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July 2009

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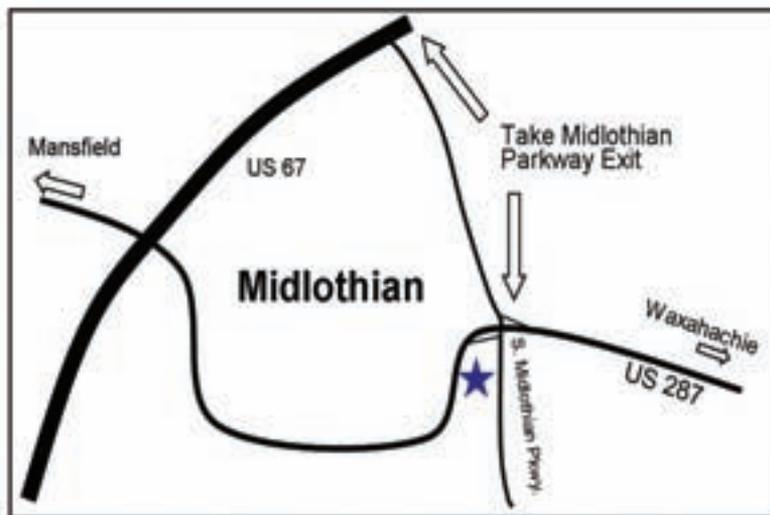
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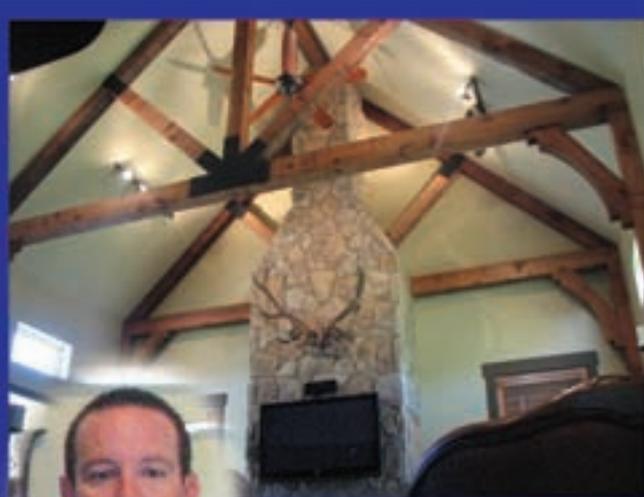
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Representing each of the 50 states, the stars on the flag fly proud and free not only on Independence Day, but every day.

Photo by Becky Walker.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Midlothian,

What is patriotism? Many try to define it. Lee Greenwood's song "Proud to be an American" personally stirs me. Patriotism to me is never to forget those who have sacrificed, in wars past and present, to keep our country free. It is an awareness that this great country of ours is worth the effort millions put forth to keep it great and free. Patriotism to me is loving my country and doing what it takes to keep her strong. Patriotism is action in people who help make this a great country, one person at a time. I see this in the optimism and work ethic the citizens in this community demonstrate every day. Enjoy celebrating Independence Day on July 4!

We are in the full bloom of summer heat and fun. Remember to take care of your skin with lots of sunscreen, drink water and stay safe out there.

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor



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Flight, Fright and Faith

— By Betty Tryon

Quite unexpectedly, what should have been an easy mission to Budapest turned deadly. The crew in the B-17 bomber during WWII realized they were being fired upon with 88 mm anti-aircraft guns. The artillery that exploded on the nose cone of the aircraft killed two of the men instantly. The air that came roaring through the gaping hole was overwhelming. J.D. Bennett, a sergeant in WWII, immediately put on his parachute, and he and the crew “bailed out.” Dropping out of the plane into nothingness, he became afraid. He remembers spinning out of control until he put both arms out to stabilize himself. After landing safely, J.D. quickly realized he was not out of danger. Bombs were exploding all around him, and he tried to move to a safer spot.

J.D.’s harrowing adventure then took a more sinister turn. The very ones who blew his plane out of the air were now firing their weapons at him as he lay helpless. They stopped firing long enough to tie his hands together. J.D. realized

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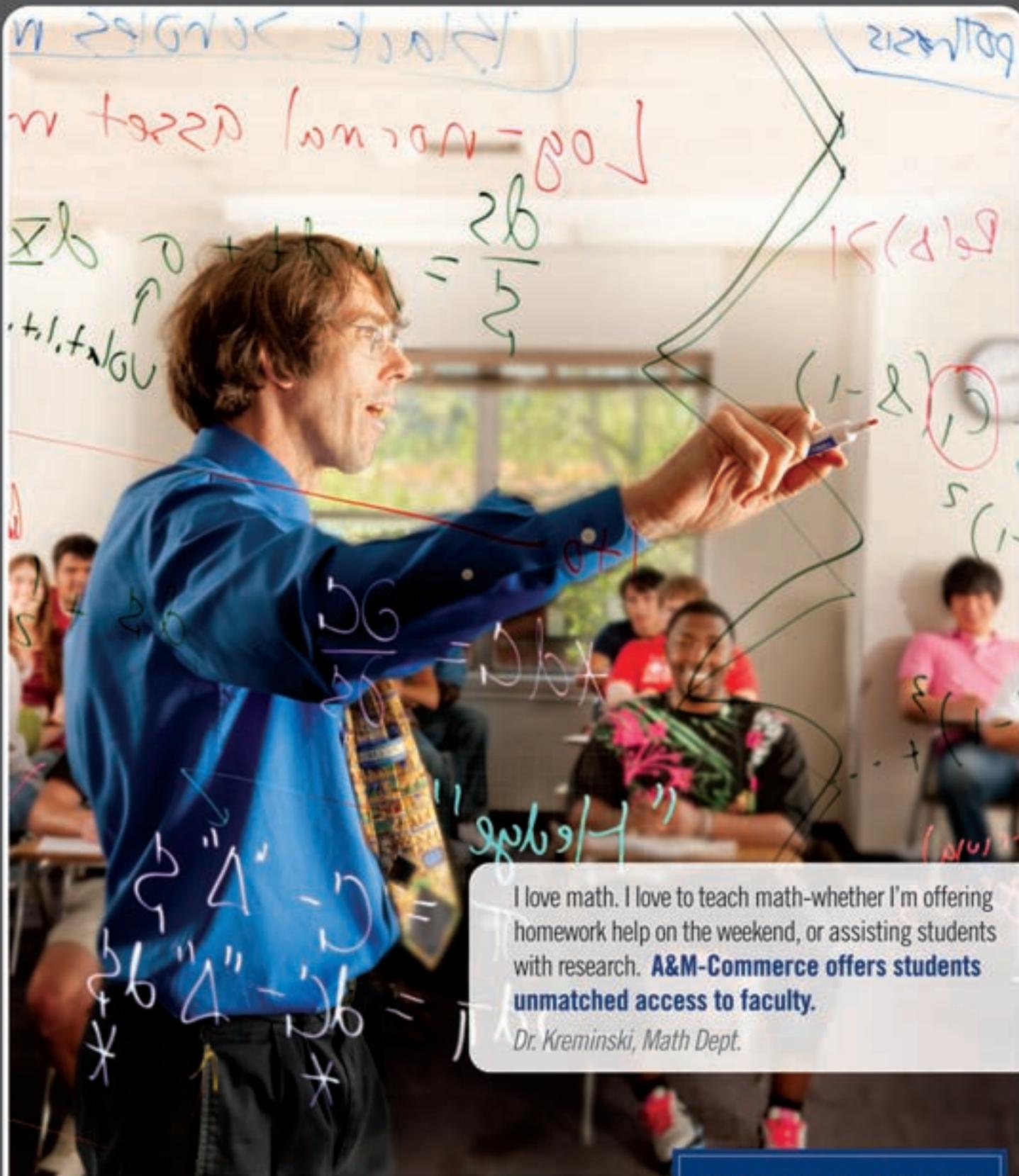
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that he was now a prisoner of war along with the others. He stated, "They took us to a penitentiary for about one or two weeks. Then they moved us to Stalag Luft IV prison camp." Their captors received word that the Russians were coming to liberate the prisoners, so the decision was made to move them. J.D. remembered, "We were a part of the Death March from February 6 until April 18, 1945. During that time, I never knew what it was to have something good to eat, or a good place to stay at night. I lost 35 to 40 pounds.



At one point, "We were placed in a small boxcar for three days and nights with no bathroom and not enough room for all of us to sit down. We took even numbers to stand up and the odd numbers could sit down and rest for so many hours, and then we switched. We used an old milk can for our bathroom. We would use it, pass it back and forth and pour it out the window the best we could. The window was very small and had barbed wire over it." J.D. said quietly, "That was the worst time on that march."

As they traveled, occasionally the prisoners were allowed to spend the night in a farmer's barn. During his time of imprisonment, J.D. learned how to cope and make the best of a horrendous situation. He explained, "I learned to take my shoes off at night and stuff them with hay to dry them. It was so cold that we snuggled with a



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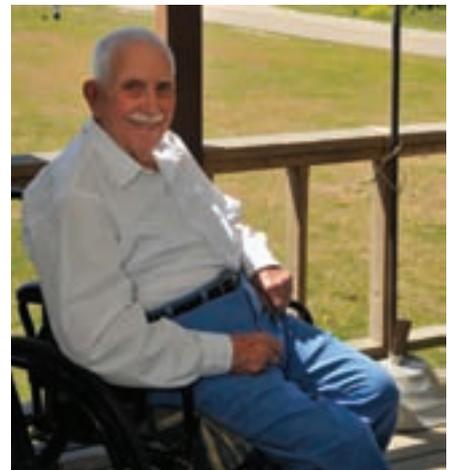
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buddy under a blanket at night and slept on the hay so we could keep each other warm."

Another lesson learned was to find nutrition any way they could. Inside the barns where they were held captive, the only food available was the horses' rolled oats. J.D. explained how they made the best of a bad situation: "There were the horses' rolled oats from out of the field. We learned that we could sift the oats through a sack and the flour would come through. We mixed it with water, and then we could drink it. In one of the barns, we found that



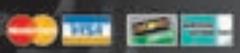
we could loosen a few of the boards. There was an area on the property where the farmers stored potatoes. They covered it with straw and dirt and that would preserve it through the wintertime. We would sneak out two at a time and come back with potatoes. A woman ... told the sergeant that his men were stealing potatoes. The head guy had us fall out in front and gave us this speech about not stealing from the civilians. Someone yelled out, 'Well if you would feed us we would not have to steal. We just got a few potatoes to eat because we were hungry.' The head guy said he was going to put the two men caught stealing potatoes in detention and called for them to take two paces out. They were going to step out because they didn't want everyone to get punished. When he said step out, we all stepped out two paces. It was cold and nasty weather, and he looked at us for about five minutes.

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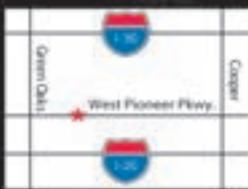


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Finally, he said, 'Bah! Dismissed!'"

J.D. learned early how to stay out of trouble while being held captive. "If you didn't step when they told you to, you would get knocked [around]," J.D. said, referring to how quickly his captors would hit them if they were slow in obeying an order. He soon learned to move as quickly as he could. In addition to life lessons, J.D. received two things that are grim but victorious reminders of that harrowing period in his life: a photo of the moment the nose was blown off his plane, and a photo of said plane going down.

The irony of J.D.'s imprisonment is that he unknowingly received information that could have kept him

"The ones who didn't get to come home, those were the heroes."

from ever being on that airplane. He belonged to the Air Force during that period in history where the Air Force was a part of the Army. He explained, "I had to go take a test and my sergeant told me to fail the test, but I wasn't the kind of guy to halfway do something. So, I passed it and two weeks later, I was shipped out. My sergeant was trying to tell me something, and I didn't listen to him."

One thing J.D. is adamant about — he is not a hero. He steadfastly maintained, "The ones who didn't get to come home, those were the heroes. They gave their lives. I don't consider myself a hero. I was just one of the boys doing what I was told to do." When J.D. was blown out of the sky that fateful day, he remembers one of the prisoners saying, "He had never talked to God in his life until he was coming down in his parachute over Germany. I told him I was way ahead of him. I started praying to God to bring me home to my wife before I even made the first mission. God answered my prayer." **NOW**

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Coming Back *to* Center

— By Sandra McIntosh

A home centered around the youngest members of the family is apparent as soon as the threshold is crossed. This is the case at the four-bedroom, four-bath home of Keven and Amy Powers. The home's contemporary style, both inside and out, lends to the openness needed

when rearing three children ranging in age from 8 to 3. “We are home a lot,” Amy said. “Keven and I work, communicate and balance the needs of our children — Dawson, Abby and Gracie — so we can enjoy every moment we have with them. It does not come



At Home With
Keven and Amy Powers



without challenge, but the time is also filled with lots of joy.”

The couple moved into their new home in December 2003, after six months of continuous building. Keven’s father, Tommy Powers, was at an age where building the home himself was no longer an option, so he gave Keven the tools needed to get the job done. “He helped by securing all the building permits,” Keven remembered, “and by handing over his list of contractors.” The process was difficult to say the least, with Keven working a full-time job while also trying to be his own custom home builder. “Amy became a builder, too,” he smiled. “Amy was instrumental in keeping the work flowing.” Growing up, Keven learned so much about what to do and what not to do when designing and building a home. “My mom was famous for making changes,” he admitted. “My dad encouraged Amy and I to get all we wanted incorporated into the main plans before the building process began.”

The couple took a set of basic plans

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and changed them up to accommodate their personal wants and needs, the most important one being the playroom/media room/school room combination, which is centrally located between the children's three bedrooms. "We wanted a central spot for the children from the very beginning," Amy explained. "It has become the most meaningful room in the whole house." The activities shared in this one room are many. One such



activity, which fills Amy with a great sense of pride and satisfaction, is the time she and Dawson spend as teacher and student. "As soon as we found out Dawson had Down Syndrome, I started educating myself on his needs," she said, also mentioning he is homeschooled now so his specific needs can be met without hesitation. "I want his life to have as much meaning as the other two children's." While Dawson learned meaningful life skills and academics from home before the summer break, Abby spent weekdays in kindergarten at Rue Miller Elementary and



Gracie attended Mother's Day Out two days per week.

When the family is home, it is common for the five of them to spend quality time in this one room. The unique, one-of-a-kind dry erase board taking up the entire length of one wall was Keven's design. It also serves as a large, pull-down work table for homework assignments and craft time. On movie nights, it also becomes the movie screen. "He thought of everything," Amy said, proud of the handiwork, which brings hours of family time to fruition. "We camp out on the floor and eat finger foods and popcorn." The family also enjoys camping out in state parks, as well as in their own spacious backyard. Keven even sets up a sheet so the family is able to watch



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movies while enjoying the nature that surrounds them.

Each child was encouraged to pick the colors for their individual bedrooms.

Gracie's room is purple and green with white trim; the same white trim found throughout the home. Abby's room is done in pink and yellow. The Jack-and-Jill bathroom separating the two rooms is a combination of the girls' rooms in shades of green and yellow. Dawson's room, befitting a young boy his age, is done in two complementary shades of blue. "The wall decor is limited in his room due to



the over-stimulation it causes," Amy said.

The couple's favorite collection is found in the artwork their children have designed. "We frame it and hang it," Amy noted. "It's hard to choose our all-time favorites because they bring so many home." One example is found in the letter Abby wrote to Jesus. "She brought the letter to Keven and asked him to please put it in the mailbox," Amy remembered, tears welling up in her eyes at the memory. "Keven assured her Jesus would get the letter." When

the letter was opened later that same day, Keven and Amy were moved by what Abby had drawn. "All the letter said was, 'I love you Jesus,'" Amy explained. "She had drawn a beautiful picture with crayons where a heart was the main focus of the drawing." Dawson and Gracie also grow their imaginations through play and painting.

Happy Independence Day!



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The colors used throughout the home were chosen with the help of Cedar Hill Design Center. The colors flow freely from the dining room with its three-tiered ceiling and walls in what Amy calls deep mustard to the soft shades of olive found in the master suite at the other end of the home. The well-blended colors offer warmth among the antique and contemporary furnishings, while adding to the peaceful atmosphere Keven and Amy desired as



parents. They wanted the home to be a place everyone was eager to come home to at the end of a busy day. Keven is no exception. "The minute Keven walks through the door, the kids run to him and he takes over," Amy said. "They want to love on him, and he wants to do the same for them."

While Keven plays with the children, Amy gets supper cooked and on the table. They make every effort to eat together as a family on a daily basis. In fact, the children started something,



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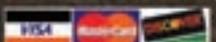
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which quickly became a Powers' family tradition. "The children say prayers before anyone begins eating," Amy said. "Each child prays, beginning with Dawson."

Each one of the Powers children is different in personality, style and ability. Dawson is a healthy, young boy who is happy and full of life. Abby wants to



be sure Jesus loves her while also being the best athlete she can be. Gracie has a love, not only for painting imaginative pictures, but for the "daddy stories" her father tells on a regular basis. Keven and Amy work very hard to balance the needs of each one of their children. "Often, you can get lost in the chaos when you are running around here and there," Amy said, as Keven quickly nodded his head in agreement. "The children bring us back to center." **NOW**

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Drilling for *Success*

— By Betty Tryon



Meeting Taylor Walling, one gets the impression of a very polite, gracious and soft-spoken student. Her calm exterior conceals what her teammates on the Pantherettes Drill Team at Midlothian High School already know — a determined and persistent desire to get the job done as perfectly as possible. “Being part of the Pantherettes teaches you so much,” she said. “You learn to take responsibility for mistakes you didn’t make. After you graduate, you take that with you. People like it that you don’t place the blame on someone else, even if it belongs there. You learn how to work as a team and not as an individual because it’s not all about just you; it’s about everyone else, too.”

In her position as captain of the team, Taylor handles various responsibilities. She explained, “As the captain, you have to be everywhere 15 minutes earlier than the team. I help choreograph a lot of the dances. It is a collaborative thing with all of the officers and Mrs. Truett. We teach dances, clean the dances [polish and perfect], correct each mistake we find and make sure everyone is wearing the correct

attire every day.” Sometimes in monitoring the other teammates, the captain and other officers must discipline their friends. Taylor added, “We have to do what is best for the team rather than what’s best for our best buddy.”

Choreographing a drill team requires ensuring everyone is on the same page and can become proficient in each routine. She explained, “Our choreography has to be precise. We have 19 dancers on the team, and we choreograph for football season, contest season and for the spring show. We have a few months to perfect each season, and it has to be something everyone looks good doing. If it is something one girl looks good doing but another girl looks silly, then we can’t do it. It is not necessarily that one girl is better or worse than another girl, it is just that everyone moves so differently. It is just finding the right match for everyone.”

Becoming a Pantherette was a perfect fit for Taylor, as it became an extension of her dancing skills. She stated, “I started studio dancing when I was 1 or 2 years old, and it became a big part of what I did. I thought it [joining

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Pantherettes] would be a great way to further my dance abilities, as well as to be in a team setting. In Pantherettes, we do a lot of the same stuff only not as much ballet.”

Being the captain of the team earned Taylor a spot on the Texas All State Drill Team to represent her team and to perform at the Texas Drill Team Director’s Banquet. There were 170 girls, each representing their respective schools. In addition to performing for the directors, the girls had the chance to take advantage of many learning opportunities. “We took technique and dance classes,” she stated. “In our leadership classes, we learned how to do the right thing for your team in every situation. We worked with well-known choreographers, who taught all of us this one big piece that we perform for the directors at their banquet.”

One of the top choreographers they met and from whom they learned new dance moves was Jimmy Arguello. He was one of the top 10 male dancers in



2007 on the television show *So You Think You Can Dance*. Taylor stated, “He choreographed our show. It is a huge feat to work with 170 girls because there are so many parts and a lot going on throughout the entire dance. He is an amazing choreographer. I have never done anything like his work. It was

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quite unique with natural movement, very organic and wasn't at all technical. Hopefully, when you come back from the convention, you will be able to bring some new ideas for your team."

At that same convention in March of 2009, Taylor won a prestigious scholarship from the members of the Texas Dance Educator's Association for \$2,500 toward her college education by writing the winning essay.

In addition to their scheduled performances, the Pantherettes enroll in three contests every year. At Regional competition, there were 60 to 70 teams competing. The Pantherettes placed fourth out of all of the teams. This year

"In our leadership classes, we learned how to do the right thing for your team in every situation."

in March, one of the contests was in Hawaii to compete in the ShowMakers of America® National Competition. There, they were first runner up, a testament to their hard effort all season.

For any girl wanting to try-out for the team, Taylor recommends, "They have to work really hard and realize that it is a real challenge. They need to take dance technique class and have teacher recommendations." Although, technically, the activity the drill team does is an art form, the amount of energy and hard work which makes it beautiful could easily classify it as a sport. Any way you look at it, these girls give their best all season and it is a pleasure to watch them. **NOW**

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Star Teacher
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Future Plans: Baylor University; Major in Education (Math Teacher)



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Star Student

Laird Duppen
Star Teacher
(Elementary Science)

Parents: Devona and Murray Allen
Future Plans: Baylor University



MATTHEW ATHTON
Star Student

John Seale
Star Teacher
(Elementary Bridge Teacher)

Parents: Mike and Cathy Athton
Future Plans: Texas A&M in Galveston; Major in Oceanography



BRIAN BALES
Star Student

Rich Stewart
Star Teacher
(Elementary English Teacher)

Parents: David and Diana Bales
Future Plans: University of Texas at Austin; Major in Computer Science



NICOLE BECK
Star Student

Braun Bennett
Star Teacher
(Elementary English & Social Studies)

Parents: Phillip and Kalena Beck
Future Plans: Southwestern Assembly of God University; Major in Elementary Education



KAYLEN CALVERT
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Couch Brady Gibson
Star Teacher
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Parents: Scott and Donna Calvert
Future Plans: Texas A&M University; Major in Engineering



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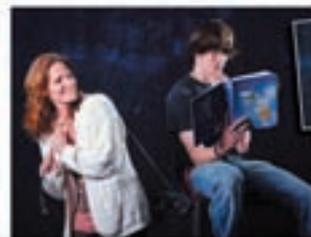
Parents: Ann and Cindy Carey
Future Plans: University of Oklahoma; Major in Physical Therapy



CARLEY CRANDALL
Star Student

Lorilyn Worley
Star Teacher
(Elementary English Teacher)

Parents: Tim and Tammy Crandall
Future Plans: University of Evansville in Indiana; Major in International Studies



MATTHEW DEFARIAS
Star Student

Ellen Hayden
Star Teacher
(Elementary English Teacher)

Parents: Robert and Cathy DeFarias
Future Plans: Texas Tech University; Major in Electrical Engineering



MICHAEL HAYDEN
Star Student

Paula Spillers
Star Teacher
(Elementary English Teacher)

Parent: Ellen Hayden
Future Plans: Texas A&M University; Major in Civil Engineering



CLAIRE HEBERT
Star Student

Maryann Pinkston
Star Teacher
(Elementary English Teacher)

Parents: Jason and Susan Hebert
Future Plans: University of North Texas; Major in Jazz Studies/Vocal Performance



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Tanya Hydus
Star Teacher
(Elementary Bridge Teacher)

Parents: John and Paula Horton
Future Plans: University of Mary Hardin Baylor

SHOWCASE OF STARS



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Star Teacher

John Seale
Star Teacher
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Parents:
Eric and Cheryl Ingersoll

Future Plans:
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Major in Biology



LARISA KLIMAN
Star Teacher

Beth Stewart
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
Rick and Kelly Kliman

Future Plans:
Texas Woman's University
Major in Physical Therapy



ANNE LYNCH
Star Teacher

Lucia Gomez
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
Mike and Kathy Epwch

Future Plans:
Texas A&M University
Major in Visual Studies



HANNAH MERRIFIELD
Star Teacher

Donna Smith
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
Ken and Janet Merrifield

Future Plans:
Trinity International University
Major in Counseling/Psychology
Minor in Nutrition

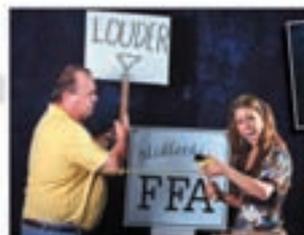


TWYLA MILLER
Star Teacher

Leticia Arroyo
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
David and Melodie Miller

Future Plans:
Texas A&M University
Major in Elementary Education



LACY MOSLEY
Star Teacher

Gary Pruitt
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
Scott & Chris Mosley

Future Plans: Blinn College/
Texas A&M, Major in Agricultural Communications or
Business



ALYSSON ORR
Star Teacher

Angela Clark
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
Dew and Alisa Orr

Future Plans:
Dallas Baptist University
Major in Elementary Education



KATIE OWEN
Star Teacher

Stephen Yoon
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
John and Anne Owen

Future Plans:
University of Texas at Austin
Major in Biomedical Engineering



ANNA PAYNE
Star Teacher

Amy Ballard
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
Andrew and Cindy Payne

Future Plans:
University of Mary Hardin
Baylor, Major in Sociology



KACIE BOWLETTE
Star Teacher

Brady Gibson
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
Tim and Rebel Bowlette

Future Plans:
Texas A&M University
Major in Biomedical Science



LEEANNA SMITH
Star Teacher

Susie Yarbou
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
Robert and Adrienne Smith

Future Plans:
Moody Bible Institute



SARAH STEWART
Star Teacher

Kathleen Miller
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
David and Beth Stewart

Future Plans:
Texas Tech University



MICHAEL VANG
Star Teacher

Paul Spillers
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
So & Air Vang

Future Plans: University of
Texas at Arlington, Major in
Materials Engineering



TAYLOR WALLING
Star Teacher

Laura Truett
Star Teacher
2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019

Parents:
Tim and Judy Walling

Future Plans:
Texas A&M University
Major in Physics



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Play Ball!

— By Betty Tryon

“Take me out to the ball game. Take me out with the crowd. Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack, I don’t care if I never get back...” As the head coach for the select baseball team, Midlothian Sox, Brian Hyles may care if he ever gets back, and his dedication for the game goes with him. Enjoyment for the game and his sons kept him going to game after game for almost a decade. “I became a baseball coach when my first son was 6 years old. He is now in the 11th grade,” Brian stated. “With my youngest son, I started when he was 4 years old and he is now 13.”

Coaching his youngest son brings Brian satisfaction that goes far beyond



the game of baseball. “He was born in 1995 with heart problems. We almost lost him. When he became better, he has never looked back. He has played everything — baseball, football and track,” he shared.

The select team Brian now coaches is for 13-year-olds. Although it is a Midlothian team, not all of the 12 teammates live here. Eighty percent of the players are from Midlothian, while the others are connected to the city in some form, either having lived here or

having relatives who live here. Because Brian coaches both of his sons’ teams, he does not get the chance to spend many weekends at home. “We play two to three tournaments a month,” he said. “It is rewarding to watch them develop and play good.”

Camaraderie is an important aspect of team sports and indeed, it remains one of the reasons children join. “We develop good friendships with the other families on the team as well,” Brian said. “We travel together and have taken vacations together.” The developing friendships have a lot of time to grow and flourish. “Last year, we started our season back in January. ... We took a month off and then played fall ball through the summer. We play pretty much year-round,” he continued. “We will play in the World Series of this division in Pensacola, Florida, this July. I didn’t expect the team to do as well as they did. The playing ability is about even. There are no stars on the team.”

Playing in a select ball club before a child joins a team in high school is great preparatory work. “Baseball is a game of repetition,” Brian explained.



“The more you play the game, the better you become. Some high school coaches will say that if you haven’t played club baseball, you might not be able to make the team. With most of the select players, not only do we work with them, but a lot of kids go for one-on-one training. They do it for the team. It can be very competitive, but the kids want to play better. The parent involvement is sometimes higher.” Select clubs can be expensive and the



“It is rewarding to watch them develop and play good.”

costs add up. “Not everyone can afford the uniforms, equipment and the travel expenses, but I think it is worth it. Some of the players go on to play ball in college. I know of a team in Dallas that had two of their players who eventually went to play for the Texas Rangers,” Brian added.

Coaching was a natural transition for Brian. As soon as he graduated from school, he started coaching a men’s softball team. “I have been a Dallas fireman for 28 years. I coached the softball team with the firemen, and we

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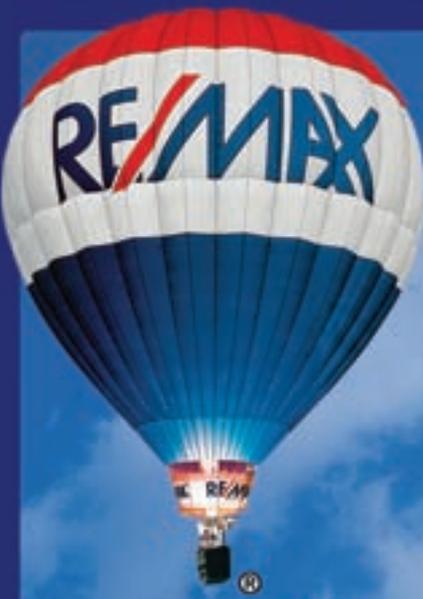
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went to the softball Olympics in [the] 1990s," he said. When Brian went to Cedar Valley Community College, he admitted he only went long enough to get the necessary hours to become a firefighter. "One of the requirements was to have at least 46 hours of college credit," he explained. "As soon as I finished the 46 hours, I went to work at the fire department in Dallas. I used to work as a paramedic, but now I am on the engine. I am a first responder and EMT [Emergency Medical Technician] trained and certified."



Brian's training as an EMT comes in handy, with the cuts, bruises and sprains that are all a part of an active sport. "Anytime there is an injury on the field, the parents look to me and another fireman on the team. I usually check the kid out and tell them the best thing to do. Even if they are hurt, the kids want to stay out there and play, but I say, 'No, you need to sit this one out,'" he said. "These kids are motivated and want to win. They get on the Internet and look at the ranking of other teams. We try to avoid it, but sometimes the kids will play to the level of competition. I tell the kids all the time that every time they step on the field, they can play anyone." **NOW**



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Triwanna Fisher, M.D. is board certified in family medicine and received her medical degree from Texas Tech University Health Sciences



Center School of Medicine in Lubbock. She completed her residency at John Peter Smith Hospital's family medicine residency program in Fort Worth. Dr. Fisher is interested in the management of acute and chronic diseases, women's health, dermatology procedures, adult and pediatric medicine. Dr. Fisher enjoys reading, watching movies, and traveling internationally.

Just Like Family

— By Betty Tryon

It is lunchtime and the atmosphere is full of conversation, giggles and lots of food. Everyone sits around a table and bowls of salad, rolls, fruit and other food is passed from one person to another. Each one takes their portion and hands the dish to the next person. Sound familiar? Well, it might if you are thinking of your home; it is not if you are thinking of day care with 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds. This is standard procedure, however, at Discovery Children's Academy owned by Kyle and Renay McAfee. Renay is officially the executive director for



the facility. Kyle affectionately calls her the “big kahuna” and himself the “maintenance man.” Whatever their designated titles, they get the job done.

Thinking about feeding time, Renay laughed and said, “Sometimes it can get a little messy. It’s fun because they feel like it is an accomplishment when they serve themselves. We have them sitting family style around the table. With the exception of the 2-year-olds, everyone else is able (within reason) to sit by their friend. It helps with the transition when the 2s become 3s and the 3s become 4s. They have friends in that classroom, and it makes it not quite so scary to change.”

The relaxed family atmosphere at meal times is no accident.

Renay and Kyle planned their facility to operate this way. Renay stated, “We always have a prayer said before meals because it definitely sets a tone for the day. We don’t feel it is our responsibility to advocate a religion, but we spend the bulk of our day with these children and we want to have a part instilling

values and morals. We have a VBS (Vacation Bible School) style for the parents to take it in the direction they feel appropriate for their lives.”

The McAfees opened Discovery Children's Academy in February 2007 offering a wide range of services. The curriculum is the same for all of the children but is age appropriate for each one. According to Renay, “We want the children to have fun and play games, but we also want there to be a learning environment. We have a learning wall in the hallway so parents know where our focus is for that week and month. We have a letter, color, size and shape for the week and a theme for the month. Calendars and a monthly newsletter go

out to help keep parents in the know as well.

“We offer before- and after-school care. When the children arrive after school, we have a snack time and if they have homework, they go to the homework room. There is a teacher in there to help at least get them started on it, because I know when the moms

“We want the children to have fun and play games, but we also want there to be a learning environment.”



get here they have ballet practice and soccer practice and whatever else. So, we at least try to get a big chunk of it knocked out. We have an area for them with TVs, video games, puzzles and a playground. It is more of an open atmosphere. Our philosophy is it is the end of a school day, and they are not going to want to sit down.”

All of the workers are trained in first aid, CPR certified and have had criminal and fingerprint checks. They also accept children who are in Child Care Services, a government program that helps with tuition. Summer camp is available, as well.

If the atmosphere sounds like a fit for your family, contact Discovery Children's Academy at (972) 775-5600, located at 111 Roundabout Drive. The operating hours are 5:45 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. **NOW**

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Difficult courses, a class schedule with major changes, lunch on-the-go, all-night study sessions — these are all things very familiar to college students; and now, to Jan Johnson. If you have always thought going back to school would be too hard, take a cue from her story.

After living in Arizona for several years, Jan and her husband, Brent, moved to Texas because of a job change and to be closer to family. Jan, Brent and their two sons, Eric and Greg, ended up in Midlothian. “The neighborhood is wonderful,” Jan said. “We like the schools and the small-town feel. The bicycling is good here, too.”

One day in 2005, Jan was helping her oldest son, Eric, prepare to start college in the fall. As she was learning about all the requirements he needed, she thought it might be fun to go back to school herself and complete her bachelor’s degree. “I was working in desktop publishing. I enjoy writing, so I thought I’d take an English course,” she said. “Then I thought I’d finish college and get an English degree.”

After high school, Jan had started college and finished four semesters toward a floriculture major before leaving to pursue a full-time job. This time, she decided to try something different. “One reason I chose English is that I wanted to communicate well,” she said. “There are so many good things I’d like to say. Life is wonderful, and I read so many negative things. I’d like to contribute something that’s positive.” Jan went to the Navarro campus to learn what she needed to do to enroll in classes, with the intent of finishing her degree at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). After a little bit of transcript trouble, Jan was enrolled in two courses for her first semester in the fall of 2005.

Once Jan figured out her plan, she started to worry about all the other issues that could surface. She was unsure of how hard it would be to concentrate and study; if people would talk to her because she was a “grandmotherly type”; if she would be able to stick with it; and even what she would wear to class. Once she solved all of those issues, more

long-term thoughts came to mind. “I wondered about things like how long it would take,” Jan said. “The goal seemed really far away at the time.”

With a family at home, Jan had to be careful about her course schedule. She avoided scheduling evening classes so she could be at home with her family each night, although she still sometimes fell behind with the cooking and laundry. Keeping up with her classes, however, did become easier as her sons got older.

Jan attended school part time each semester, working as a part-time tutor in the UTA writing center. She included a writing-intensive class each semester, classes that turned out to be some of her favorites. “One of my favorite classes, surprisingly, was Structure of Modern English,” she said. “We learned to diagram sentences, and I never thought I’d enjoy that.”

Being back in school also enabled Jan to work on projects she had always wanted to complete, such as a Web site she created based on her father-in-law and his stories from his time fighting in the Korean War. She gathered pictures



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and tales from him and his friends, made a CD of the finished site, and gave copies of the CD to her family members and her father-in-law's war buddies for Christmas. Jan's father-in-law recently passed away, and she is thankful she got the chance to create that tribute to him.

Were Jan's initial fears justified? "I was surprised," she said. "I expected to be intimidated. As it turns out, [the students] reminded me of my kids' friends. And in very few classes was I ever the only returning student; there was always someone in their 30s, 40s or 50s in my classes." As graduation approached, Jan started to get a bit antsy. "I got senioritis so bad," she



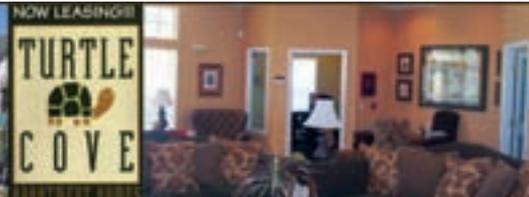
said, admitting she was on cloud nine, crossing off each class session until she graduated.

Since graduating, Jan has made sure to not eat any sort of grab-and-go snack bars — her normal choice for quick meals on the way to and from classes. She also determined not to worry about finding a job until after her oldest son's wedding in June. "If you're thinking about going back to school, just go for it," she advised. There are many financial incentives for nontraditional students, like single moms, who are considering getting a degree. Many of Jan's classmates worked, sometimes full time, to pay for their education. Their success is proof that it can be done. "I say do it! My situation's been good," she said. "It's a lot more accessible than you may think." **NOW**

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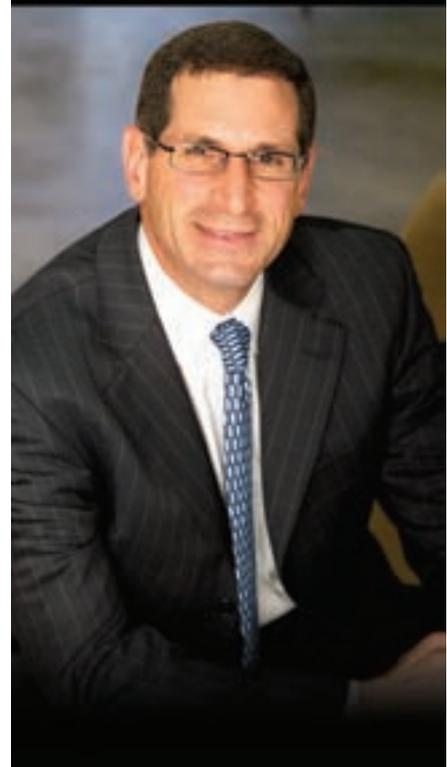
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- Judges for the First Midlothian Middle School Essay Contest, top left, waded through the many submissions.
- NOW Magazines staff member, Alexandra Allred, along with friends Nikki White and Jill Dunegan, top center, prepared to race in the duathlon hosted by Texas Motor Speedway.
- Marisa Ellis, top right, was recognized during the Education in Action's Texas Independence Day Recognition Ceremony and Reception.
- J.R. Irvin first-grade teachers Kathy Lucas, Casey Rogers and Cheryl Cline, bottom right, dressed as centenarians.
- Students in Mrs. Stewart's class, bottom right, created their own 3-D city using all types of boxes.



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• The West Ellis County Retired School Personnel organization, top left, presented books to T.E. Baxter first-graders. • Ribbon cuttings were held at: 2 Friends Flowers and Gifts, top right; and Giovanni's Italian Restaurant, second row left.



• The Mt. Peak CBI class, second row right, learned about a chicken's life on the farm. • NOW advertising representative Rick Ausmus, bottom left, was named 2009 chairman of the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors. • Several fifth-graders, bottom right, participated in reading and creating movie posters for Newbery Medal books.



Front: Megan, Carolynn, Brandi, Kristi, Alicia
Back: Johnnie, Hillary, Jamie, Denise.

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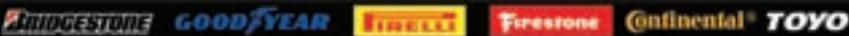


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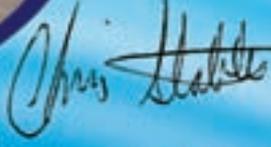
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What is Your Objection to Term Life Insurance?

— By Clay Money, CLU

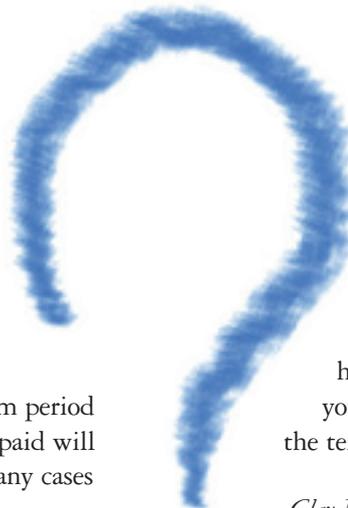
One objection to purchasing term life insurance is just that: when the term is over, the policy is finished. That's it. No more coverage.

Many people worry they will outlive the policy period and 'waste their money' on something they didn't need. It can be difficult to counter these arguments except by explaining how term insurance can be an affordable way to provide life insurance coverage for a specific time period.

Until now, insurance companies are offering term policies that actually return the premiums you've paid after the level premium period ends. In other words, if you purchase a 20-year term policy and are still living when the 20-year level premium period ends, the premiums you paid will be returned to you, in many cases free of federal income tax.

Those returned premiums can have a number of uses. If you still need life insurance, you could purchase another policy. You could also use the premiums that are returned to pay down your mortgage or even add to your retirement savings.

Life insurance can provide peace of mind that your loved ones' financial burdens may be eased if you are no longer there. The benefit provided by life insurance can help keep dreams alive.

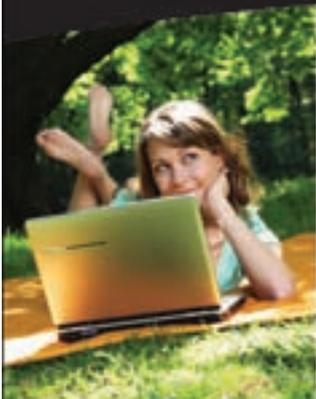


One objection to buying term life insurance has been addressed by a policy that may return the premiums you paid. Ask an insurance professional about a product that provides needed life insurance coverage but has the potential to return your premiums at the end of the term. **NOW**

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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH GINA BATES

FROZEN FRUIT CUPS

- 1 16-oz. container sour cream
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 3 bananas, cut up
- 1 8.5-oz. can pineapple, undrained
- 1/4 cup maraschino cherries
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans

Mix the above ingredients together and pour into individual small cups or an 8 x 8-inch container. Freeze for 6-8 hours before serving.

G.G.'S CHERRY CHOCOLATE CAKE

- 1 box Duncan Hines Devil's Food Cake Mix
- 3 eggs
- 1 16-oz. can cherry pie filling

Duncan Hines milk chocolate frosting or sifted powdered sugar

Mix the above ingredients and pour into a 9 x 13-inch greased and floured pan. Bake at 350 F for approximately 30-35 minutes. Frost with frosting or just sprinkle with sifted powdered sugar.

HOT CHICKEN SALAD

- 4 cups chicken, cooked and chopped
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 2/3 cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 3/4 cup Hellman's Mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 cups raw celery, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. onion, chopped
- 4 boiled eggs, finely chopped
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 cup potato chips, crushed

Growing up, Gina Bates learned the value of hard work. "I worked for my dad's grocery store/delicatessen from the age of 12 to 23 — until I graduated from Kansas University with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice," she recalled.

After moving to Texas, Gina met her husband, Brian, while attending the Arlington Police Academy. She started her career with the Arlington Police Department, and then moved to Mansfield to serve for an additional 10 years. Afterwards, she left her career to stay home with her two young children.

Now Gina is in the cleaning business and enjoys cooking for Brian and their children, Zack and Katie. "I really enjoy cooking big meals for all my friends and family," she expressed. "I love spending time with the people that I love." **NOW**

Mix the first 8 ingredients together; place in 2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with the cheddar cheese and top with crushed up potato chips. Bake at 400 F for approximately 30-35 minutes.

BARB'S BUFFALO CHIP COOKIES

- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 6-12 oz. chocolate chips
- 1 cup oatmeal
- 1 cup corn flakes

Preheat oven to 350 F. Cream butter and

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Who's Cooking **NOW**

sugars until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, one at a time. Sift together baking powder, baking soda and flour; add to the batter. Add vanilla, stir in chips, oatmeal and corn flakes. Drop by tablespoonfuls onto a baking sheet; bake for 12 minutes or until golden brown.

SPINACH ARTICHOKE CASSEROLE

6 green onions (white parts only)
 1/2 stick margarine or butter
 2 10-oz. boxes frozen spinach
 1 can artichoke hearts, quartered
 16 oz. sour cream
 pinch of salt
 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese

Sauté green onions in margarine. Cook spinach according to package directions, and drain thoroughly. Combine artichoke hearts and spinach with the green onions; stir in the sour cream and salt. Pour the mixture into an 8 x 8-inch Pyrex container; sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top. Bake at 350 F 30-35 minutes.

CRÈME BRÛLÉE FRENCH TOAST

1/2 cup unsalted butter
 1 cup packed brown sugar
 2 Tbsp. light corn syrup
 1 loaf French bread
 5 large eggs
 1 1/2 cups half-and-half
 1 tsp. Grand Marnier or Amaretto liqueur
 1/4 tsp. salt

In a small, heavy saucepan, melt butter, brown sugar and corn syrup, over medium heat, stirring until smooth. Pour into a 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Cut the bread into 1-inch thick slices; arrange in one layer in the baking dish, squeezing them slightly to fit. Mix the rest of the ingredients together, and pour over the bread. Chill covered for 8 hours, or overnight. Preheat oven to 350 F. Bring the bread mixture to room temperature; bake uncovered until puffed and golden. Serve immediately.

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Chiropractic Care May Improve Infants' Sleep

— By Brad W. Collins, D.C.



A pilot study conducted by Joyce Miller and Matts Klemsdal evaluated whether routine chiropractic care in infants had also improved the patients' sleep patterns. Sleep problems plague about 25 percent of all infants; they are measured by the time it takes the child to settle down, the amount of consecutive sleep hours the child accumulates and the quality of sleep. All this can add a great amount of stress to new parents. In many cases, a disturbed sleep pattern is also accompanied by an infant's excessive crying.

In the pilot study, published this year in the *Journal of Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics*, 116 infants, who were in chiropractic care for various health challenges, were rated on their sleep behavior during the course of their care. Of the infants, only 10 percent had initially come to the chiropractor because of dyssomnia or sleep disturbances, while the majority of the children received chiropractic care for excessive crying.

The parents were asked to complete a questionnaire on their child's sleep pattern after the first, fourth and seventh visit to the chiropractor. The questions related to the amount of hours the child slept, the quality of sleep and the time it took for the child to fall asleep. The data was analyzed and showed a

significant improvement in the children's sleep patterns after the adjustments.

After the first visit, almost 40 percent of infants slept deeper. That percentage jumped to more than 60 percent after the seventh visit. The percentage of children who had difficulty falling asleep fell from more than 65 percent after the first visit to just over 22 percent after the seventh visit. Most children had received adjustments to the upper cervical spine.

This is an important finding that warrants more scientific and clinical research. Chiropractic care seems not only to help children get a better night's sleep, it also reduces the stress on parents. And stress, as we all know, has its own health challenges. **NOW**

Source:

"Can Chiropractic Care Improve Infants' Sleep?" Joyce Miller and Matts Klemsdal. *Journal of Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics*, Volume 9, No. 1, 2008.

By Brad W. Collins, D.C.
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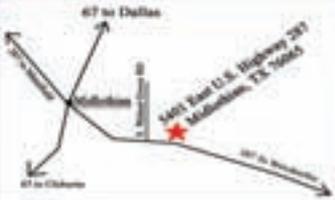
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July 2009 Community Calendar

First and Fourth Monday

School Board meeting: 6:30 p.m.

Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin. For more information, contact Cheryl Bell at (972) 723-0341 or rb4cj@sbcglobal.net.

Every Tuesday

Midlothian Rotary Club meeting: noon, Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th St. (972) 775-7118.

GED Class: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Midlothian City Council meeting: 6:00 p.m., City Hall, 104 West Ave. E.

First Thursday

Midlothian Area Historical Society: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library. Contact Kathy Robinson at (972) 723-2755 for more information.

ABWA Empowering Women Express Network monthly meeting: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle. www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

First and Third Thursday

Midlothian Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. (972) 775-7118.

Friday

Story Time: 11:00 a.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library.

July 3

Evening of Musical Entertainment: 5:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Fireworks provided by Danny Rodgers and CNB. Concession stand, barbecue and local churches to provide entertainment for children. Proceeds go to Senior Citizens Food Pantry. Donations of briskets for barbecue welcome. For more information, call Vicki Massey at (972) 743-1730.

Midlothian City offices and Chamber of Commerce closed.

July 11

Movie in the Park: *E.T.* Location: Hawkins Spring Park. Time: Dusk (8:30 p.m.). For more information, call (972) 775-7777 or e-mail james.berman@midlothian.tx.us.

July 11-12

Trade Days of Waxahachie: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Unique arts and crafts, commercial items, produce and more.

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July 15

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection monthly luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East, Exit 401B, Waxahachie. \$13, inclusive. Nursery vouchers available. Reservations preferred. Please contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984 or e-mail Kay at windchime423@yahoo.com no later than Sunday, July 12.

July 17-18

Creative Quilters Guild presents "Christmas in July" Quilt Show: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. Admission: \$5. Seniors 60 plus: \$4. Judged show with over 100 quilts and wearable art on display, vendors, door prizes and a raffle quilt. A silent auction of quilted Christmas-related items will be held with proceeds benefiting an Ellis County charity. For more information, please contact the guild at www.elliscountyquilters.com.

*For more community events,
visit our online calendar at
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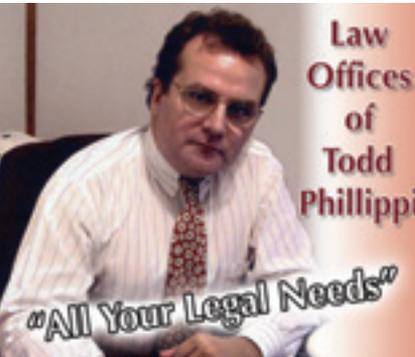
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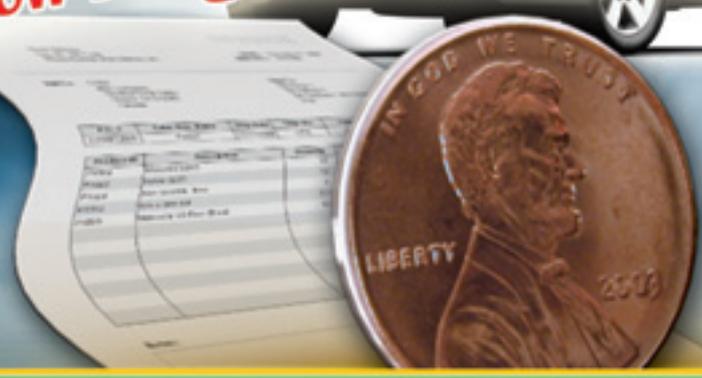
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