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JULY 2015

## Positive Outlook on Life

Cody Jones has overcome many obstacles

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ON THE COVER



Cody Jones looks forward to calling Ennis home sweet home.

Photography by Amy Ramirez.

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## Editor's Note

*Happy Independence Day!*

If given the chance, what would you ask Mother Nature? Would you ask her why we continue to experience earthquakes? Would you ask her to explain why the weather can change in the blink of an eye? Or, like me, would you beg her to turn nature's thermostat down so a walk in the park wouldn't feel like a workout in an oversized sauna? As a youngster, I vaguely remember four seasons. Now, we have but two — hot and cold.

I am thankful I live in a nation where I'm free to complain about the weather, and just as free to turn the air conditioning down to 65 F. I'm also very thankful for the men and women in the military who serve to keep my freedoms intact. As we celebrate our country's independence, let's not forget they are the real heroes.

*Sandra*

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*Happy*  
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# Positive Outlook on Life

— By Sandra Strong

*Cpl. Cody Jones was only in the fifth grade when 9/11 changed the landscape of the United States forever. As he stood in shock, watching the Twin Towers fall into heaps of rock and rubble, he knew without a doubt that his career path had just been chosen for him. "It was my destiny to be in the military," Cody said, remembering that heartbreaking day in such vivid detail. "I knew when I grew up and became a man I was going to serve my country, and I knew I was going to be a Marine."*

And serve he did. Cody joined the Marine Corps in June 2009, not even a full month following his graduation from Grandview High School. He married Alexis on March 4, 2012, and was deployed to Afghanistan under Operation Enduring Freedom in November 2012. This deployment, which would be his last, ended up rocking their world to its very core. "The accident happened while I was on an operation on December 16, 2012," Cody stated. "A command-detonated IED exploded beneath our vehicle."

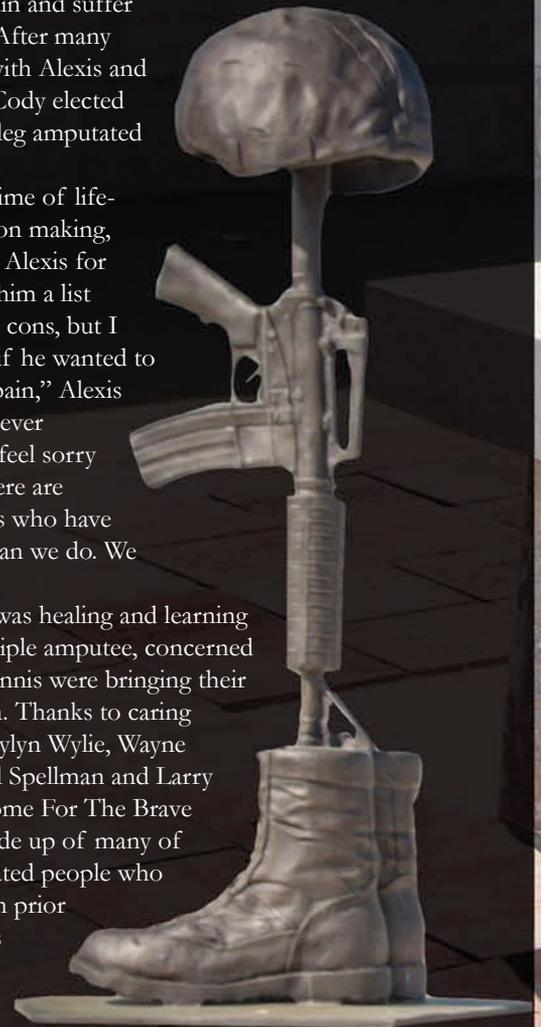
As the vehicle commander, Cody checked to make sure his "group of five" was OK. It was only then he looked down to realize the damage that had been done to his own legs. He was

transported via helicopter to Camp Leatherneck and then on to Germany's Ramstein Air Force Base, where pins were placed and bones reset to stabilize his weakened legs. Cody finally landed in San Antonio, where he underwent several major surgeries and spent a lengthy time rehabbing back to health.

In the initial blast, four toes on his right foot were severed. The angle was such that doctors decided to remove his big toe. The damage to the left leg was so extensive it caused a much larger dilemma. "Doctors discussed the process of limb wound salvage to me in detail," Cody explained. "If I decided to keep the leg, it was guaranteed that I would have chronic pain and suffer with arthritis." After many conversations with Alexis and lots of prayer, Cody elected to have his left leg amputated below the knee.

During this time of life-changing decision making, Cody looked to Alexis for advice. "I gave him a list of the pros and cons, but I also asked him if he wanted to live in chronic pain," Alexis recalled. "I've never allowed him to feel sorry for himself. There are plenty of others who have it a lot worse than we do. We are blessed."

While Cody was healing and learning to live as a multiple amputee, concerned individuals in Ennis were bringing their ideas to fruition. Thanks to caring people like Marylyn Wylie, Wayne Norcross, Carol Spellman and Larry Fincher, the Home For The Brave Committee, made up of many of the same dedicated people who were involved in prior veteran projects in Ennis, was established in





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RO... BELL, U.S.M.C.  
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**“The Home For The Brave Committee feels privileged and honored to provide a home for Cody and his young family. We have gotten so much more out of the process than we’ve given.”**

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late 2013. The mission of Home For The Brave is to provide a mortgage-free home for a disabled American veteran. The effort is to construct a home in Ennis, built specifically for a veteran with special needs due to wounds received while serving our country. "Our goal was to reach out to corporate and individual contributors, as well as volunteers, to assist in this endeavor," Marylyn stated. "Most of the money we received was from individuals, but several Ennis businesses have been on board since the beginning."

As funds started adding up, the Home For The Brave Committee decided it was time to choose a worthy recipient for the home and reached out to the local VA, as well as other veterans' groups, for possible candidates. A group of five that included Larry, Wayne, Dr. B. Laws, Dr. Shannon Roth and Danny Cook was formed to serve as the selection committee. In preparing a list of viable applicants, the committee knew that certain criteria had to be met. "The candidate had to have been wounded in Operation Enduring Freedom, the latest conflict," Carol explained. "They needed to be from around this area, so they'd have family support. And lastly, they needed to fit into the Ennis community."

Out of three viable candidates chosen to be considered, Cody, along with Alexis and their son, Corey Thomas, became the proud recipients of the first Home For The Brave residence in Ellis County. Cody fit the criteria closer than the other two. He had served in the latest conflict, losing so much in the fight. Being from



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Grandview, in Johnson County, he lived near enough to Ennis to have family ties nearby. Fitting into the community was almost instantaneous. Cody's personality is such that he can merge himself into any situation, handling it with wit, humor and ease. He knows who he is as a husband, father and veteran.

Actual construction on the home was begun in late April, with the home originally slated to be complete by July 4. However, due to the overabundance of rain the area experienced in April and May, the "welcome home" date has been moved back to late August or early September. "The Home For The Brave Committee feels privileged and honored to provide a home for Cody and his young family. We have gotten so much more out of the process than we've given," Marylyn stated.

When Cody was notified, he was in shock. "We are so thankful and grateful for the home," he said. "Now I know without a doubt that my kids will grow

## Meg Sullivan, M.D.

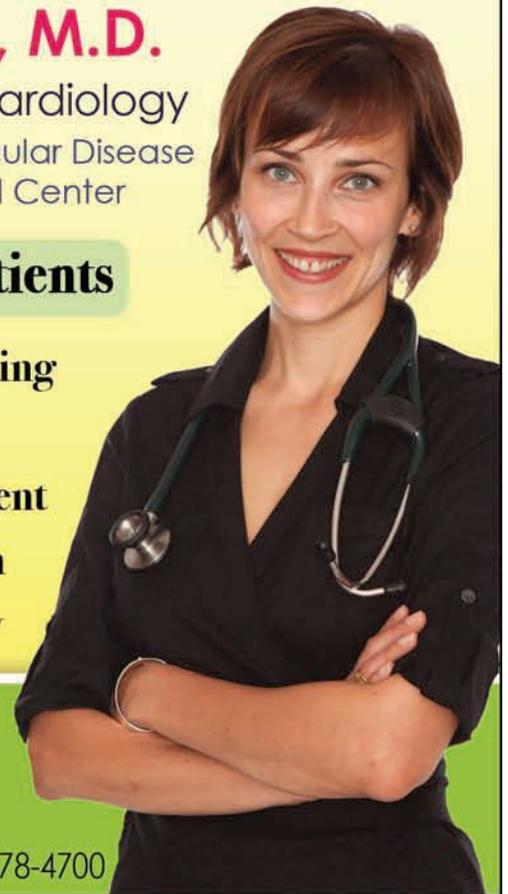
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up in a steady, stable neighborhood — a neighborhood that reminds me of Grandview in so many ways.”

“Yes, it means so much to us,” Alexis reiterated. “Cody is now able to complete his schooling and not have to worry about a monthly mortgage payment while on a limited budget.”

By the time he retired, on April 29, 2014, Cody had spent five years fighting the battle for freedom. He is currently attending Murray State College in Tishomingo, Oklahoma, where he is studying to earn an associate degree in gunsmithing. “My goal is to one day own my own gun shop,” he said. “Once we are settled in our new home, I will continue to commute to and from school until I’m able to take my remaining courses online.”

Alexis is currently a stay-at-home mom. She enjoys taking classes online and looks forward to having one more baby in the future before they start the process of adopting. “We would like to have five children in all,” she confessed, with a smile that matched Cody’s.

The couple’s outlook on life is filled with positive energy. They are looking forward to moving in and planting roots in the new community they will soon call home. “We *do* have a really good outlook on life,” Alexis said, as Cody took her hand and nodded in agreement. “We’ve lived through a lot to get to where we are today.” **NOW**

*Editor’s Note: For more information, visit [www.homeforthebrave.net](http://www.homeforthebrave.net).*

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# Shannon Childs

ACNP-BC, FNP-BC

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Shannon Childs is an Ellis County native who has practiced in Ennis since 2001. She received her master's degree in nursing administration with a minor in education from The University of Texas at Arlington. Shannon received her Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Certificate in 2000 and her Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate in 2009. She is board certified in both acute care and family nursing. Shannon is the proud mother of three daughters and has two beautiful grandsons. Shannon is accepting NEW patients of all ages.



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Sharon Wolfe has an awesome team of nurses at Ennis Care Center! They are all very helpful, warm and friendly. I think Ennis Care Center is the best place to go when you are sick and need help. I really enjoyed the activities and want to say thank you to Susan for keeping me busy when I wasn't in therapy. Also, a special thank you to Jennifer, my wound care nurse, Deanna and Amy in nursing and Jennifer in therapy. I wouldn't go anywhere else except Ennis Care Center for rehab!

~ J. Dixon



My daughter and I are so glad we chose Ennis Care Center for my rehabilitation. When I arrived, all I could do was lay in bed. Now that my rehab stay is over, I can walk better than before my accident and back pain that I have suffered with for years is gone! We are so thankful to all of the staff. Everyone was so sweet to me. I can't tell you the praise I have for the therapy department! This is the best therapy program I have ever been through! I really enjoyed the activities while at ECC and I took it upon myself to encourage some of the other rehab patients to participate. I feel that it helped push us to keep working and have fun getting to know each other at the same time. There is no place else I will ever go for rehab. ECC is the only choice!

~ M. Myers

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# A Family FOURTH

— By Virginia Riddle

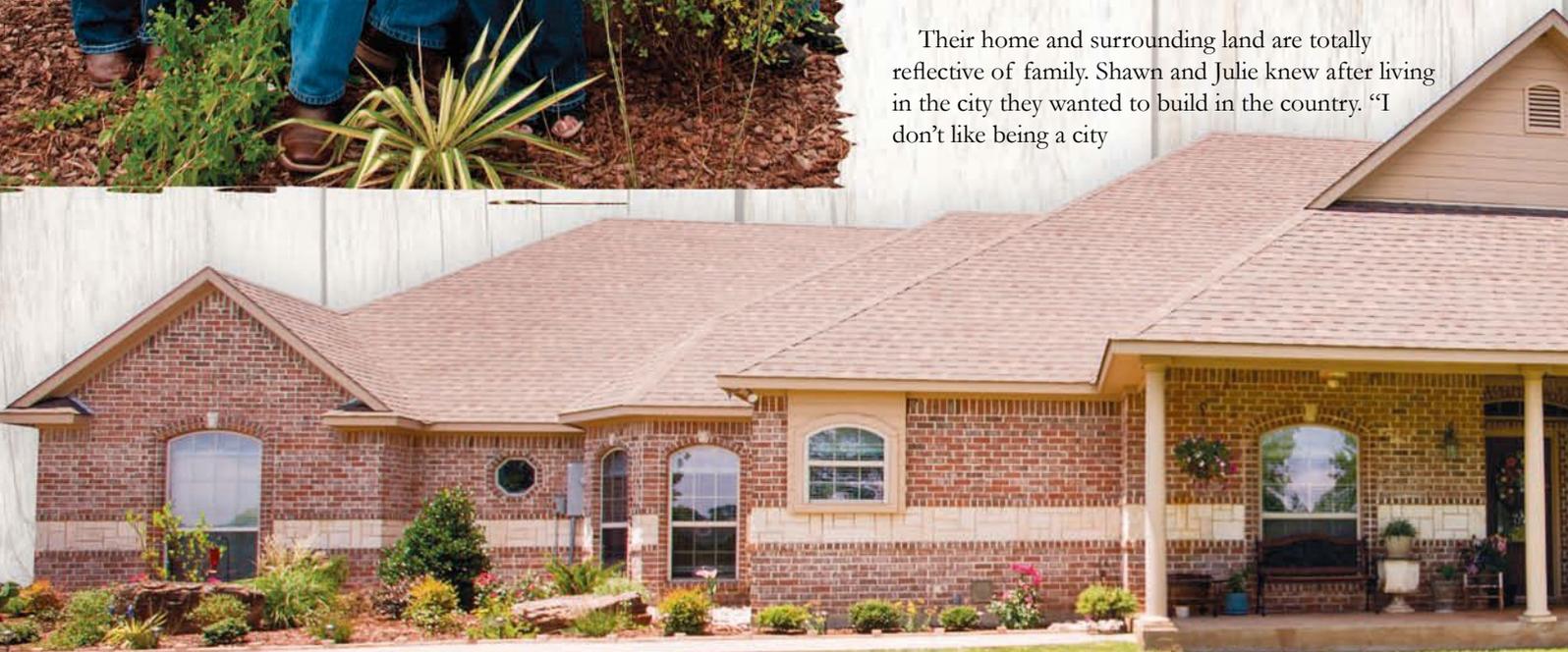


## At Home With Shawn and Julie Mounts ☆ ☆ ☆



*Smoked briskets, served with all the usual side dishes and tons of fun, will greet over 100 family members at the country home of Shawn and Julie Mounts during their annual Fourth of July family reunion. The one thing missing from the celebration will be fireworks, if it is too dry! Shawn, recently retired from the Ennis Fire Department after 24-and-a-half years of service — the last three as Captain, is ever mindful of fire danger during hot Texas summers. But there is still plenty to do during this annual event. Shawn and Julie's home has a game room, and folks can ride four-wheeleders and take advantage of the fishing tank. "We have a big enough house and something for everyone to do," Shawn said.*

Their home and surrounding land are totally reflective of family. Shawn and Julie knew after living in the city they wanted to build in the country. "I don't like being a city





girl. You just can't find a lot of country in the city. I feel more productive living in the country," Julie said. They worked from two sets of house plans, and then "changed everything," asking Shawn's uncle, Al Krajca, to build their house. Completed in 2002, the home sits on land that has been in Shawn's family since 1958. His cousin lives next door, and their immediate family members live throughout the Ennis area. Family memories are made and shared daily.

Even though Shawn and Julie had



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High School, and their son, Aric, will be an eighth-grader at Ennis Junior High School. Madison is taking nearly all pre-AP courses, while playing on the EHS volleyball team. Aric plays tennis at school, enjoys fishing, four-wheeling, paintball and Xbox 360. "We follow all their games," Shawn said.

Cole, the resident black cat, and a black Lab named Buddy are also part of the family. Tigger, a cat that was abandoned on their acreage and Rocky "the wild cat" round out the family's current menagerie.

Shawn continued his education at Texas A&M University's fire school and, ultimately, he became certified as an EMT/paramedic and was commissioned as a police officer, so he could become a fire arson investigator. He founded Firehouse Firewood five years ago and is a salesman for SpitLead Company. The tactical TAC-12 A-1 shotgun he sells is used on the show *Heli-Hunter*. Shawn is serving as a paramedic for Ennis Regional Medical Center. "I know the people, and know that what I do matters. Every time I go to work at the hospital, I know I make a difference," he said. He

known each other for years and both attended Navarro College, they did not date until Julie walked into the pizza shop where Shawn was working while putting himself through fire school. "He said he knew right away he was going to marry me, told his boss and bet him \$10," Julie remembered. Shawn's boss was in the resulting wedding party 22 years ago!

Their lives are busy with family activities and work. Their daughter, Madison, will be a 10th-grader at Ennis



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Shawn and Julie plan to stay in their Ennis-area country home the rest of their lives.

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continues to volunteer with the Garrett Rural VFD and helps other VFDs during fundraisers in the area. Shawn enjoys a lifelong passion for hunting.

Julie works part time for her father, Dr. Daniel Gabriel, in his Ennis chiropractic practice, after having gained experience as an office manager for other practices. She also sells essential oils and the Saba weight loss and wellness supplements. Julie loves to paint, cook, bake and garden, especially in their home vegetable garden, and she has volunteered with Madison's Girl Scouts troops. Together, the family enjoys camping and cruising and has taken road trips in their camper to Tennessee, San Antonio and many state parks.

Woodworking together, the couple built a chaise lounge for two that is strategically placed on their front porch to catch the view of pastures, pipe fencing and their gated entrance. The limestone and red brick home is a marriage of old, new and collected memorabilia. The leaded glass entry door, with its matching transom, and a photo in the formal dining room of Julie's grandparents' home in Brenham, Texas, are part of the old feeling of the home. "I had so much fun in that house when I was growing up," Julie remembered. An aerial photo of their property decorates the wall above a tea cart ready for high tea. Julie, who worked in a gift shop during her high school years, designed and created the table centerpiece.

This room also features a quarter circle ceiling treatment that complements the rounded archways into the room and columned entryway. Other ceilings in the home are boxed treatments, and most of the home's rooms are rich with custom-designed-and-created moldings around the ceilings and doors and custom-designed tile floors.

A limestone fireplace, with a black iron decorative screen and a mantel supporting family photos, is the focal point of the living room. Floor-to-ceiling windows and French doors allow a full view of the backyard.

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Madison and Aric's bedrooms and shared bath have been redecorated to reflect their teenage interests. "I learned to cut tile in the bathroom, and we crackle-painted the walls," Shawn recalled. There is also a fourth



bedroom for overnight guests. The master bedroom and bath feature a "see-through" fireplace, built-in bookcases and his/her vanities.

The staircase is open to the kitchen, breakfast bar and informal dining area, which is encircled by a bay window. The faux finish on the walls looks like elegant leather, framing the custom-made cabinets that hang above granite countertops. The kitchen also contains a wine rack and convenient work island. A coffee grinder that belonged to Shawn's grandfather sits on the counter. A walk-in pantry with custom-designed shelves for cans is tucked under the staircase.

The staircase is theater lit and covered with elegant carpet from England. It leads to the game room, complete with a bar, pool table and blackjack/poker table. A beer bottle chandelier and an eclectic collection of decor from pawn shops, auctions, family memorabilia and trip souvenirs complete the festive room. "Nearly everything in this room has come from someone else in the family," Shawn said. Shawn's firefighting memorabilia holds a special place on the wall.

The home will work even when the couple enter the empty nest phase of life, since there is zoned HVAC. Shawn and Julie plan to stay in their Ennis-area country home the rest of their lives, and they have reserved an acre of land each for Madison and Aric, so the family heritage of the land can continue. **NOW**

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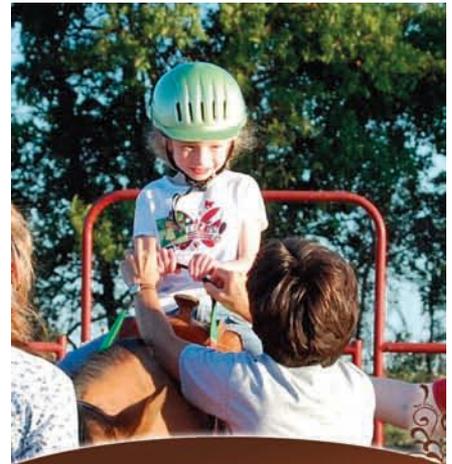
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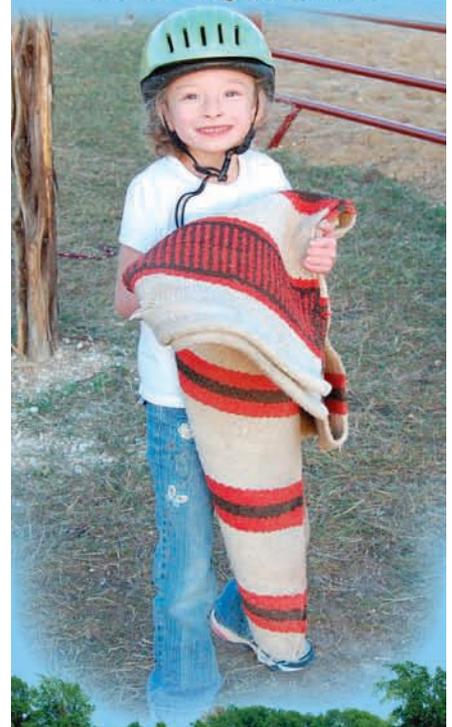
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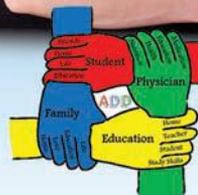
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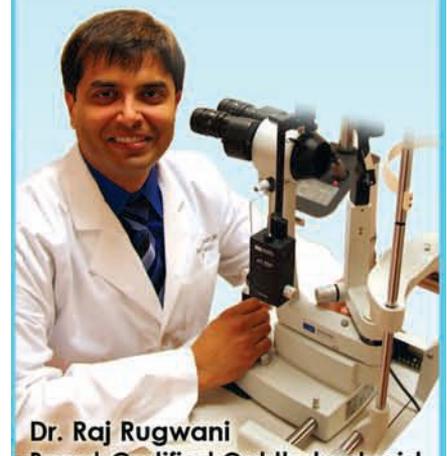
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# Musical *Blessings*

— By Callie Revell



*Danny Potter and his wife of 26 years, Jaye, have lived in Palmer for 12 years. “We like living away from the city,” Danny said. “It’s quiet.” Since they are both retired, they have plenty of time to travel and explore their hobbies. Danny often accomplishes both at the same time. He has played the clarinet for 57 years, and in that time, his love for the instrument has taken him across the country and around the world.*

Danny began playing the clarinet in middle school out of necessity. “I told my parents I wanted to be in the band, and they said, ‘Your



brother played clarinet. So, you're going to be a clarinet player, because we can't afford to buy you anything," Danny remembered. The clarinet has remained his favorite instrument throughout the



decades. "I was horrible at the piano and horrible at the guitar," he laughed. "I just never picked up other things. I like playing the clarinet. It seems to work for me. I think that's the way a lot of people are. They stick with what they like, and I like the sound of the clarinet."

Danny played the clarinet all the way through high school in the jazz band at Channelview High School. He went to college on a music scholarship from Sam Houston State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in music education. He participated in his school's band throughout his time as an undergraduate and was even selected to participate in the National Intercollegiate Band at Indiana University.

Naturally, Danny's career path led him to music. He spent most of his career as a high school band director. He decided to pursue his master's degree in special education, which gave him valuable insights about teaching. He spent the first part of his career directing in the Houston area. During this time, he attended the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic where he was named to the All-American Bandmasters Band.

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“Two directors from every state are selected to be in that band, and I was one of two from the state of Texas,” Danny said. He also spent time teaching in Jacksonville, Florida, and played with First Baptist Church of Jacksonville during that time. Later, he taught for several years near Galveston, and he had the opportunity to play in the orchestra for two musicals put on by The Strand Street Theatre.

As his teaching career began to wind down, Danny stepped away from directing to pursue a position as an elementary school music teacher. “A lot of band directors do that,” he said. “They are directors for a number of years, and it takes a lot of energy. So, some of them switch to teaching little kids.” In 2007, Danny was selected as Teacher of the Year by Clinton P. Russell Elementary School in Dallas. In his retirement, he has also enjoyed playing as a guest musician for a number of churches in the area.

Danny went on two singing tours to Colombia and the United Kingdom when he was younger, but his favorite trip by far has been a trip to Israel, in October 2012. “That was the very first time my clarinet and I have been out of the country together,” Danny said. The trip was organized by Danny’s friend, Camp Kirkland, through the Global Missions Project. People who play an instrument can apply to travel with a selected orchestra to various countries. “Camp Kirkland said he had a place for me if I was interested in going,” Danny said. “I asked Jaye if I could go, and she

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said, 'Yes, but not without me!'" Jaye accompanied Danny on the trip as a member of the support group.

The eight-day trip was exciting, but it was also exhausting. "When we arrived, we dumped our luggage in our room and went straight to rehearsal," Danny said, noting that this was after a 10-hour flight and a drastic time change. "We had to, though, because people were gathered from eight different states, and this was the first time we had ever met each other, let alone played together." Danny played five concerts with the traveling orchestra.



"We were warmly received everywhere we went," he said. "Not only did people applaud, but they seemed genuinely interested in us. They would hang around and want to talk to us."

While they were touring with the orchestra, Danny and Jaye were able to see some of the many incredible sights in Israel. They loved watching the sunset over the Mediterranean Sea. They took guided tours of Caesarea, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea and more. They took the time to be baptized in the Jordan River. They especially enjoyed Jerusalem, where they saw the Garden of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives and the suspected location of Jesus' tomb. "There is some doubt about the authenticity of these locations, but there was evidence that seemed compelling that these were the correct sites," Danny said. "There were

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a lot of amazing things about that trip. When you're on the ground for eight days, and they're giving you Bible verses constantly and telling you about all the sites you're seeing — it was a lot to do in eight days!"

Over the past several years, Danny has focused his attention on connecting with local musicians. He spent 2005 to 2014 playing with the Mesquite Symphonic Band (now the Mesquite Community Band), after being invited by a fellow teacher, Ron Totoro. He served on the board for a time and even made a solo appearance in one of the concerts. However, the location eventually became a problem. "I drove over 45 minutes to and from rehearsals once a week," he said. "It was too far."

That's how Danny came up with the idea for the Ellis County Community Band, a way for musicians throughout Ellis County to work together to make



great music. He's looking for musicians of all ages and all walks of life. "There could be someone sitting right next to you in church who used to play and plays very well, and you never knew it," Danny said. "Those are the kind of people we need to find." He's feeling very optimistic, and he believes the band will come together soon. "I only have a few responses, so far, but they're all different instruments. So, it's looking pretty good."

Regardless of what happens, Danny will always be playing his clarinet. He's currently working on releasing a CD with his friend, Randy Tredway of In The Music Room Studio and Listening Room. He also plays and sings at Rockett Christian Church, where he attends every Sunday. Music has been a constant friend to Danny since he was young, and it has taken him on adventures he never expected. He has dedicated his life to spreading the blessing of music to others. **NOW**

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# Revamping the Kid's Room

— By Sara Edgell

*The decor of a house is a direct reflection of the family that resides within, and the same is true of a child's bedroom. As children grow, their interests, hobbies and tastes change. What they find appealing from ages 4 to 7 will very likely be different from an 8- to 12-year-old and definitely different from a teen. Luckily, remodeling, redesigning and redecorating their personal space to encompass the things they love doesn't have to be an expensive undertaking.*



## Getting Started

Use the experience as an opportunity to work on the project together and bond. The very first thing to do is talk about the things your child would like to see in the space. Discuss current likes and dislikes, favorite colors, interests, hobbies and needs.

A wonderful place to start is with a theme, as this can determine color palette, accessories, bedding and even furniture. For example, if a 12-year-old girl is dreaming of a shabby-chic, vintage cottage bedroom, the colors will likely be soft pastels. The decor will include lots of floral fabrics and refurbished furniture pieces, such as a whitewashed, vintage vanity and nightstand. Repurposed picket fence planks could also be used to build a



headboard and/or shelving units, or they could be used to line the walls, starting at the baseboard and coming half way up the wall.

Assessing the project and what it will entail before developing a plan is important. Make a list of items to be purchased, as well as those that can be repurposed, determine “do it yourself” projects versus those requiring the expertise of professionals and, lastly, decide a budget and stick to it. Then, you are ready to begin.

## Painting

Painting is perhaps the most inexpensive and easiest way to revamp a room. With a little prep and good old-fashioned elbow grease, a space can be completely transformed in a matter of hours. Because color can greatly

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influence mood, and since children are typically drawn to bright, bold colors, compromising on paint selections is crucial.

Take into consideration the size of the room. Lighter shades of blue, teal, purple and green can open up a smaller space, whereas darker, richer tones like plum, magenta, burnt orange and ruby can be overpowering, making the space feel even smaller and cramped. Lighting is another factor to consider. Natural light will show the truest color, whereas incandescent and florescent lighting will cast hues on the color, altering its appearance. Give your child the freedom to pick their paint color, with a bit of compromise considering these factors.

## Personal Touches

Decorative painting techniques are also an option. Many craft stores carry a variety of stencils that could be used to create a slew of personalized wall graphics. You can also make your own stencil using a piece of cardboard, pencil and box cutter. Simply draw the design on the cardboard and carefully cut it out. From the popular chevron pattern to more specific designs like sailboats and anchors, cheetah print or a favorite quote, stencils — whether store-bought or homemade — make the job a breeze.

While stencils are helpful, they will not enable you to create the whimsical ambience only a custom-painted mural can deliver. From magical fairytale forests to vibrant cityscapes, nothing can top the work of a local artist or painter. These individuals are easy to find and can bring your child's vision to life like no one else can do.

## Furniture, Storage and Lighting

Storage and functionality are two areas to consider. Understanding the activities the space will accommodate is key. For example, is a desk needed for homework?

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Will a television and gaming system be kept in the room? Are there lots of toys or books requiring storage? All of these factors must be determined in order to decide the specific types of furniture the room will need.

You may be able to carry over large pieces of furniture, such as a bed or dresser, into the new room or update them with paint to fit the theme your child has chosen. However, in some cases, purchasing new furniture may be necessary. If your child wants a super-cool and highly functional loft bed complete with a shelving unit and desk underneath, or maybe they desire their own hidey-hole built into the window frame, hiring a carpenter is in order. These professionals can build custom pieces of furniture, shelving and closet organization, or even change the layout of a room by removing or building new walls.

For new lighting fixture installation or construction, master electricians are needed. Not only can they effortlessly install anything from a ceiling fan to recess or track lighting, they can also add extra outlets. No matter the job, when it comes to dealing with high voltage, letting a professional handle the task is the way to go.



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## Accessories

Additional personal touches can be added to the space with specialized accessories. These specialty items can be found anywhere and can be anything. For instance, a 7-year-old boy may want a sports-themed bedroom, complete with a basketball goal and scoreboard, a football field floor and custom-painted stadium wall.

To complement these major room components, posters can be framed and hung on the wall. Sports cards could be used to decoupage the surface of a desk or the back of a shelf. Old baseball bats could be repurposed into a bed frame or curtain rods. Jerseys could easily be transformed into curtain panels or bedding.



The trick is to be creative and allow your child the power of choice when picking accessories for their new space.

In the end, a room redo is all about updating the space to be a true reflection of the child who occupies it. By revamping your child's room to fit their current interests and personality, you are not only acknowledging them as an individual but also providing them with a space all their own. **NOW**



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*Hunter, Kaitlyn and Jason have a great checkup!*

## SMILES AS BIG AS TEXAS

*The Just for Kids Dental team makes dentistry a fun experience for patients.  
— By Virginia Riddle*

Cowpokes standing tall holding big-screen televisions and cowboy boots and hats are ready to distract kids, while Just for Kids Dental professionals perform their valuable services that establish good care and lifetime habits, thus creating beautiful smiles. Favorite DVD movies play above the young patients' heads, while they relax in dental chairs and Wii games provide a very homey and kid-friendly atmosphere. "We make the experience fun, so the kids will feel comfortable and want to come back," Dr. Jon Ousley, DDS, MSD, stated.

Just for Kids Dental focuses on dental care for infants to 18-year-old young adults. "We like to see infants before their first birthdays and continue their care every six months from then on," Dr. Ousley said. All general dentistry services are offered, and many future dental problems can be caught early or avoided completely. "We don't offer orthodontics and will refer some

procedures out, when necessary, but most patients' care can be handled right here," Dr. Ousley remarked.

A graduate of North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas), Baylor Dental College (now Texas A&M University Baylor College of Dentistry) and The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston, Dr. Ousley has practiced dentistry in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex for over 40 years. He is a past president of the Texas Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the Southwestern Society of Pediatric Dentistry. "It takes two extra years of study to become a pediatric dentist," Dr. Ousley said, "but treating kids is special. All of our doctors are specialty trained."

Just for Kids Dental has offices in both Waxahachie and Ennis. Joining Dr. Ousley in the Ennis office is Dr. Taylor McFarland who has degrees from Duke University, the

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Texas A&M University Baylor College of Dentistry. Dr. Paul Bonner, a graduate of The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston, along with a dental hygienist, chairside assistants and front office greeters make up the rest of the staff. Bilingual services in English/Spanish are offered. "We have incredible assistants who can take a child from crying into smiling. We listen to kids," Dr. Ousley related. Balloons and stickers are handy rewards for a job accomplished, and girls get the spa treatment when staff paint fingernails bright pink.

Staff members are always aware that the treatment of such young patients also means treating parents. "Parents don't like to see their children hurting. We use anesthesia and oral sedation to ease pain," Dr. Ousley explained. Education of both the parents and the child is important. Every procedure is thoroughly explained,

**"We make the experience FUN, so the kids will feel comfortable and want to come back."**

and parents and kids are trained to perform ongoing home care well.

Insurance plans are accepted, as well as major credit cards, checks, money orders and cash. "Ninety percent of our patients' care is insurance and/or Medicaid based," Dr. Ousley said.

Dr. Ousley and his wife, Julia, are the parents of three grown children and grandparents to eight. In his spare time, Dr. Ousley enjoys soccer. In the past, he played and coached the sport. Now he enjoys it as a proud grandfather.

The philosophy of the practice is clearly stated by Dr. Ousley. "We care for kids," he said. "We don't do anything that is not needed, and we go slowly and are into their world. The goal is to set the stage for the patient to like dentistry. We strive to make Just for Kids Dental children's dental home." **NOW**

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*Michaela Steager, Prague Czech Queen 2015 from Prague, Nebraska, stops to greet local attendees at the halls.*



*The Blue Blast team takes the field during their first ever blast-ball game.*



*GO! Dance dancers Lulu and Raegan wave to the crowd at the Polka Festival Parade.*



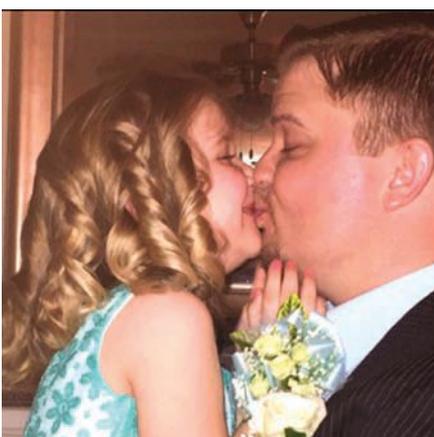
*Brayden Thompson decorates a cake for his mom for Mother's Day at Carver ECC.*



*Last Day of Pre-K for Bailey Reno, Peyton Dickerson and Sophia Hughes at Tabernacle Weekday Ministry.*



*Kevin and Sandra Strong enjoy bugs from Zane Robinson and Easton McIntosh, two of their grandchildren, on Palm Sunday.*



*Avery Mach Leone at her first father/daughter dance with her daddy, Chad.*



*Julie Johncox takes Ennis Now's Linda Roberson on a tour at the Moncrief Cancer Institute's recent open house.*



*Rudy Ozymy prepares delicious Texas-shaped, Texas-sized waffles for guests prior to the 49th Annual Polka Festival Parade.*

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## Goodbye, Child Care Costs ... Hello, College Savings Opportunities

If you're a working parent, you know firsthand about the difficulties of finding quality, affordable care for your children. But eventually, your kids head off to school, and those child care bills go away, or at least diminish greatly. When that happens, you could start putting away money for another one of your children's milestones: college.

Just how expensive is child care? Costs vary greatly among the 50 states, but the national average for a 4-year-old at a child care center is approximately \$7,880 per year, according to Child Care Aware of America, a child care resource and referral agency sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. What could you do with this money once your child enters kindergarten?

Of course, not all schools provide all-day kindergarten, so you still may have some child care costs. For the purposes of illustration, let's presume you can finally say "goodbye" to child care costs when your child is in first grade, and let's also assume your child is attending a public school. If you invested that \$7,880 every year for 12 years, until your child reaches 18, you could accumulate more than \$150,000 in a tax-advantaged college savings account, such as a 529 plan — assuming the money was placed in a hypothetical investment that earned 7 percent per year. (Keep in mind, though, that the word hypothetical means exactly that, because whenever you put money in any variable investment, there are no guarantees.)

Actually, earnings in a 529 plan accumulate and are distributed tax free, provided they are used for qualified higher education expenses. (529 plan distributions not used for qualified expenses may be subject to federal and state income tax and a 10-percent IRS penalty on the earnings.) Also, your 529 plan contributions may be

deductible from your state taxes. However, 529 plans vary, so be sure to check with your tax advisor regarding deductibility.

A 529 plan offers other benefits, too. For one thing, the lifetime contribution limits are generous. While these limits vary by state, some plans allow contributions well in excess of \$200,000. And a 529 plan is flexible: If your child decides against college or vocational school, you can transfer the unused funds to another family member, tax and penalty free.

A 529 plan is a widely used choice for college savings, but it is not your only option. You could also consider a Coverdell Education Savings Account, which, like a 529 plan, can generate tax-free earnings if the money is used for higher education expenses. You can typically only put a maximum of \$2,000 per year into a Coverdell account, but it lets you use the funds on K-12 and college expenses.

Whichever college-savings vehicle you choose, it will take discipline on your part to continue investing in it, year after year. And after freeing yourself from those child care bills, you can certainly think of other ways to use this "found" money. That's why you might want to automatically move money from your checking or savings account to your 529 plan, Coverdell account or other investment earmarked for college. As your income rises over the years, you can increase the amount of these automatic transfers.

In any case, once those child care bills stop, you can put that money to work on your children's behalf. Make the most of this opportunity. **NOW**

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Jeff Irish is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.*

### Happy Independence Day

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## Low Back Pain: To Fix or Not to Fix — That Is a Great Question

Perhaps among the most common pains experienced in life is low back pain. We ask a lot of our backs and, for the most part, they perform remarkably well despite decades of poor lifting mechanics, poor posture and excessive lifting/straining. No one wants surgery, but similarly, none amongst us wants chronic low back pain. Wouldn't it be better to just "fix it"? Well, the answer is really quite complicated and merits discussion.

First, an understanding of the basic mechanics of the back is needed in order to make an informed decision. Whether you are talking about the neck, mid back or lower back, the spinal column consists of alternating bones called vertebrae and soft tissue cushions called discs. The vertebrae provide the bulk of the structural support and provide a bony cage that protects the spinal cord. The discs serve to enhance flexibility of the spine, provide shock absorption and act as spacers to provide ample room for nerves to exit the spinal cord. In our youth, the discs are gelatin-filled much like a jelly donut, but with aging, the gelatin dries out and the structural integrity of the spine is therefore compromised.

As the disc dries, compression of the disc occurs resulting in extrusion of the disc material into either the spinal cord or the spinal nerves. As it does so, the corresponding nerve function is diminished causing pain and/or numbness and weakness in one or both legs. The pain may be in the back or it may be in the hip, leg or foot. The farther down the leg the pain extends, the worse

the disc problem tends to be. Further, compression of the nerve may lead to impairment of bowel, bladder or sexual function. If the compression persists, the neurologic manifestations become permanent even following surgical decompression.

As painful symptoms persist and fear of chronic disability arises, the temptation to seek a surgical solution is understandable. However, a recent study demonstrated similar outcomes at periods up to 2 years between patients having decompression surgery for low back pain and patients receiving traditional physical therapy. That is to say, surgical patients did no better than patients receiving intensive physical therapy. While these results need to be corroborated with additional studies, this trial reinforces the merit for physical therapy in the management of chronic low back pain.

So, when should back surgery be seriously considered? Clearly back surgery should be pursued in appropriate patients who fail to respond to conservative measures. Likewise the presence of neurologic manifestations, such as weakness or bowel/bladder dysfunction, often merits surgical management. As back surgery results vary with the skill and experience of the surgeon, selection of the best possible surgeon is important. Your physician will be the best source for an informed decision.

So, here's to your back! Treat it right, and it will serve you well. **NOW**

*Larry A. Jinks, M.D., F.A.C.P. • Ennis Doctors Center*

## Saturdays Through October

Ennis Farmers Market.

### July 3

Crape Myrtle Festival Concert and Fireworks: gates open at 5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Sports Complex. Bring lawn chairs and barbecue grills so you can cook out before and/or during the show. Free to the public.

### July 4

Ennis Freedom Festival: 8:00 a.m.-dark. Farmers Market will be open from 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.; Red, White and Bike Parade begins at 10:00 a.m.; BBQ cook-off held throughout the day; all in downtown Ennis. Music by the Pontiac and a fireworks show will be held at the Texas Motorplex at dark. For more details, call (972) 878-4748 or visit [www.visitennis.org](http://www.visitennis.org).

Pettigrew Academy's Free Ice-cream Social: 9:00 a.m.-noon, 806 E. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie. For more information, visit [www.pettigrewacademy.com](http://www.pettigrewacademy.com).

Independence Day Parade: 10:00 a.m., Downtown Midlothian. 2015 Parade Theme: Salute to Our American Heroes. Serving as the 2015 Grand Marshal is Air Force Veteran Cpl. Nick Bristow, WFAA Daybreak traffic reporter and DeSoto police officer.

Patriotic Parade: 10:00 a.m., down Main Street lined with crape myrtles in full bloom, Waxahachie. Free hotdogs, provided by Remedy Church, will be served following the parade in Getzendaner Park.

### July 9 — 11

Air & Space Camp: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Cook Center, Corsicana. This miniature aircraft camp is open to all kids from ages 9-14. For more information, call (903) 654-4874.

### July 11

Junk in the Trunk: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie.

Summer Moonlight Movies: *The Sandlot*: 9:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie. Bring lawn chairs or blankets. Concession stand on-site. Free admission to the movie sponsored by the City of Waxahachie Main Street Program. For more information, call (469) 309-4111.

Movies in the Park: *The Lego Movie*: movie starts at dusk. Hawkins Spring Park, 1498 FM 1387. Bring your blankets and chairs. Giveaways at every showing. Concession stand open.

### July 17, 18

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County Annual Quilt Show; "Quilts! Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow": 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, Midlothian. The show benefits both the guild and Hope Clinic.

### July 17 — 19

Virtual Tournament Directory National Girls Softball Tournament: Waxahachie Sports Complex.

### July 24 — 26

Kid's Summer Showcase: *The Girl With the Golden Locks*: Gateway Church, Midlothian. For more details, visit [www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com](http://www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com).

### July 24, 25, 26, 31, August 1, 2, 7, 8, 9

Ennis Public Theatre presents *Ruthless! The Musical: Fridays and Saturdays*, 7:30 p.m.; **Sunday** matinee, 2:30 p.m., 2705-C N. Kaufman St. For more information, call (972) 878-7529 or visit [www.info@ennispublictheatre.com](http://www.info@ennispublictheatre.com).

### July 25

Boomerang Lunchtime Cinema: Books on Film: Noon, Sims Library. Adults are encouraged to bring their own lunch and join others at the library for a midday movie. Movies shown will represent books that have been made into cinematic features. Call the library at (972) 937-2671 for the title and rating of each month's cinema showing.

### August 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, 31

Theatre Rocks! presents *Over the River and Through the Woods*: 505 N.W. Main St. Call (972) 878-5126 or visit [www.theaterocks.com](http://www.theaterocks.com) for times, ticket purchases and more details.

### Ongoing:

#### Mondays and Wednesdays

Sign Language Class: 4:00-5:15 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Ave. Classes are free and available for all ages. No sign up required.

#### Third Mondays

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin, Waxahachie. For more information, visit [www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org](http://www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org).

#### Fourth Mondays

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Ave.

### Second Tuesdays

Ennis Masonic Lodge No. 369 meeting: dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting to follow at 7:30 p.m., Masonic Lodge, 209 N. Dallas St. For more information, contact Cecil Curry at [ccurry\\_98@yahoo.com](mailto:c Curry@yahoo.com).

### Third Tuesdays

Veterans Networking Group meeting: 5:00 p.m., Ryan's Steak House, Hwy 287 Bypass and 77. Call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378 for more information.

Skyblazers of Waxahachie R/C Club meeting: 7:30 p.m. at the Parks and Recreation Building, downtown Waxahachie.

### Third Wednesdays

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection meeting: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club. Cost is \$13. For more information, contact Kay at (972) 935-2054 or Margaret at (972) 937-1016 for reservations.

### Thursdays

Chess for Kids: 6:00-7:30 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Ave. Elementary age and above. No sign up required.

### Fourth Thursdays

MACS: 6:00 p.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church Life Center. Evening includes a covered dish meal and a program of singing or informational message.

### Second Thursdays

Mom's Connected meeting: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200 Country Club Rd. Call the church office at (972) 875-3861 for more information.

### Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local singers and musicians. Sponsored by Bristol Cemetery Association and Caring Hands of Bristol. For more information, contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

### Sundays

GriefShare meeting: 2:30-4:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ellis County in the sanctuary Youth Inc. room. For more information, call (972) 935-9801 or visit [www.cowboychurchofelliscounty.org](http://www.cowboychurchofelliscounty.org).

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com](mailto:sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com).*



## In the Kitchen With Norma Wilson

— By Virginia Riddle

A lifetime of cooking began for Norma Wilson while under her mother's wing in the kitchen. Norma credits her mother, Margaret Gentry, and her mother-in-law, Nannie Wilson, for giving her the necessary skills and inspiration. Today, Norma watches cooking shows on television, a practice she shares with her daughter, Julie. "I regularly adopt the recipes, tweak them and make them using pantry items I already have in my kitchen," Norma said.

Recently, Norma has been trying to eat healthier by cooking with fresh vegetables. Her husband, Joe, is a farmer and her salon customers also bring in garden "gems." Norma picks selections at the Ennis Farmer's Market. "Nothing's better than homegrown veggies," she remarked. **NOW**

### Potato Casserole

**5-6 large potatoes**  
**1 medium onion, diced**  
**1 16-oz. carton sour cream**  
**2 cups shredded, mild cheddar cheese**  
**1/4 cup butter, cut into small chunks**  
**Salt and pepper, to taste**

1. Cook potatoes with skins until done; let cool.
2. Peel and grate potatoes; gently fold in remaining ingredients.
3. Place mixture into a large baking dish; cover and refrigerate overnight.
4. Uncover; bake at 350 F for approximately 45 minutes.

### Banana Pudding

**5 cups milk**  
**3 3.4-oz. pkgs. instant vanilla pudding mix**  
**1 8-oz. carton sour cream**  
**1 16-oz. tub Cool Whip (divided use)**  
**Vanilla wafers**  
**4 bananas, sliced**

1. Add milk to pudding mixes; beat until well-blended.
2. Add sour cream and 8-oz. Cool Whip.
3. In a large casserole, make two layers consisting of vanilla wafers, pudding and bananas.
4. Top with remaining Cool Whip and vanilla wafers.

### Nannie's Squash Casserole

**1 lb. yellow squash, cut into thin slices**  
**1 10 1/2-oz. can cream of mushroom soup**  
**1 egg**  
**1 5-oz. can Pet Condensed Evaporated Milk**  
**6-7 crackers**  
**1 medium onion, diced**  
**1/2 stick butter**  
**1 Tbsp. sugar**  
**Salt and pepper, to taste**

1. Cook and drain squash.
2. Mix in soup, egg, milk and crackers.
3. Sauté onion in butter.
4. Add onion, sugar, salt and pepper to squash mixture.
5. Pour mixture into a casserole dish; bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

### Great Potato Soup

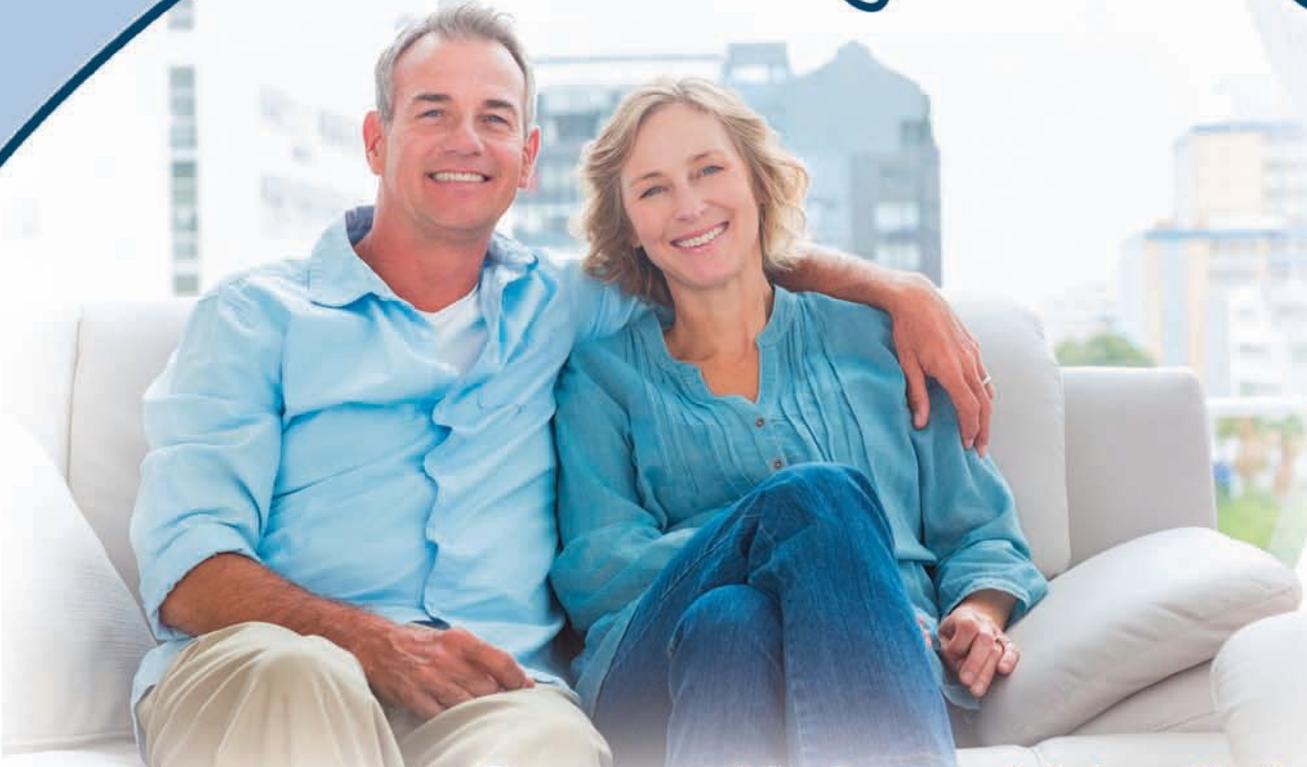
Makes 6 servings.

**4 cups potatoes, cubed**  
**4 cups water**  
**1 cup carrots, thinly sliced**  
**1 cup celery, finely chopped**  
**1/2 cup onions, diced**  
**2 tsp. salt (divided use)**  
**1/2 cup butter**  
**1/2 cup flour**  
**1 tsp. salt**  
**2 cups milk**  
**1/2 cup shredded cheddar or Colby cheese**  
**2 cups precooked ham, diced**

1. In a Dutch oven, combine potatoes, water, carrots, celery, onions and 1 tsp. salt.
2. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to simmer until vegetables are tender; do not drain.
3. In a saucepan, melt butter; whisk in flour and 1 tsp. salt.
4. Cook 1 minute, gradually adding milk and cheese; cook until cheese melts and mixture thickens.
5. Fold in ham; combine with veggies in broth mixture.
6. Simmer until ready to serve.

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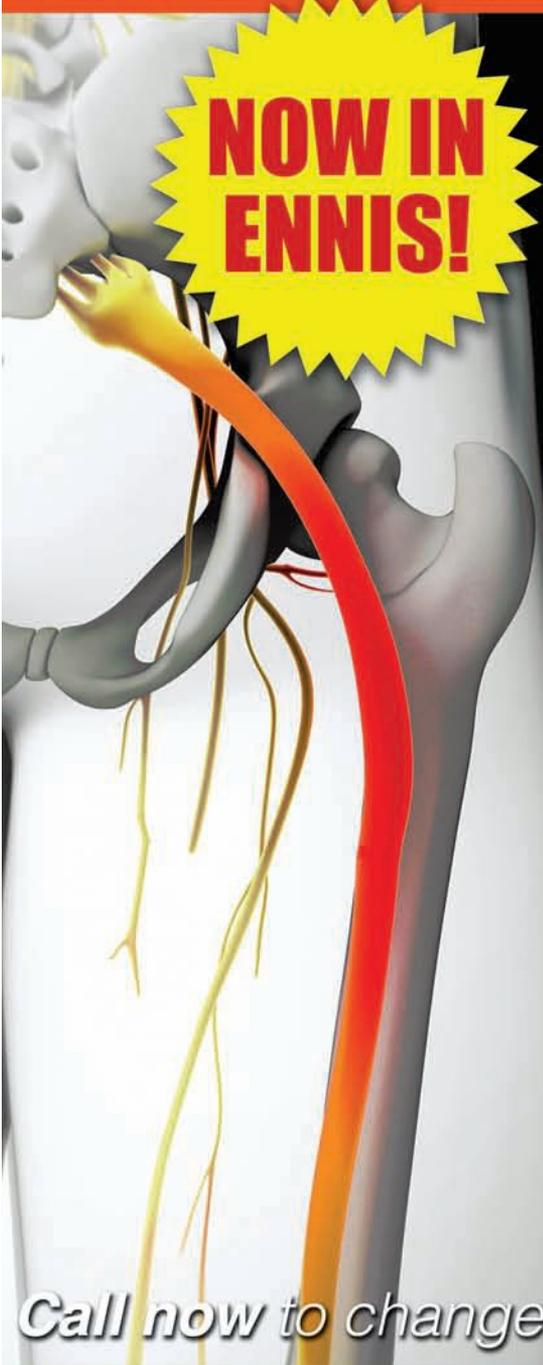
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