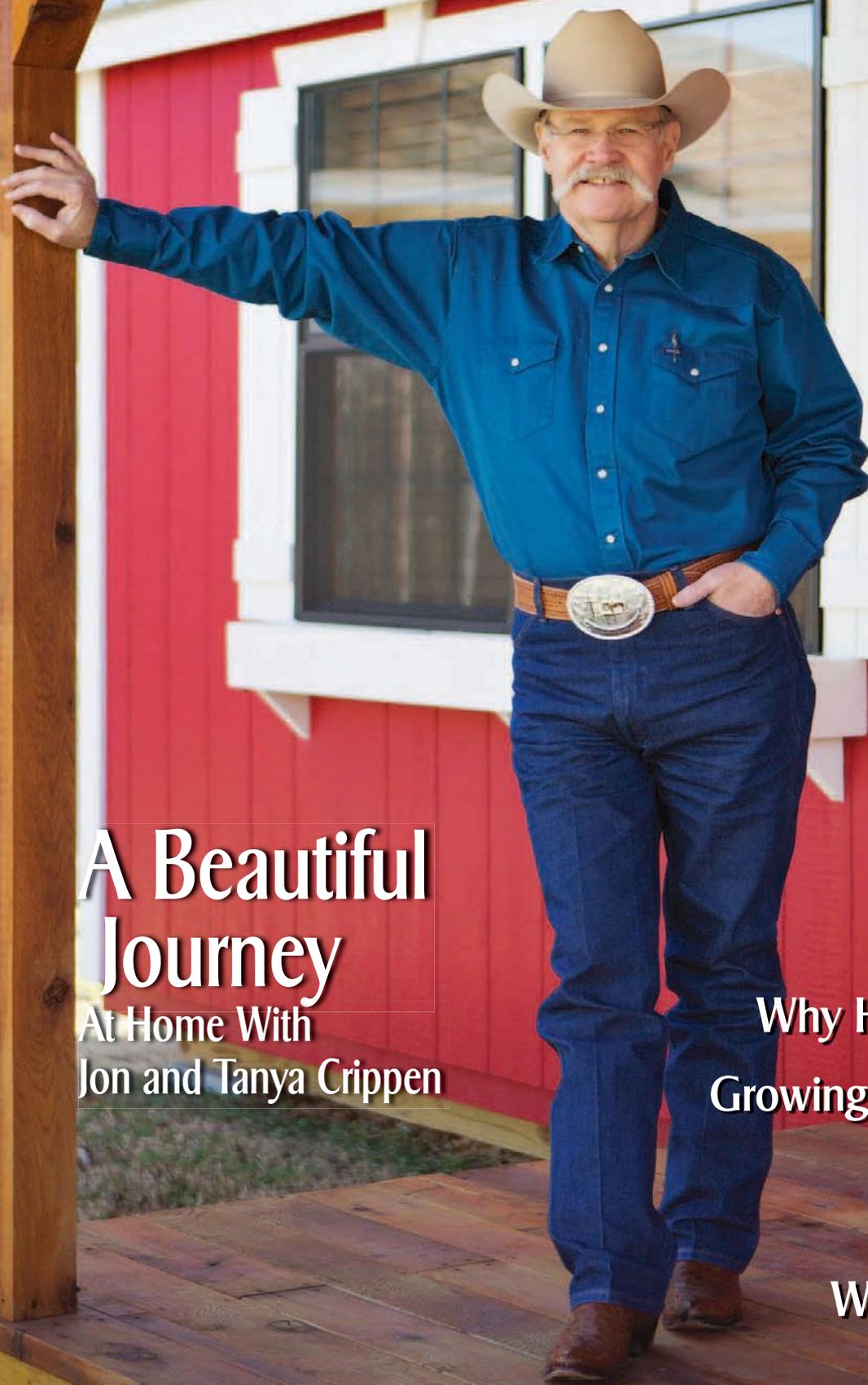


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Dave Smith is an artistic cowboy.

Photo by Vanessa Polozola.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Mansfieldians,

Lately, I have been pondering about how messy and cluttered life can become. If we don't take the necessary precautions to keep things in order, things can really pile up. From the catchall junk drawer in the kitchen to the over-stuffed closets and dresser drawers, the amount of stuff we acquire can be rather overwhelming and difficult to manage.

Remodeling my kitchen inspired this line of thinking. As I emptied the old cabinets, I was shocked at the number of unnecessary items. And the junk drawer was a doozy! I actually had a disposable camera in there. Unbelievable. These items were just taking up space. They had no purpose in my life, so I got rid of all of it. I have to say, it was undeniably liberating!

Now, I can't help but wonder what you will free your homes of this spring?

Sara

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Just
TOOLING
Around

— By Sara Edgell



At the ripe old age of 13, Dave Smith unknowingly began a hobby that would eventually define and give a unique purpose to his life. On a day trip to Waco, his parents splurged by buying him a leather tooling kit that would soon captivate his imagination and develop his creative talents. Little did they know that one splurge would lead to a

lifetime filled with leather crafting. Now at the age of 67, Dave is still at it, and his impressive masterpieces are a sight to behold.

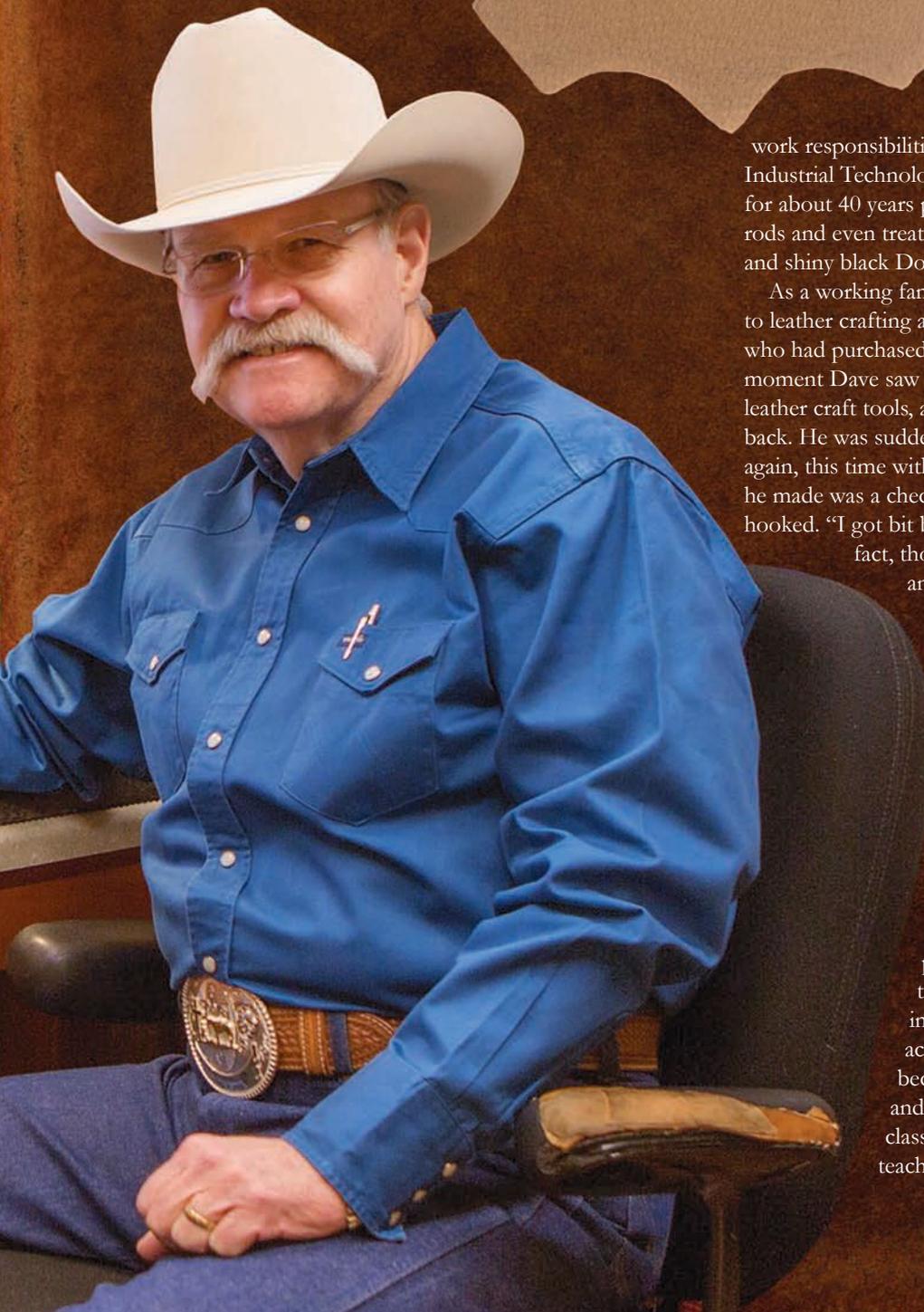
"IT'S A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT TO MAKE SOMETHING WITH MY OWN HANDS. IT'S SOMETHING I DO THAT WILL LAST."

Dave still has the first few pieces that he ever made, many of them from the kit purchased in his youth, including a wallet he made for his grandfather, a key holder and a luggage tag. But over the years, Dave became busy with life, and his interests changed from leather crafting to fast cars and dating. He enjoyed his college years, eventually settling down and marrying Judy in 1975.

Some years later, they welcomed their daughter, Victoria, into the world and settled in for a life filled with family and work responsibilities. His long-term career working at Applied Industrial Technologies selling heavy industrial conveyer belts for about 40 years proved satisfactory. Now, Dave still loves hot rods and even treated himself to a retirement gift, buying a fast and shiny black Dodge Challenger.

As a working family man, Dave eventually found his way back to leather crafting about 25 years ago, thanks to his father-in-law who had purchased a collection of tools at a garage sale. The moment Dave saw the tools, he immediately recognized them as leather craft tools, and his childhood memories came flooding back. He was suddenly inspired to take up his old hobby once again, this time with a more serious dedication. The first thing he made was a checkbook for his wife, and after that, he was hooked. "I got bit by the bug pretty good," Dave admitted. In fact, those eight tools quickly turned into over 300 and counting, as he got back into the swing of things.

Getting reacclimated with the art, he felt much like a student learning all over again. Dave quickly learned his old self-taught techniques, in some instances, needed fine-tuning. "I had developed some pretty bad habits, actually, so I relearned how to do things properly," he admitted. He took classes, looked for challenging projects to complete and played with materials to evolve his skills. His meager beginnings were a thing of the past, as his projects turned from wallets and checkbooks to saddles and figure carvings, which is an image on leather stretched from behind to achieve a 3-D appearance. Ultimately, Dave became the teacher, initially teaching beginners and then eventually leading a workshop-style class open to all levels of leather crafters. "I love teaching leather craft. Seeing those light bulb





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moments when a person finally masters a new technique is such a joy,” Dave declared. He is also directly involved with both the International Federation of Leather Guilds and the Lone Star Leather Crafters Guild.

Unfortunately, in 2010, Dave had to take another short sabbatical from leathering due to health-related issues. After countless tests and doctor visits, he was diagnosed with internal bleeding, major coronary blockage and esophageal cancer. A large tumor in his chest region was discovered by accident and, he believes, by the grace of God. “I am a strong believer in prayer,” Dave said. “It’s what got me through everything.”

Dave had to have several surgeries and endured chemotherapy along with radiation as a preventative measure. During his recovery, he had to promise to stay away from sharp objects, which meant no leather craft. “The entire year-



DAVE SMITH



long ordeal, including no leather work, was the hardest thing I have ever endured in my life,” Dave confessed.

But during this time Dave also received the most prestigious accolade he could imagine. During his chemo treatments, he received a phone call



informing him he had received the Lifetime Achievement Award. “To be nominated by my peers for something so significant was just unbelievable,” he said. Soon after his recovery, he was right back at it, hammering away at the leather with a delicate, yet firm hand. With all the years of practice and technique development under his belt, Dave can now make virtually anything, and it is no wonder that his work has earned him acknowledgement and awards throughout the leather crafting community.

“The only thing that limits a person is their imagination,” Dave remarked. Some of his most creative and labor-intensive pieces include a leather log cabin and several ornately decorated saddles, one of which his daughter has claimed. Most leather crafters strive to make a saddle, so these pieces, in particular, were a huge

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achievement for Dave, marking his level of accomplishment in his artistic abilities. Another piece in which Dave takes great pride is his intricately designed portfolio binder. The cover features beautifully detailed Sheridan roses and a horseshoe, inspired by one of his horses, with textured basket weave panel on the back. The binder took Dave about 20 hours to complete. "Every design begins with a drawing," he said, "and I am lucky to have lots of friends who draw up designs for me."

Once a design template is ready, the pounding begins. Literally, each impression upon the leather is formed by a specific stamp, but each strike of the



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stamps is only a minute part of the larger design. Most pieces, like Dave's binder, require thousands of strikes to complete the design. Each stamp is hammered into the dampened leather hide using a mallet. If the stamp slips or the mallet recoils, striking the stamps twice, a permanent mark is left. "This is what sets hand crafted leather apart from machine-pressed leather," Dave said. "Those little imperfections really end up giving the piece more character."

Currently, he is working on a copy of a piece created by one of his mentors,



Jim Linnell, titled *The Heart of Texas*, a complex featuring just about every design element possible. Dave has already spent over 100 hours working on his version, which includes three-dimensional features, coloring, layered pieces and intricate patterns. He admits he still has a long way to go. "It's a challenge, but I enjoy it," Dave said. "It's a sense of accomplishment to make something with my own hands. It's something I do that will last." **NOW**



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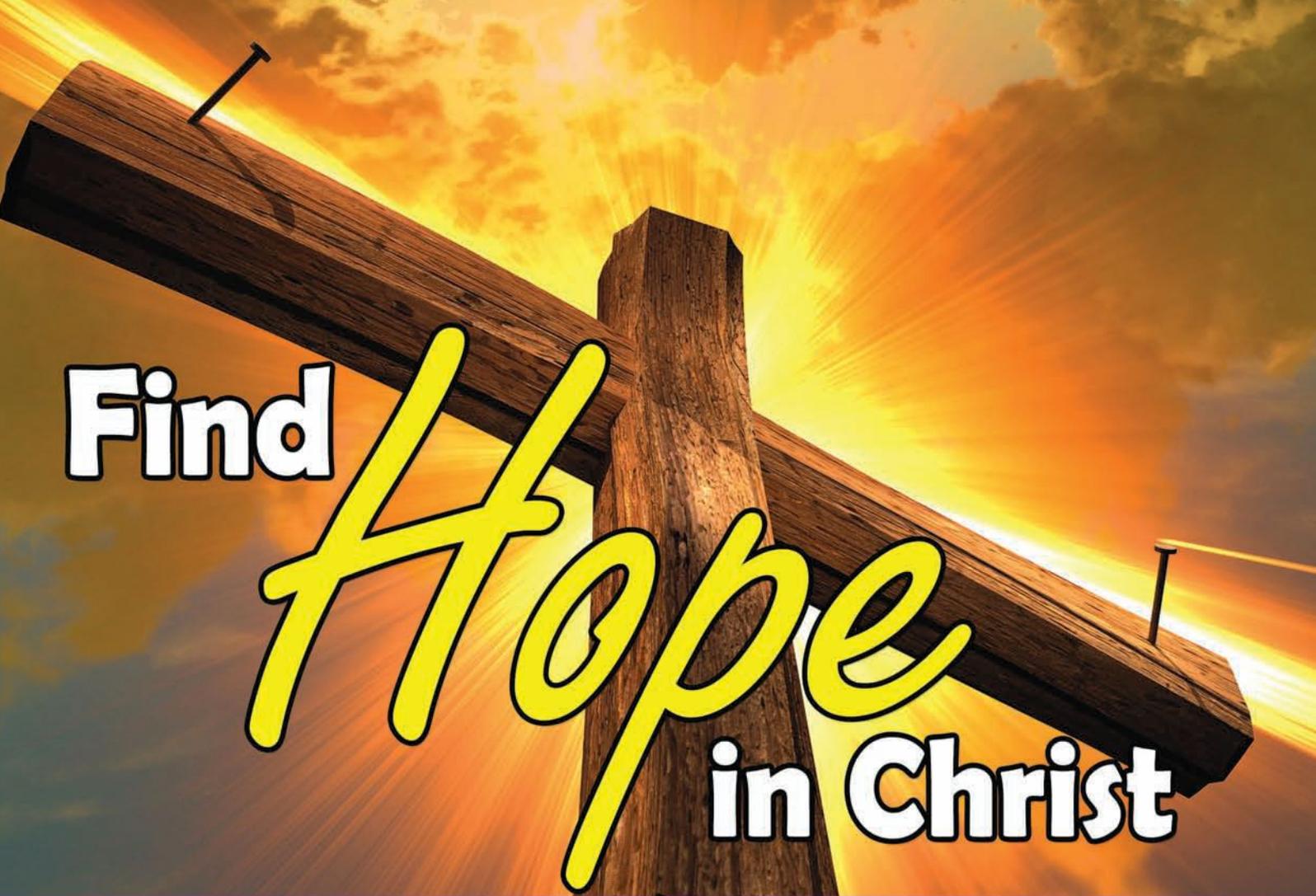
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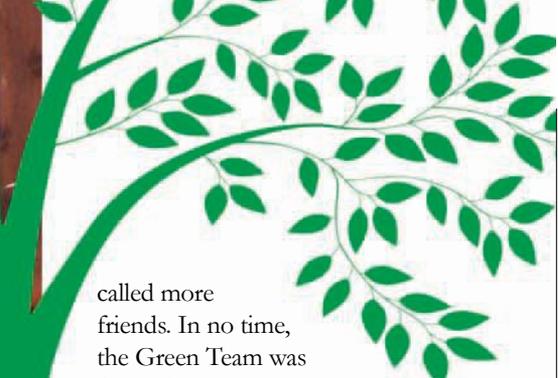


— By Carolyn Wills

Ten-year-old Lauren Scott has a big heart and a mission to match. She wants to help people, animals and the environment. Two years ago, when she was only 8 years old, Lauren found a way for her wish to come true. “I was watching a TV show called Friends for Change,” she grinned. The Disney series is about young people making positive changes in the world by working with friends and families. “I thought, How cool,” she said. “I want to do something like that!”

“Helping our environment is vitally important,” agreed Lauren’s mother, Amy. “What Lauren and all young people can do to increase awareness for the need to care for our planet and for each other makes all futures brighter.” Amy is an attorney, and Lauren’s father, Barton, is a high school science and engineering teacher.

With her parents’ approval, Lauren began reaching out to friends. First, she called Austin Parrish. Then, she and Austin



called more friends. In no time, the Green Team was formed. "Our purpose is to treat God's nature with kindness," she smiled. "Austin came up with the name, and it's perfect."

Lauren's mother became the parent responsible for the group. "I help organize, schedule, connect with community and maintain communications with parents," she said. "The group's creative genius, though, is really the heart of everything. All of the children's parents

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are tremendous about bringing them to meetings and supporting their projects," she added. "We're so proud of these kids."

When the Green Team met for the first time, another important task needed to be done. For Lauren, it was essential that the group be biblically based, so they had to find the perfect Bible verse to go with



their perfect name. "Everyone came up with lots of choices," she said. "Finally, I said, 'Let's just vote.' So we put our heads down and each of us raised a hand for the verse we liked best." The winner and perfect verse was from Isaiah 65:18,



“Rejoice forever and be glad in my creation.”

The Green Team’s first project was a butterfly garden at Mansfield’s First United Methodist Church. “The church gave us permission to plant the garden,” Lauren said. Their interest in butterflies was partially inspired by a film called *Flight of the Monarch* and, also, by the expertise of Lauren’s grandmother, Tommie Bosillo, whom Lauren calls Nana. “My grandmother is a gardener,” she smiled. “She knows what to plant.”

“We planted milkweed,” said Green Team member Nora Mooney. “We learned aphids don’t like milkweed, so they won’t come to eat the butterfly larvae. We’ve seen the butterflies now and know it actually worked!” she smiled. “The butterflies have a great time, and they come back every spring.”

The Green Team is now 2 years old and includes 10 members. In addition to Lauren, Austin and Nora, the team includes: Catarina Silva, Emma Valenzuela, Alexandra (Alex) Tutor, Logan Tutor, Kayla Butler, Aubrey Burks and Grace Savering. “Most of the children are in fourth grade and live in Mansfield,” Amy shared. “We do have a sixth- and a fifth-grader and members from Fort Worth and Arlington.”

Starting with a shining star like Lauren and adding nine bright and eager friends, the Green Team was bound for action and success. Beyond the butterfly garden, they’ve adopted a portion of Broad Street from the railroad tracks to just before Main Street. “There’s a street sign with our

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name on it,” Kayla beamed. “Three times a year, we’re scheduled to meet with trash bags, gloves and trash grabbers to pick up trash so our street stays clean.”

They also participated in the 2014 Pickle Palooza Parade. “Arianne Shipley has been a strong supporter of the group,” Amy explained. “We first met her when adopting our street. Since she joined the water department in Mansfield, she’s reached out to the Green Team for several service projects, including the parade, and the children have gladly obliged!”

“We got to be part of the Viking float,” Lauren grinned. The huge boat represented the water department’s theme: Don’t Sail Past Trash. “We painted the boat, wore Viking hats and rode on or walked beside the float,” she added. “It was great. We handed out magnets to remind people to be environmentally friendly by keeping trash out of our waterways!”

Last April, the Green Team was thrilled to contribute to a Disney fundraiser benefiting Earth Day projects. “With



help from families and friends, the kids bought a block of 50 tickets to the movie *Bears*,” Amy said. More than a quarter of those tickets were sold by Emma — she was quite the salesperson! The movie was released just before Earth Day and a portion of ticket sales were donated to America’s National Parks.

“The movie was about a mother bear and her two cubs and how they survived in the Alaskan mountains,” Lauren shared. “We went to see it as a group and were so happy to have the chance to contribute.”

Reducing waste, recycling and conservation are hallmarks of the Green Team philosophy. “Last Christmas, we made wreaths using recycled cans and a Christmas tree made from metal covered



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in rolls of recycled paper,” Lauren said. “We shared them with a group of senior citizens.” For another project, they used scraps of recycled paper to make handmade Christmas cards for the homeless population served by a local church.

“The goal is not for the children to become environmental scientists,” Amy shared. “By working together, they’re having fun, learning to be good stewards and developing simple habits that will continue to serve them and the world. Conserving, recycling and respecting the environment are part of their lives, and as adults, it will be natural for them to maintain the lifestyle.”

The Green Team has been together now for two years. They’ve accomplished much, laughed a lot and are true friends



for change. The tree house in Lauren’s backyard is now the Green Team playhouse, a hole cut into the Scotts’ backyard fence serves as a portal for members who live in the neighborhood, and Lauren’s dog, Biscuit, is always welcomed at meetings. Oh, and Green Team Productions has produced its first iMovie, featuring the Green Team story.

What’s next? “We hope to reach out to other kids and countries,” Lauren smiled. “It would be great to help kids in Africa.” From butterfly gardens, rain barrel projects, Viking boats, mother bears and recycled wreaths to their very own Green Team street, these kids are making a difference. “We love to tell people about the Green Team,” Lauren beamed. “We say, ‘If you want to join, you’re welcome!’” **NOW**

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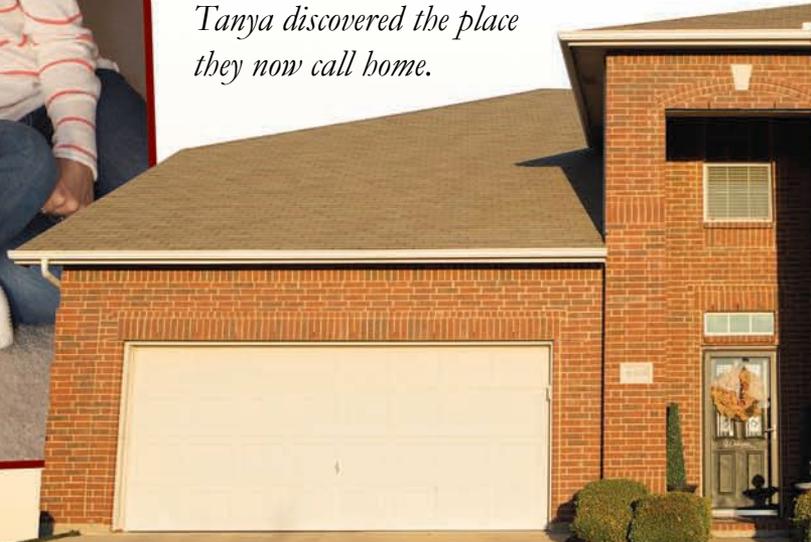


A BEAUTIFUL

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— By Sara Edgell

From freezing Nebraska winters to sweltering Texas summers, the Crippen family moved over 700 miles to make a life and home for themselves in Mansfield. Such a major relocation is considered as a life-changing event, and indeed it was, but it was also the beginning of a beautiful journey for this family of four. Trading in the cold for the heat was how Jon and Tanya discovered the place they now call home.





AT HOME WITH Jon and Tanya Crippen

Jon, a Texas native, attended the University of Nebraska, where he played football and earned a degree in communications. He was chomping at the bit to get back to Texas, until 1991 when he met Tanya, a vivacious beauty pageant winner. Jon said he'd stay another year, but after they married in 1992, that year quickly turned into seven.



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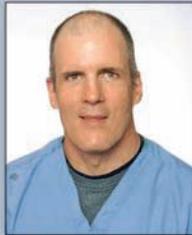
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The couple then multiplied from two to four, welcoming daughter Morgan in 1999 and son Drew in 2002. “The two most meaningful memories of my family are the seven years we had together before kids and then the years with kids,” recalled Jon with a smile.

However, everything changed on a trip to Jon’s 20th high school reunion in Houston. Tanya jokingly said that she could see herself living in Texas one day, even after years of turning down the idea. Well, that was all Jon needed to hear! He immediately sent out résumés in the Dallas area, and within a two-week period, he had landed a few interviews. The move was destined to happen.

Jon and Tanya only had a single day to find a house after Jon landed a job. Jon, a district manager for Regions Bank, was focused on price, while Tanya, who works from home designing blinged-out shirts and apparel, was more interested in floor plans. One thing they agreed on was square footage. “We were used to having a basement in our homes in Nebraska,” Jon said. “That’s something we had to compensate for, that lost extra space.”

After viewing several homes, they were feeling deflated. If one was the right price, it didn’t have the right space and vice versa. “We had a plane to catch to go back to Nebraska, but we decided to drive down one last street,” Tanya recalled. “That’s when we found this place. It was just the studs, but we viewed the model home and were sold.”

Needless to say, they missed their plane, but they had a home deep in the heart of Texas. Over a short period of time, what began as studs was transformed

into a house, and when the family of four moved in, it finally became a home. Fast-forward eight years and life is once again picture-perfect. The two-story, 4,068-square-foot home features four bedrooms, three full bathrooms, media room, office, combined living and dining area, kitchen with dinette, family room and two-car garage. Even though they didn’t get basement space, the generous layout of the house was more than sufficient for the family, who loves to entertain. “Our house may not be huge and extravagant, but we love it,” Tanya said.



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The kitchen, located off the dining area, is another spacious room, with clean lines and a minimalistic feel. "We don't have an island, because Morgan likes to dance in here," Tanya said. The French bistro decor, accented by a chef figurine and window-paneled pantry door, makes the space cozy and perfect for Tuesday night family dinners. When Morgan isn't dancing across the tiled kitchen floor, she is cooking with her dad. One of Jon's passions is cooking. Another is family time.

Therefore, they often spend time watching movies and television together. The family room adjoined to the kitchen has seen many nights filled with laughter and joy. The space lends well to the warm, cozy feel of the house, featuring a second cross wall and fireplace

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filled with beautiful decorative candles that glow softly. Off the family room is the downstairs bathroom, Tanya's home office and the garage access.

The family also spends time together playing board games on Friday nights in the media room upstairs. "Sometimes, we play Monopoly until 2:00

in the morning. I am always the banker, and I do not let them quit," added Jon with a smirk. In addition to the media room, the individual bedrooms are also on the second floor. Morgan's bedroom walls are adorned with inspirational quotes, mums, awards and countless photos of friends. Memories are important to Morgan, and she wanted to make that the focus of her room decor. Conversely, Drew's room demonstrates his infinite love of sports. When he isn't on the field or the court, he enjoys playing video games in his comfortable, personalized space. The master bedroom, complete with master bath, is Tanya and Jon's peaceful space. "We read in bed at night and have conversations," Tanya said. "Occasionally, we find a kid or two snuggled up with us on Saturday mornings."

But with life being so busy, they do not spend much time in these rooms. Instead, they are out and about in the community going to sporting events or trying new restaurants. "Every Sunday after church, we go to lunch as a family," Jon explained. "And cell phones are not allowed. This is a time for us to connect as a family. It's the best two hours of the week."

When Jon and Tanya moved to Mansfield, Debbie Lane was a barren strip of road with virtually nothing lining its sides. Eight years later, the area has flourished, much like the Crippen family. In a way, the town and the family have grown together over the years, making this Texas town especially significant to a former mid-American family. "I love that Mansfield is growing, and I love that we are a part of it. We may downsize one day as the kids get older and move away, but we will never leave Mansfield," Tanya declared. "This is home." **NOW**

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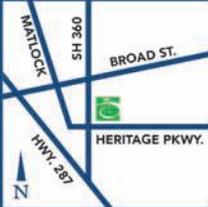
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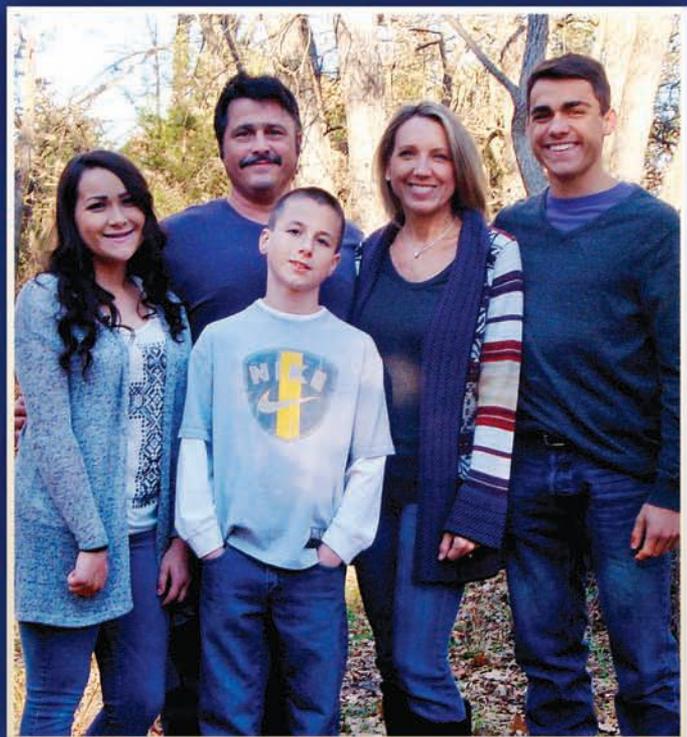


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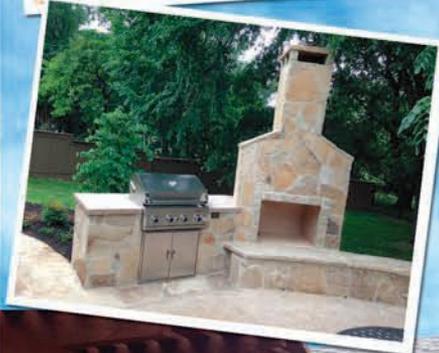
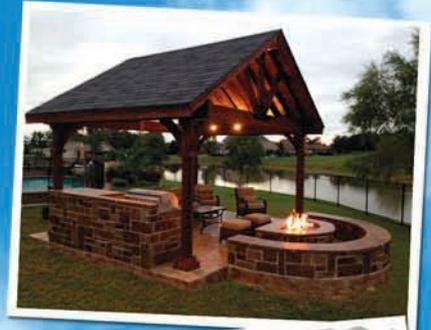
Eighteen-year-old Louie Lombardo finds enjoyment in everything he does. "It's why I do everything," he smiled. Everything to this multi-talented Summit High School senior is a day packed with activity, responsibility, opportunity, challenge and good friends. Starting at 6:30 a.m., his typical day might consist of classes followed by a student council meeting, followed by sports or choir practice; then, home for dinner, back to school for a game or performance and, finally, home to finish homework and, maybe, write a speech for a school program.





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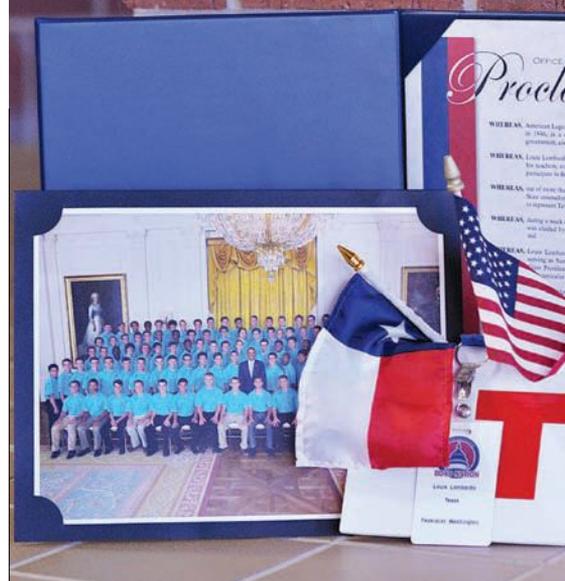
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Louie is president of his senior class and school choir. He sings baritone in both school and community choirs, is active across five different sports and is currently a Texas state senator at Boys' State and vice president at Boys Nation. He credits the source of his energy to his family and friends. "I've lived in the same house all of my life," he explained. "I've grown up with the same 11 friends since first grade and, although we have different interests, we're still close. I'm really lucky to have them."

According to Louie's mother, Janet Lombardo, the oldest of her three children has always been a performer and natural leader. "Last fall, while being introduced as one of the candidates for homecoming king during the varsity football game, it was announced that his plan for the future is to eventually be the president of the United States." He later showcased his vocal talent by singing the national anthem a cappella, and then reached for his helmet to hit the field as the Jaguars' receiver and cornerback.

"I've played football since the fourth grade," Louie added. "The team is my school family." His favorite professional football player is Hines Ward, receiver for the Pittsburgh Steelers. "Hines is a great player without a lot of attitude," he explained. "He seems happy to have had the opportunity to play professionally."

Currently, Louie is active in a number of leadership roles, all of which are important to him. "I'm presiding over the senior class that I've grown up with, and choir is like another family," he said. "I think, though, being named vice president of Boys Nation is my biggest accomplishment."

Boys Nation, an official American

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“I’ve played football since the fourth grade. The team is my school family.”

Legion youth activity, was initiated in 1946 for the purpose of teaching promising young men about government and leadership. (There is also a Girls Nation.) Last June, Louie was among the high school juniors selected to attend Texas Boys State, the first step toward possibly moving on to Boys Nation. “I was sponsored by American Legion Post 624 in Mansfield,” he said. “We spent a week at The University of Texas at Austin learning about city, county and state governments.” Participants accepted to Boys State must have demonstrated leadership, character, scholarship, loyalty and service in school and community. Louie not only met the criteria but by the end of his Austin program also emerged as one of two Texas senators to travel to Boys Nation in Washington, D.C.

Focused on national government, Boys Nation relies on each delegate to serve as a senator from his Boys State group. The 98 young senators hold caucus, organize into committees, conduct hearings, and ultimately, organize party conventions and elect a president and vice president

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for each of two parties. "The group divided into two parties of 47 senators," Louie said. "Both parties were asked to create a party platform and to be ready to stand for the platform in a 45-minute debate with random questions from moderators." Louie successfully faced the Oklahoma senator. "I enjoyed the debate process and want to do more," he said. "We were given one night to prepare, and it felt good to work under pressure." At the conclusion of the debate, Louie was elected by his peers as the 2014 Boys Nation vice president.

The week spent at Boys Nation also included visits to national agencies, memorials, institutions and historical sites plus the chance for Boys Nation senators to meet their home-state officials. "I met Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz," Louie said. "Then all of us got to meet the president." The boys were invited to the East Room of the White House. "It was pretty awesome," he grinned. "When President Obama walked in, everyone was quiet." As it happened, the president shook Louie's hand first and ended up standing next to him in the group photo. "He talked to us about leadership and the fact that, at age 18, we are no longer the future," Louie said. "We are the now."

For one week in July, 98 exceptional boys were treated to an extraordinary experience. As he packed his Boys Nation blue polo shirts, khaki pants and vice president plaque for the trip home, Louie absorbed the impact of his week in Washington, D.C. Today, he's hoping to attend either Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., or The University of Texas at Austin to major in political science and economics and go on to law school. "Reaching the Oval Office is not necessarily the goal, although it would be nice," he smiled.

"We're very proud of him," Janet said. "After Boys Nation, his father and I realized that politics would be a good fit,

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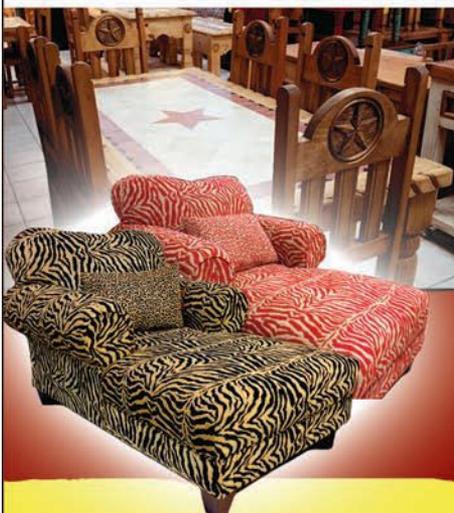
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and that Georgetown or The University of Texas would be the right choice.”

In addition to his passion for politics and sports, Louie loves music. “My favorite music is all music,” he said. He sings baritone in his school choir and, also, was privileged to sing with a choral group accompanying Andrea Bocelli performing at the American Airlines Center and *Carmina Burana* at Bass Hall.

Louie, aka Louis Anthony Lombardo II, is the oldest son of Louis and Janet Lombardo. He is brother to 15-year-old sister, Macy, and 9-year-old brother, Nicholas. His father, a medical equipment planner, is Italian. Louie doesn't have much time for television. As much as he would like to have a dog, there isn't time for that either. He treasures his 2009 black Nissan Altima Coup, having worked part time for a year-and-a-half to afford it. There's barely room for another patch on his blue and black letterman jacket and barely a moment of his time to spare. His major flaw is in over-committing, and he believes if everyone could be accepting of religions, there would be much less violence in the world.

Louie plans to live on his own for a while before marriage and family, and he definitely wants to travel everywhere. “I haven't even been out of the country yet,” he smiled. Clearly, this special young man, who finds enjoyment in everything, is a promise that the world is in good hands. **NOW**

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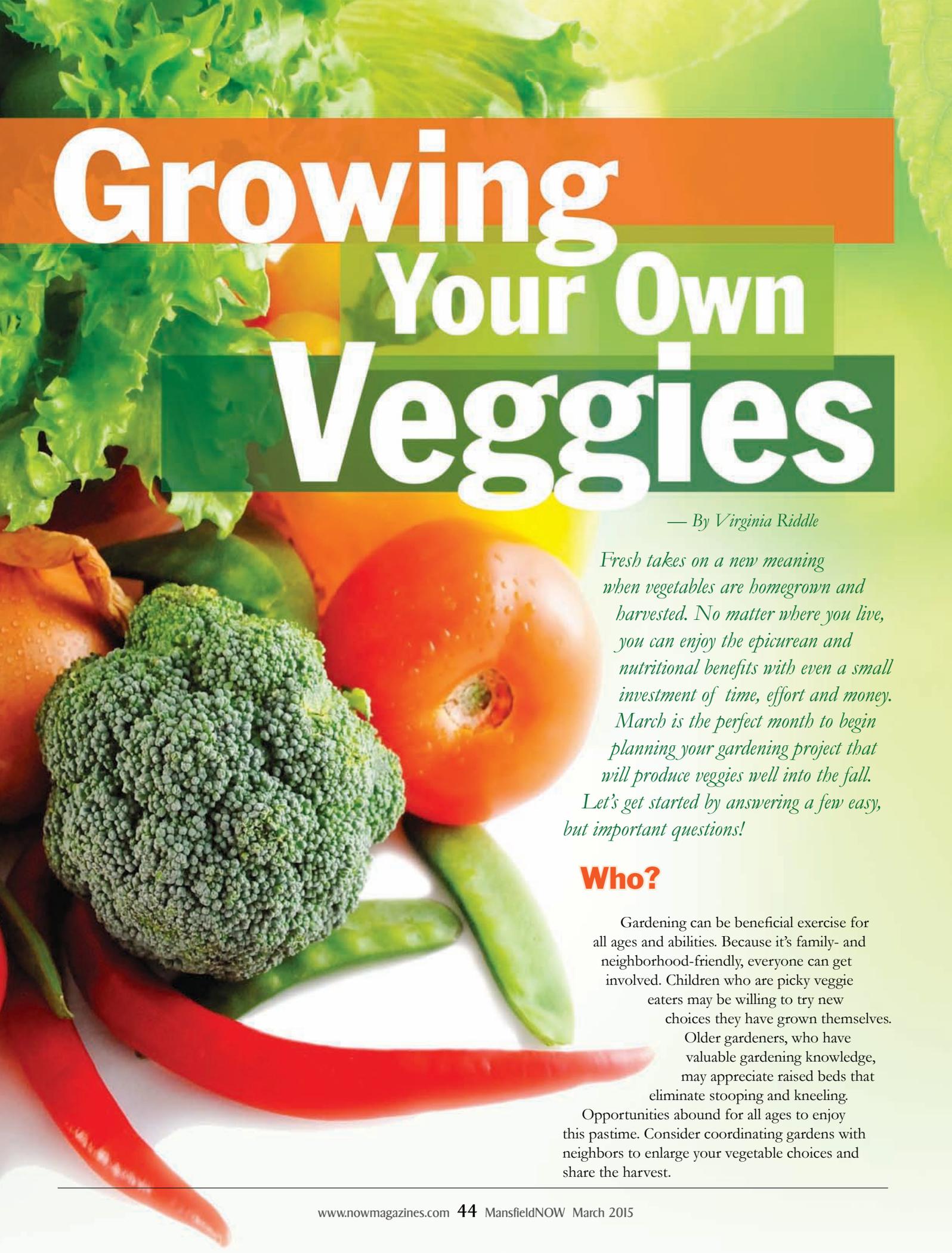
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Growing Your Own Veggies

— By Virginia Riddle

Fresh takes on a new meaning when vegetables are homegrown and harvested. No matter where you live, you can enjoy the epicurean and nutritional benefits with even a small investment of time, effort and money. March is the perfect month to begin planning your gardening project that will produce veggies well into the fall. Let's get started by answering a few easy, but important questions!

Who?

Gardening can be beneficial exercise for all ages and abilities. Because it's family- and neighborhood-friendly, everyone can get involved. Children who are picky veggie eaters may be willing to try new choices they have grown themselves.

Older gardeners, who have valuable gardening knowledge, may appreciate raised beds that eliminate stooping and kneeling.

Opportunities abound for all ages to enjoy this pastime. Consider coordinating gardens with neighbors to enlarge your vegetable choices and share the harvest.

What?

Endless vegetables are easy to grow depending on the season of the year. If you are a first-time veggie gardener, keep things simple. Plant easy-to-grow vegetables or your favorites that have been recommended by neighbors or nurseries in the area. Spring and summer plant choices include all varieties of tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, summer



squash, peas, beans, okra and nearly all herbs. Swiss chard is a green that will survive the Texas summer heat.

Where?

Most veggies require a sunny, well-drained area, but if that's not possible, try a potted garden or a hydroponic system in a sunny patio or balcony area. One patio tomato plant can produce a plentiful and continuous supply when planted in a pot. Local garden centers have a large range of pots. You can also create your own pot by cutting drainage holes into the bottom of a potted soil bag, splitting open the top of the bag, removing about half the soil, rolling the bag's sides down, and finally, planting a vegetable inside. Hydroponic systems are pricier but can yield produce for years to come. And since most vegetable

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plants blossom, they are attractive when incorporated into favorite sunny flower beds.

If you are carving a vegetable plot out of your backyard, have your soil tested. Use either a commercial kit or ask your county extension agent for advice. Almost any type of soil can be amended to give good plant growth. Your choice of mulch and fertilizer depends on soil type and available supplies.

What kind of watering system is available for your location? For small gardens or potted veggies, a watering can or diffused sprayer may work well. However, for larger plots, you may wish to lay soaker hoses on timers.

Invest in great time-saving gardening tools and keep them sharpened, cleaned and organized throughout the years to come. Simple hand tools are available, as well as powered tools.

When?

Planning begins now. However, planting out-of-doors needs to wait until the danger of a late frost or freeze is over. One of the best indicators of that date is when you notice buds on native-to-Texas pecan or mesquite trees. Vegetables, even tomatoes, can be started from seeds planted in starter trays purchased, along with quality potting soil, at your local nursery. Just follow the



directions on the seed packet. The trays are easy to set outside during warm days



and nights but move them to a heated location when temperatures dip down below 40 F.

How?

Now is the time to choose between organic or nonorganic vegetable gardens. Start a compost pile and investigate appropriate choices for fertilizer and pesticides that work best in your area. Your local garden nurseries, county extension agents and Master Gardeners are great resources for information that will help you whether you decide to go organic or not.

If your veggie garden is going to encompass more than a few square feet, rent or purchase a tiller from an area garden center or hardware store. Break the soil and turn the subsoil at a depth of about 6 inches. Remove rocks, make

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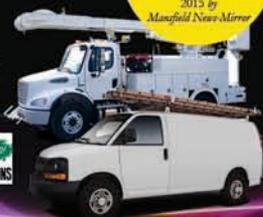
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furrows for proper drainage, plant seeds or seedlings and lay down a 3-inch layer of mulch for weed control and water retention.

Plan your plantings so mature, larger plants will not shade smaller ones. Larger plants, like tomatoes, may need to be



staked as they grow. To save space, beans, peas, melons and squash can be grown on easy-to-construct trellises, cages or A-frames.

Check your garden daily for insects and pull weeds that crowd your plants, taking water and nutrients from the soil. Water when moisture cannot be felt 1-inch deep into the soil and fertilize on

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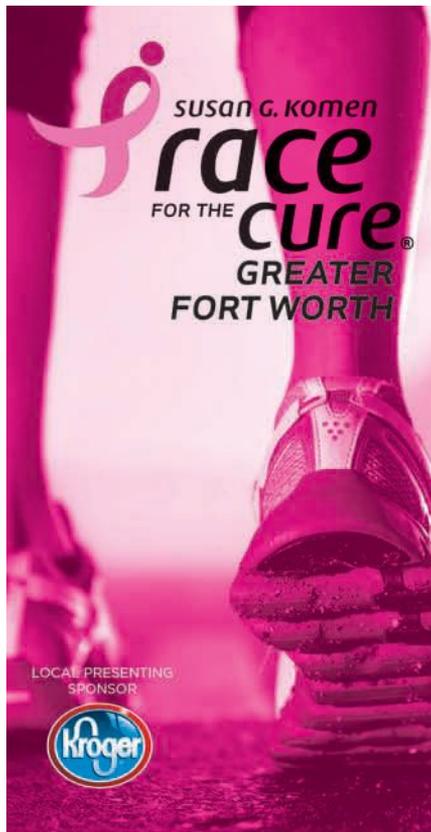
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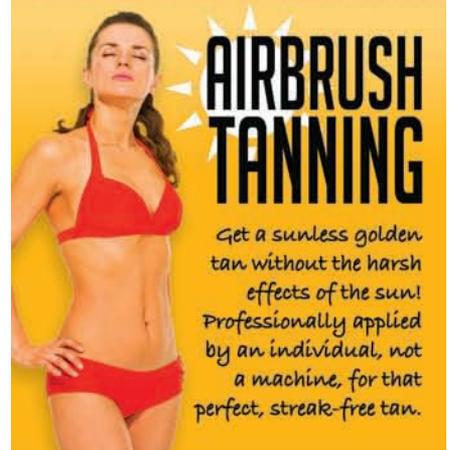
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recommended cycles. Harvest veggies when they are at their ripest point or before damaging weather, such as hail is predicted.

Handling the Harvest!

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- **Most veggies can be frozen, canned or dehydrated for future use.** Research methods online or with your county extension agents. Follow food-handling safety tips exactly.
- **Donate produce to a local food bank.** Their clients love to see fresh vegetable offerings. Your charitable donations may be tax deductible — check with your income tax specialist.



- **Share with friends and family.** They will know it is a gift from your heart!

Growing your own vegetables can be a fun, educational experience for family, friends and neighbors, and the physical exercise and healthy eating can elevate your spirits after our cold winter days. Welcome spring by enjoying watching your new veggie garden thrive! **NOW**

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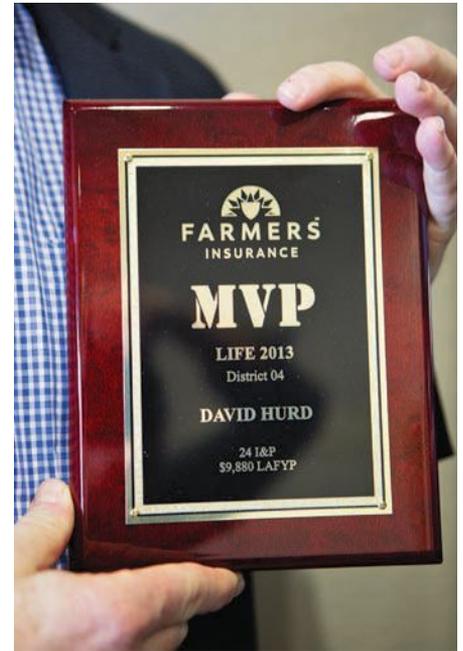


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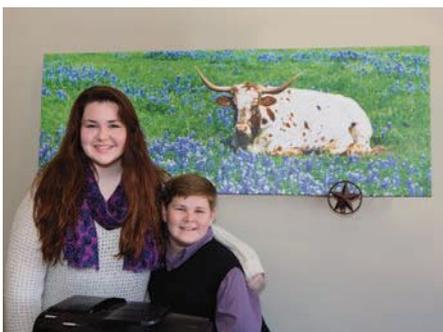
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David Hurd is an insurance man who knows just how important family really is.



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Going above and beyond for customers insures satisfaction.

— By Sara Edgell

In a world of uncertainties, one thing explicity certain is David Hurd's dedication to his clients. In his eyes, the insurance business is all about accountability, and good customer service begins at his office. From hand-delivering ID cards to meeting after business hours and on weekends, David's Farmers Insurance Agency revolves around customer needs and stellar service.

For many years, David worked in the medical field, but as the industry began to change, David began to pursue a new career. He had been approached by numerous companies and, after investigating them all, ultimately decided to go with Farmers. He spent the first few years working in Bedford, learning the ropes and establishing a solid foundation before finally opening his own agency here in Mansfield. When the doors opened in November 2013, he only had about 150 policies, but after about a year with a lot of learning along the way, David had written

about 500 policies. He anticipates even more growth in the coming year.

He offers a range of coverage with policies including auto, home, life and commercial business. The office also offers financial planning services, but the real cornerstone of the agency is life insurance policies. Because anything can happen in life, having a life insurance policy in place can alleviate the stress and difficulty of dealing with and paying for any given situation. And that is what David's work is truly all about. Customer service and tailoring coverage based on the long-term needs of clients is the real business mindset. "There are so many options out there, so I must set myself apart. I do so by treating customers special and in a very personal manner," he said. "What works for me is to ask questions and be patient."

"Anyone can go online and create their own quote, but price

Business **NOW**

isn't always the best option," David remarked. While low rates can be enticing, David is a firm believer that customers need to understand what they are getting for their money. "I am a very technical person," he added, "so understanding what it all means is important for me." And it's also important for his clients. While David admits he cannot always be the lowest priced, he can guarantee he can be the most personable and honest. Therefore, the agency takes pride in investing time with each client to explain every last detail. "When a client calls me for a quote, I like to take as much time as I possibly can to explain exactly what everything means. I've had a lot of people tell me they've never had that happen before," he said.

The office staff is comprised of David and his assistant, Amy Stevens. They run the office as a team, juggling life and families all while managing daily operations. "We're a small agency, but

**THE AGENCY
TAKES PRIDE IN
INVESTING TIME
WITH EACH CLIENT
TO EXPLAIN
EVERY LAST DETAIL.**

we're growing fast," David said. And the agency's small size is what allows them to so uniquely accommodate their various customers' needs. From time to time, David is dedicated to making it work. "We are not a 9-to-5 business," he clarified. "We deliver policies, traveling all over North Texas to accommodate our clients' and prospects' busy schedules." Clearly, accountability means going the extra mile to ensure customer satisfaction.

Ultimately, David Hurd is a family oriented businessman who understands what is most important in life: family, home and security. And in his profession, he is able to help his clients protect these most important things in life. **NOW**



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Attendees at the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce's 43rd Annual Awards Dinner enjoy a lovely evening celebrating the community.



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Everyone is all smiles at the Shatiff Pharmacy ribbon cutting.



Becky Smith, Alison Vestal, Pam Misbeck, Carla Green and Renee Brendle pose at a Plaid for Women monthly meeting in Mansfield.



Chris Barakat of B&B Tires smiles while he works on a busy Monday.



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A ribbon cutting is held at Hearing Professional Center.



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Patrice Pike and Dave Goodwin stop for a picture during an evening at Farr Best Theater.

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How Will Social Security Fit Into Your Retirement Income Strategy?

Have you given much thought to collecting Social Security? The answer probably depends on how old you are. But whatever your age, you'll want to consider the best way of incorporating Social Security benefits into your retirement income strategy.

Of course, if you have several decades to go until you retire, you might be wondering if Social Security will even be there for you at all. The basic issue is that the Social Security system is experiencing a sharply declining worker-to-beneficiary ratio. In plain English, this means that fewer workers are contributing to Social Security, while the huge baby boom generation is retiring and taking money out. Still, Social Security has enough money to pay full retirement benefits to every eligible American until 2038, according to the Congressional Budget Office. After that point, benefits would have to be reduced unless changes are made to the Social Security system.

And several changes have indeed been proposed. Given that we do have nearly 25 years until benefit cuts may need to be made, it seems reasonable that some type of solution could be reached to put Social Security back on solid ground. In any case, when thinking about your retirement income, you need to focus on those things that you can control — such as when to start taking Social Security and how you can supplement your Social Security benefits.

Depending on when you were born, your full retirement age, as far as collecting Social Security benefits, is likely either 66 or 67. You can start getting your checks as early as 62, but if you do, your monthly payments could be reduced by as much as 30 percent — and this reduction is permanent. Consequently, if you can support your lifestyle from other

sources of income — such as earnings from employment and withdrawals from your IRA and 401(k) — you may want to postpone taking Social Security until you reach your full retirement age. In fact, you can get even bigger monthly checks if you delay taking your benefits beyond your full retirement age, although your payments will max out once you reach 70. Keep in mind, though, that other factors, such as your anticipated longevity, should also enter into your calculations in considering when to take Social Security.

As mentioned above, your retirement income may also include withdrawals from retirement accounts, such as an IRA and a 401(k), along with other investments, such as a fixed annuity. And these other accounts are quite important, because Social Security provides, on average, only about 40 percent of retirement income for the average 65-year-old today. Consequently, in the years and decades before you retire, contribute as much as you can possibly afford to these other accounts. Given the advances in medical care and the greater awareness of healthy lifestyles, people are living longer than ever — which means you could spend two, or even three, decades in retirement. To enjoy those years fully, you'll need adequate income.

By planning ahead, you can determine how best to fit Social Security into your retirement income strategy. Every move you make to help secure your retirement can pay off for you in the long run. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Shawn M. Malley is an Edward Jones representative based in Mansfield.

www.edwardjones.com

Will You Get the Most from Your Social Security Benefits?

Deciding when to take your Social Security benefits is one of the most important retirement-related decisions you'll ever make. It will likely be an essential component of your retirement income strategy, so it's important to understand what factors will determine your benefit amount. Your informed decisions on timing, spousal benefits and other factors can make a significant difference on the lifetime benefits you receive.

Learn about your Social Security options and the effect they have on your overall retirement income strategy. Call or visit today.



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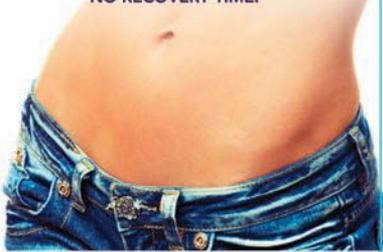
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March 3

Girl Scouts VIP Meeting and pre-K Roundup: 7:00-8:00 p.m., Willie E. Brown Elementary School, 1860 Cannon Dr. For those entering Kindergarten August 2015, come learn about how to be a part of the Girl Scouts of America. For more information, contact Kriste Ryan at (682) 422-9211 or girlscoutsMISD@gmail.com.

March 7, 21

Mulch Madness: 8:30 a.m.-noon, 24 N. Mitchell Rd. Free. This free mulch pick up event is for Mansfield residents. You must bring your own containers, but staff will be on-site to help. For more details, contact water@mansfieldtexas.gov or (817) 276-4250.

March 7

John Doshier: 8:00-10:00 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main St. \$16-\$21 per ticket. Enjoy the musical stylings of this pop, new romantic balladeer who is sure to entertain. For more information, visit www.farrbest.com.

March 14

Pickle Run: registration starts at 7:00 a.m.; dance and costume contest at

7:30 a.m.; races begin at 8:00 a.m., St. Jude Church, 500 E. Dallas St. Kids K \$10; 5K \$20; 10K \$25. All races are open to the public. Show off your best Pickle or Irish costume, or strut your stuff in the costume and dance contests before the run and take home a prize! For more details and registration, visit www.pickleparade.org.

Pickle Parade and Palooza: 10:00 a.m., Smith and Oak Streets. Free. Come celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the 4th Annual World's Only Pickle Parade and Palooza. Enjoy the parade followed by an all day event complete with food, beverage and vendor booths, pickle juice drinking and pickle eating contests, live music and much more. For more information, visit www.pickleparade.org.

March 21

Women's Conference: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 777 N. Walnut Creek Dr. Save the date for this spring Women's Conference featuring guest speaker Renee Swope from Proverbs 31 Ministry. For more information, contact Leslie Waldson at lesliew@fmc.org.

Elizabeth Willis Band: 8:00-10:00 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 109 N Main St. \$16-

\$22 per ticket. Come enjoy an evening listening to this confessional songwriter with a musical force that presses Americana pop music to discover its highest self. For more information, visit www.farrbest.com.

March 28

Bunny Brunch: 9:00-11:30 a.m., Mansfield Activities Center, 106 S. Wisteria. Children \$9, Adults \$6. Join the Easter Bunny for brunch followed by festive crafts, face painting and lots of other Easter fun. For more information, visit www.mansfieldtexas.gov/event/bunny-brunch.

Rock-T Presents Stomp Wars: doors open at 4:00 p.m., event begins at 5:30 p.m., Mansfield ISD Center for Performing Arts, 110 W. Debbie Ln. \$12 general admission. Rock-T Youth Foundation and RT3 Group is proud to host a premiere event featuring some of the nation's best high school and middle school step teams as they compete for the title of being called "The Best." For more information, visit www.center.mansfield.org.

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

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In the Kitchen With Jo Ann Johnson

— By Sara Edgell

For as long as she can remember, Jo Ann Johnson has been cooking. She grew up in Jackson, Mississippi, where her mother and godmother taught her how to cook, clean, sew and play piano. Later in life, she was a food service manager for the Army and Air Force Exchange. “That experience, along with what I was taught as a young girl, has made me a person who cooks with ease,” Jo Ann stated.

These experiences are also the biggest influences on how she cooks today. While down-home food is her specialty, she does enjoy trying new recipes, so long as she has someone who loves to eat them. “I enjoy cooking for the pleasure of seeing my family enjoying eating and fellowshiping together,” she said. **NOW**

Smothered Pork Chops With Gravy

Pork Chops:

- 4 pork chops**
- Salt and pepper**
- 2 cups flour**
- Brown paper bag**
- 1 cup vegetable or canola oil**

Gravy:

- 4 Tbsp. strained pork chop cooking oil**
- 1/3 cup flour**
- 1 1/2 cups of pork stock**
- 1 small onion, sliced**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1/2 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**

- 1. For pork chops:** Wash meat thoroughly, season with salt and pepper; set aside.
- 2.** Put flour, salt and pepper (to taste) in brown bag; add meat and shake well. Make sure all the meat is completely covered.

- 3.** Heat oil in a large cast-iron skillet and place meat in carefully. Brown on both sides, remove from pan and place on a strainer with paper towels to absorb oil.
- 4. For gravy:** Strain all oil from frying pan, then place pan back on burner over medium heat. Add strained oil and flour to pan. Allow flour to brown.
- 5.** Add pork stock to mixture, stirring occasionally.
- 6.** Add remaining ingredients; reduce heat to simmer.
- 7.** Add cooked pork chops to pan, cover with lid and simmer until meat is tender and finger-licking good!

A Way to a Man’s Heart Mac-n-Cheez

- 1 16-oz. box elbow macaroni, cooked**
- 1 can Ro-Tel, liquid only**
- 1 stick butter, melted**
- 2 eggs**

- 1 cup milk**
- 1 cup cubed Velveeta cheese**
- 8-oz. medium cheddar cheese**
- Parmesan (optional)**

- 1.** Cook macaroni according to directions. Drain and place in a large casserole dish.
- 2.** Place Ro-Tel liquid into mixing bowl; add butter, eggs and milk. Beat until smooth.
- 3.** Add cheeses to the drained macaroni and pour in the liquid mixture. Stir well.
- 4.** Bake covered at 350 F for 20 minutes. Sprinkle Parmesan on top and serve.

Dentist Visit Banana Pudding

pudding:

- 3/4 cup sugar**
- 1/3 cup self-rising flour**
- 1 cup whole milk**
- 3 egg yolks**
- 1 14-oz. can condensed milk**
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla flavoring**
- 1 11-oz. box of Nabisco Nilla Wafers**
- 3-4 ripe bananas, sliced**

Meringue:

- 3 egg whites**
- 1/4 cup sugar**
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla**

- 1. For pudding:** Using a double boiler over medium heat, combine sugar and flour; slowly stir in whole milk until mixture thickens with no lumps.
- 2.** In a mixing bowl, beat egg yolks, condensed milk and vanilla. Slowly blend into hot mixture. Stir until creamy; remove from heat.
- 3.** Place a layer of Nilla Wafers then a layer of bananas on bottom of baking dish. Repeat. Pour half of the mixture on top.
- 4.** Add another layer of Nilla Wafers and bananas; pour remaining mixture on top.
- 5. For meringue:** In a mixing bowl, beat egg whites until frothy. Gradually beat in sugar and vanilla. Beat until stiff peaks form, then spoon over banana pudding.
- 6.** Bake at 350 F for 15 minutes until golden brown.

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

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