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MARCH 2012

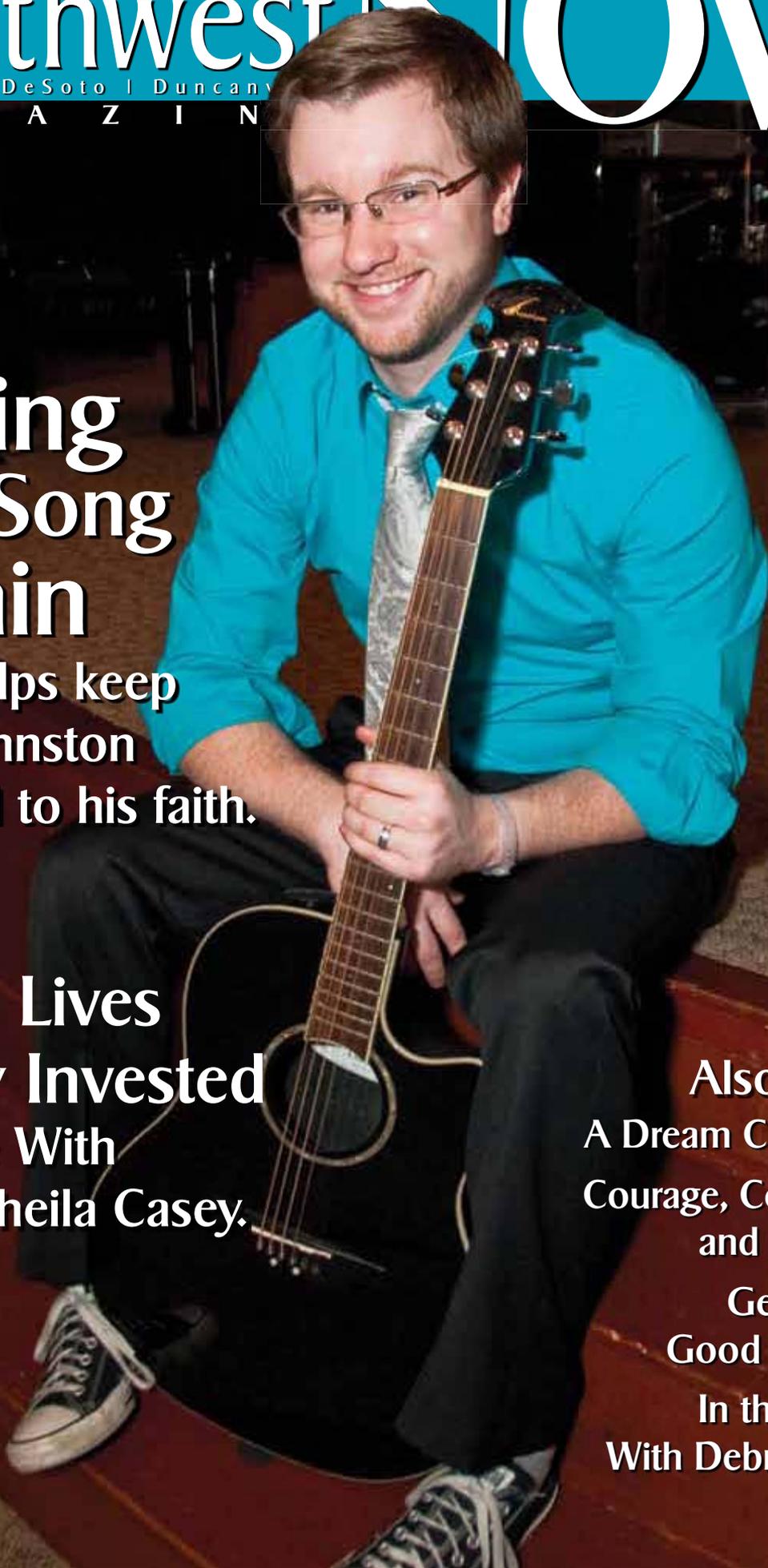
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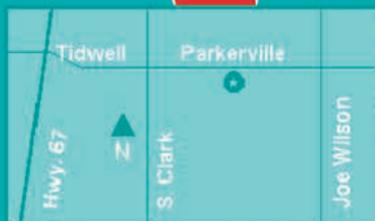
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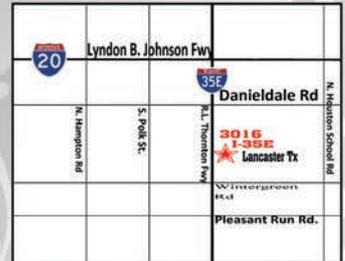
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On The Cover



Jarrod Johnston believes music is a conduit to bring people to God.

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Friends!

Funny, this month people start talking about weather ... or basketball ... and they both refer to a little "March madness." But there are a few other things going on in March, such as Read Across America (a National Education Association initiative on March 2) — try some Dr. Seuss to honor his birthday (or the *SouthwestNOW Magazine* — I hear it's good). Don't limit yourself to reading on just one day though — J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *Lord of the Rings*, gets honorable mention this month as well.

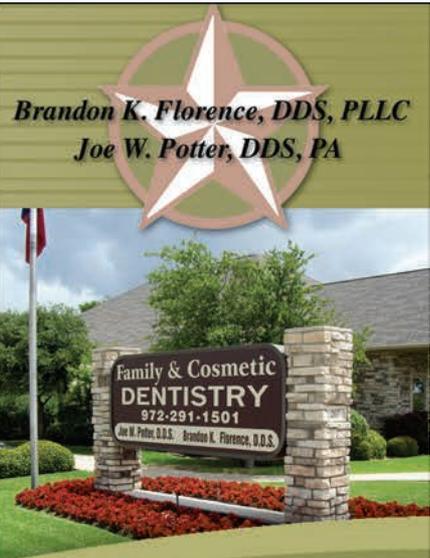
Girl Scouts of the USA turns 100 this month, so eat some cookies — Thin Mints ... yum! And spring arrives, so let's change the time (again), or dye your hair green for St. Patrick's Day.

Me? I'll be celebrating my delightful grandson's third birthday, listening for his precious voice calling me Grandma. It doesn't even matter if he still calls his grandpa the same name.

Oh, and join me for a pickle on March 29 (pickle day).

Beverly

Beverly Shay
SouthwestNOW Editor
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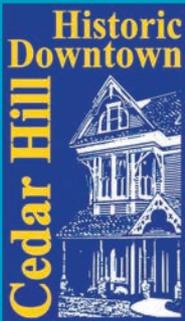
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Board members, left to right: Dr. Deborah Harris, President Tom Kennedy, Louis V. McElroy, Phil McNeely, Vice President Marlies Peregory, Secretary Marshal Wesley, and Dorothy Wolverton.

Duncanville ISD applauds our school board members' efforts to serve as advocates for our children and the voice of public education. Their job is to establish a vision for the education program, design a structure to achieve that vision, assure schools are accountable to the community, and strongly advocate continuous improvement in student learning. That responsibility entails an endless string of meetings and school functions to attend; reams of reports, agendas, proposals,

and other information to read and study; and a host of difficult decisions to make. Focused on the future success of every student enrolled in the district, the Duncanville ISD Board of Trustees truly helps our kids shine year after year.

District Holds First Knighting Ceremony



In an age when bullying has become an increasing concern around the country, Duncanville ISD continues to teach students character and competence, from the time they start school until the time they finish. One program that is helping the district accomplish this goal is the Early Act First Knight curriculum piloted at Central Elementary. This character education program, created by The Knights of the Guild for students in grades K-8, teaches knightly virtues and Rotarian values such as tolerance, responsibility,

confidence, perseverance, discipline, respect, honesty, compassion, friendliness, and service. Since Central Elementary's kick-off event this past September, students have been studying the character-education curriculum, devoting ten minutes of class time each day to the subject. With a different virtue spotlighted each month, knighting ceremonies are held to recognize students who best display those attributes. The school's auditorium is transformed into a medieval banquet hall, and honorees receive medallions and certificates in the presence of their friends and family. Central's first knighting ceremony was held in November, recognizing the students who demonstrated tolerance and responsibility.

District Celebrates Gold Performance Acknowledgments



Duncanville ISD is proud to announce that 12 of 17 eligible campuses, or 70 percent of our schools, earned one or more Gold Performance Acknowledgments, and the District earned two Gold Performance Acknowledgments. These schools were recognized during the December School Board Meeting for a total of 21 Gold Performance Acknowledgments.

Visit duncanvilleisd.org for a complete Gold Performance listing.





A Dream Come True

— By Beverly Shay

Sometimes, a dream begins with one person or one need, and dreams are often contagious. Sometimes, dreams are elusive or overwhelming. One of the key ingredients for dreams becoming a reality is timing. Another key is partnership. Perhaps the most important key is hard work. One dream in Cedar Hill is becoming a reality: The dream of providing a safe maternity home for any woman who finds herself in a crisis pregnancy and needs people to support her, provide for her and love her. The home is a place of hope. In fact, it is a mansion of hope — appropriately called Hope Mansion.

Most of you have driven by it. Built in 1985, the three-story, 14,719-square-foot, pillared beauty has drawn the attention of those driving north or south along Highway 67, around Mt. Lebanon Rd. The very structure has begged purpose and will finally achieve it as a joint project of the community of Cedar Hill and countless churches, businesses and individuals. The director, Angie Hammond, was one of those captivated by the home — for at least 12 years now. “Every time I drove by, I

would say, ‘God, that house would make a great maternity home. Save it for me!’ That was my dream, but now it’s not my dream alone,” Angie stated.

Cedar Hill’s mayor, Rob Franke, has had a dream as well — a dream of finding a cause that would pull all the aspects of a community together in the common service of community-wide needs. “I wanted to see something tap into the businesses, churches, civil servants, individuals, groups, people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds and economic statuses — because we all have something to offer.” Hope Mansion, which will initially be under the oversight of Transformation Vision Cedar Hill, is fulfilling Mayor Franke’s dream, as well.

Angie not only has a long history of providing support for women in crisis pregnancy situations (some 24 years), she has a



Back row: Donna and Keith Bobb-Semple. Front row: Angie Hammond and Mayor Rob Franke.

deep passion. And this passion reached a bit of a crisis of its own when she found out the two maternity homes with which she had been working (there are only 12 maternity homes in the state of Texas) were closing. A friend encouraged her to contact Trinity Church in Cedar Hill, as they shared her heart for these women and their unborn children.

So, in what has been dubbed a Kingdom of God event, a group of people from churches, businesses, government, charitable ministries, along with concerned individuals, met. Angie shared her dreams and prayers. Someone reported they had a picture of the house on their refrigerator and had been praying for God to provide a way for it to be used in godly, community service. Two more people shared similar stories. Within a short time, a board was formed and a decision made to make an offer on the mansion — propitiously for sale. The banker said, “Sure.” And the project was underway.

Pregnant teens and women make up the fastest growing group of homeless in America, yet Texas can only house 80-85 women in maternity homes at one time. Hope Mansion will be able to house 16 residents once the facilities have been fully renovated and pass code inspections. So many, many people have volunteered expertise, time and supplies in the form of plumbing, dry wall, electrical wiring, air conditioning and much more. Trees of hope (like an angel tree) for linens, furnishings, fixtures and appliances were set up at several churches and at the mansion. So many opportunities have been presented for people to get involved on all sorts and types of levels from donating labor, time and supplies to sponsoring the finishing out and furnishing of each room.



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Keith and Donna Bobb-Semple will be the first of two couples who will serve as house parents. "I have been involved with crisis pregnancy work since the '80s," Keith began, "first as a volunteer, then a board member and chairman of the board at Restoration House Pregnancy Center in Hammond, Louisiana." He and Donna met while working for the 700 Club. "I let people know I was believing God for the restoration of my first marriage, so I wasn't available for a new mate," Keith stated.

"When God told me to marry Keith, I wasn't looking to be married either, and I told God, 'No!'" Donna remarked. "I asked for 10 confirmations [to marry him] and got 20. We married without ever dating."

Twenty-seven years and four children, plus Keith's son, later, they know a little bit about life and some of its unexpected twists and turns. In fact, it was an interesting twist and turn that brought them to Dallas. Donna was mostly a stay-at-home mom until the mid-'90s, when she began visiting a crisis pregnancy center. Eventually, she became a counselor and then a substitute teacher nearby and later taught at the center. But it wasn't until Keith's job in human resources dissolved that they considered moving from Hammond, Louisiana. They first came to Dallas to visit their daughter, Charis, who was in school. "We sensed this urge to move to Dallas and so went home, packed up and moved here with no job or home to come to," Keith remarked.

"I was looking forward to getting a full-time job," Donna added, "but God had a different plan: I began to volunteer



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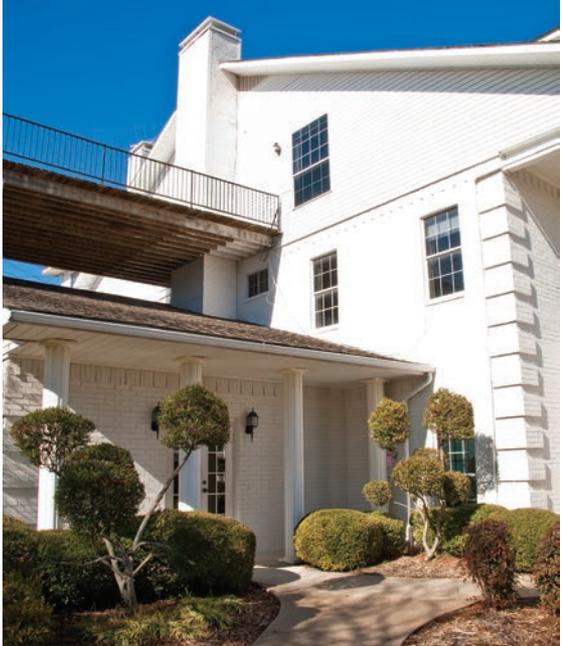
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at the crisis pregnancy center where Angie worked.” The two women became close friends almost immediately. “I felt we would be working closely together for a long time,” Donna recalled.

When Angie asked Keith and Donna if they would be house parents, Donna balked at first. “Our youngest child was a senior in high school, and I thought I was ready for a break. I had dreams of doing some traveling, but our friends and those who knew our history really encouraged us to take this on. The clincher was when my son said, ‘Mom, if Jesus could lay down his life for you, you could spend two to three years laying your life down for these women who need some loving,’” Donna said quietly.

Women who have benefited from the loving care of maternity homes usually comment on how crucial having the love and support of house parents is, as they navigate out of valueless mindsets and situations and learn to see themselves as women, who do not have to remain derailed and who can become great moms. This spring, Hope Mansion will be opening its doors to women who have decided to either parent their babies or place them for adoption. The women will be able to stay for several weeks after their babies are born. Pastors, government leaders, businessmen and women and people from all over the Best Southwest are eager to embrace these women and introduce them to hope at their very own mansion. **NOW**

Editor's Note: To find out more information or how you can help, visit www.hopemansion.org.

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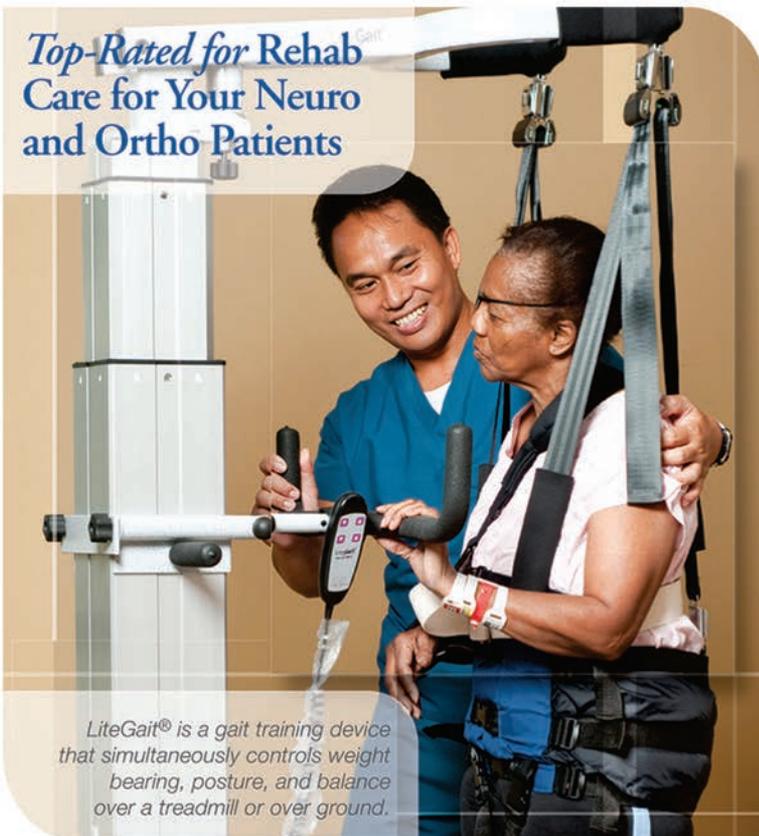
**Learn more at our next information session
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Superintendent Search in final stages

After completing the development, recruitment, assessment and interview phases of the superintendent search, the DeSoto ISD Board, led by a committee of three, will name a lone finalist on March 3 to be the next superintendent of DeSoto ISD. The board must go through a required 21-day waiting period before formally hiring the lone finalist in a meeting set for March 26. The newly hired superintendent is expected to begin June 1, 2012.

Board Election scheduled for May 12, 2012

The candidate filing and voting dates have been set for the 2012 DeSoto Independent School District's Board of Trustee Election. The Board Election will be held jointly with other area elections on Saturday, May 12, 2012. Candidate filing dates for the DeSoto ISD Board of Trustees Election will be Monday, February 6-Monday, March 5.

Positions up for election this year are:

- Place 6 — incumbent Warren Seay, Jr.
- Place 7 — incumbent Donald Gant

Interested candidates may pick up and submit a candidate packet at the DeSoto Instructional Support Center - Education Center at 200 E. Belt Line Road, during office hours from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (4 p.m. on Fridays) from Monday, February 6 to Monday, March 5.

Early voting for the DeSoto ISD Board of Trustees Election will occur Monday, April 30 through Tuesday, May 8. Voters may cast their ballot at any location in Dallas County during early voting. Polls will be open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. on Election Day, Saturday, May 12. Elected board members will serve three-year terms. More information can be found at www.dalcoelections.org.



Four DeSoto ISD players were named to the Texas 5A All-State Football Teams - in the photo with Interim Superintendent Levatta Levels and Board Member Don Gant are (from left): Michael Richardson (2nd Team), Curtis Riser (1st Team) and Bryson Echols (Honorable Mention). Not in the photo: Jalen Mills (Honorable Mention). In addition, the program had a record eight (8) players named to the Texas Academic All-State Teams and a record 22 players signed a Letter of Intent to play collegiate ball on February 3. Academic All-State players are: 1st Team: Alex Lyons and Jalen Taylor; 2nd Team: Michael Davis, Devin Rushing, Gary Singleton, Derrick Smallwood, Jordan Smith and Ryan Sternes.

calendar of events

- March 26; April 9, 23 - Board Meetings, DeSoto ISD Board Room
- March 5, 7-9 – TAKS Testing (see online for details)
- March 12-16 – Spring Break - no school, all ISD closed
- March 23-24 - District UIL Spring Meet at DHS
- March 26-30 - STAAR Testing (see online for details)
- Saturday, March 31 - Education Foundation Gala and Auction, Hilton Garden Inn
- April 5 - DeSoto Reads! program with the DeSoto Library

STAAR is coming

The new state assessment, STAAR, will begin this spring, replacing the former TAKS tests.

STAAR Assessments for Grades 3-8:

- 3-8 mathematics
- 3-8 reading
- 4 and 7 writing
- 5 and 8 science
- 8 social studies

12 End of Course (EOC)

Assessments:

- English I, English II, English III
- Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics
- World Geography, U.S. History, World History

The new assessments will be more rigorous and timed (TAKS was not). Standards for EOC will be released in late spring, Gr. 3-8 will not be released until the fall of 2012.

STAAR will allow parents to view student scores through a data portal.

EOC Assessments will begin with this year's 9th graders. Current students in grades 10-12 will finish under the previous TAKS system.

The goal is for Texas to rank in the top ten among states in percent college-ready and the percent graduating under the recommended or advanced high school program, with no gaps by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status by 2019-2020.

Courage, Confidence and Character

— By Cindy Malone

The mission of the Girl Scouts of the USA is to “build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.” Keyana Davis and Soweto Redmond are shining examples of what the Girl Scouts hope to create with each girl who joins.

Keyana and Soweto are both in the 11th grade, Keyana at Red Oak High School and Soweto at DeSoto High. They both joined the Girl Scouts in the third grade, with Keyana’s mother, Monica Davis, taking the helm as a troop leader along with Myla Wilson. Both girls joined the group for vastly different reasons.

Keyana was ready to try something new. “I liked camping and stuff like that, and I really wanted to meet some new friends,” Keyana explained.

Soweto, on the other hand, needed



Girl Scouts to work on her extreme shyness. "It took awhile, but thanks to all the girls, especially Keyana, I finally came out of my shell," Soweta remembered.

Since joining, they have grown up together, learning and experiencing new things every day. They have learned how to be selfless by giving their time and effort to multiple charities. "It feels good to do something positive," Keyana said. "I like that I get to help others, and I like that I get to do everything with my best friend."

"Definitely, and now that we get to help all of the little girls who just joined, it's like we are everybody's older sisters," Soweta chimed in. "We can remember what it is like to be there, young and just starting out."

Now that the girls are in high school, they both help to actually run most meetings. They even joined together to teach a class in the Cookie College put on recently at the University of North Texas (UNT) Dallas Campus. Cookie College is a program hosted by the older Girl Scouts to teach the younger girls the strategies and best business practices that come with running a program as large and well-known as the Girl Scout Cookie Program, which usually takes place in the first quarter each year. In Keyana and Soweto's room, they were teaching the girls how to set up tables in front of a business, when they are allowed to do so. Businesses such as Tom Thumb and Walmart routinely support the Girl Scouts by letting them set up outside their front entrance doors.

Keyana had a special reason for choosing to teach marketing. "I sell about 1,500 boxes of cookies a year," she explained. Soweto doesn't sell quite as many, only about 500. But Keyana drives, so it is easier for her. Both girls find school is their favorite place to sell cookies. "You know how high school kids eat!" they agreed.

However, the funniest things that have happened to them while selling cookies occurred when they were out and about in town. "Remember that time at Chili's?" Soweto asked Keyana.



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“OMG! A man bought 16 cases of cookies, loaded them in his trunk and sped off like he was in a hurry to get those cookies somewhere *fast!*” Keyana stated.

Soweto remembered, “Once a man asked me my favorite kind of cookie. I told him Thin Mint, and he bought a box and gave them to me. And another time a woman said she was diabetic so she just gave me \$20.”

Besides the friendships made, there are lots of other benefits to being a Girl Scout. “We get to meet celebrities sometimes. We just met Mindless Behavior [an American boy band] at the convention in Houston. They were so nice!” Keyana said.

“And Katie Couric came to speak,” Soweto joined in. “She even wore her Girl Scout uniform. She spruced it up with heels though.” They have also had the opportunity to meet Girl Scouts from all over the world. The fellow Girl Scouts may not have been famous, but both girls found them to be the most interesting people they met in Houston at the National Convention. “We met girls from Japan and India,” Keyana said. “The Japanese uniform is cool; it’s blue with a beret.” Along with all of the other Girl Scouts, the 100 Year Party in Houston also had vendors, crafts and a fashion show.

The 100 year anniversary celebration has already begun and will last most of 2012. The Girl Scouts organization began in 1912 with 18 girls. Juliette Low, who was called Daisy, was the first leader and the inspiration for their logo, the daisy. Juliette’s goals from 100 years ago are

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still the goals today — to give women the confidence to own businesses, become doctors and lawyers, and reach any and all of their dreams. In celebration of the anniversary, the Girl Scouts will be hosting several events all over the world, including an international celebration at Disney World where the Girl Scouts will be escorted into the park by Minnie Mouse herself. A 100-year float is making a tour through several local parades. It was included in the Martin Luther King Jr. Parade in downtown Dallas, and its major stop will be at Six Flags on March 12.

Along with all the 100-year celebration activities, Keyana and Soweto will be busy working to earn some very important milestones in their scouting career. Each girl is working on earning her Gold Award, the highest achievement a Girl Scout can earn. Each girl must create and implement a community service project, which can be continued by Girl Scouts in the future. Both girls are filled with ideas, and now that the Cookie College is over, they will start making calls and budgets and working out the business plan required to run a successful community service project.

As juniors in high school, both girls are thinking about their college plans. Keyana is looking into UNT in Denton or the University of Houston to study social work or nursing. She also has interest in pediatric medicine. Soweto is planning on attending Spelman College in Atlanta with hopes of being a doctor or nurse. In preparation, she is attending a health science vocational program to participate in a hands-on internship this coming summer.

Both Keyana and Soweto want to become troop leaders when they turn 18. Keyana has a younger sister whom she would love to help as she makes her way through Girl Scouts. Keyana and Soweto are excellent examples of what Juliette Low had in mind when she said, "Scouting rises within you and inspires you to put forth your best." These best friends have definitely been inspired to always do their best, and with that motivation, they will undoubtedly continue to bring the best out of others. **NOW**

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Finding the Song Within

— By Katrina D. Lewis

An unknown person once said music is what feelings sound like. If this is indeed true, then the symphony of love and dedication that flow from the heart of Jarrod Johnston should definitely not be missed. Jarrod, who was born in Houston but reared in the Metroplex, is the worship pastor of First United Methodist Church in Duncanville. Like many of those who are compelled to take on faith-based leadership positions, Jarrod didn't quite see the call coming. He thought he would end up singing in an opera or working in musical theater, which were both his first loves.

Although Jarrod's parents were active in church while he was growing up, he admitted that when he was younger, being active in the ministry was not something he was, well, "fired up" for. But even then, his love of music kept him anchored to his faith. "I started singing as a child in church," he said. "It was always kind of my conduit to the church. It's what kept me connected."

When he was an undergraduate student at Tarleton State University, Jarrod felt his heart turning him to a different path, as he found himself struggling for direction. He knew he wanted to teach, but not in a traditional school setting, and life on the road as a musician was not as appealing as he once thought it would be. "While I was there, I felt the call to ministry. So, I did my research and decided on the Perkins School of Theology," he said, referencing the widely known theology school at Southern

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Methodist University, from which he graduated in 2008. "It's a really great melting pot of denominations, and it was a great school."

After graduation, Jarrod was seeking a job and was offered one as director of music ministries in Slidell, Louisiana. The job was offered to him by a Perkins classmate's parents. "I had no intention of leaving Texas, ever," he admitted. "But I had an opportunity to do something kind of wild, so when they offered me the job and it ended up being that experience you need to have when you're off on your own for the first time, I took it."

Though Jarrod was on his own in a new state, he had left a bit of his heart behind with the one who would become



his future wife — Leanne, also an SMU graduate and the best friend of one of his Perkins classmates. Leanne currently works as a conference coordinator for youth ministries in the Methodist church, but at that time she was exploring the Perkins school to further her goal of working with youth ministries. "We went out to lunch, but we didn't really hit it off, or anything," Jarrod laughed.

However, the tides changed when both were attendants in a mutual friend's

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wedding two years after their first meeting. “We couldn’t stop talking to each other. She came to visit me in Slidell a week after the wedding just to see if there was something we wanted to pursue.” Married for almost three years, the couple recently welcomed their first son, Wesley, to the family.

Jarrod jokes that he made Leanne come to Louisiana kicking and screaming, where she found work in disaster recovery after



Hurricane Katrina devastated the area. “Our church, because it didn’t flood, became a gathering place,” he explained. “When people here complain about what they have and don’t have — that job gave me a real perspective, as we were working with people who really had nothing. Church members just moved in together while their houses were being worked on. That’s what the church is all about, to me. Making family and taking care of each other.”

While the couple enjoyed their life in Louisiana, they knew they wanted to return to Texas someday. They had decided that they would move for whoever got the first job. “We were so blessed that we both got our dream jobs,” Jarrod said. “I accepted my job, and she got her job around the same time.”

At his dream job at First United Methodist in Duncanville, Jarrod faces the joys and challenges of working with various age groups and coordinating musical selections and arrangements for every worship service. In the environment of the church’s deep, rich musical heritage, Jarrod leads several choirs, including a youth choir, two children’s choirs, an adult choir, a

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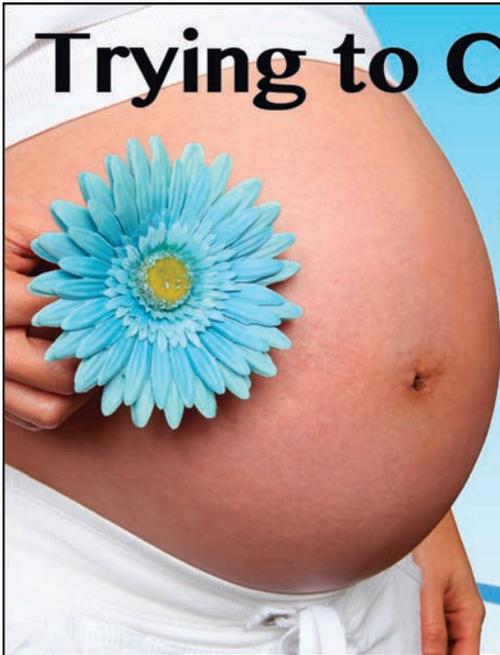
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hand bell choir and a church band. He also plays guitar in the church's band, Crossroads Praise Team, which he says is a dream to work with.

With all of these moving parts and people, Jarrod has to keep schedules on his mind and practices on task, with some choirs practicing on the same night, back-to-back with one another. "I'm a real taskmaster in practice," he said. "There's always a little time for chitchat, but I'm really there to work, and our choirs are there to work. Thankfully, there are really hardworking people in our choirs. They want to do the very best and have the best ministry they can. With everyone we work with, we make sure their primary responsibility is to lead worship on Sunday mornings. They're not there just to sing pretty music. They're there to lead hymns and get the congregation involved as we lead the congregation together."

Since the church is celebrating more than 135 years of existence, Jarrod acknowledges things tended to lean a little more toward the traditional before he began overseeing worship services. As to his style of music, Jarrod believes in being a bit edgy, but he maintains an edge can be infused into both traditional and contemporary music styles. He also embraces the idea of incorporating more international music into worship services, embracing ideas and musical influences from across the globe. At times, he is a bit nervous about bringing in such influences, but he believes taking a risk with enthusiasm makes it that much more exciting. "You can do edgy things in traditional worship and still have your traditional kind of high-church feel," he said. "It's also super important in contemporary worship to stay edgy, because that's where you get a lot more of your young families and your youth."

Ultimately, when it comes down to it, music is the one language that unites us all, especially in a worship service. No matter the denomination, music style or instrument, it all comes down to one thing: "It's all about people. And you can't be an effective music minister if you don't feel that pastoral calling to just care for and love people," Jarrod shared. "We're praying together when we sing together." **NOW**




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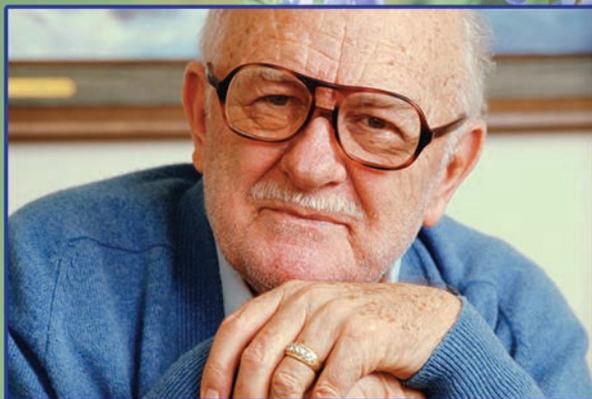
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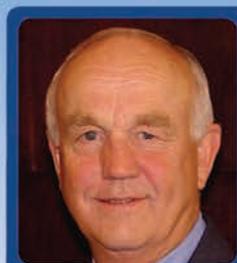
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Simple Lives DEEPLY INVESTED

— By Adam Walker

When John and Sheila Casey bought their home in Duncanville, they only intended to stay for a short time, but 25 years later, Duncanville is still home. Sheila was working for a home builder who took this house in trade for another he had built, even though it was in bad need of repair. “When Sheila brought me to show me this house,” John remembered, “my first thought was, ‘You’re out of your mind!’ The house was dark and dreary, but Sheila had a vision of what she could do with it. Now it’s light and airy.”



AT HOME WITH *John and Sheila Casey*



They bought their house in 1987, spending \$10,000 fixing it up, putting in new flooring, painting and rewiring. "I used to call this house the money pit, after that movie, because most of the money we've spent on this house, you can't see," Sheila confessed.

"She told me, 'If we pay to have this work done, we can get the cheap stuff. Or we can do it ourselves and get nice stuff,' so that's the way we went," John remembered.

John also has recollections of getting himself stuck to the floor one evening as he was removing old linoleum squares from the kitchen floor, preparing to lay the tile they now have. "I was probably too tired after working all day," he admitted, "but that's how we redid the house."

John's favorite part of the house is the yard. "When we moved in, there was no grass, and the yard was subdivided into three sections by fences. We opened it up and landscaped it." During the time they have lived in their house, the yard has continued to evolve. Many of the big trees that originally grew on the lot have been lost, and the pool has been redone three times. "For me," John said, "the allure has always been the yard. Yard work is an effort, because we have over an acre, but it is a release for me."

They built a balcony on the second floor, to enjoy the outdoors even more, and have fixed up the patio with tile and added a balustrade. They also added a cabana complete with seating for plenty





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of guests, a fire pit and even a TV. Recently, they have been adding new landscaping, including a Japanese elm and some banana trees to complement the waterfall flowing into one end of the pool.

One reason John and Sheila have put so much effort into the backyard is because that's where they do most of their entertaining. "We donate rib and beer dinners for groups of 10 for causes we support, but we've had up to 60 people back here," John explained. "Last October, we had our third wedding in the yard."

Sheila has plenty of stories, too. Returning back inside the home, the dining room table has a tale attached to it. If you saw the table today, it would appear to be a large table designed for entertaining, but under the elegant place settings and crystal chandeliers, a story lurks. "I call this our make-do house," Sheila confessed, "because when you're young and have no money, you just have to make do, so everything here is eclectic. We had just moved in and didn't have any furniture yet, but John called me to say, 'Oh, by the way, we have six to eight people coming for dinner on Friday.' We didn't even have a table yet! I still worked for the home builder then, so I asked our window and glass man at work if he could make me a table by Friday. He said he could, but not by Friday. I explained my situation, that I needed a table, so he told me he had a big storefront window of tempered glass, and I could have that. I got the carpenters to make me some pillars for the table, but I still didn't have any chairs. When I got back home, I turned the pillars on their sides and put the glass on top. I put cushions around the table, so we could sit on the floor, and served Japanese food!"

VOTE MAY 29, 2012

Bennie Brown is the founder and CEO of Hope Beyond Hope Foundation, a non-profit organization that is forging lifelong relationships within the community by supporting programs that provide children within the Dallas area access to free, nutritious meals via summer and after-school feeding programs.

Bennie brings 25 years of results-driven executive leadership experience. She is recognized and respected for her sound judgment, decisive leadership, high standards, integrity and effective execution of strategic vision and quality improvements.

Prior to her current role, Bennie successfully managed all aspects of contract management for Exchange, formerly known as the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. Her specific areas of expertise include IT contract management, logistics, construction and capital improvements. Her expertise in foreign contract management facilitation and negotiation earned her a Superior Accomplishment Award for her due diligence and oversight of equipment for OEF/OIF. She spearheaded the research, planning and strategic deployment of initiatives worldwide that were in compliance with regulatory requirements and resulted in millions of dollar savings for the Exchange.

No stranger to the public service arena, Bennie is the daughter of Mary Washington, the first woman and first African American Mayor of Hutchins, Texas, serving two terms from 1996-2000. Bennie Brown has a Bachelors of Business Administration and is a graduate of Leadership Southwest. Bennie serves as the President of the A. W. Brown Education Foundation and the financial co-chair for Relay for Life-Best Southwest. She is an Ambassador for the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Desoto Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee.

Bennie esteems it an honor that God finds her worthy of this calling, not according to her own works but according to His purpose and grace which has been given to her in Jesus Christ. Bennie possesses the characteristics of a great leader (loyalty, respect, selfless service, integrity, honor and personal courage). This is the core of her foundation which defines who she is; this has given her a solid footing as a great leader.

Bennie resides in DeSoto, Texas with her husband, Attorney Lorenzo Brown, and their children. Their family worships at Antioch Baptist Church.



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The 125-inch table, with the pillars now set upright, still holds a place of honor in the dining room, where it is flanked by a pair of antique European sideboard cabinets filled with glassware. On the end wall of the dining room is a giant mirror reflecting the room and making the space seem much larger and more open.

The living room features another large mirror above the mantel, adding light and space to that room, as well as reflecting a special piece of sculpture. "I bought that piece here, but it was done by an artist in Austin. When I saw it, I had to buy it because it reminded me of my special needs child," Sheila explained.

Another reminder of John and Sheila's son is a small table full of Elmos and Tiggers, which is set just to the right of the fireplace with its leaded glass screen, nestled between the hearth and the TV. These belonged to their son as did the table, which was designed by their daughter. "She won state for that table at an Invention Convention," Sheila proudly explained. Their daughter was offered a patent for the railing design on the top of the table that keeps the toys in place. Their daughter is now a graduate of Texas Tech University and has moved back to Lubbock with her husband, where they are both working on second graduate degrees.

The whitewashed hutch in the living room is filled with photographs of John and Sheila's children, as well as a small collection of service awards, which John calls Sheila's awards, though many also bear his name. "She gives a lot of time to community service, the Education Foundation Board and other groups. My name is on there because I give

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money, but Sheila's the one who is really involved," he explained.

The awards include Duncanville's Woman of the Year and a set of cobalt blue glassware. As John started to explain, Sheila changed the subject to John's now-boxed-up collection of pink flamingos, which has become a multigenerational joke among family and



friends. "People used to give them to him all the time and still do, from time to time," she explained. "Our daughter's friends still ask about the collection, now and then, so now John gives each of them a set of flamingos for their yards when they marry."

"Duncanville has become home. We became embedded in the community," John explained. "It's not the house, itself, but the community."

Sheila agreed and summed it up, "That's our simple life." **NOW**

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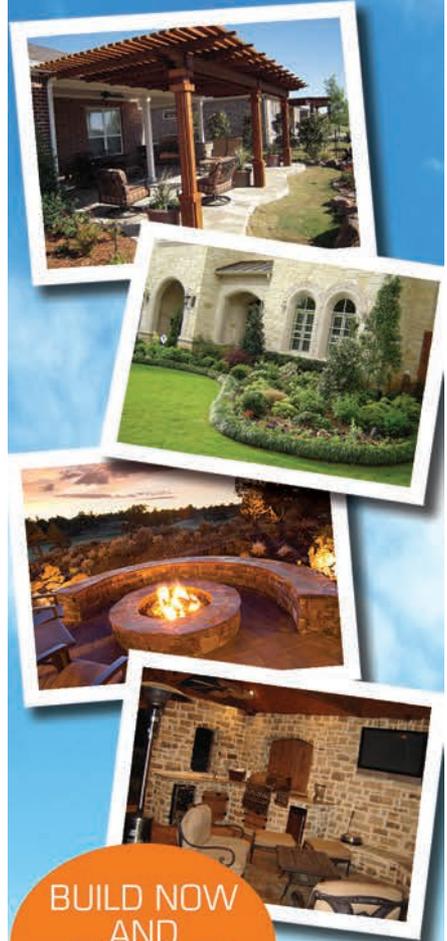


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— By Beverly Shay

Jim McDonald grew up in an entrepreneurial family in Jefferson, Texas. His father was in the lumber business, and his mom was a florist. “Business was a given for me following graduation from the University of North Texas in the ’60s. My faculty advisor got me a job with a Dallas bank,” Jim recalled. Returning from 16 months of active duty during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Jim realized rather than going back into banking, he really wanted to go into business for himself.

Jim was licensed with the Farm Bureau in Waxahachie but came to Duncanville when he heard State Farm was looking to open an office here. “Serving farmers and ranchers in Ellis County provided good experience when the opportunity to have my insurance business came,” Jim stated. “I really like

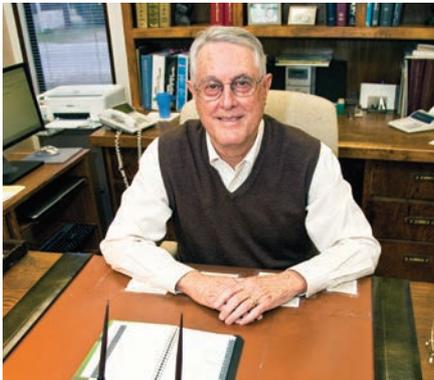
dealing with the people in Duncanville. They are good, solid working people. Those I deal with are mostly of middle class income, so the main products we offer them are home, renters and auto insurance, along with some life insurance policies and some business policies. “One of the newer things State Farm is offering is banking. They chartered a bank and offer CDs and other banking products,” Jim informed.

Jim’s office is known for the friendly, competent service offered by Jim and his staff. Angela Spurgeon has been with him for 11 years, servicing and selling policies. “A friend recommended I come to work for him, and it proved to be a good decision. I have never met anyone who cares more genuinely for his customers. He truly goes above and beyond the

call of duty," she remarked. "It is very satisfying to be able to give understanding to clients who call in with questions about their policy or the cost. And once they file a claim, they can really see that not only does State Farm back their promises, we do too!"

Jim's wife, Claudia, to whom he has been married for 49 years, was his very first office girl. "We opened up in July. I would come back into the air-conditioned office to cool off, and she'd be telling me to get back out there, meet customers and sell policies," Jim laughingly recalled. The McDonalds have one married daughter, who lives in Austin, and a 10-year-old granddaughter.

Drena Cromaz is the other member of their team. She has been with Jim



for seven years now. "When I took early retirement from Southwestern Bell in 1990, I was looking for something new. I worked for a State Farm agent in Grand Prairie until he retired. I eventually came here, because it's closer to my home," Drena said. She loves working in such a caring office. "We hurt with our clients when the hard times come and rejoice with them in the happy events. It is not uncommon for Jim to attend funerals and other personal events with his clients. We really get to know the people and their families, and we always greet them with a smile."

Jim recalled a client thanking him for "being there" when he came out of a game at the stadium late one night to find his windshield broken. "Seems bad things always happen after hours," Jim stated. "He called and got our 24-hour, live customer service center, who immediately sent a tow truck. Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there." **NOW**

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Miss Teen Cedar Hill International 2012, Lacey Trevino, poses for a photo with Bella and Zoey Stephenson.



Matthew Spivey and Tyler Lee perform at Northwood's Campus Activity Board coffee house.



Jewellena and Feliciano Hernandez enjoy the Cedar Hill Daddy Daughter Dance.



Members of the "Active Older Adults Chickenfoot Group" from the Grand Prairie YMCA enjoy lunch at Babe's Chicken.



Linda Gage, Shirley Nicholson and Carolyn Chaffin have fun at Joe Pitt's birthday party.

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DHS student, Dorian Yearby, competes in a power lifting event against Kaufman HS.



DISD Board President Warren Seay Jr. reads to a fourth-grade class at Ruby Young Elementary.

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Emilio Neri takes his 4-wheeler for a spin around Lakeside Park.



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Five Easy Tips to Spring Into Shape

1. Get plenty of sleep.

Several studies have shown that a lack of sleep is associated with weight gain. One such study at Stanford University concluded that those who slept least weighed the most. People who sleep less have less of the hormone leptin. Leptin is produced by fat cells, and it signals the body to feel "full." Ghrelin levels rise with less sleep. Ghrelin is the hormone produced by the gastrointestinal system which increases appetite. There is one paradox to the sleep-weight correlation, however. Those suffering from obstructive sleep apnea tend to have abnormally high levels of leptin. Treating the apnea lowers leptin levels to normal, and they lose weight. Obstructive sleep apnea is generally treated by wearing a CPAP or BiPAP mask while sleeping to open airways, a minor inconvenience compared to major health effects suffered by untreated apnea.

2. Don't sip too many calories.

Many people unwittingly sabotage healthy eating by indulging in fancy coffees, alcoholic drinks and sodas. A fancy frap could have as many as 500 calories or more, and so can a single daiquiri. That's like eating another large snack or meal, without any significant nutrients. Regular sodas are about 150 calories each. What about diet sodas? Aren't they better? Researchers at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, School of Medicine followed study participants for 9.5 years and found that diet soda drinkers increased their waist circumference 70 percent more than those who did not drink diet sodas. Other studies suggest that aspartame actually raises blood glucose levels.

3. Drink lots of water.

Many Americans don't drink enough water. Dehydration slows metabolism, so it is

harder to burn off excess weight, and easier to gain more weight. Drinking a glass of water with every meal and snack can also add a sense of fullness. Many people mistake the thirst signal for hunger. Next time, try drinking a glass of water before reaching for that snack.

4. Stay out of the drive-through.

People who ate fast food more than twice a week gained 10 pounds more than those who frequented fast-food restaurants less than once a week. Salads offered at fast-food or dine-in establishments can be deceiving. High calorie cheeses, tortilla strips, fried meat strips, taco salad shells and beans made with lard increase calories and fat, as does pouring on the dressing. Many people can't withstand the temptation of a pie or shake or fries to go with their meal, either.

5. See your chiropractor.

More fat in the low back muscles also leads to more low back pain. Chiropractic adjustments have been shown to enhance spinal muscles' resting rate and contraction ability, basically exercising the spinal muscles. This means your spine will be healthier and better equipped for other exercise pursuits. Chiropractors are well-suited to discuss healthy diet and exercise options with their patients. Finally, chiropractic care will also help relieve those aches and pains associated with beginning a new exercise regimen. **NOW**

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Give Your Portfolio a “Spring Cleaning”

Springtime is almost here. If you're like many people, the arrival of spring means it's time to spruce up your home. But why stop there? This year, consider applying some of those same spring-cleaning techniques to your investment portfolio.

Here are some ideas you may want to put to work:

- **Get rid of clutter.** You probably don't have to look too far around your home to find things that are broken or simply no longer useful to you. If you poke around your portfolio, you might make similar discoveries: an investment that has chronically underperformed, duplicates another investment or met your needs in the past but is less relevant to your current situation and goals. Once you identify these types of investments, you may decide to sell them and use the proceeds to take advantage of opportunities that may prove more valuable to you.
- **Consolidate.** Over the years, you may have accumulated multiple versions of common household items — brooms, mops, hammers — which pop up mysteriously in various parts of your home. You might find it more efficient, and even less expensive, if you consolidated all these things in one centralized location. As an investor, you also might find that consolidation can offer you some benefits. Do you have one Individual Retirement Account (IRA) with one financial services provider and a second IRA with another? Do you have a couple of old 401(k) accounts with former employers? And have you scattered investments here, there and everywhere? By consolidating all these accounts in one place, you can cut down on paperwork, reduce fees and, most importantly, unite your investment dollars so that it's easier for you to see what you have and

then follow a single, coherent investment strategy.

- **Prepare for turbulent weather.** As you know, springtime can bring heavy rains, hail, strong winds and other threats to your home. As part of your overall spring cleaning, you may want to check the condition of your roof, clear branches away from your house, clean your gutters and downspouts and take other steps to protect your property from the ravages of Mother Nature. And just as you need to safeguard your home, you'll want to protect the lifestyles of those who live in that home — namely, your family. You can help accomplish this by reviewing your life and disability insurance to make sure it's still sufficient for your needs.

- **Get professional help.** You may find that you can't do all your spring cleaning by yourself. For example, if your carpets and rugs are heavily soiled, you may need to call in a professional cleaner. Or if your tree branches have grown out of control, you might need to bring in a tree trimmer. Similarly, when you decide to “tidy up” your portfolio, you'll need some assistance from a financial professional — someone who can study your current mix of investments and recommend changes, as needed, to help ensure your holdings are suitable for your risk tolerance, time horizon and short- and long-term goals.

Spring cleaning can reinvigorate your home and your overall outlook. And by tidying up your investment portfolio, you can help gain some of that same optimism — for your future. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Darryl Fenton is an Edward Jones representative based in Cedar Hill.



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Cedar Hill Recreation Center's 7th Anniversary and Neighborhood Services Citywide Block Party: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Rec. Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Free T-shirt to first 500. (972) 293-5388 or cedarhilltx.com.

19th Annual Expanding Your Horizons Conference: Hosted by American Association of University Women's southwest Dallas branch. Penny Ball (972) 709-1957 or penny@acm.org.

The Canterbury Episcopal School Annual Gala "Retro Rewind": 6:00 p.m., Ruthe Jackson Center, 3113 S. Carrier Pkwy., Grand Prairie. Sherry Bowers (972) 293-5877 or cesgala@yahoo.com. www.CanterburyGala.com.

March 3 and 4

N.I.A. Kids presents *Color Us Black: A Diary for African Americans*, black history in poetry, song, dance. **March 3:** 7:00 p.m.; **March 4:** 3:00 p.m., DeSoto Corner Theater. Cost: \$10; children 5/under: free. www.niakids.org or (972) 228-8381.

March 7

Duncanville Women's Club luncheon: 10:30 a.m., The Golf Club of Dallas, 2200 Red Bird Lane. Speaker: "The Lady in the Hat," Mae Hoover, Laffologist and storyteller. Reservations: Barbara McComb, (972) 296-4601 or Joan Bryan, (972) 296-8986.

Dynamic discussion about *The Help* and relationships between women: 7:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Library.

March 9

Bridges Safehouse's annual banquet "Making a Difference": 7:00 p.m., Trinity Church, 1231 E. Pleasant Run Rd., Cedar Hill. Call (469) 272-4441 for ticket information.

March 11

DeSoto Arts Commission presents Dallas Black Dance Theater: 3:00 p.m., The Corner Theater, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd. \$10/adults; \$8/students. (972) 230-9648 or kathy.jones@desototexas.gov or www.desotoartscommission.com.

March 13

Spring Fling Storytelling Event: 2:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Library.

Duncanville Library Dad's Night Out — Tommy Terrific presents Fun With Dr. Seuss: 7:00-7:45 p.m.

March 22-24, 29-31

Duncanville Community Theatre presents *The Diary of Anne Franke*: 8:00 p.m., 106 S. Main. Reservations recommended: (972) 780-5707 or www.dctheatre.org.

March 24

Pinkalicious Tea Party: 4:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Library.

Walk the Lights Arts Festival: 5:00-10:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Library.

March 26

The Southwest Dallas County Parkinson's Group support meeting: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Trinity UMC, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville. Speaker: Rachele Caruthers: "Brain Health." (972) 298-4556.

March 31

Keys to women's health and wellness: 10:00 a.m., Cedar Hill Library. Free mammograms; please register: (972) 291-7323.

"Smart Planting — Plants That Thrive in Southwest Dallas County": 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., DeSoto Library. Speaker: Master Gardener, Sandi Ciarochi.

2012 Lawn & Garden Expo: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln., Waxahachie. Adults \$5; children under 12 free.

April 3

Southwest Dallas County Aggie Moms hosts AfterHours Improv Theater: 7:00 p.m., Trinity UMC, 1302 S. Clark Road, Duncanville. Tickets (at door) \$10; children under 12 \$5. E-mail krlynch54@gmail.com.

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

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In The Kitchen With Debra Herring

— *By Beverly Shay*

Debra Herring was born and reared in Dallas, married at 17 and started having children right away. Her four children are grown, and she and her husband have six grandchildren. “After 35 years, I have a lot of cooking under my belt. I have recipes from family, friends and the Internet. Sometimes, I change them up by adding spices or herbs. One of my favorite spices is cumin, which I even add to my guacamole. I also like to grill meats and vegetables,” Debra said. “My most interesting cooking story happened the day we got married. I was so excited to cook our first meal that I burned one side of the pork chops and smoked up the kitchen. Not an impressive start,” Debra recalled. **NOW**

Italian Sausage and Potato Soup

1 lb. Italian sausage, cooked
8 medium-sized potatoes, peeled and sliced
3 pints heavy whipping cream
6 cans chicken broth
1 bunch kale, chopped
2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
Parmesan cheese, grated

1. In a large pot, combine sausage, potatoes, whipping cream, chicken broth, kale and red pepper; cook until potatoes and kale are tender.
2. Garnish soup with the Parmesan cheese.
3. Serve with salad and garlic bread.

Pumpkin Ginger Cupcakes

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 3.4-oz. pkg. instant butterscotch pudding mix
2 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. ground allspice
1/4 tsp. ground cloves
1 cup butter, room temperature
1 cup white sugar
1 cup packed brown sugar
1/3 cup crystallized ginger candy, finely chopped
4 eggs, room temperature
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 15-oz. can pumpkin puree

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease 24 muffin cups or line with paper muffin liners.
2. Whisk together the flour, pudding mix, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ground ginger, allspice and cloves; set aside.
3. Beat butter, white and brown sugars with

an electric mixer in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Grind crystallized ginger into paste; add to mixture. One at a time, blend eggs in thoroughly, beating in vanilla and pumpkin with last egg.

4. Stir flour mixture into butter/egg mixture, until just incorporated. Pour batter into prepared muffin cups.

5. Bake about 20 minutes, or until golden and tops spring back when lightly pressed. Cool in pans for 10 minutes; remove from pans; cool completely on wire rack.

6. Frost with Cinnamon Ginger Cream Cheese Frosting.

Cinnamon Ginger Cream Cheese Frosting

1 3-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup butter, softened
3/4 tsp. ground allspice
2 cups powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 Tbsp. milk

1. Blend cream cheese, butter and allspice; gradually mix in the sugar, vanilla and milk, until mixture is spreadable.

2. After frosting cupcakes, sprinkle with cinnamon/sugar mixture.

Baked Potato Soup

3 bacon strips, diced
1 small onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. dried basil
1/2 tsp. pepper
3 cups chicken broth
2 large potatoes, baked, peeled and cubed
1 cup half-and-half cream
1/2 tsp. hot pepper sauce
Cheddar cheese, shredded
Fresh parsley, minced

1. In a large saucepan, cook bacon, until crisp. Drain, reserving 1 Tbsp. drippings. Set bacon aside.

2. Sauté onion and garlic in the drippings, until tender. Stir in flour, salt, basil and pepper; mix well.

3. Gradually add broth, bringing to a boil. Boil and stir for 2 minutes.

4. Add potatoes, cream and hot pepper sauce; heat through, but do not boil. Garnish with bacon, cheese and parsley.

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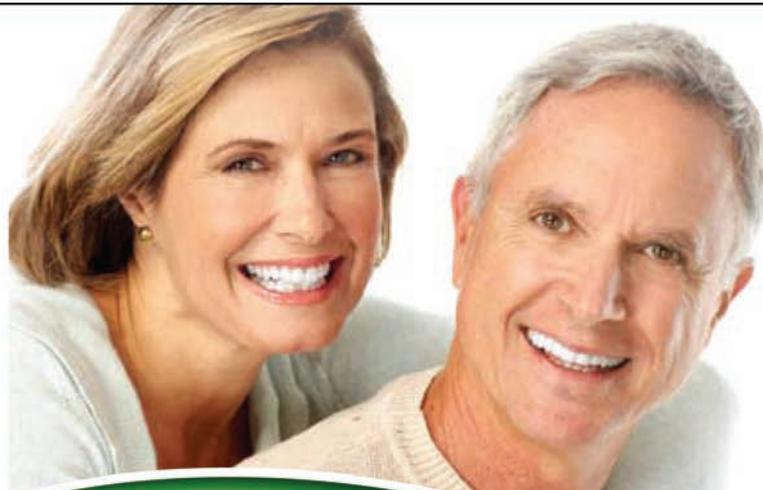


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