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ON THE COVER



Dan and Sydney Howell are romantics at heart.

Photo by Vanessa Polozola.

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Editor's Note

Hi there, *WeatherfordNOW* readers!

As February gets underway, many of us are still enjoying the cooler temperatures, while others cannot wait for spring to arrive. Others are getting ready to celebrate Valentine's Day with their loved one with a romantic, candlelight dinner or by decorating heart-shaped cookies with the children. *WeatherfordNOW* is celebrating its two year anniversary in the community. Over the past couple of years, we've had a chance to get to know a little more about many of you in the local community and shared your stories with our readers. I am looking forward to meeting more of you and hearing your great story ideas. If you have someone in mind, who volunteers their time for others, creates artistic pieces to enjoy or has a great meal you have always wanted the recipe for, please let me know.

Happy Valentine's Day, everyone!

Amber

Amber D. Browne
WeatherfordNOW Editor
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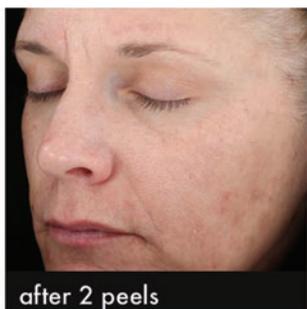
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PULLING AT THE HARP *Strings*

— By Amber D. Browne

As the perfect gentleman, Dan Howell was determined to talk and dance with the beautiful lady he met at a West Coast Swing or “Push” dance class during the summer of 1992. Ever since their first fox trot, Dan and Sydney Howell’s romance has been as instinctive as dancing, and they joined in marriage 19 years ago.



For Sydney, the transition came naturally, like pulling at harp strings — she has played the harp for four decades. Sydney entertains the crowd at local weddings and other venues, but spent nearly 30 years of her career at Texas Christian University (TCU) teaching others how to play. She also spent 15 years performing with the Fort Worth Symphony and has even graced the stage at Carnegie Hall. Locally, she plays at the Wild Mushroom Restaurant and also performs occasionally and records with Octavia, an eight-harp ensemble.

Sydney became captivated by the harp when she was a freshman at Paschal High School in Fort Worth. She was no stranger to music. Her late mother, Margaret Payne, was a piano teacher for 76 years and taught Sydney from the time she was 5. As Sydney matured, she wanted to try another instrument and play in an orchestra. “We went to a symphony concert where the harp was featured, and I got real excited,” Sydney explained. She asked her parents for harp lessons, and they found a teacher at TCU. Eventually, they found another teacher in Ranger, where she had long lessons twice a month. Sydney went on to receive a master’s degree in harp from the New England Conservatory in Boston after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of North Texas. She is active in the Dallas Harp Society, has taught at national Suzuki Institutes and written articles for national harp publications.

Over the years, Sydney has accumulated beautiful harps that now line a large window in her spacious living room, which

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also serves as her studio. She spends time there practicing and teaching her students, who range in age from 5 to 85. Sydney believes in introducing children to music when they are very young. She believes talent is overrated. "Some people learn faster than others," she said. "I teach Suzuki harp, which is the mother tongue or by ear approach," she



explained. "Every child, unless they have a physical disability, learns their native language without any effort. It's the same with music. More important than talent or ability is determination — and practice, discipline and consistency," she said. "Anyone can be successful to the extent of their determination."

This applies in romance, too. Sydney had given up on love after her husband passed away. At the dance class where she met Dan, she was looking for a dance partner not a relationship. "I had decided I was going to be single, and I was okay with that," she said. "I was through shopping." She told God that if He wanted her to have someone, He would have to bring him to her. "And, He did," she smiled.

"I asked her to dance, and we got out on the dance floor. Like an audible click, we were two puzzle pieces coming together," Dan recollected. "It didn't hurt that she's knock-out gorgeous with a beautiful figure. We hit it off right away."

The two have plenty in common. "We both have master's degrees. We both love to travel the world. We both love history," he said. "We're very dedicated to our faith. There are so many parallels — it just goes on and on." Although their paths had crossed throughout their

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young lives, the two never really knew each other. They both attended Paschal High School, and her father also taught Dan's Sunday school class for five years in junior and senior high school. "He was one of the most wonderful men I've known," Dan said of Sydney's father.

Dan fell in love with classical music after taking a music appreciation class as a child. He used his paper route money to buy his first record, which was *The Nutcracker Suite*. His second album purchase was *Swan Lake*. "Now I'm married to a classical harpist whom I've seen play on stage at Carnegie Hall," he said proudly.

Sydney and Dan married in 1993, merging their two families together. They each have three children. Sydney's daughter, Rachel Hunt, owns a ballroom dance studio in Cleburne, where Dan teaches classes. Sydney also has two sons: John in Fort Worth and Peter in Seattle.

Dan's three daughters, Dannelle, Desiree and Deanna, all live in North Texas.

Dan is a retired international pilot. For his retirement flight, all Dan's daughters and their spouses travelled with Sydney on the aircraft for a trip to Paris, France. The couple often travels the world together. They visited Sydney, Australia, shortly after Dan retired. They have also traveled to Thailand, Canada, Germany



and many other countries. Sydney and Dan enjoy spending time together. They often read to each other while commuting and are very involved in their Christian Science church in Fort Worth. The two also perform together and have collaborated on a music CD with Sydney behind the harp and Dan adding vocals.

Besides teaching and performing, Sydney has occasionally donated her time

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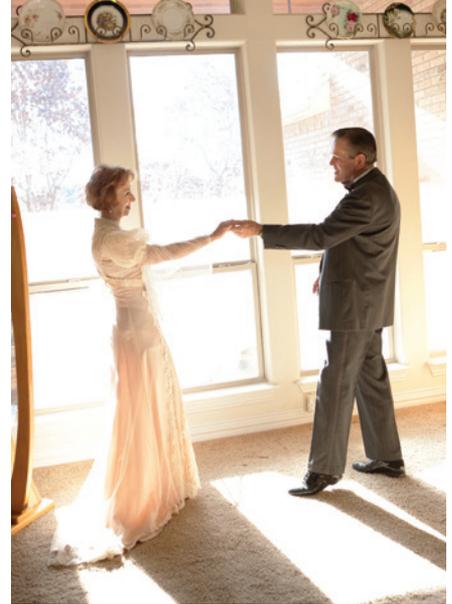
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to play at hospitals and nursing homes. The healing harp music is often used to sooth patients and staff. "The vibrations of the harp have a positive physical affect on the body," Sydney explained. It can include lower heart rates for both staff and patient and provide quicker recovery and more successful surgeries. "Acoustical harp is the best thing," she said.

Playing the harp has also brought Sydney into the pageant world. She was crowned Miss Senior Parker County in 2010. "It was great fun," she said. Sydney played harp for her talent and wore her unique Victorian wedding dress, which included five different lace patterns. "When I won the title I was really shocked!" she exclaimed. "I enjoyed riding in some parades and promoting Meals on Wheels," she shared. Sydney was able to pass on her crown to the couple's 98-year-old friend and fellow church member, Carmen Ashby. Dan escorted Carmen and danced the Rumba with her during the talent competition.

Getting on the dance floor is second nature to both Sydney and Dan. They encourage couples to get involved in ballroom dancing. "In what other sport or activity do you hold each other close in a romantic fashion? It is world-renowned as a major source of relaxation and tension release," Dan explained. "In dance, you put each other first." Whether sharing a dance or simply sitting across the kitchen table from one another, Sydney and Dan often get lost in each other's eyes and share loving glances. Happily married for nearly two decades, they are romantics at heart. **NOW**

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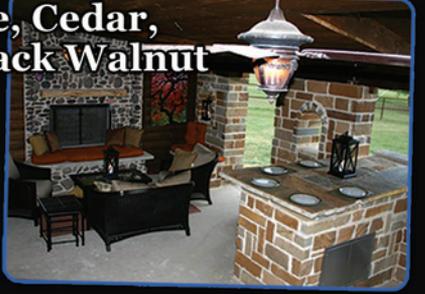
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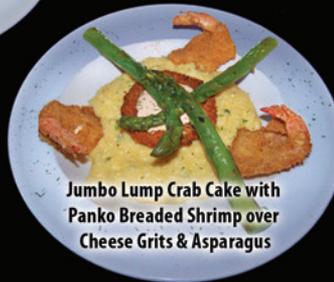
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SPANNING *Generations*

— By Amber D. Browne



Nestled among large oak trees on acres of ranch land in Aledo, Steve and Jerry Reid's home has become a place of comfort and joy for the couple. The Reids inherited the two-story English Tudor home from Jerry's aunt, Dorothy Winston. Dorothy and her husband, Joe, were pioneers and built the stone house in 1933.

Jerry grew up on the property and moved into the house in March of 2000. Her aunt moved into a guest house on the property, and Jerry's parents, Pete and Carrie Jo Kelly, lived in the foreman's house just steps away. All of them have now passed away, but Jerry and her husband keep up the ranch.

AT HOME WITH STEVE AND JERRY REID

"Don't ever say you won't ever go home again, because you might," Jerry chuckled. "I don't mind living in the country," she said. "I like all the animals that come up. We have a family of foxes that come every day, and we have deer that eat my flowers right at the back door."

Jerry enjoys watching the wildlife through the large windows in the sun room. They allow lots of light in, making it bright and cheery for Jerry to enjoy her books. She often sees raccoons, squirrels and a rafter of wild turkeys milling about outside. The sun room and the foyer have original cobblestone flooring from England.

Original light fixtures are found throughout the house, and dark wooden floors give the place a warm feel. "The floor was actually milled out here on the property," Jerry explained.

In the living area, dark wooden beams adorn the ceiling overhead. A comfy, oversized leather sofa and chairs provide plenty of seating in front of a warm fire on a cold winter's night. A collection of crosses line one living room wall, and paintings purchased over the years bring the other walls to life. An antique piano also finds a home in the living area. "I used to play when I was young, because my mother made me. I wish I could play now, but I wasn't that good in the first place," Steve laughed.

They enjoy entertaining friends with a chuck wagon supper in the spring to celebrate their birthdays. Their three children, Steve Reid, Kelly Nelson and Stephanie Bradley visit when they can. "We have seven grandchildren. Four girls and three boys," Jerry said. "They are all old enough to be really busy. They've grown, and they've moved on." But, they still make time to come out to the ranch for family gatherings.



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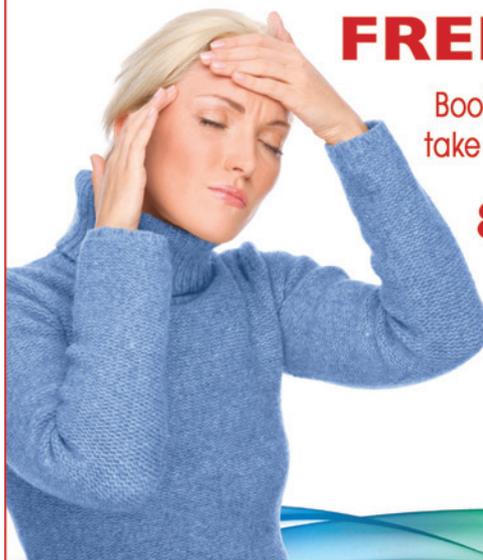


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The Reids have done some remodeling since moving to the property. “The first major project was replacing all of the windows,” she said. About 50 windows were replaced throughout the entire home. They have also renovated one room Dorothy added to the home. “We had it redone to look like the rest of the house. The room was real modern, and it didn’t fit at all,” Jerry explained.

The new room has some office equipment and sitting areas, with family photos proudly displayed. Large

windows and doors let a lot of light into the room, which is where Steve likes to find solitude. “It’s more open. I can see out, watch the road, watch the back,” Steve said.

Steve and Jerry redid the cozy kitchen with all new cabinets and countertops. Jerry painted bricks on one wall in the kitchen. She enjoys painting in her free time. The kitchen opens into a breakfast room, where Jerry has a cabinet for her homemade plum and grape jellies. She gets the fruit from trees and grapevines

on the ranch.

An original smoke house still sits on the property. “When I was growing up, that’s where we smoked hams and bacon. We killed our own pigs,” Jerry explained. A covered rock walkway leads from the home to their two-story office. As a retired football coach, Steve displays his sports memorabilia and keeps his golf clubs in there.

The main home features a downstairs guest room painted peach with two twin beds — their original mattresses date

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from 1933. They were going to get rid of them, but with urging from overnight guests, they decided to keep the comfy mattresses.

At the top of the wooden stair case is a hallway with white, built-in linen cabinets for extra storage. Dorothy was a hair dresser, so her original hair drier bench sits just outside the master bedroom. The master bedroom has a reading nook near a large window. Steve and Jerry can get some fresh air in the morning by stepping outside onto the patio. Or, they can warm up by the wood-burning fireplace. Inside the updated master bathroom, Jerry added a large closet and two copper sinks inset into rustic-colored countertops.



Another guest room, where Jerry lived for a while as a girl, includes an antique trousseau trunk from Steve's grandmother. "Everything I have is something that belonged to somebody else," Jerry said. A Jack-and-Jill bath decorated in black and white connects the room to another guest room with fancy hats on display. Jerry's Aunt Dorothy's hope chest and bed fill up the room.

Jerry likes to recycle and reuse as much as she can. "If you've got it and want to use it, why not? I never understood why people get rid of stuff. Some stuff, but not everything," she said.

Although they are both retired, Steve and Jerry keep busy on the property. "There are a lot of responsibilities that we have out here," Steve said. They do



have help from Marcos Sosa, who has worked on the property for two decades. He helps care for the animals, fences, windmills and anything else that might need a little work.

Even though keeping up the property can take time, Steve and Jerry travel as much as possible. "When he was 68, he wanted to learn to fly helicopters," Jerry said about Steve. So, Steve got his pilot's



license, and now the couple flies to other cities for weekend trips.

Steve met Jerry on a blind date at Texas A&M University in 1958. He attended school there, and Jerry was a student at Texas Christian University. They were married in 1960, and Steve went on to join the Marine Corps. Steve and Jerry have lived in other areas of the country, but, they are happy to have settled on the ranch in Aledo.

"We want to pass it on to the kids down the line. Not many ranches today still have the background of maintaining their property," Steve said. "We're just trying to hold onto it, and keep it like that as long as we can. And, hopefully, our kids will do it as long as they can." **NOW**

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Investing

— By Melissa Rawlins

Together

She's better known as Volunteer Amy, the stay-at-home mom who never stays home. Amy Mercer, along with her husband, George, are teaching their children to serve the community. It all started when their 12-year-old, Macy Jo, was only 2. "We did not have two nickels to rub together, and I didn't know what to do with myself because my house was spotless. George told me, 'Go, volunteer,'" Amy said. She registered Macy Jo in a mother's day out program and got two days a week to herself. While running errands, she saw a poster at the dry cleaners of a woman with a black eye, advertising Freedom House. "I picked up my cleaning and went immediately over there. They did a background check on me, and I started the next week."

Parker County's Freedom House provides shelter and counseling for people fleeing traumatic situations. "They have the rape crisis center where they help women, men and children. It's an impressive institution," Amy said. "I can't stand for people to be hurt by abuse. I wanted to help people get out of the situation,



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and because they come to the Freedom House shelter, they get all their needs taken care of immediately — including security. If somebody's been beating on you, and you finally have the nerve to get out, we want you to stay safe.”

Over the last 10 years, Amy and her daughters, Tommie Ellen, Macy Jo and Chelsea have cleaned windows, vacuumed offices, sorted clothes and organized the monthly garage sales. “My girls are joyful givers,” Amy said, “and we know women who had been helped and then come back to volunteer, because they love that place so much.”

“I don't think there's a more direct way to help people than something like Freedom House,” George said. “The worst of all human conditions is to have no hope. Broke's a situation, poor's a state of mind. I've been broke, but never poor. I've never been without hope.”

George's faith-based background prepared him for the role he now plays. So did his family's pipeline logistics company, which, due to recent success and growth, has allowed the Mercers to participate in strategic philanthropy. “We were blessed to be a blessing,” George affirmed.

Supporting Parker County and teaching their children to participate in the community's growth, the Mercers give both money and elbow grease. “He writes the checks, and I do the work,” Amy said, with a silly grin, casting light on their amazing teamwork. Married for 14 years, the Mercers work together to



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bring good where they can. The family is central, and many weekends they join up in the stands to cheer on Vincent, George's son from his previous marriage. Vincent plays in the Challenger League for people with special needs. "That's a lot of fun. Your hands are hurting so bad from clapping for every child."

No longer bored, Volunteer Amy stays busy September through May, co-producing fundraisers for organizations the couple deems stable, faithful and capable of directly helping families to improve their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. "Amy and I support each other 100 percent, and we view this as a long-term commitment of time and finances," George said, explaining he runs his charitable giving just like his business, with budgets. "It is important for us to continue to support charities we're involved in."

Amy joined Zonta specifically because that organization supports Freedom House, so her efforts on behalf of Zonta help Freedom House all the more. Likewise, the couple supports the Parker County Health Foundation (PCHF) because it is the root of so many local social services. "PCHF supports the health and well-being of women and children," Amy said. "The foundation even gives to dentistry for children!"

Since George likes getting a bang for his buck, he and Amy involve themselves in charities with low overhead. "When you give the money to the PCHF, dollar for dollar more of it goes directly to patients who require the care," George said. "Only one employee with PCHF is paid, and the rest are volunteer board members — successful people who bring that attitude to their charities, as well."

Along with the Parker County Health Foundation and First National Bank of Weatherford, the Mercers produce the PCHF Gala every February on the heels of October's Pink Luncheon. "They support women's rights and provide breast cancer screenings for people who can't afford it," George said. "We help Careity Foundation, PCHF, Zonta and Freedom House because we believe it's more the people's role than the government's to supply such services. We feel responsible and obligated to help."

"My key is early detection," Amy added. "If a woman can get a free

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mammogram and free biopsy, she'll be willing to go."

"This helps remove the financial barriers," George said. "When you can go for services locally, it changes the attitude of the client. I am not a person who believes in getting something for nothing. But this is a moral issue, these are human beings we're talking about, and most of them, in this county anyway, are Christians. We know the safety net is getting tighter in Parker County, because of the amount and quality of volunteers."

Amy has won numerous awards for helping people. She was recently named Woman of the Year by Zonta and Humanitarian of the Year by United Way. "It enhances my soul. God has given me the ability to help," Amy said. "George can give money all day long, but I physically do the work, which makes my heart and soul soar."

This winter, Amy and the hard-working volunteers and board members from PCHF and Zonta have had fun preparing for the PCHF gala. Tasting and selecting the food was certainly less effort than lifting and setting up tables and decorations will be, yet it is all joy for Amy. After the Gala, she will take a brief breather before assisting in the production of Zonta's casino night. Her much-needed summer vacation will involve attending the international convention for Zonta, and then in September, she will help host the Freedom House's garden party. The following month, Careity's Pink Luncheon gets the Mercer's full attention.

For George, the biggest benefit of their mutual investment is personal. "I don't think we're ever as close to God as when we're helping those who need it," he said. "I believe that if I take care of others, the Lord will take care of my family." **NOW**

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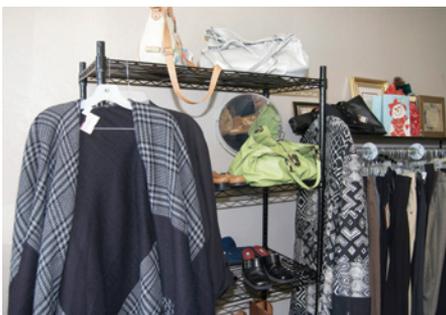
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Michelle Jacoby, owner of Fancy's Plus Size Resale Shop, helps customers pick out that perfect outfit or accessory for any occasion.



Boutique Quality, Resale Prices

Fancy's offers more than just plus-sized clothing.

— By Amber D. Bronne

For Fancy's Plus Size Resale Shop owner, Michelle Jacoby, opening her business in Weatherford was all about serving the local community. "We didn't open the store to make a lot of money or to be anything special. I wanted to help the people," she confessed. Michelle opened Fancy's in Weatherford in November 2011, about a year after the successful launch of her Burleson location. "Everybody has been so awesome. They are thankful that we are here," she said.

"I like to think I break any misconceptions they have when they come in," Michelle said. "When we opened, we wanted it to feel like a boutique — just not with the prices," she said.

Michelle has always loved resale and began to wonder why there was only one rack of plus-sized clothing in many of the

stores she went to, when the average size for today's woman is a 14. Fancy's provides a needed service in the community with its clothing sized extra-large or 14-16 and up. "We also have shoes, jewelry, purses. A little bit of everything."

As a consignment shop, Fancy's pays a certain percentage of the sale price to consignors who bring in items for purchase. "It helps them, and it helps us," Michelle explained. Some of the Weatherford location's 400 consignors come from as far away as Abilene every day with new and gently used items, keeping the store's inventory fresh. "We have a good flow, so everything is pretty new. We are very selective about what we take, so you know when you come in, you'll get quality merchandise," Michelle said. "We have Lane Bryant, Catherines, Coldwater

Creek and Talbots. Chico's is a big one." The store also carries scrubs, pajamas and clothing for special occasions. "We sell a lot of evening wear for cruises and mothers of the bride."

Fancy's puts items on sale after they have been there for 30 days, and the inventory is changed out every 60 days. The consignor has three days to pick up their items, or they are donated to a local organization, such as: Meals on Wheels and the Center of Hope.

When she got the idea to open her first store in Burleson, Michelle had just changed careers from hair stylist to school bus driver. "I didn't open it for me. It was a dream. It didn't come from me," she explained. "I woke up, and He just said, 'You need to do this.'" So, Michelle started driving through Burleson

"We didn't open the store to make a lot of money or to be anything special. I wanted to help the people."

and found a place for rent. The store was up and running within two weeks, and now her mother, Elvira Adams, and sister, Robyn Adams, run it for her.

Michelle's four children and her husband, Pete Rivera, support her fully in her journey into retail. Pete even recently opened Pop's Bookstore with Michelle's father, Richard Adams, just a few doors down from Fancy's in Weatherford. "So, here we are. We have two stores now. I have three employees. I'm able to help so many people," Michelle explained.

Susie Howell works part-time at the store. "There is something for everybody of all generations," Susie said. "I love Michelle to death. She is the best boss. I like coming to work every day. I look forward to it."

And, Michelle looks forward to continuing her work in the Weatherford community. "It's just such a blessing to get to be here." **NOW**

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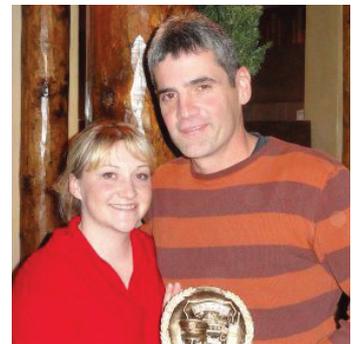
Cory Weaver checks out the wood burnings his brother, Tyler, displays at First Monday.



Josh Sterling receives the Weatherford College Staff Member of the Year 2012 award from the 2011 winner, Lisa Coody.



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Officer Brian Schaechtel is honored as the Hudson Oaks Police Department's 2012 Police Officer of the Year, with his wife, Lindsay.



Tatiana, Yahir, Alex and Maria Mejia finish up some weekend shopping in Weatherford.



First National Bank Weatherford celebrates the opening of the business' new location on College Park with a ribbon cutting.



Matt Tincher and Sheldon Laigle catch a movie at City Lights Theaters in Hudson Oaks.



Korbin and Korah Hayes play at McDonald's in Willow Park while visiting family.



Kaylee Vaughn restocks leotards at The Rock of Sports and Performing Arts in Weatherford.



Caleb Parker and Brittany Huggard pick out birthday candles at Wally's Party Factory.

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Don't Let Low Rates Sink Your Retirement Plans

Over the past few years, if you've taken out a mortgage or another consumer loan, you've probably welcomed the low interest rates you may have received. But as an investor, if you've kept any retirement savings in fixed-rate investment vehicles, you may have seen low rates in a less favorable light. And that's why it may be time for you to take a closer look at your financial strategy for working toward the retirement lifestyle you've envisioned.

Of course, you can always hope that interest rates will rise, and perhaps they will. As you may know, the Federal Reserve has kept interest rates at record lows in recent years to stimulate lending and thereby boost the economy. But rates can't get much lower, and if inflation were to heat up, the Fed could reverse course by starting to raise rates.

However, if you're going to do a good job of building financial assets for retirement, you really can't afford to play wait-and-see with interest rates. Instead, consider the following moves:

- **Rebalance your portfolio.** No matter what your situation, it's a good idea to periodically rebalance your investment portfolio to help ensure it still reflects your risk tolerance, time horizon and long-term goals. If you're concerned about low rates harming your future investment income, you have more reason than ever to review your portfolio and make adjustments as needed, relative to your objectives. For example, if it seems that your portfolio has become "overweighted" in any one vehicle, you may need to change your investment mix, keeping in mind your individual risk tolerance.

- **Redefine "retirement."** Retiring from one career doesn't have to mean retiring from work altogether. If you decide to work part time, do some consulting or even open your own small business, you may be able to earn enough income to take some of the pressure off your investment portfolio in terms of providing you with the money you need to live on during retirement. Also, by working during your nominal retirement years, you may be able to delay taking Social Security until you're a little older, when your monthly checks can be larger.

- **Review your withdrawal strategy.** During your retirement, the amount you choose to withdraw from your investments each year will depend on several factors, including the size of your portfolio and the amount of income it is providing. As you chart your retirement strategy, you'll need to factor in a realistic withdrawal rate.

- **Re-examine sources of investment income.** You may want part of your retirement income to come from investments that offer protection of principal. If so, you don't have to settle for the lowest-rate vehicles. By looking at the various alternatives and blending them with your overall portfolio, you may be able to boost your income without significantly increasing your investment risk.

In short, just because interest rates are low, you don't have to lower your retirement expectations — as long as you plan ahead and explore your options. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Gregg Davis is an Edward Jones representative based in Willow Park.

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**\$178
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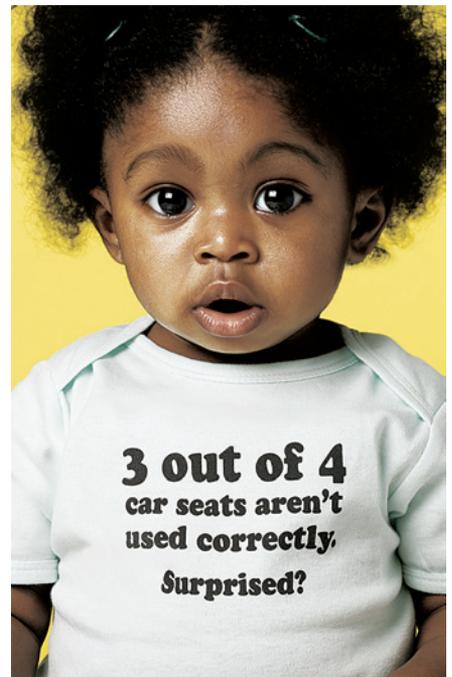


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Calendar

FEBRUARY 2013

February 8

Parker County Newcomers Club Meeting: 10:00 a.m., Alkek Fine Arts Building of Weatherford College, 225 College Park Ave. Guest speaker Col. Kim Olson representing "Grace After Fire" will discuss help available for female veterans to return to civilian life after military service. A buffet lunch begins at noon. Please call (817) 594-5127 by **Sunday, February 3** to make reservations.

The cost is \$10 per person. For more information, visit pcwnc.org

3rd Annual Sweet on Business Networking Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Dr. At the luncheon hosted by the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce Business Development Committee, attendees can network as they change tables for each of three courses. The cost for chamber members is \$20 and \$25 for non-chamber members. You can RSVP at (817) 596-3801 or email pehutton@weatherford-chamber.com.

February 9

Parker County Live Show: 3:00-5:00 p.m., Texas Opry Theater, 315 York Ave. The variety show will feature music from local and regional talent. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased online at www.parkercountylive.org or at the door. For more information, contact Don Webster at (817) 771-8368 or donlwebster@yahoo.com.

February 19

57th Annual Weatherford Rotary Pancake Supper: 5:00-7:30 p.m., Weatherford High School Cafeteria, 2121 Bethel Rd. Pancakes and bacon will be served, and a silent auction and raffle will be held. Funds raised will help local students through scholarships, literacy initiatives and school-readiness programs. Tickets are \$5 in advance or \$8 at the door. They can be purchased at the Weatherford Chamber or from any Rotary Club Member. Please contact (682) 229-2407 for more information.

February 21

Go Red. Think Pink: 5:00 p.m., Doss

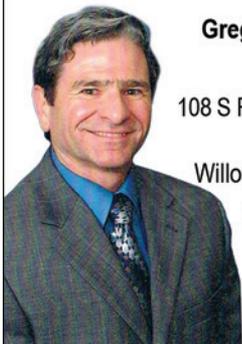
Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Dr. The event hosted by the Healthy Woman program at Weatherford Regional Medical Center and the Zonta Club of Parker County begins with a chocolate and wine tasting followed by physician presentations, dinner and door prizes. Tickets are \$10 per person. Call Nadia Nazeer at (817) 599-1699 for more information.

February 23

2013 Parker County Health Foundation Charity Gala: 6:30 p.m., The Worthington Renaissance Hotel, 200 Main St., Fort Worth, TX. The gala benefits the foundation's project to enhance the health and well-being of underserved Parker County citizens. A portion of the proceeds will go toward colon cancer awareness. Visit www.parkercountyhealthfoundation.org or call (817) 594-1990 for more information.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to amberbrowne@nowmagazines.com.

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In The Kitchen With Tracy Paulsen

— By Amber D. Browne

If she could choose to do one thing in the kitchen, Tracy Paulsen would spend her days baking. She first started baking 20 years ago after inheriting her grandma's cookie recipes. "I still make her cookies every year," Tracy explained.

Tracy finds many of her recipes on Pinterest or in her favorite magazines. "Sometimes, I'll change a recipe's ingredients according to what my family likes. I may omit something, change a spice or add something I think will make it better," she explained.

Tracy enjoys sharing her treats with her Aledo United Methodist Church preschool co-workers at their monthly birthday luncheons. She spends most weekends watching her three boys play baseball and entertaining family and friends with a big meal. "We love to eat and talk about food!" **NOW**

Robin's Carrot Cake

- 1 1/2 cups vegetable oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 3 cups carrots, shredded
- 1 cup walnuts (or your favorite nut), chopped

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Beat oil and sugars together until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time. Add next 5 ingredients with the liquid mixture. Mix well.
3. Stir in shredded carrots and nuts.
4. Bake in a greased and floured 9x13-inch pan for 45 minutes.

Cream Cheese Frosting

- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 stick butter
- 24 oz. powdered sugar

1. Mix together all ingredients. You can add more powdered sugar if you desire.

Swedish Nut Sticks

- 1/2 lb. butter
- 1 cup + 6 Tbsp. powdered sugar (divided use)
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla
- 1 cup walnuts, finely chopped

1. Cream butter with 6 Tbsp. sugar.
2. Mix in next 3 ingredients until soft dough forms.

3. Roll into sticks approximately 2-inches long. Bake at 350 F for about 15-20 minutes, until lightly browned.

4. Pour remaining sugar into small bowl. When almost completely cooled, roll the nut sticks in the powdered sugar.

Santa's Cookies

(Not just for Christmas time!)

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 egg, well beaten
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup oatmeal
- 1 cup cornflakes
- 1/2 cup coconut, shredded
- 1/2 cup walnuts or pecans, chopped

1. Mix butter and sugars until creamy. Mix in egg and vanilla.
2. Add in flour, soda, salt and baking powder.
3. Mix in next 4 ingredients.
4. Roll into small balls; place on baking sheet. Bake at 350 F for 10-15 minutes.

Meringue Cookies

- 2 egg whites
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 6-oz. pkg. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup walnuts (or your favorite nut), chopped

1. Beat egg whites, salt, cream of tartar and vanilla until soft peaks form.
2. Add sugar slowly, beating until forms stiff peaks.
3. Fold in chocolate chips and nuts.
4. Cover baking sheet with plain brown paper. Drop rounded teaspoons of mixture onto baking sheet. Bake at 300 F for about 25 minutes.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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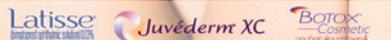
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