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ON THE COVER



David Harper helps build a community of visual artists.

Photo by Amy Dishman.

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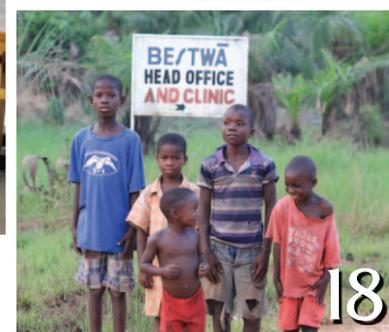
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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



Editor's Note

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Strap on the feedbag because in a few days, the Fourth of July's Independence Day celebration will be upon us. What would the Fourth be without tons of hot dogs, hamburgers, steaks and sausages? And, don't forget copious amounts of watermelon, chips, potato salad, beans, pickles and lemonade. Independence Day is made for the great outdoors, so fire up the grill and/or head for the nearest park. You can graze all day, while waiting for the main attraction — fireworks! All in all the Fourth lends itself to being a fun-packed day.

How much time will you spend thinking about our veterans who made this day possible? We can enjoy this day because of the courageous men and women who willingly sign up to serve and protect this great nation. Just saying the words "thank you" somehow doesn't seem enough. We can thank them by caring for them and honoring them when they return. From the bottom of my heart to every veteran, thank you.

Happy Fourth of July!

Betty

Betty Tryon
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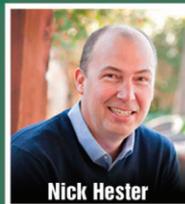
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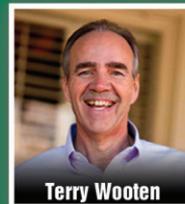
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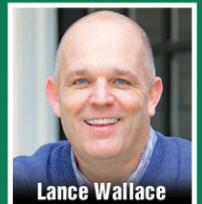
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Retreat in ART

— By Betty Tryon

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life,” said one of the greatest artists of all time — Pablo Picasso. There is a place in Midlothian where you can go and have the cares of the day momentarily swept away and for a few moments rest in the beauty of art.

David Harper, volunteer curator at the Lighthouse Gallery located inside the Lighthouse Coffee Bar, acknowledged that viewing the arts has an incredible effect on the mind. “I’m in art museums regularly,” he shared, “but most people are not. So, in a very basic way, the gallery is like a little art museum. It introduces people to the experience and exposes them to the arts, which is an asset to anyone’s life in multiple directions. It introduces everyone from students to seniors to the gallery setting.”

David’s introduction to art began as a child. “I was always known as the kid who could draw,” he said. “My first grade teacher had sensitivity to the arts and knew what I could do. I remember helping her put together props for a play.” David’s skill to paint began to fade in recent years. “I haven’t painted for a decade,” he said. “There is a saying: ‘Use it or lose it,’ and my painting skills





are gone.” Although he feels his painting skills are no longer viable, his skill at sketching is still beautiful. He is currently drawing a series called *Vanishing Midlothian*, in which he is preserving the images of some of the old farm buildings seen around Midlothian. “I sketched them because some day they are all going to be gone,” he explained. Some parts of the series were shown in one of the gallery shows.

Born in Alexandria, Louisiana, David went to Louisiana Tech University and earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in design. After graduation, he moved to Dallas to begin his career. “This was in 1970, and we had the draft lottery. I had a low draft number, so unless the Vietnam War ended, it was possible I would be drafted,” he disclosed. “When I did the job interview, I told my prospective employer about the draft and was hired anyway. I worked about three months as a rookie designer before getting my draft notice.”

Following his time in the service, David returned to Dallas, where he met and married Vicki. David and Vicki have been married for 41 years and have three daughters. All three of them are now married, and two are moms. David’s design career has spanned 46 years. In 2015, he and Vicki moved to Midlothian, where they continued their membership and 15-year involvement at The Lighthouse Church. Being a lover of the arts, David began to devote his time to the art gallery by organizing it, scheduling events and procuring items for display. “The original vision for the coffee bar was that it



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would not only be a crossroad to the community, but would help to develop and nurture a community of visual and performing art,” he explained.

The exhibits are open to artists from across Ellis County of any age or skill level. One of the goals of the gallery is to help build a community of visual artists, and David sees the connectivity already happening as artists are meeting each other. “We have had artists as young as 8 years old and as old as in their 80s,” he said, “and we have had signature level artists who are known nationally exhibited next to people who have done maybe a half dozen paintings in their entire lifetime. The shows are never juried. That is, your work is not submitted to determine if it is good enough, only to see if it is appropriate for a family setting.”

One of the signature level artists whose work has graced the walls of the Lighthouse Gallery is Tina Bohlman, president of Ellis County Art Association. She is a signature member of five or six art associations across the country. “You don’t become a signature member by paying dues. You obtain that by achievement,” David shared. One

of the unique offerings of this gallery is someone without any experience or particular skill can have their work shown next to a Tina Bohlman. "Tina has given us strong support with the Association, and it's a nh honor to have her," David said.

The gallery has standards to ensure the work is safe for a family setting. "There are times when art needs to grab you by the collar and say, 'There is a terrible evil in the world, and you should be concerned about it.' This is not that place," David explained. "The gallery will reflect a quality, wholesome message, so families and people of all ages can enjoy it."

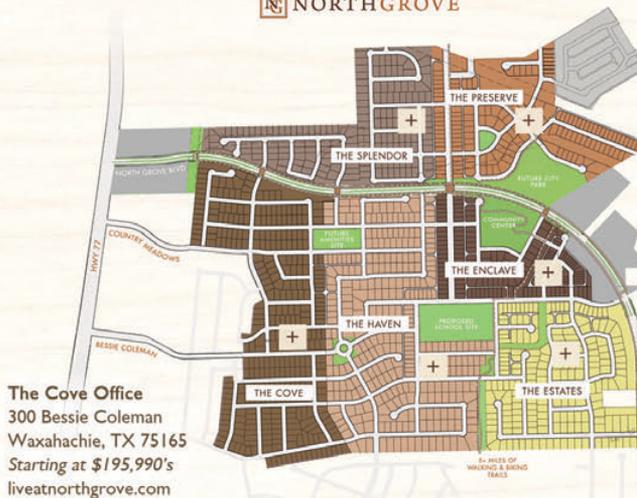
The gallery presents five themed shows per year. The Student Show starts the year in January and February. It is



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the only restricted show, consisting of students from the SALT and DasCHE homeschool associations. “The art teacher selects the images for the gallery. The students are so excited to be a part of the show and stand next to their framed work for picture taking,” David said.

The months of March and April present a show with a springtime theme. In the summer they host a show called Artist’s Favorite. “This show hangs all summer long and is designed to be just what it says,” David mentioned. “The



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work can be three dimensional, abstract, photography or sculpture." This year, the summer show will be replaced on September 1 by the Ellis County Life exhibit, which will run in September and October. Any art related to Ellis County is acceptable. Last year, one exhibitor



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photographed six quirky mailboxes found around the county. The last show of the year will be Faces, and it will be on exhibit in November and December. "Last year, it consisted of people faces, animal faces, painted faces, whimsical little strange characters, any kind of face," David said. "That's our plan for this year, but some events may vary from year to year."

There is no cost to visit this small oasis in Midlothian. "Art adds value to your life. It also introduces you to artists across the Ellis County area and gives artists an opportunity to show their work." Come relax and enjoy it! **NOW**

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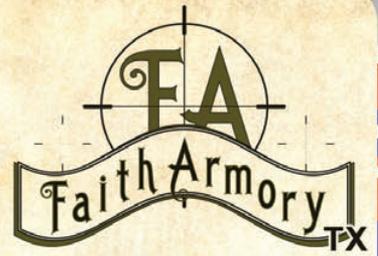
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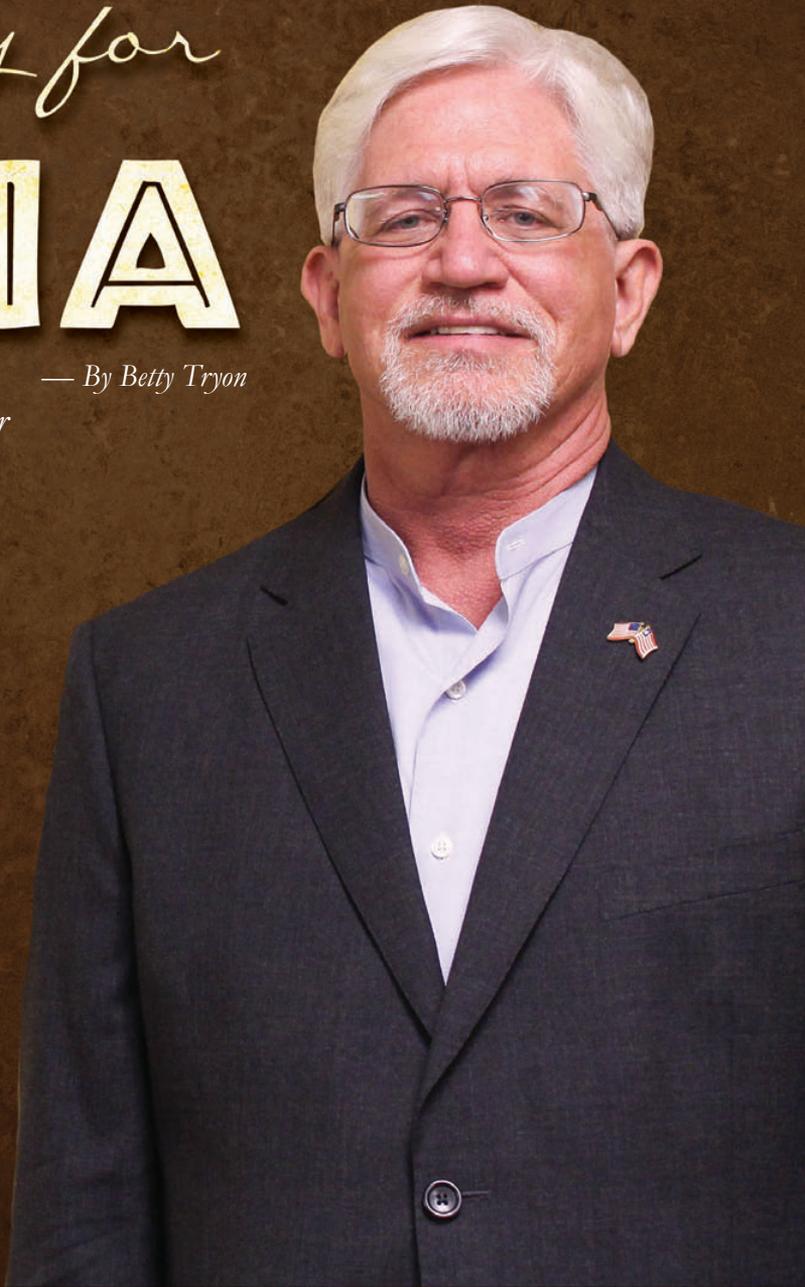
A Full Belly for LIBERIA

— By Betty Tryon

Balanced carefully over the coal stove, the large 60-liter cooking pot simmered with the makings of a nutritious soup of spices, sweet potatoes, greens and fish fresh from the ocean. The scent was enticing as it floated over the village inviting empty bellies to come. The soup's only flaw was there wasn't enough. Andy Perkins, member of Midlothian Bible Church and executive director of Building Everyone's Success Together in West Africa, is trying his best to change that in a country with millions of malnourished people. "God sent me to Liberia where just about anything you do is going to help someone," he declared.

Although his father was a Baptist pastor, Andy didn't grow up wanting to be a missionary to a foreign country. At age 20, he was drafted into the Army and honorably served for 10 years. Upon discharge, he came to Texas and attended Christ For The Nations Institute from 1981-1983. While there, he worked as the managing editor of *Christ For The Nations Magazine*.

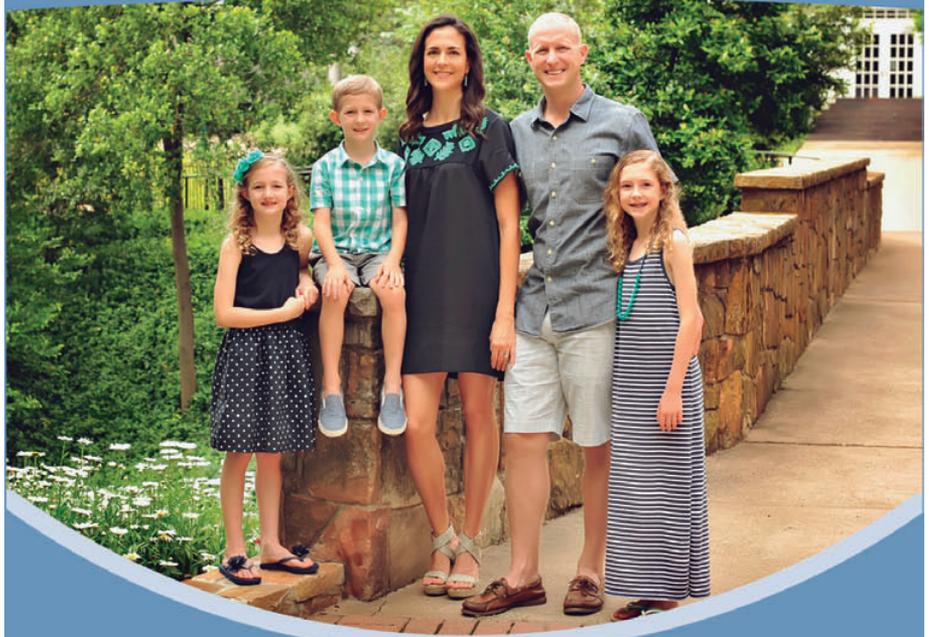
Growing up, Andy had a lot of experience in the printing business because his dad was not only a pastor but owned a print shop. He remembers running a press as early as age 8.



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That experience gave him the ability to have a career in the printing business, and it opened the door to his future involvement with Liberia. “I had a business as a printing broker and discovered that someone in Liberia wanted some help starting economic development,” Andy explained. “I went over there in 1999 and fell in love with the people.”

Liberia, located on the West African coast and founded by freed American slaves during the 1800s, has no electricity and no running water. Tanker trucks bring in fresh water. “The capital city has



over a million people and no sewers,” Andy said. He went there with a church group to start economic development. They tried developing several businesses, but those attempts failed. In February 2004, Andy returned to Liberia along with a friend, Daniel Mellish, who is now the field director for BESTWA and tried to figure out what to do. “We brainstormed, and we prayed,” Andy acknowledged.

One moment during his visit changed Andy’s perspective and focused him on the singular problem of feeding the children. Walking down the street to join Daniel, he happened to look down an alley and saw a 4-year-old girl being

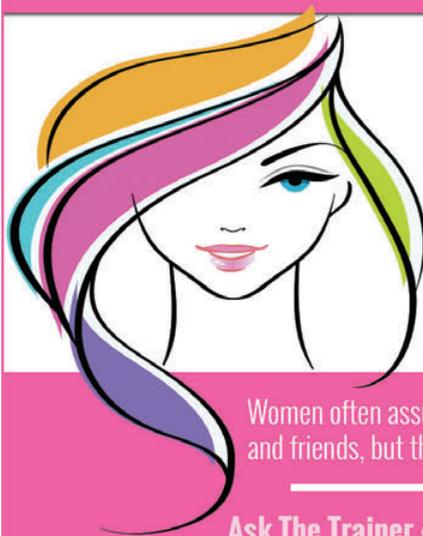


abused. "That incident is seared in me," he shared. "She was put in that situation because she wanted to eat. I didn't know how I was going to do it, but I *had* to do something."

Now, he had a purpose and a plan for Liberia, and that was BESTWA. Andy founded the organization in 2004, with the support of Midlothian Bible Church, but in January of 2005 he was diagnosed with stage IV cancer and was told to get his affairs in order. By December 2005, he was in full remission and was able to focus on the ministry again. For the next two years, he worked to raise funds and bring on the right personnel to help with the vision. Finally, in May 2008, the organization started with three cooks and 150 kids. "It took me two years to get it off the ground," he acknowledged. "We now have 917 children in the program and three feeding sites with each site having a supervisor, security guard and three cooks. We feed them rice and soup. The kids eat once a day, five days a week. They thrive on this. At every feeding site, kids who are not in the program line up for any leftover food. They will wait all day, but when the food runs out, we have to turn them away."



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The main criterion for admission into the program is for the child to show physical signs of malnutrition. “It’s not hard to tell. Starvation is quiet. One of the joys of feeding them is after they’ve been in our program for about a month, they begin to play and get noisy. Healthy kids are noisy kids,” he laughed. Children who grow up malnourished may have physical and mental deficits they can never overcome.

Andy receives assistance from the World Children’s Fund for actual feeding of the children. “We’re giving them food and health care for 15 bucks a month, and that includes overhead.” Along with feeding children, Andy saw the need for health care. In the first eight months of the program, they lost 19 children. Desperate to figure out a way to keep them from dying of disease, Andy found a relatively competent nurse with his own clinic, and for \$10 per child, he provided health care to the children. In the last two years, they have not lost any children to disease.

Andy now has 30 employees on a 6-acre compound belonging to BESTWA. On the grounds is a two-story building, and Andy’s dream is to have the top level be the location for the first birthing center in Liberia. “Liberia has the second-highest maternal mortality rate and fourth-highest infant mortality rate in the world,” Andy said. He was motivated by witnessing firsthand the

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personal toll. His daughter, Candy, gave birth to baby Zoe in 2009. Naturally exuberant about his granddaughter's birth, he called his best friends, Daniel and Victoria, in Liberia with the news, and they danced in celebration. Three days later, Daniel and Victoria's daughter had a baby, who died in Victoria's arms. "It seemed like such an injustice," Andy said sorrowfully. "Many women die from post-partum hemorrhage. It's so commonplace now that when a woman is ready to go into labor, she calls all her family to say goodbye."

Andy thinks that with proper training, more women can survive childbirth. Samaritan's Purse is willing to ship the equipment over when the center is completed, but Andy needed medical personnel to do the training. "You can just see the hand of the Lord in this," Andy affirmed. Within a quarter mile of BESTWA's compound, he found the answer to his needs. "I met Dr. Levi Zangai who has three doctorates. He's a Liberian and was a tenured professor and department head at USC. He quit that job, came to Liberia and is now the president and CEO of the European Union-built Grand Bassa Community College. Andy discovered Dr. Zangai wanted to start a midwifery program but had no place for the trainees to work." Since Andy's focus with the midwifery program is more about training personnel and not just a place for them to give birth, Dr. Zangai was an answer to prayer.

Andy's goals for BESTWA are the same goals he had for his kids. "There are five things we want to accomplish with the children — feed them, give them health care, send them to school, love them and tell them about Jesus." Liberia is a hard country in which to live and help but the efforts of organizations like BESTWA are bringing hope and a new future to the next generation. **NOW**



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An Oasis of Our Own

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

They say you should never judge a book by its cover, but that lesson is hard to follow when it comes to houses. Usually, the features on the front façade of a home will tell you a lot about the rest of the house. But there is a home in one of the older parts of Midlothian that has a hidden backyard oasis far exceeding anything you would guess as you drive through the neighborhood. Over the last 20 years, Doug and Denise Ward have carefully built a work of genius from the inside out.



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Doug grew up in Houston, graduating from Spring High School before heading to Baylor University. He studied real estate and entrepreneurship, but never went into that field. “Denise opened her business, and I used to do a lot of sales early on,” he explained. “But I would do part-time work, too, and now I’ve been with Fire Blockers for 20 years.”

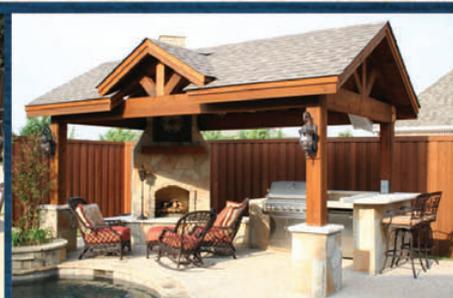
Denise grew up and graduated high school in Duncanville before she also headed to Baylor. “Doug and I met at a place called Brazos Landing,” she recalled. “We dated for a few months before getting engaged, and we got married in May 1984, right before our senior year.” Before the end of that last school year, though, Doug and Denise welcomed their first child into the family. “I ended up three hours shy of my secondary education degree, so I never did go into teaching,” she admitted. Their daughter, Kristin, lives in Ovilla with her husband, Chad, and three children. Doug and Denise’s son, Brandon, and his wife, Tiffany, live in Midlothian, and they just welcomed their third child, as well.

After leaving Waco, Doug and Denise moved to Duncanville, where Denise opened a business with her sister. “We started Claire Lynn, which used to solely do wholesale clothing sales to businesses around the nation,” she described. The business still does the wholesale side, but Denise also has a storefront in downtown Midlothian.

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Doug and Denise moved to Midlothian quicker than they expected. “We wanted to move, but weren’t really looking yet. Denise’s mom was a real estate agent, so she was always looking for us,” Doug explained. “One day, she called and told us she found the place. We bought our house and moved in within a few weeks.”

They moved at the start of that summer, and immediately confirmed what they loved about Midlothian. “After living in Duncanville forever, we really wanted the feel of a smaller

town,” Denise recounted. “After seeing that little Fourth of July parade with people in pickup trucks, we knew this was our town.” They moved into the neighborhood behind Midlothian High School, and they have slowly remodeled the house over the last decade.

From the front, their home seems similar to the others in the neighborhood. Walking to the front door, though, the upgrades start to stand out from typical houses built in Midlothian 20 years ago.

“We replaced all the doors with iron ones,” Denise listed. “And we put a few antique windows throughout.”

Just inside the front door, there is evidence of some of their bigger remodeling jobs as well. “The kitchen was really small, so we knocked out some walls and changed the floor plan,” Doug detailed. The end result is a large kitchen, with dark granite counters, open space and a sink Doug made himself.



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"I bought a mold and looked online for how to pour a concrete sink," he said. They hired someone to give all of the cabinets a custom, distressed-white facing, and Doug hung a large distinctive door that gives sliding access to the utility room. "The plumbing layout worked out, we were able to swap the sink and the washing machine locations," he remarked. "You can see the lines where the old walls were in the flooring."

Those lines are easy to see, in part, because they got rid of the old flooring. "The first big change we made was changing the floors to stained concrete throughout the house," Denise specified. "We also had the ceilings raised and turned our coat closet into a wine cabinet. We love going to the wine country, and we just went to Italy for the first time." The kitchen and entryway flow into a casually formal dining room in the front of the house and a leather-adorned living room before leading into the bedroom area. With six grandkids living nearby, Doug and Denise have a room just for toys and kids' stuff. "When they're here, the whole house turns into their playroom," she joked. The other extra room was reserved for Doug's mom, but she lives in Midlothian now, too, so they use it as a simple and cute guestroom. The hallway is full of pictures of their ever-growing family, and the guest bathroom in between the rooms

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is one of the projects Doug did himself, with fanciful cabinets and an exquisitely tiled shower.

The biggest room remodel was their master bedroom. "Our most common vacation spot is in the Caribbean, so we wanted our room to have the feel of a cabana," Doug explained. He knocked out an exterior wall and replaced it with doors that function as large windows, adding a few simple trim and accent pieces, and the result is exactly what they hoped to achieve. That feel is highlighted by the pièce de résistance of the house, a tiki hut that looks like it belongs on the shores of a white-sand beach. "We decided to do something special with our backyard, and this was it," Doug said. He built the hut with real bamboo from a supplier in Frisco, and he got the thatch from a company in Florida. "I did the structural building, and all of the tile work except for the outer facing. We even dug up living bamboo from Duncanville to line the outer portion of the yard," he detailed.



Behind the bar, the refrigerator and grill are surrounded by a custom sink, bamboo doors and a mosaic bar counter. "On one of our trips, we saw a bar like this," Denise said. "Doug figured out how to copy it, and my aunt, Sherry Tolar, who is also an artist in San Antonio, made all of the fishes that are mixed in with the beads and concrete." A few years ago, they added a beautiful swimming pool, complete with rock features. "There used to be a great big oak in the middle of the yard, but when it died, it let us add the pool," she continued. "We just love being out here, and now we have everything we need to have parties, invite the family to swim or just enjoy the oasis we have." Though you might not know it driving by their house, Doug and Denise have built an island getaway right in the comfort of their own home. **NOW**

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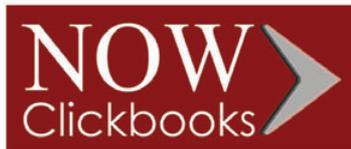


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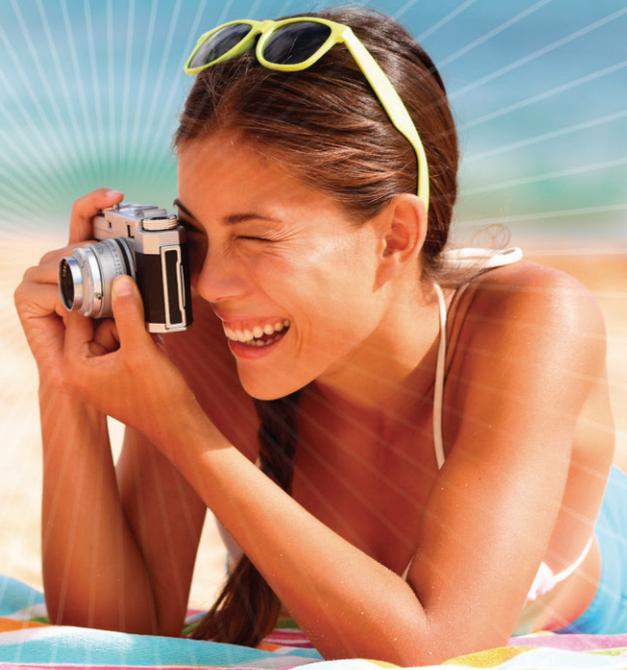
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Ready, Set, SHOOT

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

Summer is the time for making memories, and one of the best parts of making memories is capturing the perfect shot to commemorate the occasion. Whether your little ones jumped off the high dive for the first time, or you need a photo of your family pet fetching a Frisbee out of the water, getting the picture can be harder than it seems. These simple steps will help make sure you get an image to last a lifetime.

KNOW HOW TO USE YOUR EQUIPMENT

- Modern-day single-lens reflex cameras are amazing, as long as you know how to use them. If you have, or are buying an SLR, the manual should be your friend. Most SLRs, whether digital or manual, offer many features, but



the novice photographer often misses some of the features available. Specifics differ from one camera to another, but some common features include: changing shutter speeds, optional flash and the ability to take rapid-fire photos.

- Lenses have zoom capabilities for specific ranges, and bigger is not always better. For closer photos, a smaller lens gives a clearer picture, but shots from far away are greatly enhanced by lenses with a range of 55-300 mm.¹ Most companies also offer a lens choice that is branded “vibration reduction” or “image stabilization,” which steadies the subject but can also slow some camera functions.

IF YOUR CAMERA IS A PHONE

Phone companies have come a long way when it comes to their camera features, although a phone picture will

probably not have the quality of a stand-alone camera. Here are some things to remember when your phone is the only camera you can use:

- Use space behind the subject to make sure





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Focus on having fun.

they stand out as much as possible. This could include the sky, a field or even a solid-colored wall. Most phones will automatically enhance the subject of the photo, but even the smartest phone may not know whether the subject is your son or the celebrity on the poster behind him.

- Use the flash and zoom sparingly. Most camera flashes overexpose the subject and leave colors looking washed out. And if you have to take a picture from far away, crop it afterward instead of zooming. You will see a drastic reduction in quality when you zoom in on a subject that is far away. Instead, let the subject be far away and fix it in the editing stage.²

- Find the right editing app. Different phones will have different best options, so find out what apps are ideal for your use.³ Getting out red-eye, touching up lighting issues and adding enhancements

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it outdoors.⁴ Too much sunlight can be bad, but on a mildly cloudy day, just enough light means fewer shadows and rich colors for the photos. If you have to take a picture in the middle of a cloudless day, try to use trees with large openings to diffuse the sun, without completely putting your subjects in the dark.

- Make sure you and the subject are in the right spot. You may not be able to control the amount of light, but putting the light source to the side of the subject will decrease washout, if the light is behind them, and should eliminate the awkward squint that happens when your subject has to look into the sun. If you see shadows, you might consider adding a light source on each side of the subject, which will provide equal lighting for the photo.

- Learn how and when to use your flash. Make sure not to let the flash reflect off a mirror or window. On the other hand, using the flash when the sun is behind your subject can reverse the shadowing effect that typically ruins some pictures.



HOW TO CAPTURE YOUR LOVED ONES

Even with the right camera, the perfect light and complete understanding of how to use what you have, getting a great shot of a moving target can seem impossible. Remember these tips:

- Anticipate the movement, and use the shutter speed to your advantage. Aim your shot in the direction your subject is moving. It is better to get your child's

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face and the grass in front of him than the back of his feet.

- Be careful how you bribe. Offer the kids a treat for doing a good job, but do not hold it in front of them while taking the shot. You are likely to get a child with an unhappy look and outstretched arms.

- Use their energy and spunk. It may be messy, but getting a candid photo of your daughter joyfully eating an ice cream cone may be better than struggling to get a shot of her sitting just right. And for your pets, try action shots of them playing fetch instead of getting them to sit still for a photo.

This list can help you get a great photo of special moments this summer. But the most important tip is this: Focus on having fun. Do not let the stress of taking the perfect picture take away from making great memories with your loved ones. **NOW**

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Kara Mack's and Melissa Shook's businesses deal in making things and people beautiful.

Fashion and Photos

Lucky U Boutique and Melissa Shook Photography both focus their businesses on customer service. — By Betty Tryon

When customers walk into Lucky U Boutique, the coziness of the interior invites one to touch everything and to walk and linger in the uniqueness of the decor. “I would describe my decor as shabby chic,” Kara Mack, owner of the business, explained. “I try to mix vintage with modern touches in the decor and with my clothing, too. I want my customers to have pieces that are very versatile, so their Lucky U goodies are always a favorite in their wardrobe.”

The Lucky U is full of distinctive quality pieces in clothing and items for the home. “I strive to have items that are different from what other people carry,” Kara explained. “My tagline is *Be Original. Be Unique.* I don’t want to see you in the same thing everyone else is wearing.” Kara actively looks for items that fulfill this goal. One way of doing this is to offer products that

are handmade and one of a kind. Among the more exclusive and beautiful items Kara carries are her Guatemalan bags. They are decorated in the vivid and rich colors of that region and no two are alike.

Once you shop at Lucky U and Kara gets the opportunity to know your style, she can function as a personal stylist for you and can pull items for you to see on your next visit. “The feedback I get from my customers is that I offer excellent customer service,” she noted. Uniqueness and service are stalwarts of the Lucky U Boutique.

Kara found her way to Midlothian with the suggestion of her friend, Melissa Shook, owner of Melissa Shook Photography. Melissa had already settled into Midlothian with a successful photography business. She discovered her love of photography

Business **NOW**

when, as a graphic design major, she took one class in the subject. "Taking that photography class gave me something hands on to touch and to create with," she explained.

Although Melissa enjoys family shoots, her specialty is weddings. "I have come to realize that I like shooting the moment," she shared. "I like shooting different pieces of someone's whole day. It's been a lot of fun working with brides. It's the flowers, the putting on of the dress and having those memories." She prefers photographing candid shots rather than posing people. When shooting family photos, she does pose them but likes for them to be themselves. "If the 3-year-old just doesn't want to smile for the camera, it's OK."

These two friends share a love for Midlothian. And they pride themselves in running their respective businesses with customer satisfaction in mind.

All of her photo shoots are shot on location. No need to worry about where the location will be because Melissa has "a ton of location spots for whatever you want — urban, modern, country or downtown." If you have a location in mind, Melissa will scout it out ahead of the shoot and let you know her concerns. "Outside there might not be any shade, and you can't shoot in the full sun," she said. "But if it's the location you want, then I'll make it work and make sure we do it at the right time to make it happen. My style is fresh, pretty and rustic. I bring a fresh style, exceptional service and professionalism for the very best photography experience."

These two friends share a love for Midlothian. And they pride themselves in running their respective businesses with customer satisfaction in mind. **NOW**



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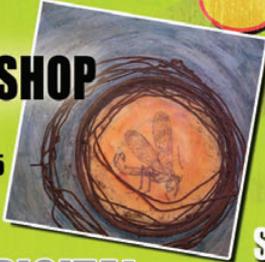
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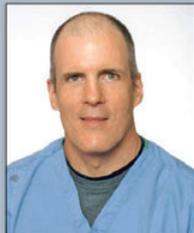


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Taking a Vacation? Make It Easy on Your Feet.

Although rest and relaxation are the goals for most vacations, they usually involve a lot of walking, and a lot of walking usually involves sore feet. Walking is great exercise and one of the most reliable forms of transportation, but if your feet aren't in the best shape or you don't have the right shoes, too much walking can cause foot problems. Good foot care is essential if you plan to subject your feet to long periods of walking.

Some simple foot-care tips include:

- Wear thick, absorbent socks (acrylic instead of cotton).
- Dry feet thoroughly after bathing, making sure to dry between toes. Use powder before putting on shoes.
- Nails should be cut regularly, straight across the toe.
- Bunions, hammertoes or any other serious foot problems should be evaluated by a foot and ankle surgeon.

The right shoe is also important to healthy walking.

The ideal walking shoe should be stable from side to side, and well-cushioned, and it should enable you to walk smoothly. Many running shoes will fit the bill. There are also shoes made especially for walking. Walking shoes tend to be slightly less cushioned, yet not as bulky and lighter than running shoes. Whether a walking or running shoe, the shoes need to feel stable and comfortable. Warm-up exercises to help alleviate any muscle stiffness or pulled muscles are also advised before walking. Loosening up the heel cords (Achilles and calf) and thigh muscles before a walk is especially effective. If you're not accustomed to long walks, start slowly and rest if your feet start hurting. And above all, have fun! **NOW**

*Christopher Schmitt, DPM
Member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons
Southern Star Foot & Ankle*

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July 2

Midlothian Independence Day Parade: 10:00 a.m., Historic Downtown Midlothian. 2016 Parade Grand Marshal James Kimmel and family.

July 3

Independence Day Fireworks Display: 9:15 p.m., MISD Multi-Purpose Stadium. Annual fireworks display sponsored by Citizens National Bank of Texas.

July 9

Movie in the Park – *The Peanuts Movie*: 7:30 p.m., Hawkins Spring Park. Bring chairs or blankets. May bring snacks and drinks. Concession stand will be open. Don't forget insect repellent. Rainout Date: **July 16**.

July 13, 20, 27

Summer Movies at the Library: 2:00 p.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Free event is open to the public. For more information, call (972) 775-3417.

July 15, 16

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County: 10:00 a.m., Midlothian Conference Center 1 Community Circle. Admission: \$7. Free parking. A judged show of 100 quilts, silent auction benefiting Hope Clinic, Red Oak Senior Center and the Bridge Network, many vendors, scissor man, door prizes and quilt appraisals.

Midlothian Opry Country Music Show: Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. Old Country and gospel music with Goodtimers Band. \$5 admission. Call Davonna at (214) 676-1706 or go to Facebook Midlothian Opry for details.

July 16

Wildflower Walk: 9:00 a.m., Mockingbird Nature Park. One-half mile stroll to identify wildflowers and take a flora and fauna survey along the trail. Be sure to bring water and wear close-toed shoes. Insect repellent is also a good idea, especially in the spring when the chiggers are out and hungry. In the event of rain, the walk will be cancelled.

July 16, 17

Lone Star Cowboy Church of Ellis County 10th anniversary celebration: For more details, call (972) 576-0900 or visit www.LoneStarCC.org.

July 19

Magician Brett Roberts: 11:00 a.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Come and be amazed. For more information, call (972) 775-3417.

July 21

Ellis County Amateur Radio Club: 7:30 p.m., Ellis County Sheriff's Office Training Center (County Farm), 2272 FM 878, Waxahachie. Talk-in on the 145.410 machines. All are welcome. For more information: wd5ddh.org.

July 29, 30, 31

Rumpelstiltskin Private Eye performance: **July 29**, 7:30 p.m.; **July 30**, 7:30 p.m.; **July 31**, 2:30 p.m., Living Hope Church of the Nazarene, 2420 Brown St., Waxahachie. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased online through the theatre website at waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com. Call at (972) 646-1050 or email at wct.texas@gmail.com for further information.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to betty.tryon@nowmagazines.com.



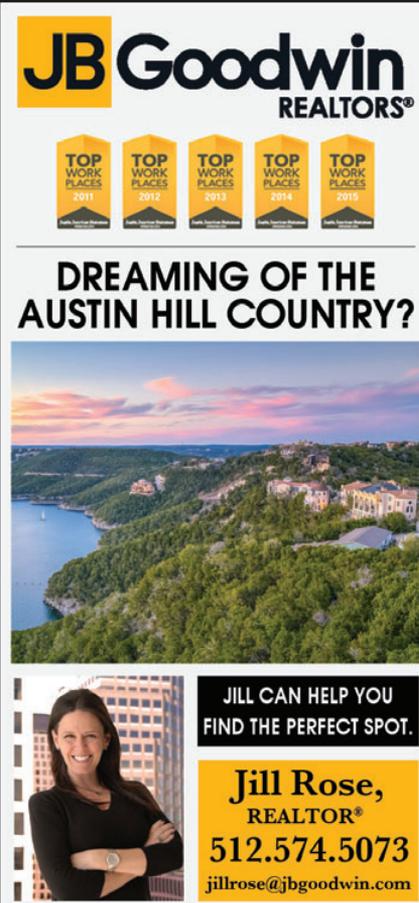
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In the Kitchen With Isabella Valdez

— *By Betty Tryon*

Isabella Valdez remembers moving to Midlothian in the third grade, seeing cows on McAlpin and becoming sad thinking they might be eaten. She made the decision to become a vegetarian. “Now my line of reasoning is that it helps me to be more aware of what I am consuming. It is not always the case though. I am a teenager, and I eat donuts and drink coffee!”

Isabella shares a bond with her parents most kids would envy. Her dad gifts her cooking utensils and ingredients, and they both appreciate a well-oiled, cast-iron skillet. While listening to Leon Bridges, Isabella and her mom encourage each other during cooking sessions that include such things as sautéing onion until it’s perfect. **NOW**

Quinoa Fried Rice

Serves 2 hungry monsters.

- 2 Tbsp. oil**
- 1 small onion, diced**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 8 oz. mushrooms, sliced**
- 2 heads broccoli, cut into florets**
- 1 zucchini, chopped**
- 2 carrots, chopped**
- 3 Tbsp. rice vinegar**
- 3 Tbsp. Tamari or soy sauce**
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar**
- 1 Tbsp. grated fresh ginger**
- Dash red pepper flakes**
- Vegetable stock, up to 2 cups**
- 4 large eggs, beaten**
- 2 cups cooked quinoa**

1. Heat oil; sauté onion and garlic for 5 minutes on medium heat. Add other vegetables.

2. Pour the vinegar, Tamari or soy sauce, brown sugar, ginger and red pepper flakes on top of the vegetables. Add stock and more oil if they begin sticking. Cook vegetables until they reach desired texture; add eggs. Continue cooking until eggs reach desired doneness. Add quinoa and cook to desired doneness.

My Favorite Enchilada Sauce

- 2 Tbsp. oil**
- 2 Tbsp. flour**
- 2 Tbsp. chili powder**
- 2 cups water**
- 1 3-oz. can tomato paste**
- 1/2 tsp. cumin**
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder**
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper**
- 2 tsp. unsweetened cocoa powder**
- Salt, to taste**

- 1.** Combine the first three ingredients. Heat until it bubbles, and then whisk for two minutes.
- 2.** Add water and whisk. Add remaining ingredients. Allow to simmer until thickened. Play with your spices!

Twice Baked Potatoes Veggie Style

- 3 russet potatoes, baked**
- 1 large leek**
- 1 Tbsp. oil**
- 1 Tbsp. butter**
- 1 bundle kale, washed and torn into pieces**
- 1 cup sour cream**
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, grated**
- Freshly ground black pepper or red pepper flakes, to taste**

- 1.** Scoop out the middle of the baked potatoes. Reserve the scooped potato and the skins.
- 2.** Cook leeks on low heat with oil and butter until softened. Add kale; cook until wilted.
- 3.** Combine leek and kale mixture with sour cream, cheese and the reserved scooped potatoes. Fill reserved potato skins with the kale/potato mixture. Cook for 30 minutes, season to taste.

Blueberry Muffins

- 2 cups flour**
- 3/4 cup brown sugar**
- 2 1/2 tsp. baking powder**
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 cup buttermilk**
- 1/2 cup canola oil**
- 1 ripe banana, mashed**
- 1 to 2 cups blueberries (divided use)**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 400 F. Whisk together dry ingredients, making a well in the center.
- 2.** In a smaller bowl, whisk the eggs. Mix in the buttermilk and canola oil. Pour into the flour mixture and stir. Stir in the mashed banana and half the blueberries. Evenly distribute the batter into lined muffin tins. Take remaining blueberries and put on top of each muffin. Bake muffins 15-20 minutes.

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

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