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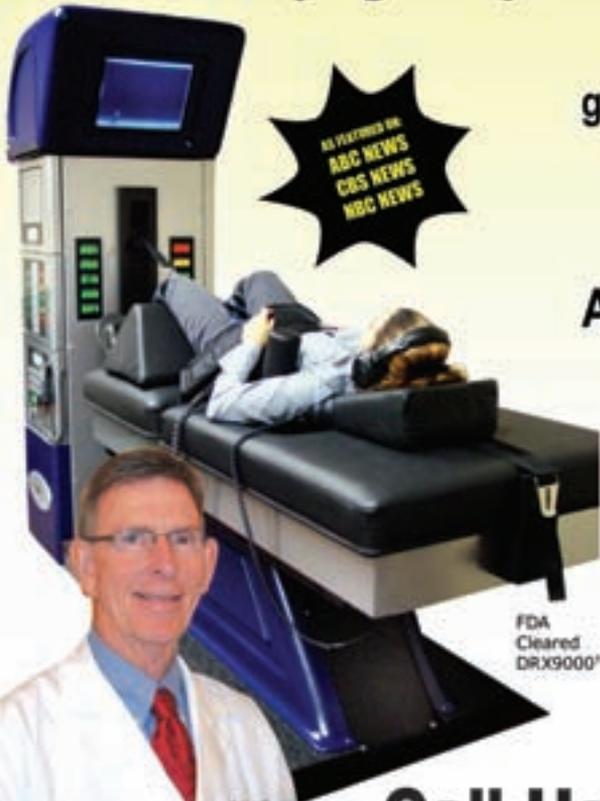
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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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MAGAZINE

Editor's Note

Hello, Waxahachie!

The seasonal change from spring to summer brings many exciting events to the Waxahachie area — from the Paint Historic Waxahachie art sale and exhibition to the annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-In and the DFW Summer Balloon Classic. Last year, I was lucky enough to experience the hot air balloon extravaganza firsthand. As one who is deathly afraid of heights, I debated with myself for a very long time before I jumped into the basket and took flight with my female pilot to actually conquer a fear.

The weekend event begins Friday evening, June 19, and comes to a high-flying end on Sunday evening, June 21. I encourage you to hop in the car, drive out to Mid-Way Airport and make some family memories.

Sandra McIntosh
WaxahachieNOW Editor



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Balloonists' Prayer

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You have flown so high and so well,
that God has joined you in your laughter,
and set you gently back again
into the loving arms of Mother Earth.

One

With the Wind

— By Sandra McIntosh

In a single moment nearly 30 years ago, Debby Standefer saw her first hot air balloon. “I fell instantly in love,” she said, as she fondly remembered that day so long ago in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Three years passed before Debby was able to actually take her first flight. During that period of time, she learned all she could by helping “crew” for other balloonists and by attending as many balloon shows as she could. “There is no feeling of movement,” she said, recalling her first ride during a small balloon festival held in Colorado Springs. “You and the balloon become one with the wind.”

In 1985, Debby moved to Texas and started saving her money. She wanted a balloon she could call her own. In 1988, she began taking flying lessons and in 1989, Debby earned her pilot's license.

“I also bought my first balloon that same year,” she smiled. “I named it *Banana Split* because it was bright yellow with rainbow chevrons.” Debby explained further the reason why most pilots name their balloons. “That way when you see someone up flying,” she noted, “you know who they are. Balloonists are like one big happy family.”

On January 24, 2007, when Debby married Wayne, she sold her first beloved balloon. “His preference is a two-burner, four-sided balloon,” she said, noting *Banana Split* was a three-sided, one-burner balloon. Rather than argue the point, she sold her first one and now is the co-owner of 18 balloons. “Wayne got involved with balloons in the mid '90s,” Debby stated. “He does it as a

business, and I do it because it's my passion. You either love it or you don't.”

Over the years, Debby has met and befriended many balloon pilots. Some, like her, enjoy the sport for the anticipation and relaxation it provides as the balloon glides through the air, while others are known as the NASCAR drivers of the sport. “They are the very competitive balloonists,” she said. “The average balloon ascends at about 200 feet per minute. The competitive balloons will travel up to 800 feet per minute.” Surprisingly enough, there is no steering to the balloons. Sometimes, the pilot will take a ride straight up and straight back down, while others have mastered the art of “working with the wind.”

“Floaters are those who fly around

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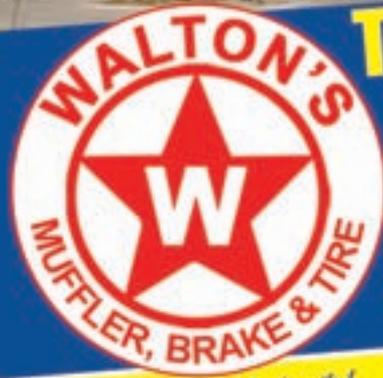
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and land wherever the wind takes them,” Debby noted. “Flyers are pilots that work the wind to their advantage.”

As aforementioned, balloons come in all shapes and sizes, as do the baskets. Balloons used simply for flying are generally 77,000 cubic feet. “They can hold up to 77,000 basketballs,” she added, providing a visual which most individuals can relate to. “The balloon is up to seven stories tall. The basket on the average balloon will carry a pilot and two extra people.” The competitive balloons — smaller in size — are 56,000 cubic feet and their shape



resembles a football. “They are able to go up and come down faster because of their pointed shape,” Debby explained. “That’s also why they are so good for competitions.” The big-ride balloons can easily hold up to eight people. They range in size from 140,000 to 160,000 cubic feet and can be up to 10 stories tall. “They have a much bigger envelope, or opening, at the top of the balloon,” Debby added. “A bigger envelope allows for more weight to be carried.”

The science behind a hot air balloon may seem difficult, but in reality is a simple concept. To get the balloon to “stand up,” the air in the balloon must be the same temperature as the outside

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air surrounding the balloon. To lift off, the air inside the balloon must be hotter than the outside air. "To go higher, the pilot hits the burner, adding more hot air to the balloon," Debby said. "As you continue to fly, the pilot will hit the burner when needed to keep the balloon at the altitude they desire. Allowing the air in the balloon to cool off brings the balloon to a lower altitude level."

Pilots will pull what is known as the vent cord to cool the air. "The vent cord opens the parachute top, allowing the cooler outside air into the balloon," Debby said. "This automatically decreases the balloon's altitude. You can decrease slowly or rapidly; it all depends on the length of time the pilot pulls on the vent cord. To land, you must pull on the vent cord constantly."

Last year, Debby had an idea for a local balloon festival — the Dallas/Fort Worth Summer Balloon Classic — held at Mid-Way Airport off Highway 287 between Waxahachie and Midlothian. "I had to go out and get the sponsorships needed for an event of this magnitude so admittance to the event would be free. The only thing spectators paid for was parking," she said. "We are in the final planning stages of the Second Annual Dallas/Fort Worth Summer Balloon Classic, which will be held later this month from June 19-21." This year's competitive event, once again sanctioned by the Balloon Federation of America, promises to be bigger and better than last year's event. Some balloonists will come to compete,

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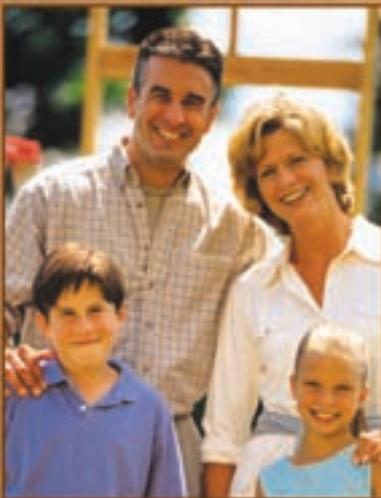
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while others will come to fly and entertain the massive crowds that will be on hand for the balloons, as well as the helicopters, gliders, airplanes, sky divers, powered parachutes, radio-controlled aircraft and Commemorative Air Force air show.

Debby's three main goals for bringing an idea to fruition are simple. "Balloon festivals cross all demographics. The idea was great for the airport and it also promotes the [local] area, while

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bringing people together," she explained. "Secondly, it brings revenue into the local area and last but not least, it's a wonderful event for pilots, spectators and local nonprofit organizations." Several nonprofits Debby mentioned from last year's event included the ECSPCA, the Lions Club, the Civil Air Patrol and the Waxahachie Police Department Explorers.

In Texas, the most ideal times to fly are at sunrise and dusk. The sights include wildlife, gorgeous sunrises and unforgettable sunsets. Debby has so many stories to share: from a swarm of bumblebees to the artistry needed when taking part in "splash and dash" events. Her love for the wild blue yonder has not wavered. "Ballooning still holds the same magic for me," she admitted. "Every ride is different, but the peacefulness is the same. You are literally in God's hands. You are one with nature and one with the wind." **WXXV**

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Making Dreams Reality

— By Jaime Ruark

Waco, but grew up in Corsicana, and my mother is still there. My father was raised in Waxahachie. My grandmother's house is actually the one catty-corner to ours now. We always knew we'd come back here; we both had a warm spot in our hearts for Waxahachie."

The Chapmans had an idea about the house they wanted. "We wanted an old home to redo. We wanted it to be brick and one-story, and we wanted it to be on Marvin or Main or Sycamore — one of the old streets in town," Jerry remembered. The couple had a difficult time finding a house to match the dream house in their heads, so they decided to be proactive and make their dreams a

When Jerry and Shirley Chapman decided it was time to retire, they knew they wanted to settle in Waxahachie. Not only did their son live close by in Dallas, but they also both had ties and memories of growing up in the area. "Shirley was born in Waxahachie and grew up in Ferris. Her mother still lives in Ferris," Jerry said. "I was born in



At Home With Jerry and Shirley Chapman





reality. “We picked out five or six houses we liked, and I wrote letters to the owners asking if they would want to sell,” Jerry smiled at his unusual tactic.

The response to Jerry’s letters was both surprising and exciting. “When we’d drive around town looking at houses, we’d park under the shade trees just across the street from this house to talk things out. I used to play here when I was a little boy. My dad’s best friend lived here. It was the Eastham’s house then,” he recalled. “So, of course,



this was one of the letters I wrote, and the people who owned the house ended up writing me back. Turns out they had been thinking of selling.”

The buying process was completed in a matter of weeks, and the remodeling of the house from Jerry’s childhood began. “We didn’t change anything on the outside because we have the historic marker,” Shirley said. “We bought the house a little over two years ago, in April, but because of the remodeling, we didn’t move in until the following October.” While the inside was remodeled, the

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Chapmans were nomads, vacationing in Europe for a month and staying in a few of the local downtown inns, including the Rogers Hotel. "They actually closed the hotel for remodeling while we were there. We were the only guests," Jerry recalled. "We were remodeling; they were remodeling. They suggested we leave, but we told them we didn't care because we were working on our house all day, and we just wanted somewhere to come home to!"

Historic homes can require a lot of

work and upkeep, but the Chapmans were happy to find the 2,600-square-foot house, built in 1923, needed few repairs. Mortar on the chimneys was crumbling, so a mason was hired to re-brick them and remove one interior chimney, but little restoration was needed. "The house was really in good shape. The changes we made were really all just our personal style. We wanted a bigger kitchen, bookcases, a powder room and more modern bathrooms," Shirley remarked. "We changed quite a bit on

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the inside,” Jerry added. “We wanted to see all the woodwork and windows. We made it lighter and brighter.”

The three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath home is surrounded by greenery and flowers. The Chapmans enjoy relaxing on the porch, accessible from three different front doors, that curls around the side of the house. “I did all three flowerbeds myself,” Jerry said proudly. Shirley laughed and added, “Well, he had some help. Rollins did our landscaping, planting all the crape myrtle trees and all the trees along the outside. We still have some work to do.”

Most of the interior walls of the home are painted a light gray, set off by the bright white of the intricate wood trim. “The man who built this house, Bertram C. Hill, was an architect, so there’s a lot of artistry in the woodwork,” Jerry noted. The flooring is original wood, with gorgeous rugs in many rooms. Numerous windows with plantation shutters

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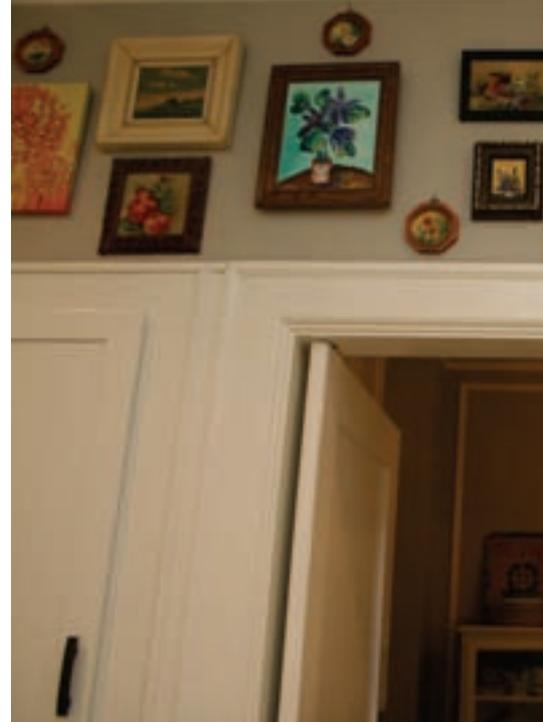
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let in the sun, and French doors give the front rooms the open, airy feeling Shirley loves. "I guess in the old days, they'd close off rooms to keep the heat in, but we've never closed them," Jerry said. "The house is built up four or five feet off the ground, so we can open the windows and get a pretty good breeze in the summertime."

The front door opens to a den on the right and a front sitting room to the left, both with Rookwood tile fireplaces. The sitting room houses many antiques; a hutch displays a hand-painted, gilt-edged china set and the painting of a winter scene above the mantle was done by Jerry's grandmother. "A lot of our antiques were Jerry's grandmother's, so some of the things we have were in the house across the street when Jerry was a little boy," Shirley said. "Many of the paintings we have throughout the house were done by his grandmother."

The formal dining room is lit by a gorgeous crystal chandelier, original to the house. Antique light fixtures and chandeliers, purchased in antique shops or estate sales are found in almost every room. "My dad had four sisters, one of them named Rosa Lee, so we call a lot of stuff by that name," Jerry explained, pointing out a display of cranberry-colored glasses. "She liked red; it was her favorite, so all the stuff you see in the house that's red was hers."

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A room, dedicated to a particular collection of Shirley's, holds cabinets filled with an endless supply of dishes. "We call this room the Dish Room. When we moved from Memphis, the movers said they'd never moved so many dishes," Jerry laughed. Shirley's dish collection continues into the kitchen, where her light and bright walls are accented by yellow, aqua, navy and red



Fiestaware. Chairs painted in teal and navy give 'pops' of color, and one wall is decorated with small, brightly painted, framed canvases of sunflowers, poppies and roses.

The Chapmans plan to include their home on the Gingerbread Trail Home Tour now that their remodeling is complete. With a smile, Jerry said, "This house has history and character, and it's never been on the Trail or opened to the public. People are anxious to see it, and we're anxious to show it off." **NOW**

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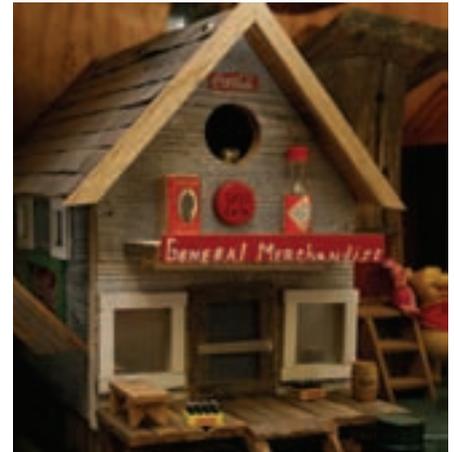
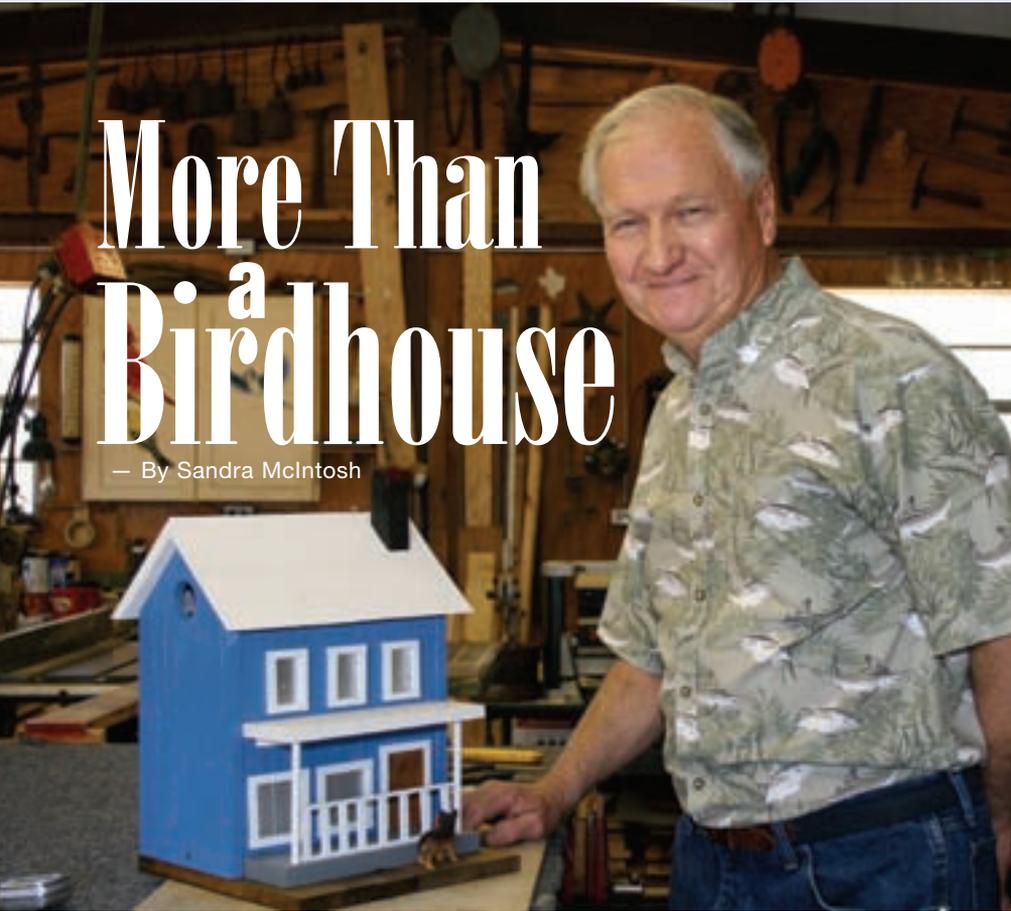
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More Than a Birdhouse

— By Sandra McIntosh



What do expired license plates, outdated doorknobs, rusty horseshoes and pieces of a picket fence have in common? When mixed with a vivid imagination, wood glue and carpentry nails, they become one-of-a-kind, original birdhouses designed and built by Ken Vess. “I’ve only been building the birdhouses for the last two years,” he said, as he opened the door to the part of the garage, that houses his birdhouses. “I’ve probably made at least 300 in that length of time, and I’ve never sold a single one. People have tried to buy them, but I just won’t sell them.”

The fact that he gives them away is what makes Ken’s birdhouses special to those lucky enough to be on the receiving end. “I’ve probably given 200 away, and I’m proud to say that no two are exactly alike,” he added. “The pleasure comes from trying to decide how to make each one different and unique.”

He also finds great pleasure in the accolades he has received since beginning the hobby, which quickly became a passion for him.

He and his wife, Durene, have always loved looking at woodworking and home improvement magazines. One day, Durene ordered a birdhouse kit from one of these magazines and presented it to Ken as soon as it arrived. “It was plain, but very nice,” she noted, as she pointed to the one that started it all. “The first one he built and gave away went to my sister. It was a barn with a barnyard theme.”

Before Ken retired, he used to build small office buildings, commercial buildings and houses. His partners and contractors were always available to help him when a challenge arose. Any challenges Ken faces with his birdhouses fall solely on him. The birdhouses he constructs in his shop these days are so

much more than houses with four walls, a hole and a perch. They are detailed masterpieces, which take a great deal of thought and preparation before Ken considers them complete. “Once the challenges are met,” he said, “I feel rewarded, because I figured the problem out all by myself.”

Some of Ken’s birdhouses are made from recycled wood, while others start out as shipping crates, old barn wood and small sections of fencing material. Ken has even used an existing wagon to fashion a birdhouse. The early houses boasted of galvanized copper roofs, each shingle cut and attached individually. Roofs on the current birdhouses include license plates and full sheets of metal or copper, while details include antique doorknobs, well-worn horseshoes and metal hinges. Some are glued and some are hammered. Several on display have workable lights. All Ken has to

do is “flip a switch.”

Always the perfectionist, Ken may be his worst critic, but Durene is her husband’s biggest fan. “There’s something special about each of the birdhouses,” she said. “I can always find at least one thing I like about every one of them.” The post office birdhouses are assembled using actual mailboxes. They come with

The birdhouses he constructs in his shop these days are so much more than houses with four walls, a hole and a perch.

their very own combinations. The birdhouses reminiscent of the old Gulf Filling Station from the days of Andy Griffith and the ones that have a country jail theme, with metal bars over the windows, bring the past to life. Ken, always thinking of his grandchildren, also constructed a Winnie the Pooh house using toys considered unusable. His barn- and country store-themed houses include small bales of hay and horses tied to posts. Some take on the look of English cottages, fully equipped with two stories and rabbits in the yard. The watermelon houses represent summer, while the Texas Flag evokes pride and patriotism in one’s state of origin. One birdhouse even has a pond in the front yard area. “The animals and other items I use to decorate the birdhouses are purchased from local stores and Canton’s First Monday Trade Days,” he said. “All my postal cars and vehicles are special ordered.”

Ken can cut the wood for his birdhouses with “his eyes closed,” but the painting is another thing altogether. “Painting is definitely the hardest part of the process,” he admitted, “especially when the houses are more than one

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color. You have to stop working on one and start on another while the paint is drying.” Each birdhouse takes anywhere from six to eight hours to complete, from start to finish. Those made from simple barn wood take half the time.

Ken finds the recipients of his birdhouses in the most unique way. “I



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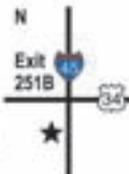
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read about them in the local media,” he said. “I learn about them through what I read and then I design a birdhouse around what I learn.” Several people in Waxahachie have at least one of Ken’s birdhouses, if not two or three. He takes great pride in being able to donate to area churches, fire departments and nonprofit organizations for their silent auctions and fundraisers. He has recently expanded his craft to include handmade crosses and wall hangings. Two signs — “Organize for Success” and “Don’t Let Yesterday Cloud Today” — hang in his workshop, and what a workshop Ken enjoys! Does he actually need all the tools that he has available to build his birdhouses? “Probably not,” he smiled, “but don’t tell my wife!” **NOW**

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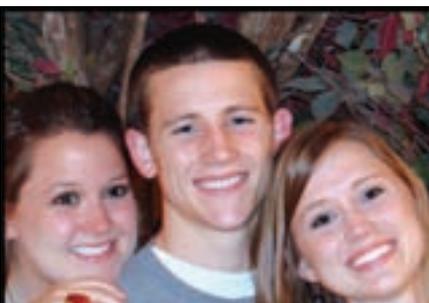
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— By Sandra McIntosh

The Waxahachie High School (WHS) swim team will take to the water for practice when all area public pools close down after a long, hot summer. As Labor Day comes and goes, high school students, both male and female, will stand ready at the edge of the YMCA pool. These athletes will dive in at the sound of Tamra Pruitt's whistle as she announces the start of her third season as the coach of the WHS swim team. "I read about the need for a swim coach through the campus e-mail," Tamra said, also mentioning she has taught eighth-grade English and the gifted and talented program for the past eight years in the Waxahachie Independent School District (WISD). "I thought about it for a day or two before telling myself, 'I can do this.'"

As the wife of an agriculture teacher within Ellis County, Tamra would spend her afternoons waiting on her husband to finish his duties in the classroom. After remembering the years her father coached the summer swim



league in Dallas and also seeing her husband coach, Tamra thought she had enough experience to at least apply for the position. "I called Sandy Faussett, the girls' athletic director," Tamra said. "I made it a point to tell her about my

limited experience as a coach, but I was also sure to mention the fact that I'm motivated and disciplined."

The district needed a coach who would be dedicated to the swim team. Following a couple of impromptu meetings, Tamra was offered the position she has come to love. In her first two years, she has proven to be the coach they needed and so much more. "It's been difficult to keep a coach for the swim team," she stated, "mainly because we have no indoor pool in which to practice." The year before Tamra agreed to the challenge, the swim team was comprised of five members. The first year she coached, 15 students tried out for the team, but even fewer made it to the end of the season. Last year, the numbers grew to 23 and the team's overall success in district and regional competitions doubled. "Michael Phelps' success at the Olympics may



have helped the program,” Tamra commented. “Or it could be that these high school students are the same students I taught back in eighth grade.”

Daily after-school practice for the swim season begins in September; athletes



Blake Wright prepares to dive into the pool during swim practice.

work on the backstroke, the breaststroke, the butterfly and the freestyle. There are 22 competitive events for swimmers, which originate with these four basic strokes. “They vary, based on length and number of laps, as well as combinations of the four,” Tamra added. The season ends for the swim team in mid- to late-February, but only if the team is conditioned and disciplined enough to make it to the regional meet. “Athletes only attend seven meets, with the main meet being district. It’s the one in February we are constantly working toward,” she explained. “If a swimmer, whether as an individual or a relay team, ends up in the top six at the district meet, they automatically get to compete at regionals.”

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and qualified for the regional meet. “Kristi Clem qualified in two individual events and placed sixth in both events,” Tamra said. “The relay team took seventh place; while the boys’ team ended up in eighth place overall.” Tamra is so proud of the teamwork the athletes shared to earn these accolades. “To excel in the sport of swimming, they each need to be self-motivated and self-disciplined,” Tamra claimed. “As a coach, I can only push them so far. They have to want to push themselves to beat the best time to the wall.”

Tamra went on to say that the WHS swim team is probably the only team in Texas that practices in an outdoor pool in the dead of winter. “The pool is heated,” she said, “but the dedication these kids need to possess is amazing. The weather conditions are such that dedication is a must.” Practice times for the WHS team are probably shorter than most other schools, too, because they are constantly fighting the elements. “But the swimmers from Waxahachie always have the best tans,” she laughed.

Many of Tamra’s peers were surprised when she took the job. They did not see her functioning in the realm of swim coach. “Those that really know me, knew I’d coach with a competitive spirit,” Tamra said. “They also knew the kids and I would have fun while making the school proud.” The school district has been very supportive of the swim program and whatever it has needed. Tamra was quick to mention the support of a very special individual during last year’s regional meet. “WHS Principal David Nix drove all the way to Conroe to see the kids compete,” she said. “The kids were thrilled.”

Four members of the team graduated last May, but Tamra is very hopeful for the swim team this year. “I expect the athletes to work hard and be supportive of one another,” she said. “We should be very strong during the 2010 season.” **NOW**

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As a third-generation flooring expert and second-generation store owner, Richard has seen and done it all. “I’ve done every job imaginable,” he said. “I did what I had to do to get to the next level.” He and his father opened their first store in the Dallas area. Richard remembers going to work as a young man right out of high school. He took over as the sole owner of the Dallas store when his father retired seven years ago.

First Floors has been affiliated with Carpet One for 22 years. They enjoy a 1,000-store buying power through this partnership. First Floors Carpet One offers 10,000 styles, colors and textures of flooring, including all the biggest brand names in flooring. “Anything floor-related we can do,” Richard stated. “At one time, carpet was the standard. Hardwoods are

the leading sales now.” Hardwoods include pre-finished, custom, dust-free and authentic. “Hardwood is the only thing you can put on your floor to increase its value,” Richard added. “It’s an investment that pays great dividends.”

Customer service is key when it comes to operating a successful business. First Floors Carpet One was the first carpet store to offer a customer service department, which was totally separate from the installation department. First Floors Carpet One provides their exclusive “beautiful guarantee,” which states customers will love the way their new floor looks or it will be replaced for free! “We set ourselves apart by the customer service we provide,” Richard said, sure to mention that he will not personally do anything he would not sign his own name to.

The sales staff at First Floors Carpet One is made up of highly trained professionals, who can provide suggestions and solutions for every room in a customer’s home. Whether a customer knows exactly what they want or they come to the retail showroom undecided, the sales staff is always ready to help in any way they can. Regardless of their choice — carpet,

hardwood or linoleum — First Floors Carpet One will help their customers make a decision that is right for both the home and the homeowner.

First Floors Carpet One also prides itself in working closely with insurance companies on a wide variety of insurance claims. “We repair, replace and fix the damage the right way,” Richard said. “In this business, you have to.” They also offer excellent “no interest” programs with specific terms and conditions, which allow qualified customers the opportunity to purchase a new floor without the worry of paying any interest on their purchase.

Richard learned from his father, who had learned from his father. The experience of three generations of flooring experts means only one thing



— customer satisfaction guaranteed. “Our customers in Dallas and Waxahachie have been so good to our family,” he said, answering the question on why he does what he does. “We enjoy it. It’s just what we do!”

For more information on the offerings at First Floors Carpet One, customers are encouraged to call the office at (469) 517-8611. The staff will be more than happy to help in any way they can. **NOW**

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An Educated Investment

— By Danielle Parker

When it comes to education, Renee Ramsey, an academic advisor at Navarro College in Waxahachie, can be considered an expert. Yet, her expertise has never been for herself alone. Renee is taking the experience and knowledge she has gained in her life and is translating it daily to her students.

Renee, who is committed to educating herself and others, attended Texas A&M University for her bachelor's degree, Texas A&M University International for her master's degree and Utah State University for her doctorate course work. It was then time for her to share all her learning. "After I went to school in Utah, I taught for a while but didn't really enjoy teaching at the upper college level," Renee said. "I knew I liked the sociology field, and I knew I wanted to teach in a junior college setting."

Circumstances brought Renee back to Texas and, eventually, to Navarro College. "The stars were aligned just right, and I have now been here for five-and-a-half years," Renee said. "I was hired as a sociology professor, and a few weeks later, as a full-time academics advisor. I was teaching classes during the day and then staying late to work in the counseling department. So my first semester was a little hectic. Since that semester, I now teach mostly online and night classes."

Teaching is what Renee does, but it is academic counseling that she loves. Renee can recall when she first found her niche. "At Texas A&M, we had to make advising appointments way in advance," she said. "So I would help people in the dorms figure out degree plans and class schedules. It came kind of

natural to me. I made a list, while working on my bachelor's degree, of what I wanted to do, and on that list I wrote 'teach' and 'become an admissions counselor.' Somehow I knew this was the route I wanted to take."

Following the course Renee said was innate to her, she has stepped into her calling as an academic advisor at Navarro, helping students find where their career paths lead. "I help students select a major that fits and fully understand the course requirements for them to complete an associate's degree in that field," she explained. "Most of my job deals with students wanting to transfer to a four-year university when they are finished here, so I hope to ensure they have the proper classes and credits that will transfer to their major of choice. People come here for different reasons, but no matter what the case, I want to help them get to where they want to be."

With an open-door policy, Renee is easily accessible for students as they discover their future aspirations. Throughout this process, she has been able to see many of the goals they set fulfilled. "The most rewarding thing is to see them graduate," Renee said. "Every single graduation brings tears to my eyes. You see them when they come in their first year when they register and the road that leads them up until the big day, and it's pretty exciting. It makes it all worth it to see them walk across the stage."

Over the years, many of the advisor-student relationships have developed into lifelong friendships, according to Renee. "A lot of former students are now some of my best friends,"

Education **NOW**

she said. "I don't really know how it happens; I have just established a good connection with them." Through those connections she has seen a return on her simple investment of time and

“I just really like what I do”

encouragement. "Some people want to come back and update me," Renee said. "I have attended a few four-year graduations. I have remained pretty close to some of them. One in particular was an education major who had to push past a lot, and in the end, she has done really well. I saw her go from being a student here to having three kids and almost dropping out, to finishing her bachelor's degree, and today she is a teacher."

Learning has always been an important value to Renee. Educators influenced the development of her passion. "Education is something you always have with you; no one can ever take it away from you," she said. "I had a high school teacher who would always get me thinking about a major and careers. While getting my master's, it was the department head who encouraged me to apply for my doctoral studies."

As students share their goals, Renee believes she, too, can enable them to achieve short- and long-term ambitions. "You can see the impact we are making every day," she said. "I still look forward to their future successes, but we don't have to look in the long run to see it." Renee's desire is to guide her students to pick more than a major, so they, like her, can be passionate about their career choice. "I hope to retire here," she commented. "I'm not complacent; I just really like what I do. I don't know a lot of people that can say that." **NOW**

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Fire Chief David Hudgins, top left, decorated the registration table with "wild" animals. • Palmer High School Class of 1977 Alumni, top center, shared lunch at Catfish Plantation while making plans for an upcoming class reunion. • The award-winning WHS Jazz Combo, top right, provided the musical entertainment at the Partners in Education Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. • Montae Reagor, bottom left, accepted the Howard Eighth Grade campus volunteer award from Principal Robert Woodhouse, while Montae's mother, Laveeda Bell, looked on. • YMCA 4-year-old Wildcats Parker, Tucker, Nash and Cole, bottom center, headed out to one of their many soccer games. • Elizabeth Delbosque and Minnie Bradley, bottom right, put the final preparations on the buffet served at the PIE Volunteer Luncheon held at Southwestern Assemblies of God University.

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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH TRACEY PIM

KEY LIME PIE

- 2 10-oz. cans sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 3/4 cup Key lime juice
- 1 Tbsp. grated lime zest
- 1 prepared graham cracker crust, 9-inch

Preheat oven to 350 F. Combine condensed milk, sour cream, lime juice and lime zest. Mix well and pour into graham cracker crust. Bake in preheated oven for 5-10 minutes, until tiny pinhole bubbles burst on the surface of pie. Do not brown! Chill thoroughly before serving. Serve with lime wedges and whipped topping, if desired.

SHIRLEY TEMPLE CUPCAKES

- 16-oz. jar Maraschino cherries (no stems)
- 4 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 1/2 cups butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs

- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. fresh lime juice
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup reserved cherry juice

FROSTING:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup shortening
- 1/4 tsp. lime zest
- 1/4 tsp. lemon zest
- 2 lbs. powdered sugar
- 1/4 tsp. fresh lime juice
- 1/4 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 cup plus 1 Tbsp. Maraschino cherry juice
- 24 Maraschino cherries with stems
- drinking straws

Preheat oven to 325 F. Drain cherries, reserving juice for frosting. Cut cherries in half (if not using cherry halves already); dry cherries thoroughly. Sift flour and baking powder together. Coat cherries with a little of the dry mixture; set aside. In mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar; add eggs, one at a time, mixing well. Add vanilla, lemon and lime

Raising her three teenagers, Abby, Colton and Hannah Due, keeps Tracey Pim very busy. Being a supervisor for the Child Nutrition Department of Waxahachie ISD, plus teaching Texas Association of Child Nutrition certification classes and, occasionally, classes for Lighthouse for Learning gives her very little time for anything else. “I love to read but rarely find the time anymore,” she explained. “When I am not working, I am watching *Top Chef*, the Food Network or trying out a new recipe.”

Tara credits her mother for developing her desire to cook. “I have been cooking and baking since I was old enough to pull a chair up to the kitchen counter and help my mom,” she recalled. “My mother was always cooking wonderful, homemade meals for my father, brother, sister and myself. She is an awesome cook, baker and cake decorator.” **★☆☆**

juice; combine well. Add dry mix, milk and cherry juice alternately and beat until batter is smooth. Fill cupcake liners 1/2 full with batter; drop in cherries (approximately 4 in each cupcake). Fill the remainder of the cupcake liner with batter, almost to the top of liner. Bake for 25-28 minutes, until toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool completely on wire rack before icing. **FROSTING:** Cream butter and shortening until light and fluffy. Add lime and lemon zest, mix. Alternately add powdered sugar and fruit juices. Beat until smooth and creamy. Add more cherry juice, if needed, to reach desired consistency; frost cupcakes. If desired, pipe frosting onto cupcake with a large star decorating tip. Top each cupcake with a stemmed Maraschino cherry. For an additional fun decoration, cut drinking straws into thirds and push one straw piece into the top of each cupcake.

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- 1 6-oz. can medium, pitted black olives, drained



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Who's Cooking **NOW**

- 1 14.5-oz. can basil, garlic and oregano tomatoes
- 1 16-oz. bottle Kraft Sun Dried Tomato Vinaigrette Dressing & Marinade

Cook pasta according to package directions. Rinse under cool water and drain. Add pasta to a medium-sized bowl; mix in green olives, black olives and tomatoes. Add 3/4 bottle of dressing; toss. Cover; chill at least one hour or overnight. After chilling, the pasta will have absorbed the dressing, so just before serving, add desired amount of remaining dressing to coat pasta.

GARLIC-LIME CHICKEN

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 large onion, diced
- 4 chicken breasts, boneless, skinless salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 lime

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add minced garlic and diced onion. Season chicken breasts with salt and pepper to taste. Place chicken breasts in skillet. Brown chicken breasts, approximately 6 minutes on each side. Squeeze the juice of one lime over chicken; continue cooking until chicken is cooked through and tender 5-10 minutes.

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Is CD Laddering Right for You?

— By Adam Rope

With the recent volatility in the stock market, people are hesitant to put their entire nest egg into the market. Additionally, with the economy creating tight times for families, it's often necessary to make sure funds are available if and when we need them. For those investors who are either reluctant to jump head first into the market or those who may have a need for cash, the strategy of laddering Certificates of Deposit (CDs) may be appropriate.

CD laddering is the process of structuring your investment into CDs to take advantage of the higher rates afforded by longer-term time deposits, yet maintaining liquidity by arranging it so that equal portions of the invested money is available periodically. To accomplish this, you begin by buying numerous CDs with various maturities.

For instance, let's say you have \$25,000 to invest. Rather than investing the \$25,000 in one CD that matures at a designated time, by laddering CDs, you may choose to invest \$5,000 in each of five separate CDs. In this example, you would then purchase a 1-year, 2-year, 3-year, 4-year, and

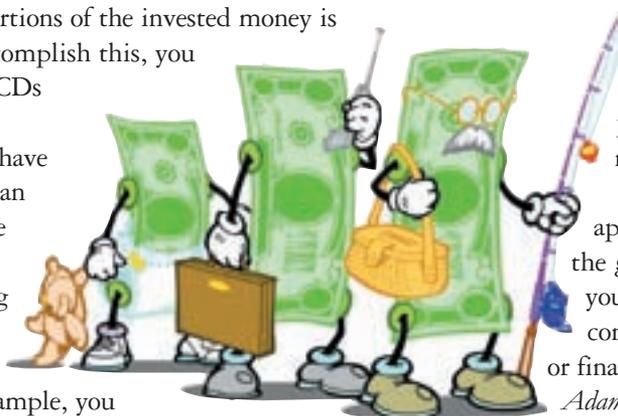
5-year CD in equal amounts of \$5,000. After one year, when your first CD matures, you would invest it in a new 5-year CD. Each year, a CD will expire and, if the funds are not needed, they will be reinvested in a new 5-year CD to take advantage of the higher interest rate typically offered by a 5-year CD as compared to the 1- or 2-year CDs.

This approach allows you the comfort of knowing that a CD will mature each year in case you need the money, yet still take advantage of the higher rates typically offered for longer maturities. Staggering your maturity dates also helps smooth out the volatility of the market.

If interest rates rise during the year, you will have money available to invest in a higher rate CD. Or, if rates fall, only a portion of your investment dollars will need to be reinvested at the lower rate.

CD laddering may be a strategy that's appropriate for your lifestyle. Plus, with the guaranteed interest rate offered on CDs, you will be able to plan your future with confidence. Talk with your insurance agent or financial expert for more information. **NOW**

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Scan It for Health

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

What is the big deal about osteoporosis anyway? Our TV shows are inundated with commercials of the latest and greatest medication to take for this problem. If you are female and over 50, your physician frequently encourages you to have a bone scan. Is it important to have a Bone Mineral Density Test? In a word, yes.

Osteoporosis means porous bones. Porous bones are less solid or less dense and become more fragile; therefore, they are more prone to fracture. This disease is a silent one in that it has no symptoms. Usually, you will not know if you have it until a bone breaks and a closer examination is made. Typically, as you grow older, your bones become weaker. Older females are more likely to get this disease than men are. Women also lose bone rapidly after menopause. Estrogen, in conjunction with other hormones and minerals, works to build bone. When a woman becomes post-menopausal, that building block is compromised and bones are at risk to thinning and breakage.

Other risk factors include your family history. If a member of your family suffers from this affliction, you are more

likely to get the disease. A sedentary lifestyle also increases your risk. Exercising places more stress on your bones, which sends a signal to them to increase bone mass. The more active you were as a child, the greater chance you have of building up strong bones, lessening your risk of developing osteoporosis. Your “bone bank” is off to a good start.

The importance of calcium and Vitamin D in your diet cannot be underestimated. Your body needs calcium for more functions than simply being a necessary ingredient for bones and teeth. When the calcium level in your blood drops, your body will take the calcium it needs from bones. As your diet supplies additional calcium, the proper amount is restored to the bones. Most adults and teenagers do not get the daily requirement of calcium from their diet, so a calcium supplement is necessary. Vitamin D aids with the absorption of calcium and helps to regulate the amount of calcium in your blood. Vitamin D can be obtained through supplements, diet or exposure to at least 10 minutes of sunlight every day.

Becoming stronger is all up to you. With appropriate exercise, watching your weight, a diet rich in calcium or supplements, and foods or supplements fortified with Vitamin D, osteoporosis is a disease you can live with. Your physician will help you determine how much calcium and Vitamin D you need and whether you need additional medication. Get your Bone Mineral Density Test! **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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How Much is Too Much?

— By Nancy Fenton

The Ellis County Master Gardeners ran a test in July and August of 2008 on several different types and depths of mulch. The long and short of it was that when compared to non-mulched flowerbeds, any amount of mulch (from 2 to 6 inches) did a reasonable job of reducing the soil temperature — sometimes as much as 28 degrees. The organic mulches, such as chipped tree limbs, bark, etc. have an added advantage of becoming fertilizer as the year moves on. Think of it like covering a bucket of water with a lid to slow evaporation. The shade provided by the mulch also cools the root zone so you can avoid the “baked root syndrome” of several years ago.

A friend asked me recently if you could put too much mulch on your beds. Of course you can. It really is a question of moderation. Two to 6 inches of mulch is a good range to shoot for. The test mentioned above had five 8-foot-by-8-foot beds with no mulch, 2 inches

of mulch, 4 inches of mulch, 6 inches of chipped tree trimmings and one with 4 inches of rock. Comparing the temperature of the bed with no mulch to any of the others was an eye-opener. All of the mulched beds registered from 10 to 28 degrees cooler during the hotter parts of the day. The beds with 4 to 6 inches

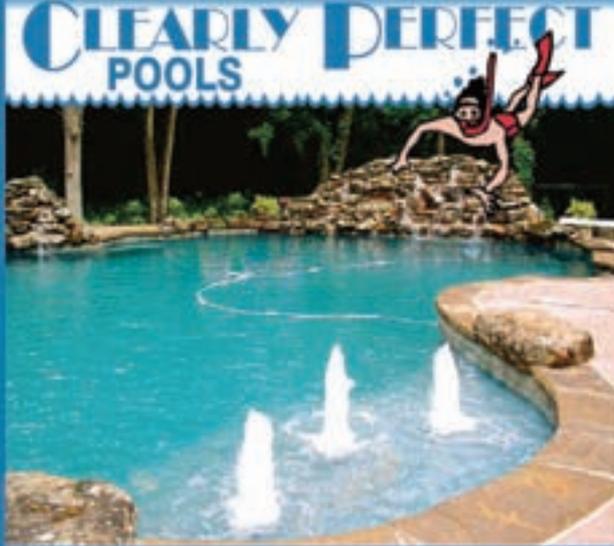
of mulch had the added benefit of blocking lots and lots of weeds and grass. Perennials will come up through the mulch, so there is no need to clean out all that good organic stuff in the spring. New, little plants can have the mulch pulled back until they grow tall enough to peek over the top; then move the mulch back in close to the root base.

Whatever mulch you use, it works. Just put it on thick or put it on thin and you are good to go. Fewer weeds, fewer bugs and lower water usage — what more could you ask? **NOW**



Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

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June 2009 Community Calendar

June 5

The Gingerbread Classic Golf Tournament will be held at the Old Brickyard Golf Course, located at 605 North I-45 in Ferris. Lunch will begin at 11:00 a.m. with a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. \$110 per player. For more information, call (972) 937-2390.

June 6

Four homes and one local business will welcome visitors to the annual Gingerbread Trails Historic Home Tour from 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. For more information or to get trail addresses, call (972) 937-0681.

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-In will be held from 8:00-11:00 a.m. at Mid-Way Regional Airport. Breakfast tickets are \$6. One child under the age of 8 eats free with a paid adult ticket. The event and parking are free to the public. For more information, contact Tammy Bowen at (972) 923-0080.

June 6 and 7

Paint Historic Waxahachie will culminate with an art sale and exhibition at the Chautauqua Auditorium, located at Getzendaner Park, from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Common Threads Quilting, in conjunction with the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce and the Waxahachie Downtown Merchants Association, will present Covering Waxahachie in Color during Gingerbread Trail Weekend. There will be a non-judged quilt show around the courthouse square. For information on soliciting entries for the show and to secure an entry form, call (972) 935-0510 or e-mail commonthreads@sbcglobal.net.

Trade Days of Waxahachie Grand Opening. Drawings for prizes will be held all weekend. For more information, contact Les Clemons at (972) 617-8156.

June 12-14

4th Annual North Texas Lakes Rally Ray Guns and Scooter Fun will be held at Spring Park at Lake Waxahachie. There will be camping, live music, barbecue, refreshments, organized rides and more. Call (214) 532-5795 for more information.

June 19-21

DFW Summer Balloon Classic, an Aviation Extravaganza, will be held at Mid-Way Regional

Airport in Midlothian. Admission is free. Parking is \$10. The event will feature 40 magnificent hot air balloons. Five mass ascensions will be followed by top ranked competitors flying their balloons in a challenging competition. "Lite the Nite" balloon glow will be held at sunset on Saturday evening. Aviation Extravaganza during the day features airplanes, helicopters, military aircraft, gliders, skydivers, powered parachutes, RC aircraft and more in-flight and static displays. Some flights available to the public. Attractions include exhibits, food, arts and crafts and areas for the children. For more information, visit www.summerballoonclassic.com.

June 27

23rd Annual Cow Creek Classic Bike Ride will be held at the Waxahachie Ninth Grade Academy. For more information, call (972) 937-2390.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.

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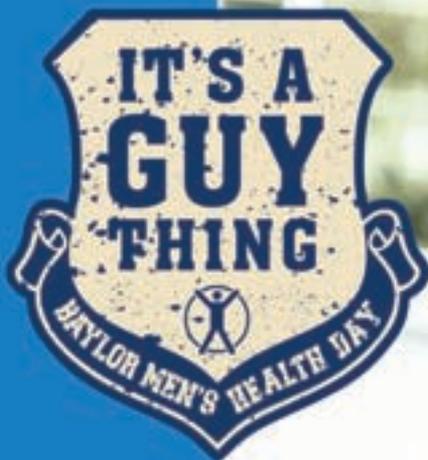
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- Saturday, June 20, 2009 • 9:00 a.m. to Noon
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Join Us For Men's Health Day

Most guys like to take charge, be in control. That is, until it comes to their health. When was the last time you had a check-up? Do you know your cholesterol numbers? How about your blood pressure?

Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie invites you to join us for Men's Health Day - a morning devoted solely to male health.

We have physicians giving a health talk at the top of each hour 9:00, 10:00 and 11:00. **Call 1-800-4BAYLOR to get more information and to reserve a spot.** Seating is limited so call today!

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**For a more accurate reading, do not eat or drink anything after midnight before the screening. You may take your regular medications as directed.*

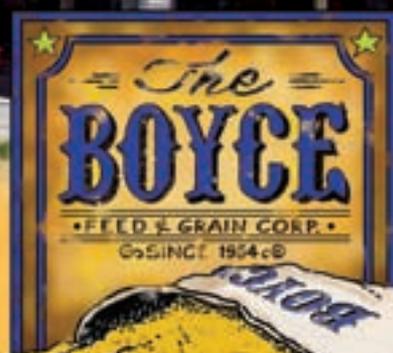
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