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February 2010

**Life Behind
Home Plate**

**Following
Footsteps
of Faith**

**Capturing
Moments in Time**

*At Home With
David and
Paula Hudgins*





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On the Cover

A Simple Moment in Time.

Photo by Rebecca Grogan of Captured Moments by Rebecca.

Editor's Note



Happy Valentine's Day!

Love is most definitely in the air. Cupid has been very busy shooting his little arrows. In fact, one of them caught me by surprise last summer, and I will be getting married later this month. I know, when I said it aloud the first time, it surprised me, too!

February is also the month we celebrate Black History. As you read the main feature, I hope you will see and feel the history of Mt. Horeb Baptist Church just as I did when Judy Smith retold the story. Hers is a story based on walking in her ancestors' footsteps — footsteps based on a strong faith in God.

Whatever your plans for the month may be, I encourage you to say "I love you" to those you love and be thankful for each and every moment you have this side of heaven. Get up, get out and enjoy all life has to offer!

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The members of Mt. Horeb Baptist Church continue to follow the footsteps of their ancestors.

Following Footsteps of Faith

— By Sandra Skoda



Homecoming. What do you think of when you hear that word? Memories of a bonfire before a football game may come to mind or you may recall a 10- or 20-year class reunion. The word, when marking the 150th anniversary of her church, has a much deeper meaning for Judy Smith, lifetime member of Mt. Horeb Baptist Church. “It’s a precious memory time to reflect on those who have passed on throughout the year,” Judy explained. “It’s a time of celebration, too.”



For Judy and others within the church’s core congregation, it is also a time to hear the history of the church, while looking toward its future with faithful anticipation. The early members first began meeting in the late 1850s at the back of a schoolhouse in Reagor Springs. Judy recalls that when she was a child, the dust would bounce up off the dirt floors as she and the other children ran from seat to seat before services began. In the summertime, the windows would be opened wide, allowing the children to drift from the day’s message as they kept their eyes fixed on the cows in the field beyond. The outdoor bathrooms also left a lasting impression in Judy’s mind. “I vividly remember Reagor Springs as a child,” she said. “I remember those homecomings from the past. My mom would give all us children a chicken leg and tell us to go play.” Judy also remembers potluck, where people would go from one car trunk to another filling their plates with home-cooked dishes that are almost nonexistent today.

Moving from a schoolhouse to a church building came in 1859 when a white minister by the name of W. H. Stokes saw a need and felt compelled to fulfill it. “He wanted us

to have a church of our own,” Judy said, “so he started what is still considered to be the first black church in Ellis County.” Some years later, the house of worship moved to its present location in Waxahachie on Kaufman Street.

The church has only had nine pastors in its long history, and Judy has known only three pastors her entire life. The first pastor was one she recalled by name only, Reverend Larkin, because she was still very young when the second pastor, Charles Otis Smith Sr., took his place behind the pulpit. This month marks the second year anniversary of Pastor Smith’s passing. “The last two years have been really difficult for the church,” Judy explained. “We’ve been going through the transition from a pastor most of the congregation has



known their whole lives to a new, younger version of the same man — his grandson, Tedrick Woods.”

Needless to say, the last homecoming celebration in September 2009, proved to be happy, sad and bittersweet; all three feelings rolled into one to make the event emotional, yet deeply meaningful for all those in attendance. “Pastor Smith truly loved the church and his church family,” Judy said, with emotion still evident in her voice. “It was devastating for the congregation. When he passed, it was like losing my father all over again.” But, Judy is quick to mention that Pastor Woods has the same heart as his grandfather and the same sentiments toward his church and congregation. Pastor Woods may very well have some mighty big shoes to fill, but after attending the Southern Bible Institute of Dallas and earning his bachelor’s degree, he is well on his way in taking up exactly

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where his grandfather left off.

It was Pastor Woods who oversaw the latest homecoming celebration at Mt. Horeb Baptist Church. His message that day was eloquent, yet simple. He celebrated the life of his grandfather, a man who he believes lifted the church to new heights, while also speaking of a future filled with hope, faith and



continued growth. People came back home that day to celebrate with family members and friends. They enjoyed the message, the food and most of all the fellowship. "Lot's of tears were cried that day," Judy confessed. "Second- and third-generation children that are now adults took the microphone and shared what homecoming meant to them. It was very moving."

Judy was one of those children turned adult who shared her innermost feelings. She spoke openly about her many blessings and how good God has been to her and her family. "I am thankful to have had parents and grandparents who took me to church and taught me what serving

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God was all about,” she said, repeating the words she spoke that day. She is also thankful to know what it means when the congregation sings the age-old hymn, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

It is said that a church is only as strong as its foundation. If that is true, then Mt. Horeb has staying power based on faith and stability. “Our source of strength is our stability,” Judy stated. “The church family is your leaning post. We all find camaraderie here. There’s a certain wisdom found in all ages. Pastor Woods is so excited about the future, that we, the congregation, can’t help but be excited, too.”

Homecoming celebrations will continue to be the stepping stone of the church. It is during these gatherings that the history of the church is repeated, so the senior members can share and the younger members can grasp how far the church has come, not only in building size, location and amenities, but within Black History itself. “We’ve come this far by faith,” Judy said, “and we’ll move into the future with this same faith. It’s a steady strength and a testament to the core members. We’re a group of people who love God, Mt. Horeb history and family ties. We welcome guests with warm hearts and smiles. We greet guests with the same eyes Jesus used when He met a stranger.”

Judy makes up the third of five generations within her family that have attended, and are still attending, Mt. Horeb Baptist Church. Her grandfather, Ed Mangram, and father, George W. Pointer, took her to church. Now she and her husband, Charlie, are an example to their blended family, which consists of children, Justin, Jessica, Demetrius and Jacoby-Chase and grandson, Armoni. “All the children have a church background,” Judy said. “I followed the footsteps of my parents and grandparents.”

The hardwood floors today provide padding underfoot instead of miniature clouds of dust and the air conditioning allows for the full attention of the younger members when it comes to the Sunday message. “One thing that hasn’t changed and probably never will,” Judy admitted, “is the strong faith we share as a congregation.” They, no doubt, will continue to walk in the footsteps of faith. **NOW**

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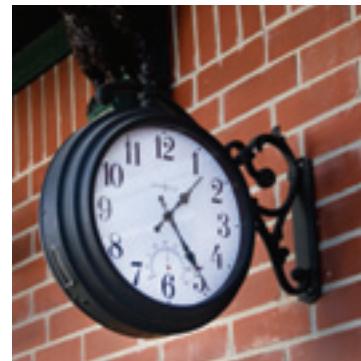
— By Janice C. Johnson

At Home With

David and Paula Hudgins



An old-fashioned railroad station brings to mind vividly human scenes: tearful farewells, joyous reunions, exciting new adventures. David and Paula Hudgins captured that romantic atmosphere when they designed their extraordinary redbrick home to resemble a vintage train station. Outside, carefully authentic details include regulation five-foot eaves all around and a pair of decorative “freight doors” — and then you step inside.



Antique double doors at the front lead into a spacious living area, or is it a railway passenger lounge and about 80 years back in time? A stone fountain stands inside near the entrance, just as in a real train station. Dark brown chair rails and art-deco woodwork and fixtures stand out against off-white walls. The polished brown concrete floor is left open and the furniture, mostly small, is tucked into corners. Two rocking chairs draw together in a window alcove like elderly cousins settling in for a chat. Across the room, an elaborate wooden birdcage stands beside a Queen Anne settee.



A placard above the back door reads "To The Trains." This whimsical touch of realism becomes even more convincing as you look outside: a Pullman railroad car, the kind with private sleeping compartments, sits just beyond the back porch.

The Hudgins' adventure and romance began long before they built their home almost three years ago. "During my teen years in Gilmer, I worked summers cleaning ditches for the fire department," David remembered. "Over time, both my responsibilities and interest in firefighting grew." After high school, he began studying business administration at Tyler Junior College but soon found that his heart was in firefighting rather than business. In 1968, hearing of some openings in the Houston Fire Department, he applied, got hired and left college behind. He now serves as Waxahachie's fire chief.

Paula holds advanced degrees in nursing and works as a psychiatric nurse practitioner. In 1973, she was a busy undergraduate at Houston Baptist University where she worked weekends as an emergency room receptionist. One December day, a paramedic who had brought in a patient told her, "I know the perfect guy for you ..." and set up a blind date for her and David.

What is a first date without some little disaster? Paula remembered, "We went to a steak house, on Westheimer in Houston, and had a very nice meal. Now,

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I don't wear my shoes very often, so, here I was on a blind date, and I had taken my shoes off and kicked them under the table. Then after the meal I had to get under the table to find my shoes." She may have felt flustered, but not David. "He still took me out on a second date!" Paula said. David's persistence paid off. He and Paula married before her senior year in college almost 35 years ago — their union now proudly evident in

the "D&P Railroad" sign on their gate.

David shows the same patience and persistence in developing the "D&P Railroad's" period decor as he did when courting Paula or choosing his career. Complementing carefully-chosen historic furniture, the many architectural features in the home look like they were custom crafted for it. But David has collected them over a period of decades, rescuing turn-of-the-century doors from one

building demolition and wooden brackets or leaded glass windows from another. Everything that is not actually old is chosen for its authentic appearance, from forest green, damask carpet to the claw-foot tub hiding modern whirlpool jets.

David's persistence is even more evident in the Pullman car outside. He has spent years restoring the car to the glamour it originally enjoyed as a private car. He said, "It was built for the Union

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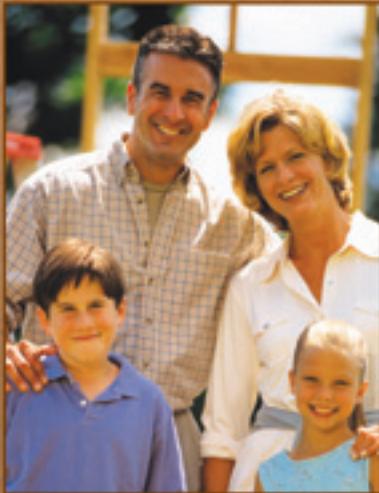
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Pacific Railroad by the Pullman Company. The railroad bought it for their superintendent in the Omaha headquarters. It was the ‘corporate jet’ of its day — his car to travel to different parts of the country with his crew to take care of business.” Besides sleeping berths, a bath with shower, a parlor and office space for the superintendent and his assistant, the car contains its own kitchen and dining room. “The wood-burning stove still works,” David noted. Bit by bit, he has refinished paneling, polished brass, overhauled the plumbing and even bought a set of replica Union Pacific china. He is also adding one modern touch: air-conditioning. This long-term “hobby” will double as a guest house someday.

The extra space will come in handy. “There are no tables in the house – just card tables we can set up if we want,” David explained. “Our thought was, when we get the dining room [in the Pullman] fixed up, if we want to entertain more formally, it will be out there. That’s what I’m looking forward to, is when I’ve gotten to that point.”

Paula does not miss having a dining table. “I like my little kitchen. Everything is right there within reach. I like the stove with the serving [bar] around it.” She saves steps and can enjoy her company while cooking. “The house is kind of small,” David said, “but it’s exactly what we wanted. We didn’t want a big place.”

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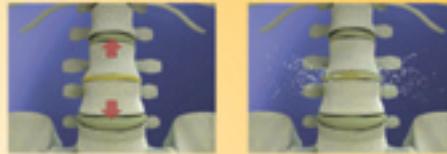
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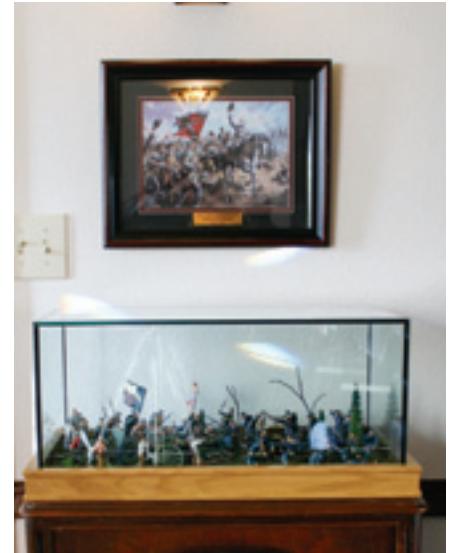
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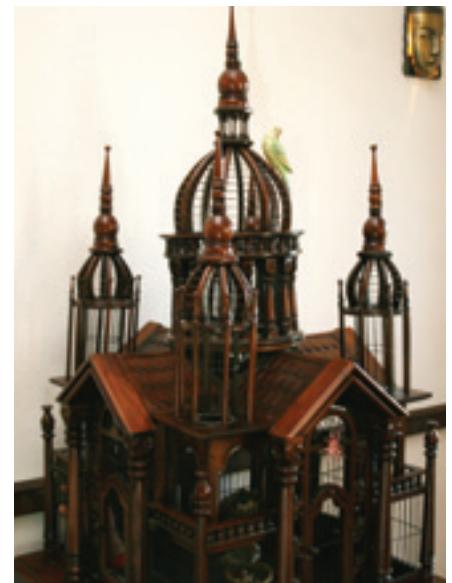
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Paula counted off, "One bedroom, two baths, a study, the kitchen." Their builder had suggested more rooms, but they would not hear of it. Paula elaborated. "I hate housework; here, I don't have a lot of housework."

David likes the great room best. The art depicts Civil War scenes (his other hobby), which adds to the historic feel. A shaft in the high ceiling leads up to a skylight-like tower with different colored windows on all four sides. David loves to relax in the living area and watch the light change with the sun's movement.

Paula is not the railroad buff David is, but both enjoy rail travel. "When our children were growing up, we went on vacation on the Amtrak train," David said. "That was as much of the vacation as wherever we were going." Their tradition is to buy a unique memento of

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each vacation trip. They may be the only couple in Waxahachie who have bobble heads of themselves, for example.

Following their dreams has led the Hudgins off the beaten path, but as

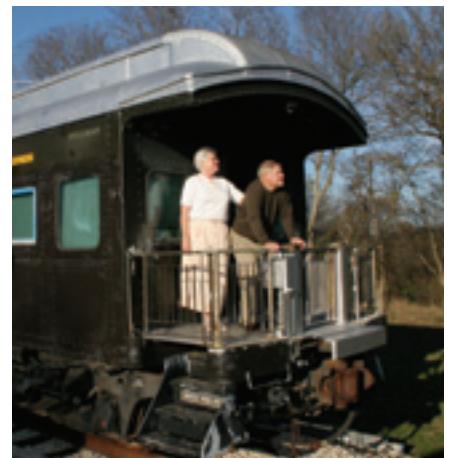


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David said, "Whether we're going to battlegrounds or looking at old homes or plantations, it's not just to be different, but it's something we really like, and we want to capture it if we can." Paula added, "Both of us have real serious jobs, and it's good to get away and have fun. He doesn't bring his job home; I don't bring my job home. We just relax and take it easy together." This house they love to be in is the perfect place for that. **NOW**

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Capturing Moments in Time

— By Sandra Skoda



“Creativity is so important if you want photos that are unique and special.”

Rebecca Grogan started taking photographs when her three children were little. “The kids hated it,” she said, laughing at the memories. “I loved taking pictures of the kids outdoors. They would wear dress clothes to hike up a hill or a mountain just so I could capture the moment in time I envisioned.”

Now, some 30 years later, Rebecca still has the same passion for what she sees through her camera’s viewfinder as she did in those early days. To hear her talk, the passion may have doubled over time. Some changes have also come to pass during her time as a photographer. “My husband, Ray, bought me my first

digital camera about 10 years ago,” she explained, also sure to mention that she did not begin using her new camera immediately. “I’m not a techie person, and I’m not much for change,” she admitted. “Walking around with a small computer in my hand made me nervous. I was afraid I was going to delete photos or touch a wrong button.”

After accidentally exposing several rolls of film, Rebecca made the decision to try out the digital camera. “I admit, I fought the digital process for about six months before learning how to use it,” she added. “The change from film to digital was difficult at first. It just took some time to learn before it finally became comfortable to me.” Rebecca is so glad she gave in to change. “The digital camera makes the editing process so much easier,” she shared. “It opened up a whole new world for me.”

Editing is critical, but it proves to be Rebecca’s least favorite part of the art of photography. Her passion is meeting new people, spending the time necessary to get to know them and then taking photographs that will offer a lifetime of memories. A relaxed subject is of the utmost importance to Rebecca. “The lighting and background can be fixed or altered,” she explained, “but you can’t fix or alter someone’s expression.”

Thanks to the natural beauty of her backyard and the creek that runs along the back perimeter of the property, Rebecca has spent many hours shooting unique, one-of-a-kind photos for family and friends. She finds enjoyment in taking candid photographs of children. “Children possess an innocence that the camera lens seems to love,” Rebecca explained. Little boys get to fish in the creek, while the little girls get to wear floppy hats and play with tiny plastic yellow ducks. Rebecca, starting with her own daughters years ago, has learned that each little girl has a mind all her own. “Each little girl who poses with the plastic ducks has ‘a specific spot for each duck,’” she said. “Some are lined up in a



straight line, while others are separated in a random order that only the little girl can understand.”

One friend of the family had been a cheerleader her whole life. “I took photos of her from my back deck looking down on her as she sat on the lawn encircled by all her past uniforms,” Rebecca

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remembered. "Creativity is so important if you want photos that are unique and special. Props, flexibility and patience make for some great photos."

As creative as Rebecca has been with the children in her life, she has fostered a newfound love — taking photos of brides-to-be. Her desire to take photos of brides started soon after her oldest daughter was married. "She was so upset about her bridal portraits," Rebecca said. "Of course as her mother, I thought they were just beautiful, but she hated them." Her philosophy when snapping photos of soon-to-be-brides is simple. "Even though I may already know them," she said, "I want them to be happy with the end result. I want their individual personalities to shine through in each and every picture."

One bride that brings a smile to Rebecca's face was a self-proclaimed "Tomboy" who never wore makeup. "She bought a sheer dress with rhinestones because she wanted to be 'feminine' for a day," Rebecca explained. "When the bride arrived, her makeup was flawless and she looked quite the lady. Since I knew she was a Tomboy at heart, I wanted to capture that side of her personality in her photographs." Rebecca was able to accomplish the "Tomboy" feel by placing a rocking chair in the creek bed that runs behind her house. The bride gathered her dress around her, sat down in the rocking chair and began kicking her bare feet in the water. "I was proud of what I was able to capture that particular day," she added.

Men, especially her husband and son, have proved to be Rebecca's most difficult subjects when it comes to relaxing. "They always want to remain stoic," she said. When this happens, it only takes Rebecca a few minutes to figure a person out and incorporate their personality into the photos she takes. "Photos need to be fun," she said. "They need to capture the special moments in time." Most of Rebecca's photographs are of people, but she also enjoys taking pictures of unique landscapes, as well as still life. "My passion is the people!" **NOW**

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Chuck Tennant,
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An Ellis county umpire
keeps his eye on the ball.

Life Behind Home Plate

— By Sandra Skoda

Softball is one of America's favorite pastimes — just ask Chuck Tennant, the current deputy commissioner of the Ellis County Umpires Association. Chuck's tenure with the association began in 1977, just a short time after Glenn "Ott" Woodard started the organization. Chuck who was 33 at the time, had played in lots of tournaments with a local men's softball team, and said "yes" when he was asked to umpire. He moved up the ladder and has held his position as deputy commissioner for 15 consecutive years. "I think there were approximately 15 umpires on the roster when I started," Chuck remembered. "This year we registered 73. Our numbers seem to go up when the economy goes down, and they go down when the economy goes back up."

Thankfully for the association, the economy has never dictated Chuck's decision to be an integral part of the association. Except for the three years he spent in Florida, Chuck has held an active role within the Ellis County Umpires Association for a total of 29 years. "If I didn't love it," he added, "I wouldn't do it." Not only has he seen a steady growth in the number of umpires from year to year, Chuck has also watched the sport grow to the point where more playing fields were needed. "When I started umpiring, games were played at Joy Larkin Field," he explained. "We went from that one field to four fields at Lions Park. Today, we umpire games at six fields

located at the Waxahachie Sports Complex."

The purpose of the association is simple; it gives structure to the softball league, while enforcing the rules of the game. As Chuck put it, "It keeps the game real!" All umpires, whether new or veteran, undergo extensive training before taking their places behind home plate or along the baselines at first and/or third. There have been local training sessions, as well as some for state and national levels of play. The last national level of play training Chuck attended had more than 80 umpires in attendance. Chuck is proud that all three levels of training have been taught right here in Waxahachie.

Training begins each year in January. Umpires go through one day a week of classroom instruction and hands-on field work for a total of six weeks. These training sessions are paramount to the success of the association because the rules in the game of softball are always changing. "It also gives the umpires the chance to mesh and mentor," Chuck said. "A 'rookie' gets paired with a veteran during the six-week process. We don't ever throw the new umpires to the dogs." Chuck also was sure to mention that they never schedule two "rookies" on the field at one time. Without fail, a new umpire is always paired with at least one veteran umpire.

Chuck used to umpire every night that games were played, but now he only officiates once a week to give the younger, up-and-



“When we say we are from Waxahachie, they expect us to be good.”

coming umpires a chance to shine. The need for more umpires grew when the love for the sport grew. Girls’ teams in the area include Waxahachie, Red Oak, Italy, Palmer, Ennis and Midlothian. “We also umpire for all the adult leagues, too,” he said. “Monday nights we umpire the church leagues. Wednesday is [for] the adult men and Thursday we cover the coed teams. Basically, there’s three seasons in one year.”

The Waxahachie Sports Complex opened in the spring of 2001. The first state level tournament was held in 2001 and involved church teams. The first national level tournament, the Women’s Open, was held in 2005. This first dabble in national play went great, as far as Chuck and the Ellis County Umpires Association are concerned. Last year, teams from California, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Oklahoma flew in and were unable to compete because of inclement, rainy weather. Two state tournaments are on the schedule



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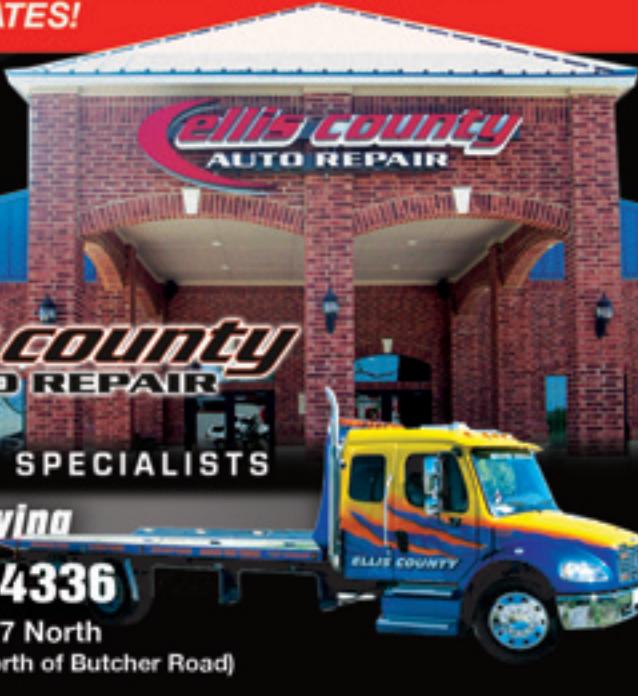
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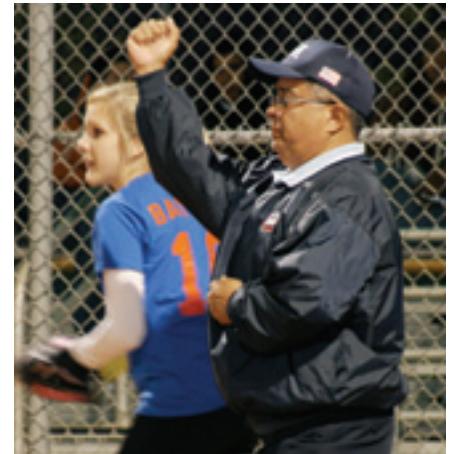


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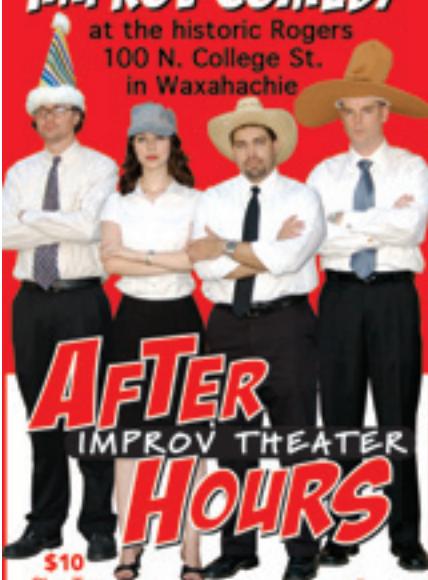
this year: Youth 12 and under in June and Coed in July.

The association is one of the smallest groups compared to the larger cities and college towns within Texas. “But that hasn’t hindered our reputation,” Chuck said. “We have a reputation for quality all over the state. When we say we are from Waxahachie, they expect



Ramiro Carbajal, one of the umpires of the Ellis County Umpires Association officiates a game.

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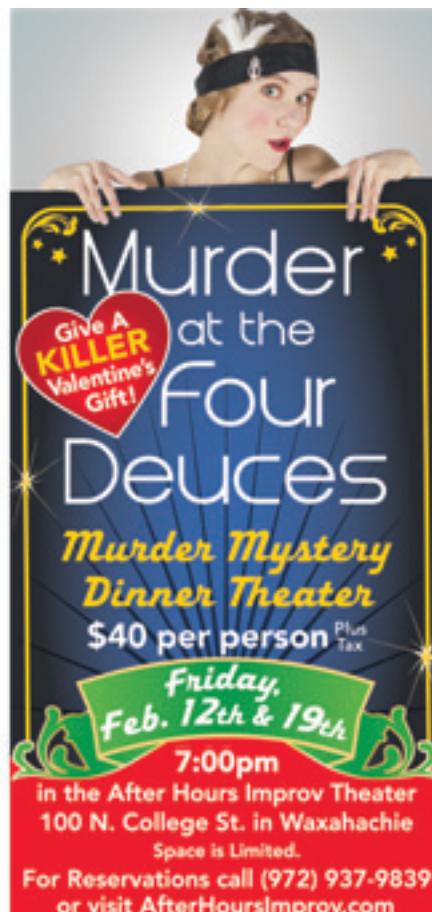


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us to be good.” Some examples of the goodness are: one umpire is qualified to oversee the Olympics within the Continental USA; three umpires have reached ELITE status, the highest rank within the American Softball Association; nine are part of the National Indicator Fraternity; one umpire made it to the Hooters East meets West Championships, a tournament held in Oklahoma City that is considered the highest assignment in slow pitch softball; and one other umpire made it to the 18 and Under Gold FP, also in Oklahoma City, which is considered the highest assignment in fast pitch softball and umpired in four consecutive high school tournaments.

Although Chuck loves life behind home plate, he said this year will be his final year to umpire. He has chosen to let the younger guys do the state and national tournaments so he can help Commissioner James Villarreal bid on more tournaments for the association. “I tell the rookies that if they’re umpiring for the money, they need to find another job,” Chuck said. “It’s a passion. Umpires have to love life behind home plate.” **NOW**



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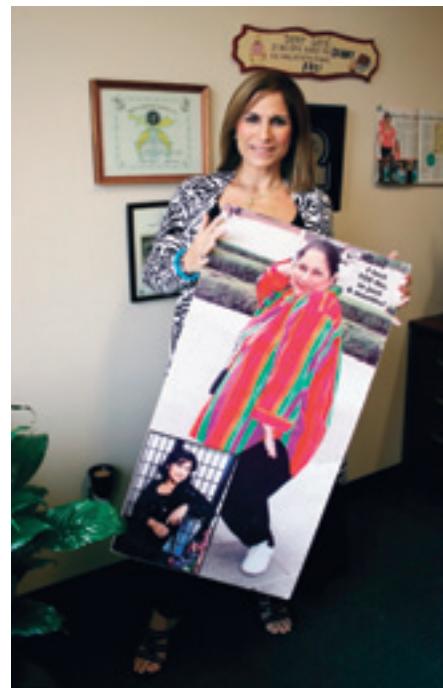


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From left:

Mary Jane Medlock at her desk; Mary Jane holds her “before” picture; a display of several products offered; one of many articles written about Mary Jane’s success at maintaining her weight loss.



Shopping the Walls

Mary Jane Medlock shares her secrets to weight-loss success.

— By Sandra Skoda

Mary Jane Medlock continues to be a weight-loss success story. Nine years ago, Mary Jane finally found a plan that worked for her, and it can work for you, too. “When you quit smoking, it takes 7 to 10 years for your lungs to clear. With bankruptcy, it takes 7 to 10 years to clear your record,” she stated. “It takes the person trying to maintain weight loss 7 to 10 years to actually ‘get it.’” In six months, Mary Jane lost 152 pounds and went from a size 56 to her current size of 10-12. “I’ve got an enormous amount of dieting experience,” she said. “My goal is to teach people how to lose weight fast, and learn the secrets of keeping it off successfully.”

“Getting it” simply means knowing what triggers you to overeat. The first thing Mary Jane does with a new client, after

the initial consultation, is to evaluate his or her current needs. During this consult, she discusses ways to meet the client’s life, budget and personal goals. “I was on the diet roller coaster for years,” she admitted. “What I do for my clients now is what I didn’t get when I was going through my own battle with obesity and weight loss. I really listen to what they are saying.”

Triggers that make a person eat are one of the first things Mary Jane identifies and gets out of the way. Once triggers are introduced and understood, the journey to losing weight has a much better chance of being successful. “There are five trigger categories,” Mary Jane explained. “They are social, emotional, situational, our own thoughts and physiological. Any of these five can cause you to go back on an eating binge. It’s so

important to get to know what triggers your overeating.”

Mary Jane also teaches the importance of proportional eating when it comes to changing her clients’ eating habits. She does this with two simple rules that have worked for her during the past 10 years. “My one tablespoon rule lets you eat whatever you want to eat, one tablespoon at a time,” she said. “Putting your thumb and forefinger together is your guide for one tablespoon. With a bowl of ice cream, chances are, you won’t eat as much, and you certainly will no longer eat the whole bowl.” Her second rule is the “two-bite rule.” If you are eating a dessert, fill the spoon with a bite of everything — the chocolate cake, the

“What I do for my clients now is what I didn’t get when I was going through my own battle with obesity and weight loss. I really listen to what they are saying.”

fudge icing, the vanilla ice cream and the nuts. “Put the spoonful of dessert in your mouth and truly savor the flavor,” Mary Jane said. “Do the same thing with a second bite. You have now reached the height in the flavor of that food. After that second bite, you’re just feeding, so push it away.”

Another tidbit for success in maintaining weight loss is shopping the walls at the supermarket. Everything a body needs to be healthy can be found along the walls — fresh fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat. She also feels it is paramount to have a support group in place when it comes to keeping the unwanted weight off. “January is for weight-loss amateurs,” she stated with passion. “Resolutions get broken before the month is over. This month, come visit me and let me explain my entire program at length. I’m a realistic, no-nonsense person. I never give up on anyone. If I help one person overcome their battle with morbid obesity, then I’ve done what I’ve been called to do.” **NOW**



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20 or 30 years.”

But it is not just the folks who danced this music during World War II and the Depression who come out to enjoy Jazz Café. Swing dancing is also popular with a much younger generation that finds the energetic moves fun and challenging.

Rich has high expectations for his award-winning Waxahachie Jazz Orchestra students who perform the music. They learn to play 75 pieces or more and will have 50 pieces ready for that one night, including a big Glenn Miller set of 10 to 12 songs. He expects his students to sound professional when they perform at Jazz Café, and apparently, his expectations pay off. Rich remembers one World War II veteran telling him, “When I close my eyes, I can’t tell it’s not Glenn Miller.” That is high praise coming from someone who heard Glenn Miller live. “This event is an outlet for students to play Big Band music in an authentic environment,” Rich continued. “They get to play like jazz musicians did in the 40s. It’s a real learning opportunity for the students.” Rich wants his students to come away from the evening with a better idea of what it is like to work as a professional musician.

To that end, Rich brings in professionals to play with the Waxahachie High School (WHS) students. This year’s guest performer will be Larry Spencer, a local trumpeter who has played worldwide with the likes of Bob Hope, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Henry Mancini. Artists like Mr. Spencer and local WHS alumnus Keith Davis, saxophonist, will bring their knowledge of the music business to students and help them raise the level of their performance for the delight of Waxahachie residents lucky enough to get tickets for what is always a sold-out event.

When asked why he loves jazz so, Rich’s first response was, “Because,” but then he went on to explain what an important part of the American art scene jazz has been. “Jazz is important. It’s a true American thing, but it tends to be forgotten. Jazz didn’t start somewhere else. It started here. Jazz isn’t very old. It’s young, and it’s important to keep it going. I hope some of these students go on to teach jazz. If one student gets hooked,

Dancing Cheek to Cheek

— By Adam Walker



What do you get when you mix today’s teenagers and Big Band music from long ago? Well, here in Waxahachie, that combination creates one of the town’s most interesting annual events — Jazz Café. “This is a regal event,” said Rich Armstrong, who helped start Jazz Café five years ago. “The kids dress up in formal attire to play the music.”

Many of the patrons who pay to attend year after year also dress up

making it a night on the town reminiscent of yesteryear. Others make it a more casual affair and come out for a night of dining and dancing to swing, bossa nova and ballad tunes, so a mix of Sunday best and khakis on the dance floor will be seen. “Waxahachie doesn’t have many events like this,” Rich said, “where residents who grew up dancing this music have the opportunity to experience something they haven’t experienced for

that's one more who gets to enjoy this music for the rest of their life." As Jennifer Dacy, chairperson of Jazz Café said, "Jazz is a history lesson. Studying these bands and their music teaches the students the history of World War II and the Depression."

But there is nothing depressing about the evening they have planned. After four years of producing Jazz Café and seeing attendance grow each year, they are hoping the fifth annual Jazz Café will be the biggest and best yet, full of fine food and great music played to a packed house. Lisa Popp, president of the Waxahachie ISD band booster club said, "This is a big-time commitment for the students, especially the first-year students in jazz band. They want to bring joy to people." They hope to make some money for the band program through ticket sales and a silent auction, but Rich said, "We have a purpose greater than money. People look forward to dressing up and coming out. We want it to be a night to remember."

The Waxahachie Jazz Orchestra considers Jazz Café a gift to the community, an evening of elegant dining, dancing and music that is rarely experienced today. Many of the older patrons feel very nostalgic about the evening. Memories of dances with sweethearts long ago are reawakened by dancing once again to the song that was playing when a then-young man proposed to his best girl. At the same time, the musicians get an opportunity very few high school bands are afforded — the chance to play three to four hours of live music with a professional guest artist. Jazz music and dancing are bringing the generations together.

Jazz Café sounds like a great way to combine a romantic evening with an investment in today's youth. Waxahachie is lucky to play host to this unique event. It just might be the perfect way to combine romance, history and hope for tomorrow. If there are still any tickets left, you could be dancing cheek to cheek. **NOW**

Editor's Note: Jazz Café will be held February 6 at the Waxahachie Civic Center. If interested in tickets, please call (469) 765-6326 or e-mail jazzcafe@spiritofwaxahachie.com.

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In The Kitchen With Billie Hayes

— *By Faith Browning*

Growing up on a big farm and being the youngest of five children kept Billie Hayes too busy to help in the kitchen. “Momma never called on me much to help in the kitchen,” she recalled. “The older ones acted like they knew more than I did, so I went out and played with my animals. That was my favorite thing to do!”

Billie learned her cooking skills by

taking home economics in high school and through trial and error for over 62 years of marriage to her husband, Ralph. She enjoys painting, knitting, reading and attending the First Baptist Church the past 53 years. She gets her recipes from the cookbooks she has collected. “I have a lot of recipes,” she said. “Every time we have ever been on a trip, I bought a cookbook.” **NOW**



CRACKLIN' CORN BREAD

1 1/2 cups cornmeal
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1 lg. egg, slightly beaten
2 cups buttermilk
1 cup cracklings

1. In a large bowl, combine first four ingredients.
2. Add the egg and buttermilk, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened. Stir in cracklings.
3. Generously grease a 10-inch cast-iron skillet with shortening. Place skillet in an oven at 450 F for 4 minutes until hot.
4. Remove skillet from oven and pour batter into the hot skillet.
5. Bake in 450 F oven for 25 minutes or until golden brown.

SWEET POTATOE PIE

1 1/2 cups sweet potatoes, peeled and mashed
1 12-oz. can evaporated milk
1 cup sugar
3 lg. eggs
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
Dash cinnamon
Dash salt
9-inch piecrust

1. Heat oven to 350 F.
2. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients, except piecrust. Mix until well blended, but do not over mix.
3. Pour into crust. Bake for 50 minutes or until knife inserted in middle comes out clean.

FRIED GREEN TOMATOES

1 lg. egg, slightly beaten
1/2 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup flour, divided use
1/2 cup cornmeal
1 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. pepper
3 med. green tomatoes, cut in 1/2-inch slices
Vegetable oil
Salt, to taste

1. Combine egg and buttermilk; set aside.
2. Combine 1/4 cup flour, cornmeal salt and pepper in a shallow bowl or pan.
3. Dredge tomato slices in remaining 1/4 cup flour. Next dip them into the buttermilk mixture and then into the cornmeal mixture.
4. Pour 1/4 to 1/2 inch of oil into a large cast-iron skillet. Heat to 375 F.
5. In batches, drop tomatoes in hot oil; cook on each side until golden. Drain on a paper towels or on a rack. Sprinkle with salt to taste.

PECAN PIE

3 eggs, slightly beaten
3/4 cup sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
1 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup pecans, chopped
9-inch piecrust

1. Mix first five ingredients together.
2. Pour pecans into piecrust. Pour mixture over pecans.
3. Bake at 350 F for 40 minutes.

SOUR CREAM POUND CAKE

1/2 lb. butter
3 cups sugar
6 eggs
3 heaping cups plain flour
1/4 tsp. baking soda
3/4 cup sour cream
1/2 tsp. vanilla
1/2 cup sweet milk

1. Start with all ingredients being room temperature. Cream together butter and sugar; add eggs one at a time, beating well

- after each addition.
2. Sift flour with soda.
3. Alternately add 2 cups of flour with sour cream. Add vanilla with milk and last cup of flour.
4. Pour into 3 loaf pans or one Bundt pan. Bake at 325 F for 1 hour for loaf pans or 1 hour and 20 minutes for Bundt pan.

STRAWBERRY TRIPLE-DECKER CAKE

1 8.25-oz. pkg. white cake mix, without pudding
1 3-oz. pkg. strawberry gelatin
4 lg. eggs
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup fresh strawberries, finely chopped
1 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup milk

FROSTING:

1 cup butter, softened
2 16-oz. pkgs. powdered sugar, sifted
1 cup fresh strawberries, finely chopped

1. Combine first eight ingredients with an electric mixer on low speed for 1 minute.
2. Scrape down the sides and beat at medium speed 2 more minutes, scraping down the sides if needed. Strawberries should be well blended into the batter.
3. Pour batter into 3 greased and floured, 9-inch round pans. Bake at 350 F for 25 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted comes out clean.
4. Cool in pans for 10 minutes; remove from pans and cool completely on wire rack.
5. While cakes cool, prepare frosting: beat butter for 20 seconds or until creamy.
6. Add sugar and strawberries; beat on low speed until creamy. Add more sugar if too thin or add more strawberries if too thick.
7. Spread frosting between layers and on the top and sides. Garnish with strawberries if desired. Serve immediately or chill up to a week.

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Are you financially exposed?

— By Adam Rope

Many people realize the need for life insurance but keep putting it off until it is too late. You may think that life insurance is confusing, expensive and complicated. You may think you don't know enough to make the right decisions for you and your loved ones. Postponing this decision leaves you and your family exposed financially.

Assumption #1: I'll always be able to buy life insurance.

You could develop a health condition that makes you uninsurable or could make life insurance too costly for you.

Assumption #2: I'll get life insurance later when I'm older or have a family.

Life insurance may be needed at all stages of life. Whether married or



single, male or female, with children or without, you may have financial obligations that need to be met. Life insurance provides financial security for you and your loved ones.

Assumption #3: My family and I are covered by the group insurance at work.

To meet the future needs of your family, you need to have seven to 10 times your annual income. Most group term insurance amounts offered by employers won't meet this need. And, when you don't work for that employer any longer, you usually lose that coverage.

Assumption #4: My husband has life insurance, so I don't need it.

Women often live longer than men but not always. There are countless stories

of men who had to shoulder the family financial burden along with the emotional burden after their wife passed away.

Assumption #5: My family can cover funeral and burial expenses.

Burying a spouse or loved one is the most stressful time in a family's life. Having life insurance can reduce financial concerns for the family.

Take the time now to review your needs and provide adequately for yourself and your family. For more information or to review your current policy, please contact an insurance professional. **NOW**

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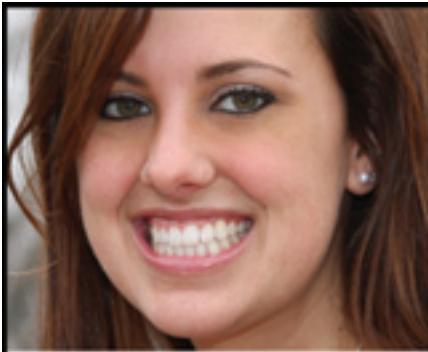
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A Woman's Heart

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

Of all the things women worry about with or without merit, it seems another item should definitely be on the plate. The number one cause of death for women in America is not breast cancer; it is heart disease. This may surprise many because breast cancer is so prevalent in the media and receives a lot of attention. Surprising or not, the incredible statistic is that heart disease causes 45 percent of the deaths in women. Women and heart disease, to the public, is an anomaly.

Women produce the hormone estrogen and prior to menopause, it plays a beneficial role in providing some protection in women against heart disease. One function of estrogen is to help maintain the levels of good cholesterol — HDL, high-density lipoprotein. HDL contributes to good cardiovascular health. Recent studies show that after menopause, even with hormone replacement therapy, that benefit is lost. We now know women cannot count on the benefits of estrogen after menopause for protection from heart disease, whether the hormone is natural or synthetically made. Because of this information, women and their health care providers need to be more aware of possible complications to their well-being.

Many women die from heart attacks because it can be a challenge to diagnose. The symptoms women experience when having a heart attack are not necessarily the same ones that appear in men. The familiar complaint of crushing and debilitating pain in the chest that may radiate to other areas is not always present in women. When women present with symptoms of upper back pain, abdominal pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, sweating, fatigue and/or nausea and vomiting, their discomfort may be attributed to gastrointestinal problems,

anxiety, muscle injury or some other ailment. Precious time needed for proper diagnosis may be wasted, for example, if a woman thinks she is experiencing indigestion and treats her symptoms with antacids.

Awareness of risk factors and working to eliminate or minimize areas of concern is very important. As mentioned, menopausal women are at increased risk because of the decreased estrogen hormone. The risk for a heart attack increases substantially when combined with obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes. Women can improve their odds by following a healthy diet and maintaining a healthy weight by watching their intake of salt and fats. Exercising under your doctor's supervision will bring great benefits. Avoid alcohol and cigarettes. Becoming menopausal brings a list of challenges to a woman's life. Hot flashes are only a tiny part of it. A consultation with your health care provider before problems emerge can lessen a lot of worry later. **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.

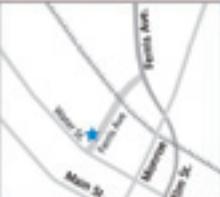


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Time to Cut Back — By Nancy Fenton

How many times have you told yourself, “It’s time to cut back”? Be it food, computer/game time or whatever, everything has its season. This is the season to prune, prune, prune. The roses, grasses, liriopie (monkey grass), shrubs and even trees will all benefit from a few clips here and there. Most roses need a good chopping to stimulate new growth. The exceptions to the rule, of course, are the climbing roses. If you cut them now, you cut off the old wood that brings the new blooms. Wait to trim the climbers until after they bloom and then cut them way back.

It is a bit easier to know when to cut grasses. If they are brown, cut them to the ground. Lantana also likes to start over again. While it may look bare for a short time, you will be rewarded with

lush, green growth as spring approaches. I usually use a weed eater to trim border grasses like mondo and liriopie down to one inch or so. As with pruning, it will stimulate growth and blooms for the coming season. Because this new growth is tender and very susceptible to the late hard freezes, it does not hurt to wait until the end of February to do major chopping.

Trimming is important to maintaining a healthy tree. All the little growth needs to come out of the tree, as well as the limbs that hang down. My rule of thumb is that “suckers” smaller than my thumb need to be removed, as well as limbs that cross and rub. Choose a tree professional to do the areas you cannot reach from the ground. The key words are *licensed arborist*. I use an arborist who will grind the limbs and leaves into mulch for me.



This is a great way to return the natural elements to the soil, and it does not involve a trip to the store or recycle station!

Cut back now for lush growth as the weather warms up. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

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Happening **NOW**

First Thursday

ABWA Empowering Women Express Network will meet at 5:45 p.m. at the Midlothian Conference Center, located at 1 Community Circle in Midlothian. Please visit www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org to RSVP a seat and dinner reservations.

Second and Fourth Tuesday

Get Smart: Strategic Marketing and Research Technologies (formerly Waxahachie Business Interchange Networking) is held from 7:30-8:30 a.m. Network with other professionals and promote your business. Call (972) 937-2390 for location of the next meeting.

Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. at the Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin St. For more information, contact Cheryl Bell at (972) 723-0341 or rb4cj@sbcglobal.net.

Every Friday

After Hours Improv Theater presents on a rotating basis: Mystery Murder Dinner at 7:00 p.m. and Standup Comedy Show featuring touring, professional standup comedians at 8:00 p.m. The theater is located at 100 N. College St., Suite 11, in the Rogers Hotel. Call (972) 937-9839 or visit www.AfterHoursImprov.com.

Every Saturday

After Hours Improv Theater begins at 8:00 p.m. Adult tickets: \$10 plus tax. Children 10 and under: \$5 plus tax. Call (972) 937-9839 to make reservations or visit www.AfterHoursImprov.com for more detailed information. The theater is located at 100 N. College St., Suite 11, in the Rogers Hotel.

February 6

Jazz Café, an evening of elegant

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Happening **NOW**

dining, dancing and great jazz and Big Band-era music: 6:30 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. This year marks the 5th anniversary of Jazz Café, featuring the Waxahachie Jazz Orchestra with guest artists that include professional jazz trumpeter Larry Spencer. A silent auction with a variety of great prizes will benefit the Waxahachie Band Boosters. Tickets: \$25. E-mail jazzcafe@spiritofwaxahachie.com or visit www.spiritofwaxahachie.com/jazzcafe.

February 16

18th Annual Mardi Gras: 6:00-8:00 p.m., St. Paul Church, 624 Ovilla Rd. The Cajun dinner will include fried catfish, gumbo, red beans, rice, salad and bread pudding for dessert. Live music will also be provided. Tickets: \$12 for adults, \$6 for children 5-10, free for children under the age of 5. Tickets are available at the church office Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. or they may be purchased at the door. For more information, call (972) 938-2126.

Through February 18

Register for Expanding Your Horizons career day program to be held on February 27 from 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Cedar Valley College. The program is for girls in grades 6, 7 and 8 and their parents. Visit www.EYH.AAUW-SWDC.org or call (972) 709-1957 for more information.

April 17

All Free Earth Day children's event at Pettigrew Academy, located at 806 E. Marvin St., from 10:00-noon. Games, prizes, healthy snacks, exhibits and the Dallas Zoo Nature Exchange Program will all be open to the public. For more information, call (972) 923-1633.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.



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For a physician referral or for more information about cancer care services at Baylor Waxahachie, call [1.800.4BAYLOR](tel:1.800.4BAYLOR) or visit us online at BaylorHealth.com.

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