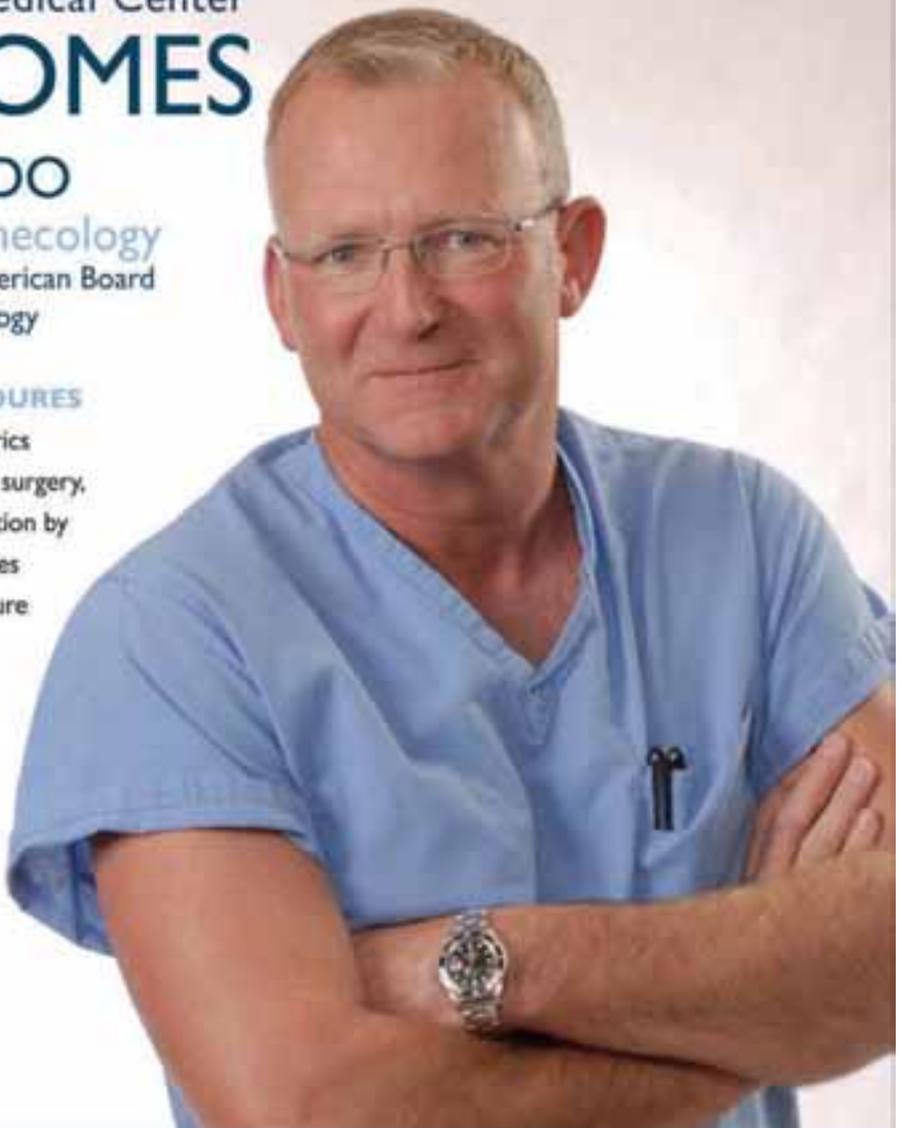
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An Old Time



The twinkling lights and 19th century-inspired village sets and characters that dot the Courthouse Square have come to define Christmas in Waxahachie. The first to get into the spirit are those who make the Victorian-themed celebration possible – the men and women of the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

Beginning early in November, long before most people are even thinking about the holidays, the Parks and Rec crew is busy stringing lights, hanging signs, assembling decorations and doing it all with cheer and pride. "We feel sort of like Santa's elves," said department director, John David Smith, a former teacher who has been with the city since 1995. "It really is the high point of the year for us, even if we do have to be in a jolly state of mind longer than most folks!"

Getting a jump on the season for John and his employees

means having everything in place by Thanksgiving, so that the backdrop for old Saint Nick is ready for the choirs, carolers, Dickensian costumed figures, carriage rides and lighted strolls that turn downtown Waxahachie into an annual oasis of holiday merriment. "When it's all said and done, the crew enjoys getting it all prepared and seeing the fruits of their labor," John said. "The men all have kids, and they like to show off their handiwork. It's like: 'Look what Daddy did.' So setting up for Christmas is a big source of pride for us."

While to new residents or tourists it may appear that Waxahachie's Christmas festivities have been around for as long as the antique-looking decorations that festoon sidewalks and telephone poles, the city is only in its 10th year of coordinating downtown Yuletide events. Previously, the department handled lights and decorating for a community-wide Christmas carnival in Getzsdaner Park, sponsored by local service organizations. "That's in the past now," John explained. "It became too expensive to maintain. One year, a storm came through and tore up our props and the next year, vandals destroyed everything beyond repair."



Christmas

— By Randy Bigban

The department abandoned the idea of Christmas in the Park, but in league with the city's Downtown Merchants Association, it formulated the alternative of Christmas in the Square. "We just switched gears," John said. "And it's been a big hit. We think it's better in many ways because it's more centrally located, and it catches the eye of out-of-towners who might want to stop and join in the fun."

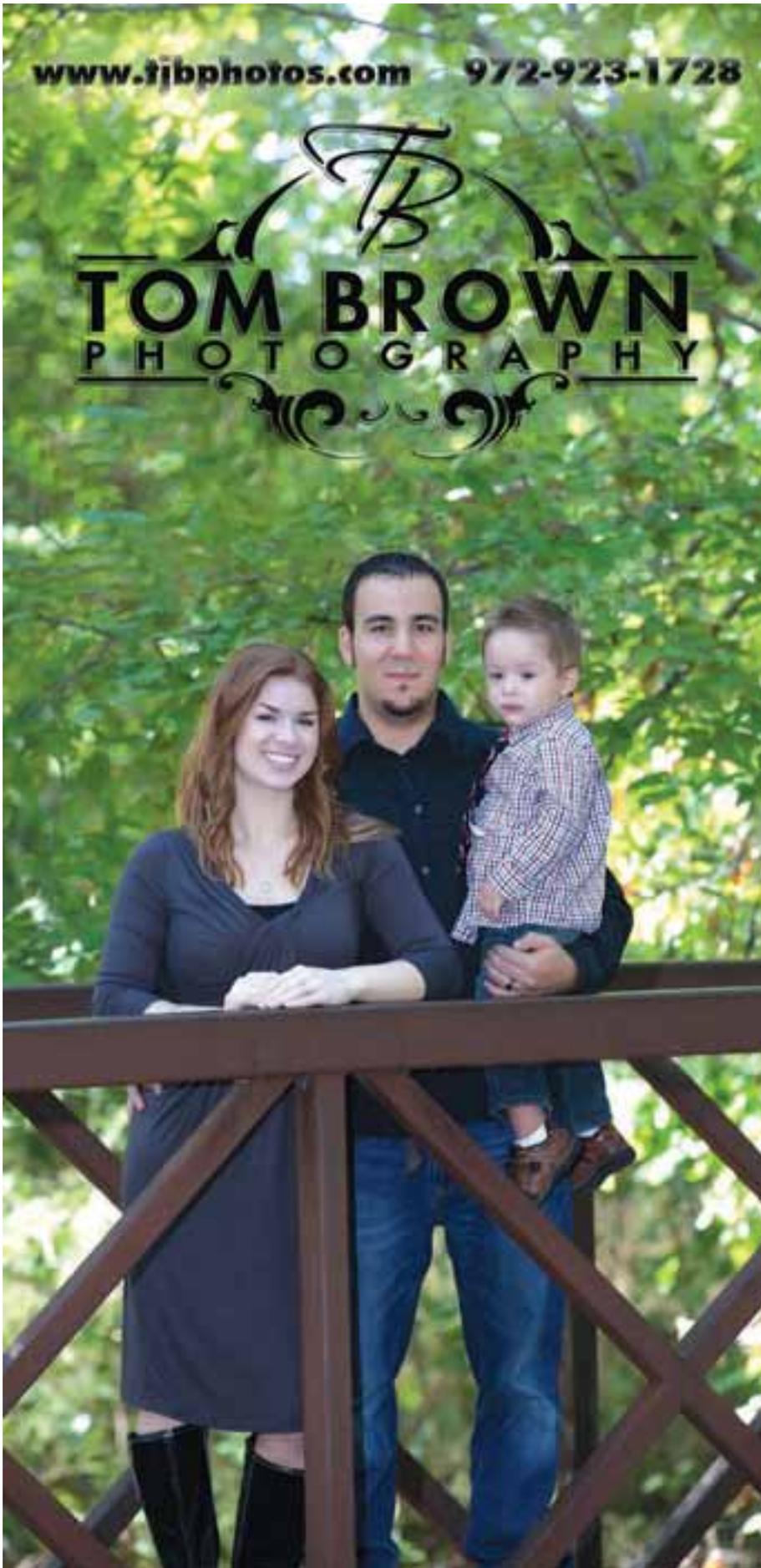
John points out that the fun extends beyond the parameters of the square itself. Decorations and lights also go up on Martin Luther King, Main and Elm streets. He added that the area is a safer venue than before, being monitored regularly by the police,

and the event is a boom for sales for downtown store owners and vendors.

Most residents appreciate the change, agreeing that downtown seasonal events are more convenient for revelers and more beneficial to local tourism, but John admits to receiving some complaints. "The feedback is positive

"We feel sort of like Santa's elves."





for the most part,” he said, “although we do still hear from people who miss the park festivities and wish they could be reinstated.” John and his staff understand that people have great memories of that time, but there’s so much to recommend the current celebration – the Christmas tree lighting ceremony, kids’ activities, booths for shopping, eating or taking pictures with Santa – that they are confident the right decision was made .

“When the first brainstorming went on to change the location to downtown,” John stressed, “the merchants’ group and the city were sure this would evolve into something special, and it has.” The director also singles out for praise two dynamic colleagues who have contributed to the growth of the Christmas itinerary: Amy Hollywood, City of Waxahachie’s public relations manager, and Anita Williamson, the city’s downtown development director. “These ladies have really outdone themselves in the way of publicity and in enhancing the Christmas event calendar,” John enthused. The list of events is stellar indeed.

In addition to the tree lighting



program and parade, which take place between the day after Thanksgiving and early December, Waxahachie hosts an outdoor skating rink (opposite City Hall), as well as the popular attraction, "Bethlehem Revisited," a performance tour sponsored by Central Presbyterian Church that guides visitors through the story of Christ's birth in a setting replicating Herod's court, where crafts are demonstrated and sold.

As the range of activities is growing, so soon will the city's cache of decorations. They hope to soon purchase new items for the downtown Christmas



displays. The present Victorian lights and scenery are enough to please one return visitor to the Christmas on the Square events. Ellis County resident, Kim Douglas, said, "Waxahachie is never more beautiful than at Christmas." She thinks the set pieces used by the Parks and Recreation department capture the charm

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of the city and its historic buildings and homes. "My family likes coming to the tree lighting ceremony," she said. "We love the feel of the square and seeing all the decorations. It sets the right tone for the season for us."

Linda Worth is another local who counts on Christmas on the Square for revving up her holiday spirit. "I used to go with my parents on the driving tour through Getzandaner Park, but now I take my kids to the town square, and they love it," she said, noting that the atmosphere makes her feel like a kid again herself.

That's Christmas music to the ears for John and his hard-working Parks and Rec staff. "We love knowing people are having a good time, and that they'll spread the word," he said. Steve Hamm, crew supervisor for the Parks department, oversees six employees who all enjoy making holiday gaiety happen for residents and visitors alike. "It's exciting for us, and the initial work isn't that hard," John explained. "It just takes about a week and a half to put up all the lights and decorations. What's hard sometimes is maintaining the decorations for the five weeks they're up."

John sees the collaboration between his men and the other city departments that contribute to Christmas on the Square as an example of the familial mood that prevails regardless of the season. "I am most impressed by our ability to pull together," he said. "And the result is so wonderful, especially at Christmas. The square lends itself to decoration well. It's pretty without a single ornament, but when it's dressed and lit up at night, it's really amazing."

Getzandaner Park may hold fond memories for earlier generations, but the Courthouse Square is rivaling it for beauty and nostalgia. John said it best: "It's a great place to make new memories." **NOW**



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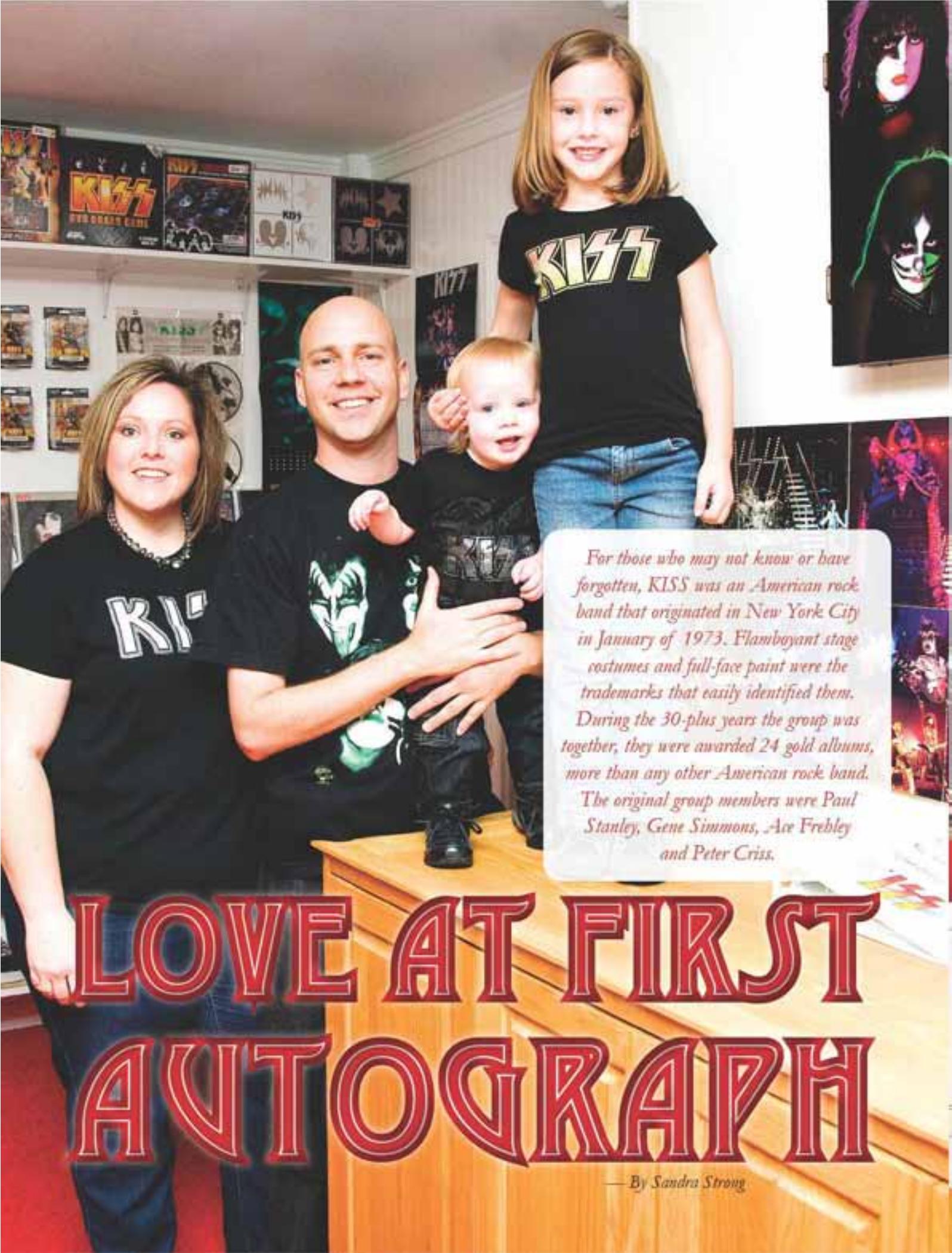
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For those who may not know or have forgotten, KISS was an American rock band that originated in New York City in January of 1973. Flamboyant stage costumes and full-face paint were the trademarks that easily identified them. During the 30-plus years the group was together, they were awarded 24 gold albums, more than any other American rock band. The original group members were Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Ace Frehley and Peter Criss.

LOVE AT FIRST AUTOGRAPH

—By Sandra Strong

Jason Vire was only 6 years old when he began collecting KISS memorabilia. His older brother, being a huge fan of rock and roll music, gave Jason the album that started it all. "He gave me a record album that had first been handed down to him," Jason remembered. "He passed it down to me, and I'm not quite sure why, but I latched onto it."

He knew he was an avid collector, but Jason didn't fully understand the extent of his passion until he was asked to share it with others. As he looks around what the family lovingly refers to as the "KISS room," the memories take him all the way back to his days as a teenager. "I wanted more and more KISS music," he said. "By the time I was a teenager, I had received a few more things, but what I had the most of was posters. I had them hanging all over my bedroom."

His goal was to acquire anything and everything he could get his hands on, but at the time his parents had real concerns about what the rock band represented overall. In Jason's case, the persistence of a child won them over. "My parents finally realized their first impression was incorrect," he explained. After his parents' view of the group changed, Jason was able to add to his collection at a faster rate than before.

High school graduation led to college enrollment. At the end of his first year, April 23, 1992, to be exact, he met Shyla. Not long after they started dating, Shyla was going through some boxes and



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came across an Eric Carr autograph. Eric debuted with KISS in July of 1980, after taking Peter's place as the band's new drummer. "Eric signed his name on the back of my high school U.S. History progress report," Shyla remembered, also admitting, "I skipped school to get that autograph."

The couple smiles as they reminisce. "That piece of paper may be what sold me," Jason quipped.

"But, it's the one piece in the collection that will always be mine," Shyla playfully stated.

The couple got engaged three months following their first date. They didn't elope until August 9, 1997, and they stood before family and friends a year later, renewing their vows. When asked if it was "love at first sight," they both laughed as they looked at one another. "It was more like love at first autograph," Shyla said. "I knew coming into the relationship that KISS was a big deal to Jason."

Before moving to their home on the outskirts of Waxahachie in 2002, Jason and Shyla had been living in Mansfield. One room of that home was reserved solely for Jason's ever-growing KISS collection. Things drastically changed when they settled down in the country. "We converted the garage into what we refer to as the 'KISS room,'" Shyla admitted. "We had someone close the room in and lay the carpet, but the rest





of the remodeling we did ourselves.”

The conversion has proven worthy of Jason’s lifetime of collecting. Although it seemed to take the couple forever to find the black theater-like furniture and just the right color of red carpet, the end result was more than they had hoped for. Two- and three-tiered shelves line the walls, allowing the KISS memorabilia to be displayed in the way Jason feels it should be – available for all to see.

The vast collection, still with their original price tags, includes just about



everything one can imagine. The list includes dolls from miniature to life size, Mr. Potato Head replicas, jigsaw puzzles, candy M&Ms, Christmas ornaments, rubber party masks, ties, Johnny Lightning commemorative cars, lunch boxes, checkers, lapel pins, dog tags, a full line of bathing products, a neon telephone, a dart board, and scads of

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posters, DVDs and albums. "I also have signed t-shirts and a life-sized costume," Jason said, as he pointed to a fully-dressed mannequin in one corner of the room. The list of items could easily be considered endless.

Much of the collection came to Jason as gifts from friends and family. Some other items have been "special surprises" from Shyla. "I guess you could say I feed the addiction," Shyla confessed, as she shared a couple of her bigger surprises. "In 1995, I took him to see them perform acoustically at the KISS Convention in Dallas. It was an intimate group of 300." Her second-best surprise was on December 6, 2009. "I finally was able to get a 'meet and greet package,'" she explained. "We got to meet them all in person. We had front row center seats for the concert."

When asked what the most valuable item of memorabilia is, Jason found it very difficult to pick just one. Of course, the autograph that he inherited through marriage is at the top of the list, but one other "unique item" comes in at a close second – his commemorative KISS coffin. "I know it sounds strange," he said, "but it's one of only 3,500 made. It completes the collection." KISS partnered with a company out of Dallas for the limited edition. The day it was delivered to the Mansfield house was unforgettable. "The guy that delivered it couldn't figure out why he was bringing a coffin to someone's home," Jason said, still smiling at the memory. "When he arrived and was able to see the KISS room, he understood and was able to breathe a huge sigh of relief." If that same delivery guy was to come back today, he'd see that the coffin has become a very much needed storage bin for the more than 200 posters Jason has accumulated over the years.

Another great part of his collection are purchases Jason made for himself, with the aforementioned being the largest and most expensive to date. But since the births of his children, Kadin and Lyric, 6 years and 18 months respectively, his passion for collecting has taken a backseat. He's a realist who understands his family comes first. "It's not every day that you meet a police officer with a KISS collection," Shyla stated, "and the teacher wife who's perfectly OK with it." **NOW**

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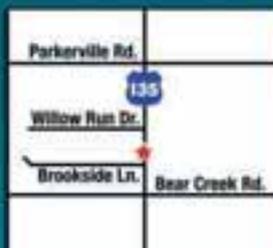
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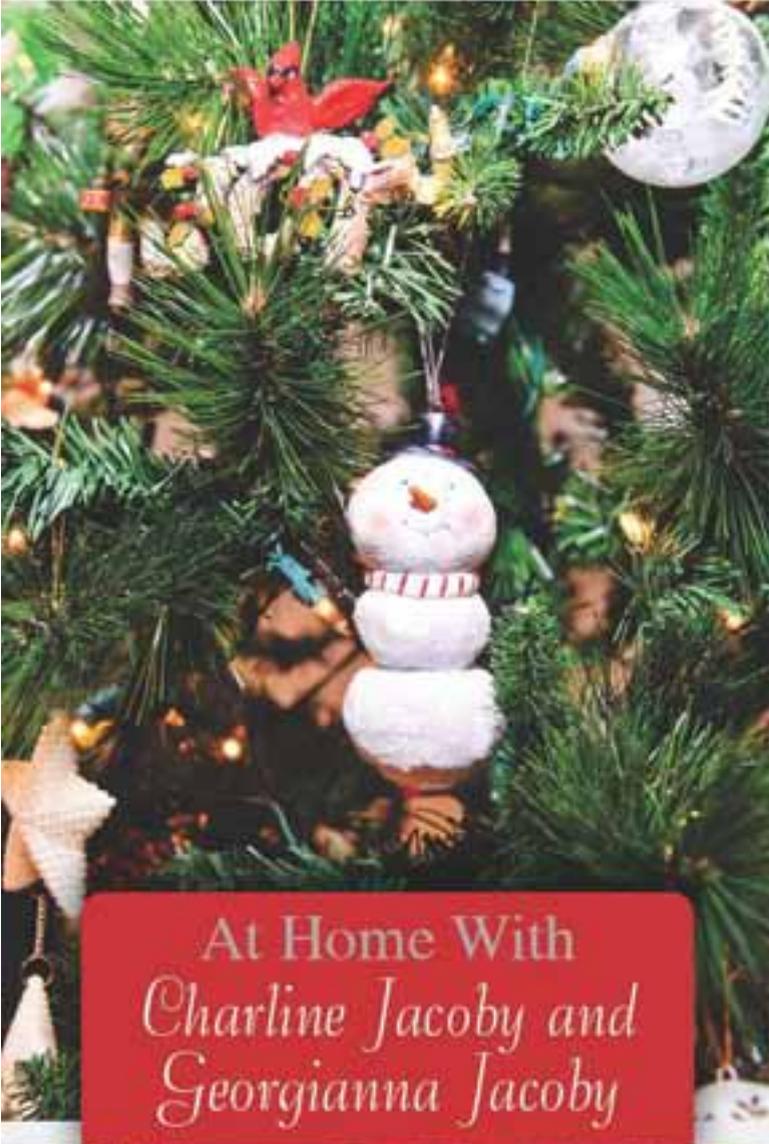


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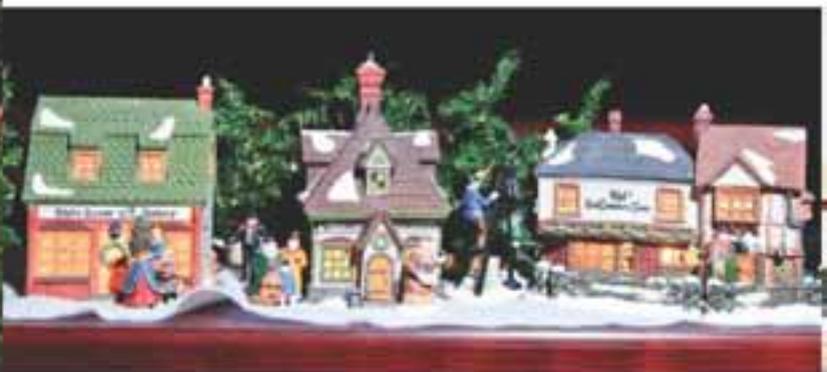




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Bookends



Charline Jacoby and her sister, Georgianna, 13 years older, were the "bookends" of their Lexington, Kentucky, family of four children. By the time Charline was born, their mother, who suffered from asthma, needed help caring for the little one. Georgianna, the eldest, filled in. Few teens would have welcomed such responsibility for a baby sister, but Georgianna took it in stride. "We didn't have any trouble," she said with a shrug. "She minded pretty well."

For her part, Charline said, "Georgianna's really been a mother to me. There hasn't been a day on this earth when she hasn't befriended me." Their years together ended when Georgianna moved to Detroit to work for General Motors. But her care for Charline continued, as she provided for her sister to go to college and become a teacher.

Charline moved to Waxahachie in 1973 and has taught in Dallas and Waxahachie schools, as well as at Navarro College. Of her 35-year career, she said, "I dearly love every student I ever had."

Now retired and with children grown and gone, she and Georgianna once again share a home. Charline had the house built in 1985 with a second living area instead of the usual garage. "That way I'm able to display the antiques. I like that real well."

9 nds

— By Janice C. Johnson



The sisters have resumed their family Christmas tradition of enthusiastic decorating. "Mother always decorated everywhere," Charline said, "and I still do — every room and outside." Each room boasts a decorated tree, from tabletop miniatures to the seven-foot blue one in the living room. In the sunroom, blue glass dishes move out of the bay window in December and the ledge becomes a Dickens village nestled among miniature evergreen trees. Other decorations make way for collections of Santas, angels and glass Christmas trees. Seasonal lamps appear on shelves and tables, while the sofas seem to blossom with Christmas pillows and throws.

One revived family tradition is to tie ornaments to ribbons and hang them from the mirrors. Both sisters make up their beds with holiday-themed quilts during the month, and the dining room table is dressed up with a lace cloth, seasonal centerpiece, china and crystal. Outside, wreaths and a sleigh full of "gifts" welcome visitors to the home.

Charline has made few changes to the house since having it built, merely replacing the carpet throughout the home with hardwood flooring because

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of allergies. When Georgianna moved in, the split floor plan allowed them to arrange her own "apartment" without remodeling. Georgianna's space includes a library, living room, bedroom and bath.

The antiques Charline mentioned consist of furniture and a few dishes that have been in the sisters' family for generations. Each piece has a story. One of their favorites is about the blue velvet



settee in the living room. Their mother's great-grandfather had wanted to run for sheriff in their small Indiana town, but his wife did not want him to, Charline explained. "He kept badgering her about it, and finally she said, 'There's a settee down at the furniture store that I want. You can run for Sheriff if you'll buy me that.'" Call it bribery, but both were satisfied. Great-grandmother got her settee, and great-grandfather not only ran for office, but won the election.

Other family antiques include

carved dressers, a pedestal table, a glass-front bookcase and some armchairs. Georgianna and Charline use these enduring pieces just as their ancestors did, and still have the original purchase receipts for some of them.

They have fond memories from childhood, of their father bringing home fresh-caught fish or game for dinner, and their mother socializing with church friends and playing bridge. Charline remembers feeling a thrill when she came home from school to find the

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ladies at the card tables, dressed up and wearing hats.

The sisters' devotion to family and each other became obvious as they helped one another remember details of the memories they share. They expanded on the topic of Christmas decorating, reminiscing about going with their father to get the cedar tree each December. "Get a small one," their mother would admonish him every year. It was no use. Every year, he came in with a cedar that he could barely get into the house.

"Sometimes he got such a big tree that he used guy wires to hold it up," Charline laughed. No matter; despite the evergreen aroma, they could still smell spices simmering on the stove and yeast rolls fresh from the oven.

In another Christmas tradition, the family piled into the Model T and drove to the nearby town of Paris, Kentucky, for Christmas Eve dinner with their father's sister. Charline remembers the story of one such visit when she was very small. Her aunt served eggnog to the adults, but gave her a glass of milk instead. Long after dinner, when it was time to go home, no one could find the little girl. "They looked everywhere," Charline said, "inside, on the porch, even down in the cellar." Finally someone thought to lift the tablecloth and look under the table. There was the soundly sleeping Charline, with all the eggnog glasses lined up around her, now completely drained.



The Model T served them well, but one year its headlights inexplicably went out en route home from the Christmas Eve dinner. Unable to get the lights to work again, their father gave Charline his big flashlight and let her shine it through the windshield to light the way home.

Of the Christmas trees in the Jacobys' home, the main one in the living room harbors a secret. As a child, Charline received a tiny decorated tree, and she still has one ornament from it. Every year she hangs it "way around back where no one touches it."

Since moving to Waxahachie, Charline has come to love the people here. She is proud of her neighborhood, plays bridge like her mother before her, and has "magnificent friends all around town." She likes her private corner lot and her view of the nearby elementary school.

As for Georgianna, she was so used to the bustling city of Detroit that she found it hard to adapt to a smaller town. But that drawback came with one benefit — the warmer climate. As a hometown friend wrote her that first winter, "Remember, you don't have to shovel sunshine." Both sisters enjoy reading, evidenced by shelves full of books new and old.

As the "bookend" sisters advance in age, it gets more difficult to do all the decorating. But they're not ready to give up. "Our neighbors will help," Charline said. "Of course, we could skip it — but then it wouldn't be Christmas." **NOW**

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Secrets of a Sweet Life

— By Julie B. Cosgrove



Will and Elsie McAdams were married for 53 wonderful, loving years before Elsie passed away. Later, when Will married Charlotte, who had been good friends with Elsie, Charlotte

willingly moved into the house where Will and Elsie had lived.

"People asked me, 'Are you really gonna live in her house?' I shrugged and said, 'Why not? She was one of my best friends, and I loved her.'" Charlotte glanced up at a portrait of Elsie as a

Now after eight years of marriage, he still makes her laugh, according to Charlotte.

young wife. "She lived here for over 50 years, so she has her place here, too." Charlotte reached over to hold her husband's hand. Will's soft smile reflected his love, for both women.

"Not that Charlotte hasn't made a few changes of her own here and there," Will said, while gently squeezing her hand. "I didn't expect otherwise." He leaned toward her with a grin, "That's what I told you, right?"

Will and Charlotte grew up in Waxahatchie a few blocks apart. "I lived with my grandparents on Williams, and Will lived on Pickett," she said. However, they didn't play together as children. Will is five years older than Charlotte. Still, they share many of the same memories. As young adults, Will and Elsie knew Charlotte and her husband, Earl. Their

sons played ball together, and Will was involved in their American Legion teams. "We traveled all over Texas together, my sons and her son, going to the games," he reminisced. "Those were fun times."

Time marched on, and the two couples' lives crossed and uncrossed. Then, Will lost Elsie after a long illness. Three months later, his granddaughter called and told him Charlotte had lost Earl after 51 years of marriage. "I went over to pay my respects, but I told her I wouldn't be at Earl's funeral. It was still too soon for me."

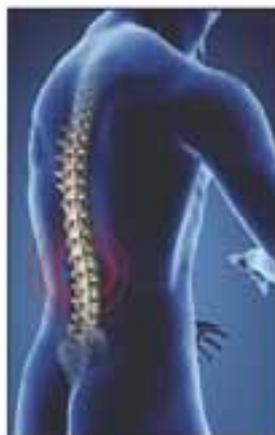
Charlotte's eyes welled. "He told me the Lord said to him, 'She needs help,' and he was supposed to come help me."



Their newfound relationship started off as two lifelong friends comforting each other over the loss of their beloved spouses. Charlotte chuckled. "Will would come over and drink a pot of coffee at my kitchen table, and we'd talk and talk. Then he'd say, 'Guess I better go. It's almost 1:00 a.m.'"

"She was going to work, coming home and going to bed," Will shared. "That's not the way to live life." He shook his head, his eyes twinkling. "I made her laugh. You have to laugh every day." Now after eight years of marriage, he still makes her laugh, according to Charlotte.

On their first official date, Will asked Charlotte to church. "He walks closely with His Lord," she said as she patted his



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hand again.

The two live harmoniously with the past. Elsie's things are still around, displayed with loving care. One tradition Elsie began, Will has now taken over with fervor. "She used to make holiday candies, divinities and fancy stuff. My favorite was her peanut brittle," Will explained. "We had two young boys. The youngest was blonde. She'd call him over



to the stove and tell him to stand there. When the peanut brittle was the color of his hair, she knew it was ready."

He smiled and wiped his eyes. "Then I began to make it while she made the other stuff. Every time I make the peanut brittle, I think of my son."

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Will has used a special aluminum skillet since the 1960s — avocado green and shiny like a new penny. "I don't dare touch his skillet," Charlotte laughed. The couple collects Christmas tins, buying them on sale after the holidays. "We have a whole storage room full of them, and each year he makes peanut brittle for our family and friends," Charlotte added. The McAdams buy an average of 200 pounds

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Will creates the peanut brittle from memory. He uses no timers, nor does he test the candy in boiling water to see if it's the right hardness. By now, he just knows. "It only takes 6 minutes; easiest recipe in the world. Everyone loves it." Sometimes he adds a pinch of cayenne pepper. "It just hits the taste buds here," he mentioned, as he slid his fingers down each side of his throat. "It's not hot or anything. It's just right." The only difference is now he spreads the brittle out on nonstick aluminum foil instead of lathering on butter. Other than that, it's the same recipe he and Elsie used year after year for 60 years.

Peanut brittle is not all Will loves to make. He

designs his own looms and weaves pot holders and coasters as presents. He also made their living room furniture, which Charlotte has reupholstered. Will worked for Flexsteel Furniture for 38 years, and one day asked them if he could have the scraps. "They said, 'Sure.' I made couches, love seats and chairs for me and for my boys' homes, too," he smiled.

The strength in Will and Charlotte's marriage comes not only from their affection for each other, but also through their acceptance of their deep love for the spouses who came before. "When my son asked me if I was sure I wanted to remarry so soon, I told him, 'He's not some



stranger I picked up in a bar or something. You've known this man all your life. He's a good man," Charlotte recalled.

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She pointed out at their age it would have been foolish to wait the customary five years. "We aren't ready to go yet. Will is a cancer survivor," she explained. "We plan to celebrate our lives together every 10 years by renewing our vows."

Will's advice as to the secret of a stable, long-lasting marriage is simple: "You have



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to hug 'em and tell them you love them first thing in the morning and the last thing before you go to bed at night."

Charlotte nodded. "You have to be friends, too. We don't keep anything back. We have mourned together and laughed together. We share everything."

Charlotte has four daughters and one son. "Will has two boys," she said. "He never had daughters, but now he does."

"And they keep us busy, always planning for us to do stuff with them," he said with a wink. In a short while, the couple will go on their first cruise and have invited their children's families. "And of course, everyone will expect us to bring lots of peanut brittle," Will chuckled. "But only if it's allowed on board." **NOW**

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Brushes With Reality

— By Janice C. Johnson



Tina Boblman's backpack, loaded with her watercolor painting setup, weighs in around 15 pounds. "And that's the portable one," Tina said. "The French easel setup weighs about 40 pounds. I don't bike very far with that one."

Tina was describing the rigors of painting landscapes on location. She finds the method, called *plein air* from a French phrase meaning outdoors, both more challenging and more rewarding than working in the studio. On location, she said, "You have to block quickly to catch the shapes and light, and take color notes for reference." To make her color notes, she mixes paint samples to duplicate the colors of foliage, buildings or other features so she can later represent them accurately. She went on, "You may have to return four or five times, at the same time of day, to get the same light."

Tina's eyes sparkled as she spoke about spending time on location rather than merely taking a photograph to work from. "You might take three seconds to focus, snap a photo and leave. But when you sit on location and sketch, you become intimate with a setting. You absorb not only the sights but the smells and sounds — the inspiration, the emotion." Also, on a purely practical level, a camera cannot capture the play of light in shadowed areas, such as when looking toward a sunset.



Born in Texas, Tina attended high school in Oklahoma City. There she had the advantage of capable art instructors who saw her talent and mentored her. These classes made up the bulk of her formal art training. Most of her studies have been independent, having felt driven since childhood to draw and paint. Over time, she became accomplished at oil painting.

Her art took a back seat to other responsibilities when Tina held a full-time secretarial job in Edmond, Oklahoma, while single-handedly raising her son and daughter. The children were in their



teens when she joined the Edmond Art League. Soon she attended a League meeting which changed the course of her career.

"Our guest artist that night did a watercolor demonstration that really inspired me," Tina recalled. With characteristic energy, she set her oils aside and concentrated on learning to use watercolors. Tina observed that both media have their advantages. "Oils have more volume – more of an impressionistic effect. You can push the paint around. With watercolor, you can get more detail, more clarity. You can also work with more speed." For these reasons Tina prefers watercolors, more portable and quicker-drying than oil paints, for her swift outdoor studies.

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Though she maintains that fully mastering watercolor techniques required a difficult 10-year learning curve, she was entering local shows and selling paintings in far less time. "One day, I realized that I was making as much money at a weekend show as I did in a whole month at my job." She approached her teenagers with the idea of giving up her full-time job to focus on painting. "I told them there might be weeks when I didn't sell many paintings, and we wouldn't have much money. But they both said, 'Go for it, Mom. You can do it.'"

With their encouragement, Tina began to participate in shows a little farther from home. As she became established, she kept expanding that radius until she had worked in much of the Western

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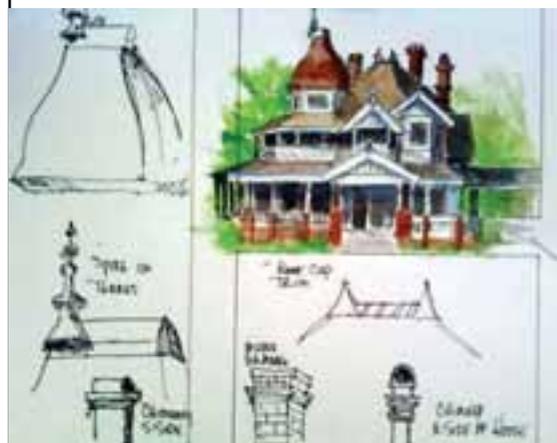
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United States and along the East Coast. "The only difference between me and a 'carny' was that I went home every week," she quipped.

The plein air practice of painting on location originated with the Impressionist

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style, which developed in nineteenth-century France with such painters as Claude Monet, Edgar Degas and Paul Cézanne. Plein air became popular in the United States for a time, and has enjoyed a renewed interest in the last decade or so.

Thanks to this resurgence in popularity, plein air workshops and competitions have given Tina more opportunities to learn from others and polish her skills. The competitions have taken her far afield. Prominent artists hosted Sedona Plein Air Festival in Sedona, Arizona, which allowed her, as she put it, to “run with the big boys for 10 days.”

Back in Texas since 1986, Tina loves painting here. She has observed some distinctive aspects of our rural landscapes. “Texas has rolling grass and seasons and different trees: the live oaks, the hardwoods. And even the same kind of tree, like the cottonwood, has a different color in Texas [than elsewhere].” Geographic features and climate conditions affect the look of a landscape, too. In contrast to Texas’ hazy, rolling prairies, Sedona is known for its red rocks standing under clear, dry air. That air makes the already-bright rocks appear so vivid that “if you paint the colors as you see them, they look garish. I had to learn to soften them.”

Tina also learned that people’s tastes differed from one part of the country to another. East Coast communities preferred a Pennsylvania Dutch look over Tina’s rustic scenes. Even seascapes had a different feel, with flowing sailboats rather than the old shrimp trawlers that

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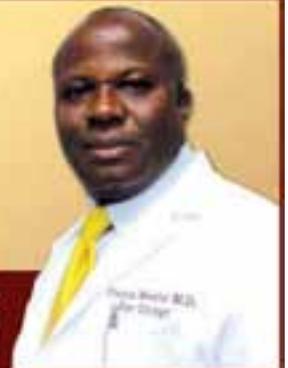
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grace the Texas Gulf Coast. "I did very few shows around the East Coast," Tina noted.

Tina's hard work and talent have made her increasingly well-known in her field. She has earned more than 60 awards for her paintings and is active in art leagues and societies at the local, state, national and international levels. She founded and chairs the annual 10-day festival Paint Historic Waxahachie event, in which more than 50 plein air artists compete. She feels fortunate to be able to earn a living at following her passion. "Painting is something I have to do," she said. "When other responsibilities interrupt my painting time, I tend to get edgy."

Art galleries prefer oil paintings instead of watercolors for display, and she has resumed working with oils part of the time for this reason, but Tina's heart is still drawn to watercolor work. Normally framed behind glass, Tina's finished watercolors are treated differently. She sprays an invisible waterproof coating on them and frames them without glass. "It makes a more intimate presentation, and you can see the color and detail better," she explained.

This intimacy harks back to her partiality toward on-location work. Photographs do have their usefulness as reference, especially if Tina needs accurate details, such as when someone commissions a painting of their home. But for her own works, she moves things around to best recreate the scene's atmosphere. The reality of a picture, she maintains, is the emotion it evokes. "I want the viewer to feel what I felt when I was there," she said. "That's what makes it a story." **NOW**

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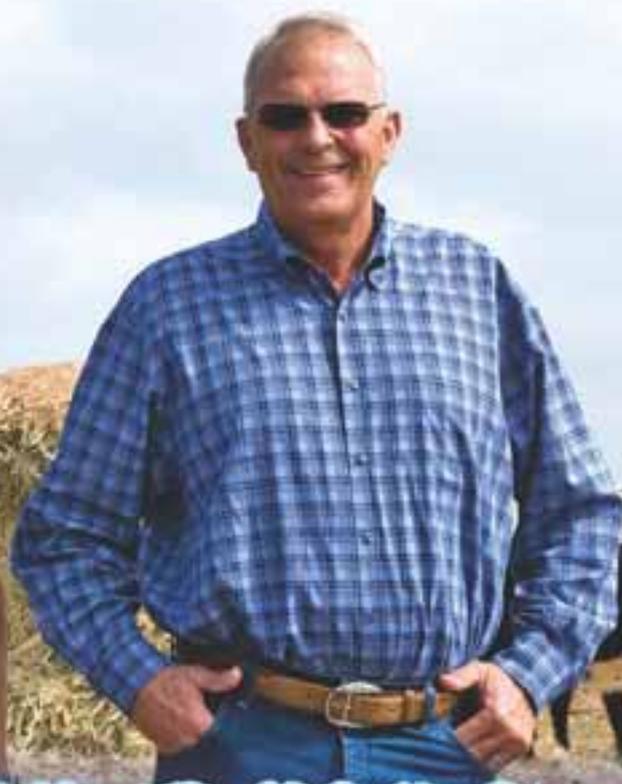
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BUILDING THE HERD

—By Sydni Thomas

Bobby Lide had a long career in the family business. When it came time to figure out how he was going to spend retirement, Bobby decided he finally had enough time to turn his cattle hobby into something more — a passion to possibly work with a brand new breed of cattle. After some soul searching and a lot of research, Bobby began working with the Black Hereford, a newly developed breed of cattle. It took a lot of traveling and determination, but Bobby and his son, Jared, were set on creating the best herd of Black Hereford they could.



“Keep God first, family second and work third. Fun comes after the third.”



The American Black Hereford Association was founded in 1994 by John Gage, an agriculture lawyer from Kansas City, Kansas. John and Frank Felton, a cattle breeder, set out to design a new breed of black cattle and came up with what is currently known as the Black Hereford. Frank, an internationally acclaimed Hereford breeder and pioneer in cattle genetics, began developing the new breed, but it wasn't until 1997 that the first Black Herefords qualified for registration.

The American Black Hereford Association's (ABHA) main responsibility is to keep the breed at top quality by registering all Black Herefords and Black Hereford seed stock. They also keep a record of pedigrees in the Black Hereford Herdbook. The Black Herefords received breed designation from the National Association of Animal breeders in 2003. "All of our Black Herefords are registered with the ABHA," Bobby said. "When I joined the ABHA there were around 61 members. Now there are over 100."

Essentially, a Black Hereford is a Red Hereford turned black through breeding with a Black Angus. In order to be registered with the ABHA, a Black Hereford must be 62.5 percent registered Hereford blood, black in color and sired by a bull that is registered by the ABHA. A Black Hereford bull bred with a black commercial cow will eliminate the chance of producing a red calf. "All you can hope for is that they stay black," Bobby stated. "Most of the time they do. If you put a Black Hereford bull with any cow, the calf will be black."

To increase their herd, the father-and-son team took a trip to market. It was eye-opening to say the least. The facts they learned that day gave them the encouragement they needed to continue working with the Black

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Hereford. Bobby's goal has also become Jared's goal. According to the ABHA, Red Herefords and calves usually sell at a five to 15 percent per pound discount, lower in price per head than cattle that are black. But it's not the increased price that keeps Bobby and Jared moving forward; it's the legacy they are hoping to leave behind for generations to come. "We want people to recognize the Black Hereford as easily as they recognize the Black Angus. Hopefully, the Black Hereford can benefit from our work."

In February 2010, Bobby attended an association sale in Leavenworth, Kansas. It seemed as if nobody wanted to part with more than a few of their Black Herefords at a time, since the breed was still fairly new. "Most of us were trying to build our herds and maintain the quality of the breed," Bobby explained.

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Not long after his trip to Leavenworth, Bobby began traveling the country to continue growing his herd. Purchasing one or two at a time, Bobby was able to get enough cattle to start reproducing his own Black Herefords. His base herd came from California, Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas and Texas, and has now grown to include 200 females.

“The Black Hereford sounded great to us because it was a new breed, and we wanted to help make an impact on the cattle industry, too,” Bobby said. “After making our decision to begin building this new breed of cattle, we soon realized they weren’t that easy to find.” Literally, Bobby and Jared traveled all over the United States putting their herd together. While building a herd, the bond between father and son also grew.

Having worked alongside his family most of his life, Bobby wanted to share that same experience with Jared. Thinking about the future generations of Lides, Bobby and Jared took on this venture in hopes of providing a legacy. Getting on board early with a new breed of cattle wasn’t something new to Bobby. He’s worked with his family for most of his life, even during the years his own father raised Simbras.

People might wonder how Bobby feels about working with his own son. “Jared sometimes sees things differently than I do, and I always like to see a different side of things,” Bobby said. “There’s a special bond that is built between men who work together. I have been so fortunate in my life to have been able to work with my grandfather, father, father-in-law, brother and now my son. God has truly blessed our family.”

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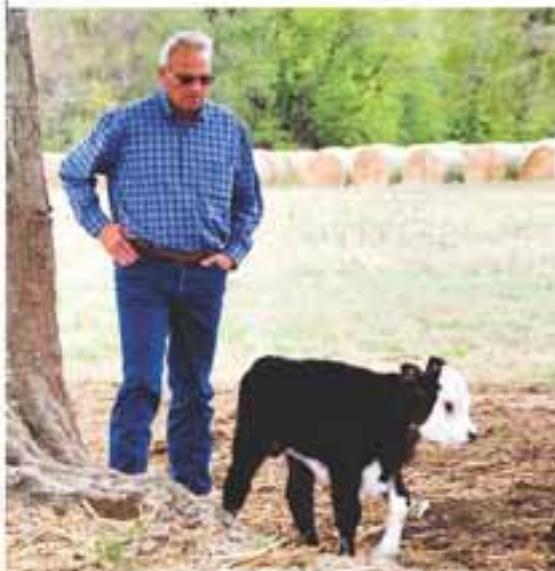


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When he was 5 years old, Bobby remembers the money his parents gave him to purchase his first calf. This calf inspired the passion for cattle, ranching and breeding that Bobby has had a hand in all his adult life. Jared, following in his father's footsteps, earned the money to purchase his first calf by raising quail and working in the family's tank business during the summer months.

Bobby knows without a doubt he wouldn't be able to pursue his passion without the understanding he receives from his wife, and Jared's mother, Deana. "Deana is like all good women," Bobby said. "She is what makes Jared and I what we are – good men. Behind every good man or good son is a good woman. She supports us in all the decisions we make, and she always has good ideas."



Bobby took a chance by bringing the Black Hereford breed to the area. Now more and more cattle ranchers are working with the breed. It is currently the fastest growing breed of cattle in America. While Bobby hopes to one day leave his family with the best Black Hereford herd in the world, he also wants to leave them with a good name they can be proud to take on as theirs.

"The most important thing I want to leave my children is something to remember," Bobby said. "Keep God first, family second and work third. Fun comes after the third. It would be nice for my children to say, 'Dad had a big part in the making of this great breed of cattle.'" That alone is a legacy any father would be proud to leave behind. **NOW**

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Lancaster Sales Associate Sheryl Ariens with Chris Turturro; a home in progress and completed UBH homes.



Homemade Just For You

We are building on a firm foundation.

— By Sandra Strong

What first began in 1958 as a family-owned lumber yard has, over the years, grown into a national company that believes customer service has been the key to their continued success. "Our clients are able to design and build the perfect home while staying comfortably within a reasonable budget. 'Custom' doesn't mean 'expensive' at UBH," said Chris Turturro, regional sales manager who oversees most of Texas, including Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio and all areas in and around Ellis County. "One of my clients used a napkin to draw his dream home, and we were able to build it!"

As cliché as it may sound, United-Bilt Homes (UBH) offers "one-stop shopping" when it comes to the business of custom home building. United-Bilt Homes offers 100-percent financing

and the option of no money down with approved credit. Finding a construction loan is the most difficult piece of the puzzle when building a new home, and UBH provides this at no cost to the client. "Customers can use one of the 70 plans we have available," Chris said, "or they can bring their own plans to the table. We are able to modify our plans to fit the needs and wants of the customer. We're able to expand one room or decrease the area in another."

Company architects are also on hand to give advice, always mindful to give the client the most for their dollar. "Each person is different," Chris said, adding, "It all boils down to the client's financial strength." Chris also mentioned the library of floor plans built during the past 10 years. "Customers can also pull

from a plethora of homes, as well as the basic ones we always have on file. The choices are endless."

United-Bilt Homes really does offer "all a customer needs" when building the custom home of their dreams. The lumber company where it all began 53 years ago still supplies the lumber. Every door, window and shingle is shipped to the jobsite via the lumberyard in Shreveport. "It's amazing," Chris admitted. "Every item needed to build a home is loaded in reverse order."

The company also serves as the financial lending institute, thanks to the owner, Donald R. Pitts and his sons, Donnie and Darrin, who strongly believe in keeping it all in one place. They also offer the insurance needed with a new home. "United-Bilt Homes is family-owned and family-financed," Chris added. "When they say they build from the ground up, they aren't kidding."

The "finish and save program," although unique, has proven to be quite popular with many of UBH's clients. "This program allows customers the option to participate in building their

"We finance with our own money, so we are able to allow, and even encourage, families to 'finish and save.' Thousands of dollars can be saved ..."

home," Chris explained. "We finance with our own money, so we are able to allow, and even encourage, families to 'finish and save.' Thousands of dollars can be saved when customers take advantage of finishing out their home themselves." Chris can build your dream home, but it may take some of your own elbow grease and sweat equity to bring that dream to fruition.

United-Bilt Homes has proven to be a great match for Chris because of the personal choices he's made in his own life. "Each staff meeting begins with the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem and a prayer in Jesus' name," Chris shared. "It's these core values of honesty and pride in workmanship that are passed down to our employees and then to the customers." **NOW**



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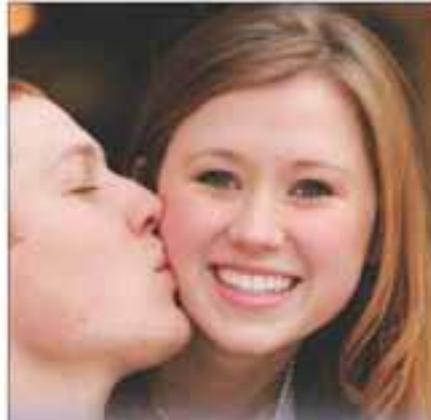


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Hope Clinic CEO Dr. Mackie Owens receives a check from Magnablend CEO Scott Pendery.



Donna Christopher, Eloy Ortiz and Pearl Cerdas work the concession stand for the opening YMCA Tackle Football game.



Bettye Sharp and Cecil Wilkins are crowned King and Queen at the Retirement Living Community.



The United Way of East Ellis County announces its new board. From left: Incoming Chairman Clint Almand, Kevin Chester, Paula Baucum, Outgoing Chairman Dr. Harold Nolte and Kelly Pacleb.

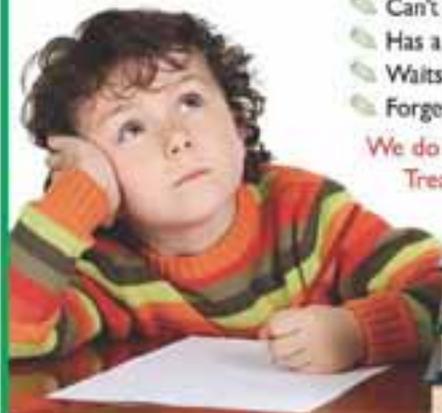


Faith Family Academy's PE teacher, Karen Sorrels, working out at the YMCA.

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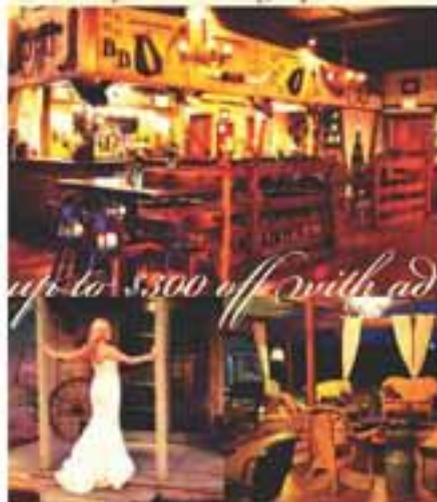
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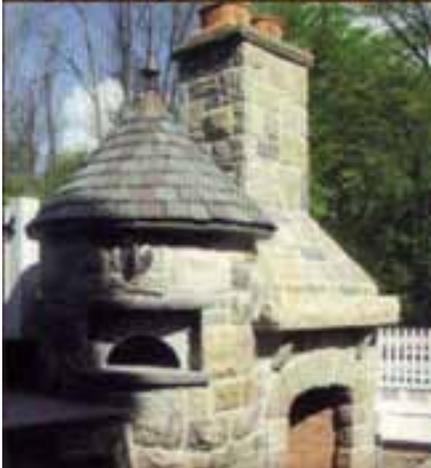


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Blue for Christmas

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Elvis Presley's rendition of "Blue Christmas" touches many people in December. It may seem to be an anomaly to think of being blue or depressed when everything external overflows with color, lights and good cheer, but some people look at the red and green lights and still feel blue. They suffer from a very real disorder called seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

SAD is a depression disorder that is sometimes called the winter blues. It makes its appearance usually in the fall and lasts through the winter. A rare form of SAD can occur in the summer. This discussion is for the winter version. People who have this are miserable and exhibit many symptoms that interfere with the quality of their lives. SAD may be affected by geographical location according to the availability of light in that region. For example, it is estimated that 1 percent of Floridians are affected whereas 10 percent of residents in Alaska are affected.

Some of the symptoms are a feeling of depression, hopelessness, a tendency to eat too much that results in weight gain, lethargy, a decreased interest in doing activities previously enjoyed and increasing isolation from others. It is important that a physician diagnose this disorder because the symptoms may point to a different psychiatric problem. However, if SAD is the disorder, appropriate treatment is available. The cause is unknown but the correlation between the availability of sunlight and timing of the season cannot be ignored.

Since lack of sunlight may trigger this, it makes sense to utilize light therapy to increase exposure to light. Light therapy, sometimes called phototherapy or bright light therapy is the exposure of affected persons to a special lamp under controlled situations to mimic sunlight. During treatment, you merely sit under a lamp for a time period determined by your health care professional once or twice a day. Eyes are open with the body turned toward the light.



Common thought supports the belief that light triggers chemicals in the brain that affect a person's mood and makes them feel better by lessening the symptoms of SAD. In some cases, antidepressants are prescribed.

If you think you are susceptible to seasonal depression and are having thoughts of suicide, please seek help immediately. Even if thoughts of suicide are not an issue with you, do not sit alone in a darkened room feeling blue. There is light and help a phone call away. **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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Happy New Year*



A Gardener's Christmas List

—By Nancy Fenton

Is it really Christmas again? After our dry, long summer, it seemed the cool would never come. I'm still trying to get my spring bulbs in the ground! If yours are not in yet, don't fear. There is still a bit of time left. The bulbs may come up a bit sooner and bloom a bit smaller this year, but they will make it and store up food for next year. Come to think about it, a gift certificate for several hours of gardening help would be a perfect gift for me!

As for the other gardeners in your life, try a pair of "rose gloves" (heavy duty gloves with long sleeves that protect the arms from thorns.) A new hoe or rake can make a smile on a gardener's face. One of my favorite gifts was a conveyor belt type Loadmaster for moving mulch and other large loads from our pickup to the ground or wheelbarrow. No more shoveling from one place to another. I can unload a full pickup of compost or mulch in less than an hour by myself!

The tarp is always a winner to pull around weeds, clippings, etc., as is a wheelbarrow for heavier things. (Don't use metal please! The rust doesn't do a thing for our plants). A rain gauge, clippers, never-dull scissors and various whetstones are all great stocking stuffers. One of the best gift certificates for central



Texas would be tickets to the Dallas Blooms at the Dallas Arboretum in April.

If you are the gardener, do what I have been known to do. Pull out the advertising pages with items you want, circle them and leave them on someone's desk! It usually works well, especially for ensuring the right-sized item gets purchased. **NOW**

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Universal Life or Whole Life? You have choices in life.

— *By Adam Rope*

When looking for a new car, you have choices between numerous models, manufacturers and colors. The same can be said for life insurance. Your selection will depend on a number of factors, but there is more than likely an option to fit your needs.

Two life insurance products you may consider are Universal Life and Whole Life. Each offers the protection of a death benefit that will pass along to your loved ones tax-free. But beyond that, each policy also allows for tax-deferred growth over your lifetime.

The cash value of these policies can be an important source of supplemental cash for a variety of needs. While any withdrawals will reduce the cash value or death benefit of your policy and should be done only after careful consideration, there are no restrictions on how proceeds may be used. But, before you start thinking these products are the same, you will find some important differences between them. Any comparisons between Universal and Whole Life policies should include discussions about premium and benefits.

The premiums for each policy differ in that Whole Life offers a premium amount that will not change throughout your lifetime. A Universal Life premium has some flexibility after an initial minimum amount is paid. Universal Life premiums can change to fit various financial situations, but the policy does not have the same premium guarantees found in a Whole Life policy.

A Universal Life policy offers a death benefit that may be



increased or decreased depending on your needs. The death benefit of a Whole Life policy is fixed and guaranteed as long as premiums are paid, so you won't need to worry about the death benefit for your beneficiaries.

Whether you are looking for the flexibility of a Universal Life policy or the guarantees offered by Whole Life, you have options to suit your needs. Talk to your insurance agent to find a policy with the features you want. **NOW**

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December 2, 3

Waxahachie Junior Service League Christmas Market and Preview Party: **Friday**, 6:00-9:00 p.m., **Saturday**, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Preview party will feature an exclusive shopping experience that includes cocktails, refreshments, live entertainment and a silent auction. Friday admission: \$25 and is good for Saturday also. Saturday's market will feature unique gifts, photos with Santa, door prizes and more. WJSL cookbooks will also be available for purchase. Saturday only admission: \$5, children 10 and under are free. For more information, visit www.waxahachiejls.org.

December 2-4 and 9-11

Bethlehem Revisited: 6:00-9:00 p.m., 402 North College Street. Free admission, but donations are welcome. For more information, call (972) 937-2390.

December 3

Free Christmas Pancake Breakfast: 8:00-10:00 a.m., 315 North Rogers Street. Hosted by First Step Mother's Day Out of First Baptist Church. Call (972) 937-1940 for more information.

Annual Model Railroad Open House: noon-5:00 p.m., home of Bob and Freda Brand, 2509 Lake Ridge Road, Glenn Heights. Bring the family for a free tour of this extensive model train collection. For more details, call (972) 230-8101.

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Candlelight Home Tour: 2:00-8:00 p.m., \$15 per weekend, under 12 free. For more information and home locations, call (972) 937-2390.

December 10

Santa Claus visits Sims Library: 10:30-11:30 a.m. For ages 2-10.

December 13

Girl Scouts Volunteer Meeting: 7:00-8:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 505 West Marvin Avenue. For more information, visit joinus@gssu251.org, www.gssu251.org or www.facebook.com/gssu251.

December 15-17

Waxahachie Community Theatre presents *You Better Watch Out*: **Thursday and Friday** at 7:30 p.m., **Saturday matinee** at 2:30 p.m., McCafferty Hall on the campus of Southwestern Assemblies of God University. Doors will open 30 minutes prior to each performance. Advance tickets are \$8 per person, ages 5-plus. Seating is limited and the venue is not wheelchair accessible. For more information, visit www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com or call the box office at (972) 646-1050.

December 19-30

WISD Winter Break

December 21

It's A Party: 4:00-5:00 p.m., Sims Library. Celebrate the holidays with a Grinch Gift Exchange. To participate you need to bring a wrapped gift valued at \$3-\$5. For ages 11-18.

December 25

Merry Christmas!

Ongoing:

Third Wednesdays

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club. Contact Kay at (972) 935-2054 or Margaret at (972) 937-1016 for reservations. Cost is \$13.

Thursdays

Celebrate Recovery: 7:00 p.m. at 408 Water Street, Waxahachie. The purpose is to help people live free from addiction, compulsive or dysfunctional behavior. Contact Brandon Jones at (214) 949-5725 or Brandon@thefrontiercommunity.org.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to sskoda.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.

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In The Kitchen With Melissa Graham

— *By Sandra Strong*

Melissa Graham grew up yearning to be like her grandmother when it came to preparing home-cooked meals for her own family. It took a few "trial and error" dishes to master the art of cooking. "The first gravy I made was a disaster," she laughed. "It was inedible." Melissa makes recipes her own way by adding a little of this and leaving out a little of that, changing the ingredients to match her taste.

Her two children prefer home-cooked meals to fast food. "I taught my daughter to cook. At the age of 9, her spaghetti was perfect, and now at 16 she loves to bake," Melissa explained. "My son never wanted to learn to cook. He decided he was going to find a woman who cooked for him." **NOW**

Hamburger Steak

- 2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- Seasoned salt, to taste
- 2 10.5-oz. cans cream of mushroom soup

1. In large mixing bowl, combine ground beef, onion, eggs, ketchup and seasoned salt. Form into patties.
2. In skillet on medium high to high heat, sear both sides of beef patties. Place patties in casserole dish.
3. Spoon soup straight from cans onto each patty. Cover with foil and place in 325 F. oven for 30 minutes.
4. Remove from oven. Meat juices and soup

will be separated. Remove patties.

5. Stir mixture to make "gravy," replace patties, return foil cover and cook for about 10 more minutes. Serve with rice or mashed potatoes.

Beef Enchiladas

- 1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 large green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups sour cream
- 2 cups Mexican blend cheese, grated
- 1 15-oz. can enchilada sauce
- 2 15-oz. cans Wolf brand chili, without beans
- 3/4 cup water
- 1 pkg. medium flour tortillas
- 3-4 cups cheddar cheese, grated

1. Brown ground beef, bell pepper and onion. Drain. Stir in sour cream and Mexican blend cheese; set aside.
2. Heat enchilada sauce, chili and water in large skillet. Dip flour tortilla in sauce mixture, spread meat mixture down the middle, roll and place in casserole dish, continuing until dish is full.
3. Pour remaining sauce mixture over enchiladas; cover with cheddar cheese. Place in 350 F oven for about 20 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Oatmeal Cake

Cake:

- 1 1/2 cups boiling water
- 1 cup oats
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten

Topping:

- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 6 Tbsp. butter
- 1/4 tsp. vanilla
- 1/4 cup Eagle Brand condensed milk
- 1 cup shredded coconut

1. For cake: Heat oven to 350 F. Mix boiling water and oats; set aside for at least 5 minutes. Mix all dry ingredients in large bowl.
2. Stir butter and eggs into bowl with oats; add mixed dry ingredients, stirring well. Pour into greased, floured cake pan.
3. Bake for 35 minutes or until inserted toothpick comes out clean.
4. For topping: Stir all ingredients, except coconut, in saucepan over low heat until melted. Remove from heat. Stir in coconut. Spread over cake and place in oven on broil until topping turns a golden brown.

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