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August 2008

**I Did it
His Way**

**Filling
the Void**

**City Girls
Gone
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**A Beacon
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**George and
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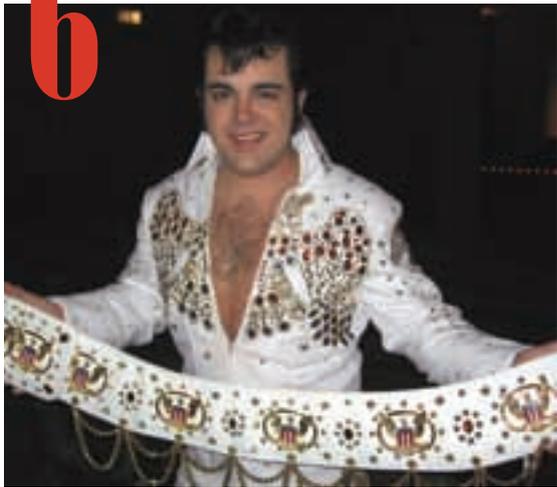
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Waxahachie NOW

Editor's Note

Hello, Waxahachie,

I know August has arrived when I step outside and the heat engulfs me, making the simple act of breathing difficult. The sweat on my brow and the constant hum of the air conditioner confirm what I already know. It is hot, hot, hot!

August also marks the anniversary of Elvis' death. As a tribute to the legacy he left behind, read how David Allen keeps his memory alive as an award-winning Elvis impersonator. Meet Ava and Candice Jammer, the mother/daughter team, who share a passion for horses or see firsthand the hidden talent of Dalynda DeLeon come alive in painted letters and a variety of one-of-a-kind crosses. Allow George and Jan Price to give you a tour of their backyard paradise of splendor.

The stories included in this edition of *WaxahachieNOW* are sure to warm your heart. They may even prompt you to do something you have only dreamed of.

Sandra McIntosh

WaxahachieNOW Editor

P.S. Please submit your feature ideas to smcintosh-nowmag@sbcglobal.net.



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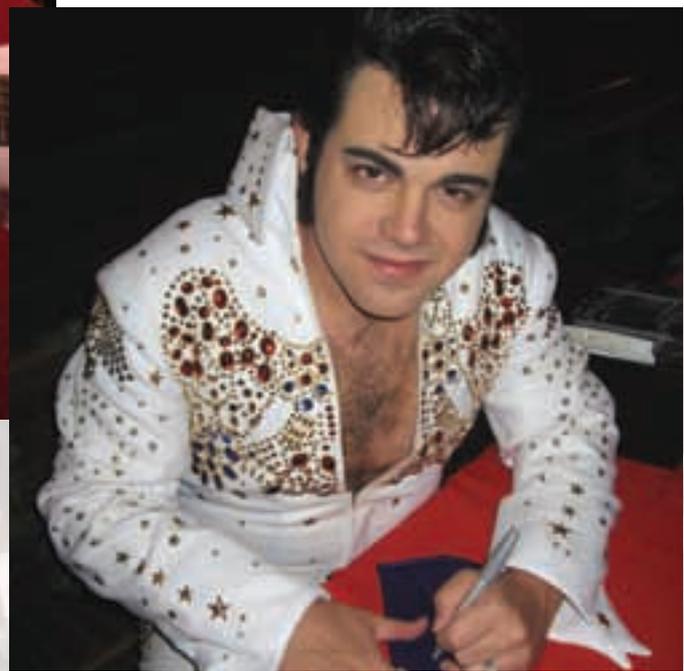
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I Did it His Way

— By Sandra McIntosh



Elvis Aaron Presley was born in a two-room house in Tupelo, Mississippi, to parents, Vernon and Gladys Presley. At the young age of 19, Elvis recorded his first song. By 1958, the unique performer had become an international sensation with his dark good looks, talent and charisma. Some called him diverse, while many others said he challenged social and racial barriers. He did so much more than make the ladies swoon with a deep voice and a bit of zealous hip action. “Elvis saved my life,” said David Allen, full-time Elvis impersonator. “His legacy got me on the right track. Things could definitely have gone the other way.”

Before his career as an Elvis impersonator started, David was a normal teenager hanging out with the wrong crowd. Like most, he was looking for a place to fit in. Since both his parents were avid Elvis fans, David grew up listening to his music. Until the day he walked into his parents’ house and heard someone other than Elvis singing, “I’m All Shook Up,” he never gave performing a second thought. “I knew it wasn’t the radio because it wasn’t Elvis,” David explained. “I opened the door to my parents’ bedroom and caught my dad singing

to a karaoke machine. He was singing along to the words Elvis had made famous.”

Needless to say, David entered the room laughing. His father, David Sr., could have handled the situation in one of two ways. He chose to take the high road. “He dared me to try,” David said, with the smile and mannerisms that so closely resemble Elvis in his younger days. As David began to sing, he watched his father’s stance go from hands on hips to arms crossing his chest. Toward the end, he watched as his father’s eyebrows furrowed. “I thought I had done a terrible job, based on his facial expression,” David said. “He surprised me when he said I sounded just like Elvis.”

Within days, a second karaoke machine was purchased so



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David could hear himself sing. "I was pretty impressed with myself," David commented. Not long after that, David Sr. took another step in the right direction for his son. "He entered me in an Elvis contest in an Oklahoma casino," David remembered. "He made me enter." David cannot forget the two-piece jumpsuit that David Sr. rented from a Halloween costume store and the dark black wig with matching sideburns he was forced to wear for that first trip out in public as Elvis. "I



was a normal kid who had been transformed," he added.

As this normal kid walked into the casino, he was accosted in a matter of moments. "Some lady came up to me and said I'd won the 'look-alike' contest," David said. When it came time for David to stand before an audience and perform, he recalls the overall nervousness he felt. "My whole body seemed like it was convulsing," he said, but David proved that night that he was a natural when it came to imitating the king of rock 'n' roll. "I sang 'Suspicious Minds,'" he recalled. "I didn't move around at all, but I won the contest."

That first performance began what David likes to call "the journey of a lifetime." He started practicing seven days a week. Every day he would come straight home from school. He practiced and he listened. "I was looking for

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something,” he said, referring to the need he had to find out who he was as a young man. “I became obsessed with singing Elvis songs — nothing but Elvis.” David laughed as he remembered his father’s frustration during the Elvis cramming period. “Dad got so tired of it,” David laughed, “but all I was doing was following his instructions of trying it over again and again until I got it right.”

As he continued to enter contests and perform on weekends, David also began to look at impersonating Elvis as a career. “I sought out the best to



“David proved that night that he was a natural when it came to imitating the king of rock ‘n’ roll.”

teach me the moves and mannerisms I didn’t come by naturally,” David said, explaining his time under the tutelage of well-known Elvis impersonator Johnny Lovett, the son of Johnny Harra, the first-ever Elvis impersonator. “Johnny and I became the best of friends. He took me under his wing and taught me everything he knew and everything he had learned from his father.” While showing David how to “act the part,” Johnny also taught him the importance of not downgrading other impersonators. “Johnny had the moves, and I wanted to emulate him,” David said. “Today, we’re a lot alike, while still having our own individual styles.”

David also met his wife, Stacy, at one of his performances. “I was friends with David’s parents before I ever met him,” Stacy said. “His parents took me

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to one of his shows." David, so smitten with Stacy, even remembers what she was wearing that night. "She had an 'Elvis Rocks' T-shirt on," he said, as he looked at her with a smile and a wink. It must have been love-at-first sight for the couple, because two shorts weeks later, they were engaged.

A little over two years ago, David was able to vacate his job as assistant night manager for Tom Thumb and pursue his career as an Elvis impersonator full time. Actually, the career has become somewhat of a family affair. His wife and parents continue to be his biggest fans, but David continues to be Elvis' biggest fan. Keeping it real is what is most important to David. "I know I'm not Elvis," David said, "but it's very important to me to not make a mockery of his memory and all he left behind for us to still enjoy." David's performance philosophy is "why change what ain't broken."

Keeping this in mind, David ends each concert with "Can't Help Falling in Love." "It's a concert tradition Elvis started," David explained, "and I have followed suit by closing each show with it, too." David takes great pride in being able to honestly say he does not lip synch. "What you hear is all David," Stacy said. "Still, after all this time, he studies video and does his homework. David gives his all no matter the size of the audience." David's mother, Minka, is the seamstress behind the beautiful scarves given out during each performance. "They're made by mom," David quipped, "but they're sweat-stained by me."

David has won many awards over the years, but what means the most to him as an Elvis impersonator is keeping the memory of Elvis Aaron Presley alive, not just in the musical form, but also by how he lived until his death on August 16, 1977. "His upbringing was poor," David said, "but he never forgot where he came from. He enjoyed giving to others." By doing it Elvis' way, David as become the Elvis impersonator to watch. He has got the moves in his hips, as well as his heart. **WOW**

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The Secret Garden

— By Alex Allred

At Home With George and Jan Price



When George and Jan Price moved to Waxahachie to be closer to their daughter, they sold most of the furniture from their West Texas home. In exchange, they salvaged over 4,000 bricks, making several backbreaking trips from Robey, Texas, to Waxahachie. “They were really good bricks,” George smiled.

For most people, the decision to leave furniture behind in lieu of good bricks might seem crazy, but one only needs to step into the backyard of the Price’s three-bedroom, ranch-style home to understand their reasoning. Truly, it is their paradise of splendor. Although their lot is small, George and Jan have been able to utilize every square inch of the backyard while minimizing water usage.

As a result of living in West Texas, “we were always landscaping,” George said. Historically, West Texas has always received far less rainfall than the rest of the state and, with its arid climate, farming and landscaping have been challenging tasks at best. “George was known as the ‘tree man,’” Jan laughed. “When we left [West Texas], we left a forest behind.”

George immersed himself in the study of water conservation, determining which plants were most water-efficient. By the



time they settled in Waxahachie, he had a fair idea of how and what he wanted to plant in his backyard paradise. Despite the built-in sprinkler system that came with their new home, "we rarely use it," George said. One of the first things he did as they settled in was to pull up the new sod that had been laid, leveled the ground with sand and began construction.

George built a beautiful wooden arbor that runs along the back fence, essentially creating a second and separate porch on which they can



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lounge, bird watch and read books. The first porch, just off the sunroom, was nothing more than a concrete slab before George devised a brick wall that, while only two feet tall, bows slightly into the yard, creating a larger, more elegant sitting area. He built an awning attached to the house, where Jan strategically placed hanging plants, bird feeders and wind chimes from its wooden beams. What is most breathtaking is the wooden plank bridge that runs from the first porch to the back arbor. Lined with solar lighting

and gorgeous, tropical-looking plants and flowers, it has the look, and offers the serenity of, a botanical garden.

For their storage facility, George fashioned a structure which appears more like a small cottage than a tool shed. It also has a covered porch and, like the two other porches, comfortable chairs, flowerpots and wind chimes decorating the frame. Throughout the backyard are a wide variety of trees and plants, as well as ornamental statues and functional art. It is here that Jan shows her creative flare, using recycled

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products, such as tables, mailboxes, crocks and even an old keg. "We found an old table in a barn," Jan said, noting how there are treasures to be found everywhere. A stoplight from a garage sale adorns the shed, while George was able to turn a cut tree into a birdhouse and even drill holes into a bath pipe to better irrigate potted plants. Even their plants are recycled from season to season.

Their practice of cultivation and recycling is not just for the outdoors. It



is a theme that can be seen throughout their beautiful home, as well. "And that's all Jan," George said, proud of his wife.

Just as George instantly went to work on the backyard, Jan began forming blueprints in her mind of how she wanted her home to look.



Hardwood floors replaced the carpeting and deep chocolate-brown furniture was chosen to perfectly offset the cream-colored walls. An eclectic blend of modern and Aztec art gives a warm feeling to their home.

The original construction of the home featured two windows toward the back of the

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house offering a perfect view of the backyard, but Jan saw better use for both the existing patio and one of the windows. "We closed up and replaced one window," George said, "with a built-in bookshelf. I thought this was going to be a lifetime project." Instead, the result was just as Jan had envisioned it. The simple bookshelf built into the wall provided the perfect fit for family pictures, books and a decorative plate of their miniature pincher.

Beyond the now closed-in window, George was also instructed to build a sunroom from the existing patio to act as both a buffer from the outside temperatures and a neat "everything" room. There, a second refrigerator, table and chairs, as well as collector items are stored. Leaving the main door to the backyard slightly ajar, their miniature pincher, Sophie, can also run in and out of the house through her doggy door. The sunroom is an appealing place for visitors to hang their hats and for the couple to entertain family and friends and transition inside and out without the heat or air conditioning escaping from the house. "But it was another big project," George said. "I've gotten to where I hate to hear, 'You know, I've got an idea ...'" With Jan, George said, no idea is ever small.

For every idea Jan has had, and every bit of construction George has undertaken, the result is perfection. Above the door to the sunroom, lined



along the wall, are collector RCA portable radios George has been accruing since the first one he carried on his date with Jan in 1961.

To meet this attractive, vivacious couple, it seems impossible they married over 45 years ago at the ages of 19 and 16. Throughout their marriage, he worked as an educator and she as a school librarian until they retired and followed their second daughter to Waxahachie. Today, George, too active for retirement, has returned to his educator roots. He spends his days teaching special education at Avalon, while Jan tends to her parents, retired cotton farmers, who also followed their daughter to Waxahachie, just two months after George and Jan made the move.

Family, love and devotion have always been the driving force behind their friendship and, ironically, their talents as gardeners and conservationists. Although George loves nothing better than sitting outside with his radio and a cappuccino, and Jan can think of nothing more relaxing than watching the vast array of red finches, cardinals, doves, sparrows and blue jays, they will both tell you there is still much work to be done. "I have this idea," Jan smiled, as she laid out her newest plans to devise a sitting bench with sweeping vines and trees on the side of the house as a prime reading place. "I'm looking for a secret garden," she confided. The truth is: she already has it. **NOW**

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ARTS NOW



Filling *the* Void

— By Sandra McIntosh

Dalynda DeLeon used to keep her talent hidden somewhere deep within herself until the day a very special friend encouraged her to share her passion with others. “I guess you could say I was keeping my talent hidden in my back pocket,” Dalynda said. That was until Sandy Clark, her boss at Pete and Repete, pushed her to express herself through her art.

“Sandy encouraged me to excel,” she said. “That encouragement helped me turn my ideas into reality.”

The friendship between Dalynda and Sandy first began when Dalynda would frequent the resale shop as a customer. A fast and close friendship was forged during these regular visits. The friendship allowed Sandy to be straightforward and honest when it came time for Dalynda to fill a void in her life. “I’m not sure exactly what the

hole, or void, in my life needing filling was at the time Sandy offered me a job,” Dalynda explained. “Now, the store, the friendship and the handcrafted items have become a ministry.”

Firmly believing everything in this life happens for a reason, Dalynda is so thankful for the push toward success

“All I know for sure is the artwork I do on a daily basis now is answered prayer.”

she received over a year ago. “It could have been so I’d start my artwork again or even to offer beauty to others,” she said, referring to the busy schedule she thoroughly enjoys today. “All I know for sure is the artwork I do on a daily basis now is answered prayer.”

Her handcrafted artwork has taken on several dimensions. Special orders are quite common these days. “I hand paint letters for nurseries and children’s rooms,” she said, further explaining

that the idea behind the letters is to match something in the room. “It could be as simple as the child’s name in shades of their favorite color in the theme the proud new parents have chosen for the nursery.” Dalynda is definitely not limited to age or gender. “I’ve painted letters for every age from birth

to teenagers,” she proudly expressed. “Some of the newborns will have to grow into their letters.”

One such example of “growing into” the letters were these she was working on for a newborn. “He [the baby] had a room with a safari theme,” Dalynda explained. “I painted the letters to match the khaki-colored walls of the nursery and then added safari animals to the letters.” The safari animals included an alligator, zebra, lion, giraffe,

**ARTS
NOW**

elephant and monkey. Dalynda painted them to be whimsical and fun. As they were drying, they soon became conversation pieces to those who happened to be in the shop that particular morning. Dalynda is not limited to any one style either. "The customer's request will always dictate the style," she added, "and the style always changes." She is also proud to say the demand has made it impossible for her to keep any extra letters in stock.

Needless to say, when Sandy offered her words of encouragement to Dalynda, the projects did not begin and end with hand-painted letters. They grew to include crosses of all shapes, sizes and colors. "I watched Sandy's daughter make



crosses when she worked here," Dalynda offered for a better understanding of how this second phase of creativity began. The crosses she designs come in small, medium, large and extra large. "Some are small enough to be used as a pendant on a necklace," she said, "while others are plenty large enough to add to the ever-popular cross walls found in homes everywhere today."

There are two ways in which Dalynda assembles her crosses. Both begin with a solid frame. "The smaller pieces take small-gauge wire," she said, "while the large crosses begin with a frame of heavy metal." One selection is made by wrapping wire around the frame and randomly adding beads to the front of the cross as she continues to wrap the entire frame. "The second

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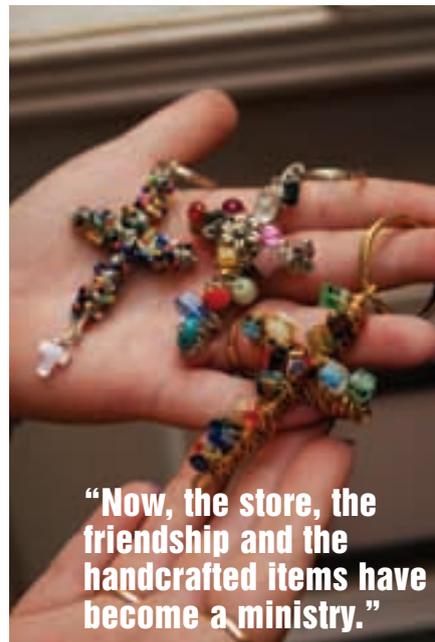
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style is a bit more time-consuming,” she said. “I wrap the entire frame with wire and then string hundreds of tiny seed beads on another strand of small wire. When I’ve completed the strand of beads, I wrap it around the cross.” The most difficult aspect of making



the crosses is to assure the frame is as perfect as possible. “The rest just seems to take on a life of its own,” she said.

Dalynda’s most favorite cross also happens to be the first one she ever handcrafted. A butterfly made from shells was Dalynda’s inspiration for this particular piece. “I sometimes wish I still had it,” she said. “My aunt purchased it and it now hangs in an art gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico.” She has also made seasonal crosses, pink crosses and turquoise crosses to signify breast and ovarian cancers, respectively.

Self-esteem — once at an all-time low — has now rocketed, thanks to the words which caused Dalynda to take flight and flourish. No longer does she feel inadequate or second-best. “The void has been filled and I find excitement with each new day,” she said. “There’s freedom in expressing yourself through your passion. It’s quite liberating!” **NOW**

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Sports
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City Girls Gone Country

— By Sandra McIntosh



After a thorough investigation, police reports stated that the barn in Red Oak had been struck by lightning in the early morning hours of March 9. Sadly, five horses perished in that fire, two of which belonged to the mother-daughter barrel racing team of Ava and Candice Jammer. The lifestyle the pair had come to love could have been lost in the ashes that day had they let the tragedy dictate their future. Instead, the accident seemed to spur them forward. “We could talk about horses all day long,” Ava said, as Candice shook her head in the affirmative. “Horses are our passion. They are part of who we are.”

They were living in California when their commitment and desire for training and riding first began. Ava remembered Candice, as a little girl, always saying she wanted to be a cowgirl someday. “I thought she was talking about maybe being a vet or something,” Ava explained. “At around the age of 4, I took Candice for several horse rides.



When she turned 5, I introduced her to a full-size horse. She showed no fear!” Ava, thinking her daughter to be quite amazing, took note of Candice’s talent and natural ability.

When Ava’s sister began dating a man with horses, Candice’s fascination grew into a deep-seeded passion. “Candice began to ride on a regular basis at the all-black stable where he boarded his horses,” Ava explained. “It was the beginning of a fun, fun lifestyle.” As mother and daughter spent more time at the stable, husband and father, Travis, decided it was time for him to visit the stable and see firsthand what all the excitement was about. “Once he got to the stables, he realized he had grown up with many of the

Sports NOW

guys there," Ava remembered. "He found a horse that was for sale. It was a little sorrel horse with a white blaze and three white socks." This particular horse was so unique with his big eyes and a tongue that constantly hung out of the side of his mouth. "The owner had to return to Mexico," Ava added. "She gave us a very good deal. Jammer, named after our family, may have been the runt, but he was totally the best."

They quickly secured and began renting a stall in a barn located close to home. With Candice in school, Ava had to take lessons on how to tend and care for the horse in Candice's absence. "I trained with large horses," Ava said, "so I no longer was intimidated by their stature." By the time Jammer was 3 years old, he was broken and ready to be ridden. "As a family, we broke and did all the work with Jammer," Candice said. "For five to six years, I watched my mom do all the work. I learned the right way to do things from watching her."

Taking her passion to the next level, Ava decided to purchase three more horses, Sky, Missy and Robin. "Missy taught me so much about who I was as a cowgirl," Ava commented. Missy lived to be 27 years old and Robin was sold to a friend in California before the Jammer family relocated to Ellis County, bringing Jammer and Sky with them. Once in Waxahachie, the lessons worth learning continued between mother and daughter. "Mom taught me to be prepared for anything," Candice said, while also referring to Gym Khana, a play day that consisted of 13 different events she attended in California at the age of 12. "Gym Khana taught me the necessary skills to ride a horse properly." The competition included: skills in jumping, speed, turning, stopping and leg usage. It was an overall workout for both horse and rider that taught Candice skills she has continued to perfect over the years.

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Since the very beginning, Ava studied and researched the pros and cons of barrel racing and the sport of rodeo in general. "I taught Candice everything she knows. She has never been to another trainer," Ava explained. "In training, I've always stressed the importance of safety first." "She taught me to 'cowgirl up' more than once," Candice interjected.



The first rodeo in which they competed was the Bill Pickett Rodeo, named after William Pickett, an African American rodeo legend, also known as the founder of bulldogging and calf roping. This initial experience is what actually started them on the road to barrel racing and the rodeo circuit. "This is when two city girls went country," Ava said. "We soon realized we had a place in the sport of barrel racing."

Saying their final goodbyes to Jammer and Sky was definitely not easy, but what they learned from their horses is what pushes them forward today. "We now have a new horse, a 6-year-old bay mare," Candice said. "We are training her on foundation and believing for a second horse in the future that is already barrel trained." To say they love the "twice-a-days" (two visits to the horse stable per day), is an understatement. "We don't need the accolades or the notoriety," Ava said. "All we need is the two-a-days; the riding, the feeding and the grooming. It's who we are." **NOW**

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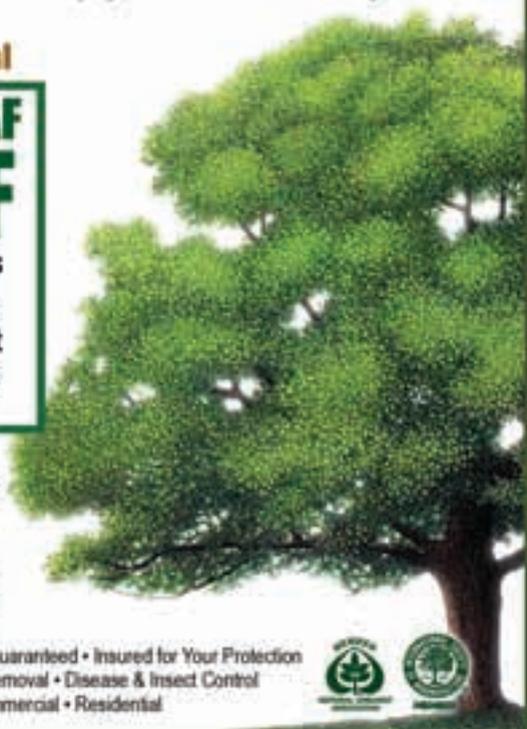
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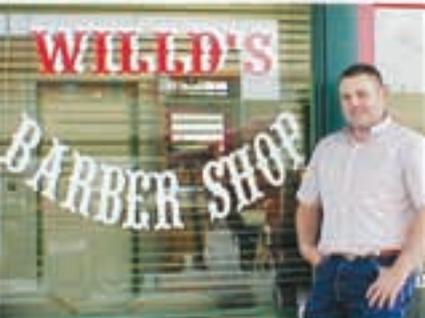
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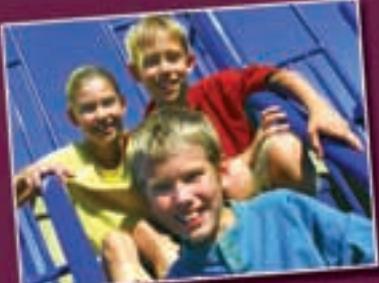


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Business NOW



A Courtside Vision

— By Sandra McIntosh

After an extensive and time-consuming remodel, the doors to Courtside Bar & Grill opened to the public in July of 2006, thanks to the vision of its owner, Tim Herum. Growing up in Wisconsin, Tim remembers things being much different. In his hometown, he remembers a variety of bars and quaint eateries.

“You don’t have to be a drinker to enjoy the sports bar atmosphere,” he said, referring to his decision to open a similar business in downtown Waxahachie. “There was no place local where people could come in the evening hours to relax.”

Courtside Bar & Grill offers so much more than a sports bar atmosphere. “We’ve become a place known for our food, fellowship and fun,” Tim explained. “My vision is to see the downtown area become the destination spot of Ellis County.” So much so, that Tim would love nothing more than to see new businesses open up. “After five o’clock in the evening, I have the whole square for a parking lot,” he said. “I’d welcome the competition.”

The success of Courtside Bar & Grill, located in the old Marchman’s Building at 200 S. Rogers Street, would not be possible without the help

of Laura Dixon, Tim’s general manager who has been with the corporation since the beginning. With full freedom to run the restaurant and bar as she sees fit, one of the main responsibilities Laura takes very seriously is the management of an estimated 25 employees, both full- and part-time. “I constantly tell them the importance of a smile,” she said, adding that she passes her philosophy onto the staff on a regular basis. “Our employees take pride in the way they look. They come to work dressed appropriately, ready to work and serve the public. A good attitude is everything.” Employee turnover is common in this type business, but both Tim and Laura said Courtside employees are happy employees, so turnover is lower than normal. “It’s a great place to work,” Laura interjected. “Some of the waitresses and bar employees have



Business NOW

been with us for quite some time.”

One thing many in the area may not be aware of is the full menu offered at Courtside Bar & Grill. During the lunchtime rush, burgers and sandwiches seem to be the most requested items. “We have daily specials,” Laura said, proud of the variety offered on the menu. “Friday’s special is always catfish.”

“But my goal is to try to always accommodate the needs of our customers.”

Other items ordered more times than not include the chicken parmesan and the chicken fried steak. “We also deliver to customers in the downtown area almost on a daily basis,” she added.

Laura always tries to provide service to large parties and referring back to past schedules, she said they host a class reunion at least once every quarter. “It all just depends on the events we already have confirmed on the calendar,” she said, “but my goal is to try to always accommodate the needs of our customers.” Regular patrons include local groups, such as the Widows Club and Drinking Liberally, but Tim and Laura have seen an increase in families, as well. “We serve lunch to the church crowd on Sundays,” Laura further explained. “Small, intimate dinner parties are also held here. It’s also a place where you can do a little networking of your own.” Tim and Laura are also proud to say they work in tandem with the Waxahachie Downtown Merchants Association and the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce on any and all special events held in the downtown area.

Business hours at Courtside Bar & Grill are Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to midnight, Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. and Sunday from noon to midnight. For more information, please call Laura at (972) 923-3738. **NOW**

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Education **NOW**

A Beacon *of* Knowledge

— By Jaime Ruark

A lighthouse is a tower used for displaying a bright light to guide ships so they can avoid dangerous areas at night. Waxahachie has its very own lighthouse, a beacon of knowledge for those who seek to know more about the world and community around them. The Lighthouse for Learning is a continuing education facility, and many have gained valuable knowledge from teachers who are ready and willing to share their wisdom and experience.

DeAnn Bell has been working with the Lighthouse for Learning for three years, as both a teacher and as a member of the Community Education Advisory Board. A resident of Waxahachie for the past 15 years, DeAnn and her husband, James, own a landscaping company called Urban Farmers. With the help of her son, Jay, DeAnn puts her skills as a Master Gardener to good use, beautifying the lawns and gardens of local residents. This proud new grandmother is a busy woman, active in her church and as the president of the Waxahachie Mother's Club.

She has now become the liaison between the Master Gardeners and Lighthouse for Learning. She not only teaches classes herself, she also helps find teachers and organize classes. "I look for people who have expertise in specific areas, and then we decide on the classes we will offer through the Lighthouse," she explained. "Our classes are offered in the fall and the spring. We run them about three months each semester. We have all kinds of classes, from computer and gardening classes to knitting, crocheting, cooking, cake decorating, photography, dancing classes and even, art history."



Taking pride in the educational opportunities offered through the program comes easy for DeAnn. "I have had many, many friends take the classes we offer, and many of my good friends are the teachers. It's a fun way for adults to learn a new activity or hobby without it costing them a whole bunch of money," she expressed. With knowledgeable and friendly teachers, such as DeAnn, the classes are definitely growing in popularity. "We've gone from having 125 people our first year in the spring of '02 to 844 people in 2006. We have people come from all over the county," she said proudly.

DeAnn is a committed teacher, and even buys the plants for the students in her class. "I have my students bring their own pots and then we use the plants that they need for their environment. People say they have 'black thumbs,' but really all it takes to have a 'green thumb' is learning how to prepare your gardens," she declared. "We have so many people who have moved to the area that aren't Texas natives, or have even moved here from different parts of Texas, and gardening just isn't the same here as it is other places. We try to teach them the different plants that grow well in our zone. Part of the Master Gardeners' mission is education, and this is just a great way for us to help people learn how to take care of the earth."

When asked if her talent for all things green was innate or

Education **NOW**

learned, she responded with a laugh, “I grew up on a farm. I’m not sure that I always enjoyed it, especially when my daddy made me hoe weeds, but I do enjoy being outside now. There’s just such a reward when your plants are blooming. I have plants that were my mother’s, and it’s such a joy when they bloom. I love to share that joy, that sense of satisfaction, and tell people that everyone can have a pretty flower bed if they just learn the basics of gardening — anyone can do it.”

DeAnn is quick to give credit where it is due, and speaks highly of her fellow teachers, as well as Melissa Cobb, who oversees Lighthouse for Learning. “She does the majority of the work at the Lighthouse, and she is just so gracious, she makes it fun for us to be there,” DeAnn smiled. “There are so many that help. I don’t know if there are many other communities that do what we do, and I think it’s important. It’s a good community outreach.”

The people who make up the advisory board for the facility are vigilant in keeping with the times and offering classes that people express interest in, such as DeAnn’s Container Gardening and Heirloom Plants classes. “The people on the advisory board come from all walks of life. We have people from Navarro College, the newspaper — there’s such a variety of teachers, and they all bring with them different ideas, which helps keep our classes new and exciting,” DeAnn said. “We work hard to make sure the community is aware of what we’re offering.”

DeAnn encourages anyone interested in continuing their education to follow the beacon of knowledge to the Lighthouse for Learning. “Mark those classes on your calendar, make that commitment and go out and do it,” she advised. “Learn something new. One of the best things you can do in life is to continue learning every day, and the added bonus is that at the Lighthouse, you’re forming new friendships while you learn.” **NOW**

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Ferns Forever

— By Nancy Fenton

Do you just love the cool, lacy look of ferns in the cool shade? Our hot summers and alkaline soils make it a little hard to produce that look in our backyards. According to Linda Gay of Mercer Arboretum in Houston, there are a few ferns that better tolerate our heat and alkaline soil. At a recent Master Gardener conference she went “bonkers” about ferns, making all of us want more. Suggestions for high-alkaline areas with low water were Maidenhair, Trailing Maidenhair, East Indian Holly, Japanese Painted Fern, New Zealand Bracken Fern, Lace Fern, River Brooke Cloak Fern, River Beech Fern and Southern Wood Fern.

Some are available locally; others will have to be ordered via special catalogs or the Internet. Most do well with

strong, light or at least dappled, if not deep, shade part of the day. When planting a fern, it is important to know if it is a clumping fern or if it spreads by runners. It is also important to know how big it will be at maturity. Varieties range from heights of 6 inches to the 120 inches of the Bracken Fern. Also keep in mind the growth rate of the fern. (East Indian Holly Fern grows very slowly.)

I have only mentioned ferns capable of taking our high pH, but they do vary widely in growth rate and size. Prepare your soil with lots of compost; plant your area so each fern has room to grow and show, and then plant either late in the fall or early in the spring. Mulch heavily and water weekly until vigorous new growth appears. After new growth starts up you can back off a little on the watering, but keep checking! It may take a full year for a fern to establish itself, so be watchful! Fall planting allows more root growth before the plant has to take on a Texas summer. With proper care, you can have that cool lacy look in your own yard! **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.



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Around Town NOW



The Summer Balloon Classic was held recently at Midway Airport. Photos of the event include: kiddie trains, top left; Janie Ivey of Ivey Photography, top center, prepared to take her first hot air balloon flight; an avid balloon fan, top right, helped "fire up" a balloon during the evening glow event; colorful balloons, second row left, quickly filled the skies over Ellis County; Hunter and Preston Colburn, second row right, enjoyed the meal at the Summer Balloon Classic that was catered by Joe's Crab Shack; after a successful jump, a skydiver, bottom left, carried his parachute through the crowd; and Lisa Noteboom Khoury and Debbie Andrews, bottom right, stopped to see the hot air balloons as they landed at the Whataburger on Highway 287.

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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH DEBBIE TURNER

Waxahachie can proudly add Debbie Turner to its list of talented residents. Debbie stays busy publishing her newspaper, *The Goat Gap Gazette*, which focuses on chili and barbecue cook-offs across the country. On weekends, you can find Debbie and her husband, Wayne, traveling around the country competing in the chili cook-offs. “I have cooked in over 38 states,” Debbie said. “I hope to someday say I have cooked competition chili in all 50 states.”

Debbie has appeared on the Food Channel in segments about chili championships and was named “Chili Cook Advisor to the Governor” by Governor Rick Perry. Even with Debbie’s notoriety, she lovingly named Wayne as her biggest fan, “His theory is that all good cooks need good eaters, and he loves to eat.” **NOW**

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

5 LB CHILI

- 1 14-oz. can chicken broth
- 1 14-oz. can beef broth
- 2 8-oz. cans tomato sauce
- 1 6-oz. can tomato paste
- 6 oz. water
- 5 lbs. chili grind beef
- 1 Tbsp. beef granules
- 1 Tbsp. chicken granules
- 2 Tbsp. granulated onion (or two large onions minced)
- 7 Tbsp. Gebhart chili powder
- 7 Tbsp. Fiesta chili powder
- 2 Tbsp. Pendery's ground cumin
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. granulated garlic
- 3 Tbsp. ground chilies
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- 1 tsp. cayenne (or other hot chili pepper) - OPTIONAL

Combine and bring to boil chicken broth, beef broth, tomato sauce, tomato paste and water. Add beef granules, chicken granules, granulated onion, 3 Tbsp. Gebhart chili powder and 3 Tbsp. Fiesta chili powder; simmer about 15 minutes. While sauce is simmering, brown chili grind. Add browned chili grind to sauce. Add cumin, garlic, 4 Tbsp. Gebhardt chili powder, 4 Tbsp. Fiesta Chili Powder,

ground chilies, sea salt and cayenne. Cover and cook 30 to 45 minutes or until meat is tender. If needed, add salt, cumin and hot pepper powder to taste. Chili freezes well, so if you are taking the time to make it, you might as well have some for leftovers, too. Different chili powders can drastically change a recipe, so experiment with what is available in your local store. I suggested two brands that I find and like that are available locally. Most competition cooks order their chili spices from spice companies to assure freshness and variety. Note: A chili powder is a mixture of ground chilies and other spices such as onion, garlic, cumin, salt and other spices. Ground chilies had no other spices added and are more difficult to find. If you do not find, just increase one of the chili powders.

CHICKEN TAMALES SOUP

- 1/2 cup masa harina flour
- 1 1/2 cup water
- 12 cups chicken broth
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. chili powder
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground pepper

- 2 8-oz. cans chopped green chilies
- 4 to 5 cups chopped cooked chicken
- 1 15-oz. can white hominy, drained
- 1 15-oz. can yellow hominy, drained
- 6 to 8 prepared tamales, cut into pieces
- salt, to taste
- 1 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese

Mix masa with the water in a large stockpot, stirring until smooth. Add the chicken broth. Bring mixture to boil. Add garlic, onions, chili powder, brown sugar, cumin, pepper and chilies. Simmer, covered 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the chicken and hominy and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in tamales and salt if needed. Serve with grated cheese and corn bread. A Hearty soup, good use for leftover chicken or turkey and with some prep work at home, easy to prepare at in your RV for a crowd.

MY MOTHER'S CORN BREAD RECIPE

- 1 1/2 cup corn meal
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. soda

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- 1 tsp. sugar (optional)
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups buttermilk
- 4 Tbsp. shortening (or better yet bacon grease) — melted

Combine dry ingredients. Whisk eggs and buttermilk together; mix into dry ingredients. Pour half of shortening in 9x13-inch pan to grease pan, other half into mix. Bake at 450 F for 20 to 25 minutes.

SOUTHWEST CHEESY MEAT DIP

- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 8 oz. sour cream
- 8 oz. can chopped mild green chilies, drained
- 1 cup red bell pepper, chopped (approx. 1 medium)
- 2 2.5-oz. jars chipped beef (or substitute 5 oz. sliced pepperoni)

Combine all the ingredients in a microwave safe bowl. Heat for 15 minutes. Serve with crackers or corn chips, hot or cold.

BUFFALO CHIP COOKIES

- 1 cup shortening
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 4 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. salt
- 2 cups uncooked oatmeal
- 2 cups cornflakes cereal or Rice Krispies cereal for more crunch
- 2 cups chopped pecans
- 1 11.5-oz. bag chocolate chips
- 2 cups coconut

Preheat oven to 325 F. Cream together shortening, butter, sugar and brown sugar. Add eggs and vanilla; beat until fluffy. Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Slowly add flour mixture to creamed mixture, mixing well. In a large mixing bowl, combine oatmeal, cornflakes or Rice Krispies, chopped pecans, chocolate chips and coconut. Fold into flour, sugar, butter mixture. Drop dough by tablespoon (a cookie scoop speeds up the job and makes for uniform cookies) on greased cookie sheet. Cook 12 - 15 minutes. Makes about 100 small cookies. They also freeze well.

Finance
NOW

Barbarians at the Gate:

The Importance of Asset Protection Planning

— By John D. Hale, Attorney at Law

An English professor once told me that every story can be reduced to one theme: two dogs, one bone. Since the dawn of man, people who have things have been prey to people who want things. Vikings marauded coastal towns, the Mongols pillaged the Orient and the Conquistadors ravaged the Aztecs. Civilization has only changed the method, while leaving the madness untouched. No amount of culture and refining can alter the core elements of human nature.

People who want your things have found new ways — civilized ways — to satisfy their appetite. Pirates and pillagers have been replaced by lawyers and creditors. Luckily, the defenses have evolved to meet the attack. Let asset protection be your fortress.

Don't Wait

Asset protection is life planning; an action rather than a reaction to a problem. It is too late to build a fortress when the barbarians are at the gate. Once claims on your property exist, there isn't much you can do to stop them. You may only protect yourself from future potential creditors. Attempting to shield assets with the intent to hinder collection of debts owed to your current creditors could subject you to civil and even criminal liability. This is why planning ahead is critical.

Asset protection is about planning for the unforeseen. Your plan should be designed to ward off any potential adversary. Life is much more random than we would like to believe. I am sure the Aztecs never imagined the likes of Cortez.

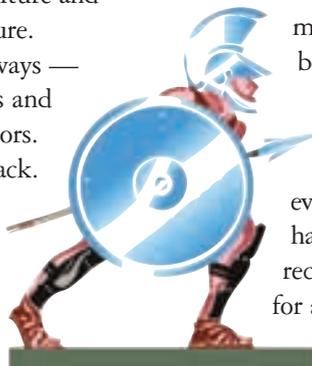
Avoid Juries

Most of the time, your theory of liability is much different than a jury's. While you may believe you have done nothing wrong, creative lawyers have been increasingly able to convince juries otherwise.

Juries are often result-oriented and with the new, ever-widening theories of liability, jury verdicts have sky-rocketed. A Washington, D.C. attorney recently sued a local dry-cleaner for \$65 million for a lost pair of pants. Further, contingency fee agreements entice unscrupulous attorneys to suck dollars out of meritless cases. A good asset protection plan can deter litigation and encourage much more favorable settlement outside the courtroom.

Take Off the "Kick Me" Sign

A well-integrated plan will not completely shield you from liability, but it will encourage settlements and reduce



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the size of the target. Wealth is the magnet. Put that wealth out of reach and litigation will be less attractive for potential claimants.

Asset protection planning is all about organizing your assets in the safest way possible. The idea is to transfer vulnerable assets from a less protected to a more protected form.

If the Spaniards had not seen Montezuma's gold, they probably would have turned right around and gone home. The Aztecs were not ready. Will you be? **NO!!!**

This information is neither provided in the course of an attorney-client relationship nor is it intended to constitute legal advice, or as a substitute for obtaining legal advice from a licensed attorney.

John D. Hale is an attorney based in Waxahachie.

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Give a Shot

— By Betty Tryon

Many of us are old enough to remember our smallpox vaccinations. We still bear the scar to prove it. The temporary, uncomfortable ordeal of the vaccination brought huge dividends — the eradication of smallpox in our lifetime. Although at times controversial, no one can argue how the discovery of vaccines has improved the quality of life for millions of people. Vaccinations or immunizations introduce into the body weakened or dead pathogens, such as viruses or bacteria, stimulating the immune system to produce antibodies to fight the invader. The very small and safe amount of disease-causing molecules creates the immunologic response.

This amazing living machine called our body has the ability to remember exposure to certain diseases, and within that memory database, to fight it effectively. This is where the miracle of immunization comes in to save the day from diseases that in the past would wipe out entire communities.

The four types of immunizations are inoculations with: weakened viruses, inactivated viruses or bacteria, toxoid and biosynthetic vaccines. The general population is familiar with vaccines from weakened and inactivated pathogens. Measles, mumps, rubella, anthrax and chicken pox vaccines are composed from weakened (attenuated) live viruses. The

weakened state of the virus reduces its virulence. This may pose a threat to a person who has a compromised immune system, such as someone with AIDS or being treated with chemotherapy. The inactivated or dead viruses yield the vaccines for influenza and hepatitis A. These vaccines are much safer for people with compromised systems. Toxoids from the bacteria or virus needed for inoculation are the third form of immunization. The common diphtheria and tetanus vaccines are produced from toxoids. Lastly, vaccines for diseases such as HPV (human papillomavirus) and HBV (Hepatitis B virus) are manufactured formulas classified as biosynthetic vaccines.

The immunization program begins in infancy with the first vaccine given at two months of age. This program continues with regularly scheduled visits to the clinic or pediatrician throughout childhood. Immunization does not end with childhood. Some vaccines, such as diphtheria and tetanus require booster shots to maintain consistent protection.

The quality of our lives improved with the discovery and administration of vaccines. Unfortunately, some diseases such as measles are making disturbing comebacks due to the lack of a national immunization policy in some countries. The creeping return of these dreaded diseases comes via travelers and then spreads to those who have not been immunized. The good news is that millions of children going back to school this year will first make a trip to their doctor for any immunizations they need. This simple act helps to ensure the safety of all. **WOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult your physician for questions regarding this topic.

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August 2008 Community Calendar

Second and Fourth Tuesday

Get Smart: Strategic Marketing and Research Technologies (formerly Waxahachie Business Interchange Networking) is held from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Network with other professionals and promote your business. Bring \$1 entry fee and plenty of business cards. Coffee and pastries will be furnished. Call (972) 937-2390 for location of the next meeting.

Third Thursday

ABWA - Empowering Women Express Network will meet at 5:45 p.m. at the Midlothian Conference Center, located at 1 Community Circle in Midlothian. Please RSVP to Daphne Brewer at (972) 723-6551 or visit www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org for more information.

August 9

The First United Methodist Church will host classical guitarist Stacy Arnold. The free concert will begin at 7:00 p.m. and is open to the public. Stacy will perform a solo guitar concert featuring the music of Villa-Lobos, Ponce, Back, Giuliani, Sor, Lauro and several others. FUMC is located at 505

W. Marvin Ave. For more information, please call the church office at (972) 937-4400.

August 9 and 10

Waxahachie Trade Days, located at the Ellis County Expo Center next door to the Cowboy Church of Ellis County, will be open Saturday from 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and Sunday from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. For more information, call Dean Worley at (903) 286-0183, e-mail waxtradedays@yahoo.com or visit www.waxtradedays.com.

August 11 and 12

The King and I, produced by the Waxahachie Community Theatre, will be conducting adult auditions beginning each evening at 7:00 p.m. Children ages 8-14 will audition on August 16 at 10:00 a.m. Auditions will be held at the First United Methodist Church located at 600 W. Red Oak Road in Red Oak. For more information, call PJ Searsy at (972) 723-6976 or visit www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com.

August 20

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection will

be having their monthly luncheon at the Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 @ I-35 East (Exit 401B). The cost is \$13.00 inclusive. Nursery vouchers are available for those with young children. To make reservations, please contact either Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984, or e-mail Kay at windchime@charter.net no later than Sunday, August 17.

September 27

Texana: Sights & Sounds of the Lone Star State will be presented at the Chautauqua Auditorium beginning at 12:30 p.m. Come enjoy the early days of Texas beginning at 7:00 p.m. with music, food and fun in Getzendaner Park. For more information, visit www.waxahachiechautauqua.org.

To have your events posted on the community calendar, e-mail us at: smcintosh-nowmag@sbcglobal.net.
For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.

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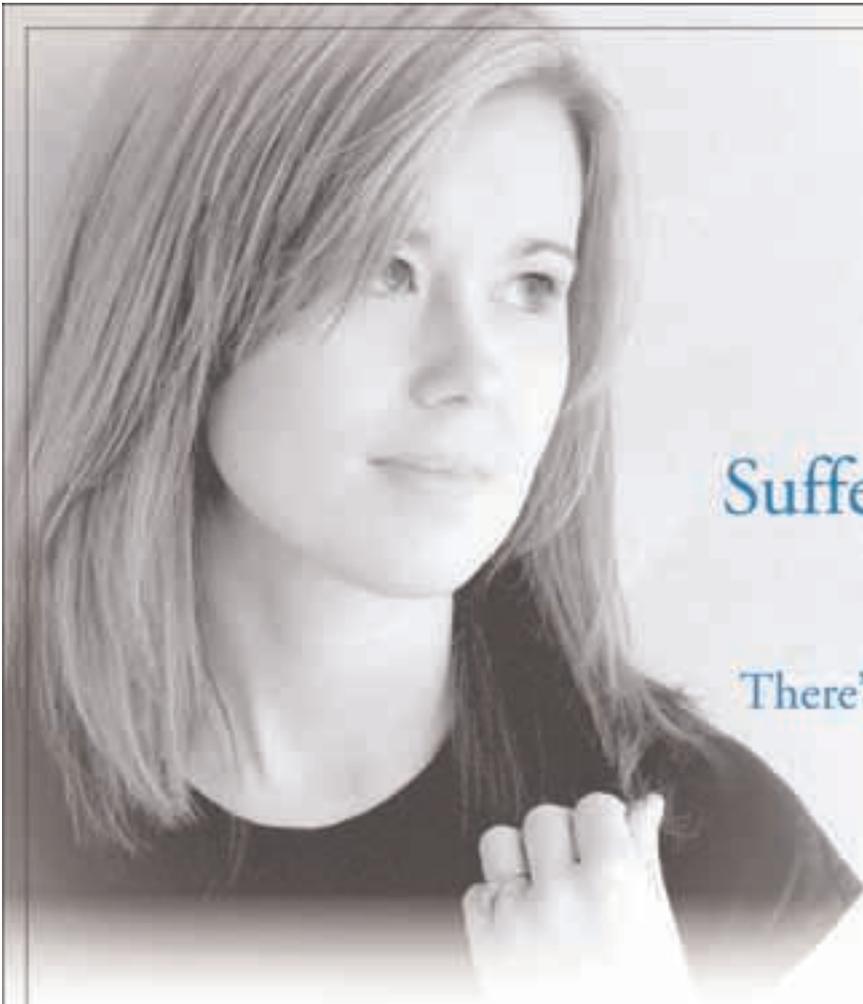
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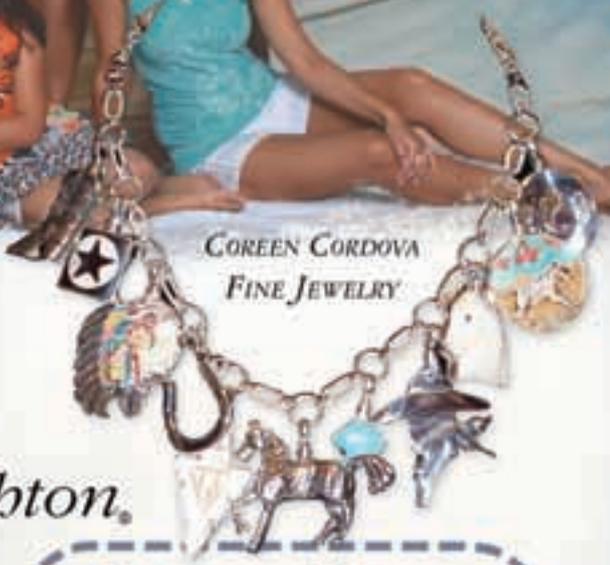
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