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# Midlothian NOW

## Editor's Note

*Hello, Midlothian!*

This month celebrates potential and possibilities. Valentine's Day is looming. This year try something different, instead of the usual cards, candy and flowers. Put some action behind your exclamations of love. Husbands, take that "honey do" list that never seems to get done, and do a couple of tasks on it for Valentine's Day. Wives, give your husband one-day free of kvetching. Vow to encourage and support him for the entire 24 hours. The children can give their parents one day of peace and cooperation. Have you not called your grandparents in a while? This is the perfect day to catch up with a chat. Who knows, all of this may work out so well that you will want to continue spreading the love long after the 14th!

This is also Black History Month. We honor Donice Arrington, a dedicated occupational therapist who loves and trains students to their best potential.

Betty Tryon  
MidlothianNOW Editor



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**Triwanna Fisher, M.D.** is board certified in family medicine and received her medical degree from Texas Tech University Health Sciences



Center School of Medicine in Lubbock. She completed her residency at John Peter Smith Hospital's family medicine residency program in Fort Worth. Dr. Fisher is interested in the management of acute and chronic disease, women's health, dermatology procedures, adult and pediatric medicine. Dr. Fisher enjoys reading, watching movies, and traveling internationally.

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# Mission Possible

— By Betty Tryon

**“Occupational therapy is fine motor skills, writing and being able to conduct activities of daily living such as dressing. “**

The preschool youngster took one look at his therapist, fled under the table, held onto it and yelled as if his life depended upon it. Donice Arrington, occupational therapist, gently laughed as she recalled the scene. “That preschool student has since graduated. He didn’t want to go with me [to therapy] because I made him work. I told him at his graduation that he has come a long way from being under the table and screaming that he didn’t want to go with me. I still laugh about things that happened from years ago,” she said.

Donice coordinates occupational and physical therapy and assistive technology in the Midlothian Independent School District (MISD). She explained, “In the 1970s, children with special needs started coming to the schools. This came from the idea that every child is entitled to a free and appropriate education. The schools did not know how to manage [special needs children] and help them learn; so, the districts provided special education students with occupational and physical therapy.”

Donice does all the assessments for occupational therapy



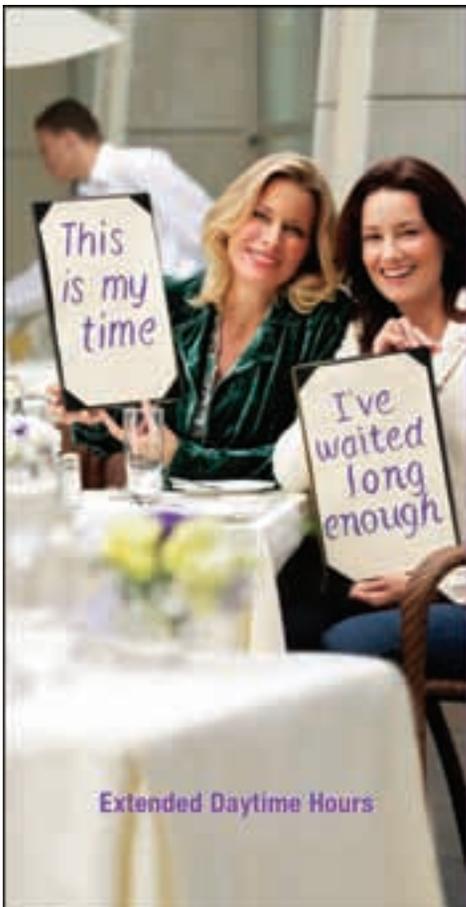
and coordinates physical therapy. She said, “Occupational therapy is fine motor skills, writing and being able to conduct activities of daily living such as dressing. This is an educational model — not a clinical one. If we can strengthen their hand a bit so they can hold a pencil, it helps in the classroom. A lot of what we do is in conjunction with the teacher. Our goals are integrated with the teacher. We make different modifications to the equipment used in the classroom. We help with visual perception problems because sometimes it is a perceptual issue [hindering] if a student can read and write.” Some of the modifications Donice refers to allow the students access to technology. It might be using different types of keyboards, providing them with communication devices or adapting computers with switches. These are part of her responsibilities

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in assistive technology.

According to Donice, there are approximately 800 students in MISD who need help. She added, "Some of them just need resource help. A lot of them I don't see. I see 30 to 40 students on a regular basis. Their need prevents them from learning appropriately in the classroom, so we try to lessen the impact of that handicap on their learning ability." Progress comes slowly, but the enthusiasm remains the same. Donice's assistant was helping a student write his letters. He finally was able to painstakingly make the letter E and



**“Their need prevents them from learning appropriately in the classroom, so we try to lessen the impact of that handicap on their learning ability.”**

proudly exclaimed, "I made an E!" Donice shared, "It is a little thing for us, but a huge milestone for them."

Donice holds the unique position of being able to watch these students from the time they first enter the school system and witness every tiny step along the way to graduation. She explained, "We start as early as preschool. We start seeing them there with multiple disabilities. At that point, [some] are not using their hands and, on a developmental scale, they are severely

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**Some of the modifications Donice refers to allow the students access to technology.**



One of Donice's most rewarding moments is seeing the children achieve, even in the face of some skepticism from others. "Some people think that a lot of the kids are unable to learn," she said. "It is so rewarding to see the light come on, to realize that they are doing something. I love it when we



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try something new and they catch on. That is the rewarding part. With some of the kids who can't walk or can't move, we are asked why we are educating them. You need to look 10 years down the road. They might always need care, but if what they learn in school can make it possible that one less person is needed to help them, then that is



**“I want the community to know the benefits in this school district and all the blessings here.”**

our job. The other end of the spectrum is to get them to where they can make choices, help them be productive and to go on to college. They are entitled to an education, and we need to see how productive we can make them.

“I want the community to know the benefits in this school district and all the blessings here. The resources and especially the personnel are fantastic. I've worked in a lot of school districts and the administrative support here is very good,” Donice said. All of these benefits enable Donice and her team to give the students the best assistance toward their future. **NOW**

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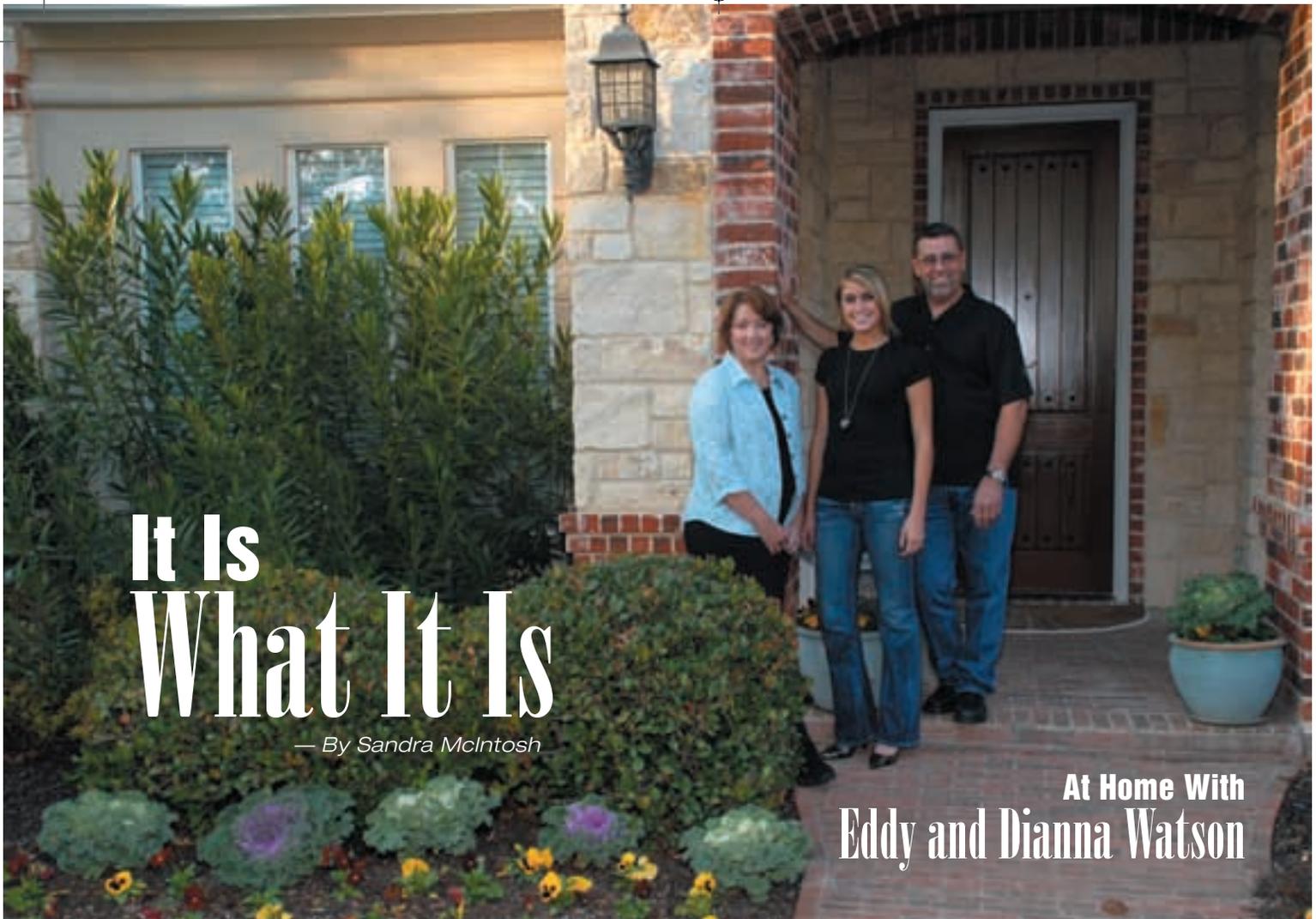
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# It Is What It Is

— By Sandra McIntosh

## At Home With Eddy and Dianna Watson

Lots of memories accumulate during 30 years of marriage — just ask Eddy and Dianna Watson. They will no doubt tell you the very best memories are the ones which include the births of their three children, Miranda, Eddy Ray and Christa, as well as the birth of their one grandchild, Karissa. Times shared with family and friends come to mind. “We have several gatherings throughout the year,” Eddy said, referring to the Fourth of July and Labor Day when all the nieces and nephews come for a swim. “We have a very big family.”

The couple has resided in the Midlothian area for more than 20 years. They moved in with Dianna’s parents on Montgomery Road in 1984, living with them until deciding to build their own home. “We built our house on Montgomery Road in 1987,” Dianna remembered, “and moved in on December 21.” Eddy laughed as the memory of moving a completely decorated Christmas tree came to mind. Unfortunately, this same house brought them the memories that changed their lives forever. “The home



caught on fire in the early morning hours of December 26, 1995," Eddy noted. "It burned to the ground in a matter of minutes."

Once again, the family moved in with Dianna's parents while they rebuilt their home. Sometime later when deciding to downsize, they drew up plans for a home on an 18-acre lot before changing their minds and deciding on the one-acre lot in the Twin Creeks addition, now home to their four-bedroom, three-bath Hill Country-inspired home. Before the house could be constructed, the lot had to be cleared, and several adjustments



had to be made to the plans. "It took us three months to clean off the lot and decide what we were going to do," Eddy explained. "We kept twisting and adjusting the plans."

House placement was a tedious undertaking, due in large part to the shape of the lot itself and the couple's desire to keep as many trees as possible. In fact, it is what makes the home so unique. "It's shaped like a big triangle," Dianna said. "The house goes in on a 90-degree angle and expands to a 45-degree angle in the back," Eddy added. The home may look small to those passing by, but looks can often be deceiving.

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There is also great fallacy in the belief that a married couple cannot design, build and decorate a home together without anger and impending separation. “We love working together,” Dianna beamed. “He’s the builder; I’m the decorator.” For this well-matched team, it seems to have all worked out perfectly.

When designing the interior, the couple wasted no time in installing what was most important — a fireproof safe. They learned through experience what material items meant the most to them as parents and grandparents. “Photos, CDs and DVDs can’t be replaced after a fire,” Dianna sorrowfully shared. “They hold precious memories that can never be retrieved or replaced.” The safe is located in the home office and it is filled with something more precious than silver and gold. “It’s home to all the photographs,” Dianna said, as

Eddy quickly interjected, “She has been taking, downloading and saving photos, only to put them in the safe.” If the couple could suggest one thing it would be for all homeowners to have a fireproof safe, as well as smoke alarms.

The soft shades of khaki, deep green and rich burgundy Dianna chose when decorating the home’s interior add warmth, while the built-ins and recessed walls allow plenty of room for the more recent family photographs and keepsakes they have accumulated since losing almost everything in the fire. The curio cabinet in the open hall between the living room and kitchen is home to the few items that were salvaged. A blue porcelain bell that Dianna’s grandmother had given her was masterfully pieced back together. It takes its rightful place in the cabinet alongside newer items such as a pair of

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Madame Alexander Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls and heirloom items which include a baby rattle Eddy's mom gifted him with following the fire. "My father, Weldon Ray Watson, carved it when I was a baby," he said.

Another antique printer's drawer was found to replace the one burned in the fire. It now hangs above the curio cabinet. Since moving to the new home in October of 2003, the couple

has managed to fill it to near capacity. "One small purple bird was all that was left of my original drawer after the fire," Dianna said, making sure to point it out so it would not be missed or forgotten.

One other collection which means a great deal to the couple is found above the kitchen cabinetry. "I've been collecting unique birdhouses for a while now," Dianna confessed, as

Eddy pointed to one that was a bit more rustic than all the others. "My dad made that log cabin birdhouse from sticks," he said, fondly remembering the hands that crafted it. "My father was one of the two people who drowned in the Ovilla flood in 2004, so these small things mean the world to me."



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and dining areas, a game room, an Austin stone fireplace which takes up an entire wall and a backyard oasis, which is home to many family volleyball games. The oversized patio with its tri-leveled backyard is a favorite spot year-round. "The backyard started out plain," Eddy said, "and then it took on a life of its own." There is the outdoor fireplace, offering warmth on cool evenings; the cabana, where Eddy plays the cook at every party and a lounging pool surrounded by lots and lots of redwood decking.





Eddy and Dianna left no stone unturned or untuned. “The stereo system is wired to the backyard,” Eddy laughed, as he mentioned some of the stones were actually weatherproof speakers. “I brought surround sound outdoors.” With such a large family, the volume levels differ considerably. Eddy’s idea allows the younger generation to listen with the volume on high, while the older generation has the option to listen at a softer level as they relax on the patio.

Decorative signs are hung and placed throughout the home, both inside and out. They welcome guests to the home, while offering peace, joy and abundance. The newest one pretty much puts their life into a five-word nutshell, as it reads: “It Is What It Is.” In fact, this has become the mantra for Eddy and Dianna. There is no need to dwell on the past when such a wonderful future with family, friends and Karissa lie ahead. **NOW**



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# Comfort *in* Service

— By Betty Tryon

Quilts evoke visions of home, comfort and security. When you join the military, for a time, you say goodbye to all familiar things. Anything that brings back good memories and a sense of stability are greatly welcomed. A simple quilt can do this. Grace Kelley, a member of the Duncanville Peacemakers Quilting Club, joins her fellow members in donating completed quilts to members in the military at Fort Hood Army Base in Texas. Grace said, “Our quilting club has been giving quilts to Fort Hood for about two to three years. At the Veteran’s Hospital, we make lap robes for the patient. We make them with ties, so that the robe can be tied to the chairs. The nurses say it helps preserve their dignity.”

The quilting club meets in the Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Duncanville. The church allows them the use of their facilities in return for them performing a service project. Grace explained, “When someone presented the idea of sending quilts to soldiers, it sounded like something we would really like to do. The individual quilters make the quilts for the servicemen and women. Our club time is a social time for



quilters when we bring in our quilts. It’s ‘show-and-tell’ or more like ‘bring-and-brag,’” she said smiling. “When 12 to 15 quilts are completed, we send them to a representative who distributes them to the family at Fort Hood.”

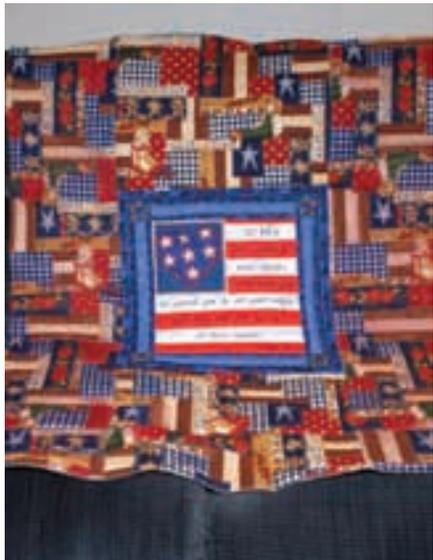
The group has been rewarded many times with expressions of gratitude from the recipients of the quilts. Grace explained, “One lady, who received the one we gave to her father, wrote a letter thanking us. She was so impressed that someone would do that for him. She said her daddy loved it.” Another example of gratefulness came from the gleeful outbursts from one of the women in the military. Grace remembered, “Most of the time, we make quilts using the colors of red, white and blue. For the lady soldiers, we make the quilts to look a little more feminine. When the quilts were given for the service men and women to choose from, this lady soldier pointed out one and said, ‘I want that one,’ and immediately put it around her shoulders and hugged it to herself.”

Witnessing the joy of others from receiving a gift made by hand is something Grace has experienced for many years.

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She explained, "I started quilting when my first grandchild was on the way because I felt every grandmother should know how to quilt." That granddaughter turned 19 this year. Quilting as a hobby became a way for Grace to express her creativity. She said, "I definitely don't sing or play the piano, but I can sew. My favorite thing about quilting is choosing the fabric and designing it." Laughing, she said, "My least favorite thing about quilting is the cutting part. Whenever I travel somewhere, I have to find a quilt shop to buy fabric."

Grace and her husband moved to Midlothian 12 years ago from Fargo, N. Dakota, where she first learned how to quilt. "I made a quilt for every baby and for every wedding in our church. I do all of my work on the sewing machine because life is too short to do it by hand.



When I'm making the quilt, I think about the person I am making it for. I recently attended a wedding in N. Dakota, and I had made a quilt for the bride when she was born. I made her a quilt when she graduated, and now she gets another quilt for her wedding. I made a quilt for one of the girls in Awana, whose family is a mission family in Brazil, and they were returning. I put the names of the team leaders and

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the names of the girls in the group on the white blocks on the quilt. I think the mother was more excited than the girl was! My sister is a cake decorator. I would look at the wedding cakes so beautifully decorated and, after one cut, it's gone. I would rather spend 20 hours making something that will last 20 years," she said.

Grace has a personal connection to the men and women in our military and in her desire to give comfort to them. She explained, "When you know someone personally, it makes you want to do it. I think that my brother, who was in the Navy and served in Vietnam,



**"My favorite thing about quilting is choosing the fabric and designing it."**

probably would've wanted to have one. I feel like we have a responsibility to these young folks who go over there to give up a year or two of their lives. It's patriotic. I have been given this gift, so you do with it what you can. God has given this ability to me. It makes you feel good to do something for someone. You won't get paid for it, but it is the right thing to do." **NOW**



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**Sports**  
**NOW**

# A Quiet Competitor

— By Betty Tryon

Do not be fooled by Lexa Corbin's calm and steady demeanor, for deep inside her is the heart of a champion. Her dad, Greg, stated, "When she is playing, you get the same expression regardless of what happens in the game. She can make the winning point and still have the same expression." However, Lexa did not need the assistance of expressions to become a winner. Playing beach volleyball in 2008, she and her teammate, Tatum Mergener, brought home the national championship from Siesta Key, Florida. Lexa belongs to the One 10 Club. The name refers to the 110 percent effort the club encourages from every team member. Beach volleyball is sometimes called sand volleyball because, instead of playing on the traditional court, the game takes place on sand. Beach volleyball qualifies as an Olympic team sport. Lexa said, "I like playing beach volleyball more than court volleyball because the court is smaller and the beach is more fun."

Lexa also plays for the Midlothian Lady Panthers volleyball team for Midlothian High School. The team completed their 2008 season with a second-place finish in District 16-4A. After the two-month school season, Lexa plays club volleyball for five or six months and then beach volleyball. With this rigorous schedule, she plays volleyball year-round. Not only that, she is blessed with a sand volleyball court in her backyard. Greg said, "Many times I would come home and see her hitting the ball." Sometimes the adults join the fun, much to the chagrin of Lexa. She said, "They don't play right and hog the ball." However, it turns out to be good family fun for everyone.



## Sports NOW

To play one particular sport nonstop requires a lot of dedication and love for the game. Lexa said, "The most fun thing in volleyball is hitting and that you can play it for a long time. You can play it in high school, college and then professional." Her mom, Lisa, relayed the information that scholarships will be available for beach volleyball in a couple of years. Her parents understand the importance of scholarships, but stress the importance of playing sports for fun. Greg stated, "I think it is a great idea and a great goal to shoot for scholarships, but what we try to encourage is — whatever it is we are doing — to give 100 percent all the

**"I like playing beach volleyball more than court volleyball because the court is smaller and the beach is more fun."**

time and just see what happens. Don't do it for a scholarship. Just do the best you can today, work hard and see what happens. The most important thing for Lexa is to have fun and stay busy."

Lexa has no problem having fun as she plays the game, but she also enjoys the game's competitiveness. She shared, "I like going high in points and coming back and winning when we've been down. If we lose one game, then I try to do better on the next set. If I tip and get a kill, then I feel better next time." According to Lexa, a tip is "when you barely hit it [the ball] over the net, and a kill is when you hit or tip the ball and the other team can't get it. If they are not in position, you can tell and you can get a kill."

In beach volleyball, the girls play in pairs. One of Lexa's best friends, Tatum, is her partner. The two of them make a great partnership which is visible to

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## Sports NOW

onlookers. Lisa stated, “They really can read each other’s mind. They know what they are going to do. It is really neat to watch them.” Greg joined in with, “If one makes a mistake, they never get down on each other. They are very supportive.” As a team, the two of them learned how to strategize together to win the game. Lexa said, “When the other team is warming up, we would look at who passes the worst and then we hit to them.”

Volleyball has given Lexa an unexpected benefit. She opens up more freely now than before. “I talk more and feel less shy because of volleyball,” she



said. “In school, I talk to my friends a lot more now because I got to know them better.” Lexa explained another benefit to playing a sport in school. It makes her more focused. “If I don’t do my schoolwork, then I don’t get to play,” she stated.

Lexa has also learned the value of perseverance — the discipline of sticking with the hard work to achieve a goal. “I got to be so good because of practice,” she said. “When I first started playing, I knew I was going to like it. Sometimes when we lose and the coach gets upset, we come back and play our game. It gets us even more pumped up. When we play bad, I wish I could redo it.” Her dad added, “When the game is over, you just get up and keep going,” and get up and keep going is what Lexa does best. There are many different types of winners, but Lexa shows us the quiet and determined way to become a champion. **NOW**

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The name David Hyde chose for his business, Hyde's Landscapes for Texas, not only indicates its location — it is the very signature of his business. He explained, "I do designs that are natural. I do not do formal landscapes. I use plants that are adaptable to our area. Many of the big-box stores sell plants that don't do well in our area, and customers don't know this."

David landscaped for 25 years. The first 20 years was part time, as he worked in the wholesale tire business. He stated, "I always had that desire to own my own business. So five years ago, I started a tire business for commercial fleets. I had a customer who asked me to landscape his new home for him. I ended up picking up a few more customers on that same street, and it came back to me. I like to create something very satisfying."

David's introduction to gardening came from his mother who possessed all the skills of a Master Gardener. As his

**"I do designs that are natural. I do not do formal landscapes. I use plants that are adaptable to our area."**

# Gardens

## Naturally

— By Betty Tryon

gardening skills grew in the area of native plants, he began to focus on water conservation. He recalled, "Three years ago, I went into the irrigation system. I went through training and got licensed. The water systems I design are drip irrigation. I choose plants that don't require a lot of water. I am really big on water conservation in the irrigation system, and using plants that are adaptable to our area. With the irrigation systems, I am right out there with the crew making sure it is being set up the way I designed it."

David recognizes that most people do not have as much knowledge as he does about gardening and oftentimes are too busy to landscape. He meets their need by taking the guesswork out of growing plants. He said, "I grow different types of plants on my property to see how drought tolerant they are and what their fertilization needs are. If someone wants to do it themselves, then I am more than happy to come out with a program [and] show them step-by-step how to do it. It is our 'Do It Yourself With Help' program to save money."

David offers a comprehensive set of services which include: lighting, water features, flagstone walkways, patios and decks. He stated, "It is a very inexpensive way to add to the landscape. It all goes hand in hand." Although David offers many services, he is not in the maintenance part of the business, such as

## Business NOW

mowing. He does keep in close contact with his clients. "I encourage customers to let me come out that first spring and show them how to care for their plants with the fertilization and watering needs. I do a lot of educating of the customers and encourage them to conserve. After installing a landscape, I will call the customer two to three months later to see how things are doing. Many of my customers are surprised because they are not used to that," he said. Part of David's instruction to his customers is



to water once a week for a long period of time instead of several times a week for short bursts of time.

For the customer who values having a creatively inspired garden filled with native Texas plants, and who wants to focus on water conservation, Hyde's Landscapes for Texas can meet your needs. He also communicates with the customer in a timely manner. David said, "Many times I am the landscaper who gets the business because I call the customer back. I try to be accessible to them."

For a beautiful lawn made in Texas, call Hyde's Landscapes for Texas at (972) 775-5824 or, you can e-mail him at [Dhyde6307@aol.com](mailto:Dhyde6307@aol.com). **NOW**

## INSPIRING BY EDUCATION

— By Danielle N. Parker



As a fifth grade history teacher at J.A. Vitovsky Elementary, Stacey Johnson is known for her creative and inspirational teaching style that gets her young learners excited about education. Coming from a family of teachers and professors, Stacey was reared with a unique approach to learning. “I didn’t grow up with stories of Cinderella,” she said. “I grew up with stories of the Civil War and Native Americans. Teaching is in my blood.” So after finishing school, Stacey jumped right into the role for which she was destined. “This is my niche,” she enthused. “I like this age group a lot. The students are curious and they are starting to become risk takers. They are still enthusiastic about learning.”

Because she knows this is where she belongs, Stacey finds it easy to get her students involved. “I’m very project based,” she admitted. “We dress up a lot and play games, but it sticks with them. They do read the text, but it’s in preparation for discussion we hold in class, so they’re learning how to communicate their thoughts clearly and intelligently.”

Being reared in a family that made education interesting, Stacey said her goal is to create that same atmosphere for her young pupils. “My dad always made history come alive to me, and that is something that is important to me,” she stated. “If it’s not fun, why do it? And I realized my students are not going to remember it if I don’t make it fun and interactive.”

Striving to create healthy mindsets and a sense of worth among her students, Stacey gives them the opportunity to showcase their newly gained knowledge. “We had a ‘State Bash’ where each student was assigned a state and brought a food item that represented their state,” Stacey recalled. “We then paraded around the school and gave the kids a chance to show off what they had learned.”

In the fall, the fifth-graders also hosted a congressional hearing. Last year, students took a trip to the University of Texas at Austin to learn about the college process. Stacey is constantly working to add a unique twist to the classroom experience, but teaching 10- and 11-year-olds can be tricky. Stacey admitted there are times when there is a communication barrier between her and the students. “Sometimes, the phrases and idioms go right over their head,” she said. “I was explaining how a mentor of mine was helping me write a paper and that ‘he had torn up my paper,’ and I saw this look of horror come across their faces. They could just see the guy literally tearing my paper to shreds. So, I had to explain he was just helping me edit the paper.” Stacey said the classroom is fun because her students know she has a vested interest in their well-being. “Kids love to see that you really want them to do well,” Stacey said. “I strive to build that lifelong passion for learning.” To create this enthusiasm, Stacey begins preparing her students

## Education NOW

for their future right now. "I want them to know who they are and what they want to do," she explained. "So, I do a lot throughout the year to help them have some idea of what they want to do when they grow up. I hope to help them cast that dream. It may change over the next few years, but at least they have a focus and don't have to just wander."

Often calling her students "her kids," Stacey loves being a teacher and cannot think of anything else she would rather do. "I have a master's in educational administration, so one day I could possibly be a principal, but I'm not done teaching yet," she said. "Right now, I am enjoying being a mama to two little girls, with one more on the way, plus being a mama to the other 80 as well."

What keeps her passionate and keeps these fifth-graders hungry to learn? It is the true purpose behind her job. "I know what matters," she stated. "People that go into teaching know it's a calling, and it's about more than a paycheck. It's the little victories sometimes. What we do is going to impact the future in some way. And, hopefully, our kids want to impact the future for the good, because they have the ability and heart to do it."

Stacey also attributes the successes in the classroom to the teachers and staff of Vitovsky and their combined efforts to guide and inspire. "These kids have community around them, not just in our grade level," she said. "This is a neat place to be. Every campus has kids with challenges, but if there is a problem, there is a solution, and we look for solutions."

"World changers" is how Stacey refers to her students because she believes they have the potential to influence and change the human race. "I want my students to know that they're valued, that they matter and they have unique abilities and talent that only they can give to the world," she said. **NOW**



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# Around Town **NOW**



LaRue Miller Elementary raised over \$1,100 for the Walk for Diabetes. The top fundraiser, top left, was Shelby H. J.A. Vitovsky counselor Mrs. Curry, top center, pinned Macayla B. during the Student Council induction ceremony. The Baxter Community Relations Committee, top right, recently greeted new and transfer students to Baxter where they enjoyed muffins and juice. Students and staff at Mt. Peak Elementary, second row center, were all decked out in pink in support of Julie Brooks, third grade teacher and one-year breast cancer survivor. Mt. Peak Student Council teacher Janet Miller and fourth-graders Shane and Trevor, second row right, enjoyed hula-hoops at the Diabetes Walk-a-Thon. Summer B. and friends, third row right, looked for physical or chemical changes when a small, hard crystal created a soft, squishy sphere. Second-graders from Baxter Elementary, bottom right, traveled to Dinosaur World in Glen Rose with their families.



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# Around Town **NOW**



Shady Lakes Ranch & Resort, top left, hosted the December Chamber of Commerce Ambassador's Luncheon during their ribbon cutting ceremony. Students at J.R. Irvin Elementary, top right, constructed 3-D Christmas trees from materials they brought from home. The Vocal Majority, second row left, performed a concert that benefited the Midlothian Masonic Scholarship Foundation. Baxter staff members, third row left, recently created clay ornaments for the Baxter tree that was on display at the Midlothian Conference Center. A ribbon cutting, third row center, was held at Retreat Salon & Spa. Kerri Allred and Kenna Lowman, bottom left, took a break with Jonathan Merchant, one of the soccer team's many fans. Midlothian's JV II soccer team, bottom right, celebrated their victory against Burleson.

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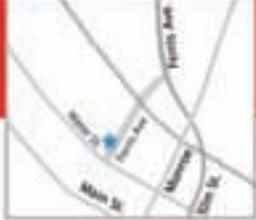


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# Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

## IN THE KITCHEN WITH SHELIA WITSCHORKE

Shelia Witschorke has a strong grasp of the importance of time spent with family. With her oldest son, William, playing on the junior varsity tennis team and her youngest son, Matthew, playing baseball, Shelia and her husband, David, spend many hours proudly watching them make lasting memories. “I enjoy scrap-booking and David is a semiprofessional photographer, so we have some awesome sports and vacation pictures always waiting for me to create a new page or album,” she said.

Shelia has called Midlothian home since she was in second grade. She has valuable memories of her grandmother’s lovingly prepared meals. “My grandmother cooked with recipes in her head and talked the language of ‘a pinch of this or that,’” Shelia remembered. “My mom helped translate those terms for me.”

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

### SOCK IT TO ME CAKE

- 1 pkg. butter golden cake mix
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 4 eggs

#### FILLING:

- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 2 tsp. brown sugar
- 2 tsp. cinnamon

#### ICING/GLAZE:

- 1 cup powdered/confectioners' sugar
- 4-5 Tbsp. milk

Preheat oven to 375 F. In a large bowl, blend cake mix, sour cream, oil, sugar, water and eggs; beat at high speed for 2 minutes. Pour 2/3 of the batter into a greased and floured 10-inch tube or fluted pan. Combine filling ingredients and sprinkle

over the batter in the pan. Spread remaining batter evenly over filling mixture. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes, until cake springs back when touched lightly. Let cool for about an hour then glaze.

### MAMA'S FUDGE

- 3 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup cocoa
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1 stick butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- pecans or walnuts (optional)

Mix sugar and cocoa until well blended; add milk in small amounts, pressing out any lumps in the dry mixture before adding more milk. In a saucepan, bring these ingredients to a rapid boil. Remove from heat; add butter and vanilla. Next, whip and beat mixture by hand until fudge starts

sticking to the sides of the pan and you feel it thicken. You must beat the fudge a very long time, or you can enjoy a hot-fudge Sunday instead. Add nuts (if desired). Pour into a buttered glass dish. Let stand for as long as you can wait, then enjoy!

### GREEN ENCHILADAS

- 2 8-oz. cans green chilies
- 1 12-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 lbs. ground beef
- corn or flour tortillas (your preference)
- 1 white onion, chopped (optional)
- salt, pepper and chili pepper, to taste (Chili powder can be substituted for chili pepper if desired.)
- 1/2 cup sharp cheddar cheese, finely shredded

In a large bowl, blend the chilies, soup and milk together. Brown and drain ground

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# Who's Cooking **NOW**

beef. Add a spoon of beef (and chopped onions, if desired) to the center of each tortilla and roll up. Place in a large glass casserole dish. Season to taste. Pour soup mixture over filled tortillas; cover dish with foil. Bake 20-30 minutes at 375 F. Remove from oven; sprinkle cheese on top of dish and continue baking only until the cheese melts.

## MEXICAN CORN BREAD

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 3 pkgs. corn bread mix
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- milk, per mix instructions
- 1 cup onion, chopped (red is good)
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup Ro-Tel tomatoes or 1 cup picante sauce — your preference

Lightly brown ground beef; drain grease. Mix all ingredients. For best results, bake in a large cast-iron skillet sprayed with nonstick spray or you can just use the same pan in which you browned the beef. Bake for 35-45 minutes at 350 F.

## BROCCOLI SALAD

- 1 head broccoli (cut into small pieces)
- 12 slices crisp bacon, crumbled
- 1 cup green or red seedless grapes, halved
- 1/2 cup sunflower kernels
- 1/2 cup red onion, chopped finely
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. vinegar
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup salad dressing or mayonnaise

Mix together all ingredients except salad dressing. Add dressing at serving time.

## ADDY'S POTATO AND HAM SOUP

- 5 lbs. russet baking potatoes, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 thick slice cooked ham, cut into small pieces
- 1 stick butter
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 1/2 cup sour cream

Place potatoes in a large pot; add enough water to just cover the potatoes (too much water will make the soup too thin). Cover and bring to a boil; uncover and cook over medium-high heat for 20 minutes. Reduce the heat and add the ham and butter. Season with salt and pepper, as desired. Over low heat, add half-and-half and sour cream; keep warm over low heat until serving time.

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# New Credit Scoring Model Set for Release in 2009!

— By Kimberly Abuown

Besieged with lawsuits between its creator, Fair Isaac, and the three largest credit bureaus, the kickoff for the much anticipated new credit scoring system is now slated for early 2009. For consumers, this could mean a minor boost — or bust — for individual credit scores.

In an attempt to fine-tune credit risk evaluation in these challenging times, which creditors and consumers are facing, the developer of FICO scores has made the most significant modification to its mathematical credit score model since its introduction in 1989. The Fair Isaac company estimates that 40 to 50 percent of consumers may see a 20-plus point variation in their score due to the new algorithm — and not necessarily in the positive direction.

The premise behind the revised scoring system is to reduce risk of defaults for creditors through improvement of the accuracy of predictability. Given that delinquencies are at their highest level since 1992, the industry was searching for ways to improve confidence in credit scoring models and their results. FICO 08 is their proposed solution, and Fair Isaac estimates that predictability of default will be improved by up to 15 percent.

Although FICO 08 is geared toward primarily helping creditors, there are some definite improvements for consumers as well, including:

**Authorized Users' Information Still Considered.** Fair Isaac initially said FICO 08 would no longer consider

“authorized users” in their formula, a practice commonly known as “piggybacking.” After a rather large consumer outcry and potential credit fairness issues, they decided some authorized-user information would be included. For some, the fact that it is no longer reported as often is a great positive attribute. Did your spouse get a lot of credit cards and add you as an authorized user, then leave without any way for one person to pay? This would only hurt the primary account holder and not the authorized user.

**Small Collection Accounts Disregarded.** Accounts with debt less than \$100 (must be original amount) are ignored. This is a big plus for individuals who simply had a bad day and forgot to pay off a parking ticket or similar minor debt, but otherwise have good payment history.

**Considers Single Credit Mishaps.** If you only have one major negative issue on your credit report, as opposed to a string of items major and minor, the new model apparently will be more forgiving.

**Amount of Available Credit You Use is Weighted More Heavily.** The changes that are likely to “bite” you include the amount of available credit you are using. With the clampdown in maximum credit limits that many card issuers are implementing carte blanche to consumers, you could see your scores plunge, regardless of whether you carry a balance.

**Having Fewer Open, Active Accounts Hurts Your Score More.** The new scoring formula responds more negatively if

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card users have fewer open, active accounts. Because more credit card issuers are shutting down unused and unprofitable accounts, that boosts the chances of damage to your scores.

Now, more than ever is the time to restore your credit. A credit restoration company will use these new laws to your advantage in restoring your credit and helping you to boost your FICO score.

So what affect will the new scoring model have on you? Time will tell. To quote a very appropriate adage, the only certainty in this life is that there will be change. The bottom line is it is coming, and you should be aware of it and act accordingly. Good luck! **NOW**

*Kimberly Abuown is owner of Above All Credit Solutions based in Midlothian.*

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# Children's Dental Health

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

Is there anything sweeter than the sight of a child with a big smile on his or her face? Even if the smile has a few empty holes, it is still a beautiful thing to behold. If the empty spaces in the mouth are because of the normal growing process — no problem. However, if the empty spaces are because of tooth decay, there is a big problem. Dental care for children starts as soon as that first tooth proudly pushes its way to light. This does not mean parents need to rush their babies to the dentist; it means there is another element to childcare that needs to be addressed.

The American Dental Association recommends dental appointments begin when your child is 1 year old.

In the beginning, a moist washcloth cleans those tiny pearls just fine. When more teeth emerge, switch to a child's toothbrush with soft bristles. Do not use toothpaste until you are confident your child will not swallow it. This usually happens around 2 years of age. Only a very small amount of toothpaste is necessary. Toothbrushes should be replaced every three months. When your child is older, teach them how to floss. Include this as part of the overall dental health regime. Starting this routine when the child is very young habituates them to a lifetime of good health practices.

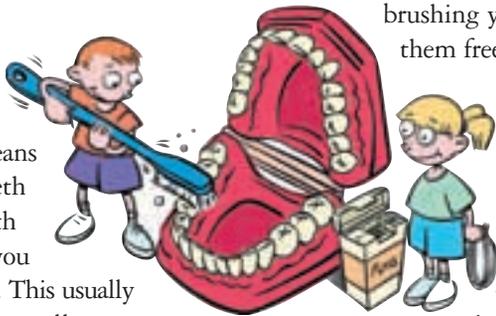
Dental health is important to avoid decay of the teeth. Tooth decay is the most common childhood disease, and the

percentage of children who fall prey to this is on the upswing. Some parents may think that decay in baby teeth is not as important as in permanent teeth because baby teeth will fall out eventually. There are a couple of flaws in this line of thinking. For one, some of the baby teeth will stay with the child for many years. Also, cavities are painful and will influence how your child thinks, behaves and eats during this time.

There is a simple preventative to tooth decay — brushing your teeth (and your children's) to keep them free of plaque. Plaque sticks to teeth and attracts bacteria, which in turn feeds on the sugar in food, turning it into acid. The acid breaks down the tooth enamel causing cavities. Diet plays an important role in dental health. A child's intake of sugar should be monitored and limited. That includes drinks with sugar in them.

Encourage snacks such as fresh vegetables and fruits, cheese and crackers, whole-wheat pretzels, trail mix and popcorn. Giving your child's teeth the attention they deserve can ensure many years of a beautiful smile. **NOW**

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



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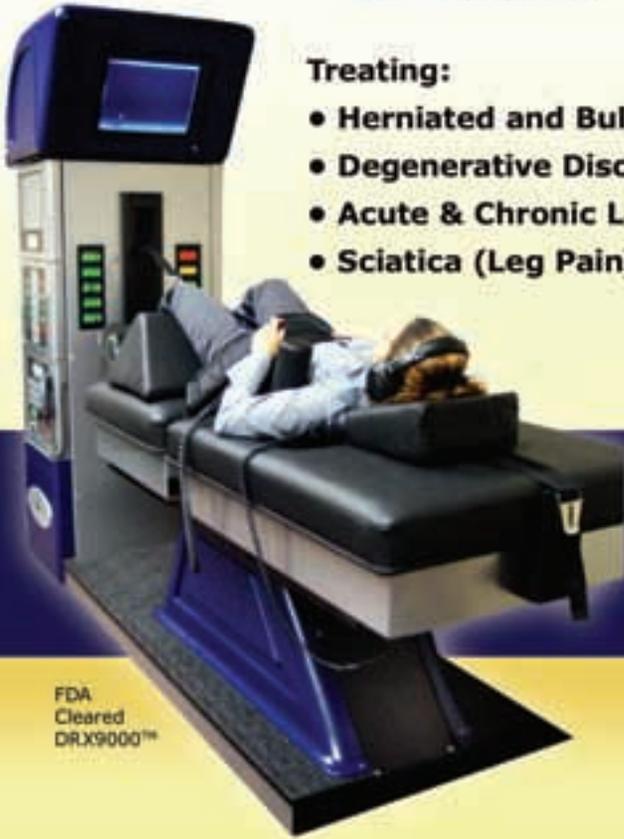
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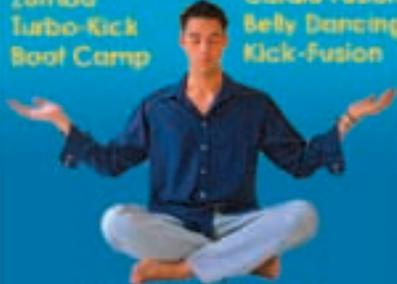
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# February 2009

## Community Calendar

### Every Tuesday

Midlothian Rotary Club meeting: noon, Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th St. (972) 775-7118.

GED Class: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library.

### Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Midlothian City Council meeting: 6:00 p.m., City Hall, 104 West Ave. E.

### First Thursday

Midlothian Area Historical Society meeting: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library. (972) 723-2755.

### First Thursday

ABWA - Empowering Women Express Network monthly meeting: 5:45 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle. RSVP to [www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org](http://www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org).

### First and Third Thursday

Midlothian Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. (972) 775-7118.

### Every Friday

Story Time: 11:00 a.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library.

### February 3

Community Computer Class: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library.

### February 9

Park Board meeting: 6:30 p.m., Development Services Administrative Conference Room, 101 W. Ave. F.

ABWA Great Visions Charter Chapter monthly meeting: 6:30 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. \$15. Members are encouraged to bring co-workers and friends. Guests welcome. RSVP to [abwainfo@ymail.com](mailto:abwainfo@ymail.com) or (972) 723-0017.

### February 10

Midlothian High School Band Concert: 6:30 p.m., MHS auditorium. Contact Larry Doran at the high school for more information.

### February 14 Valentine's Day.

### February 16 President's Day.

Regular School Board meeting: 6:30 p.m., L.A. Mills Administration Building.

### February 17

Community Computer Class: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library.

### February 18

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection monthly luncheon: Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East. \$13. Nursery vouchers available. Reservations preferred, walk-ins welcome. Contact either Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984, or e-mail Kay at [windchime423@yahoo.com](mailto:windchime423@yahoo.com) no later than the Sunday prior to the luncheon.

### February 21

6th Annual College Street Pub Mardi Gras Parade: 3:00 p.m., 210 N. College St., Waxahachie. \$10 entry fee for floats. (972) 938-2062.

### February 24

India Children's Choir performance: 6:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 800 S. Ninth St. Performance is free and open to the public. Contact Keelee Belk at (972) 775-3993.

### February 26

Midlothian High School Band Concert: 6:30 p.m., MHS auditorium. Contact Larry Doran at the high school for more information.

Navarro College 2nd 8-Week Class Registration: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., all campuses.

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

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