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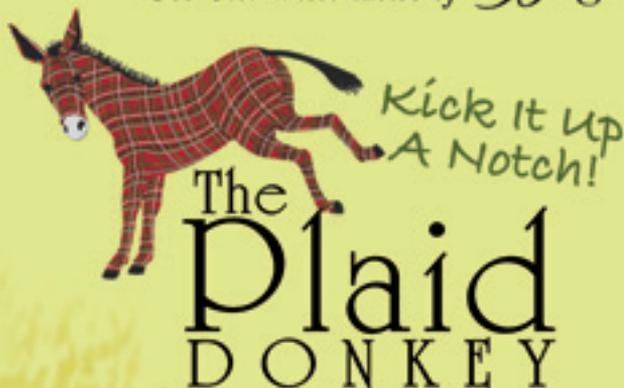
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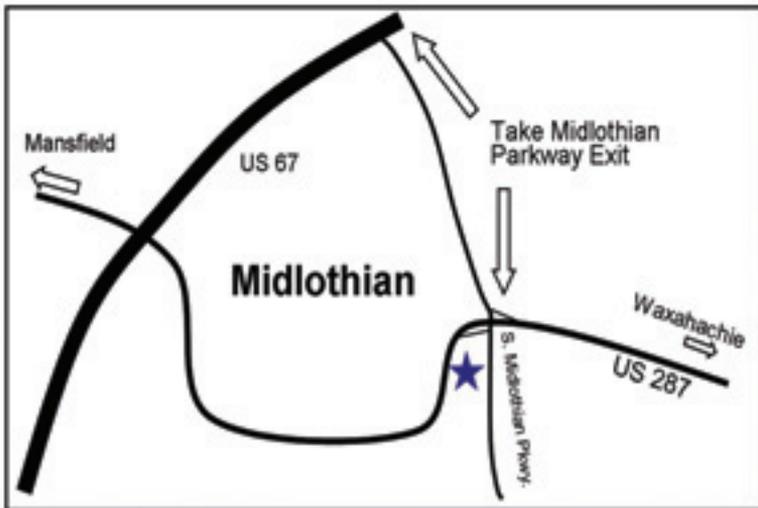
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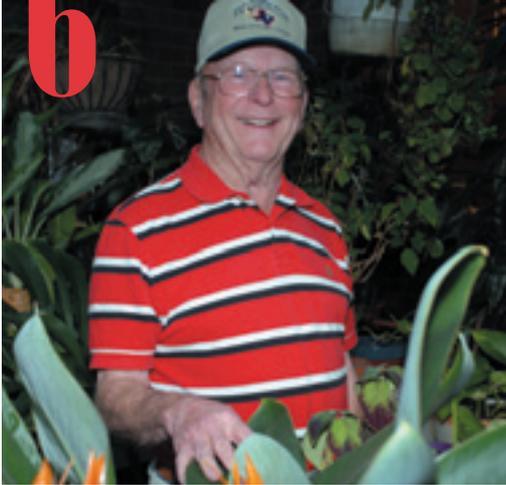
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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Each month, we at NOW Magazines take pleasure in sharing positive stories about people within the community. We look for stories about people who give of themselves to positively impact their sphere of influence. Sometimes those people are public servants; sometimes they are children, still in school yet showing signs of becoming great citizens. We celebrate art, education, sports and business, and it is amazing to see the variety represented in each of these fields!



Recently, one such story came from among our own employees, and we would like to share it with you. Our very own Betty Tryon, community editor of *MidlothianNOW* magazine, was honored by the Midlothian ISD Board of Trustees who named her to the Media Honor Roll, a program sponsored by the Texas Association of School Boards. This was a great honor, as only approximately 450 media representatives from across our state received this recognition for fair and balanced coverage of news regarding public schools.

We are very proud of Betty and her commitment to making *MidlothianNOW* a great, quality publication. If you see her out in the community, be sure to congratulate her on a job well done!

Becky Walker
Managing Editor
NOW Magazines

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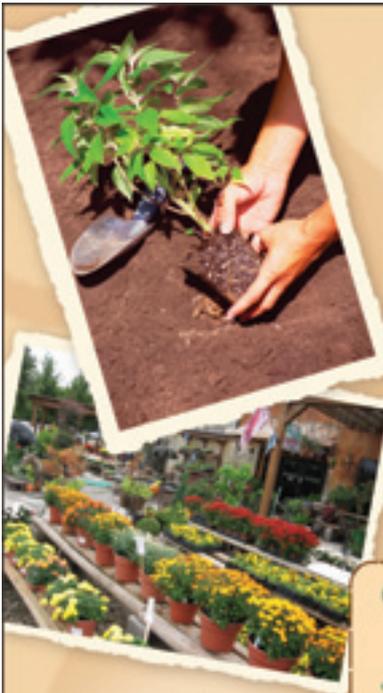
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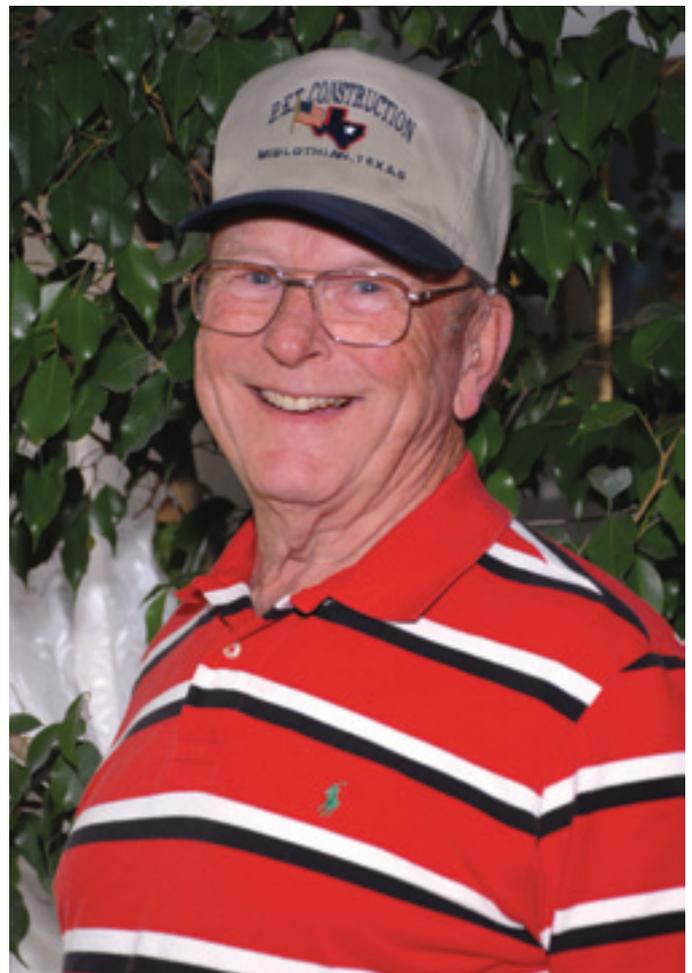
Frank's green thumb transforms his landscape every year into a gardener's paradise.

A Gardener's Paradise

— By Betty Tryon

The cold, gray winter blues vanish in a world of green when you visit Frank Davidson. The inside of his home is filled with plants, and it is almost impossible to feel gloomy in the midst of so much life and color. Frank said, "Gardening is just something I enjoy." Surprisingly, his gift of growing beautiful plants is something he discovered with a random gardening experiment. Recalling his first effort, Frank stated, "Back in 1963, my neighbor had some rose bushes. I cut off 50 roses from his bush and stuck them in the ground. The house I lived in had a two-foot square area of dirt that I used. I had 48 rose bushes that grew from those 50 cuttings. That gave me a clue that I could do this. Everyone tells me I have a green thumb. All I can say is the good Lord helps me do what I do." He now has about 80 rose bushes, in addition to the hundreds of plants in and around his home.

Frank's green thumb transforms his landscape every year into a gardener's paradise. This in itself is not so unusual since many gardeners in Midlothian demonstrate this skill. What is unusual is that every year before the first frost, Frank moves all of the plants inside, even those he has to dig up. Some of the plants winter in a building that is behind his home, a few inside the garage and a majority of the plants go inside the home in a special room he designed for that purpose.



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He explained, “The plants I have in the shed outside, I have a timer for the light that goes on in the morning and off at night. I learned about fluorescent lights in a place I used to work. Every secretary had a plant on her desk. I noticed that the plants grew well under a fluorescent light.”

Many of Frank’s plants have lived 30 years or more. Those with longevity were the starter plants for hundreds of other additional plants. He simply takes cuttings from them and gives them a new home in another pot. He stated, “There are very few plants



where you can do that.” Most people have difficulty taking cuttings and growing a healthy plant, but according to Frank’s wife, Elaine, “Frank can. A neighbor said Frank can put a stick in the ground and grow a plant.” When explaining his technique of putting cuttings into the ground, a friend of Frank’s asked him why he cut the plants at an angle. Teasing him, Frank said, “I cut them at an angle because it’s a whole lot easier to stick in the ground!” Speaking more seriously, he explained, “When you cut at an angle, it gives you a larger surface area for the roots to grow from.” With a twinkle in his eye he added, “It also helps to stick it in the ground easier.”

Frank’s skill with plants is legendary among those who know him. To them,

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he is not just a great gardener; he is something of a plant doctor as well. Many of them give him dying plants to save. Elaine stated, "Frank rescues a lot of plants. A neighbor of ours had a lot of pretty plants that were dying, so she put them over the fence and said, 'Frank, take care of these.'" Frank added, "One of those plants was a red hibiscus. I brought it over here, took some cuttings, stuck them in a pot and they grew." Another example of a plant rescue occurred at his job.

"Someone who worked for me in the early '90s brought in a four-inch pot with four leaves in it. I brought them home, used Miracle-Gro, put them into different pots and they started to grow."

Frank does not claim to have a magical formula for his success with growing plants, but he does add something extra that most people do not — rainwater. In his backyard is an elaborate system of barrels, buckets and hoses to collect rainwater and siphon it for use with his plants. Frank admitted he was not

In his backyard is an elaborate system of barrels, buckets and hoses to collect rainwater and siphon it for use with his plants.

able to use much rainwater this past summer because it was so dry. During the winter, the watering needs are not as great. Frank said, "That time of year, plants go dormant. I only water the plants in the outside building maybe three times all winter. All plants need to go dry occasionally. When you water your plants, if the pots are dry, the water will go straight to the bottom. I don't have a schedule for watering. I will pick up plants to determine their water needs. I generally go out two or three times a day to check on the plants. I like to mess with them." Elaine added with a smile, "I enjoy him messing with them outside, because they keep him outside." Frank also has a compost pile for all the leaves. This he

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eventually puts back around the plants.

Frank owes his current collection of plants, some exotic, to plants he obtained in the '80s. He stated, "I worked in Grand Prairie for 45 years. Back in the 1980s, a co-worker from Hawaii gave me a split-leaf philodendron. I went to Hawaii during that time and saw these other plants growing everywhere. I picked up some and placed them in a 35 mm cartridge container. I grew



those little plants but didn't know the name of them until we took another trip to Hawaii and found out they were called spider lilies. I have a ficus tree I planted in the fall of 1982, and it is still growing. All of the ficus trees I have now came from the trees I grew in the 1980s."

Frank retired in 1985 but went back to work shortly thereafter and retired again in 1995. Now at the age of 78, he wants to keep busy. He shared, "I learned something when I went back to work. Some people when they retired didn't know their neighbors. They only knew the people at work. I graduated from MHS [Midlothian High School] in 1950 and the majority of my friends are in Midlothian. I was told that the average number of retirement checks sent out was 18. You need to keep yourself busy. Age is a state of mind. You are as old as you think you are. My plants keep me going and keep me busy." **NOW**

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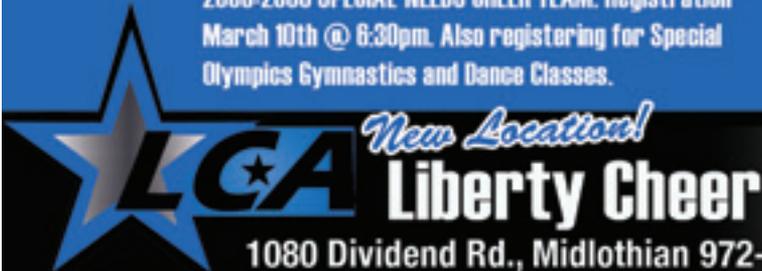
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Structurally Sound

— By Sandra McIntosh

Gary and Charley McElroy attended college late in life. In fact, they met at college in the strangest of ways. “She parked,” Gary said, as Charley began to laugh at the memory. “We got into an argument because she blocked me in where I couldn’t get out.” Not long after this first encounter, the two met again under much different circumstances. “We were introduced to one another at a restaurant,” Charley confessed, “and Gary didn’t remember who I was until he saw my van.” Gary soon realized Charley was the same yelling woman he had met a few months earlier in the school’s parking lot.

After this second meeting, the two dated for eight years before finally “tying the knot” in September 1988. Charley came to the marriage with two children of her own, Tiffany and Taylor, now 40 and 37 years of age respectively. The McElroys currently boast of four grandchildren: Barrett, Brennan, Anthony and Sophia, ranging in age

At Home With

Gary and Charley McElroy

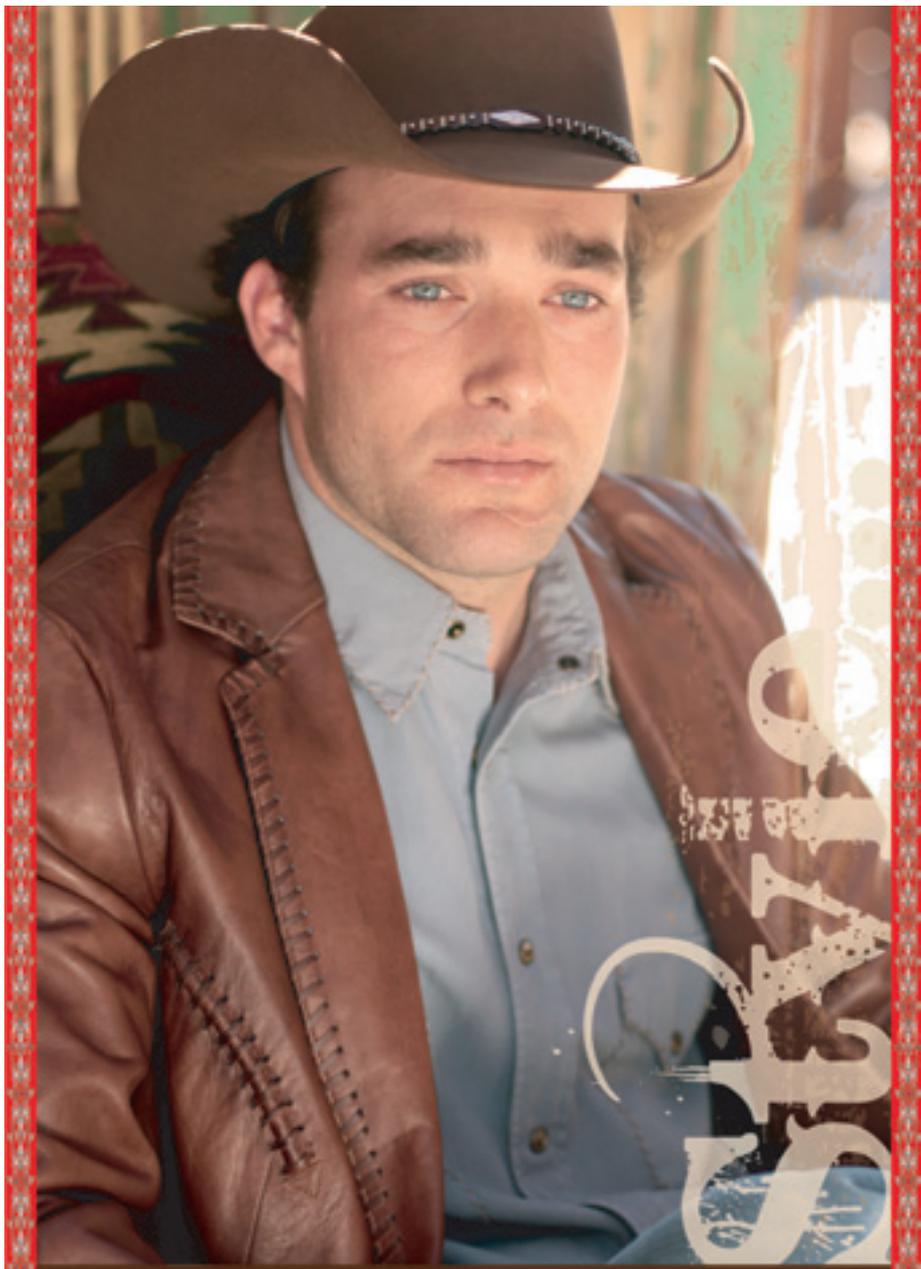




from 17 to 1, although Sophia will celebrate her second birthday next month.

Coming to Midlothian from Mansfield seemed natural for Gary and Charley, especially since Charley's brother had been living in the area for more than 30 years. The three-bedroom, two-and-a-half bath home, which rests on nearly five acres, is the last house within the Midlothian city limits on the south side. "Our next door neighbors live in Waxahachie," Gary stated with a smile.

The house they purchased was built in the early '70s. Many backbreaking hours of labor have gone into creating the ranch-style home with the Italian feel Charley wanted in her country home from the very beginning. "The remodeling is still a work in progress," they both said, almost simultaneously.



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“The only thing that is still original to the home from when we bought it is the windows,” Gary added. They both agree that the home was, and still is, structurally sound since it was built in the '70s; but it was cosmetically dysfunctional from the start. “It was scary,” Charley interjected.

The plumbing and electrical had to be redone from the ground up. All the old carpet had to go, and a new roof

was installed. Countertops, cabinetry and fixtures were added. The bar, which takes up one full wall in the dining room, was Charley’s idea, but it was Gary’s building expertise that took her idea and brought it to fruition. The bar itself is a large, one-piece slab of tumbled marble. Mirrors reflect the natural sunlight, while lighted, glass-encased cabinets offer a beautiful and safe place for Charley to showcase

her vast collection of glassware.

The unique thing about the kitchen is the border paper, which is also found in the computer room directly to the left of the foyer. “The colors in the grapes on the border paper were too blue,” Charley said. “I unrolled each roll and added the purple and green I wanted, using a fast-drying acrylic paint.” Charley used six rolls on the walls, but still has three perfectly

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painted rolls left. "We're not sure if we're going to use them in the dining room or not," she said. When visitors take a closer inspection, they can see that each brush stroke was taken with the utmost care, and that Charley's artistic ability made something wonderfully Italian even better.

New wood and tile floors, fresh paint on the outside and textured walls and interior paint brought the home from the past into the present. "Gary used a trowel on all the walls to give them an



Italian feel," Charley said. She further explained the paint color she chose to use throughout most of the house: "It's my own unique blend. I used seven colors to make the color you see now." The under-paint color was off-white, while the finished color consists of three shades of green including lime green and a muddy, almost dark brown green, lavender and off-white. The mixture gives the walls an iridescent appearance; almost ethereal. When asked could she mix and match it again if she had to, she smiled and quickly

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answered, "Yes, I'm an artist!"

The woodwork throughout the home is predominately celadon, a soft shade of celery green, which complements the wall color perfectly. The guest room is a bright buttercup yellow. A coat of iridescent bronze and off-white complete the warm feeling guests have no problem falling into when it comes time to retire for the night. "I used a 'wooly' on this room," Charley said. "A 'wooly' is a faux hand tool made of sheep skin. All the paint is patted on. There are no brush strokes. It's very time-consuming, but well worth the effort. I just love it!"

One of Charley's favorite collections is displayed in a large curio-like china cabinet in the foyer. This dragon collection started when she and Gary first met. "They are all different; filled with fantasy and quite artsy," Charley stated. "I used to use dragons to teach my art students how to use their imaginations and be creative. All ages loved it, and they are just really unique."

Another much larger collection is found in the front yard. This particular passion began years and years ago, when a past neighbor of Charley's shared a portion of their garden with her. "They had a small iris garden that



I just fell in love with,” Charley remembered. “Before moving to Midlothian, I had taken a break from growing my own irises. Now, I have at least 350 varieties of bearded irises. We have all colors, including black, which Gary and I both really enjoy. Some are as small as three inches tall, while others stand as high as four feet.”

When in full bloom, there are literally thousands of flowers for her pleasure, as well as the enjoyment of those passing by. “When we moved here, there were no flower beds to speak of,” Gary said. “We built all the beds and had truck loads of mushroom soil brought in.” Before each new iris season, Charley spends two months of solid preparation, in order for the irises to bloom fully and to keep propagation correct.

Ten years ago when Gary and Charley moved to Midlothian, they really liked the place because there were no houses anywhere near them for what seemed like miles. It may not be the same with all the new construction going on around, but the McElroys are quite comfortable with what they have created. “It’s very quiet. There are no city noises,” Gary said, as Charley nodded her head in agreement. “It’s been tedious and time-consuming, but it’s all been a labor of love.” **NOW**

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Soaring with Art

— By Betty Tryon

Visiting Alisa Morris' home is akin to a pleasant, yet provocative stroll through an art museum. Provocative because her art begs to be interpreted and discussed. In addition to the three dimensional abstract paintings that capture your attention, are the different works of craftsmanship that decorate her home. Alisa received a glimpse of how special and unique her art was while in high school. She explained, "The first casting I did was displayed in the display case in the art room. Someone broke into the school's art class, broke into the display case and stole my art. It was the only

thing stolen in the room. That told me I did pretty good."

Alisa's earliest remembrance of creating art was a project done in the second grade — a clay sculpture that still hangs on the wall in her kitchen. In her front room is a huge wall hanging that Alisa modestly refers to as a "nightlight." Shaped with vines and intertwined with tiny white lights, this nightlight might be the most elaborately decorated one ever created. Strategically placed beads, rock slices, flowers and nettings of fine wire add to the effect. She said, "I got the vine from East Texas. I love creating. I'm one of those if I find a piece of driftwood, I make something out of it."

Examples of driftwood shown in Alisa's home are crafted in the Southwest genre, but she wants to "move away" from that style of art. She stated, "I want my art to move in the direction of going tropical, like Caribbean, which is why I have done so many turtles." The turtles she referred to are part of her three-dimensional paintings, with one painting aptly called *Sculptured Turtle on Canvas*. A giant turtle of model clay, baked in the oven and then painted is mounted on a painting of acrylic and enamel. She said, "Most of my work is done with two different types of paint — acrylic and enamel. With acrylic, if you go on top of enamel, you have to go over and over again. Every art function I've been to, I don't see the same type of art that I've got. That leads me to believe that my work is different. If anything is done different, then I am the one to do it. My ambition is to find an agent.

After my mother died, I hibernated for 11 years. Now I'm ready to fly."

Alisa's paintings are so abstract that even she does not always know what she is creating. "When I want to paint, I will pull out my pad and probably stare at it for two days," she shared. "Then I start making strokes. You see a lot of straight lines and circles



in my paintings. In stuff I may have completed, it might be a year before I see what is in that picture. I paint emotion, not images." An example of this is a painting reflecting geometrical shapes with wires Alisa strung across the canvas. She then took strips of metal punched with holes and crisscrossed them over the painting. After it was completed, it showed the image of someone behind bars. She remarked, "One of my friends' daughter was jailed at the time, and I didn't see the picture within the picture until I finished it."

One of the few of Alisa's paintings with definable shapes won Honorable Mention in the Midlothian Conference Center Arts Council Art Show. The painting is done in black and white and shows the skyline of buildings behind a fountain graced with swans. Alisa said, "I didn't know what it was going to be when I started it."

Displaying her talent in another area, Alisa created an exquisite piece of a sitting figure completely covered with tiny yellow beads each individually

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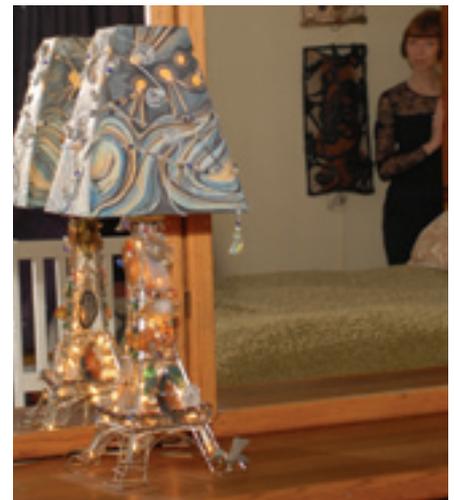
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placed. She stated, "I was on a trip to Mexico and saw someone doing it and thought, *Wow*. I ended up trying it. It is Mayan Indian art and it took me three years of working on it off and on to complete it." Alisa has also decorated gourds throughout her home. Using a wood burning tool, she burned designs into them. Making lights is another of her talents. In her bedroom is one such creation called *The Eiffel Tower*. The shade is colored and designed using pastel chalk with jewelry and sliced rocks added for effect.



In the past, Alisa displayed her works at the West End in Dallas and sold many of her pieces. She elaborated, "If you have art there, then you have to volunteer to work so many hours there. I couldn't do that many hours, but they liked my work so well that I only had to work part time. One of my paintings was shown on Deep Ellum, and the people loved it."

That painting was also three dimensional with Alisa's trademark abstract background with metal strips crisscrossed across the canvas, but what makes it even more unusual are the totally black hands sporting handmade rings handling strings across the painting. She remarked, "I call it *Strings*."

Alisa said she is ready to fly but, maybe, she is already soaring. **ARTS NOW**

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The Game That Gives Back

— By Amanda Madden Pitt

Fourteen players and two coaches in three vans left Dallas on Thanksgiving eve. They would reach their destination 21 hours later. Though the final stop was Pénjamo, Guanajuato, Mexico, known for the blue agave plant used to make tequila, this team had their minds in the game. The trip is a yearly tradition for the Mexican American Baseball League (MABL) — a tradition started by Robert Negrete, whose hometown is Pénjamo. This year, they played against the Mexican Major League: one game on Saturday and two games on Sunday. Midlothian resident Jeremy Kindrick, who said his greatest team contribution is a positive attitude, was one proud Dallas Mets player during this fall season trip. “You play

hard, respect the game, and then you leave whatever happens on the field,” Jeremy said. The MABL group that goes to Pénjamo consists of handpicked talent chosen from throughout the league. Players range in age from 18 to 40. “It was just baseball, and then you go to Mexico and it’s a lot more,” Jeremy said. “It’s charity; it’s giving back. It opens your eyes a lot wider. I just love the game. I respect the game, and I love to be a part of the team.”

Nicknamed “Hollywood” by teammates, Jeremy will never forget

the famous welcome they received after the game. “I was overwhelmed at first. I saw all of these fans wrapped around the field. There were about 300-400 fans, and they had to pay to watch us play. I believe it was the equivalent of \$2 in U.S. currency.” The American team does not profit from the proceeds. Instead, the game brings revenue into the Pénjamo community. “You’d start signing one autograph and people would just flock to you,” he recalled. “After every game we’d



go to a different house, and they'd cook for us. It meant a lot that they would spend their money to feed people they didn't even know," Jeremy said. "They said that if we come back next year they'll remember us. That means a lot, too, and I'll definitely remember them." In addition, the team handed out jerseys, uniforms, baseballs, mitts, ball caps and other gear they brought with them. The mayor of the town was at the games, and he thanked the Mets for coming.



A spot on the team has not always come easy for Jeremy. It is a privilege he feels he has worked hard to earn. He has been in the Dallas MABL for three years. Most of that time was spent with the Dallas Tomahawks, whom he will never forget. He also plays softball and has just signed with a team that has taken first place for the last two years. He has changed positions in the last three years from an outfielder to second baseman, and works to master each spot he is given.

In addition to being a baseball and softball player, Jeremy is a Midlothian High School graduate and a full-time Navarro College student majoring in teaching/coaching. Although he works and goes to school full time, Jeremy is so into America's favorite pastime that his weekend routine includes softball on Saturdays and baseball on Sundays — no exceptions. "Softball is for fun; it's my hobby. Baseball is a lot different; it's my passion. I step on that field and I'm a different person," he stated. "My

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head is in the game 100 percent. I play my position and I do what I can."

One event that depicts Jeremy's dedication to the game began with a dive into base that resulted in a gash in one of his quadriceps. The next game, Jeremy bandaged his leg, which eventually bled through. He put on his uniform and showed up. Although players expected him to sit out, Jeremy told the coach, "If you need to put me in, I'm here." Too injured to play, the coach let him sit out and put



another player in, but later told Jeremy, "It meant a lot to me that you would show up injured to support the team." After recounting the event, Jeremy said, "Baseball is my life. It teaches you so much about respect, teamwork and how to do your best and so much more."

Jeremy takes the game seriously because his teammates often depend on a solid performance, but he takes school seriously, too. He knows his future depends on it. His goal is to one day become a coach and mentor to others like his coaches have been to him. His family is also an inspiration that helps him stay in the game. His mom, Brenda, brother, Justin, and sister, Brittany, are all supportive of his dreams. As Jeremy continues to move forward in his life, his career aspirations, his hobby and passion, his undying motivation and strong desire to succeed will continue to take him far — hopefully all the way to Pénjamo, Guanajuato, Mexico, for many years to come. **NOW**

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House Hunting?

— By Betty Tryon

For many of us, the most expensive purchase we will ever make is our home. The need to feel confident in your real estate agent's experience and expertise is paramount. Part of the success of Steve and Leisha Crowe of RE/MAX Suburban South, is due to their intimate knowledge of the Midlothian market. Their longevity in the community gives them special insight into its needs for buying and selling homes and any of your real estate concerns. Leisha commented, "We have people who call us because they know us and trust us."

Steve said, "I moved to Midlothian in 1967. Leisha and I both graduated from Midlothian High School." Steve received his real estate license in the early '80s and started selling in 1996. Leisha soon followed with her license in 1997. Steve recalled, "I was self-employed at the time and wanted additional income, so I started to work part time. In 1996 to 1997, the real estate market in Midlothian started to pick up, and I could see there would be some opportunity here."

Working in real estate is a business that comes naturally to Steve and Leisha. "The thing about real estate is you are dealing with a lot of people, and I enjoy working with different people. Lots of our clients become good friends; that is the part of the business we enjoy. It is more of a relationship than a business transaction," Steve stated. Leisha added, "It is a friendship you build with them for the long term. A lot of

"It is more of a relationship than a business transaction."

our business is from past clients. Many of them are repeats from those who have bought a house from us and are ready to move in three or four years."

Steve and Leisha started with a small, independent company but decided in 2000 to join the RE/MAX team. Steve explained, "With the growth in Midlothian and people coming in, we

needed to associate ourselves with a major company. RE/MAX is the largest real estate company in the world. They have done over a million transactions and

have more name brand awareness, with the RE/MAX balloon as one of the top five symbols in advertising. Texas is one of the fastest-growing regions for RE/MAX." The name brand awareness carries beyond the Texas borders. "A buyer or seller knows when they are coming from Iowa, California or Austin



that with RE/MAX they are dealing with professionals. Only serious, full-time professionals work with RE/MAX," Leisha added.

Working for one of the better known real estate companies reaps benefits only if you are able to connect with people in a way that meets their needs. Steve and Leisha do this easily. Steve said, "I have the philosophy that if you take care of your customers, then your business will take care of itself. We try to do everything we can for them and give them the best service we can. We treat them professionally, whether a \$500,000 buyer or a \$50,000



buyer. It really doesn't matter. They are in their own situation, and it is just as important to them." Leisha summed it up simply by saying, "We just do what's right, and we do it honestly."

The Crowe's work with four agents in their office. Steve stated that another aspect to his business philosophy is he would rather have six or seven agents making a good living than 15 agents with still only six or seven making a good living. Their business plan seems to be working. They have now purchased the entire building in which they work, and lease out offices they do not need. Even in slow economic times, the RE/MAX office continues to buzz.

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The “It Factor”

— By Betty Tryon

Two seventh-graders warmly greeted an old friend. Genevieve Bouldin, sixth grade teacher of social studies at Walnut Grove Middle School, welcomed them in a warm and good-natured manner. After much roaming through their old classroom, and discussing sports, the history of Hitler, the Japanese in WWII, girls and even enduring an impromptu quiz about the Prime Meridian, they mentioned how much they enjoyed being in her class last year. “She made it fun. There was a lot of energy in the class,” they said.

Genevieve definitely has the “It Factor” for teachers. She stated, “When I come into the classroom, I try to be enthusiastic. I always liked to go to a classroom where the teacher was excited about what they taught, and that enthusiasm came through. The students seem to be happy coming here. I want them to want to be here.”

Genevieve’s entrance into education was not the usual path of graduate from high school, go to college and then start your career. She received her business degree from Southern Methodist University and worked in the business world for several years. After marriage and children, she chose to be a stay-at-home mom and became an active volunteer in her sons’ classrooms and with the PTV (Parent Teachers Volunteers). She said, “I enjoyed it and thought, *This is what I was meant to do.* I went back to school to get alternative certification in 2001. This is my eighth year of teaching.”

Genevieve initially thought she would be better suited to



teaching a younger age group, but a principal who interviewed her felt she would work better with older students. Her first job was at J.A. Vitovsky for sixth grade social studies. It turned out to be the perfect age group and the perfect subject.

“This is a fun subject to teach for me. There is so much stuff to teach,” she said. “One year you teach it one way, and the next you alter it a little bit to keep the fun things the kids like. My most favorite thing about teaching is the variety. The things I teach are the same each year; but how I teach them is different. The students are different. They are different from class to class. You can have a class that is very quiet and another that is very social, and that’s nice because you have to figure out ways to reach them all.”

Genevieve’s late start as an educator gives her some advantages. “I think I am a much better teacher since I started later in life after having been a mom. Patience is a lot of it. When you are a mom, there is a lot of stuff you learn common sense wise because you are forced into it,” she laughed. “You see what works and what doesn’t work and, sometimes, that is what works for me in the classroom. Sometimes, a student will forget and call me

mom. I can tell they are embarrassed by it, but I take it as a compliment.” One of the greatest compliments Genevieve has received came in the form of a \$1,000 check from the Midlothian Wal-Mart, along with the honor of being selected Wal-Mart 2008 Teacher of the Year. Wal-Mart recognizes local and state educators for exceptional performance in their school. The students vote for the winner.

With 23 to 28 students in each class, for a total of five classes a day, Genevieve admits to needing a little help with organization. Students are called upon to help. She has a list of jobs that students can be assigned to, such as aide (passes out papers), attendance, engineer (assists with overhead), pest control (for any bug unfortunate enough to wander into her classroom) and homework monitor (helps mark late assignments). She stated, “The job of pest control only comes up once or twice a year to squash live bugs. The job I need the most help with, but not many volunteer for, is organizer. They would help keep the room neat. If anyone doesn’t want to do a job, then I don’t make them have one. However, once they start the job, they can’t quit — but they can be fired.”

This falls in neatly with part of Genevieve’s philosophy of teaching: that there is a bigger world out there that the students must learn to live in successfully. She shared, “Some of the sixth-graders are very sheltered and some are not. I get to see a lot of growth during the school year. I don’t just teach about social studies; there are other things they have to learn. They need to learn how to interact with each other and how to interact with adults. You don’t punch someone when you pass them, even if you are joking. I teach them things they need to know in the world. I didn’t go into teaching hoping they would remember me years down the road, but it sure feels cool when they do.” **NOW**

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Mrs. Rogers' first grade class from JR Irvin, top left, measured bat wings with paper clips. The TEAM at Baxter Elementary, top right, dressed up as rock stars when they reached their goal for the annual fundraiser. Ribbon cuttings were held at: Technical Support, second row left; and Blinds by Rebecca, bottom right. Betty Tryon, community editor of the *MidlothianNOW* magazine, second row right, was named to the Media Honor Roll, a program sponsored by the Texas Association of School Boards, by the Midlothian ISD Board of Trustees. Colton L. and Tyler S., bottom left, measured their bat wings with a measuring tape.

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— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH GARY AND LETICIA BENVENUTO

Even though Gary, Leticia and their daughter, Precilla, have busy lives, they can still find the time to make most meals a special experience. They have designated Sunday to be “Italian Day” in their home. “I’m Italian,” Gary stated. “It is in my genes!” Gary loves to prepare anything with pasta. Leticia’s favorite dish to prepare is Broccoli and Linguine. “Although we both cook,” Leticia commented, “I would have to say that Gary is the primary cook in our family.”

Both Gary and Leticia have loved cooking for over 25 years. Leticia credits her grandmother as her inspiration to begin cooking. Gary enjoys taking his creative flair to the outdoor grill, while Leticia enjoys applying her creativity toward casseroles. **NOW**

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

CHICKEN TACO SALAD OR NACHOS

6 boneless chicken breasts
4-6 qts. of water
salt, pepper, cumin to taste
1/2 cup olive oil
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1/2 tsp. taco seasoning
1 cup tomatoes
1/4 cup green chiles, chopped
1 cup green onions, chopped
chips
romaine lettuce
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
tomatoes
jalapeños, sliced (optional)
cilantro
sour cream

Rinse and dry chicken; place in stock pot cover with water. Season with salt, pepper and cumin. Boil about 25 minutes on medium heat or until *al dente*; drain. In a 12-inch skillet, heat olive oil and sauté garlic until lightly browned. Add

chicken, taco seasoning, tomatoes, chiles and onions. Sauté for 10-12 minutes on medium heat; put aside. In a large casserole dish, serve over chips for nachos. For a taco salad, add chips, lettuce and sprinkle with cheese, green chilies, sliced tomatoes, jalapeños, green onions and cilantro; top with sour cream.

WINTER SALAD

1 small clove of garlic, minced
1/4 tsp. coarse salt
pinch of black pepper
1 1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. honey
2 Tbsp. orange juice
1/2 cup pure olive oil
2 bunches spinach (about 8 oz. each)
3 large navel oranges
1 medium-sized red onion, thinly sliced
1 Tbsp. snipped chives

Whisk together the garlic, coarse salt, pepper, mustard, honey and orange juice in a bowl.

Slowly drizzle in olive oil, whisking constantly until thickened; set aside. Rinse spinach well; remove any tough stems and pat dry. With a sharp knife, peel rind from the oranges; slice 1/4-inch thick. Add orange slices to the spinach, along with the onion. Just before serving, toss well with reserved dressing and sprinkle with the chives.

EARTHQUAKE CAKE

1 cup coconut
1 cup pecans, chopped
1 pkg. German chocolate cake mix
1 stick margarine
1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1 lb. confectioner's sugar

Grease and flour a 13 x 9-inch pan. Spread coconut and pecans on bottom of pan. Prepare German chocolate cake mix according to package directions. Pour batter over coconut and pecans. Mix margarine, cream cheese and confectioner's sugar. Pour mixture on top of batter. (I glob it on

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Who's Cooking **NOW**

by the tsp.) Bake at 350 F for 45 minutes. Cake will be shaky but will set up. It looks like it has been in an earthquake, thus the name, but do not cook longer than the recipe calls for.

TORTELLINI MINESTRONE

- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 rib celery, chopped
- 1 14-oz. can chicken broth
- 1 26-oz. jar Romano and garlic pasta sauce
- 1 pkg. any rosette frozen tortellini
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 Tbsp. fresh basil or parsley, chopped (optional)
- salt and black pepper, to taste

In a 6-quart sauceboat, heat the oil over medium-high heat; cook carrots, onions and celery until crisp tender. Add the chicken broth and Romano and garlic pasta sauce. Bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until the vegetables are tender. Meanwhile, cook the tortellini, as directed, and drain. In a saucepan, stir in the cooked tortellini, peas and basil; simmer an additional 5 minutes. Season, if desired, with salt and black pepper to taste.

CHICKEN MORACCO

- 4 Tbsp. oil
- 1 lb. chicken breast, boneless, skinless
- 1 cup red onion, chopped
- 2 1/2 tsp. curry powder
- 1/2 tsp. red pepper, crushed
- salt, to taste
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and cubed
- 1 14-oz. can coconut milk
- 2 scallions, chopped
- cilantro (palmful)

Heat oil; cook chicken 5 to 7 minutes. Remove chicken from oil; add onion and cook for 3 to 5 minutes. Add curry, red pepper, salt, sweet potato and coconut milk; simmer for 10 minutes. Add chicken; simmer 5 more minutes. Place in serving bowl; garnish with scallions and cilantro. Serve with pita bread.

WHITE CLAM SAUCE-SALSA ALLE VONGOLE

- 1/2 cup oil
- 3 large garlic cloves, sliced thin or chopped fine
- 1/2 cup water
- parsley chopped (palmful)
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. oregano
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 16 oz. can clams, not drained
- 1 lb. desired pasta, cooked

Heat oil; lightly brown garlic. Stir in water, parsley, salt, oregano and black pepper; simmer for 30 seconds or more. Add whole clams with juice; heat thoroughly until clams are tender. Serve over pasta. Serves five regular portions or one *Benvenuto!*

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Don't Let **April 15** Pass You By

— By *Tim Tobey*

April 15 has long been considered a date to avoid. Visions of tax men coming for your money are common in many advertisements on television and in print.

Wouldn't it be nice if you could do something to lower your federal income tax burden instead of mailing a big check on April 15? With a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA), you may be able to do just that.

A contribution of the 2008 maximum of \$5,000 prior to April 15, 2009, could reduce your taxable income, making your federal tax burden less for the year. If you were 50 or older by the end of 2008, you can add a \$1,000 catch-up contribution to potentially reduce the tax burden even more.

If you already have a traditional IRA, plan to make a contribution prior to the April 15 deadline. If not, talk to a financial professional as soon as possible to start one.

There are restrictions governing who may contribute to a traditional IRA. If you don't qualify, consider a Roth IRA. You won't get the federal tax advantages now, but qualified withdrawals can be made free of federal income tax during your retirement years.

Either way, having a plan for retirement is important. You owe it to yourself to make the best plan as soon as possible. **NOW**

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Compassion Helps With Epilepsy

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

Jennifer went from a bubbly sixth-grader to a frightened and silent little girl. She started to walk with her head down most of the time. Her friends seemed to be afraid to spend time with her. Why? She had her first seizure, days ago, in front of the entire classroom. She was eventually diagnosed with epilepsy. However, with time, medical management and education, Jennifer became popular as ever. A seizure disorder is not a social death sentence. This disorder can be managed.

Epilepsy affects millions of Americans with thousands being newly diagnosed every year. In epilepsy, the neurons (nerve cells) have bursts of abnormal electrical activity in the brain. When these nerve cells misfire, communication between them is temporarily disrupted resulting in a seizure. Epilepsy is not a disease. It is a neurological condition affecting the nervous system. You cannot catch it from anyone. It is not a mental illness. It does not indicate a person's intelligence level or ability to think and learn.

It may be frightening to watch someone have a seizure because it can cause uncontrolled jerking movements of the body. Sometimes, the person may lose consciousness. When someone goes into seizure activity, they need your help. It used to be a common practice to use a padded tongue blade



between the teeth. This is now discouraged because of the possibility of broken teeth or accidental choking. The most important thing to remember when someone has a seizure is to keep him or her safe. If they are sitting or standing, gently ease them to the floor to avoid a hard fall. Remove glasses, ties, backpacks — anything restrictive. Move furniture and other objects out of range so they are not injured when their limbs are thrashing uncontrollably. Stay with them until the seizure is over. Some of the indications that dictate calling 9-1-1 are — breathing difficulties (if breathing stops, begin CPR), if the person is pregnant or diabetic, if the seizure occurred while in water, repetitive seizures without a break in between or if the person is injured or unknown to you. Call also if the seizure is longer than five minutes. The old adage that it is better to be safe than sorry applies here.

Because of the occasional social stigma attached to this disorder, it is important for others to know that people with epilepsy are regular people with the propensity to have a normal life, just like them. **NOW**

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

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March 2009

Community Calendar

Every Tuesday

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

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

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

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

First Thursday

Midlothian Area Historical Society meeting: 7:00 p.m., Meadows Library at Midlothian High School. Contact Kathy Robinson at (972) 723-2755 for more information.

ABWA - Empowering Women Express Network monthly meeting, 5:45 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle, Midlothian. Please RSVP at www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org for more information.

First and Third Thursday

Midlothian Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m. at Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th Street. For more information, call (972) 775-7118.

Every Friday

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

March 9

American Business Women's Association (ABWA), Great Visions Charter Chapter — Midlothian, 6:30 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. Come celebrate Texas History Month with us! \$15.00. For ABWA membership information and to RSVP: abwainfo@gmail.com or (972) 723-0017.

March 11

"Understanding Copyrights and Patents": 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. at Citizen's National Bank Community Room, 310 N. 9th Street. The cost of this workshop is \$20.00. Pre-registration is required, as seating is limited. To register, call the Navarro College SBDC at (903) 875-7667 or e-mail sbdc@navarrocollege.edu.

March 13 - 15

Antique Treasures Exhibit, special version of the popular Antiques Road Show, sponsored by The Midlothian Conference Center Arts Council and Midlothian Area Historical Society. Show includes appraisals of your antiques and a display of all participants' antiques. Appraisals: March 13, 1:00 p.m. -8:00 p.m. Public Display: March 14, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. and March 15, noon - 4:00 p.m. To participate or for more information, contact Mary Rustin at midconfcntr@aol.com or (972) 723-7919 before March 11. A Vintage Auto Show will be held in the Center's parking lot Saturday March 14.

March 16 - 20

MISD Spring Break

March 18

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection, affiliated with Stonecroft Ministries, monthly luncheon at Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East (Exit 401B), Waxahachie. \$13.00, inclusive. Nursery vouchers available. Reservations are preferred. Contact (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984, or e-mail Kay at windchime423@yahoo.com before March 15.

March 21

Christian Music Festival. For information, contact Joy Ranton at (972) 938-0103.

March 28

Midlothian Chamber of Commerce will sponsor Experience Midlothian, a community Expo, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Master Gardeners Lawn and Garden EXPO: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at the Waxahachie Civic Center. Call (972) 814-0699 or e-mail expo.ecmga@yahoo.com for details.

For more community events,
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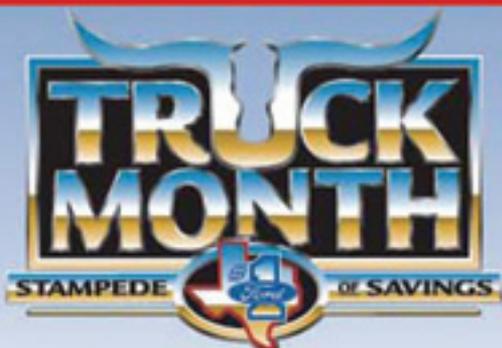


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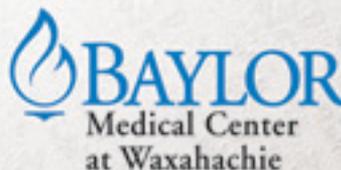


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