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FEBRUARY 2011

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Also Inside

Keep It Moving

Taking the Ice by Storm

**Passing the
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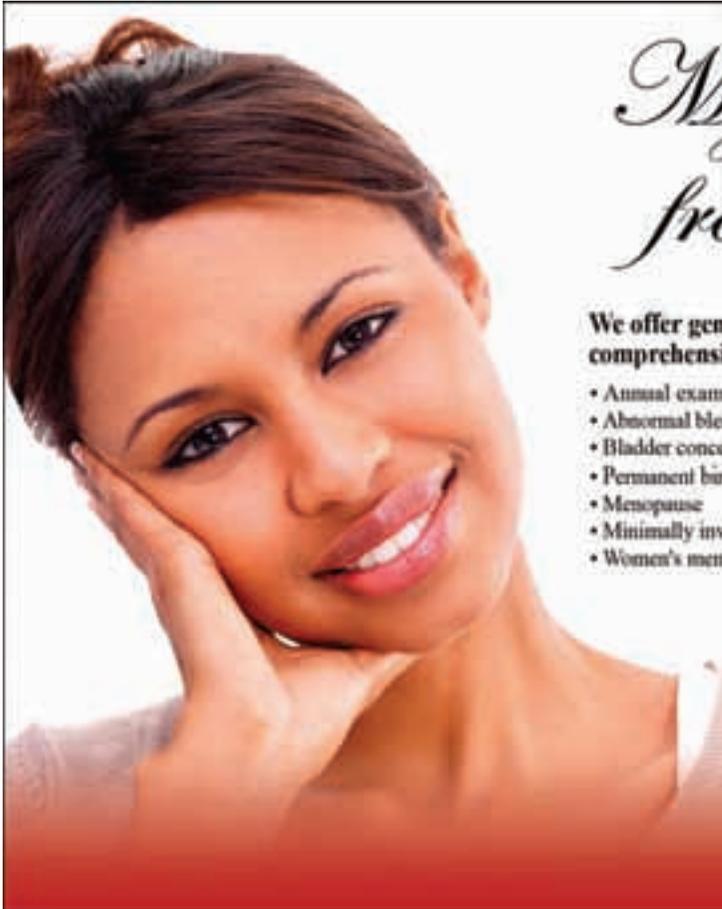
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Dr. Donald Miles, OB/GYN (Retired); Sharon Roberts, MD,
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Colors abound around
the Freeman home.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Hello Waxahachie,

I know it sounds cliché, but I cannot believe we are into the second month of 2011. My husband and I will be celebrating our one-year wedding anniversary later this month in Ruidoso, New Mexico. We are praying the weather and road conditions cooperate, as we do not want to be stranded so far from home. I am one who "likes to visit," but I am always ready to come back home. Home is where the heart is, you know.



As I wish you all a Happy Valentine's Day, I will be wishing my hubby a happy birthday, too. So many events, from Groundhog Day and Boy Scouts Day to Fat Tuesday and Ash Wednesday, make the month of February busy, yet exciting and fun. I encourage each of you to take time out of your busy February schedules to curl up with a good read, preferably your hometown magazine.

Sandra

Sandra Strong
WaxahachieNOW Editor
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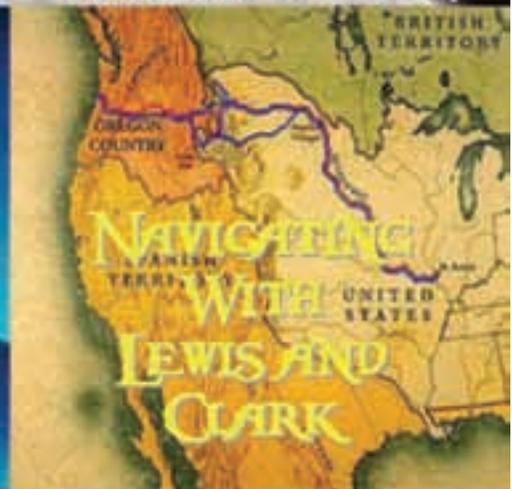
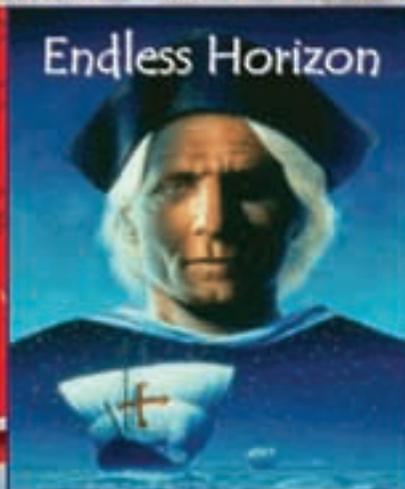
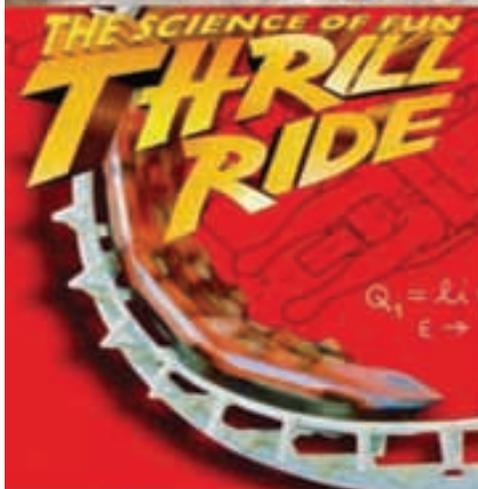
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Grease with the Gravy

— By Sandra Strong

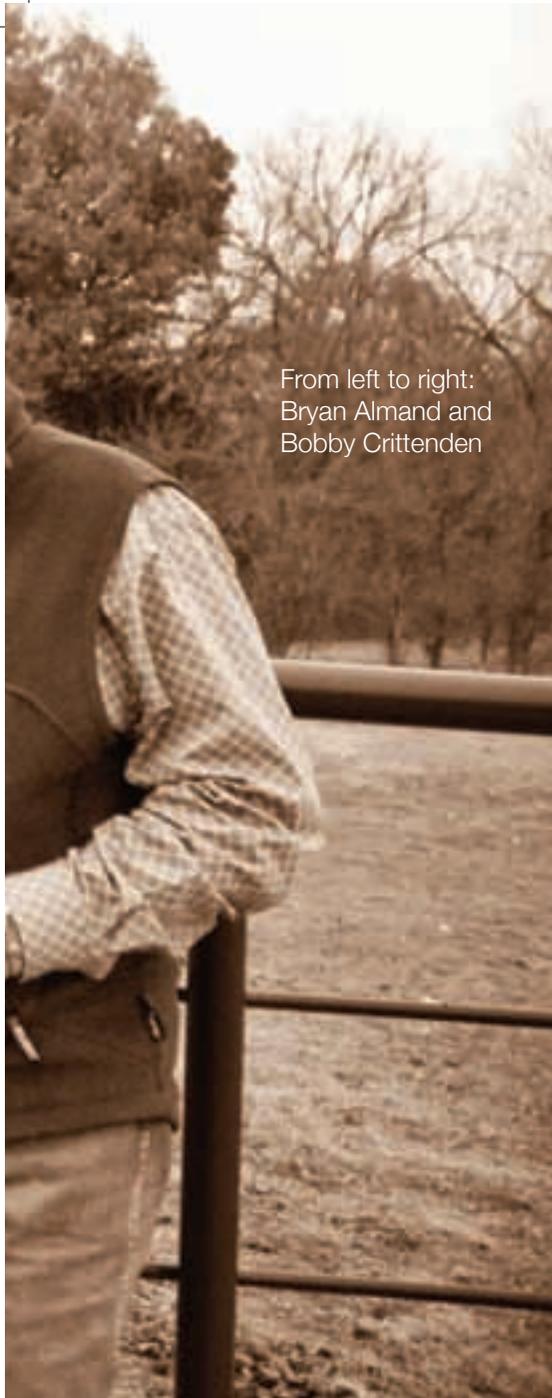
A farrier is an equine hoof care specialist who trims and balances a horse's hoof and then places shoes to the horse's feet. Bobby Crittenden and Brian Almand are modern day farriers with years of valuable hands-on experience when it comes to properly shoeing a horse. "I took a six-week course at Oklahoma State Horseshoeing School back in 1985," Bobby said.

"I've been around horseshoeing all my life, but I went to school for two weeks in 1988 to fine-tune what I already knew," Brian added.

To fully understand the craft of horseshoeing, you need to understand its origin and why it has become so important to domesticated horses. In the first century, Romans used things called "hipposandals," which were shoes handcrafted from leather and metal. It was not until 1200 and 1300 A.D. that iron horseshoes were manufactured, thus making horseshoeing available to more people. "Horseshoeing allows you to be

self-employed," Brian said of his long-term partnership with Bobby. "It's a self-starter job; one where you are dedicated to hard work and adverse conditions, both from the horse and the weather."

They both learned and practiced the art of making horseshoes in school, but they soon found out "it was not their deal." "Blacksmiths used to make shoes with a flame, an anvil and a hammer. Now you can buy premade ones in many different sizes," Bobby said. "There's so much to know and learn every day when shoeing horses. When you think you know it all, it's time to move on."

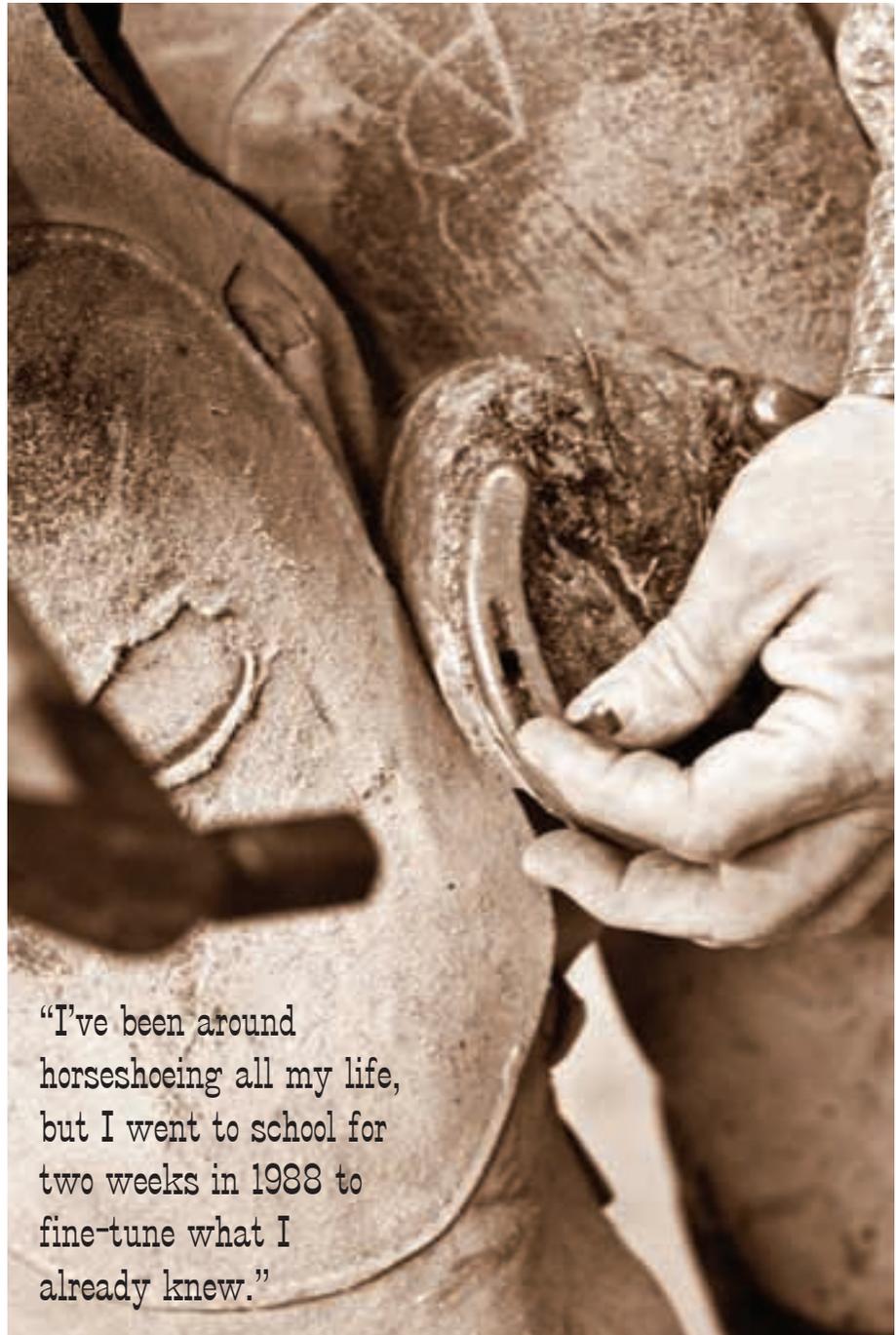


From left to right:
Bryan Almand and
Bobby Crittenden

to a small, smooth, even and hard state. “Mother Nature takes care of the wild ones,” Brian noted.

Domesticated horses are taken from these naturally dry environments and moved to stables. They are trained to carry or pull additional weight, and are often kept and worked on very soft footing, such as irrigated land, rodeo arenas and stall bedding. Even when cleaned properly on a regular basis, domesticated horses’ hooves are still exposed to much more moisture than what they would encounter in the wild.

Wearing shoes does not prevent or reduce the damage caused by moisture. What horseshoeing does do is protect horses’ hooves that are already weakened. Furthermore, without Mother Nature’s natural conditioning factors found in the wild, horses’ feet grow overly large and long unless trimmed on a regular basis. Domesticated equine are missing the protection of rocks, pebbles and hard, uneven surfaces. “When you tame horses,” Bobby emphasized, “unnatural things just begin to happen.” Other physical aspects that prompt shoeing



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Some might think wild horses would need shoeing more than domesticated horses living in a barn and being cared for, but that is definitely not the case. When in captivity, horses’ hooves are softer and become more prone to injury. In the wild, a horse may travel up to 50 miles in a single day to obtain the forage it needs to survive. While horses in the wild cover large areas of terrain, they usually do so at slow speeds, unless of course they are being chased by a predator. This mode of constant stimulation in a dry climate means one thing — horses’ feet are naturally worn

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Bobby and Brian both agree that the two most important things in horseshoeing are a feel for horses and a great deal of patience. "You must know the horse to get around it," Brian explained. "It's much like dealing with a child. You learn how to correct them without them getting so mad you are unable to work with them."

"Getting around a horse is sometimes the biggest obstacle," Bobby added. "Not losing your cool is also very important. Lose it and the battle is lost. The horse will win if you lose your patience."

When horseshoeing, knowing the anatomy of a horse is paramount. Shoe it correctly, as close to right as possible, or run the risk of crippling it. For this pair, four key components come into play when horseshoeing any horse. One, you need to know the bones found in the horse and how they relate to one another. Secondly, you must remember and know where the elastic structure of cartilage, also known as gristle, is located. "You also need to know about the corium," Brian said. "Corium is the layer of sensitive flesh that covers the framework of a horse's foot." And lastly, a good farrier must be able to look at the case or horn, also known in layman's terms as the hoof, to see how it has been shod in the past. "You need to look at them and know they are standing straight," Bobby said. "It's easy for someone with experience to see if they have been shod flat and level. You need to know how it all works from shoulder to hoof. It all must line up."

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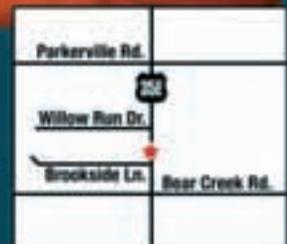
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Bobby and Brian go way back. They were close friends before they became horseshoeing partners. Working alone, they are able to shoe a horse in approximately an hour. As partners, they are able to properly shoe a horse in about 30 minutes. It becomes a win-win situation when you have a good, reliable partner.

And they have been reliable partners. They have been kicked and stepped on. They have pulled nails from their legs and hit their knees with the hammer. After years of working in a bent position, their backs ache. At one time, horseshoeing was what they referred to as their “bread and butter.” They learned early on they were going to have “to take the grease with the gravy” if they wanted to find success as farriers. “There is definitely a science to horseshoeing,” Brian said. “The downfall can simply be taking on too much work when you first get started. It can be overwhelming when you realize how hard the work actually is. The more you do and the more you know about horses, the better you will be.”

When prompted, they only have one regret. “We would love to know just how many horses we’ve shod in the past 25 years.” Rest assured, it is a big number. **NOW**

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A HOUSE BY THE WATER

— By Janice C. Johnson

It is no wonder Roy Freeman likes living by a lake. After all, it was a lake that gave him his first opportunity to date Kay, now his wife of 50 years. “We met in 1958. I tried for a year-and-a-half to date her, but she wouldn’t go out with me,” he complained good-naturedly, “until she decided she wanted to learn to water ski.”



Kay teased him right back. “Well, the only reason he was interested in me was that my dad worked for an oil company, and I had a white convertible. He thought I was rich! Anyway, he had a boat.” Kay finally went along on a ski outing with Roy and a group of his friends. “I tried it a few times on two skis. Then, after a while, Roy tossed me one ski. I asked him, ‘Why just one ski?’”

Roy took up the story. “I told her, ‘That’s all I can afford!’”

“I still wasn’t too impressed with Roy,” Kay admitted, “but we had fun. And his

friends were all nice, genuine guys who would do anything for anybody. We all went skiing every weekend, and I found out how popular Roy was, and how nice. Everyone looked up to him.”

Kay, who grew up in Lancaster, had been on the famous Rangerette drill team at Kilgore Junior College. After graduating, she began a secretarial career. She and Roy met and finally began dating, and Roy finished his business degree from University of North Texas in 1960. The couple planned a June wedding with an outdoor reception because, Kay said, “It



AT HOME WITH ROY
AND KAY FREEMAN



never rains in June — at least, not until the day we were married.”

Roy shook his head. “It was a monsoon.”

“It rained so hard,” Kay agreed, “that the convertible top leaked, and I had to hold towels up to try and keep us dry!”

But nothing could dampen their spirits for long. The Freemans settled in DeSoto, and Kay soon found an outlet for her Rangerettes experience. She took a part-time job directing Waxahachie High School’s Cherokee Charmers drill team.

When Roy, a native of Waxahachie, met Kay, he had taken a semester off from college and joined the National Guard — “to avoid getting drafted,” he explained. “I had been through basic training in South Carolina.” He went on to a career in the insurance industry, where his main occupation was claims adjuster. “I handled all phases of claims,” he said, “from climbing on roofs to setting up field offices at hurricane sites.”

The couple adopted their son, Chris, in 1966. “We applied and went through the interview process, and the case worker told us we could expect to wait 12 to 18 months. But then she called the next

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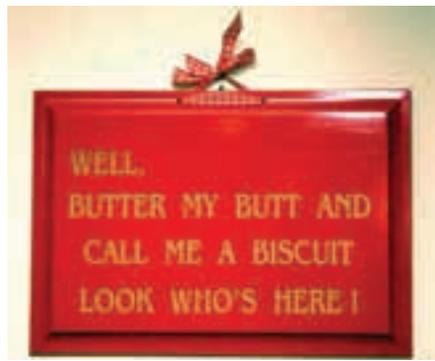
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week and said, 'We have a boy for you!' Well, I told her I wasn't ready, and she said, 'No rush — 10:30 tomorrow morning will be OK.' I became a mother overnight."

That was a huge adjustment to make so quickly, but Kay soon began to adapt, and her confidence grew. When Chris started kindergarten, Kay decided she should work in the same town where he was attending school. She resigned from Waxahachie Independent School District and took a position directing the DeSoto

Eaglettes drill team. Not long after, the Freemans began work on their little one-bedroom weekend lake house.

Roy retired in 2000, the year their home on Lake Waxahachie was finished. But it was not all built at once, as he explained. "The back part of this house was originally just a lake house. It was built from 1971 through 1975. It took that long because we built it ourselves." The front living room and kitchen, the master suite and the two upstairs guest

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rooms were all added onto the original structure.

Out of the entire new, expanded home, the spacious den at the rear is the only room that remains as it was, its many windows offering a full view of the lake. One corner houses a wet-bar area that used to be the kitchen. A lighted pantry opposite the wet bar shows off its neatly



organized shelves from behind a screen door. Kay led the way to the laundry room, where crisp white shelving, furniture, trim and appliances all stand out boldly against brown paneled walls. It had previously served as the bedroom, which was “just wall-to-wall, king-size mattress,” as Kay described it.

Once the new construction was complete, the Freemans moved in. This was when Annie, a black Labrador Retriever and the “second” love of Roy’s life, joined the family. Roy and Kay did



not buy new furniture, but kept the casual “weekend” look thanks to rustic furnishings and accents. Aside from one bureau, Kay said, “We don’t really have antiques — just hand-me-downs!” Old-fashioned quilts cover each of the beds

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and peek out from other places such as a banister, or the trunk nestled in an alcove above the stair landing.

Kay took special delight in decorating the master suite with her favorite colors, red and yellow. The cozy, romantic retreat features windows on two sides, a fireplace, a sitting area, bookshelves and a sunny, yellow bathroom that opens out to the hot tub on the back porch.

In the living room and kitchen, plank flooring provides a harmonious background for the heirloom-look furniture, including pine tables and ladder-back chairs. "I like rusty, old stuff," Kay confided. "I don't like new furniture." You can tell that by looking at her kitchen. An old-fashioned rack above the work island holds a colorful jumble of retro enamelware, other cookware, flowers and utensils, which spills over onto the top of the white cabinetry.

Roy and Kay had been in their "new/old" home for about 10 years when their 50th anniversary rolled around. They planned a big party, inviting some of their lifelong friends who are also neighbors. And it rained on their anniversary, too,



just as it had 50 years earlier. "Some of them couldn't come anyway," Roy said. "There were six [other couples] besides us, and we all got married the same year. Some of us were planning our parties for the same weekend!"

"We're all still married — and we all still get together, too," Kay put in.

Seven couples celebrating 50 years of marriage is an admirable track record in anyone's book. The Freemans seemed at a loss to explain it. "It wasn't always easy," Kay mused. "Of course, we exercise and stay busy."

Roy added, "Just good, clean living!"

One clue to Roy and Kay's happiness hangs above their headboard. There, a hand-painted wooden sign reads, "Always Kiss me Goodnight." **NOW**

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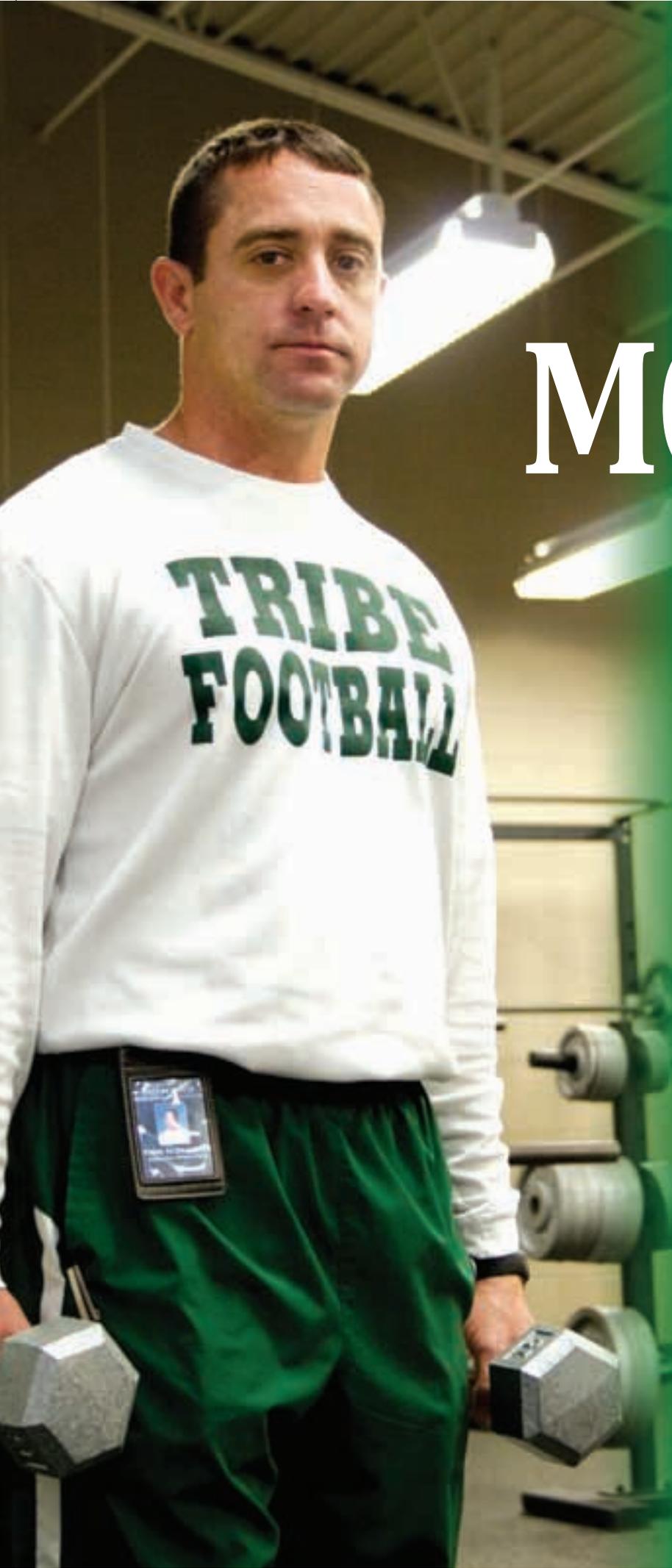
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keep it MOVING

— By Sandra Strong

Todd Alexander has not always taught health at the eighth-grade level. He first began his career as an educator in the science department at Maypearl Independent School District. After two years there, he came to Waxahachie in 1997 as a seventh-grade science teacher and junior high school football coach. Now in his 14th year, he has settled into his position as the district's only health teacher at Robbie E. Howard Eighth Grade Center, as well as a varsity football and track coach.

Why did Todd transfer from science to health? "I went from junior high assistant coach to junior high athletic coordinator," Todd explained. "Only then as the coordinator, was I able to teach physical education (PE). PE began my journey to health." When health was added to the eighth-grade curriculum as a high school credit and the teaching position came available, Todd jumped at the chance. "I was interested in the job and moving into this position allowed me to go from coaching junior high to varsity."

Todd started teaching four classes a day when health was still a state-required subject. Since then, in 2007 to be exact, the Texas Legislature decided the study of health would no longer be a required course for high school students. But thankfully, Waxahachie saw things differently. "The district thought health was important enough to keep in the school's curriculum," Todd stated. "And when picking only one grade level in which to teach health, eighth grade is a good level. So



many of the 'hot topics' we study affect students at this grade level."

Health class is held daily during fourth period for students who elect to take the course. Currently, Todd teaches two semester classes per year; 18 weeks each semester with no more than 30 students per class. "That means only 60 students per year," he emphasized. "It's just an elective class now, but we are hoping the state adds it back to the mandated curriculum for graduation sometime in the future. Fortunately, the district's School Health Advisory Committee is reviewing a plan to present to the Board of Trustees to add health back as a local requirement for graduation."

The study of health is no longer just about nutrition, proper hygiene and physical fitness. Current topics from the Game Plan curriculum that are taught and discussed in detail include: mental/emotional health, social/family health, abstinence and substance abuse. When studying mental and emotional health, students learn about stress and depression, peer pressure, self-esteem, character building and suicide prevention as it relates to them as individuals. "So many fall into this category based on family stresses and time management," Todd shared.

Social and family health issues go a bit deeper because they generally involve more than one person. Studies in this unit include family relationships, values, friendships, social skills and once again,

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peer pressure. "I'm proud to say that we have a 'no bullying' policy here at Howard," Todd stated. "We are very focused on anti-bullying."

Bullet points found under the unit on abstinence involve goal setting, self-worth, meaningful relationships and the negative consequences that come with emotional pain, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Substance abuse deals with the improper use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco, while the unit on physical health educates students on fitness, nutrition and maladies such as cancer, diabetes and diseases of the heart.

What is the most important unit Todd teaches out of those listed? "Abstinence," he answered without hesitation. "It's the biggest part of health class. We have 18 lessons per semester on the subject — every Friday. The class teaches 100 percent abstinence until marriage. The curriculum is based on character and goal setting. Instead of saying no, no, no, I teach them to identify the goals they have in life so they focus on those things instead of facing the consequences of poor choices."

Needless to say, Todd is very passionate about teaching abstinence before marriage. Once students understand the odds and how choices can adversely affect their futures, it makes saying "no" so much easier.

Films and movies were commonplace in health classes 30 years ago. Today, Todd is proud to say students only watch one video pertaining to eating properly and making wise choices. "The name of the video is *Supersize Me*," Todd explained. "It has been edited for the eighth-grade level, but the message is the same." Simply put, we choose what we eat. We choose fatty, fried foods. We choose the proportion size we put on our plates. "It's all about choices," Todd added. "My goal is to teach students to make the right choices."

This one video ties in with heart health and physical fitness. The five components of physical fitness are: cardiovascular endurance, muscle endurance, muscle strength, flexibility and overall body composition. "Aerobic exercise strengthens your cardiovascular endurance. Riding a bike and running will build muscle endurance," Todd said. "Lifting weights builds muscle strength. Each category carries its own importance,

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but cardiovascular endurance is the most important.”

Aerobic exercise is the “use of oxygen.” Heart rate increases during aerobic exercise. For younger children, Todd pushes them to “just be active.” “Most kids won’t carry a stop watch and run for 20 minutes per day,” Todd admitted. “I encourage them to take the stairs; get moving and keep moving.”

There are many reasons for the decline in healthy young adults. Todd cites his top four as family values, technology, fast food and meal proportions. “Families have habits that are passed on to the



children,” Todd explained. “Video games and computers have taken the place of backyard football games.” Living fast-paced lives means that fast food has become the meal of choice. As a society, Todd believes we have become adapted to very large portions.

His method of teaching and changing the students’ ways of thinking has a lot to do with hands-on, interactive lesson planning. He expects and encourages involvement, whether they are meeting in the classroom or the weight room. “Each unit feeds into the next,” Todd said. “The most challenging aspect of my job as the health teacher is making sure each child is taught in the manner they learn best.”

Although each child is different, it seems the problems they face as eighth-graders are basically the same. In fact, that is what Todd likes most about his job as an educator. “Influencing them to make the right choices in life is important to me,” he admitted.

When not at work as teacher and coach, you can find Todd spending time with his family, wife Sonya and children, Caroline, Ellie and Ross; riding horses; or putting around on the golf course. You see, Todd practices what he teaches. He just keeps moving. **NOW**

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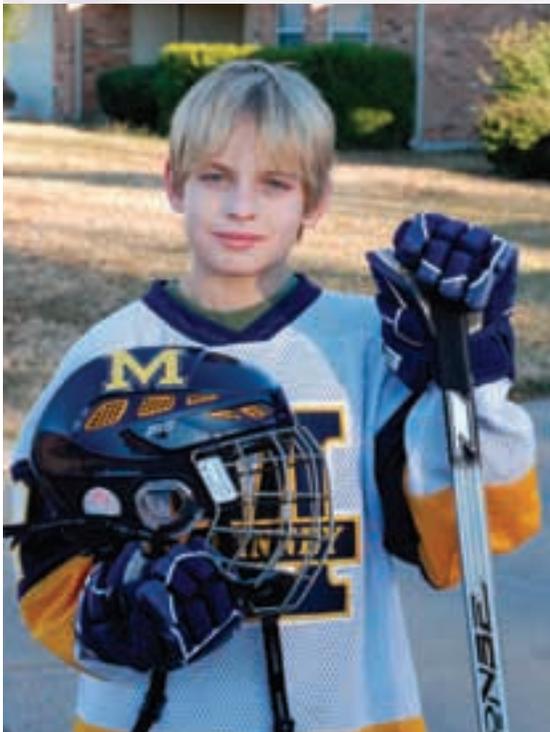
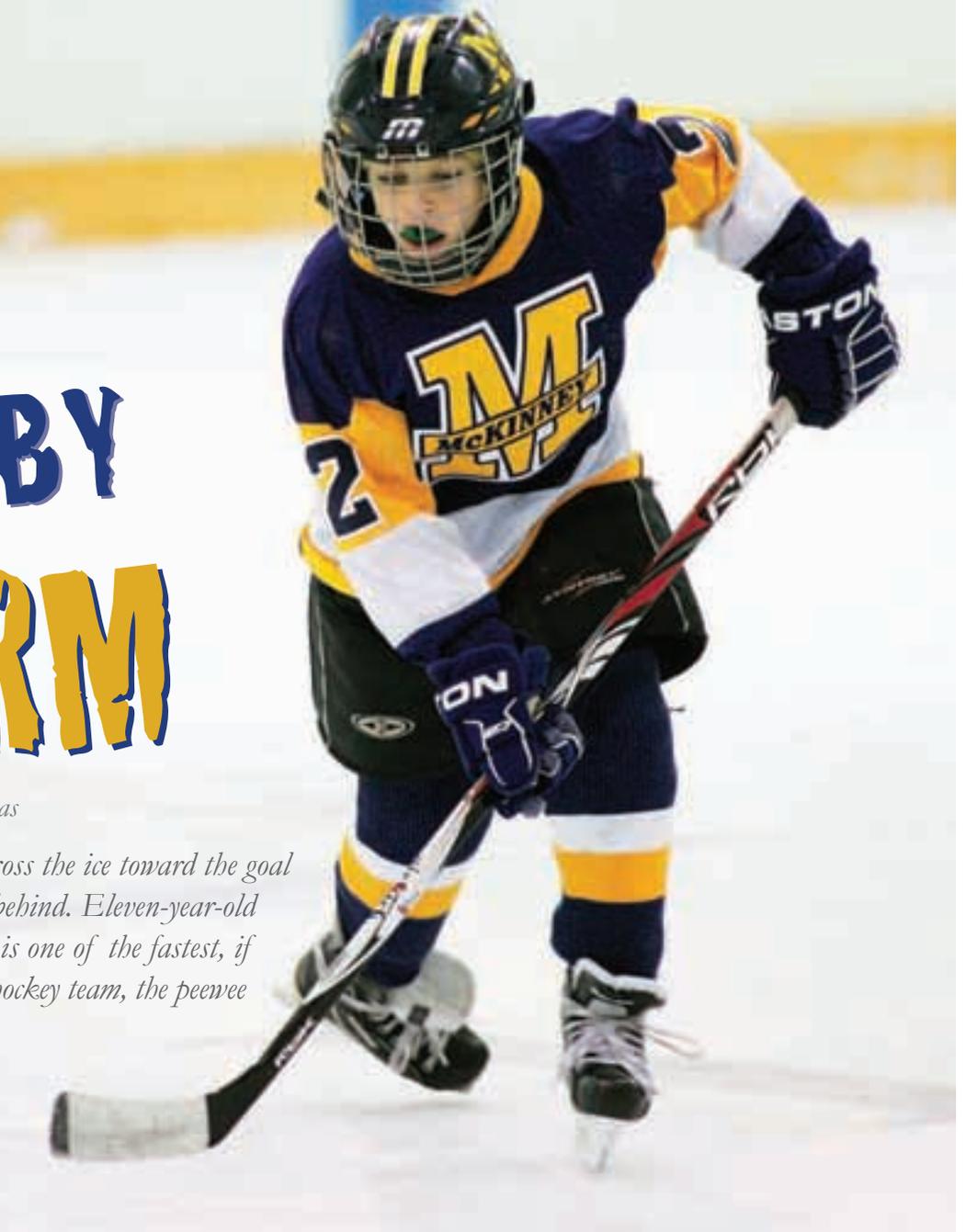
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TAKING THE ICE BY STORM

— By Sydni Thomas

A small, fast blur cuts across the ice toward the goal leaving all the other players behind. Eleven-year-old Trenton Harlin of Waxahachie is one of the fastest, if not the fastest, player on his select hockey team, the pee-wee AA Lions of McKinney.



In a state where hockey is slowly integrating into high school and collegiate sports, more youth league teams are popping up. After the Stars Center in Duncanville was converted into Bob Knight's Fieldhouse, many teams were left disbanded and players began commuting to north Dallas and beyond to find ice.

Trenton's dad, Brad Harlin, and his mom, Kerry McClain, drive him to practice three times a week and then to games on the weekend. They spend seven to eight hours a week in the car usually working on homework or just talking about their day. Each select season runs

six months, starting in September and ending in February. "Generally speaking, hockey families have to commute. It just comes with the sport," Brad said. "Trenton has friends that travel from Wichita Falls, Tyler and Oklahoma to play on travel teams in DFW. Our closest rinks are now in Arlington and Farmers Branch."

Trenton picked up his first pair of skates when he was 6 years old. His dad had taken him to his first Dallas Stars hockey game and during the game, Trenton looked up at him and said he had to play. After begging to go, Trenton's grandpa and grandma took him

out skating for the first time. "It took me a while to learn how to skate," Trenton said. "It's pretty hard. In the beginning I fell a lot, but not so much now. I roller blade after school because it helps me skate better on the ice. This summer I'm going to play roller hockey. It's inside and outside."

"He'd stay out there skating all night on the street if I let him," Brad said. "He kept asking me to take him after that first game, but I couldn't. His grandpa took him out for the first time. My parents watched him in the summer



while I worked, and they signed him up for lessons. In Duncanville they had a program called Kid's First. Kids would get to borrow the equipment and take up to six sessions of hockey lessons. After those were over, he had to play for real. He loved it."

He joined his first team in Duncanville when he was 7. Last year he played for a Grapevine team, and now he plays against them. Finding a team to stay with for consecutive years has been hard for Trenton with rink changes and traveling so far to play. This year he joined the Lions and found the perfect fit. When the coach, Mark Wazny, started putting the team together, he took the youngsters who were trying out to Toronto, Canada, for a tournament to see how they would play together. The Canadian teams were tough, but the future Lions did not quit. They won a game and best of all, they found their team. Almost everyone who went on the trip joined the team.

"I'm the center for the Lions," Trenton said. "I love my team and don't ever want to change teams again. They're all my friends, and we are good. I like my coach, too."

As Trenton progresses through age divisions, more skills and rules are added to the game. This year hitting is allowed. Trenton is the smallest player, but he does not let that stop him. The team spends



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a lot of time in practice learning how to hit and take hits. "Scoring is my favorite thing to do," Trenton admitted. "Hitting is my second. It's a lot of fun."

There are summer leagues that Trenton could play in, but he uses the off season to play other sports. He has played football, basketball, baseball and raced BMX. Currently, the only other sport he plays is soccer in the spring with the Waxahachie youth league. When he gets the chance he wants to play football again. Several of his hockey teammates play other sports. A few of them practice football right after school and then race over to hockey practice. "He has all of these other sports that he wants to play," Brad said. "I will let him, but I always



tell him that other sports means hockey gets scaled back. That usually changes his mind."

Playing hockey, Trenton has had the opportunity to travel all over the country. He has played in San Antonio, Oklahoma, Boston, Toronto, Colorado Springs, and will be going to St. Louis very soon. Trenton played his first outdoor game while in Colorado Springs. "The ice was smooth and easy to play on," Trenton said. "But the air was so cold it was hard to breathe."

"It was 15 degrees outside," Brad said. "They'd never seen steam like they were breathing."

In 2008, Trenton got to compete in the Ace Bailey's "Got Skills" Nationals. He won both the fastest skater and hardest shot events at his regional to advance. "We went to the University of Boston," Trenton said. "I competed against 10 other kids in each event. I came in fourth overall in the fastest skater."

Trenton goes to the Dallas Stars Elite Hockey Club AAA camp each year. Tryouts are by invitation only. "There are kids that return each year for the camp," Brad said. "This year they had about five spots open up, and they invited around

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30 kids to try out for those spots.”

“Camp is a lot of fun,” Trenton said. “I know the coaches already and they are great.”

The Dallas Stars are Trenton’s favorite team. Every season Brad and Trenton try to go to a few games. They go to open practices to watch the team practice. Trenton has scored three autographed sticks from players after practice just

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for asking. His favorite players are No. 63 Mike Ribeiro and Mike Modano, even though he moved to the Detroit Red Wings this season. “I’ve gotten to meet the players like five or six times,” Trenton said. “The sticks I got were used in practices and games. One of them was Trevor Daley’s. Most of the players will sign before practice and stay after practice to sign,” Trenton added.

Not very many athletes play hockey at Northside Elementary, but when Trenton reaches high school he hopes to attend a school that has a team. Even in high school, Trenton will more than likely commute to play on a team, whether it is for a school, his select team or both. “When I’m older, I will play in college,” Trenton said. “And then I will become a professional hockey player.” **NOW**



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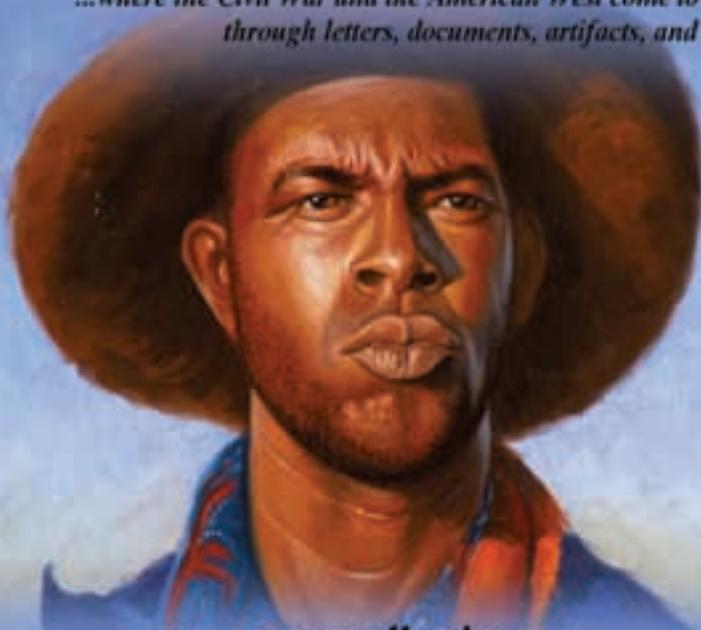
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From left:
Mother and son team Karen and Matthew
Boyett have entered into a third-generation
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Passing the Clippers Forward

Customers get peace of mind at Kountry K-9 Designs.

— By Sandra Strong

For Matthew and Karen Boyett, the best things in life are “furry and four-legged.” As the mother and son team behind Kountry K-9 Designs Pet Services, they make a great pair when it comes to pampering your canine companions. “I learned from my mother,” Karen said, “and now Matthew is learning from me.”

Learning to groom the family dog came after a terrible mishap when Karen was a teenager. “After going through a bad experience with a groomer and the family poodle, my mom decided to learn the art of grooming herself. She purchased a pair of clippers and checked out a book about the subject from the local library.” After seeing what she could do with a little practice, it was not long before others wanted to take advantage

of her services. “My mom was self-taught,” Karen said, mentioning that since she followed in her mother’s footsteps, it seemed only natural that Matthew would follow in hers. “I guess you could say that I’m passing the clippers on to him.”

Before opening the business nearly two years ago, Matthew had choices. He could attend college to further his education or continue working a full-time job. “I didn’t want to go to college,” he confessed. “And I was tired of working for others. Mom said opening a shop of my own would be a ‘third-generation venture,’ a venture she would teach and pass on to me.”

Karen readily admits that things have changed over the years. What was once just basic pampered pet grooming has turned into something much more for your four-legged family

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members. In this day and age, dog owners have a large selection of services from which to choose. In addition to grooming services, Kountry K-9 Designs Pet Services offers pet sitting, doggy daycare and the doggy hotel.

Pampered pet grooming offers your companion a “relaxing day at the spa.” What used to be a simple bath, blow dry and cut has become the ultimate spa experience geared toward enhancing the beauty of your pet or show dog. “But, it also focuses on ensuring their continued health and vitality,” Matthew added.

A “day at the spa” may include whirlpool baths, nail trims, hot oil treatments and teeth cleaning. “Grooming by design” is also offered at Kountry K-9 Designs. “Grooming by design means that we design and groom each dog to their particular breed’s groom,” Karen explained, “or we can design a groom to the customer’s specifications.” Prices for grooming vary depending on size, breed and owner specifications.

“Dogs are extremely social animals who require a great deal of attention and exercise.”

Pet sitting allows your pet to receive “loving care when you cannot be there.” The doggy hotel is a one-of-a-kind facility out in the country on 10 acres, while doggy daycare offers your pet the chance to exercise, socialize and be entertained while they are away from home. “Dogs are extremely social animals who require a great deal of attention and exercise,” Karen said, repeating the sentiments found on the company’s Web site. “Doggy daycare helps improve social skills with other dogs and people,” Matthew stated. “It also provides plenty of exercise and is a great option for your furry, four-legged family member who may suffer from separation anxiety otherwise.” As Karen proudly passes the clippers forward, customers can be assured of the peace of mind they will find at Kountry K-9 Designs Pet Services. **NOW**

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A family medical history is a record of health information about a person and his or her close relatives. A complete record includes information from three generations of relatives, including children, brothers and sisters, parents, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, grandparents and cousins.

Families have many factors in common, including their genes, environment and lifestyle. Together, these factors can give clues to medical conditions that may run in a family. By noticing patterns of disorders among relatives, health care professionals can determine whether an individual, other family members or future generations may be at an increased risk of developing a particular condition.

A family medical history can identify people with a higher-than-usual chance of having common disorders, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, certain cancers and diabetes. These complex disorders are influenced by a combination of genetic factors, environmental conditions and lifestyle choices. A family history can also provide information about the risk of rarer conditions caused by mutations in a single gene, such as cystic fibrosis and sickle cell anemia.

Knowing one's family medical history allows a person to take steps to reduce his or her risk. For people at an increased risk of certain cancers, health care professionals may recommend more

frequent screening (such as mammography or colonoscopy) starting at an earlier age. Health care providers may also encourage regular checkups or testing for people with a medical condition that runs in their family. Additionally, lifestyle changes such as adopting a healthier diet, getting regular exercise and quitting smoking help many people lower their chances of developing heart disease and other common illnesses.

An easy way to begin gathering information about family medical history is to talk to relatives privately at family gatherings. Have they had any medical problems, and when did they occur? Additionally, obtaining medical records and other documents (such as obituaries and death certificates) can help complete a family medical history. It is important to keep this information up-to-date and to share it with a health care professional regularly.

Although the task may seem daunting, there are tools available to help you. The Surgeon General's Web-based tool helps users organize family history information and then share with their health care provider. In addition, the tool helps users save their family history information to their own computer and even share family history information with other family members. Access the My Family Health Portrait Web tool at <https://familyhistory.hhs.gov/>. **NOW**

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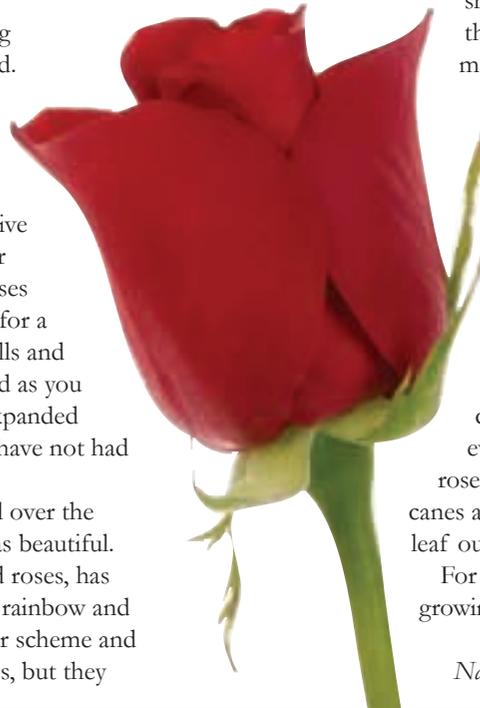
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February Is Rose Time

— By Nancy Fenton

Think of Valentine's Day, and getting roses for a special friend comes to mind. Roses are a sentimental favorite as well as a beautiful flower. A garden full of roses is truly a thing of beauty. You can have a rose garden that will grow, bloom and possibly outlive you, if you plan a bit and do the proper preparation. Ninety-nine percent of roses adore full sun, so when planning, look for a well-drained, sunny spot away from walls and fences. If the spot is not as well-drained as you would like, build it up. Compost and expanded shale will help, as will a soil test if you have not had one on the bed area in a while.

EarthKind roses have been tested all over the nation and found to be sturdy, as well as beautiful. Knock Out, one of the first EarthKind roses, has been cultivated to include pink, yellow, rainbow and blushing white varieties. Plan your color scheme and look around. Hybrids can be great roses, but they



usually bloom only once a year whereas EarthKind roses bloom all season. An attractive bed could include Sea Foam roses crawling over the edges and then a bed built with varying sizes and colors. With the white edging, an apricot yellow small shrub like Perle d'Or or a lilac pink one like Caldwell Pink would begin to show off the multi-color beauty. Depending on the size of the bed, medium and large roses of many colors can be added. They all require sun, careful watering and mulching. Turn your lawn sprinklers away or off, and go to drip- or hand-watering for this bed.

EarthKind roses can be found at local nurseries. Buy small and leave extra room between plants for the air to get through after they mature. Damp leaves and poor air circulation are the primary causes of black spot and other rose diseases.

Any roses already in your beds should be cut back now. Any canes that cross should be evaluated and one of them cut severely. My two roses that struggle in the shade are cut back to 6-inch canes and come on like gangbusters until the trees leaf out!

For a brochure on EarthKind roses and hints for growing, call the AgriLife office at (972) 825-5175. **NOW**

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Are you taking advantage of a Roth IRA?

— *By Adam Rope*

Simply put ... contributing to a Roth Individual Retirement Account (IRA) may be a smart money move. The question then is ... are you taking full advantage? The benefit of contributing to the Roth IRA is the money you put into one of these accounts grows tax free and distributions may be made tax free.¹

If you haven't opened a Roth IRA, do it now. You have until your tax deadline (typically April 15) to set up an account and make contributions for the previous year. Annual contributions are limited; currently the maximum amount is \$5,000.² That means you can invest \$5,000 for 2010, giving you a solid start to your savings.

If you're just starting to invest, the Roth IRA should be one of your first options — even before you open a regular, taxable account or contribute to a workplace retirement savings plan. The only exception is if your employer offers a match on your 401(k) contributions. That's free money you don't want to pass up. You can invest in both a Roth IRA and a workplace retirement plan.

Not sure where to find money to fund your account? Consider investing your tax refund. The amount could be a great start for funding a Roth IRA.

There are specific income restrictions for contributing to a Roth IRA. Contributions are limited and based on the taxpayer's

filing status and Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI). When the taxpayer's income exceeds the eligibility limits for contributing to a Roth IRA, an eligibility phase out period begins.

For 2010, the MAGI phase out range for contributing to a Roth IRA is:

- At least \$167,000 but less than \$177,000 for a married couple filing a joint return or a qualified widow(er)
- At least \$105,000 but less than \$120,000 for a single individual or head of household
- Less than \$10,000 for a married individual filing a separate return

Your exact contribution amount can be calculated using the worksheets found in Publication 590 on the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov.

1. Withdrawals are tax-free if you're over age 59 1/2 and at least five years have expired since you established a Roth IRA. Otherwise withdrawals of gain may be taxable (unless the withdrawal is "qualified") and may be subject to a 10-percent tax penalty.

2. An individual can contribute up to \$5,000 (or 100 percent of earned income, whichever is less) for tax year 2010. If you are over age 50, you are allowed to make additional catch-up contributions of \$1,000 for tax years 2009 and 2010. Your adjusted gross income may limit your contribution amount. **NOW**

Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.

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Calendar

FEBRUARY 2011

February 2-6

Gingerbread House Annual Chili Cook-off and Barn Dance: Ellis County Expo Center. For more information, call (972) 937-1870.

February 8

Educator's Appreciation Tuesday Happy Hour: Bonnie & Clyde's Speakeasy, 100 N. College Street in the Rogers Hotel basement. For more information, call (469) 383-2732.

February 12

"Share the Love" Gala: 6:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Dinner, dancing, wine, roses, chocolate and shopping will be available at this dinner and auction benefiting CASA of Ellis County. \$50 per person. Contact Rhodie Rawls at (972) 937-1455 or e-mail Rhodie at rrawls@sbcglobal.net.

February 15

Deadline for entering the Master Gardener Photo Contest. Entry categories include "single specimen" and "in the garden." Think about vegetables, summer gardens, fall and winter when taking pictures. There is no cost and individuals may enter as many as five photos. Prizes will be awarded. Enter online at www.ecmga.com.

February 21

Lighthouse for Learning/community and continuing education classes begin. Call the Education Office at (972) 923-4631, extension 142, for more detailed information.

February 24

83rd Annual Academy Awards membership meeting: 7:00-10:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. For more information, call (972) 937-2390.

February 25

"A Night at the Canteen": 6:00-8:00 p.m., Texas Motorplex, located between Waxahachie and Ennis. A happy hour and swing dance lessons for "early bird" ticket holders and larger sponsors of next month's Fabulous Forties Fling, a gala dinner and dance open to anyone from the public who wishes to support Meals On Wheels of Johnson and Ellis Counties. For reservations, or to find out more information, please contact the Meals On Wheels office at (817) 558-2840 or (972) 351-9943 or online at www.servingthechildrenofyesterday.org.

February 26

Organist Bradley Welch in concert: 7:30

p.m., First United Methodist Church, 505 West Marvin Street. Concert presented by the Waxahachie Symphony Association. For more information about the concert and ticket pricing, contact Cindy Hess at (972) 814-3621 or Lynn Nolte at (903) 654-8675.

March 5

Woman of Faith's Patsy Clairmont: The Avenue, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. There is a \$25 entry fee that includes a box lunch. \$5 extra fee for childcare. Please register early at www.thevenuechurch.com/events. For more information about the event, call (972) 937-5301.

8th Annual Mardi Gras on the Square Celebration: hosted by College Street Pub, begins at 11:00 a.m. in Singleton Plaza. The Zydeco Stingrays perform starting at noon. The parade around the square will "step off" at 3:00 p.m. For more information about the 8th Annual Mardi Gras on the Square Celebration please, visit www.collegestreetpub.com or call (972) 938-2062.

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



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In The Kitchen With Jack Christensen

— *By Adam Walker*

Jack Christensen began cooking as a boy. “As a chore, I started cooking at about age 11,” Jack explained. “I started improving and seeing cooking as an art when I started my family and could not afford to eat out. If we wanted Italian, I had to learn to make it. Fortunately, I have friends from different cultures who were kind enough to share their own methods to help me improve the cuisine I made for my own family.” Jack really likes to mix it up in the kitchen, trying dishes from every corner of the globe. “Any time that I travel or read about different cultures, I research their cuisine and the local ingredients that are used,” he said. For Jack, the world is his table. **NOW**

Beef Stroganoff

1/4 cup butter
 1 1/2 lbs. milanese or sirloin, cut very thin
 1 medium onion, chopped
 2 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
 1/2 cup beef broth
 1/4 cup ketchup or tomato paste
 1 16-oz. container sour cream
 Salt, to taste
 Pepper, to taste
 Garlic, to taste

1. Melt butter in a large skillet on medium heat. Add sirloin and onion. Sauté until beef is browned and onion has been caramelized.
2. Add Worcestershire sauce, broth and ketchup or tomato paste. Stir until well-mixed.
3. Reduce heat to medium-low. Stir in sour cream and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Season with salt, pepper and garlic to taste.
5. Remove from heat; let sit for 5 minutes. Serve over egg noodles or thin, fried potatoes.

Ethiopian Chicken Stew

1/2 cup vegetable or canola oil
 2 tsp. ground ginger
 3 tsp. cayenne pepper
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
 1/2 tsp. allspice
 1 tsp. black pepper
 1/3 cup butter
 2 medium red onions, finely chopped
 1 clove garlic (or 2 Tbsp. garlic powder added at the end of cooking)
 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
 3 oz. tomato paste (or can of tomato sauce will do)
 3 lbs. chicken, boiled and deboned

1. In a medium bowl, thoroughly combine oil, ginger, cayenne, cinnamon, allspice and pepper. Set to the side until instructed to add spice blend.
2. Heat large skillet to medium. Add butter and allow it to clarify. Add onion (and garlic if in clove form); cook until liquid is nearly evaporated, stirring occasionally.

3. Add lemon juice, spice blend and tomato paste. Reduce heat to medium-low.
4. Stir in chicken and simmer for 30 minutes. Add water as necessary to keep chicken covered.
5. Remove from heat; let sit for 5-10 minutes. Serve over rice, couscous or with flat bread.

Scotch Eggs

1 pint oil
 3-4 lbs. ground sausage, any variety
 8 eggs, hardboiled and peeled
 4 eggs, beaten
 1 cup all-purpose flour
 4 cups bread crumbs or panko

1. Preheat oven to 350 F
2. Heat oil to 375 F in a deep fryer or to medium-high in a skillet.
3. Flatten out sausage into patties that will surround hardboiled eggs. Wrap 1 patty around each egg, ensuring egg is fully covered. Dip sausage-covered eggs into beaten egg. Roll in flour. Roll in bread crumbs until fully coated.
4. Deep fry until all sides are golden and place on paper towel or cheese cloth to remove excess oil.
5. After all eggs are fried, place them on baking sheet or in casserole dish and bake for 10 minutes. Remove; let cool for an additional 10 minutes. NOTE: These can be sliced in half and served as an appetizer.

Easy Chocolate Silk Pie

1 pint heavy whipping cream
 1 tsp. vanilla
 1/4 tsp. salt
 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
 1 box instant chocolate pudding, prepared for pie filling
 1 frozen pie crust, prepared per instructions

1. In a large mixing bowl, add whipping cream, vanilla and salt. Begin mixing on low speed, slowly adding powdered sugar.
2. After powdered sugar is added, switch mixer to high speed; whip until soft peaks form.
3. Gently fold half of the whipped cream into the chocolate pie filling until well-combined.
4. Add pie filling to prepared crust and smooth.
5. Top with remaining whipped cream. Refrigerate until time for dessert.