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# Mansfield **NOW**

M A G A Z I N E

May 2009

**The Big  
Picture**

**Bringing  
Eggs to Life**

**The Full Ride ...  
Off Court**

**Our  
Academy  
Awards**

*At Home With*

**Alma Pressley**



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- Tom Ritter, Jr.
- Mike Waters
- Tony Meehan
- Danny Ray
- MCB EVP Harrel Adkison

**CENTER:**

- Dennis Withers
- MCB EVP Chuck Wilson
- Kim Schlieker
- Roger Liebelt
- Michael Evans, Sr.

**FRONT:**

- MCB EVP Debbie Koennecke
- Dee Davey



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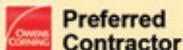
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MAGAZINE

## Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

May is the month in which we observe Memorial Day. Often, this day is considered to be a family holiday, a beginning to the summer marked by a three-day weekend. As the daughter of a U.S. military attaché and war hero, I know better. I was just 5 years old when my father returned from his second tour in Vietnam and watched with confusion as he tackled my mom to the floor after hearing an explosion down the street. A demolition team had been removing trees, but to my father, freshly returned to the States, the horrors of war were fresh in his mind.

When I was 19 years old, he was captured and held by the Kuwaiti government after following a Soviet military convoy. Today, the greatest tribute I have paid my father is teaching my own children the value of this day. Honor our heroes and our history by teaching someone you love about Memorial Day!

As always, be safe!

Alex Allred

MansfieldNOW Editor



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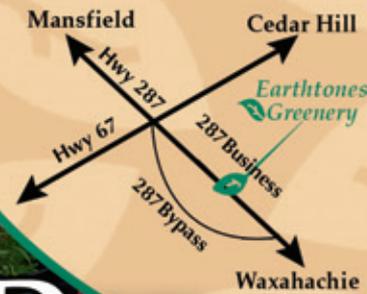
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# The Big Picture

— By Alex Allred

Tiffany Chartier sees the big picture. She sees things most people never have the chance to see, much less understand. To the outside world, Tiffany appears to have it all. She is gorgeous, vibrant and an immensely talented artist. She is happily married and has three beautiful children. She is also slowly losing her eyesight.

At first glance, a person would not even know she has retinitis pigmentosa (RP), an inherited disease that causes retinal degeneration. “I’ve lost close to 65 percent of my peripheral vision, and it decreases every year.” In fact, Tiffany has not been able to drive a car at night for the past seven years and suffers from seriously impaired depth perception.

When she was 15 years old, Tiffany was diagnosed with RP. “When my grandfather passed away,” Tiffany said, “he was legally blind.” Her father, who had always been an avid golfer, began having a difficult time finding the golf ball, “so we went to the Retina Foundation of the Southwest in Dallas,” she explained. “I went purely for support.” The terrible truth was revealed when it was suggested she get tested as well. “Mine was actually worse than his.” Suddenly her clumsy moments were explained. “I’ve only seen my father cry twice in my life. He cried when his father died and that day in the parking lot of the hospital when he said, ‘I’m sorry I gave this to you.’”

“But it is also a gift,” Tiffany smiled. Refusing to be labeled or sidelined in any way, Tiffany took life on with a whole new fervor. She graduated from the University of North Texas,

Mrs. Portillo

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having studied criminal justice, was the president of the Criminal Justice Honor Society, gave the commencement speech at graduation and was honored UNT Woman of the Year. She pushed through a grueling internship with the Federal Law Enforcement Academy, still believing she could be a top notch FBI agent when her then mentor/trainer questioned her motives. "He said, 'Tiffany, what are you doing all this for? It's like you're fighting yourself to be the absolute best you can be for



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something that is unattainable. You can't do this. It's not going to happen!" "I had honestly tricked myself into thinking my vision would not be an obstacle. Sometimes, you can do everything right and your prayers still won't be answered," she said. However briefly Tiffany was down, she was never out. She contacted the

# V<sup>A</sup> Voice *for* Mansfield

Move over Brady Bunch, because the Short family is our latest and greatest example of the blended family, and let there be no mistake, Julie Short is no Carol Brady. With six children, Julie has no live-in maid. Instead, she and her husband, Stoney, run their own construction company. She is a certified fitness trainer, an active member of the Mansfield community and, today, making a bid for a seat on the City Council.

"I've been interested in what happens here in Mansfield for a long time," she said. However, like so many residents, she was "too busy," and felt "intimidated" by the inner workings of local politics. Julie has never been shy about voicing her opinion to state representatives and corporate CEOs about their political affiliations, often writing letters or boycotting certain products. A staunch pro-life supporter and health activist, her sister once told her, "You're going to be in politics one day." But it was not until she and Stoney attended a City Council meeting that something awakened inside Julie, and she knew she had to do something more than write letters. Although managing a busy household and business, committed to her neighbors and friends, she is "every woman" and she is determined to be heard.

With Mansfield's rapid growth, Julie encourages diversity in business without losing the integrity of Mansfield's small town appeal. "I want Mansfield to remain a family-friendly town," Julie said, emphasizing the importance of education, community activism and proper representation of citizens throughout the city. "If I am elected to the City Council," she said, "I want our Council to be more accessible to the average citizen."

For more information about Julie, log on to [www.julieshort.com](http://www.julieshort.com).



In fact, it is her intention to send weekly e-mails to any citizens who want constant updates on what is happening in Mansfield. It is not lack of interest that keeps people at home, rather, "People just don't always know what is going on," she said.

Julie Short wants to put a stop to that. "It's what my sister once said is the difference between a statesman and a politician. A statesman wants to get in and do the right thing. A politician wants to find out what you want to hear."

"Believe me. I won't just tell you what you want to hear. I will speak the truth and always vote my conscience." That stated, Julie has returned to good old-fashioned politics — knocking on doors, attending public functions to shake hands and get to know her neighbors. Individual contributions have remained small but numerous, all of which makes Julie very happy as her grassroots campaign truly is "family-friendly." Indeed, her campaign motto is no different from what she taught her own children: "Have the courage to be who you are and stand for what you believe in."

*Pd. Pol. Adv., Julie Short Campaign, Lisa Stewart, Treasurer*



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Foundation Fighting Blindness in Dallas and became what the events manager, Aaron Rager, terms, “a professional volunteer,” giving countless hours and devotion to the cause. She earned her master’s from the University of Texas at Dallas in interdisciplinary studies, became an established photographer and wrote her first novel, a Christian-based fiction for young readers, but perhaps one of the greatest things she has done thus far was to follow the sounds of a hearty belly laugh down the hallway of a previous job. “I love to laugh,” Tiffany explained, “and Todd has a great laugh!”

Tiffany’s instinct led her to the man who is now her husband, Todd. “He’s never left my side. The only time he’s not been beside me is when he’s leading me so I can see. In many, many ways, he is my eyes, and I couldn’t have asked for anyone more than Todd. I just hope I give him a fraction of what he’s given me,” she expressed.

What Tiffany has given Todd is light. She has given him the big picture. “She taught me to stop and smell the flowers, to never take everyday life for granted,” he said. Well before the movie, *The Bucket List*, came out, “we had a list of our own,” Todd said. They honeymooned in Florence, Italy, because Tiffany’s grandmother had once remarked it was the most beautiful place in the world and it was important to Tiffany to see such a place. “It was a financial strain, but we did it,” Todd said. Together, they have run a race, hot air ballooned and taken in the sights, “because we don’t know how much time we have. Will she see her kids walk down the aisle or see the faces of our grandchildren? It’s a real fear.”

It is, however, a fear they face together and already, some of it has been realized. Of their three children, their oldest child, Holt, has been diagnosed with RP, as well. In response, Todd and Tiffany created ‘Holt’s Heroes,’ a team of walkers/joggers to help raise funds and awareness for the Foundation Fighting Blindness. With 100 percent of the proceeds going to the foundation, Todd and Tiffany hope a cure can be



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found for the disease.

"Sometimes, we get tired of talking about it," Aaron said of RP. Like Tiffany, Aaron was diagnosed at a young age and has lost significant peripheral eyesight. "But Todd never tires. He's raised over \$20,000; he writes letters and he's always there pushing us along!" With hopes of raising more than \$100,000 this year, Congressman Pete Sessions will be walking with team Holt's Heroes on May 16 at White Rock Lake.

"When we found out Holt had RP," Tiffany said, "I had to teach him how to deal with life in a positive way. Life isn't meant to be easy, but it is meant to be meaningful."

Certainly, she leads by example. "Just because I have RP doesn't mean it has to be a death sentence," Tiffany said. In her home a sign states, "giggle," and that has become her personal mantra. "If RP is my story, I'm still the author," she asserted. Visits to museums and antiques shops are educational opportunities for Tiffany as she makes her children close their eyes and explain different objects they feel. Flowers were smelled well before they were ever viewed as a natural beauty, and she continues to give her photography away for free. Despite even desperate attempts by her subjects to pay for her photographs, Tiffany refuses.

"What is awesome about knowing you are losing your eyesight is that I can give what I see away. When you have something like your eyesight slipping through your hands, you have to celebrate what you have," she said. For Tiffany, each time she captures an image through her photographic lens and is able to share what she sees, it is a true celebration.

While she continues to write, she also collects antique lanterns, "because her purpose is to be a light for others." Todd points out the irony of this — as Tiffany's own world is slowly going dark, "she is the most inspiring woman I have ever met."

For more information about Holt's Heroes or Foundation Fighting Blindness, contact [DFW@FightBlindness.org](mailto:DFW@FightBlindness.org).

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wives — Cindy and Lisa — and have children of their own. “Red passed away in 1980, when Skeeter was only 7,” she said. She learned during that time of change and transition that tears were the language of the heart.

Even for one who exudes immeasurable confidence, joy and a zest for life, the years following Alma’s loss were tough ones. For her, however, giving up was never an option, so she forged ahead. She put new meaning on her journey through life with one simple story after another, but the one that brought the most emotion from those listening was the story she told of 33 cents. “At one time, I didn’t have 33 cents to buy a loaf of bread between paychecks as a single mother,” she humbly admitted. “Once I had 33 extra pennies, I put them in a small bag and put the bag

# The Sweet Life

— By Sandra McIntosh

Looking back over time, Alma Pressley can honestly say life has been good to her. “I’m excited about life,” she said, overflowing with a positive energy second to none. “You have to be excited about your own life; who else will be if you’re not?”

Alma first became acquainted with the Mansfield community back in the

early ‘60s, when she met and married her late husband, J.T. “Red” Pressley. “He moved us to Mansfield, and the first home we lived in is still standing,” she noted. “It’s still right next door to the family’s jewelry store.” She and Red had two children, John Thomas Jr. and Tony, also known around town as “Skeeter,” who are both grown, have





in my purse.” Alma has been carrying those same 33 coins in her purse since the early '80s.

Each and every time she reaches in her purse and her fingers touch the small bag of coins, she remembers where she came from, where she has been and where she is going. “God’s gifts put man’s dreams to shame. God has given me all these wonderful gifts,” she explained. “They far exceed anything



I could have dreamed for myself.”

The gifts she is referring to include the family’s business, Mansfield Fine Jewelry, and her four-bedroom, three-and-a-half bath home located just off the 18th green of the Oak Course, one of two golf courses connected with the Walnut Creek Country Club. Her Italian heritage

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inspired the Italian style found throughout her home, but if the walls could talk, they would take you on a trip around the world. Father Raphael Eagle, a close friend of Alma's, put it this way in a page he once wrote, "United States, Japan, Germany, Italy, Paraguay and France. What do they have in common? They have all shared Alma's home and have tasted and enjoyed the hospitality." Who are "they" you might wonder? They include: exchange students, out-of-state priests, a couple of individuals who have needed

a place to stay while going through a divorce and numerous friends, both old and new.

Alma has opened her home for weddings, receptions, religious education classes, Christmas piano recitals and youth group functions. Once again, she made mention of how blessed she is, so sharing her home with the community comes naturally. "This home just connects me with so many beautiful individuals. I'm rich in love," she confessed. "So many people have helped me along the way, it's only right that I give back

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whenever I can.” Her riches do not come from money, they have always been found in her family and friends.

The foundation of Alma’s home may appear to be cement and a wood frame to others, but to Alma it is her Catholic faith. The walls are filled with family pictures, religious icons and a lifetime of memorabilia, which paint a visual portrait of joy, peace and family presence. “The roof is Alma’s love, which she welcomes to all,” Father Eagle penned.

As visitors arrive and walk into the foyer, they are enveloped in warmth

from the white interior accents and the lovely way in which Alma has displayed her life. A very special gift is one of the first items of interest seen. “Leonardo Zuno was an exchange student I sponsored,” she said, explaining that his mother created the colorful icon depicting the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus. “It started out as a burnt piece of wood and now it’s a beautiful piece of artwork.” Leonardo’s mother also made another piece found in the piano room. Flat pieces of silver were worked from the backside with small tools to create an



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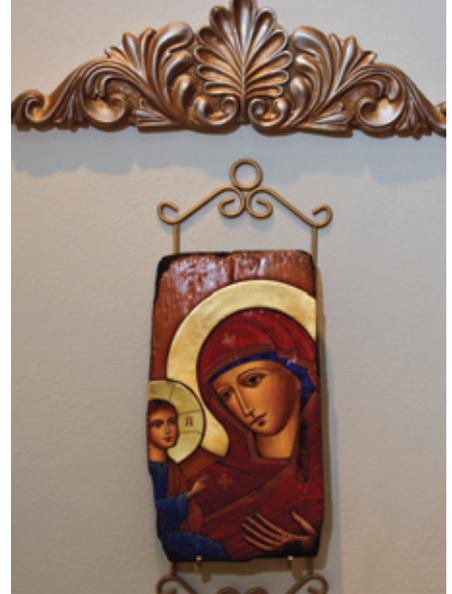
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intricate, raised effect seen on the front side within a boxed frame. Alma displayed this piece in the front window on a long table top, which rests on sandstone columns from Egypt.

The den is the most used room in the home, per Alma. "It's where I live," she added. One wall in this room is very



special to her. The oversized Rosary was a gift from a very dear friend. Displayed on the table is a Baltimore Catechism, which dates back over 100 years, as well as a current Catechism, a cross and a statuette of St. Theresa. "This wall is very precious to me," she said. "Everyone has a favorite place, but everyone does not have a favorite wall."

Other noteworthy items include, but are definitely not limited to: a collage table of her six grandchildren, two windows of matching stained glass above the entry door, a classical piano,

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the altar in the master suite where Alma enjoys her morning prayer, a Sacred Heart icon above the altar and a closet filled to overflowing with beautiful ballroom gowns, shoes that sparkle and hundreds of scarves. “I started dancing with my dad. I stood on the tops of his feet,” she said, explaining her passion for ballroom dancing.

“My brother, Elmo, taught me how to jitterbug. Once I got the basics, the rest just seemed to come naturally.”

Everyone’s life is a message that tells a special story unique to only them.

Alma’s story is one of perseverance mixed with joy, laughter and fun. Putting her life in the perfect order —

church, family, work and dancing — has proven to be the key to longevity. She has attended St. Jude Catholic Church for the past 60 years and her grandchildren — Brittany, Thomas, Carley, Cailey, Ashtyn and Brandon, ranging in age from 9 to 19 — keep her on her toes. As the sign in her kitchen states, “*La Dolce Vita*,” Alma is living “The Sweet Life.”

She may be but one small star in the universe, but Alma shines brightly in the darkness. Just ask anyone who knows her. **NOW**



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# Bringing Eggs to Life

— By Danielle Parker

What came first, the bird or the egg? For egg artist Penny Smale, it is the egg from which both existence and art are birthed. “The egg shell is the canvas,” Penny said. “It symbolizes the beginning of life.” This Mansfield resident, who has spent the past few decades transforming simple eggs into things of beauty, has always been passionate about art.

Penny found her niche when she attended a luncheon where a lady presented an egg art demonstration. “I immediately knew this was my thing,” she recalled. “After that luncheon, I began attending juried art shows learning everything I could. Around that time, my



husband was transferred to Cincinnati, so I would travel to shows in nearby states where egg art was flourishing.”

From all the learning gathered at these shows, Penny became a natural at the art of eggs. Austrian-jeweled memory eggs were Penny’s specialty in particular. “Memory eggs take a special event and capture that moment in time,” she said. “It takes a lot of research

about the person and the event. I try to put as much information on the egg as possible. I have done some very special ones for anniversaries, pets, retirements — any type of celebration really.”

These eggs are not the typical painted Easter eggs. Memory eggs require much time and energy. “I have to determine what exactly will be placed on the egg. I then sketch out on the egg shell the





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design and make the cuts,” Penny said. That is just the beginning of a process, which can take months at a time per egg. “There are a number of steps that I go through,” Penny explained. “Egg art can be very tedious and time-consuming. Cutting is probably the most difficult or ‘un-fun’ stage. Swarovski crystal jewels can also be difficult, especially because I place each jewel on one at a



**“Memory eggs take a special event and capture that moment in time.”**

time to form the flowers on the egg.” However, all the effort is well worth it once the egg has been transformed into a work of art, according to Penny. “I love the look on someone’s face when they get one of my eggs,” she said. “It’s the most gratifying thing in the world to see someone pleased with what I have done.”

Penny’s tools of the trade were few in the beginning, but developed with her skill. “I had to start a little at a time,” she said. “Each time I had a commission, I’d turn around and buy more products. As [my skill] grew, I expanded and used higher quality materials, like non-tarnishing braids, gold-plated stands and onyx or marble bases.” Over time, her art became a custom treasure desired both near and far. “Within a few years, people were requesting my eggs in many states,” Penny said. “I even had my signature as a registered trademark.

“In the olden days, we had to blow

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out our own eggs," Penny remembered. "We had to clean them out first before we could begin. We used drills and disks to cut. All our items could only be bought through shows and catalogs. [The art form] was not well-known, so it was difficult to get supplies."

As the medium has grown, so have the resources. "You can buy empty shells that have been blown and sterilized," Penny said. "Today, people use a small dental tool to cut, which is much easier."

Penny has used ostrich, emu, goose, finch and parakeet eggs as the canvas for not only her memory eggs, but for ornaments, necklaces and jewelry boxes, as well. "I choose the egg based on shape and size," Penny explained. "The rhea egg is my favorite egg to use. It is from a non-flying bird and has a wonderful shape."

No matter what type egg she begins with, in the end Penny presents a gift that continues to give for generations. "It involves a lot of memories about the person, so even when they are gone, their children can still cherish it," she said. "As you watch it go from the symbolic egg to this thing of beauty, it becomes so special. I feel that is my reward."

Lately, Penny has not been able to invest as much time in egg art, yet she still enjoys decorating eggs and imparting her gift within her family. "I have passed on the love to my grandchildren," she shared. "They do a lot of fun eggs and are trying to get me to teach them cutting, but it will be a few years before we move on to that."

Whether it is capturing a moment in time or just for fun, Penny continues to bring life to those around her. "I love seeing the egg come alive," she said. "I never really feel like it is finished, even after I let it go. Each day, you do something to change its appearance and you create an individual glow. I have the opportunity to see what I am envisioning appear right before my eyes. It truly comes to life." **NOW**

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# The Full Ride ... Off Court

— By Alex Allred

When Rachel Friesen-Norwood was a senior in high school, she had a much different problem than most athletes awaiting scholarship offers. Rachel received numerous offers and not just for one sport. As a standout athlete in multiple disciplines, she was offered scholarships for soccer, track, volleyball and basketball. As a junior, she ran the 100-meter, 200-meter, 4x100, 4x200 and 400-meter relay, making regionals every year. She performed the triple jump and long jump and, as both a volleyball and soccer player, competed at the regional level. However, it was on the basketball court that Rachel was most comfortable.

Despite being offered the elusive “full-ride” scholarship for track, Rachel turned it down. While she jokes, “I knew I didn’t want to run in college, because I hated running,” basketball

allowed Rachel to shine as the all-around athlete she is. An aggressive player and strong runner with good ball handling skills, it was a sport that also allowed her to develop a strong familial tie with her teammates.

Although her childhood memories are good ones with close relationships to her sisters, Rachel’s life was not an easy one. She was not afforded the many luxuries so many children have today. As a result, Rachel is, and has always been, most appreciative for the gift of education and the experience she was given through sports.

“You’re never too old or too experienced to learn,” Rachel said. “If you accept this, you can continue to grow, but the minute you stop learning or being open to learning, you really limit yourself and what you have to offer to other people.” Indeed, these are wise words

from a woman who has had great success on and off the court as a player and coach, but even before she entered college, she was always philosophical about life and those things for which we should be most grateful.

Despite being offered a full-ride scholarship to the prestigious Clemson University, Rachel received a last minute, very disappointing phone call. “Clemson had offered it [the scholarship] to me, but they picked up a 6-foot transfer from UConn,” she explained. At just 5’ 7”, Rachel was considered small for a point guard, and despite her aggressive reputation, she was suddenly without a home. “I had turned down a lot of other schools, but UNCW was still actively recruiting me.” Never one to stay down, Rachel quickly responded to the University of North Carolina Wilmington and realized, “It was a

feeling of home.” It was a place where she felt she could flourish both as an athlete and a student.

Flourish she did. Her initiation to the NCAA, however, was rough. Injuries plagued her, limiting her play time. Due to overtraining and fatigue, her body fat dropped to an astonishing 11 percent, she developed stress fractures and began to worry about her place on the team. However, by her junior year, “I learned there is a point where you can do too much and learned how to rest,” she explained. She was named captain of her team and was honored Co-Defensive Player of the Year in the Coastal Atlantic Conference (CAA). “We were in the top 10 in defense and top 10 in points allowed,” she said, adding that by her senior year, the UNCW’s women’s basketball team had had the best season in the school’s history. They had great expectations of going to the “big dance” only to lose the first round of the conference tournament. “We were a horrible example of losing focus and lost in the first round.” This experience would only set up her philosophy about personal growth and determination.

After earning her bachelor’s in exercise science, Rachel stayed on campus as a student assistant, until she received her first coaching job at NOVA Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, the following year. Briefly, she considered playing professional women’s basketball overseas, but when an injured knee with a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) prevented her from playing, Rachel began coaching the semi-pro, Dallas Diesel. “There comes a point as a basketball player when you have to decide if you are going to be a player, a coach or a spectator. I thought I could make a greater impact as a coach,” she said.

“She’s a great coach,” said Rachel’s sister, Talaya Allen. “Rachel is so

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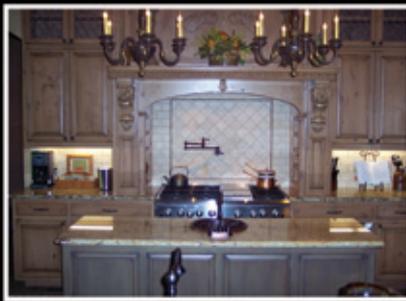


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intense.” Also a standout basketball player who received a full-ride scholarship, Talaya has played alongside her sister and coaches a girl’s basketball team in Plano. “She demands perfection and doesn’t settle for anything less.” Why would she? “That’s how she was as a player.”



**As a result, Rachel is, and has always been, most appreciative for the gift of education and the experience she was given through sports.**

Today, Rachel has returned to school in hopes of one day teaching biology and physiology. As a lover of science, sport and the eternal quest of learning, there could be no better job for Rachel than coaching and teaching science to high school and middle school students.

“The way she played on the court crosses over to her everyday life,” Talaya said. “She’s learned to apply the skills and techniques and command herself to be the best she can be.” As Rachel would say, “Life is about never limiting yourself — on or off the court.” **NOW**

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— By Alex Allred

As a boy, Brian Dorsey and his two brothers frequently walked the streets of downtown Mansfield, before all the mega shopping malls and sprawling neighborhoods arrived. His father, Warren, owned and ran a small Texaco Station at a time when customer service was still a top priority, and loyal customers returned for both the quality of work and friendships that developed over time. These early footprints would mark a strong tradition for Brian as he returned to Mansfield with Dorsey's Unlimited Construction.

Before Brian turned his attention to roofing and repair, however, he took on another kind of fight. Literally. "The three of us [brothers] got into karate. Dad had a little service station in town and we would walk down the street to watch karate until he put us in." By 1972, all three Dorsey boys were actively

taking karate and quietly building the Dorsey name in the martial arts world. Troy, Rodney and Brian would all go on to earn black belts. Both Brian and Troy opened their own karate studios and fought competitively. But as Troy moved his karate school from the Garland

area back to Mansfield, Brian had to make an executive decision about his own studio.

"I'd been in the karate business for

about 15 years, but I was also working in roofing part time for a company that got so busy, I had to pick one or the other," he shared. He chose roofing and in 1992, opened Dorsey's Unlimited Construction. While his older brother, Troy, had turned pro, becoming the only fighter in history to hold world titles in both boxing and martial arts,

**"We're very family oriented and want to take care of our customers."**

Brian dedicated that same kind of drive and determination to his own business. As stated within the company's motto, Dorsey's Unlimited Construction offers service beyond compare. From commercial and residential roofing, maintenance and repair and attic insulation to cleaning and installing gutter systems and painting services, Brian is proud to say total customer satisfaction and quality work are his *modus operandi*. Integrity is a word used again and again when talking to any employee or customer of Dorsey's Unlimited Construction.

"If any of our customers ever have a problem, they know they can talk to me, and we'll take care of them," Brian said. "We're very family oriented and want to take care of our customers. I like helping them." Following in the footsteps of his father, Warren, Brian has maintained an excellent relationship with his customers for more than 17

years. Brian attributes this success to his own family.

In fact, Warren Dorsey now works alongside his son as does Brian's daughter, Ashley. While Ashley manages the office during the day, Brian's son, Kolby, watches Ashley's children and attends college in the evenings. Both Brian and his brother, Troy, remain close both physically and metaphorically, and are hopeful that Rodney will be able to move back to the area by September bringing all the Fighting Dorseys to the Mansfield area once again.

Even beyond the familial ties, Brian has worked hard to establish the Dorsey name in the community as one to be relied upon. Integrity, honesty, dependability are the things Brian said he insists upon when hiring someone, as well as when making a commitment to a customer. As a martial artist or a roofer, a fighter or a business owner, actions speak louder than words. "And I want people to know they can rely on me," Brian asserted.

"I can't tell you how many times," Ashley said, "I've heard people complain that they hired a company and then, the next thing they knew, the company was gone! Not us. We're not going anywhere." **NOW**

# Our Academy Awards

— By Alex Allred

On May 31, Mansfield will be hosting its own Academy Awards at the Studio Movie Grill in Arlington, complete with tuxedos and formal gowns. Filmmakers, actors, screenwriters, key grips, sound experts and lighting technicians will all be on hand as the best films are awarded; but do not look for Kate Winslet or Leonardo DiCaprio to make an appearance. The stars of this event are high school students from the Mansfield Independent School District (MISD).

Dee McCown, the media technology teacher at Ben Barber Career and Technology Academy, wanted to find a way to honor her students because, “the kids in media tech don’t have a banquet like the kids in band or athletics.” In fact, Dee’s students come from all the different high schools in the district, making a school event rather difficult. “But the media tech crew are like family,” she said. “These kids have been together for years.” Mindful of both the costs and subject matter, Dee created an Academy Awards, of sorts, to showcase the work of her students, but even she was surprised by their reaction. “I know these kids,” she laughed. “I thought they would want it [award ceremony] to be low-key so they could wear jeans, but they were adamant about it being formal.”

Now in her sixth year at Ben Barber, Dee continues to be amazed by the talent level of her students. After graduation from college with a degree in Radio/TV/Film, Dee entered the business world, creating video productions for major corporations, selling air time to multimedia outlets and eventually producing newscasts and commercials for a local television station. During that time, she also stayed at home to be with her own children. For her, teaching young people how to create film was a culmination of all of her experience and passion. “When you see them get it, see how they’ve progressed and see how talented they’ve become, it is the



greatest feeling. I just like young people. I like to see them realize how talented they really are,” she said.

Her husband, Darnell, is also in film, working as a professional photographer. “When we first got married,” Dee said, “he worked in film, not digital. He was quite the film snob, but he’s come around.” In fact, whether he wanted to or not, Darnell has become a film critic, as he has been and continues to be exposed to the works of his wife’s students. “He doesn’t always see the best stuff,” Dee laughed, adding, “but a lot of times he is surprised by something he sees and wants to know who did what. He is interested in meeting the kids.”

For Dee, her students are extended members of her family and one of the reasons she has been so successful in reaching and teaching her charges. “A lot of these kids may not always achieve their potential in academics, but let me tell you, they are creative; they are very intelligent and imaginative.” Students, who may struggle in the core classes, light up in Dee’s presence. Although she is humble and quick to deflect high praise, even she cannot deny the success of her classes. Students look forward to class as they eagerly seek her out for assistance and advice. One student, who had been struggling in high school, came in every day “despite having senior release. He would come in and edit before the school day

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even started,” Dee smiled as she recalled how he stayed in touch with her even after graduation. “He said he appreciated that someone took him seriously and that he learned that there was something he was good at!”

Indeed, this is truly a gift Dee has bestowed upon her students. To walk into Dee’s classroom while her students are busily working at their stations editing video, can only be likened to walking into Santa’s workshop. As each student asks the newcomer to view and critique their work, it is a visual smorgasbord of creative ideas, lighting and visual effects.

“What has really surprised me is the level of camera work that we’re getting in,” Dee said. “Some have a very mature eye as far as setting up their shots. They are very professional.”

As the Media Tech Banquet, a.k.a. Academy Awards of Mansfield, prepares its nominees, the students have a strict criteria they must follow. “They have to submit a folder, a storyboard, character development, synopsis, script and any kind of talent releases or music releases used in the film. It is a very comprehensive project,” she explained. The only films shown during the banquet will be the two that were submitted at the state competition.

While a majority of the students enter Dee’s classroom with the idea of simply having fun with a video camera, they learn much more about modern technology, teamwork and critiquing. “One student told me that I ruined her for watching movies.” As her students learn about special effects, lighting and sound quality, “they are also learning how to take pride in what they do.” Indeed, there is no business like show business. **NOW**

*Editor’s Note: For more information about attending the film banquet, contact Dee at [mccode@mansfieldisd.org](mailto:mccode@mansfieldisd.org). All proceeds go to the media tech program.*

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Tina Williams and Janie Rountree, top left, can be seen working the front desk at Mansfield High School. Ribbon cuttings were held at: ADP-Derrick Fleming, top right and Discover Historic Mansfield LLC, bottom right. The Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, bottom left, recently named its Advisory Board. Sixteen-month-old Logan, second row right, shot and scored at the Mansfield Activity Center's Toddler Time.





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Tax Assessor-Collector Betsy Price, top left, took time out of her busy day to pose for a photograph. Students from Ben Barber Career and Technology Academy, top right, recently attended a film festival in Dallas. Andrea Barr and Julie Sondecker, bottom left, took a lunch break at the Daily Grind. Peggy, second row center, pushed her granddaughter on the swings at Serenity Park. Darla and her daughter, second row right, enjoyed a day at the park with friends. The staff at the Mansfield tax office, bottom right, keep the office running smoothly.



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Tessa Pierce is a Certified Public Accountant with over 14 years of experience in accounting and finance. She has worked for small and large publicly-held companies, as an auditor at Deloitte & Touche and as a VP of a multi-billion dollar private investment fund doing both capital management and financial reporting. Tessa has a BBA in accounting from the University of Oklahoma and an MBA in finance from Dallas Baptist University.

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# Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning



## IN THE KITCHEN WITH LYNN MUTTI

### BUTTER PECAN MOUSSE

- 3/4 cup pecan pieces
- 1 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup whipping cream, whipped

Combine pecan pieces and melted butter. Spread on baking sheet; bake 5 minutes at 350 F, or until toasted. Finely chop roasted pecans; set aside. Beat cream cheese at medium speed with a mixer until smooth. Add sugars and vanilla; beat well. Stir in pecans. Fold whipping cream into cheese mixture. Spoon or pipe into small serving dishes or shot glasses for a sweet shot!

### HOT CHEESECAKE

#### DOUGH:

- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 pkg. yeast
- 1/2 cup scalded milk
- 2 1/2 cups flour

- 1 cup margarine
- 3 egg yolks, beaten
- FILLING:**
- 4 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese
- 2 egg yolks, beaten
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract

Dissolve sugar and yeast in warm milk; set aside. Mix flour and margarine. Add yolks to milk mixture; pour into flour mixture. Mix well; divide into two parts. Roll out half; place in 11 x 13-inch pan. Combine filling ingredients; spread on top of dough. Roll out other half of dough; place on top of filling. Crimp edges together; let rise for one hour. Sprinkle top with sugar; bake for 30 to 35 minutes at 350 F. Cool slightly. Good served warm or cold.

### TWO SAUCE LASAGNA

- 15-oz. ricotta cheese
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated, divided
- 2 eggs
- 26-oz. jar marinara sauce
- 12 lasagna noodles, cooked, drained

While Lynn Mutti loves her career as a Keller Williams Realtor, both she and her husband, Mike, realized their true joy after moving into their new custom-built home with their daughter, Morgan, and two sons, Casey and Guthrie. “My daughter and I have spent hours cooking together in my dream kitchen,” Lynn said. “She is really taking an interest in cooking.”

Lynn claims to be a little “baking-challenged,” yet her cuisine preference leans toward Italian dishes. Her favorite cookbooks are the ones assembled by churches, schools and clubs, but her favorite recipes are ones passed down from her mother and her very talented friends. “I love pot-luck meals,” she claimed. “I will always hunt down the chef of a favorite [dish] and do whatever is necessary to obtain the recipe.” **NOW**

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- 10-oz. frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained
- 1 lb. Italian sausage or ground beef, cooked, drained
- 16-oz. jar Alfredo sauce

In a large bowl, combine ricotta, mozzarella, 2 Tbsp. Parmesan and eggs; mix well. In a 13 x 9-inch baking dish, spread 1 cup marinara sauce; layer 4 lasagna noodles over sauce. Top with half each of cheese mixture, spinach, marinara and meat; repeat layers. Top with 4 remaining lasagna noodles; spread Alfredo sauce evenly over top. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan; cover. Bake for 40 minutes at 350 F. Uncover and bake 15 minutes longer, or until bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

### WARM ANTIPASTO SANDWICHES

- 1 freshly baked soft loaf French bread
- 3 Tbsp. Italian dressing
- 9 oz. turkey, thinly sliced
- 9 oz. ham, thinly sliced
- 9 oz. salami, thinly sliced
- 4 thin slices red onion, separated into rings
- 1/2 cup bottled roasted red peppers, drained, sliced
- 1/4 cup black olives, chopped

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2 tsp. dried basil  
2 cups mozzarella cheese or Italian cheese blend, shredded

Preheat oven to 425 F. Slice bread loaf in half lengthwise. Pull out inner bread crumbs from top, being careful not to poke a hole in top crust. Brush inner surface with Italian dressing. Layer meats, onion, peppers, olives and basil on bottom half. Press cheese into hollowed top of loaf; close sandwich. Wrap with heavy duty aluminum foil. (Sandwich can be refrigerated up to 24 hours. Add 5 minutes to baking time if cold.) Place foil-wrapped sandwich on baking sheet; bake 20 minutes. Slice and serve.

### TIMBALLO WITH CHEESE SAUCE

1/4 cup butter, melted  
1/4 cup white flour  
1/2 tsp. salt  
2 cups milk  
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated  
1/4 cup and 1 Tbsp. bread crumbs  
1 lb. spaghetti noodles, broken in half, boiled to *al dente*, drained  
1 lb. mild breakfast sausage, cooked, drained  
4-oz. mushrooms, sliced, drained  
3 Tbsp. yellow onion, grated  
2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped  
1/2 tsp. salt  
2 eggs, beaten  
1/4 tsp. pepper  
1 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese, grated  
1/4 lb. mozzarella cheese, shredded

Combine butter, flour, salt and milk; whisk until thickened. Add Parmesan. Spray 10-inch spring form pan with non-stick cooking spray; sprinkle bottom of pan with 1/4 cup bread crumbs. In a large bowl, toss together spaghetti, sausage, mushrooms, onion, parsley, salt, eggs, pepper and Parmesan. Place half of spaghetti mixture in pan; sprinkle with half mozzarella. Add remaining spaghetti mixture; top with remaining mozzarella. Top with sprinkled bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese. Bake for 1 1/2 hours at 350 F. Let stand 10 minutes before slicing into pie-shaped pieces. Can be made ahead and refrigerated until ready to bake.

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1 qt. burgundy or port wine  
1 1/2 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce  
1 tsp. dill weed  
1 tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. garlic powder  
3 cubes beef bouillon  
3 cubes chicken bouillon  
3 cubes vegetable bouillon

In a large kettle, combine all ingredients. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 5-6 hours. Remove cover; continue cooking until liquid just covers mushrooms, 3-5 hours. Can be frozen and served later, just bring to a boil. Serve hot with toothpicks.



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# Think Fast!

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

The month of May is designated for stroke awareness. It is a great time to focus on another aspect of your health. Throughout the month, various agencies, groups and medical personnel will endeavor to influence your awareness of the danger of having a stroke and inform you on how to recognize if you or someone else is having a stroke. Information will be available about how to become involved in your community and pass the word on to others.

There exist ample reasons why increased knowledge about strokes is important. As the third-leading cause of death and the number one reason for disability, the numbers are disturbing enough to warrant concern. A brief look at the breakdown of the numbers is even more alarming. More women die from stroke than breast cancer. African-Americans have double the risk of having a stroke than do Caucasians. Also, compared with Caucasians, the strokes suffered by African-Americans tend to be far more disabling.

Strokes are so dangerous due to what occurs when a stroke takes place. When a blood vessel to the brain becomes damaged for any reason, and blood flow is disrupted, cells in

that area of the brain start to die and brain damage results. Whatever area of the brain is affected, those abilities will be severely compromised or lost. The earlier treatment is received for a stroke, the better. If medication is received within a three-hour window, you can diminish damage to those areas of the brain affected and improve chances for survival. One of the slogans used by the National Stroke Association to help educate the public is Act F.A.S.T., which stands for face, arms, speech and time. If a stroke is suspected, take a close look and determine if one side of the face is drooping. Determine if there is any weakness in the arms. Is speech difficult; is there any slurring of the words? Time is crucial.

If any of these symptoms are present, call 9-1-1.

Because the effects of having a stroke are so debilitating, and an option is available for diminishing many of those effects, it is critical for the public to have the correct information, hence, the reason for May being Stroke Awareness Month. You might notice bulletin boards in schools and health care facilities all raising the awareness of strokes.

Eighty percent of all strokes are preventable. Watching your diet, cholesterol and weight are a few steps you can take to avoid a stroke. Take advantage of this month to increase your knowledge and your chances of surviving a stroke. **NOW**



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



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# Friend or Foe?

— By Nancy Fenton

Sometimes it is hard to know if the creepy crawlers in the soil and on our plants are good guys or bad guys. The ladybugs and earthworms we all know about, but what about those little bitty worms called nematodes in the soil? The ones that grow in lumps on the roots of tomatoes are definitely harmful, hence the reason we move the planting place for tomatoes every year to a different site in the garden to reduce the risk of infecting the new plants! There are some beneficial nematodes, though, that crunch down on insect larva for food, reducing or eliminating that particular insect problem. I am trying one called *Steinernema carpocapsae* (S.C.) this year to put a dent in my flea population! There are several kinds of nematodes that like fleas of all sizes. Nematodes are a bit

small with thousands of them in one tablespoon of soil.

The S.C. nematodes are not limited to any climate or soil type. As long as the soil is moist enough to grow grass, they will eat the flea in the pre-adult, pupa and larval stages. (That is about 95 percent of the flea population!) They sneak up on the fleas, jump them and release bacteria that kill the fleas within 48 hours — even the dormant ones. It is extremely important to get a quick kill because each lady flea that grows to maturity has the potential of bearing up to 60 plus eggs a day! The nematodes are safe to have around people and animals and have been recognized as a biological control for many years. Of course, they can only be used outside and are a bit hard to find, but a flea free outside is good!

May is the time for our other good insects, the tricogramma wasps, to be released. These little wasps love to destroy bugs on our pecan trees and are not aggressive toward us! Most nurseries and feed stores have them in funny looking little black strips that hatch right on your tree! The timing has to be right: now in May and again in July. Try it. You may never go back to the chemical poisons again! **NOW**

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# May 2009 Community Calendar

**Monday-Friday**

Young At Heart (for residents ages 55 plus) meeting: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Mansfield Activities Center. (817) 453-5420, ext. 2227.

**First and Third Mondays**

Planning and Zoning Development Commission meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

**First and Third Tuesdays**

Training Academy for Dental Assistants' free informational session: 5:30 p.m. (972) 842-2999.

**Every Friday**

Bingo: 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Mansfield Activities Center. Mansfield Public Chess Club: 4:00-6:00 p.m., Mansfield Public Library.

Mansfield Kiwanis Club meeting: 6:45 a.m., Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, 2700 East Broad St. (817) 473-9886.

**Every Saturday**

Thinking about getting a pet? Check out the City of Mansfield Animal Control. Saturdays: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Weekday hours: 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**May 2**

Mansfield Fire Department free CPR classes: 8:00 a.m., Station 3, 3100 E. Broad St. Class size limited to 20 people. Must register in advance. Contact Training Lieutenant Steve Gutierrez at (817) 804-5772.

**May 4, 11 and 18**

Basic line dancing for seniors: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Mansfield Activities Center.

Small business counseling, provided by SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives): 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Chamber offices, 114 North Main St. (817) 473-0507.

**May 5, 19 and 26**

Bouncing Babies story time for infants to 24 months: 10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

**May 6, 20 and 27**

My Own Story Time for ages 3 to 5 years: 10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

**May 7**

ABWA – Empowering Women Express Network monthly meeting: 5:45 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle, Midlothian. Please RSVP to Daphne Brewer at (972) 723-6551. [www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org](http://www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org).

**May 7, 21 and 28**

Toddler Story Time for 2-year-olds: 11:00-11:30 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

**May 8**

4-Man Scratch Scramble Golf Challenge, benefiting the Maypearl Education Foundation: Waxahachie Country Club. Registration: 11:00 a.m. Shotgun start: 1:00 p.m. For information, call Thomas Pieper at (972) 880-2001 or Clint

Bittick at (972) 937-9055.

**May 11**

Memorial Day observed – city offices closed

City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

**May 12**

In celebration of Children's Book Week, the Storytime Theater will present *The Little Red Hen* at 6:30 p.m., Mansfield Public Library.

**May 19**

Mansfield Economic Development Commission meeting: 6:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

Adult book club: 6:30 p.m., Mansfield Public Library. This month's discussion: *Digging to America* by Anne Tyler. Mansfield Park Facilities Development Corp. meeting: 7:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

**June 6**

Mid-Way Regional Airport Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-In: 8:00-11:00 a.m. Breakfast tickets: \$6; one child under 8 eats free with paid adult ticket. Classic airplanes and fighters, plane rides, remote control model airplanes, Classic Swing Band and more. For more information, call Tammy at (972) 923-0080.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

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