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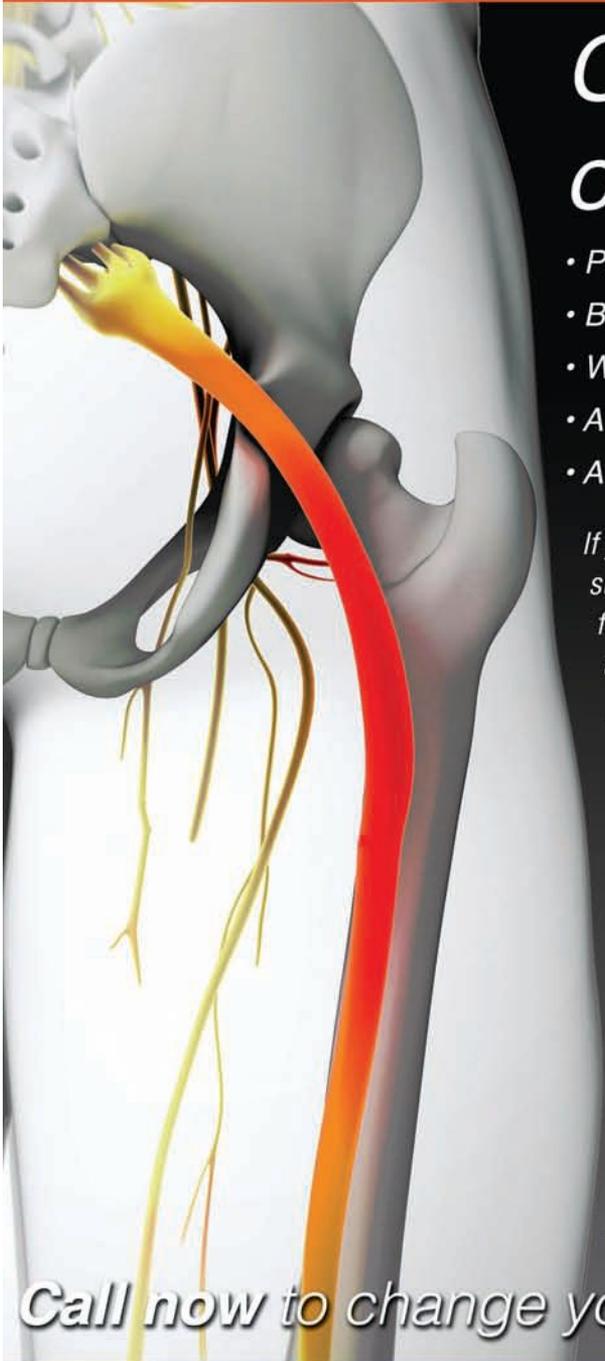
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## ON THE COVER



Heli-Hunter star, Craig Meier, offers a unique opportunity to sportsmen that benefits local farmers.

Photography by Tyler Russell.

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# Editor's Note

Hello, Ennis!

February is known for many things — black history, presidential birthdays, valentines, Mardi Gras and the peculiar tradition of attempting to predict the length of winter via groundhog shadows. I wonder if ole Punxsutawney Phil will see his shadow this year? I certainly hope not. I would much prefer an early spring. But cold or not, I am always grateful for February's arrival as the short winter days begin to get just a little bit longer.

This year, Chinese New Year also falls in the second month of the year. My brother spent three years teaching in Taiwan, and would come home for visits during this celebration bearing little red envelopes with cash inside (a traditional Chinese gift given for holidays or special occasions). Those were popular with everyone. It was like having Christmas all over again!

May your heart be warmed by the traditions that mean the most to you this month!

## Becky

Becky Walker  
Managing Editor  
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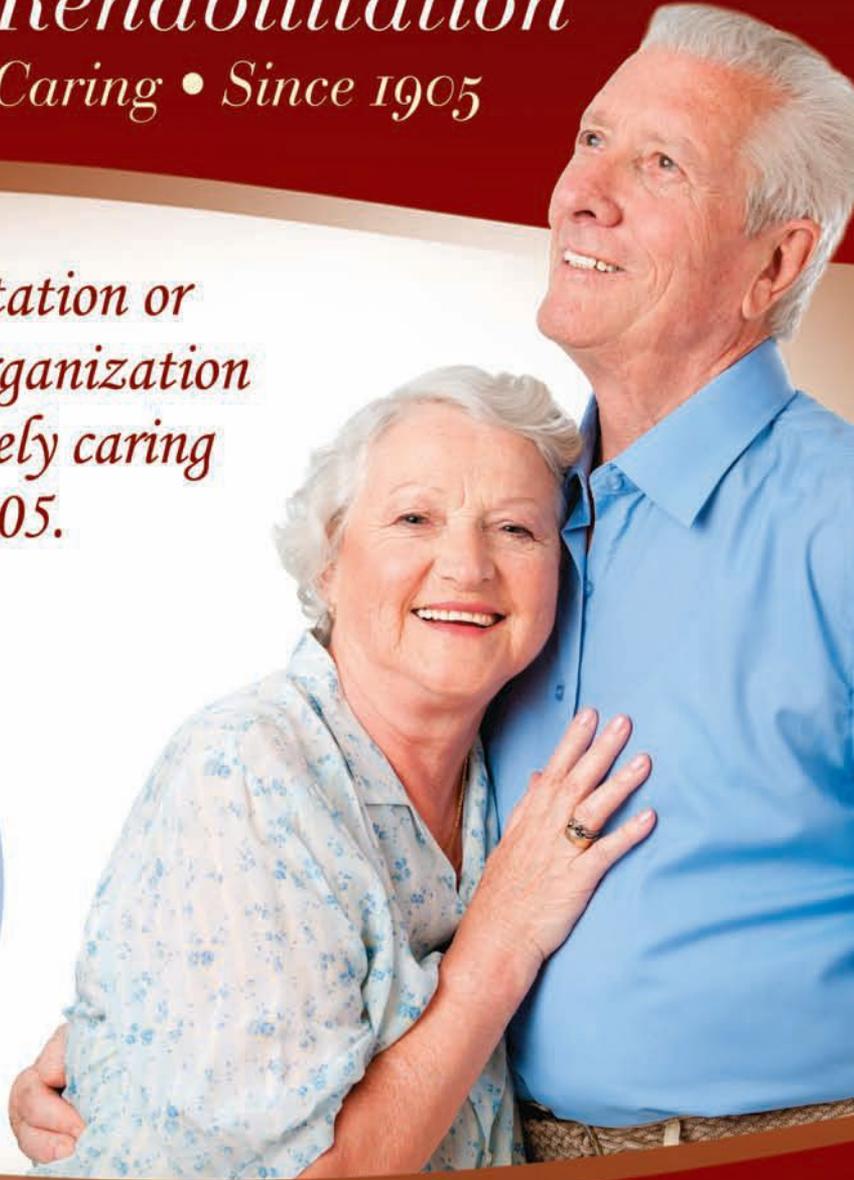
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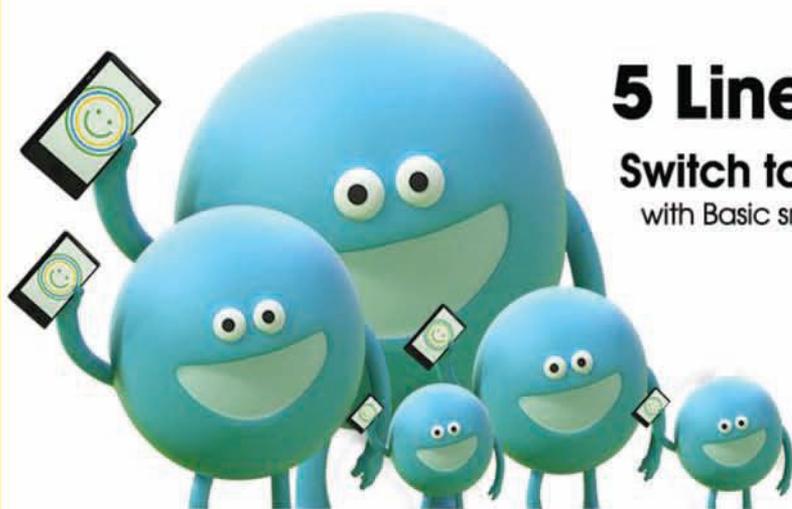


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# SHOOTING FROM THE SKY



— By Callie Revell

*Craig Meier, a born and reared Ennisite, works as a full-time auctioneer in Dallas and Ellis County. However, these days he might be more recognizable as one of the stars of the hit TV show Heli-Hunter on the Sportsman Channel. “I’ve been hunting since I was old enough to walk and follow my dad,” Craig said. “I’ve always enjoyed hunting. I like getting out in the woods and being in nature. It’s a peaceful time. I also enjoy the challenge of it.” Craig has experienced hunting many different species, including quail, dove and deer. “I remember hunting as a food source for us growing up,” he said. “We ate a lot of venison.” Nowadays, Craig sets his sights on a different target — feral hogs.*

There’s a good reason Craig didn’t hunt feral hogs when he was young. “They actually weren’t around when I was a kid,” he recalled. Craig left Ennis in 1995 and moved back in 2001. In that time, many areas of Texas became overwhelmed with feral hogs. “That’s how fast the hog population grows,” Craig said. “Their reproduction rates are astronomical.”



The hogs became a personal problem for him when he bought his ranch southwest of Ennis. “I wanted to plant grass to raise cattle, and the hogs were tearing it up so badly that I was constantly fixing what they were tearing up,” he remembered. “It was a pretty big problem the first few years we were there.”

Craig would set his alarm to wake up several times throughout the night, so

he could scare the hogs away. All of the neighbors had the same problem. “They’d be in big herds, and you’d shoot a couple of them, but the rest of them would just run to the neighbor’s place,” Craig said. “We would just chase them back and forth. It wasn’t a solution at all.”

The hogs are more than just a nuisance. They are absolutely crippling to local farmers. According to Texas A&M

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AgriLife Extension Service estimates, in 2006, feral hogs were doing \$550 million of damage annually in Texas. Not only that, but feral hogs can cause injuries to livestock, pets and even people. "They can be very dangerous," Craig said, pointing out that people also hit them all the time with cars, causing even more property damage. The hogs are not an indigenous species, so they disrupt the natural environment. They also carry disease



and pose a threat to endangered animals. Because they reproduce so quickly (the average sow can produce 150-200 young in her lifetime), it seems impossible to eradicate the population. However, Craig and his team have devised a way to at least make an attempt to control it.

Texas allows hunters to hunt feral hogs year-round. However, hunting hogs on foot or with a ground vehicle can be ineffective. The only other option on the ground is trapping. "Trapping can be good," Craig said. "But hogs become what we call trap savvy. They figure out what traps are, and they won't go in them, no matter what." In 2009, Craig heard that hunting from a helicopter can yield the best results. "A bunch of my neighbors got together that first year," Craig said. "We killed over 1,700 hogs from the helicopter. That was the first year I saw a difference." He saw results that gave him hope that the land could be returned to its former state. "With regular hunting, in a group of 25 hogs, you're lucky to kill one or two," he said. "With the helicopter, I kill all of them. They can't get away." Soon, a law was passed that allowed Craig to



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turn heli-hunting into a sport. "The state was spending so much money trying to keep hogs in control," he explained. "This was a way they could take the financial responsibility off the landowners and place it on the shoulders of the willing, the sportsmen."

Craig joined forces with Terrell Coleman of Longview in 2011. Their methods gained national attention when they took several television hosts hunting in a helicopter. "The ratings actually broke a lot of the records for outdoor television," Craig said. "We did it a second year, and the ratings were even better than the first year." Because the guest episodes were such a hit, the Sportsman Channel approached Craig and his team about doing their own show. *Heli-Hunter* aired last summer with eight episodes, and a second season is in the works. Filming takes place in the Ennis area.



When it was on the air, *Heli-Hunter* was the No. 1 rated show on the network.

Although the reaction to the show has been outstanding, it has raised some important issues. "There are some hunters who question if it's ethical. We get comments that say it isn't really hunting," Craig said. "The show is a great avenue



to educate people on why we do what we do." He wants viewers to understand why the hogs need to be controlled. "The damage they do is extensive, and I think we've been able to control it in this area,"

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Craig said. However, he knows there is no hope of wiping out the hog population for good. "We killed 4,000 pigs in three months last year. There were 4,000 pigs born in the state of Texas this morning. We're in no way winning the battle, but we have been able to control the numbers in certain areas where people are trying to make a living off the land."

When the hogs are shot, they don't go to waste. Craig and his team collect them and store them for a charity called Hogs for a Cause, which processes the meat into sausage. "They distribute the meat to needy families," Craig said. "We gave away over 25,000 pounds of processed sausage this year."

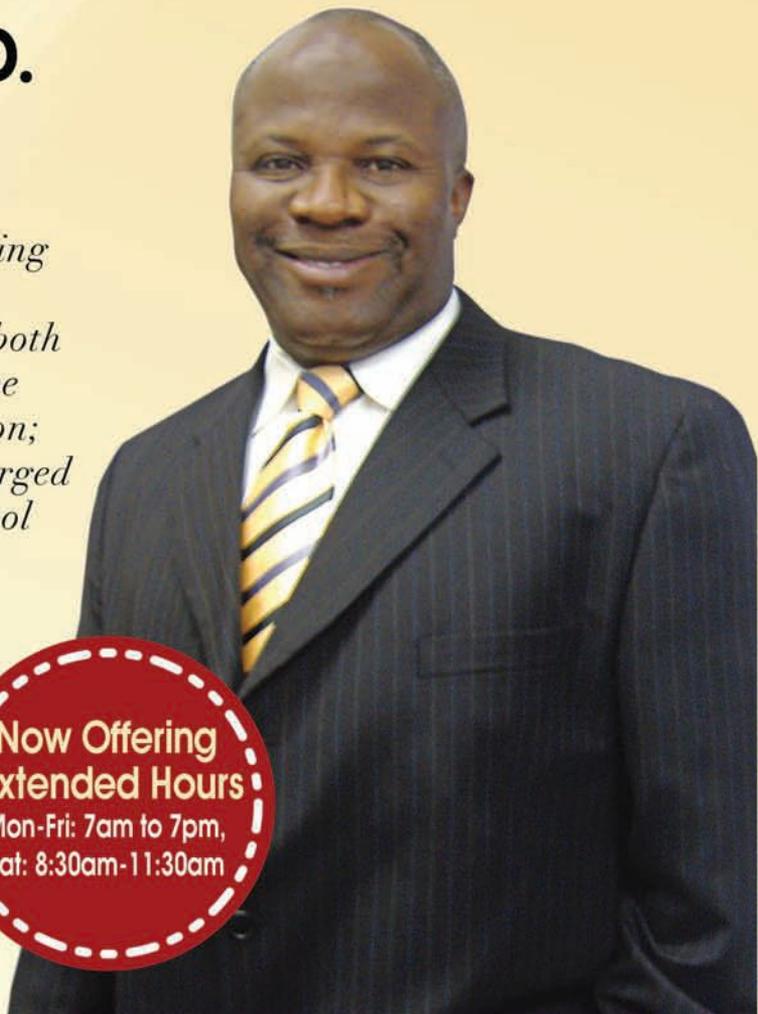
Since hunting from a helicopter can be dangerous, all participants have to wear safety harnesses and go through training. The team doesn't hunt during deer season to avoid hunters on the ground. They always hunt during the winter, so the foliage is off the trees and visibility is clear. "We take a lot of precautions to be safe. We're accustomed to shooting around roads, houses and cattle. I raise cattle myself, and we are mindful of people's livestock," Craig said. They use shotguns for safety reasons. "Shotgun bullets go 75 or 100 yards and die," he pointed out. "They aren't like rifle bullets that can fly off and go half a mile." Craig even developed his own shotgun, the TAC-12 A1, for use on the helicopter.

In the end, the results speak for themselves. "I can tell you firsthand as a landowner, this is the first time we've ever found anything that actually made an improvement with the hog population," Craig said. Farmers throughout the area can reap the benefits as sportsmen get the once-in-a-lifetime experience of hunting from the air. **NOW**

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# A Blessed Life

— By Randy Biggam

*Ennis is loved by all who grew up in the town and its environs, but it might be appreciated even more by those who chose to relocate here. Rosalie Wilson is a local resident who's lived in the Bluebonnet City only for the last eight years but who values the place as if it were her hometown. "I moved half a continent to come to Ennis," smiled Rosalie, a retired federal government executive whose career in Washington, D.C., brought her into the orbit of the country's movers and shakers. "But when I visited my brother, who married an Ennis girl, I just found the town so charming."*

Randy Rankin, Rosalie's brother, suggested she consider moving here, too, but it wasn't until she came for another visit, at Christmastime, that she decided to follow his advice. "The selling point for me was the Lights of Ennis," Rosalie admitted. "I thought then that I would love it here."

It wasn't exactly a culture shock, since Rosalie had been reared in Harrisonburg, Virginia, a small town about the size of Ennis. "The Appalachian Mountains are the home of my heart. They're very much a part of me," she said. But living in Ennis was a major change from the nation's capital, where she spent 33 years as director of personnel training for the Federal Highway Administration. "My home was in Arlington, and there was only one stoplight between there and downtown D.C.," she related. "So I had really become a city girl."

Yet after seeing the town in its holiday splendor, coming here with her son, Brian, wasn't a hard decision. "I love Ennis and the people here," Rosalie confirmed. "The informality and the easy pace of living are great, and I love being retired!"

That's not to say she didn't enjoy her time with the Department of Transportation in Washington. "It was challenging but it was also fulfilling," she commented. "I worked well with both parties and made





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lasting friendships there.” Watching job recruits prosper was a source of pride for Rosalie. Among these were engineers who completed the Pan-American Highway and the infrastructure supporting the Alaska Pipeline. But she counts the teaching and writing she undertook in connection with Vice President Al Gore’s Total Quality Management campaign as the most satisfying phase of her professional life.



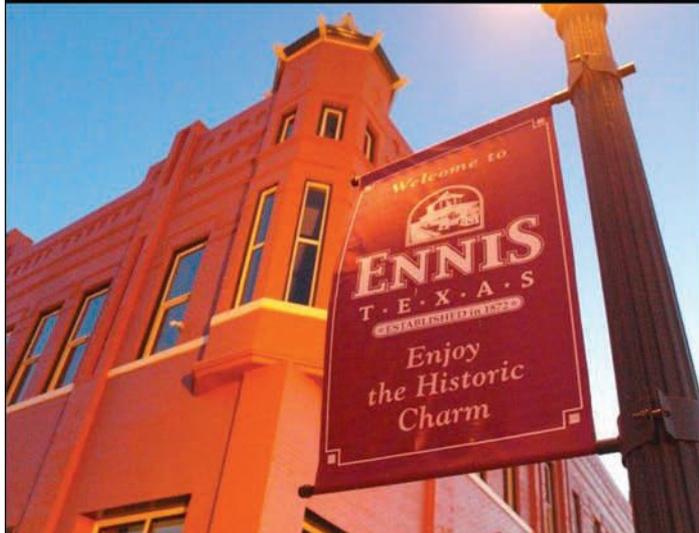
“Definitely, the most rewarding part of my career was when I was on detail to the Office of Management and Budget,” said Rosalie, adding that it was her “West Wing time.” In fact, her office was located right around the corner from the White House.

Now happily ensconced in Ennis, the home in which Rosalie has chosen to enjoy her retirement is exactly what she wanted, designed to her specifications and built on land she selected. Finding a floor plan she liked in a magazine, she asked a local architect to draw it up with slight alterations. “I knew I wanted a

single story plan with a master bedroom on one end of the house and guest rooms on the other,” she said.

Completed in 2006, the 11-room house, nestled in a quaint gated community, perches on a picturesque hill that’s barely perceptible from the road. There’s a wide driveway and a double garage situated at an angle to the residence, lending convenience as well as unique curb appeal. The green-trimmed façade is prettily landscaped while the patio, running the length of the rear of the home, overlooks a little, tree-strewn valley. This eye-catching view, observed

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from the patio or through the living room windows that open onto it, reminds Rosalie of her old Virginia home. "I was immediately drawn to the lot, so I shook hands on it with the builder, David Maliska," she recalled, "and when construction was completed, the place was mine."

Boasting tall ceilings and an open, welcoming arrangement of rooms, the interiors have been decorated by Rosalie's sister-in-law, Peggy Holland Rankin. "I have no flair for decorating," Rosalie laughed, "so it's all Peggy's doing — the flowers, the selection of furnishings — and I love it all." Peggy, active in the Ennis Garden Club and co-author (with Laurie Wilson) of *Ennis: Images of America*, applied her creativity to incorporating Rosalie's peace-loving nature into the home's style. Against walls painted a shade of golden wheat, Peggy added dark wood furniture with creamy beige upholstery mingled with forest green, chocolate brown and taupe accents in pillows, throws and curtains.

"The neutral color scheme is intentionally the same throughout the house," Rosalie clarified. "Peggy's idea to have a continuation of the colors from room to room is a good one, because they're so restful." It's also a practical devise, enabling Rosalie to move pieces about if she wants or to add new, basic elements without worrying about



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clashing tones. Most importantly, Peggy has captured her sister-in-law's soothing personality in her color plan, blending that trait with Rosalie's unerring love for the state of her birth. "They're the colors of the Appalachian woods," Rosalie smiled. "So I've brought my mountains with me!"

The furniture is mostly new, purchased after moving to Texas. She did bring from Virginia the grand piano that graces her living room and three Oriental rugs, one of which carpets the dining room. She doesn't care much for antiques, although a very old vase also adorns the dining room, along with a vintage-inspired chandelier.

If there's a theme to Rosalie's home, it is Christianity in modern art. Everywhere (but especially in the living room) there are specimens of fine prints, watercolors and some oil paintings. Most depict biblical scenes. Many of the pictures



are by Pat Mercer Hutchens, the well-known artist and Hebrew scholar and a great friend of Rosalie's. Other paintings display the talents of her late mother and local friends, including Tabernacle's Rev. Dick Moody. Paintings by Rev. Moody's mother beautify a wall in the master bedroom.

With her son and daughter-in-law, Jennifer, Rosalie (now a grandmother of three little ones) enjoys entertaining friends from church as well as out of town visitors. "We love the Texas wildflowers so, during Bluebonnet Fest, we normally have house guests," she said. But on quiet days, Rosalie curls up with a book and her beloved feline, Maggie, now 10 years old.

Life only gets richer for this active lady who gratefully counts the blessings that a life of faith has made possible. "I treasure my dependence on the Lord and my relationships with family and friends," Rosalie shared. "They're the most important things in life." **NOW**

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# GOOD STOCK

— By Callie Revell

*Don Griffith has lived in Ennis all his life, and he can't imagine being anywhere else. He and his wife, Becky, operate a cattle ranch outside of town. "I grew up in Ennis proper, but I always wanted to live in the country," Don observed. "I like the peace and quiet." Even though the land belonged to his family for years, he and Becky were the first to live on it. "We built this house when we got married in 1962," he said. The property had plenty of space to raise tiger stripe cattle and, eventually, their seven children.*



In 1968, Don made a career choice that changed his life. "I soon realized the ranch wasn't going to be sufficient to support a growing family," Don explained. "So, I became a stockbroker and just fell in love with the market. Raising seven children, I couldn't have made it otherwise." For Don, the thrill of the stock market was second to none. "Every day when it starts, it's like a new football game," he enthused. "They're kicking off, and you're in the game all day long. There's a lot of energy in a broker house. I loved it."

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However, being a stockbroker came with a serious learning curve. "I was not really that attuned to it at first," Don admitted, "but I was always ready to go to work. That's a blessing right there. There were some difficult times when I lost money, but that's part of the process. When I made a mistake, I remembered why I made it." His career allowed him to sustain his ranch, and it also gave him a working knowledge of the business world that proved invaluable. "The financial market is the hub of all the business that's going

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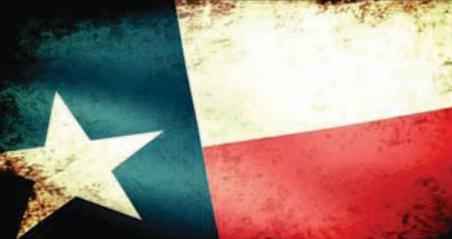


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on,” Don said. “When you get into that, it gives you a good overall picture of how business works.”

That knowledge allowed Don to prepare adequately for retirement, and now he enjoys sharing his expertise with others. “Oh, how I wish I knew at 20 what I know now about the market and



life,” Don laughed. “It would’ve been a big help.” Don believes an understanding of how the stock market works can help anyone hoping to be financially secure. “If you know what you’re doing, the market is a fabulous vehicle for retirement,” Don said. “If you start early, that would almost assure you of a reliable retirement at age 65. You need to let the compounding of time benefit you.” Don’s wisdom comes from his own ups and downs in the field. “I made a lot of mistakes,” he confessed, “but other people don’t have to make the same mistakes.”

To share his financial know-how, Don recently published a book, *Wall Street Made Simple: Supercharge Your Retirement*. He started the project in October 2013, writing when he had time, and completed the project in early March last year. “After being in the game 40 years, I know how long it takes to understand the stock market,” he said. “So why die without sharing the information?” Don hopes his book will help young people, especially graduating high school seniors, enter the workforce with financial dexterity. “They have to work hard, but they need to learn how to make their money work hard for them,” Don pointed out. So far, Don has

received positive feedback from readers who have benefited from the advice he has shared.

Over the years, Don's goals and priorities have changed. He received his bachelor's degree from St. Mary's University, but he eventually decided to go back to school for his master's degree, which he completed in 1992. As a member of St. John Catholic Church, Don was inspired to continue his education by becoming a deacon. "A fellow church member, a lady who watched me grow up, kept coming up to me and saying, 'You need to be a deacon,'" Don remembered. "She was just relentless. Every time she saw me, she told me the same thing, so I finally took her suggestion to heart and applied, and I was accepted."

Don received his Master's in Systematic Theology from St. Mary's University. "I really have enjoyed it," Don said. "When I got ordained as a deacon, it became a big focus."

Now that he's retired, Don also enjoys his hobbies. He has always loved golf and tennis and still duck and dove hunts on his land. "I hunt with all my children,"



he said. "The boys especially like it." However, most of his time is spent working on the ranch.

Although he's used to the challenges of a career as a stockbroker, the ranch can, at times, be just as unpredictable.



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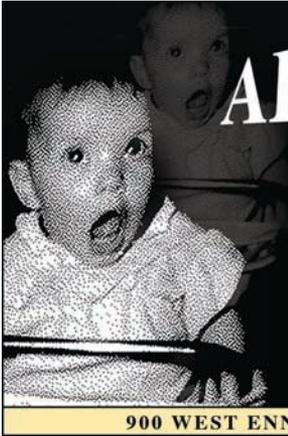
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“There is no normal day here,” Don shared. “There’s always a lot to do. You’ve got mesquite trees to eliminate, hay to make, grass to grow, weeds to get rid of, and cattle to take care of and vaccinate. It’s a full-time job.” Don’s ranch currently boasts 85 grown cows, a handful of calves and five horses, all raised on a piece of land that has a special place in his heart.

“God gave me some pretty land,” Don said, surveying it from high ground, the stretch of space filled with billowing grass, scattered trees and groups of cattle drawn together in the shade. “How about that for a view?” he smiled. “On a real clear day, you can see the skyline of Dallas. It twinkles at night.” For Don, there’s no other place on earth he would

**“After being in the game 40 years, I know how long it takes to understand the stock market.”**

rather live, and his family agrees. “My wife had lived in Dallas,” Don said. “But any time we cross the Trinity River now, she always thanks me for bringing her to Ennis.”

Don is grateful he’s been able to support his family through the satisfying work he’s accomplished in finance and on the farm. He hopes he’s passed on his business wisdom to his children and offers them advice when he can. Those kids have since blessed him with 16 grandchildren, and Don is thankful for his big family and the long, happy marriage he’s enjoyed with Becky. Through everything, Don has maintained humility and grace. “I’m not an expert by any means,” he chuckled. “There are three things I know a little bit about: the market, Scripture and cattle. That’s enough for me!” **NOW**



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# Before You Tie *the* Knot

— By Shannon Pfaff

*From the dress to the favors, the cake to the invitations, a wedding has many components that need to come together. There are countless options to choose from. You may find yourself overwhelmed trying to narrow down the scope of your choices in order to help you decide on the individual pieces of your big day. A great way to do that is by choosing a theme for your wedding.*

A theme ties all of your ideas together, so your ceremony and reception flow with each other. You can choose a song, season, pattern, color, etc. around which to build your wedding. What type of wedding do you want to have? Would you prefer a more modern wedding or something rustic? Maybe your dream-come-true wedding is a fairy-tale style affair. Perhaps you would like to create your special day around your favorite color. Maybe you have already found the perfect dress, and you'd like to design the wedding around its style. The theme of your wedding can be anything you desire it to be.

Choosing a theme can also be a creative way to

illustrate who you and your husband-to-be are as a couple. Are you an adventurous pair? Did you meet in an unusual way? Do you have a mutual passion, such as music or food? The things you enjoy together can create a unique theme. Your individual family heritage can also be a beautiful backdrop for your wedding.

Once you have decided on your theme, you can have the wedding professionals you employ help you incorporate that theme into each aspect of your wedding. When you are choosing your wedding gown, a bridal consultant can help you with dress options that coordinate with your theme. They can also help you with



attire options for the wedding party that will complement your dress. The consultant can also advise you on hairstyles and accessory choices for your gown. Your hairstylist can offer hair options, as well as showing you how to pair those options with any desired accessories.

If your theme is related to color, a florist can help you incorporate that shade into flower arrangements, bouquets and table settings. Even if your theme is not based on color, the florist can advise on color choices to complement your theme. They will also help with seasonal floral options and can offer advice on low-cost options for your decor.

You will want to be sure the theme you choose will fit the time of year you desire for your big day. If you have an idea about the season for your nuptials, you will want to be certain the venue is appropriate. If you don't have a wedding

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planner, you can contact the person who coordinates events at your chosen venue. They can inform you of the ideal seasonal conditions for their location.

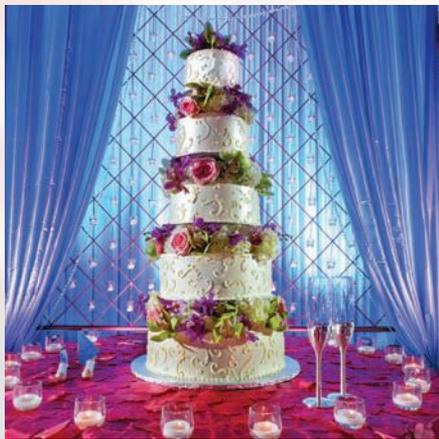
After your theme has been selected, there will still be several decisions to make about the wedding. You will,



however, have a better understanding of what your selections should look like. Here are a few theme examples to get you started:

### *A Black Tie Affair*

If you desire your wedding to be classy and romantic, a formal style is the way to go. For your announcements



and invitations, engraved, black ink on white paper is the most classic selection. You will want to choose a simple, A-line dress or a ball gown to complement your theme. Consider dramatic lighting for your venue, such as candlelight or tiny lights strung across the ceiling or around potted trees. Formal wedding cakes are generally elegant with multiple layers to create a focal point for your reception.

### *Vintage-style*

If you love the style of eras gone by, then a vintage wedding could be perfect for you. Selecting a genuinely vintage wedding dress allows you the opportunity to have a unique design versus a modern mass-produced dress. Family members may be a good source for vintage items to use for your decor. They may also be a valuable source for vintage jewelry. Lace can add a vintage touch to your decor and your attire. Keep the colors and decor simple to stay true to simpler times.

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If you are looking for country elegance, a rustic wedding is a great option. Think barns, burlap and boots! For your venue, you could select a farm house, ranch, barn or a country pavilion.



You could have the entire event outdoors, but make sure you make provisions for inclement weather. Mason jars, hand-painted signs and simple flowers can create lovely centerpieces for your reception. You will have several options for your dress, because you can add rustic touches to any gown you choose.

However you decide to define your special day, there will be no shortage of wonderful options to create your perfect wedding. The wedding professionals you choose will provide options and show you examples to help you along the way. Selecting a theme is an important step to making the planning process more manageable and can be the best way for you to tie your ideas together before you tie the knot! **NOW**

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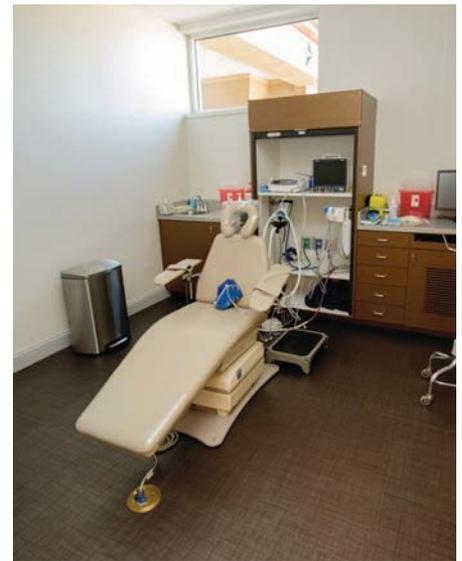


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# All Smiles

*Dr. Franco brings his expertise — and his heart — to Ennis. — By Randy Bigham*

The continuing excellence of health care in Ennis is underscored by the arrival of a world-renowned doctor whose dedication to his field is matched by his warmth and genuineness. While at first sight, Pedro Franco could be the emissary of a European fashion brand, sporting a tan and well-cut suit, he is in fact a dental surgeon with a down-to-earth approach to caring for his clients.

“Helping people has always been a motivation and is still the most fulfilling part of the job for me,” said Dr. Franco, whose DFW Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery practice opened its Ennis office in October 2013. After five years as a professor with the Baylor College of Dentistry, Texas A&M University System Health Science Center, Dr. Franco entered private practice in 2000. Although still a part-time Baylor faculty member, he’s

expanded his activities to include traveling with the American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (ACOMS), which he serves as vice president.

These mission trips to Mexico, Colombia and Guatemala largely involve assisting children suffering from facial deformities and other malformations, including cleft palate. “We bring some of the kids back for treatment in the U.S.,” Dr. Franco explained, “but what we do mostly is go there to set up all the equipment we need to bring the best health care to the people.” In addition to healing children through direct patient care, he lectures at national and international ACOMS conferences where he presents information on the latest dental and oral surgery technologies available in America.

But Dr. Franco’s concentration on the educational aspect

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of his work doesn't keep him from the private practice he's built up since 2005, when he opened his first office in Irving. Now with a third location in Mesquite, he commutes between each facility and his Dallas home, which he shares with his wife, Krystyn, and their three children, Jacob, Aliana and Pedro. "I especially enjoy my trips to Ennis," he admitted. "I love the people here. They are hardworking, honest, grateful and gracious. It's been very rewarding."

**"We want to give that personal touch, people appreciate it and we are glad to do it."**

Whether Dr. Franco is pulling wisdom teeth or performing corrective operations, his patients here receive the same high-quality treatment and service afforded his Dallas clients. "We are the only oral surgery office in Ennis," he said, "and we're very proud of the work we do to give top care in this field." His office staff also provides a high level of personal attention, regularly calling patients to check up on their progress after surgery. "We want to give that personal touch," he added. "People appreciate it, and we are glad to do it."

Deep concern for the welfare of others has been a quality the doctor exhibited even as a boy growing up in Colombia. "At age 14, I noticed a gardener, working at my family's home, had a severely swollen face," he recalled. "So I went to my dad and told him about it, and we took him to a dentist to have the area drained. So I think that experience showed me that I could make a difference."

He's definitely accomplished that here. His office is already active in the Ennis Garden Club and the annual Polka Festival and plans on becoming even more involved locally. "Ennis has such a relaxed atmosphere," Dr. Franco said, "and we really look forward to getting to know everyone!" **NOW**



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U6 Galaxy soccer team players Christopher Garcia, Landon Kriska and Peyton Dickerson pose with their trophies after a great season.



Easton McIntosh sees his first movie at Showbiz Cinema with his mom, Mickey McIntosh



Colton, Corbin and Conner Smith take a break on a tree.



David Smith prepares to give a talk on Texas cattle drives at the Ellis County Museum.



Cousins Harley Smith, Peyton Dickerson and Cheyenne Smith take a moment to smile for the camera at AT&T Stadium.



Miranda Ramirez learns the family recipe with her Grandma, Delia Macias.



Alexys Puckett and the Ennis High School band play at AT&T Stadium at the championship game.



Grace Marin, Mia Mach, Genesis Baze, Paige Ball and Emmie Hufnagel enjoy a quick treat at Starbucks.



Cooper and Caden Greer cheer on the Ennis Lions for the State Championship.

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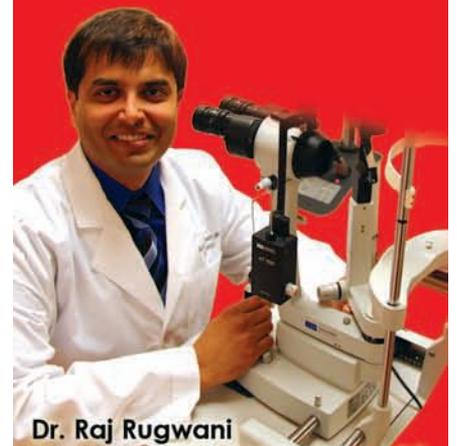
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## What Does 2015 Hold in Store for Investors?

If you're an investor, you probably had a pretty good year in 2014. But what's in store for 2015?

It's essentially impossible to make precise predictions about the performance of the financial markets, but it is possible to identify those economic conditions and market forces that may help shape outcomes in the investment world for 2015. By paying close attention to these conditions and forces, you can gain some valuable insights as to what investment moves might make sense for you.

### Here are a few of these moves:

**Consider adding stocks.** With stock prices having climbed higher and higher for more than five years, you might be wondering if it's time to scale back on your ownership of equities. After all, no bull market lasts forever. Still, some factors point to continued strength for stocks over the long term. First, we are seeing signs of improving economic growth. Employment gains and low oil prices are giving consumers more confidence, leading to a boost in spending. Second, corporate earnings — a key driver of stock prices — were quite strong in the second half of 2014, and companies appear poised to show more good results in 2015. Third, stocks — at least large-company stocks — are still reasonably valued, as measured by their price-to-earnings ratios (P/E). Given these factors, you might want to think about adding quality stocks to your holdings — assuming, of course, these stocks can help meet your needs for a balanced portfolio. And be aware that even the most favorable conditions can't assure a continued run-up in stock prices, which can and will fluctuate.

**Prepare for rising interest rates.** For several years, interest rates have been at, or near, historical lows. Given the strengthening economy, and the decreased need for stimulus,

the Federal Reserve may well raise short-term interest rates in 2015, perhaps as early as this summer. But long-term rates may start rising even before then, so you may want to take a close look at your bonds and other fixed-rate investments. As you probably know, when interest rates rise, the value of existing bonds typically falls, because investors won't pay full price for your bonds when they can get newly issued ones that pay higher rates. One way to combat the effects of rising rates is to build a "ladder" consisting of short-, intermediate- and long-term bonds. With such a ladder, you'll be able to redeem your maturing short-term bonds and reinvest them in the new, higher-paying bonds.

**Look for investment opportunities abroad.** Although economic growth has been slow in parts of the world, especially China, many countries have now initiated policies to spur economic growth. These actions can create opportunities for international equity investments. Keep in mind, though, that international investing involves particular risks, such as currency fluctuations and political and economic instability. So if you are considering foreign investments, you may want to consult with a financial professional.

There are no guarantees, but by following the above suggestions, you may be able to take advantage of what looks to be a fairly favorable investment environment for 2015. While you should make most of your investment decisions based on long-term considerations, it's always a good idea to be attuned to what's happening in the world around you — and to respond appropriately. **NOW**

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Jeff Irish is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.*

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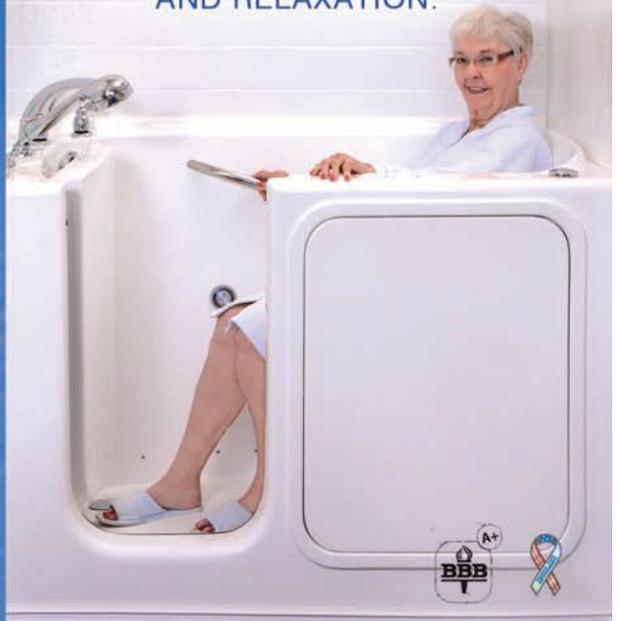


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# What Is That Fluttering in My Chest?

As February is heart health awareness month, our attention naturally turns to heart-healthy eating and exercise. Much attention is also directed to revisiting the classic symptoms of heart attack and doing an inventory of our own personal risk profile. While this is all very important and strongly advised, there are other heart symptoms that commonly occur and merit our attention and understanding. Among the most common of these symptoms are palpitations.

So, what are palpitations? They are simply disruptions in the normal rhythmic activity of the heart. Typically our heart beats about 100,000 times daily with remarkable precision and consistency. Paced by a natural pacemaker in the upper portion of the heart, the remainder of the heart follows its lead insuring efficient blood flow through the heart. However, various factors can cause this rhythm to be interrupted with either skipping of the heart or the occurrence of extra beats. Often these interruptions are asymptomatic and, in fact, all of us have occasional alterations in the natural rhythm. However, at other times, those rhythm disturbances are felt, and we call those symptoms “palpitations.” Rarely, they may lead to dizziness and even losses in consciousness.

Most palpitations are benign and can be controlled with simple lifestyle modifications. For instance, cutting back on caffeine, getting more rest, reducing stress and moderate exercise will often eliminate symptomatic palpitations. If these measures substantially resolve the symptoms an extensive evaluation is not typically needed. However, if palpitations persist despite these measures a diagnostic evaluation will need to be performed by a medical

professional, since persistent rhythm disturbances can be indicators of a more serious cardiac condition.

Typically a medical evaluation will begin with an examination and an EKG. The EKG (also known as an ECG or electrocardiogram) is simply a recording of the electrical activity of the heart. Aberrations in the electrical activity of the heart depicted on the EKG tracing may lead the physician to prescribe treatment or may suggest a further diagnostic course. However, commonly the EKG is unrevealing since it records only a 6-second window of time. Palpitations, on the other hand, are typically more episodic and are difficult to capture.

Hence, most physicians will order a Holter monitor of the heart. In this study, electrodes are applied by adhesive to the chest wall and are attached by wires to an electronic box that records all of the beats for a defined period. Usually this period is a 24-hour period, but this can vary as determined by the physician. Patients are usually recommended to keep a log of any symptoms that occur during the monitoring period, so the physician can correlate any symptoms with changes on the electronic tracing. If no abnormality is found, a longer monitoring period or other diagnostic studies may be necessary.

So, listen to your body and make lifestyle modifications to meet your individual needs. Your heart will thank you. **NOW**

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### February 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 22

**To Kill a Mockingbird: Fridays and Saturdays:** 7:30 p.m. **Sunday** matinee on Feb. 22: 2:30 p.m., Theatre Rocks!, 505 NW Main St. Based on the novel by Harper Lee, this play is set in a small Southern town in 1935 and tells the story of right and wrong and defending the innocent.

### February 6 — 8, 13 — 15, 20 — 22

**Little Women: Fridays and Saturdays:** 7:30 p.m.; **Sunday** matinees: 2:30 p.m., Ennis Public Theatre, 2705-C N. Kaufman St.

### February 7

**Ennis Czech Music Festival:** 1:00-10:30 p.m., Sokol Activity Center, 2622 E. Hwy. 34. Listen and dance to six live polka bands. Tickets are \$7 per person; ages 14 and under are free.

Visit [www.ennisczechmusicfestival.com](http://www.ennisczechmusicfestival.com) for more details.

### Auditions for *The Murder Room*:

3:00-5:00 p.m., Ennis Public Theatre, 2705-C N. Kaufman St. Roles available for three men and three women, ages 20-50. Auditions consist of cold readings from the script. For more information, email [shelley@ennispublictheatre.com](mailto:shelley@ennispublictheatre.com).

### February 12

**Fourth Annual Daddy Daughter Dance:** 6:00-9:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln. Tickets are \$15 per person, and they go on sale January 5. Tickets must be purchased in advance. This year's theme is *Frozen*. For more information, call (469) 309-4041.

### February 14

**Share the Love Gala:** 6:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. The evening includes dinner, dancing, music by The Classic Swing Band, silent and live auctions. Dale Hansen will serve as the event emcee and auctioneer. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.casaofelliscounty.org](http://www.casaofelliscounty.org) or by calling (972) 937-1455.

### February 19

**No More Bully meeting:** 7:00 p.m., Palmer Assembly of God, 1155 N. Interstate Hwy. 45, Palmer. This is an anti-bullying education and resource group. All students are welcome.

### February 20

**Daddy/Daughter Dance:** 7:00-9:00 p.m., Ennis High School Bardwell Commons.

### February 21

**Auditions for *Godspell*** (a musical based on the Gospel of St. Matthew): 10:00 a.m.-noon, Theatre Rocks!, 505 NW Main St. Roles available for two leading males and eight to twelve miscellaneous other male and female followers. Auditions consist of cold readings from the script. Auditions for musicals also include a prepared song of your choice. For more information, call (972) 878-5126.

### February 28

**Test-n-Tune, Texas Motorplex,** 7500 U.S. Hwy. 287. For more information, visit [www.texasmotorplex.com](http://www.texasmotorplex.com).

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com](mailto:sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com).*



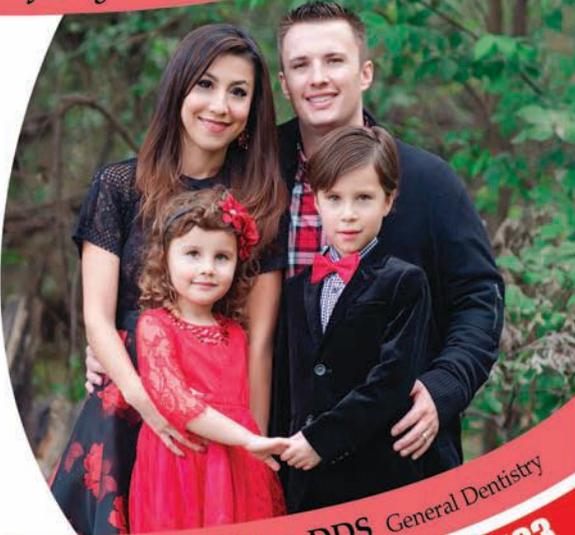
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## In the Kitchen With Barbara Montgomery and Ginger Boon

— By *Randy Bigham*

Friends Barbara Montgomery and Ginger Boon enjoy cooking for church and community events. Foremost among these is the Chat & Chew ministry at First United Methodist where they serve delicious meals to senior citizens. Barbara has always cooked for family and friends. “I learned how to cook from my mother and grandmother,” she said. “I try new recipes all the time, and I am always looking for good dishes for our programs.”

The ladies have found chicken casseroles are favorites with the locals. Joined in their outreach by Nita Bozek, Jo Ann Cody and Iris Ball, they love the work and the camaraderie. “Our team has fun in the kitchen,” Ginger added, “and we all come from families who love the warmth of a good, home-cooked meal.” **NOW**

### Chicken Dressing Casserole

- 1 1/2 cups green onions, chopped**
- 2 cups celery, chopped**
- 1/2 cup plus 2 Tbsp. butter (divided use)**
- 1 pkg. herb stuffing mix**
- 1 cup water**
- 2 cups cooked chicken, chopped**
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise**
- 3/4 tsp. salt**
- 1/4 tsp. pepper**
- 2 eggs, beaten**
- 1 1/4 cups milk**
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of mushroom soup**

- 1.** Sauté onions and celery in 2 Tbsp. butter.
- 2.** Spread half of stuffing mix in a greased 9x13-inch baking dish.
- 3.** Heat 1/2 cup butter and water and pour over stuffing mix.
- 4.** In a large bowl, mix onions, celery,

chicken, mayonnaise, salt and pepper; spread over stuffing.

- 5.** Blend eggs and milk and pour over stuffing.
- 6.** Cover and refrigerate overnight; remove one hour before baking.
- 7.** Spread soup over casserole and sprinkle remaining stuffing mix on top; bake at 350 F for 1 hour.

### Unforgettable Chicken

- 3 cups rotisserie chicken, chopped and skin removed**
- 8 oz. cheddar cheese, grated**
- 1/2 cup sour cream**
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of chicken soup**
- 2 cups celery, chopped**
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds**
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise**
- 1 4-oz. can water chestnuts, drained and chopped**
- 1 1/2 cups French fried onion rings**

- 1.** In a large bowl, stir together all ingredients except onion rings.
- 2.** Spoon mixture into a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Bake at 350 F for 40 minutes.
- 3.** Sprinkle onion rings over top and bake 5 more minutes; let stand 10 minutes before serving.

### Quick and Easy Fluffy Salad

- 24 oz. cottage cheese**
- 9 oz. whipped dessert topping**
- 1 15 1/2-oz. can crushed pineapple, well-drained**
- 1 11-oz. can mandarin oranges, well-drained**
- 1 4-oz. can coconut**
- 1/2 cup nuts, chopped**
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows (optional)**
- 1 3-oz. pkg. orange Jell-O gelatin (or flavor of choice)**

- 1.** Mix all ingredients, adding dry gelatin last.
- 2.** Place in refrigerator at least 4 hours before serving.

### Hot Chicken Salad

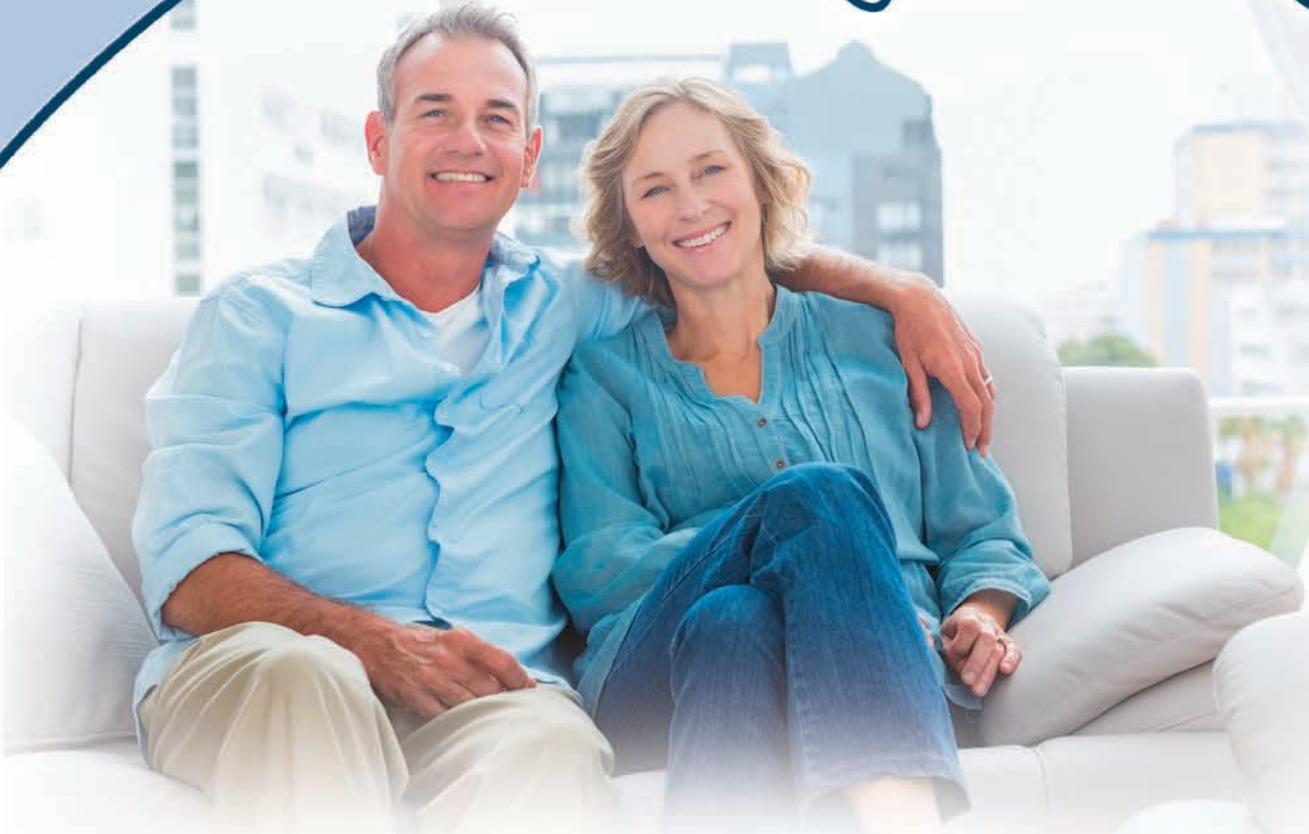
*Can be prepared the night before you plan to cook it and refrigerated. Add chips just before baking.*

- 2 cups chicken, chopped**
- 2 cups celery, thinly sliced**
- 1/2 cup peanuts, chopped**
- 1/4 cup onions, chopped**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 1 cup mayonnaise**
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, grated**
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice**
- 1 cup potato chips, crushed**

- 1.** Combine all ingredients except potato chips in a bowl; mix and place in a 9x13-inch casserole dish.
- 2.** Sprinkle chips on top of casserole; bake at 400 F for 25 minutes.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

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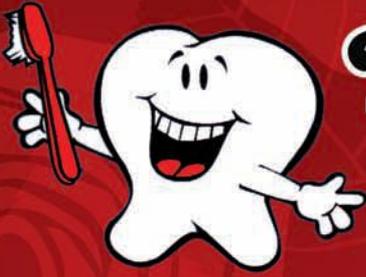
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