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Burleson Parks and
Recreation Manager Ike Vera.

Also Inside

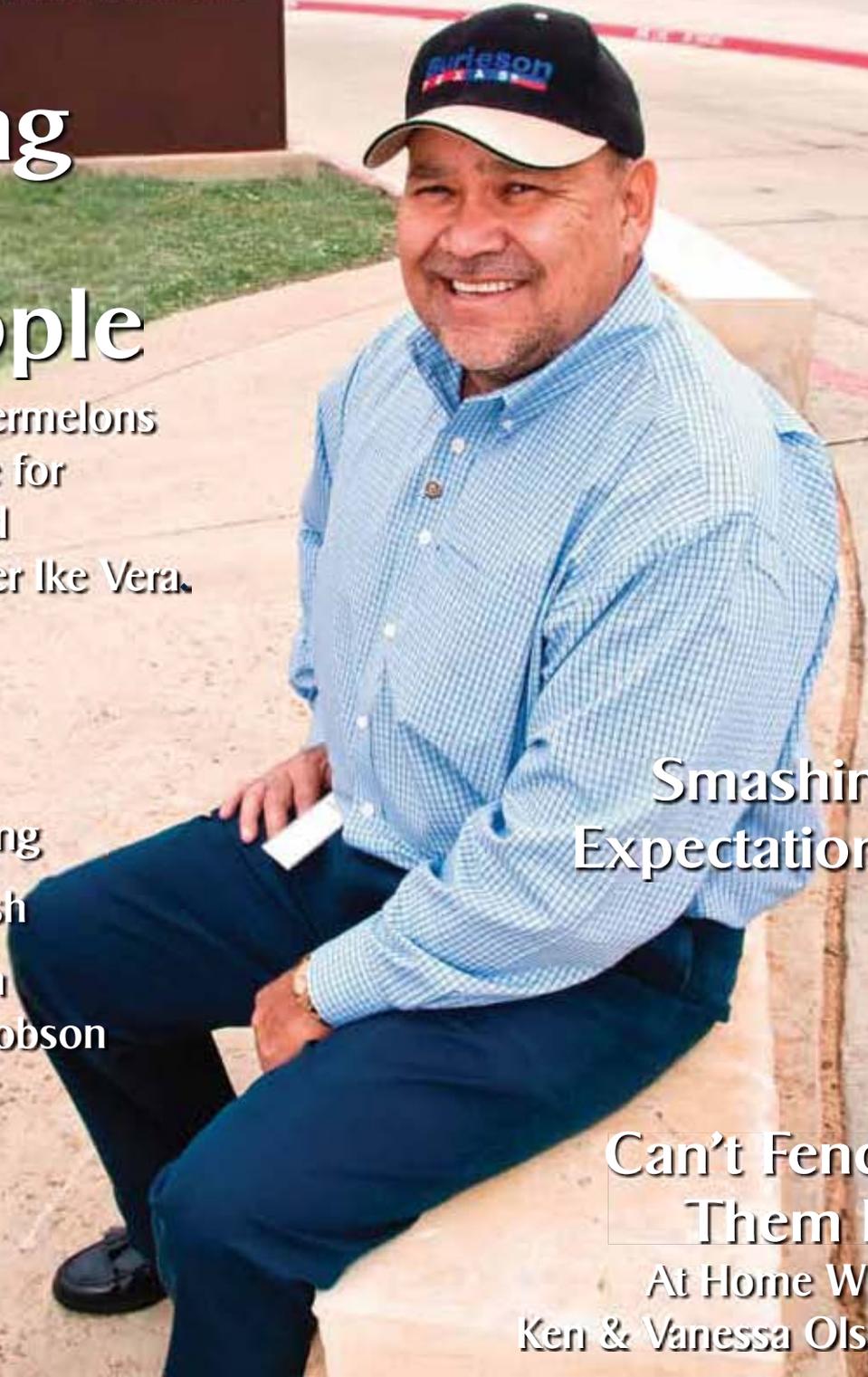
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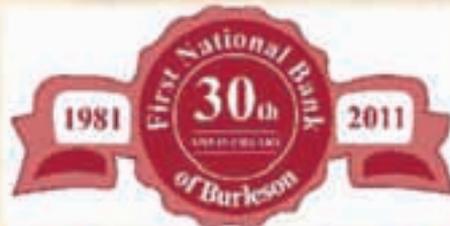
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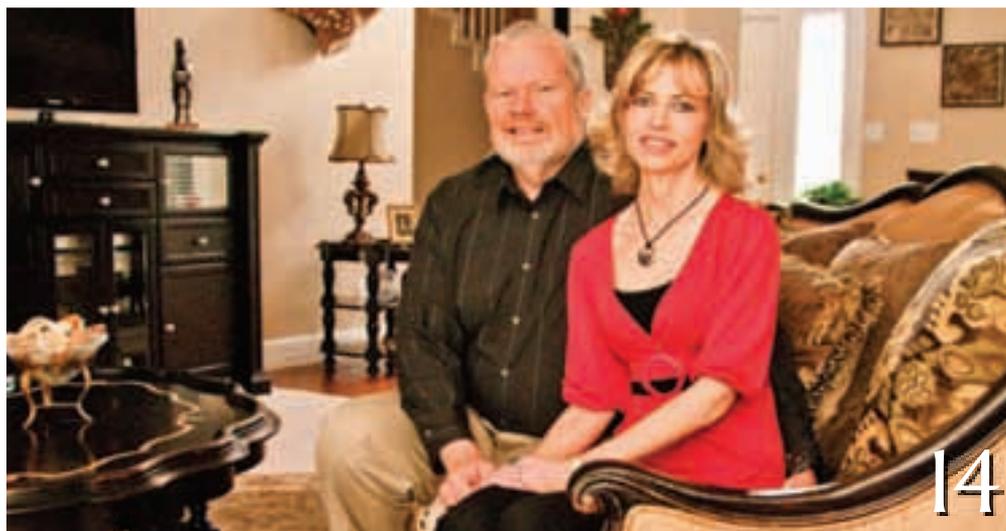


Tim and Laurie Kutch
volunteer their time in their
community and across the globe

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

Contents

April 2011 • Volume 5, Issue 4



8 Nurturing Plants and People

Ike Vera credits family and agrarian
upbringing for his passion for
community service.

30 All About the Feeling

Kevin Montgomery puts his
emotions to music to see if others
feel as he does.

14 Can't Fence Them In

At Home With Ken and
Vanessa Olsen.

24 Smashing Expectations

English teacher Anita Blackwell
helps turn Joshua High School's UIL
program into a success.



36 BusinessNOW

38 Around TownNOW

40 HealthNOW

42 FinanceNOW

44 CookingNOW

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Editor's Note

Howdy Burlison and Joshua!

My wonderful mom taught special needs children during my early childhood years. As I have volunteered this past year at Wings of Hope Equithery, I have found that, like her, my heart has expanded as a result of helping those with special needs. I have also found that my respect has doubled for folks like Keara Kirk, director of special needs ministries at Alsbury Baptist Church. Her passion is to expand the special needs ministries and share God's Word and love with these special folks. Alsbury Baptist's small groups for adults and children with special needs meet Sunday mornings as well as once monthly for group activities (fishing, movie-watching, even a summer camp). Also, they offer a free respite program for parents of children with special needs. For more information contact Keara at kearakirk@sbcglobal.net or contact the church office at (817) 295-0134. And if your personal special need is simply a little heart-expansion, I encourage you to get out there and find a place where you can help!



Melissa

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Nurturing Plants and People

— By Bart Cannon

Burleson Parks and Recreation Manager, Aris “Ike” Vera, makes his living looking after trees, plants and ball fields, but he makes a life out of serving others. Born and reared in Premont, Texas, a small municipality situated in Jim Wells County, Ike learned to care for people, plants and animals at an early age. “I grew up on a ranch 20 miles outside of Premont,” Ike recalled. “The Rios community had a population of about 150 people. Our main crop was watermelons. We shared the ranch with lots of cattle, too. I remember sitting on that Massey Ferguson tractor as far back as 5 years old and picking cotton at age 9.”



During those early years, Ike learned to serve even during difficult times. “Sometimes when I was growing up, I wondered if my parents really loved me,” Ike said. “One time, I was sick with a fever. My dad came in the house and told me to come outside and help load a truck with watermelons.”

Ike’s family consisted of nine siblings — five boys and four girls. Living in such a large family provided daily opportunities to learn the twin concepts of teamwork and community. “The boys worked in the fields while the girls stayed home and cleaned

around the house,” Ike explained. “My sisters did the laundry and cooked meals.”

He experienced the team concept even further as he graduated from grade level to grade level. “I tried out for Little League baseball and made the all-star team my first year, but my dad didn’t want me to play any more after that,” Ike said. “We had too much work to do.”

Ike’s dad finally agreed to let him play — with certain stipulations. “Dad said I could play if I took my uniform to



the fields and went to baseball practice right after work,” Ike explained. “Sometimes, I came home crying because no one came to pick me up for baseball practice.”

Midway through his freshman season, Ike joined the starting lineup. “The starting shortstop blew out a knee,” Ike said. “I stepped in and completed the remainder of the season.” Ike garnered honorable mention honors that year and all-district recognition every year for the next three years.

At Texas A&I University in Kingsville Texas (now Texas

A&M University-Kingsville), Ike pursued a double major — Spanish and physical education. “I hoped one day to be a head coach, but family difficulties caused me to leave after about two-and-a-half years,” Ike explained. “After college, I’ve played softball for over 25 years.”

Ike is the proud father of two daughters, 27 and 26 years of age, respectively. “Tessa graduated from Burleson High School in 2001,” Ike said. “She’s married with two children. My grandson is 4 1/2 years old and playing T-ball. Eva graduated

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from high school in 2003, and she has one daughter.”

The path to Burleson took Ike on a 12-year detour through Glen Rose. “I worked at the power plant through 1987,” Ike revealed. “The city of Burleson was looking for a parks supervisor. Since I worked at a storm nursery during my senior year of high school and freshman year of college, I was familiar with how to care for live oaks. I’ve been here 23 years — the last 15 years as parks manager.”

In the first seven years, Burleson city officials called on Ike for a variety of duties. “The Burleson Police Department didn’t have anyone in the department who could speak Spanish, so they asked me to translate,” Ike stated. “One time, a guy was at Walmart and needed a boost, so he called 9-1-1. The police asked me to go over there and explain to him that you’re not supposed to call 9-1-1 for a boost.”

During Ike’s tenure, the face of the city of Burleson has changed. “When I moved to Burleson in 1988, the city’s population was around 11,000, but it’s grown to around 38,500 today,” Ike noted.

In keeping with Burleson’s exponential growth, Ike’s responsibilities have multiplied as well. “I oversee all the city parks, including three sports complexes — Bartlett Park, Hidden Creek and Chisenhall Fields.”

According to Ike, Chisenhall Fields opened in the summer of 2010 and cost

\$14.5 million. "The city had outgrown the old ballpark, and parking had become a real issue," he said. "As of right now, 21 of the 24 weekends in the 2011 season are already booked with tournaments."

For example, the Super Series Nationals 16 Championships will be held June 25-30. "This tournament has television implications," Ike stated. The Super Series World Series, scheduled for July 10-17, will attract teams from Asia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Caribbean and all four United States zones. In August, the Friendship Games will come to town. A team of 13- to 14-year-old Metroplex all-stars coached by former Oakland A's baseball standout Mark McLemore, will play three games.

Burleson Meadows Park's ADA-accessible playground is one project that holds special significance for Ike. "I have a sister who is physically challenged," Ike explained. "We're very excited about this project coming on line in June 2011. Any physically challenged child can use it. For our grand opening, we hope to partner with Special Olympics and have a bunch



of these children go out there."

"At Bartlett Park, we will soon start working on the soccer complex," Ike added. "Plans have already been approved, and a quarter-mile walking trail is planned for Meadow Crest Estates. We're working on the parking lot right now."

The accomplishments of Ike's department have not gone unnoticed. "Tree City USA has recognized the

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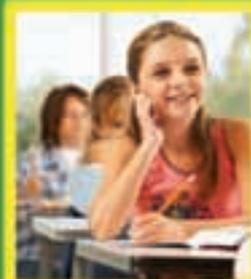
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city of Burleson 21 years in a row for our work with trees," he said. "Arbor Day is April 15th. We've scheduled lots of environmental-related activities for that week. We will also give away tree seedlings — red oak, live oak and ball cypress."

Burleson's overachieving parks manager seems to derive as much satisfaction from serving community organizations as he does nurturing the city's parks. Ike started Burleson's Cinco de Mayo celebration 13 years ago. A charter member of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), Ike serves as a board member of Meals on Wheels and team captain for Relay for Life of Burleson. As a member of Burleson's Morning Rotary Club, Ike was voted Rotarian of the Year in 1998 and 2001 and served as president in 2000. He also served as the first president of Burleson's Midday Rotary Club.

"I guess it goes back to my upbringing," Ike explained. "In a rural area, you want to be part of the community. Also, as someone who grew up playing sports, I really enjoy doing the team concept — even in my job. That's the way we reach our goals. I've met so many wonderful people since I've lived and worked in this community." **NOW**

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While traveling in Israel, thousands of miles from home, Rachel Howell, PhD, experienced chest pain and shortness of breath that caused her to stop and rest. She dismissed the chest pressure as severe indigestion and continued her journey. "It never occurred to me it was my heart," Dr. Howell says. "I had annual physicals. I was taking high blood pressure medicine and had borderline high cholesterol, but I felt fine." As a former adjunct and distance learning psychology instructor, superintendent, and teacher, Dr. Howell has always been adventurous, with a pressing desire to see the world and experience different cultures.

Everything seemed fine until two weeks after she returned home from her trip. "All of a sudden, I began feeling pressure on my chest — like an elephant sitting on me," she says. "I had trouble breathing, and the pain was very intense. I immediately took some aspirin and told my husband I needed to get to the hospital." Once at Methodist Mansfield, the cardiologist quickly evaluated me," Dr. Howell recalls. "My heart was racing, and he ran several tests. He told me I had had a heart attack and would be taken to the cardiac catheterization lab for interventional treatment."

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"Now I feel great and do what I can for my own health," Dr. Howell says. "That includes eating a healthful diet and exercising 30 minutes at least three days a week."

Dr. Howell offers words of advice for other heart patients. "Listen to your cardiologist, and don't be afraid to enjoy a full life," she recommends. "Take your medication and your doctor's advice — it will prolong your life."

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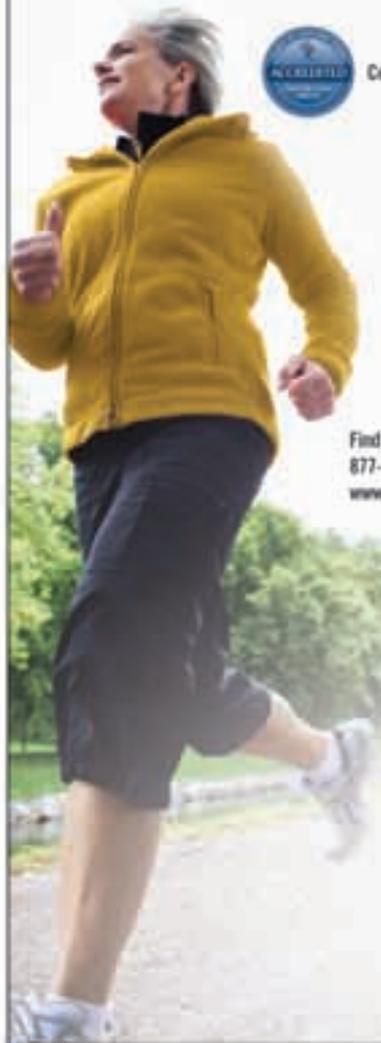
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Can't Fence Them In

— By Melissa Rawlins

You just don't know when Vanessa Olsen is going to pull out her camera. She has captured the laughter of her husband, Ken, and their three children and three grandchildren, into scrapbooks full of pictures of people in action. There are some of the grandchildren riding the mule at their Hill Country ranch in Goldthwaite, and a hilarious one of Ken sitting backwards on a horse.

AT HOME WITH
KEN AND VANESSA OLSEN



The Olsens love to laugh. Ken even paid homage to their favorite pastime when he and their son, Steven, remodeled the kitchen of their Burleson home and put the word LAUGH on the dining nook wall. "We can do two things in life: cry or laugh," said Ken, who does what he can to add to the cheer. "I just learned this new word, antioxidant, a couple years ago. I think laughter probably creates antioxidants better than anything else we can do!"

Keeping their family together and happy these 19 years has required more than laughter. It took hard work. "Our home is our refuge, but our office is also our home," Ken said. "We couldn't have any of this, nor our ranch, without our business." The couple met 26 years ago. The birth of Bennett Building Systems was 23 years ago with Vanessa doing accounting and Ken managing the business. "We have probably built 300-400 buildings and when you work together, you sure learn one another and learn how to be together. We've had our stormy times, and we're still here, still doing it." Their home is an extension of their efforts.



"We try to teach our three kids and three grandchildren that working hard is where it's at. Our kids, Crystal and Nils, work with us, and they all three [Crystal, Nils and Steven] work to try to make us happy," said Vanessa, whose roots are in Burleson, Whitney, and, way back, Norway. Ken's grandfather and grandmother were born in Norway, too, and referencing the comic strip *Hagar the Horrible*, he jokes that he is the Viking to Vanessa's Helga. But is "sweet" a word Helga ever used to describe Hagar the Horrible? Oh no. Vanessa knew she had a good thing when she found Ken. They blended their families with ease because he treated all the children the same way and taught them all the value of responsibility and accountability. "It's

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hard to take two different families and turn it into one, and we have. He's a good father.

"He is so sweet. Five years ago for our anniversary, he gave me dancing lessons," Vanessa said, pointing to the trophy the couple won in a Texas Western Shuffle Dancing competition after more than 30 private lessons and frequent dance dates. Although Ken had performed guitar and piano with a country band in the '70s, he had never gotten on the dance floor himself until he realized how much his wife wanted to dance with him. Learning how to love others

is possibly the toughest challenge Ken's taken on. Another was teaching himself to play guitar and piano all over again, after surgery on both hands. "I went through 12 months of therapy and my sweet, wonderful wife sat and rubbed my hands," Ken said.

In their open-concept home, where everything flows and blends together, three carousel horses grace the fireplace mantel. One represents Ken's desire to make Vanessa happy. "That was one Vanessa liked at a Chinese Christmas. I had me a nice power tool that I gave up to get the horse for her," said Ken, who

purchased another carousel horse at an auction. He has invested in other pieces of art, including a Georgia O'Keeffe painting of Cap Rock in the Texas Panhandle. On a credenza underneath, the Georgia O'Keeffe painting is a C.R. Morrison bronze sculpture called *Don't Fence Me In*. It reminds Ken to be a little more in tune with our American heritage.

"I'm not a cowboy, but I am a cowboy sympathizer," said Ken, who supports the Johnson County Child Advocacy Center through Cowboys for Kids with the Professional Bull Riders Rodeo. "We mustn't forget how to ride horses,

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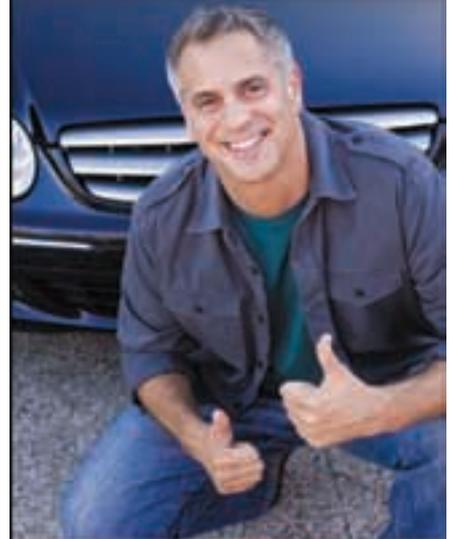
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and use 'em. I hate it when we lose our natural instincts of survival as humans. Things like hunting, field dressing and cooking and eating an animal are things we shouldn't forget how to do." Ken hunts with a bow mostly, and a gun sometimes, and got the axis deer whose head greets visitors to their home. He spends a lot of time on his ranch, where he follows state guidelines to keep a healthy environment for wildlife. "This requires a lot of hours of observing wildlife, not just shooting them. I feel closer to God when I'm out there."

Sometimes, Vanessa goes with Ken to the ranch. Other times, she stays in her Burlson home office, where she works on the company books or on the family scrapbooks. "The women at the church go together on scrapbooking retreats," Vanessa said. "It's a stress reliever, and we have a great time doing that." The 14-year-old blue heeler that was a little bitty puppy the day Ken gave him to Vanessa follows her everywhere when Ken is gone. In fact, Blue once protected her against a Doberman Pinscher who came at her while she was bringing in groceries.

Blue has his own space in the mudroom that Ken built next to his own retreat, the wood-paneled music room where he keeps several guitars and a piano for boogie-woogie moments.

Above the piano is a single piece of glass spelling the word BLUES, created by glass artist Jill Noble. "I am especially fond of her abstract deer head, inspired by my love of bow hunting," Ken said. "I feel so lucky that I have several of her pieces of art. Vanessa and I have fun rock hunting. We brought all these rocks back from the Hill Country, and I gave them to Jill so she could add them to her rock garden. In return she made me a piece for my man cave."

On the wall leading from his hideaway into the kitchen is the plaque Ken earned after serving as Fire Commissioner in Johnson County from 2005 to 2009. "It was kind of an eye opener to find out



about what the county needed to prepare for our population growth," Ken said. The Olsens have organized several golf tournaments, getting subcontractors involved in raising money to help the elderly served by Meals on Wheels of Johnson and Ellis Counties and the Johnson County Child Advocacy Center. "It's important to clean up your own backyard a bit — to help others," Ken said.

At the beginning of each long, fun day, Ken and Vanessa often sit for coffee on the back patio of the home they have shared for 13 years, discussing the results of their work and planning new ways to help. This couple is always in action, and there is certainly no fencing them in. **NOW**

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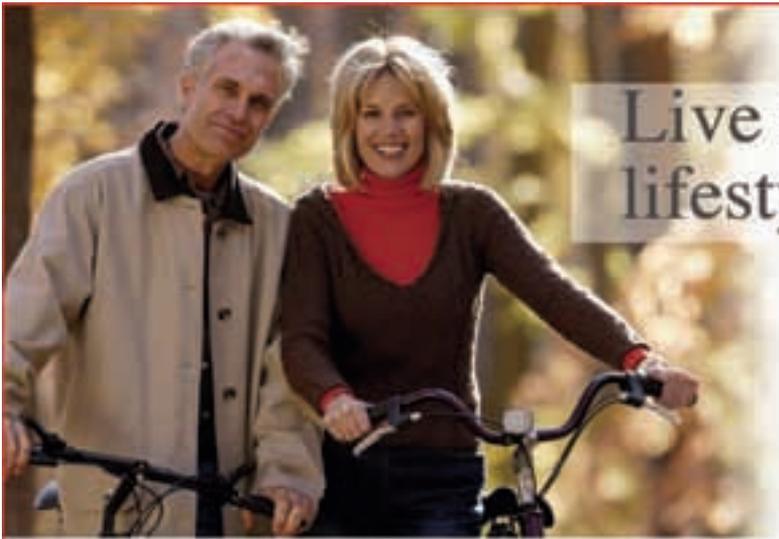
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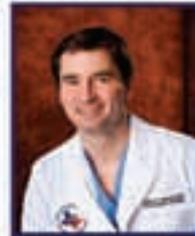
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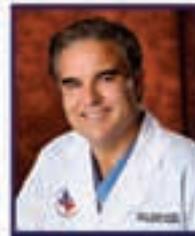
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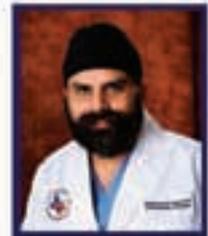
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Smashing EXPECTATIONS

— By Sydni Thomas

With barely any experience under her belt, Anita Blackwell, a freshmen English teacher, took on one of Joshua High School's (JHS) most unsuccessful programs and turned it into the pride of the school. Anita started teaching at JHS in 2001. By 2003, she had taken over the school's University Interscholastic League (UIL) program. "I was the Student Council sponsor at the middle school back in 1998 and 1999 when the UIL coordinator position



opened,” Anita said. “I loved working with the kids on Student Council and thought this would be a great opportunity.”

As the coordinator, Anita plans the meets held at JHS, coordinates student travel between meets, keeps the school’s UIL program on schedule and makes sure each team has a coach. “I had no training for this,” Anita said. “I jumped in with both feet. I took over, and the very next year Mr. Cochran said we were going to host the district meet. If it weren’t for him, there is no way I could have pulled it off. He is a driving force behind UIL.”

That first year, Joshua came in last at their district meet hosted at home. Anita quickly realized that everyone had expected this to happen, and she was not going to settle for that. She began rallying the teachers and preparing for the 2005 UIL year. “The very next year, we came in third at district,” Anita said. “I knew we could do this, and 2006 was my golden year. It was the year we won! I was surprised, shocked, crying, laughing, screaming and running down the halls. It was absolutely something momentous. It was the first time Joshua had ever won a district meet.”

Joshua kept winning. They were runner-up the next two years and took first again in 2009 and 2010. With a district change in 2010, they were up against Arlington and Mansfield 5A schools and almost lost hope of winning



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again. "They 'whooped our butts' in football," Anita said. "But we put it to them in UIL academics."

Joshua has been represented at the regional competition every year since Anita took over the program. Last year, Joshua took 10 students to the state competition. The social studies team has sent representatives every year since 2004 to State. Those who go to State in UIL are awarded college scholarships. "I can't tell you enough how wonderful these kids are," Anita said. "Learning is intrinsic for them. These are the kids that you see in class on the first day of school asking questions that you can't answer. Those are the ones you ask to try out for UIL."

Anita and the other UIL coaches never seem to have a problem drumming up students for their teams even though they have to give up their Saturdays for competitions. In fact, they have to turn children away each year. Going to several practice meets a year allows most students the opportunity to compete. When district rolls around, a team could have a dozen qualified contenders, but most teams can only take four students. "You'd be surprised at these kids," Anita said. "I tell them that they have to be on the bus by 5:45 a.m. on a Saturday morning and they all complain. When I show up that morning they almost always beat me. They are excited and have their iPods, pillows and blankets ready to study the entire trip."

Each year, Joshua attends at least seven

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practice meets to prepare for their district meet. Not only does Anita have to coordinate the trips, she also leads three different teams in three different events. During her first year at Joshua High School, she took over the ready writing program because she had experience coaching it while teaching at the junior high. After the spelling and vocabulary coach had to suddenly give up her team, Anita stepped into that role and learned quickly that it took a lot more coaching. Finally, she acquired the literary criticism team after several coaches fell through. "I knew I did not want to coach it," Anita said. "It was a lot of reading, and I already have to do that. The book list was interesting and when none of the coaches would stick I decided to take over. It has turned into a great thing, and the kids learn so much more doing it than they could have in the classroom."

With the ninth grade classes meeting in a different building, several coaches have had to rethink the logistics of their teams, including Anita's daughter-in-law and fellow ninth grade English teacher, Dema Blackwell. "It's taxing for the students in the high school having to travel down to the ninth grade building for afternoon practices," Anita said. "But we are getting there. We are working on it. Most of my students are independent learners. They are very committed to studying and learning their materials."

Anita calls herself a late-bloomer teacher. She went back to college as soon

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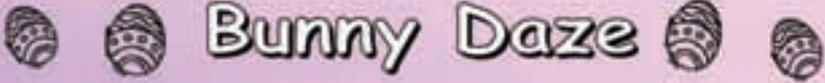


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as all of her children had entered school. After she graduated, Joshua called her and she began teaching there in 1997. She stayed at the junior high for two years and then left to teach at Burleson High School. Anita always wanted to teach in her hometown of Burleson, but after one year she missed Joshua and came back. She's been at JHS ever since. "I got married and raised kids," Anita said. "I was at home until my youngest got into school. Since my kids started school, I was on the PTA, so I had a



"I loved working with the kids on Student Council and thought this would be a great opportunity."

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lot of experience with schools. I wasn't going to stay at home, so when it came time to do something, I knew teaching was for me. I wouldn't change it any other way because I came in with a lot of experience with children."

Anita loves her job and her students, but she would be happy if she could plan and coach UIL activities all day. "To see the kids accomplish so much is really fun for us teachers," Anita said. "Any teacher worth their salt who likes to see students succeed would enjoy UIL."

The future of Joshua's UIL is clear for Anita. Besides continuing their winning streak, she would like to see the district meet come back home. "I want to get the district meet back," Anita said. "With our school being remodeled next year, I think we can. I'm looking forward to putting one on again. It's time consuming with all of the communication between schools, but I have a great team of teachers who rally together to make it happen. It isn't just the ones coaching either. Everyone is supportive of what we do." **NOW**



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Kevin Montgomery neither looks nor acts like a mind reader, but listening to his songs, you have to wonder. In fact, he is well aware of the strangeness of songwriting, even writing a tune called “Song Knows You So Well.” “It was a simple tune that told the story of a guy sitting in a bar, relating to every one of the songs the band played, like they are talking about him,” Kevin explained. “He wondered, ‘How do they know me so well? That’s exactly what’s going on in my life right now!’”

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— By Melissa Rawlins



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Kevin's mother and grandmother encouraged him to play classical music from the age of 6, and for over 30 years, Kevin has written songs just like somebody writing a poem. "It's never been about the commercial end of it. I talk to guys all the time who have written 400 tunes, and they send each one to Nashville or L.A. Their whole point is that maybe one of the tunes will make them a fortune. For me, it's never been about anything but the feeling I had at the time, and I made the decision to put it down to see if people close to me might feel that way, too."

In fact, this last song from Kevin's heart — the song that won him the 2009 Song of the Year Award from the Fort Worth Songwriters Association — is the first tune he wrote with the intention to sell. "I actually sat down and wrote using what I felt about a line that was given to me, a hook that goes, 'If you're not here after what I'm here after, then you'll be here after I'm gone.' One day, we were sitting in the office of my business associate and friend, Tom James, a general contractor in Dallas, and he said, 'Kevin, I've got a hook for you, and if you can write a song for it, it's yours.' Another musician was in the room with us, and I said, 'It sounds like a waltz to me,' and they all kind of laughed, and that's what it ended up being," Kevin said. "You don't hear waltzes anymore, hardly?"

Other songwriters have expressed appreciation for "After I'm Gone," calling the song well-written. Kevin will eventually shop the song around, as soon as he gets a copyright. "I submitted it back in January 2010, and still haven't heard from the copyright office. Once I've got some protection, I'll try to submit it," Kevin said. "I think it's a great tune for somebody like Toby Keith or

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Brad Paisley, who sing those kinds of songs. If it never happens, well, it's still a good song in my estimation."

Kevin enjoys a lot of today's country, but prefers Merle Haggard, George Jones or Marty Robbins. "Those are the guys I listened to. They were very influential on how I sing," said Kevin, who also credits his progressive sound to Gino Vannelli, Steely Dan and Jimi Hendrix. He sings in a duo called Slippery When Wett with guitar player Rusty Hayley, a fellow he graduated with from Irving High School in 1974. Their band has a full sound, because Kevin produces all the instrumentation and vocals out in his office, which is set up like a professional recording studio. "I'm also in the construction business — you gotta do something to make a living," Kevin said. "Rusty and I sit and practice out there. We try to get together usually twice a month, to go over stuff and learn. I use computer technology, sequencing programs, to create the music. When you come see us play, it's not a piano and a guitar; it's drums, strings, horns, the whole gamut of music that I've played onto the computer for us to play along with so you're getting a full band sound with two players."

When he is not on stage, Kevin plays good husband as well as good father, encouraging his sons Bobby and Brock in their academics, athletics and musicianship. He also takes time to write songs when the feeling hits. "I'm not one of those songwriters who takes eight hours a day and starts banging out lyrics,"

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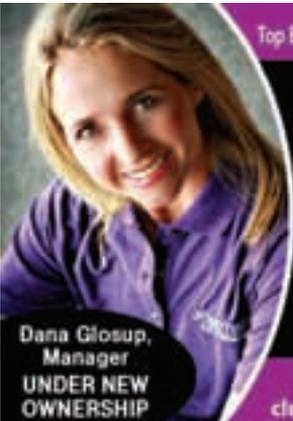


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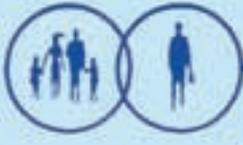


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Kevin said. “But if there’s something that strikes me as being worthy of putting words to, I’ll sit down and do it. It might take three weeks, three months or a year to finish, but I do finish.”

Patience has served Kevin well. “Life was always pretty tough,” he said. “Through my life, there’s been a whole lot of disappointments. I am happy with my wife, Kerry — I have been for over 20 years now. But I’m a Leo, so I love hard and I hurt hard. Through my younger days, I went through some pretty heartbreaking things with relationships. Those things give me the knowledge inside to know what I want to say. It’s a lot easier to reflect on ’em now. I wrote a lot of songs when I was in the position, but never finished ’em. After years go by, you can sit down and reflect and be able to finish the work. Then it’s just a matter of putting it to music. The real important part is making sure the music tells the same story. You want to make sure the music and vocals match the story.

Interestingly, Kevin sees a correlation between the process of songwriting and his chosen profession. “You lay down a bass track and start putting your puzzle together. You go ground up, starting with an idea, which would be similar to a set of plans. Next you have a basis, like laying down the drum track, which would be like the foundation, and then multiple layers, like your wall design and decoration. Your finish work (like painting and colors) would be the final vocal tracks. When you have put it all together, you mix it down,” Kevin said. “Building a song is the same as building a house or a piece of property. You start at point A and use steps to get to point Z to finish; then you hope your product is appealing enough for a homeowner or a major artist who might be interested in recording it for themselves.”

An artist needs discipline and talent to take a mental concept or some heartfelt emotion and put it to paper, canvas, keyboards, tape, disc or hard drive. For Kevin, it also takes a desire to connect with another person’s heart. “Maybe that’s simpleton. The thing about art is, maybe nobody understands it or likes it, but it’s what you feel,” Kevin said. “Sooner or later, somebody’s going to like it and go, ‘I know exactly what you were thinking or feeling at the time.’” **NOW**



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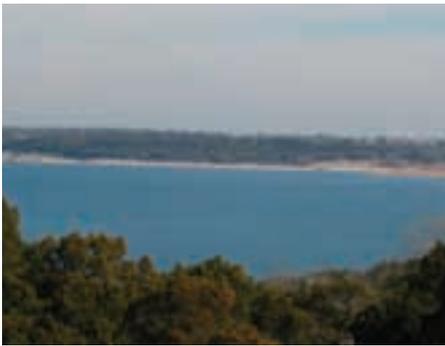
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From left:

Greg Makarwich (massage therapist), Tiffany Hurd (the Tiffie Boutique owner), Rachelle Houston (stylist), Sara Pryor (owner/stylist), Danielle Simmons (stylist), Shannon Crowley (esthetician) and Rachael Tribble (nail tech).
Not pictured: Hannah Powell (stylist)

Unwind and Refresh

Serendipity, a beauty escape for men and women, offers a secluded spa for complete body and soul rejuvenation.

— By *Melissa Rawlins*

Revival at Serendipity — with a seaweed detox wrap or salt scrub and tan — brings you face to face with a favorite saying of the salon's owner, Sara Pryor: "Believe in the wonders of tomorrow." That is exactly Sara's motivation for offering her peaceful retreat in the heart of Burleson.

"I want to change the tomorrow for my clients. I want to achieve their happiness when they're in here, and I'm not just talking hair," Sara said. The team of seven who style hair, massage away stress and polish skin and nails, first listen to their clients, then try to achieve their desired goal for their hair, skin, body or soul. "When they step into our place, where it's happy and lighthearted, they can feel like they're a part of our family."

Some evenings, Sara's clients stop by D'Vine Wine and bring

a bottle for Sara, as she has done for them. They may relax in the styling room, or even in the more private boutique — where Tiffie's merchandise is always on display. "People sit and enjoy and talk and have a bit of therapy when they come to unwind," Sara explained. When men and women walk out of Serendipity — happy about their new look, their new skin, their hair or eyelash extensions, their polished toes — they have soaked up the healthy environment at the salon. "As a team, we take care of one another and that allows us to take care of our clients."

This month marks Serendipity's first anniversary, and Sara is thrilled with the growth she sees in her salon and in the community around her. "The people in this place with me, that God has sent me, we're family, and that's what's made the

difference,” Sara mused. Her “family” knows their core business. Sara and her stylists educate each other about what is new, trendy and healthy for hair. “Everybody has a gift, and if all four of us can learn that gift from one another and incorporate it, we will be refreshing for our clients,” said Sara, who also brings people from Lanza to teach the new haircuts and color techniques.

All Serendipity stylists are certified in the Global Keratin Hair Taming System with Juvexin offering three levels of flexibility — from maximum curl taming, along with added shine and luster, down to purely frizz-free results. Men also enjoy this, as well as the pedicures, massage, waxing and skin treatments on their faces and backs. Men come to Serendipity for body wraps (for little love handles or arms or legs or tummies) and for airbrush tanning.

“We want everyone to have healthy hair and healthy skin,” Sara said. “With Lanza’s Ultimate Conditioning Treatment, which we can customize per client, we infuse the hair with strength and moisture before your hair color. Our

“We want everyone to have healthy hair and healthy skin.”

skin system, by Rhonda Allison, makes use of a lot of fruits and botanicals, which are also in Lanza, so we are providing our clients more of a natural healing instead of a chemical healing.”

Sara cares, so she has invested in Serendipity and into the families of this community. Her “family” of staff and customers give of their time and money to help the children and adults who benefit from the services of Harvest House and the Ronald McDonald House. This month, a team of clients and staff from Serendipity walk for Burleson in the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. And a few days later, they will steadily provide airbrush tanning and makeup, eyelash extensions and special-occasion hair styling for all the young ladies who desire a beautiful look for the prom. “If I can make a difference in the tomorrow, then that’s my purpose.” **NOW**



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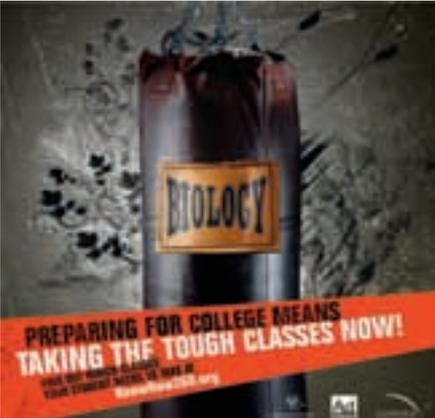
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The Ambassadors welcome businesses with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. From top left: Western Chick; the Shell Station; Gianni's; El Fenix.



Anne Sain meets some alpacas at the Tres Mijos Alpacas open house.



Darwin Kinsey supervises Randy Royal as he unpacks a new, zero turn lawnmower at Ace Lawnmower Salvage.



Virginia Shelton is a team recruiter for the American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Burleson, which takes place April 15-16, but she is no newcomer to the annual event or to cancer. This year will be her ninth year to be involved with Relay For Life, and she is a family caretaker.



Huguley Memorial Medical Center donates \$10,000, making them the title sponsor of the American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Burleson's 10th anniversary. Pictured are: Huguley Vice President Kent Tucker, Huguley CEO/President Ken Finch, Huguley board member Brenda Gammon, Relay For Life Co-chairman Dianne Arcement and Relay For Life Chairman Donyelle Allen.



The Lions Pride played the Harlem Ambassadors to earn money for underprivileged children in Burleson. From top: Carlton Jordan spins the Harlem Ambassadors ball; Stacy Singleton, the Burleson Fire Marshal, has no idea what position he played on the Lions Pride Team when they lost to the Harlem Ambassadors.



Mr. Jordan and his class (Dillon and Nicholas Spivey, back row; and Nikita Orso and Hope Spivey, front row) pose at the after-school program at Open Door Church in Joshua.



Christopher, Michelle and Ashley Crutchfield stop at McDonald's.



Bailey Powell takes Mel and Rita Shipman's order at Bailey's Place.

A Simple Test Can Save Your Life

— By *Deborah Bricker*

Most people know the huge impact heart disease can have on health. But the less talked about vascular disease outside the heart can be just as detrimental. Getting a quick and simple vascular screening could save your life.

Vascular screenings can help uncover potentially fatal conditions in the body's vascular — system. A screening can identify individuals at risk for stroke, ruptured aneurysm and peripheral arterial disease. Most deadly aortic aneurysms go undetected because there are few, if any, symptoms prior to rupture. A 20-minute screening can be lifesaving.

Three Quick Scans Can Save Lives

The vascular system carries blood to vital organs throughout the body. If left undetected, a weakness of the blood vessel wall or blockage within this system can lead to a debilitating stroke, deadly aneurysm rupture, limb amputation or other serious disability.

Three simple, non-invasive and painless tests take only 20 minutes to complete. They can tell us if an individual has a vascular problem that might lead to serious complications or death, and whether or not they need to see a physician for treatment:

- The screening's carotid scan uses ultrasound to evaluate the

arteries in the neck which supply blood to the brain. Carotid artery blockages are the leading cause of stroke. Stroke is the No. 3 cause of death in the United States, behind diseases of the heart and cancer, according to the American Heart Association. It is the leading cause of adult disability.

- Ultrasound is also used in the aortic scan to detect and measure an aneurysm in the abdominal aorta — the body's main artery. Abdominal aortic aneurysms account for 15,000 deaths each year in the United States, according to the Society of Thoracic Surgeons.

- Using Doppler measurement, the peripheral arterial disease evaluation identifies reduced blood flow and/or blockages in the arteries of the arms and legs. Impaired circulation in the body's extremities can lead to serious disability or amputation. Between 25 and 30 million people over age 70 have peripheral arterial disease, and are three times as likely to die of heart attacks and strokes as those without the disease.

Get a Vascular Screening

In most cases, with early detection, vascular disease can be treated effectively. Women over age 55 or men over age 45 with vascular disease risk factors such as diabetes, high blood pressure, smoking, high cholesterol or a family history of stroke, heart disease, aneurysm or other circulatory problems should undergo screening. If you are at risk, give yourself some peace of mind by looking into a vascular screening. **NOW**

*Deborah Bricker, director of cardiac and vascular services
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Blooming Time for Bulbs

— By Nancy Fenton

All over our area, you will find blooms. Our state bluebonnets are lovely, but not too common in the urban areas. Narcissus, daffodils and tulips are much more common. They are fun bulbs, but take planning ahead since we have to plant them in the fall in North Texas. Most years, we don't have the long cold seasons a great many bulbs require. There are several varieties that do well and naturalize here (come back stronger each year). White Flower Farms has a Web site listing varieties, the zones in which they do well and if they will naturalize. Ice Follies are one variety of narcissus that is commonly available in local outlets.

As for tulips, I have been known to put them in the same boat as azaleas — plant once, enjoy and throw away — but I'm learning every day. Through a Master Gardener class on bulbs, I discovered what is called the "Species" variety of tulips. These varieties are originally from the Mediterranean, Asia Minor and the Caucasus. They are not planted quite as deep as others, and they come up year after year. They aren't as large as many tulips, but do well in our hardy clay soils. I am ordering them for planting this fall and will let you know how they do! If you order, be sure and check the zone. We are in zone 7b, but I usually look for zone 8 to be on the safe side.

Our other big bloomer is the iris. There are lots of them



around, and they are all beautiful. You can make your own iris garden any time of year. Unlike tulips and narcissus, they aren't particular about when or where they are planted. Just give them a chance, and they'll make it. They do better in a mostly sunny area and planted shallowly so the rhizome has some sun. In planning a bed, watch the amount of shade, as well as the drainage. Irises can't take wet feet happily. Put the short ones in front with the taller ones staggered back, and be ready to thin them every three to four years. These are great plants to share.

You really can't plant much on top of irises, but narcissus and daffodils are planted deeply enough to accommodate shallow rooted plants. Try some. They will cover fading foliage as the weather heats up.

Enjoy the spring blooms and spot out places to plant your bulbs next fall. For other questions, call the Master Gardeners at the Ellis County AgriLife office at (972) 825-5175. **NOW**

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Put Your Tax Refund to Work

— By Lynn H. Bates Jr.

It's tax refund season again. This year, if you're going to get a check from Uncle Sam, why not put it to work to help you meet your financial goals?

Last year, the average tax refund was more than \$2,700, according to the IRS. The size of your refund, or whether you will get one at all, depends on your individual circumstances. But if you are going to get a refund, plan ahead for what you'll do with it. Here are a few possibilities:

- **Pay down some debts.**

In these difficult economic times, you may be carrying a higher debt load than usual. If so, you may want to use some of your refund to pay down some of these debts. The lower your debt payments, the better your cash flow and the more money you'll have to invest for the future.

- **Build an emergency fund.**

If you don't already have an emergency fund containing six to 12 months' worth of living expenses, you could use your tax refund to start one. Without such a fund, you may find yourself constantly dipping into your long-term investments to pay for unexpected costs, such as a new furnace or an expensive car repair. Keep your emergency fund in a liquid account — one that you don't draw on for your day-to-day expenses.

- **Help fund your IRA.**

In 2010, you can put in up to \$5,000 to your IRA. Consequently, if you received a \$2,700 refund, you'd have more than half of what you need to fully fund your IRA for the year. (If you're 50 or older, however, you can contribute up to \$6,000 per year.) You might not think that your \$2,700 would make much of a difference in the

long run. But by investing your refund and giving it many years of growth potential, you could end up with a sizable amount.

Consider the following: If you put \$2,700 in your IRA, and you earned, on average, seven percent a year for 30 years, you'd end up with about \$20,000, even if you never invested another dime. If you put \$2,700 every year in that same IRA, again earning an average seven percent annual return, you'd end up with more than \$270,000 after 30 years. (These examples are hypothetical illustrations and do not represent any currently available investments.)

You'd eventually have to pay taxes on your earnings, typically when you make withdrawals at retirement. And if you qualified for a Roth IRA, you'd never have to pay taxes on your earnings, as long as you had your account for at least five years and didn't start taking withdrawals until you were at least 59 1/2.

- **Contribute to a Section 529 plan.**

If you have children or grandchildren, you may want to establish Section 529 plans to help them pay for college. You can contribute virtually any amount, and the earnings grow tax-free, provided the money is used for higher education expenses. (Withdrawals used for expenses other than qualified education expenses may be subject to federal, state and penalty taxes. Contributions are tax-deductible in certain states for residents who participate in their own state's plan. Please note that a 529 college savings plan could impact a beneficiary's ability to qualify for financial aid.)

You may be tempted to spend your tax refund on things you want today — but, with a little planning, you can use it for things you need tomorrow. **NOW**

Lynn H. Bates Jr. is an Edward Jones representative based in Burleson.



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April 15

Arbor Day Ceremony hosted by the city of Burleson's parks and recreation department, the neighborhood services department and Keep Burleson Beautiful: 10:00 a.m.-noon, Chisenhall Fields on East Hidden Creek Parkway, Burleson. City staff will distribute tree seedlings — live oak, red oak and bald cypress — on a first come, first served basis. Contact (817) 426-9291.

April 15-16

American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Burleson 2011: 6:00 p.m.-6:00 a.m., Kerr Middle School stadium on Johnson Avenue, Burleson. Call Chair Donyelle Allen at (817) 648-2554 or Co-chair Dianne Arcement at (817) 992-9823. Visit www.relayforlife.org/burlesontx and the American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Burleson Facebook page.

April 15-17

Free "Empowered Living" seminar: First program starts Friday, 7:00 p.m. Joshua SDA Church. Presented by Jim and Sally Hohnberger, the purpose of this seminar is to help marital relationships and broken families in the community and to revitalize relationships with the Lord and empower

the Christian experience. Visit www.JAMM4Christ.org or contact Pastor Jeff Coleman at (817) 645-0653.

April 16

Easter Egg Hunt: 11:00 a.m.-noon, Bartlett Park Sports Complex, 550 N.W. Summercrest Blvd., Burleson. For more information, contact (817) 426-9104.

2011 Kiwanis Club Stairway to the Stars Christian Music Show: 7:00-9:00 p.m., First Baptist Church of Burleson, 371 W. Ellison, Burleson. Tickets: \$5.00. Supports scholarships for local high school seniors. E-mail bur88kiwanis@gmail.com or call (817) 733-8986.

April 23

Burleson Town & Country Garden Club 12th Annual Plant Sale: 7:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Burleson Senior Activity Center, 216 S.W. Johnson Avenue (next to the post office). Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Contact Lee Ann Downey at (817) 456-4536.

April 29

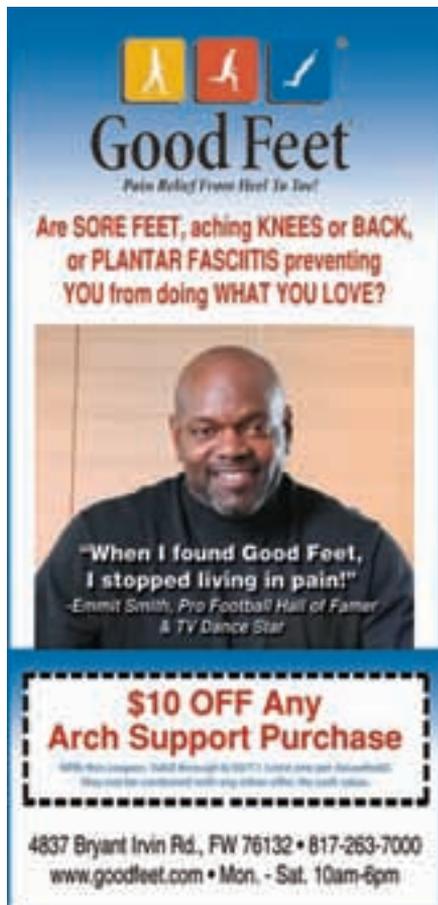
14th Annual Cowboys for Kids Fundraiser: 5:30-11:00 p.m., Coffeen Family Cutting

Horse Facility, Egan. Fundraiser for Children's Advocacy Center includes entertainment, live and silent auctions and dinner. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Visit www.cowboysforkids-jc.org or call The Children's Advocacy Center at (817) 558-1599.

April 30

Stick Horse Rodeo and PBR Enterprise Tour, Celebrity Team Roping and Wild Steer Saddling at the Johnson County Sheriff Posse Grounds. Kids Rodeo on Stick Horses: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. — part of the Cowboys for Kids fundraiser for the Children's Advocacy Center. Children 10 and under compete in rodeo events on a stick horse, which they get to keep. PBR bull riding festivities: 7:00 p.m. First bull bucks at 8:00 p.m. Tickets range from \$12 – free. Entrance for contestants in the Stick Horse Rodeo is \$10. Visit www.cowboysforkids-jc.org or call The Children's Advocacy Center at (817) 558-1599.

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



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In The Kitchen With Bill and Drinda Jacobson

— *By Melissa Rawlins*

Drinda Jacobson loves experimenting on people, introducing them to vegetarian dishes. Her husband, Bill, specializes in bread and, believe it or not, meat. After 33 years of cooking together, the couple frequently serves upwards of 20 people in their home, offering up a tasty mixture of local, grass fed, organic and cage-free foods. “The psalmist tells us that the righteous man regards the life of his beast,” Bill explained. “While we eat meat, this sends us down a path of trying to avoid meat products that are overtly abusive to animals.” Bill knows how to handle his veggies, too, and he and Drinda have found several local markets where they can buy fresh produce for their sumptuous feasts. **NOW**

Baked Falafel

1 lb. chickpeas (garbanzo beans), raw
6 cloves fresh garlic
1 large onion, coarsely chopped
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
1 cup fresh parsley, chopped
1 1/2 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. coriander
1 tsp. black pepper
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 cup gluten flour (You may substitute regular flour.)
3 eggs
1/2 cup olive oil

1. In a large pot, cover the chickpeas with water and soak overnight. Drain well the next day.
2. In a food processor, thoroughly chop all ingredients. Because the chickpeas will tend to be dry and not mix well, combine the chickpeas with the other ingredients in small batches. This will make the processing easier.
3. When all ingredients are chopped,

combine in a large mixing bowl and stir until uniformly mixed.

4. Heat oven to 350 F. Using a small scoop, put balls of the falafel mix on a cookie sheet. Bake for 20 minutes or until brown.

Tahini Sauce

2 cloves fresh garlic
1/2 tsp. fine sea salt
1/2 cup well-stirred tahini
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 tsp. ground cumin
1 Tbsp. fresh cilantro, finely chopped
1 Tbsp. fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

1. Combine all ingredients except cilantro and parsley in a food processor. Process until smooth.
2. Stir in the chopped cilantro and parsley.
3. Transfer mixture to a covered bowl and refrigerate until ready to use.

Alfredo Sauce aka Heart Attack on a Plate

1/2 tsp. white pepper
1 Tbsp. corn starch
1 quart half-and-half
1 4-oz. stick butter
1 lb. Parmesan (use the good stuff)
Fresh parsley for garnish, chopped

1. Combine pepper and corn starch in a pan and whisk in about 1 cup half-and-half until smooth.
2. Add remaining half-and-half along with butter. Simmer over low heat, whisking continuously. Heat until just prior to boiling.
3. Whisk the cheese into the sauce a little at a time until it is all incorporated and smooth while not allowing to boil. Serve over hot, cooked pasta. Garnish with parsley. Note: Do not add salt.

Pomodoro Sauce

6 Tbsp. olive oil (Here we're looking for a very intense olive oil flavor, so dark green and/or unfiltered olive oil suits best.)
1 small yellow onion, diced to 1/4-inch pieces
4 cloves garlic, smashed
2 anchovy filets (optional)
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 Tbsp. capers
2 lbs. very ripe cherry tomatoes, halved
Salt, to taste
Garnish with Parmesan

1. In a 12-inch or larger frying pan, combine olive oil, onion, garlic, anchovies and pepper. (Many people are afraid of using anchovies. But if you will take a risk, you will find that they add a huge punch to the sauce, and you will never recognize that the anchovies are in it.) Sauté over low heat until the onion is quite translucent and the anchovies have disintegrated. It is important that the pan not get overly hot, as this will ruin the olive oil.
2. Add the capers and tomatoes. Stir briefly to incorporate all the ingredients. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes or so, until the tomatoes have melted into the sauce. Salt to taste.
3. Give the sauce a final stir and serve over pasta with Parmesan as a garnish.

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

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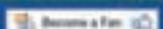


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