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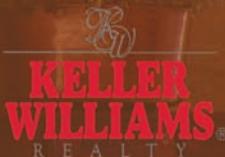
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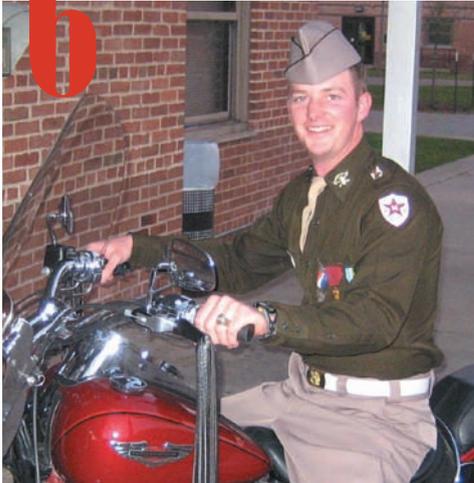
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An Inspiration  
for All of Us



*On the Cover: Maricela de Rojas pre-kindergarten classroom is filled with items from fish to plants that stimulate curiosity and a love of learning.*

*Photo by Rod Cordsen.*

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**Editor's Note**

*Hello, Ennis!*

Summer days are still in full swing, and families like Craig and Angie Meier (featured in our home article this month) may be planning a last fun-filled vacation. The Wallis family intends to enjoy this summer and will spend plenty of fun time in the water, for sure. Visit our sports feature to see them making a cool splash in the pool.

As we look toward the new school year, recent college graduate Wade Braddock (Gig 'em Aggies!) is beginning his new job as a ranch manager. Do not miss our main feature which tells the courageous story of how he overcame high odds to fulfill his dreams.

In *EducationNOW*, meet award-winning teacher Maricela de Rojas of the Early Childhood Center who will welcome Ennis' youngest pupils to a wonderful season of discovery. Mark your fall calendars with the Ennis High School drama department's performance schedule. See *ArtsNOW* for details of some fine "must-see" entertainment.

*Kelly Kovar*  
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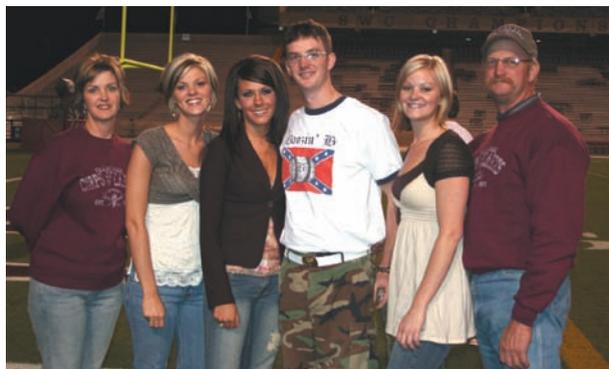
# A Moment for Courage

— By Kelly Kovar

Wade Braddock grew up on a local ranch, and now as a young man he is embarking on his own career as a ranch manager. The path to his current vocation had some unexpected obstacles, but with determination, courage and the support of his loving parents, Kenneth and Vi Ann Braddock, he has persevered.

When Wade was 9 or 10, a fellow who had been in the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University came to work at the ranch. “I saw his boots (highly prized boots worn only by senior cadets) one time, and from then on I was planning to be in the Corps. Wade went to St. John School through eighth grade and then went on to graduate, in 2002, from Ennis High School. He soon headed to Texas A&M University where he joined the Corps in body and spirit. “The group of friends I have at College Station are the best friends I will ever make,” he said. “The friends that you make in the Corps are the friends that will marry you and bury you.”

Wade started out pursuing a degree in accounting. However, he likes to be outside, and he likes to be in the country. “I realized I didn’t want to be in an office in a suit and tie; I wanted to be on a ranch.” On May 12, Wade Braddock graduated from A&M, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in animal science. His degree opened the door for a job offer as ranch manager at Sanctuary Ranch. “I’m just glad I could cross the stage in my boots,” he exclaimed. Wade did walk across the stage in his very own senior boots as a member of the A&M Corps of Cadets. But, that walk across the stage was more meaningful than he ever could have imagined.



*In his junior year, Wade was joined at the A&M Midnite yell by his parents, sisters and his girlfriend.*



*“The friends I have at College Station are the best friends I will ever make.” Wade Braddock is flanked by his A&M friends, Trent Pellitier (left) and Guy Slimp (right).*

During Wade’s sophomore year, his life took an unexpected turn. “He was in a skiing accident in March of 2005 while on spring break,” his dad, Kenneth said. “He spent the remainder of his sophomore year in the hospital and rehabilitation.”

“In Ruidoso, [New Mexico], I hit a patch of ice and slid about 75 yards, feet first, straight into a tree. I crushed my third lumbar,” Wade explained. He was Care-flighted to El Paso. “The doctors informed me that more than likely I would never be able to walk again.” With no feeling in either leg, that prediction seemed very real to Wade. “Dad found an airplane, and they flew me to Dallas to Baylor and I had a 12 1/2 hour surgery.” Feeling came back in his right leg, but he continued to have paralysis in his lower left leg. Wade spent a month in the hospital, withdrawing from



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he commented. "I did not have enough strength to hold a motorcycle up, and I also did not have the control of my interior tibula muscle. (For us motorcycle people, that's the muscle you need to shift gears)." Then on a Sunday morning in January 2006, Wade got a phone call from Kenneth saying that he had just won a 2006 Softtail Deluxe in a benefit raffle. "Dad told me that if I could get my strength up and prove to him that I could ride a motorcycle, that he would let me have it at school for my senior year. From that day on, I was in the gym every day working on my leg strength," Wade explained.

Wade researched electric shifters. "I found the one that would adapt to the motorcycle my dad had won, and e-mailed the information to him," Wade recalled. Kenneth had the part installed. The weekend before the fall semester started, Wade went home and told his dad he was ready to give it a try. "So, there I was, sitting on a motorcycle, which had just been a dream since the doctors had told me that I would probably never walk again," Wade recounted. "We cranked them up and off we went, Mom, Dad and I, just like nothing had ever happened. I was riding a motorcycle again. Afterwards, Dad said to me, 'I hope that you enjoy it at school as much as I just enjoy seeing you riding it.'"

Now, Wade is beginning his career. His interest in ranch management will be fulfilled as he begins his job by selecting trail horses for the ranch he is managing. "They will supply me with a house [and] a work truck. I will live on the ranch and be there every day. It is a 24/7 job, but the nice thing is, I don't have to get up and drive to work every day," he said.

"If it wasn't for my strong support group and that phone call on that January morning, I don't think I would have made as much progress in such a short period of time," Wade mused. "After my maiden voyage, it was at that point I realized the power of a Harley." **NOW**

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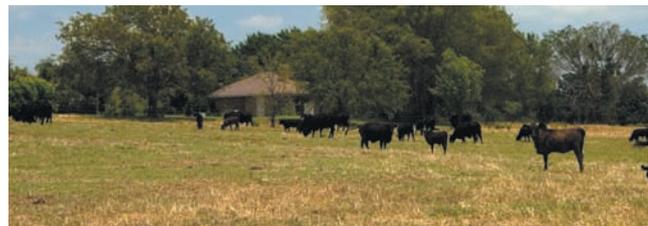


# Country LIVING

— By Sandra McIntosh

Duke and Daisy, the family's two bloodhounds, greet anyone who pulls into the driveway of Craig and Angie Meier's home. Inside, the sound of little voices and the pitter-patter of little feet are prevalent. With four children – Loralyn, Rody, Riley and Levi – ranging in age from 2 to 8, there is never a dull moment in the five-bedroom, three-bath home that until 1991 was one of the last working dairy farms in the Ellis County area. "After spending several years in the city, we decided to move to the country," Craig said. "Angie and I were both raised in the country. We wanted to offer the same experiences to our own family."

Four years ago, in December 2002, Craig and Angie made their biggest investment to date when they purchased the 540-acre dairy farm. The purchase came with not one house, but three. This alone



## At Home With Craig and Angie Meier



makes life for the pair of world champion auctioneers possible. "Dora Rivas, the children's nannie, lives in one house," Craig explained. "John Pool runs the farm. He lives in another house. Without them we wouldn't be able to do what we do for a living."

Most auctioneers work on weekends at church bazaars and local fundraisers. That may be how Craig and Angie got started years ago, but that is definitely not how it is for them today. Car auctions, estate sales and big business liquidations are what keep the couple steadily working. They "call" locally, as well as around the world. "It is rare to be as busy as we are," Angie said. "Others do it to supplement their income. It's a full time job for us."

"We have evolved," Craig added. "The demand for calling auctions has grown. Winning world honors has really pumped it up for us."

Their home is a collection of these auctions. "Our home is a museum," Craig said, as Angie just laughed in agreement. "We can look around and



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see the time line. It means a lot to us. It allows us to bring back memories from people we've met and times we've shared."

The unique items they have been able to secure in their travels add special character to the 3,400-square feet of country-living space which they look forward to coming home to each evening. The family room is where the Meiers spend most of their time when they are at home. The large floor-to-ceiling windows along the back wall allow for a priceless view of cows and the pastureland that stretches as far as the eye can see.

An oversized leather sectional and the warmth of the family room is complimented by several of the couple's favorite finds. "I've wanted a Remington reproduction for a long

time," Angie said, as she pointed to the masterpiece in solid black on display. "I also like the metal sculpture of a Mexican man sleeping."

Craig's favorite item, a Nickelodeon player piano that dates back to 1919, brings squeals of delight from the children as he digs in his pocket for a single quarter. "It's all original except for the plastic piece we put over the keys to protect them from little fingers," Craig said, as the music began to play loudly. "It's proven to be a great alarm clock."

The kitchen is open, airy and comfortable with floral wallpaper and burgundy accents. The center island is the perfect size when laying out half a loaf of bread for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. The tile floor which continues

## Good luck, Ennis Lions!

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from the kitchen to the “mud-room-turned-home-office” was the first major undertaking for Craig and Angie. “It’s 800-square feet of tile,” Angie said. “We did it ourselves. It got easier as we went along.” The couple also installed the family room’s wood floor.

Angie’s talent for interior design is readily apparent throughout the home. The children’s rooms boast a fairy princess theme for the girls and horses for the boys. The bright and cheery bathroom in the upstairs area of the split-level home is shared by the children. The green faux-finished walls create the perfect backdrop for the sunflower border and cream



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accents. The guest suite is a soothing blue trimmed with rope accents. "I love painting and changing things in the house. It seems like we're always in a state of remodeling something," Angie said. "It keeps me busy and I like the end result."

As an avid hunter, Craig has the family's only collection under lock and key. Being the high-bidder has allowed him to add to his ever-growing collection of guns. "I must have at least 40 guns," Craig said. "I've been collecting them my whole life. I have a single-action Colt revolver that dates back to 1893 that I found at an auction some time ago."

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before the children fall into bed for the night. Craig and Angie take great pride in being parents who believe in using a hands-on method when it comes to rearing their children. They sponsor their own T-ball team, rightfully named the Auctioneers. There are also the weekly karate and swimming lessons. The couple works very hard at trying to combine auctioneer contests into family vacation times that are both fun and memorable. "We just got back from two weeks in San Diego," Craig said. "We were near the beach and the San Diego Zoo. As a family, we had a great time!"

summer, the family spends their most enjoyable times outdoors. Just recently, the construction of the backyard pool was complete, allowing the children hours of water fun. On the days when Craig and Angie are home from the auction arena, the family piles into the truck and heads for Lake Bardwell. "We love spending time at the lake," Craig said. "There's plenty of room for the whole family to be comfortable aboard our 24-foot Monterey. The kids like for us to park on the beach area so they can get out and play in the sand."

On their own admission, Craig and Angie's home is comfortable, kid-friendly and very much lived-in. "It's a home filled with lots of laughter," Angie said, as she listened to four children asking four different questions all at once. "I love being a mom. Each child has a different and unique personality. I love to view things through their eyes." **ENNS**

When evening comes, it is quite common for the family to hop on the Polaris Ranger and take a trip out to the pasture to see the cows and check the property

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# Learning the Theatre Arts

— By Kelly Kovar



"I love these kids. They work so hard. They are amazing."

Tonya Harper is getting ready to start her ninth year of teaching theatre arts at Ennis High School (EHS). "When I came here, the department was very small," she recalled. "I think we had six kids that signed up for theatre arts the first year." Tonya is also the coordinator of 23 events for the University Interscholastic League (UIL).

This year, the theatre department will be performing six plays. *The Ash Girl*, a morality play based on *Cinderella*, will be performed the first week in October at San Jacinto Auditorium. "It has quite a few parts," Tonya said. "We will have 20 – 25 students involved." Tonya often looks for plays that give a number of students the opportunity to participate. "I look for plays that fit the kids I have. This year, I have a lot of kids who want to go to college and major in theatre, and so I tried to do shows that will give them experience they haven't had and make them expand their horizons a little bit."

The second show planned is *Shakespeare for Dummies*. "A playwright has taken Shakespeare and manipulated the scenes and soliloquies and monologues into a play where Shakespeare makes sense. My theatre production class will do this play for the English classes in October to show them that Shakespeare

isn't really so hard to understand, if you just know how to approach him."

"We will perform *Nunsense* in December. We have lots of very talented young men, but *Nunsense* has tons of girls, and we are really girl-heavy." The original version of *Nunsense* was written in the '70s. "The original playwrights and lyricists have gone back in and updated it," she said.

In January, a dinner theatre of *The Odd Couple* will be performed. Both male and female versions of the play will be done on alternating nights.

Later in the season a One Act play will be produced. For that production, Tonya is considering a play called *Blood Relations*. "We don't charge admission for the One Act play, but sometimes we put out a donation container. Last year we donated the proceeds, almost \$400, to Relay for Life."

Toward the end of the school year, the students themselves get involved in writing a musical review. "They don't have to write the music, but they have to come up with the through-line," Tonya explained. "Last school year

they did *The History of Broadway*."

In addition to all those shows, the theatre arts class final exam is actually a night of One Acts. "Each of my classes has to produce a One Act play. I may tell them what play they have to do, but they have to cast it [and] direct it themselves. They get an individual grade for how they have learned their lines and for their participation. They are also graded on audience etiquette and crew work. It is a true final exam, 'Did you learn anything in the class?' The kids do everything, including choosing a director and actors from each class. The finals are performed at San Jacinto Auditorium. "We don't publicize it, but it is open. There is no charge for admission."

The last event in the school year is the EHS version of the Academy Awards. "We call them the Leo Awards. It is really special to them, and we do a huge slide show at our banquet."

During the school year, Tonya teaches freshmen through seniors at EHS. Her classes include public speaking, which encompasses all the

competitive speech students – debaters, extemporaneous speakers and poetry and prose interpretation. “For University Interscholastic League [UIL] we go to invitational meets in the fall; we travel quite extensively,” she said.

Classes offered are Theatre I, Theatre II, Theatre Production and Musical Theatre (Technical Theatre) class. “The choir teacher teaches the songs, and I direct the musical,” Tonya pointed out.

Outside of regular classes, EHS offers a drama club called Acts of Pride. “You don’t have to be in a class to be in the drama club,” Tonya stated. The class does fundraising for the completely self-maintained theatre department. In June, Tonya took several students to theatre camp in Corpus Christi. “The kids raised almost \$10,000 this year to send people to camp.” The drama club has fun nights with events like hay rides, campfires, and bowling nights. “They love to do video scavenger hunts.”

“Not all of our shows are in class,” Tonya said. “Our first show of the year is open audition. Anybody in the school can audition. However, the musical is cast from the musical theatre class. Crew comes from the student body at large.”

“My biggest dream for the theatre class is about to come true,” she said. When the new school is finished, they will have their own auditorium at the high school. “When I began eight years ago, if we did a show, maybe 50 people would come,” Tonya remembered. “This year, we probably will be running two or three hundred.”

Tonya had a theatre, English and speech emphasis when she received her education degree at Baylor University. “I saw an opportunity to build something here, and I am a natural builder. I like to start from nothing and see what I can come up with. I love it here. I love these kids. They work so hard. They are amazing. We have lots of fun. It is where I am supposed to be now.” **ENNS**

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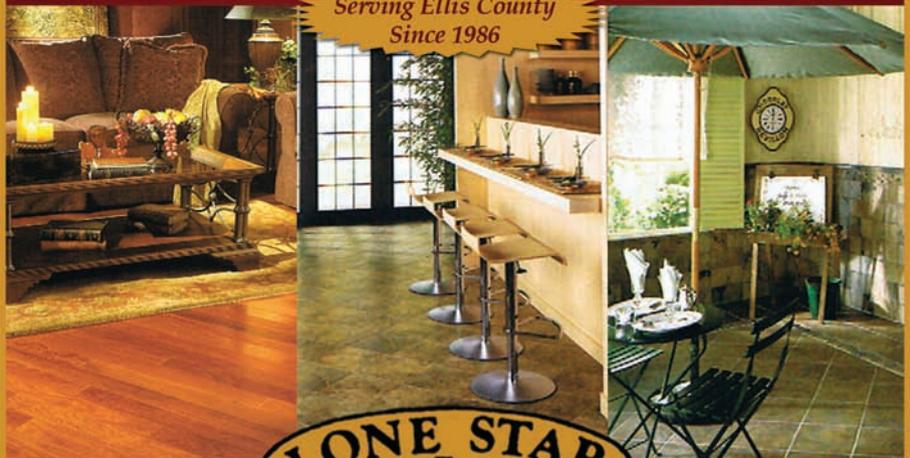


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# Making a *Splash*

— By Kelly Kovar

Tammy and Shannon Wallis found it a natural jump to move from swimming for recreation to teaching swimming lessons. This is the third summer of teaching the sport for this mother/daughter team. “We love swimming; we are just a swimming family,” Tammy said. “I have five children. When my kids were little, I taught them all how to swim. We like to be outside for summer activities. We are a very athletic family.”

Water activities have been part of Tammy’s life as long as she can remember. “I grew up swimming and water skiing,” she said. “My parents have some land with some lakes on it, and we spent almost every weekend out on the lake skiing.”

She wanted to be sure to pass those skills on to her own children. “I always wanted to make sure my kids learned how to swim. They spent their growing up years in the water all summer. Shannon and my son, and my older daughter have been lifeguards.”

When Shannon and Tammy made up their minds to share their water interests and abilities, Tammy went to the Red Cross and received training to be a swimming instructor. It took several weeks of class work and swimming. “You have to learn to do all of the strokes, and you have to learn to do them correctly with a lot of finesse,” she said. Once Tammy was certified, she was able to work with Shannon and certify her.

“I had taken a conditioning and fitness class at college the semester before, so it wasn’t hard. They teach you all the strokes, so I had already learned everything,” Shannon explained.

Shannon was already certified as a lifeguard. “Every three years, a lifeguard must be recertified, and every three years for CPR,” Tammy said.

When they teach, this duo emphasizes personal one-on-one time with each child. “The younger the children, the [fewer] we have in a class,” Tammy said. They teach morning,



*Tammy and Shannon Wallis enjoy relaxing pool-side.*

evening and Saturday classes. “We start around 3 years old, and go through pre-lifesaving classes. I like Red Cross lessons, because they teach the whole spectrum.”

“On the average, we teach six to eight in a class,” Shannon said. “We try to keep the 3-year-old classes to four or five students in a class.” Red Cross allows a ratio of one instructor to 10 students, but Tammy and Shannon prefer smaller classes. “You can do so much more with them when you don’t have too many. They get so much more practice in. And, the parents are more comfortable with fewer kids. We want the parents to know [their] kids are safe,” Shannon commented.

Listening to the parents’ desires has caused their lessons to evolve over the years. “The evening classes and private lessons started from parent requests,” Tammy noted. “The last two years we have done a ‘Mommy and Me’ swim class and that is our favorite class. It is for babies, and the moms come and they are in the pool with the baby. We direct it, and the moms do all the actions with the baby. Those are the neatest classes; they are fun!”

"You are not just learning the strokes, you are learning how to help people and what to do in an emergency situation," Shannon added. "Some children are scared of swimming, but the funny thing is, they are the ones that love the water the most at the end of the week."



**"The reward is watching them swim on their own."**

Tammy has five children of her own. The oldest, Trista, is married to Jarod Hunter and they are the parents of 1-year-old Greyson. Her son, Tate, is at college at Stephenville. He also works there in the intramural department and will graduate next year. Tate and Shannon go to college together. "We play on a coed flag football team together," Shannon said. "We have won a national championship in flag football. We also play basketball and softball." Taylor goes to Southwestern University where he is planning on playing football. The youngest is Travis, a high school sophomore.

This summer, when she is not in the pool, Tammy is the summer school principal at the Early Childhood Center. She has been teaching school since 1979. Shannon is busy planning an August 18th wedding to Matt Jordan. "Matt wants to coach football, and he and my dad are really close." Shannon will graduate with her college degree next year. "My degree will be

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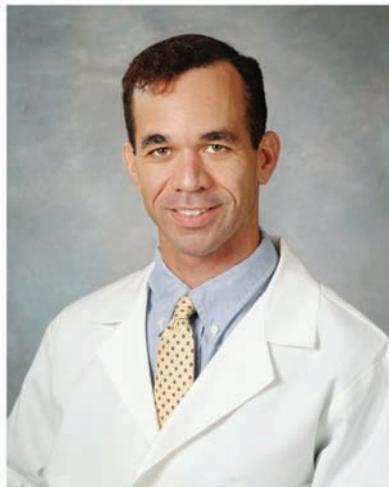


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in fitness management,” Shannon said. “I am hoping to coach on the high school or college level, or I can manage a fitness facility or give private tennis lessons. I’ve been playing tennis since I could hold a racquet.” Shannon is going to college on a full tennis scholarship and will also be



**“This job is so much fun,  
it is not a job,”**

getting a teaching certification.

Like swimming, both teaching and coaching also run in the family. Tammy’s husband, Tonny is an educator. She met him after she graduated from Stephen F. Austin and moved to Dallas to work. He is an ‘At Risk’ Coordinator and football coach.

Tammy enjoys working with children, as a teacher and as a swimming instructor. “I love getting to know the kids and getting to know the families,” she said. “How exciting it is when they actually get out in the water and they are going, ‘I did it!’ The reward is watching them swim on their own.”

“This job is so much fun, it is not a job,” Shannon said. “We are getting to help kids learn how to swim which is really important.” **NOW**



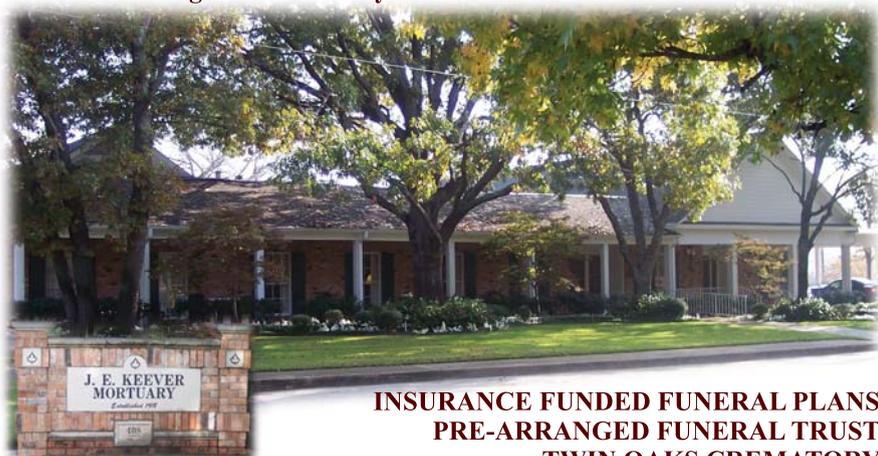
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# Happy Closings

— By Kelly Kovar

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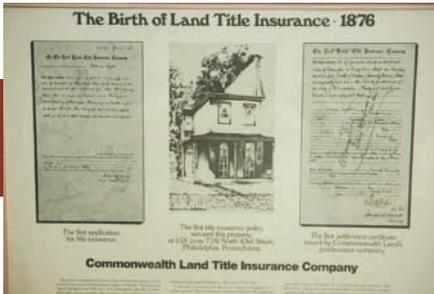
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In the Ennis office, Terri, Sharon and Carol work as a team on each transaction. Terri begins the order process by working with the title plant to order the title search. She also works directly with the customers, Realtors and lenders to collect information necessary to complete the transaction.

Sharon then steps in to complete the settlement statements and gather the lender documents to prepare the transaction for closing. "It is fun!" Sharon said. "Our final work product reflects how well the three of us work together. Everyone has their specialty."

Carol handles the title curatives matters and closes most transactions. "The success of this office is due to the three of us working together," Carol said. "We are a team. There is not a file that closes, that all three of us haven't handled for one reason or another." On a daily basis, they order title work, order surveys, order pay-offs for lien-holders and get pay-off information for the lenders of the buyers and the sellers. They deal with the IRS and judgment creditors, confirm identities of parties involved,



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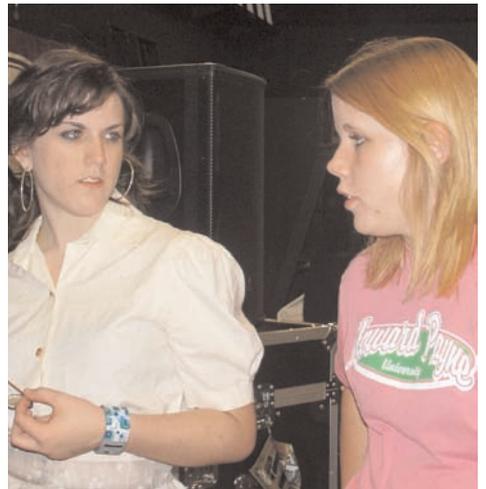
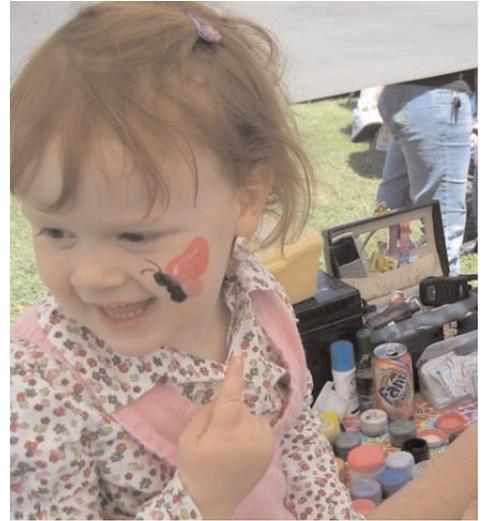
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The Ennis Little League Senior Midget Team, Certainteed, top left, basks in their victory after first eliminating the Kiwanis Club during the second round of the TTAB district tournament. Sadie Hinz, 3, got a kick out of the face painting (top right) during the annual Bluebonnet Festival. The newly-elected police chief, John Erisman, bottom left, poses for a snapshot with Mayor Pro Tem Bob Taylor. A grandmother bottom center, enjoyed feeding the ducks at Jaycee Park with her twin grandsons. The EHS Theatre group performed during one-act play competition.

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Ennis Regional Medical Center held their grand opening celebration recently. Members of LifePoint Hospitals, Inc., ERMC, city officials and country music artist Janie Fricke, top left, pose for a photo. Sadie and Hunter Hinz, top right, clown around during the Bluebonnet Festival. The "Ladies Who Lunch," a division of the Pinnacle Women's Club, bottom left, from the Cedar Creek area met recently at the Wildflower Cafe in downtown Ennis. Tabernacle Baptist Church Mother's Day Out, bottom right, held a Fourth of July parade in the church's parking lot. The children were all dressed up in red, white and blue.



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# An Inspiration

## for All of Us

— By Ashley Carlino



*“They pick it up so quickly. Their minds are so wide open, absorbent, like a sponge.”*

Have you ever had one of those special teachers who stood above all the rest – one who really made a difference in your life? There is usually one teacher who fills this role.

Maricela de Rojas is that teacher for many students.

A natural at the trade, Maricela began her career in 1978, teaching bilingual kindergarten. “My dad is the one who made me go to school,” she said. “He pushed me.” Her education at both East Texas State University-Commerce and Navarro College has yielded her two degrees. Learning all that she could about education eventually led her to co-create the Early Childhood Center (ECC) in Ennis with Loretta Hunter. The ECC is part of the Ennis Independent School District.

The 67,117-square-foot building, located at 1701 West Lampasas Street, houses 33 classes of pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and PPCD (Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities). It was built in 2002 and enrollment has climbed to 665. Students from low-income families qualify for enrollment; otherwise, tuition is based on income level.

The ECC states that children are “immersed in language.” Maricela’s class is no exception. “Students do a lot of journal writing. They draw a picture, then come and dictate it to

me,” she explained.

Language is everywhere in her classroom. Letters hang from the ceiling, numbers decorate the walls and words like “responsibility” and “trustworthiness” are defined on posters. Centers include writing, blocks, alphabet, math, language and science, art, house and listening. “I try to keep it colorful, to make it fun,” she added.

Maricela’s class consists of bilingual students. Not only are they learning all that pre-kindergarten has to offer, but they are learning English as well. “At the centers, I try and hear their conversations. They are not embarrassed to talk with the other children. It makes me proud to hear them teaching each other,” she explained. “They pick it up so quickly. Their minds are so wide open, absorbent, like a sponge.”

The Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) School Readiness Project, which was started by the Children’s Learning Institute, is one Maricela uses. There are several facets to this program. Having a letter wall at eye level helps the children learn the alphabet. There is a daily schedule and a job helper

chart. The project encourages only three to five rules. Centers are a part of the project as well, along with daily news, reading aloud and writing tools. The Sopris West curriculum is also used. “We have a good teaching program here in Ennis,” she noted.

As pre-kindergarten is designed to prepare students for kindergarten, Maricela sets realistic and attainable goals for her children. “I try and set a foundation for them,” she said. “I teach them responsibility and how to be a good listener, which is the most important thing.” She also teaches them to follow directions, obey the rules and to be respectful of others.

One of the major attributes Maricela teaches her students is responsibility. There are 20 daily jobs, one for each student. Jobs range from feeding the fish to watering the plant. If someone is absent, his duty is distributed to a substitute. Having a task gives the children a reason to feel proud. It helps them feel included and teaches them to be part of a team.

“To me, my kids are like butterflies. They start out as tiny caterpillars, then

they turn into beautiful butterflies," she explained. She wrote a poem about the life of a butterfly and gave one to each student. She took the time to show them the entire life cycle of the butterfly so they would understand. The poem states, "Your wings are ready to fly into the future. You have now begun the journey of knowledge."

In addition to her work in the classroom, Maricela continues to make positive changes in the world of teaching. She participates in the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) which is an organization that supports teachers and has a current membership of 108,000 nationwide. She was elected Campus Representative of the Year for Region 10, which includes Ennis. ATPE has allowed her to meet various political officials, such as Jim Pitts and Joe Barton. She has been able to lobby on behalf of teachers. "Lobbying is exciting," she said. Her unique experience in the teaching field gives a voice to others in the profession as she tells officials what is working and what is not working.

Family is also a vital part of Maricela's life. Her husband of 29 years, Victor Rojas, is very supportive. Together, they have three children. Their son, Victor Rojas Jr., 27, is an accountant by day and government student in the evening at North Texas State University in Denton. Their daughter, Victoria Cresencia Rojas Hamby, 26, has a degree in education; and their son, Pascual Jonathan, 22, is attending Lincoln Tech. Maricela's mother, Cresencia, and her late father, Pascual, were her role models. They have played an integral part in her life, as well.

The de Rojas family attends Emhouse Baptist Church. "My family inspires me. They keep me cheerful. We are a very close, private family. We talk to each other. We pray," she explained. "I praise the Lord for every day that He gives us. To me, every day is special." **ENNS**

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# Look Who's Cooking

— By Melinda Hines

## IN THE KITCHEN WITH SHELLI FRENCH

### MAKE AHEAD MASHED POTATOES

5 lbs. potatoes, cooked and mashed  
2 cups sour cream  
6 oz. cream cheese  
salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients, mixing well; place in casserole dish. Refrigerate until ready to use. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

### SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

4 1/2 lbs. sweet potatoes  
1 cup sugar  
1/4 cup milk  
1/2 cup butter, softened  
2 large eggs  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1/4 tsp. salt

1 1/4 cups crushed cornflakes  
1/4 cup chopped pecans  
1 Tbsp. brown sugar  
1 Tbsp. melted butter  
1 1/2 cups miniature marshmallows

Bake sweet potatoes at 400 F for about 1 hour or until tender. Let cool to touch; peel and mash. Beat mashed sweet potatoes, sugar and next 5 ingredients at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth. Spoon potatoes mixture into a greased 11 x 7-inch baking dish. Combine cornflakes and next 3 ingredients in a small bowl. Sprinkle diagonally over casserole in rows 2 inches apart. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes. Remove from oven; let stand 1 minute. Sprinkle alternate rows with marshmallows; bake 10 additional minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

### GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

3 Tbsp. margarine or butter  
2 Tbsp. flour  
1 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. sugar  
1/2 tsp. grated onions  
1 cup sour cream  
2 14.5-oz. cans french style green beans, drained  
1/2 lb. grated cheese  
1/2 cup corn flakes

Melt butter on low heat and stir in flour, salt, pepper, sugar and onion. Remove from heat and stir in sour cream, then add green beans. Pour mixture into shallow 2-quart casserole dish. Cover with cheese, then corn flakes. Bake at 350 F for 35 - 40 minutes.

As a young mom, Shelli did not cook as much as she would have liked. “When our kids were younger, I didn’t cook as much, but have picked up cooking tips from my mom, my mother-in-law and my friends,” Shelli said. “I cook more often now.”

Shelli enjoys preparing healthy dinners during the week for her family to balance out what the family eats on the weekends. “I prepare a lot of chicken, vegetables, use whole wheat pasta with only a little sauce and the kids love the Make Ahead Mashed Potatoes, even with healthier ingredient substitutions,” Shelli said.

The French family also loves tacos prepared with whole wheat tortillas, lean meat and fat free cheese, but when they entertain, Shelli said she uses the “real stuff.” **ENNS**

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# Who's Cooking **NOW**

## BUTTERMILK PIE

- 1 pie shell
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 3 eggs

Line a 9-inch pie plate with the pastry, trimming and fluting the edge. Combine the flour, butter, buttermilk, sugar, vanilla and eggs. Beat until smooth. Pour into prepared pie plate. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour.

## FRUITY SPRING MIX SALAD

*The salad dressing and sugared almonds can be made several days ahead.*

- 1 head bib lettuce, torn
- 10 oz. mixed salad greens
- 2 cups fresh chopped pineapple
- 2 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced
- 1 11-oz. can mandarin oranges, drained and chilled
- 16 red or green seedless grapes; cut in half lengthwise

## SWEET-HOT VINAIGRETTE:

- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. hot sauce

## SUGARED ALMONDS:

- 1 cup slivered almonds
- 1/2 cup sugar

Toss the first 6 ingredients together in a large glass bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together all ingredients for the Sweet-Hot Vinaigrette. Cover and chill for 30 minutes. Stir together sugar and almonds in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, 10 minutes or until golden. Spread mixture evenly on lightly greased wax paper. Let cool 20 minutes. Break into pieces and store in an airtight container. Drizzle Sweet-Hot Vinaigrette evenly over salad. Sprinkle with Sugared Almonds.





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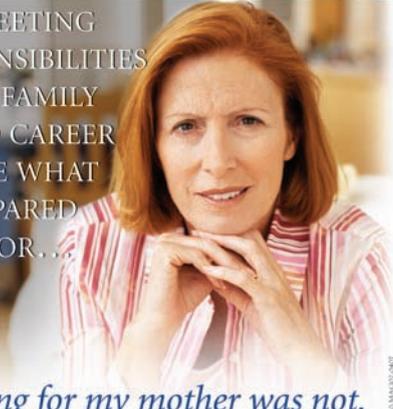
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## How to Choose a Financial Advisor

— By Bob Irish

If you are like most people, you have a variety of financial goals: college for your children, a comfortable retirement, a vacation home and so on. You might be able to achieve all these goals on your own, but you will likely find it a lot easier if you get a little help from a financial advisor. But how do you choose

the right one? For starters, ask your friends, relatives and co-workers whom they use. Then interview some of the people they recommend. What questions should you ask at such an interview?

### Consider these:

- **What are your qualifications?**

Make sure you are talking to someone who, at a minimum, has all the required licenses for selling securities.

- **What type of experience do you have?**

Find out how long someone has been a financial advisor, but do not rule out a person with only a limited amount of experience — a new financial advisor frequently brings a great deal of enthusiasm to his or her work. A financial advisor's longevity is less important than whether he or she has had experience working with someone like you — someone in your financial situation, with your goals and your investment preferences.

- **What is your investment philosophy?**

Try to learn if someone favors a specific style of investing or a particular class of investments. These styles or

classes may be well-suited for some investors but inappropriate for others. If you believe the person you are talking to has a “one-size-fits-all” mentality, you might want to look elsewhere.

- **How will you communicate with me?**

Financial advisors run their businesses in different ways, so there is no one “right” way of communicating with clients. However, you need to feel comfortable that someone will always be available to answer your questions, review your accounts, evaluate your situation and make appropriate recommendations. If you are interviewing someone who has a partner or an assistant, find out whom you are likely to be communicating with, should you decide to become a client.

- **What services do you provide?**

Find out just how a prospective financial advisor can help you. For example, some people sell investments only, while others offer investments and insurance. Keep in mind, though, that you do not need to be a “one-stop” shopper when it comes to obtaining a wide range of services. In fact, you might want to ask a prospective financial

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Financial advisors get paid in several different ways: fees, commissions, salary or some combination of these methods. One way is not necessarily any “better” than another, from your point of view, but you should have a clear understanding of what type of compensation is being used.

Your association with a financial advisor is one of the most important business relationships you will ever have. So, make sure it is a good one – right from the start. **NOW**

*Bob Irish is an Edward Jones agent based in Ennis.*

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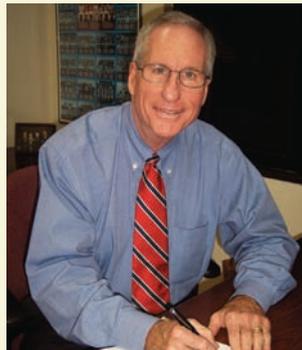
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## PREVENTING **Type 2 Diabetes**

— By Sandra Vernon RN

Diabetes is a chronic disease of metabolism. Nine out of 10 people with diabetes suffer from Type 2. The majority of them are over 40 when diagnosed, however, the age of onset is declining. The primary defect in Type 2 diabetes is insulin resistance. Insulin is needed to metabolize glucose (sugar). When insulin does not move glucose into the cells, the blood sugar rises. The cells of the body become resistant to the insulin that is produced by the pancreas. Insulin resistance occurs when the body becomes overweight, or “apple shaped” (the fat is distributed around the middle).

Type 2 diabetes is more common in people who are overweight, belong to certain ethnic groups, or have a family history of Type 2 diabetes. Making a few lifestyle changes can help prevent or delay the onset of this disease. The first step is to take steps. Drop the couch potato habit and walk, swim or ride a bike. Exercise helps the body use glucose more efficiently. It can also help lower your weight and increase your stamina. Walking just 30 minutes three times a week can make a difference in how you feel and can also help prevent high blood pressure and heart disease.

The next critical step is to develop healthy eating habits. Americans have a distorted view of what an appropriate portion size for a meal should be. When your body becomes accustomed to smaller portion sizes you will become satisfied more quickly and will not feel the need for larger portions. A serving size of meat is about the size of a deck of cards. Cut down on concentrated sweets and drinks. Drink plenty of water in place of sports drinks or sodas. You

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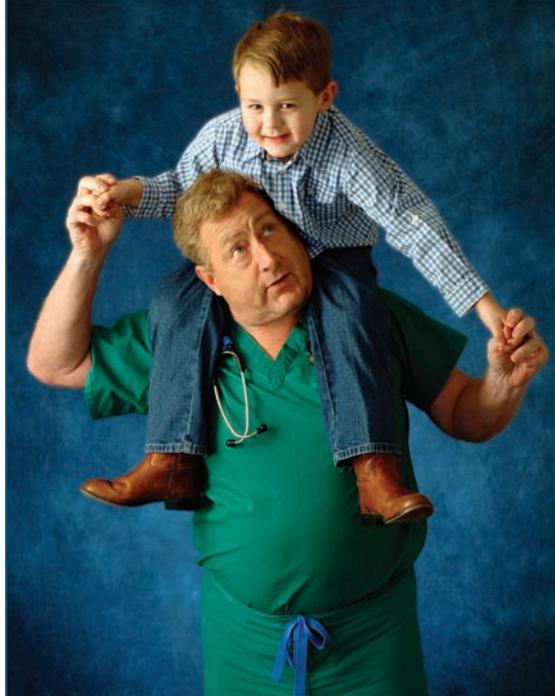
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do not have to go cold turkey! Save the desserts for special occasions or for the weekends, and learn to read labels. All foods are required by the FDA to have a label. Know the difference between complex carbohydrates and simple carbohydrates. Do not stop eating carbohydrates completely. They are needed for energy and healthy brain function.

Finally, get tested. If you have a family history of diabetes it is important to have your blood sugar tested yearly. Many pharmacies and community health fairs will do screenings for free. Catching diabetes early can make managing blood sugar much easier and can prevent or delay long-term complications. **NOW**

*Sandra Vernon RN is the Diabetes Program Coordinator at Navarro Regional Hospital.*

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# August 2007 Community Calendar

## Every Thursday

Ennis Kiwanis Club meets at noon at IOOF Retirement Center, 3202 S. Oak Grove Road.

## First and Third Tuesdays

Training Academy for Dental Assistants offers free informational sessions at 5:30 p.m. Call (972) 842-2999 for details.

## Second and Fourth Mondays

Texas Ladies Networking meets from 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Fire Mountain Grill in Waxahachie. For more information, call (214) 587-1221.

## Every Wednesday

Ennis Public Library hosts Story Time for ages 3 - 5 from 10 - 10:30 a.m.

## August 3 - 26

*You Can't Get There From Here* by Pat Cook at the Ennis Public Theatre. Call (972) 878-PLAY for more information.

## August 5

Motorcycle Rally at New Beginning Bible Church. Free barbecue and refreshments starting at 10 a.m. This event is free for all ages. Bring your motorcycles so you can participate in the games or just come and watch. Location: 1970 FM 983, Ferris. Call Kenneth Dunlap at (972) 842-2800 for more information.

## August 16

Amateur Radio Club meets at 7:30 p.m. at the Waxahachie Fire Department station on Water Street. For more information, visit wd5ddh.org.

## August 18

*Always... Patsy Cline* begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Palace Theatre. Sponsored by Clifford & Toni Brown and the J. Tom Eady Charitable Trust as a fundraiser for the Warehouse Living Arts

Center. Tickets are available at the Warehouse Living Arts Center box office, 119 W. 6th Avenue, Corsicana. Ticket prices are \$30 for front orchestra and the balcony dress circle; \$20 for the back orchestra; and \$15.00 for the upper balcony. The reception tickets are \$10 each.

## August 25

Horseshoe Fest Tournament. Location: KJT hall. For more information contact horseshoefest@yahoo.com.

"Dawg Daze" of Summer Chili Cook-off benefiting the Navarro County Animals at Risk Foundation. People's Choice - cast your vote for the best chili. Pet contest - Cutest, Most Unusual, Best Dressed, Best Trick and Pet/Owner Look-a-like. Call Kay Lefler at (972) 646-5159 for more information.

## August 27

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meets at St. Paul Episcopal Church, Hwy. 287 at Ovilla Rd., Waxahachie. 7 p.m. Visit CQGuild.org for more information.

## August 29

East Texas Kick-off Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the UT Tyler Patriot Center. Thirty-one high school and college administrators, football coaches and players will be recognized during the luncheon. One player from each team in attendance will receive a \$250 scholarship to be used toward furthering their education. The guest speaker will be former Green Bay Packer, Texas A&M and Chapel Hill player Terrence Murphy who will talk about his time in the NFL and his struggle with a career-ending neck injury. Also, a video presentation will highlight the upcoming 2007 football season. Mr. David Smoak, Sports Director of KTBB and host of *David Smoak's Sports Talk*, will be the emcee for the event. Call Valerie Morby at (903) 592-1661 for more information.

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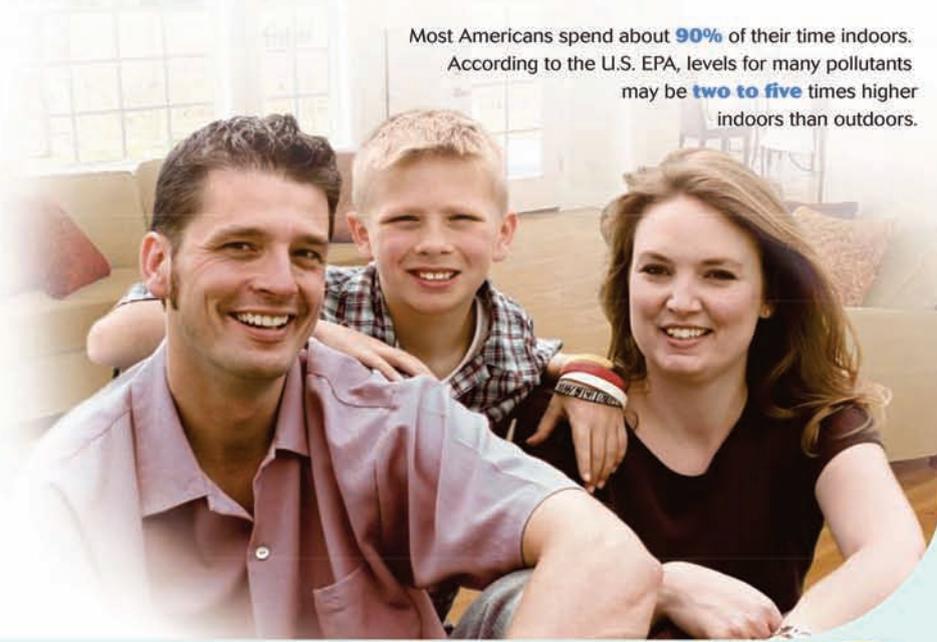
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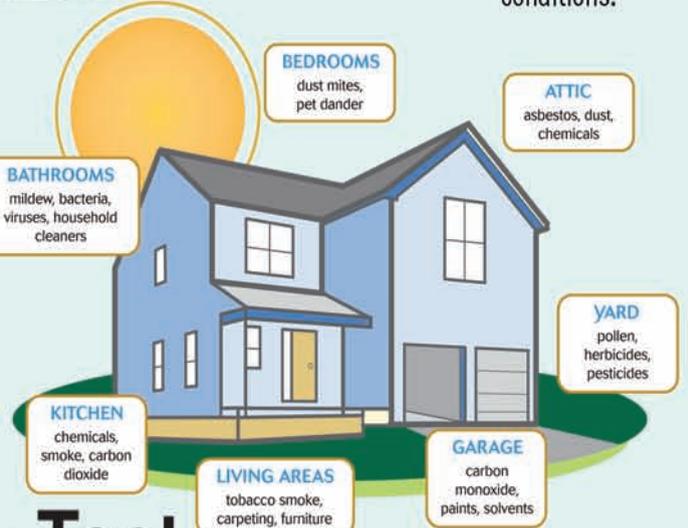
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