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M A G A Z I N E

August 2010

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Brian and Darla
Swiggart

ALSO INSIDE:

*A Giving Life
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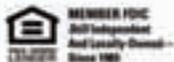
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On The Cover

At only 4 years of age, Shane Mushambi has the reading skills of a second-grader.

Photo by Shana Woods.

Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

August seems to be a month of preparation in our culture. In this issue, you will read stories about folks from Mansfield who are getting ready for a marvelous new season in their lives. I, too, have begun a new chapter, as I am now the editor of your community's magazine, *MansfieldNOW*! Already I have met lovely people from all walks of life as I wander about with camera-in-hand, introducing myself to people on the streets and in the stores and at the schools in your big little city. What a pleasure you all have been! I know you will get the same kick out of reading the good stories we serve up to you in our big little magazine. If you wish to introduce yourself to me, or even make a suggestion for a good story about a good person you know, feel free to call or e-mail me at the following: (817) 629-3888 or Melissa.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.

Happy August, Mansfield!

Melissa Rawlins
MansfieldNOW Editor

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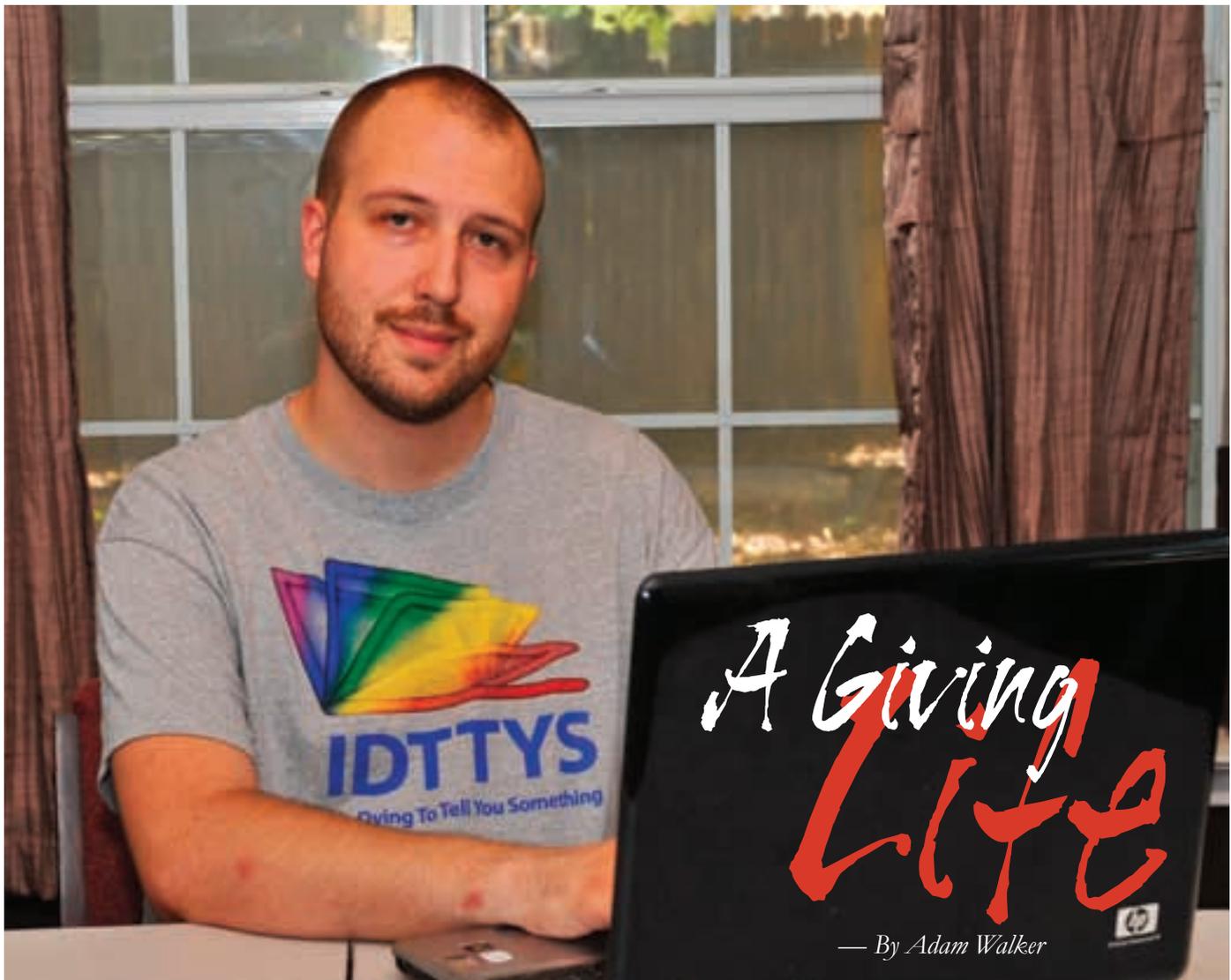
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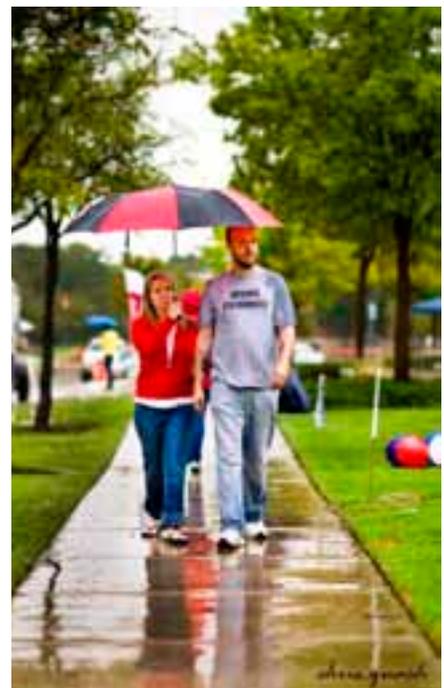
Not many 26-year-old guys spend a good deal of their time organizing and running events for charities which they helped to found. But then, Matthew Schauster is not like most people.

While over at a friend's house during his high school years, Matt met a guy named Martin Manka. Because they attended different high schools they had never met before, but they soon found many interests in common. "We both loved *The Lord of the Rings*," Matt said. "We liked writing. We were both fantasy nerds. We were into *D&D (Dungeons and Dragons)* and liked the same video games." Soon they were best friends and their families were celebrating holidays

together. At times, each boy lived with the other's family. "Our families were like one family," Matt remembered. "People thought we were brothers." After high school they roomed together.

Then tragedy struck. Martin developed testicular cancer at age 19. He beat the cancer, but a rare side effect of the treatment caused Martin to develop leukemia at age 22. Again he beat the disease. But then the cancer came back again and Martin died just before his 26th birthday.

A story like that might leave a young man bitter and angry, but that is not the way either patient or survivor reacted. "Martin was always thinking of others. Even during his third bout with cancer, Martin was always asking, 'Is there anything I can do for you?'" Matt admitted. "He fought hard and remained positive. He continued to be concerned



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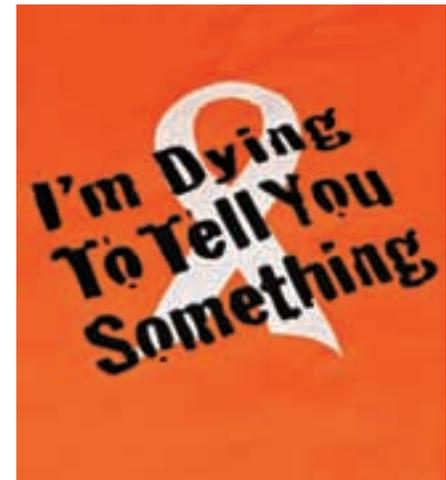
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for others no matter how bad his life was.” In fact, the charity, I’m Dying to Tell You Something, was Martin’s idea.

While hospitalized at Zale Lipshy in Dallas, Martin was allowed to bring some of his own things to his room so he had his TV and an Internet connection. He was able to stay in touch with friends through social networking sites and online gaming communities. But he saw other patients who felt very isolated and cut off from their friends and the outside world. He wanted to do something to change that, so he talked to his friends about what could be done. Matt remembered one day, “It was me, him, Ben, April and Autumn, all hanging out and talking. When we were leaving Martin said, ‘When you get home, get on the Internet and we can talk more.’” Then



Martin remembered an 11- or 12-year-old kid on the same ward who did not have the same resources and was very lonely. Martin said, “I wish everyone like me was as lucky as I am. If you’re in this situation you should have the resources to stay connected with the outside.” This conversation was the birth of the charity.

Planning went along in fits and starts, but not much actually happened until after Martin’s funeral in July of 2009. That is when Matt and Martin’s parents, Cris and Debra Manka, got together and decided to make this happen for real. I’m Dying to Tell You Something has a number of goals as an organization, among them are providing a Web site that functions as an information hub for cancer patients and their families; a site where they can help each other by sharing information about funding options for



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treatment and finding good doctors. The organization is also providing laptops to patients so they can access the Internet to use social networking sites and applications to stay in touch with friends and family while they are confined to their hospitals. They look at it as treating the mind while the body is being treated by the doctors. “We don’t plan on being as big as Live Strong or The American Cancer Society,” Matt stated, “but we want to be big enough to really be a hub for people to find help.”



Matt does a lot of the footwork, including organizing I’m Dying to Tell You Something’s charity golf tournament.

Martin’s parents run the logistics of the foundation, find the Web developers and keep track of the financial end of things. Matt does a lot of the footwork, organizing and running charity events, including I’m Dying to Tell You Something’s participation in October’s Walk for Life in Keller and their charity golf tournament. He also receives many of the donations which come from many sources — individuals, restaurants who donate gift cards and Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine, which donates unclaimed lost and found items to auction. Many of Martin’s friends also find ways to help with the foundation. “We are still contributing to his memory,” Matt added.

Matt is still working on his degree in psychology, since he took time off from school and work to help Martin, taking him to his appointments and even moved in with Martin’s parents to help them so they could continue working to pay for Martin’s treatment. Matt believes “mental health is really important when you are seriously ill. I really want to help people in this situation.” When he finishes his degree next year, he will start on his master’s degree so he can be certified as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).

You might think that Martin’s death changed the course of Matt’s life, but

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From left to right: Martin W. Fielder, M.D., Russell Dickey, M.D., Ellen Parik, M.D., R. Stephen Krombach, M.D., Erin T. Shick, D.O., John Jeffers, M.D., Baron Atkins, M.D., Keryn Dias, M.D., Byron Kalkam, M.D., John Paul Wood, Jr., M.D., Mary Finke, M.D.

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Matt was already on this course before he met Martin. In junior high and high school he served as a peer mediator helping other students solve their conflicts. He worked to help his mother pay the bills while she was sick and watched her work three jobs to feed him and his brother. "I don't want a lot in life. If I can help people that's enough," he admitted. "The best gift is giving. I'd rather buy something nice for someone else than buy myself something nice." And Matt's giving ways don't stop there.

You might think that going to school and helping to run a charity would be enough to keep him busy, but Matt also volunteers with the Texas State Guard, which is a totally volunteer, unpaid



Debra Manka, Trina Bucher, Dara Young (in the background) and Genie Uebelacker, Martin's grandmother and cancer survivor.

civilian soldier organization similar to the National Guard in its goals and functions as a relief organization coordinating with FEMA and the Red Cross during hurricanes and other disasters, as well as providing medical care to poor communities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley through Operation Lone Star. But unlike the National Guard, there is no G.I. Bill for participants and Texas Guardsmen must buy their own food and supplies and take unpaid leave from work.

Matt does not see his life as unusual. "Things happen in your life, and you grow up fast. You don't think about cancer in your 20s. It doesn't seem real until it happens. This is just what I should do. It's what Martin wanted, so I said, 'Okay. I'll do it.'" This is one young man whose dreams should come true. **NOW**

Editor's Note: If you would like more information about this charity, visit their Web site: www.idtys.org.

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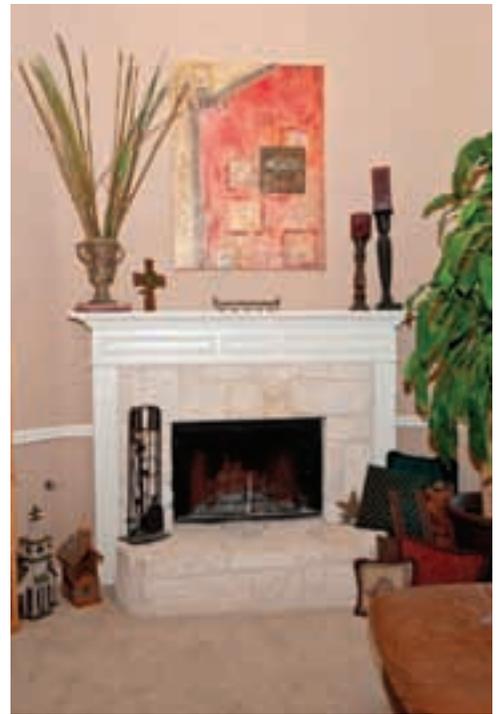


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Few parents would give their children swords for their 15th birthdays, but there is a method in Brian and Darla Swiggart's "madness." The gift symbolizes their vision of the men of character that they want their sons to grow into. "The sword represents being a knight who fights for the King, who fights for honor and for the woman God has for [him]," Brian explained. "We try to give our boys something larger than themselves to live for."

The Quest

— By Janice C. Johnson

*At Home With
Brian and Darla Swiggart*



This concept of living for something larger than oneself is familiar to Bryson, 19, Colton, 16, and Noah, 13. All their lives, they have watched Brian and Darla doing just that. Bryson was just a year old when Darla decided that motherhood was her most important calling. She became a “stay-at-home” mom, adapting her business career to fit her family’s needs and schedule. More recently, in 2007, Brian’s friend, Paul Mints, asked him to join the staff of the church he had started here in Mansfield. At the time, they lived in San Antonio, where Brian had a salaried position on staff at their church.

Brian and Darla sensed a distinct call to go; but the new church, The Community at Lakeridge, was not yet able to pay him a salary. The couple solicited donations and raised enough financial support to accept the unpaid position.



Since that autumn he has served the church, nicknamed “TCAL,” as pastor of families and logistics. His calling to help families was stronger than the “pull” of his comfort zone. Brian answers that calling consistently — not only for his own family, but for his church and the wider community. “I want to encourage, motivate and equip parents to be spiritual leaders,” he explained, “whether they are in our church or not.” He emphasized that, “Families can’t be perfect, but they can be healthy.”

In Mansfield, the family looked for a “functional” house rather than a large one, but ended up finding a five-bedroom home at a bargain price. The family has made use of every inch of the two-story home. Brian said, “It has more bedrooms than we were anticipating, but the cool thing is, ever since we moved here, we have had [extra people] living with us.” Besides giving a succession of colleagues and friends a temporary place to stay,

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Brian needed another of the “extra” rooms for an office. “Our church didn’t have any kind of office space; we just meet at a school,” he said.

Brian and Darla employ a two-part strategy as they work to build knightly character into their sons. First, as Brian said, “Part of the key for us is staying connected as a family.” Everything about the Swiggart home celebrates their family heritage. They use furniture that belonged to past generations, such as the desk that Darla’s grandfather built. Much of the artwork in their home is the work of the boys or other relatives. Family photos, displayed all around the house, symbolize the connections between individuals and generations. About these symbols, Darla said,

“That’s what makes our house our home.”

Projects bond the family together, too. They like to work together with their hands. Brian said, “When we moved in, the back patio was falling down. There was just a yucky backyard with two ‘stick’ trees.” So he and the boys built a new patio and a stone goldfish pond. Then, with Brian’s father, they designed and built a shed in another corner of the yard.

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Another way to connect is through playing and having fun. Their family favors tent camping, kayaking and fishing.

Second, the Swiggarts take every opportunity to bless and celebrate their sons. For one thing, they practice hospitality. Darla allowed a ball python (“They’re safer than a dog, Mom; really docile. And he was on sale!”), some tree frogs and a Leopard gecko into her home — provided they stay in their respective terrariums. Human friends are always welcome to hang out, too; groups of them often fill the game loft, television room or backyard. Brian and Darla also encourage their boys’ self-expression by showing off the art they have produced. As a gift for Noah’s 13th birthday this year, they supplied everything he needed to design, paint and decorate his own room.

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The family's single most momentous occasion is the party for each son's 15th birthday, observed as a rite of passage to manhood. Bryson, a Dallas Baptist University sophomore, and Colton, a junior at Timberview, have been honored so far. Building on the Jewish *bar mitzva*, or "Son of the Law," the Swiggarts celebrate each young man as *bar barukah*, meaning "Son of the Blessing." This is when each receives his sword, other symbolic gifts and mementos and letters from church and family — visual reminders of his purpose, faith and character. Many of the mementos are bound in a scrapbook, but Darla also pointed out the Scripture "life verses" that Brian's mother had worked in embroidery and framed for Bryson and Colton, encouraging them to strong, faithful manhood.

"We aren't perfect; we have issues like every other family," Darla said. "We're just your ordinary, run-of-the-mill family that can identify with teenage struggles." But as the Swiggarts see it, building a sense of honor and purpose into each of their children is a long-term objective. Darla went on, "These are targets — our goals, the standards we have set; because as the saying goes, if you aim



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at nothing, you'll hit it every time." Parents cannot reach such goals by taking the easy way. "Easy? No. It's a battle, and it's not easy," she said. "We are holding steady; we hold these things high because it's worth the fight."

This quest requires faith and a long-range view. And, as the parents have held steady through the years, encouraging and blessing their sons, the boys have grown to bless them in return. Most important to Brian and Darla, "They all love and serve the Lord." They also pitch in around the house: doing their own laundry, giving their mom a hand when she is tired and taking on all the interior painting. And they often volunteer to help others, whether relatives, church friends or neighbors.

Not long ago, Bryson surprised his mom by crafting a Scripture reference and a cross in barbed wire, and hanging the art on the outside of the shed. The reference is to I Corinthians 16:13-14 (NAS), which, Brian explained, "Is the verse we have always had for our boys: 'Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.'" **NOW**



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Around Town **NOW**



Blair Levesque and Stevie Hammer buy cupcakes for their weekend from Tonja Jefferson, proprietor of Frosted Pink Cake in historic downtown.



Jessica White, sophomore at Mansfield High School, wins the North Texas Junior PGA tournaments at Tangle Ridge, Timarron and Bridlewood in the 15-18 year old division.



Two families, the Washingtons and the Davises, enjoy a fun summer's day out on the town, including lunch at Oliver's.



Jeremy Kitchens, Leydi Contreras and Rocky Cordova lounge and watch TV.

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Barry Bondurant of the Mansfield Fire Department delivers food from meals-on-wheels to life-time resident Edna Sappington.



Dr. Kyle Cook and Rob Schulz pose at the 2010 Rotary Banquet at the Walnut Creek Country Club.



Leah enjoys play time with her sister, Lauren, in the teepee at the back of Ruffled ReBelles.



Lorrie Pogue celebrates the 5th anniversary of Pink Kisses with Elvis.



Clint Cummings takes his time tatooring his brother, Cody's, "sleeve" in the studio at Sparrows.



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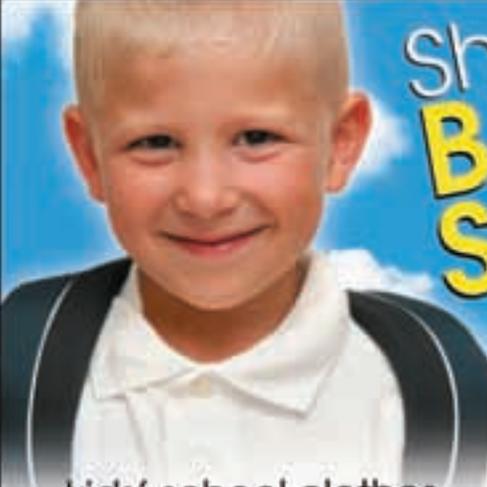
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Making Music Happen

— By *Alana Williamson*

Musician Presley Beggs knows what it is like to make things happen and how to work hard to accomplish his goals. He began singing at an early age in church and started playing the saxophone in middle school. By the time Presley graduated from Mansfield High School, he was well on his way to becoming a professional musician. “I’ve always loved music,” he said. “I was lucky enough to incorporate it into making a living.”

Presley is a self-taught musician, who also plays the drums, keyboards and the guitar. Following graduation, he spent five years as a performer at Six Flags Over Texas. “It helped broaden my horizons by doing character performances and helped build my confidence as a singer,” he said of his amusement park experience.

Today, Presley is very confident in his abilities, including adapting his performances to any genre or audience. He has played at a variety of venues, including Fat Daddy’s Sports &

Spirits Cafe of Mansfield and Houlihan’s in Arlington. “I just meet the demand and take requests a lot,” he said. “I like to play music that has pretty chords, but that is not always popular with the audience.”

When Presley plays for private groups that do not make specific requests, he relies on his diverse assortment of original and “cover” songs. He often begins with music by Sam Cooke or Motown artists. He then samples different genres and observes the audience to see how they react to the music. “Once I find the groove, I keep it,” he explained.

“My goal is to get everyone’s attention in the room,” he added. “I try to be outstanding enough that they enjoy it, but muted enough so they can still talk and enjoy themselves.”

This is especially true when Presley performs at engagement, graduation and birthday parties. He plays with the understanding that his job is to provide ambience as opposed to playing concerts

where the audience is focused only on him and his music. "I'm not always comfortable being among a large group of people, but I'm very comfortable being on stage in front of one," he explained. "It's a thrill that everything you say is so magnifying."

Presley has also recognized that different regions are more likely to enjoy specific genres of music. For example, in the west end of the Metroplex, audiences tend to prefer country music. In Dallas and Frisco, rock and alternative music seems to appeal to many groups Presley has performed for.

"My goal is to get everyone's attention in the room. I try to be outstanding enough that they enjoy it, but muted enough so they can still talk and enjoy themselves."

After a performance at Fresco's Cocina Mexicana in Burleson in 2006, Presley learned to play a new instrument to please his audience. He was given a guitar and learned one song rather quickly. While still only knowing how to play one song on his guitar, he was asked to host their open mike night. As he hosted the event, he learned to play more songs on his own in order to fill in the gaps between volunteers. Since then, Presley has used his guitar to write most of his songs.

Presley relies on a variety of different types of music for inspiration. "I'm influenced by everything I hear," he said. He particularly enjoys listening to music from the big band era of the 1920s. He also listens to classic rock, The Beatles and John Legend. When he is writing his own music, Presley often tells stories from his personal experiences, such as his song, "Like an Angel." Presley related, "The first song I remember writing was after I ran into a girl, and we exchanged phone numbers. I went right home and started writing."

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Dr. Culp graduated from Texas Christian University with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. He earned his Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree from Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He completed his three-year residency in foot and ankle surgery at Kaiser North Bay Consortium in Vallejo, California, where he served as chief resident his final year. A member of the American Podiatric Medical Association and the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, Dr. Culp has presented his research at professional conferences.

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His professional experience has included stints with bands, such as Inside Out and an audition for a Broadway musical where he was the only performer at the Texas audition to be called back. One of his favorite performances to date was at a charity event. He performed along with local and nationally touring bands. After playing and singing all original music, he received an encore and requests for autographs. "I don't take compliments very well, but I've learned to just say thank you," Presley said.

Presley's audiences have compared his music to that of groups such as the rock group, Maroon 5, and the country and



western group, Rascal Flatts. He plans to join another cover band in the near future and hopefully record demos of his original songs. Presley has hopes of becoming a touring musician, selling lots of records and rearing a family.

He feels fortunate to have a supportive family that understands his passion for music. All of Presley's four siblings are involved in the arts, and they hope to one day be able to perform together. One of his brothers is studying dance in college and another brother is a singer in New York.

Presley remembers people telling him that he needed something to fall back on, but he considered that to mean he would be leaving room for failure. Instead, he encourages aspiring musicians to be committed and find steady jobs, so that they can focus their free time on developing their music. "Never be afraid to talk to other musicians and ask them questions," he advised. "And always be ready to perform, because you never know who might be listening. With faith and a good work ethic, it will happen." **NOW**



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MANSFIELD'S MARATHON MAN

— By Carolyn Wills



Sydney, Steve and Madison Szeszko enjoy running together.

“Runners are social people, and the sport tends to be very encouraging.”

Growing up in Pennsylvania, Steve Szeszko spent most of his youth playing outdoors, going to school or practicing with the school band. He was never much interested in competitive sports. Today, Air Force Master Sergeant Steve Szeszko, husband and father to two young daughters, is passionate about marathon running, one of the most challenging of competitive endurance sports. “My interest in running began when we were stationed in Colorado Springs,” Steve said. “My boss would talk about races and how much fun they were, so I decided to sign up for a three-mile race. I had never even run a mile race before, but I finished the three miles and had so much fun that my interest in running just kept building.”

In their next move, the Szeszkos were stationed in Tacoma, Washington, and,

on occasion, a representative from the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Team in Training (TNT) program brought flyers to the recruiting office where Steve worked. The more Steve read about the TNT program, the more interested he became; yet it would take one more move before he would act on his interest.

The TNT program provides training for marathons and half marathons or hiking adventures, triathlons and 100-mile century bike rides. In exchange for raising funds, participants receive up to five months of intense training and education by certified coaches, plus the support of motivated teammates, and lodging and airfare to one of the more-than-200 accredited national and local events in the United States. “I told my wife I wanted to do it,” Steve said, “so when we got to Texas and I received a

brochure in the mail, I signed up to train for the TNT Marathon in Dallas.”

This was his first marathon, and the training began last November for the big race on April 11. “We started running two miles a day and gradually increased all the way up to 26.2 miles. My 9-year-old daughter, Madison, really took an interest. She would ride her bike beside me during my training runs through our neighborhood, and the neighbors would wave as we went by.” On Saturday, he would meet with his teammates. “There were 12 of us and we would do longer runs together, maybe 18 miles.”

When race day finally came, it was hot, hotter than any of their training days. “We weren’t prepared for how hot it was, and by the 18th mile I had lost all of the salt from my system. Sometimes you can get to a point where you think, I



Steve and wife, Constance (Connie) Szeszco.

can't do this anymore, you can't feel your legs and you hurt all over. After a TNT mentor gave me a salt packet and glass of water, though, I was good to go again. And I finished the entire race. My goal was to finish under five hours. I finished at 5:59.14 hours, but the important thing is that I finished."

Whether he is running a 3K, 5K, half or full marathon, running is now a passion for Steve. "It's infectious and fun. My daughters are running now, and it has given us quality dad-and-daughter time. My 11-year-old daughter, Sydney, and I ran the [Fort Worth] Cowtown 5K together, and Madison just finished her first 1K." Steve's wife, Connie, participates in her own way. "Connie says everyone needs to be a supporter of something and she supports the family's passion for running. She and my daughters have cheered for me in every race, and when I'm a couple of hundred yards away from the finish line, they jump in and finish with me."

Steve also enjoys his Facebook bragging rights and weight control. "I remember when I posted that I had hit 100 miles of training and some of my Facebook friends commented: 'Are you crazy? You're running a what? No way will you

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make it. All runners are skinny guys.' After April 11, I enjoyed posting that I had finished my first marathon." As for his weight, Steve is 20 pounds lighter. "I'm running so I don't have to diet," he added.

In a runner's world, it is the personal record that really counts. "Every runner



talks about your PR — trying to best yourself," Steve explained. "I kept a log for my first marathon. My first two-mile run took about 20 minutes and, as the weeks went on, I could see my time getting faster and the mileage going up. I'm a competitive person, and I do consider running to be a sport. It is a competition with yourself."

Steve also sees running as a fun sport. "If you're not having fun, it isn't worth it," he said. "Runners are social people, and the sport tends to be very encouraging. The inner pride of performing in front of people, sometimes crowds ringing cowbells to urge you on, gives you the energy to keep going."

So what does the future hold for Mansfield's Marathon Man? "I'm training for the Oklahoma City Marathon," Steve said. "My hope is to become a TNT mentor in time to help with the fall training and spring marathon." **NOW**

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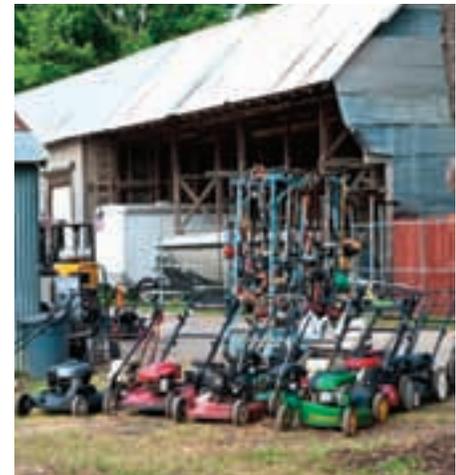


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From left:
Wayne Johnson and Charles Morrison.

Here to Stay

Texas Specialty Equipment places high value on honesty and customer service.
— By Alex Allred

With the Texas Specialty Equipment, honesty is not just a policy — it is the only way they know how to do business. The family-owned business is a small engine repair business. “So,” owner Wayne Johnson said, “most people think of us as a lawn mower repair shop, and that is the bulk of what we do, but to stay diversified, we also work large commercial projects. We do cement mixers, welders and compressors.” Beyond working on small residential equipment, such as chain saws and trimmers, Texas Specialty Equipment provides services calls for what Wayne calls “industry.”

“For example, we have a customer who is a waste hauler and cleans out restaurants. We can go on-site to make repairs when we need to.”

While Wayne stresses the need to remain diversified, ensuring that his lead mechanics are highly certified, his wide array of

services and need for perfection is no surprise to anyone who knows him.

Wayne began his career in a steel mill in California during the 1970s as a “millwright,” or, an industrial mechanic with a variety of skills. “But when the economy suffered, I moved around a lot.” Wayne developed ski areas, putting in ski lifts and managed a marina in Lake Meade, Colorado. As an assistant supervisor or foreman, he was a jack-of-all-trades, working as a pipe fitter, a welder, a mechanic and manager while balancing customer service. His was the life of a gypsy until a snowmobile accident broke his back and left him at a crossroads. For years, he had searched for a place to set down roots and call home. His sudden loss of mobility created a sudden need.

As they say, it is hard to keep a good man down, and Wayne rallied quickly. He became a deputy county land surveyor in the

Business **NOW**

largest U.S. county until 2006, when both he and his wife, Joy, moved to Mansfield to work with a private development company. Wayne began to consider starting a family business. "The economy [today] was impacting other members of our family," he said. "So, we did an extensive study, made a business plan and balanced our skills sets."

Wayne ordered a part for a customer's lawn mower although he had been unable



to reach the man. "It was an educated gamble," Wayne said. "He needs to operate the machine."

These types of educated gambles have put Texas Specialty Equipment on the map after only one year of service in the Mansfield area. Rather than wait to speak to the customer, Wayne orders the part so they can work on the machine as soon as possible.

"Even if we're very busy, we make contact with the owner in a week and we have a two-week turnaround," Wayne said, noting their customers are busy as well. "We take in pride in that."

Customer service is so important, in fact, they engage in less-than-profitable business practices. "Working on some of those smaller hand tools is so labor-intensive and time-consuming, we don't make any money, but it means a lot to our customers." They also sharpen tools, offer discounts to the disabled and provide personal services. Certainly, it is a business model that is paying off.

"We spent so much time on our five-year business plan and we've already blown it out of the water! The need was much greater than we anticipated."

Indeed, the pairing of Texas Specialty Equipment and Mansfield has been tremendous. "This is home for us," Wayne said of both his family and business. "We'll never go anywhere else." **NOW**



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Beyond the Classroom

— By Katrina D. McNair



To say that Shane Mushambi is intelligent for his age would be an understatement. Shane is actually very intelligent for his age — and a few years beyond. A struggle to find a suitable school for Shane has given his mother, Trinda Mushambi, the opportunity to educate her son with a hands-on manner that is turning the idea that boys are developmentally behind girls into a mere myth.

After graduating from college, where Trinda obtained an accounting degree, she moved to Texas, seeking work. Originally from West Virginia, she and her husband, Tendai Mushambi, have lived in Mansfield for about seven years. After starting their family (which also includes 2-year-old Nigel) Trinda and her husband began to seek out schools they felt would truly harness Shane’s potential. However, at such a young age, she found the task a little bit difficult. “They would always say what his limitations were,” Trinda said, “so, I would make up worksheets for him. By the time he was 3, he was doing word scrambles.”

Many of the challenges Trinda felt she was facing were not the lack of good schools or programs — it was all about

a numbers game. “There’s no program out there for children his age,” she said. “I looked everywhere — online, just all over the place. There was just not a lot of information for his age group.” Inspired by how quickly her son was learning and picking up concepts well beyond his years, Trinda made the step to become an at-home teacher for her children. “I started buying everything educational possible and adapting it,” she said.

Trinda’s style of teaching incorporates many hands-on activities and adapting concepts for her sons’ ages. “He [Shane] was doing addition math when he was 2,” Trinda stated proudly. “He could say one plus one, but he couldn’t write the answer two, so I had to get him magnetic numbers. It was about adapting to his age level at that time.”

To drive home lessons and ideas, Trinda uses a four-prong method to both inspire and teach her sons. Each activity or concept they learn is reiterated by watching a corresponding movie or film, a hands-on activity, a song that helps with memorization and is fun for them and computer games. And to ensure that Shane is not memorizing, but actually learning concepts, Trinda recently had his

math and verbal skills tested, using an online program designed to evaluate the grade level homeschooled students would be placed in. At only 4 years old, Shane is able to compete with second- and third-graders’ math skills, has the reading skills of a second-grader and the vocabulary of a fifth-grader. Not too bad for a 4-year-old.

Since she began teaching Shane and having so much success with him, Trinda has taken on other students and has about five on her roster. Each student she has possesses a different learning style, and those differences have allowed her to step outside of the box and allow the students to dictate their lessons — to an extent. “We obviously have guidelines,” she said, “and I’ll introduce something to them. If there seems to be a struggle

Education **NOW**

or there's no interest, I'll pull it away for another time. But, as soon as those eyes spark, we do total immersion. We teach foreign language through total submersion. I feel like when a kid is into something, they're only going to be into it for a certain amount of time — so I push it to them. I try to water it down where they understand it, but I use correct terminology.”

Not only teaching academic concepts, Trinda wants all of her students to focus on being morally upstanding young men and women, as well. To help foster this, she introduced a merit program that would reward each student as an “Adored Scholar.” All of the students had several concepts and tests they had to master, including spelling tests, learning the 50 states, learning the nutrition cycle and 3-D shapes. As the students

“He [Shane] was doing addition math when he was 2.”

accumulated star stickers on progress charts, they worked closer and closer to their reward (which they all achieved) — the Adored Scholar trophy. “It was really cute,” Trinda laughed. “They had a little ceremony and a friend gave us a red carpet to use. It’s about morals and self-esteem, as well. Self-esteem is greatly important. They can’t say, ‘I can’t do it.’ It’s not allowed. They have to say, ‘I need assistance.’ They have to say, ‘I am somebody.’”

As Trinda moves forward with teaching her students, she would like to look into securing grants to further her resources. Education is a hot topic in the country, and as a new home educator, she has observed how funding cuts have affected students at the young level she is reaching. “Funding is being cut at the pre-school level,” she said. “And this is when they begin to learn! And, I just remember reading something about a kid’s brain is like a sponge. But, my interpretation was, yes, it was and is like a sponge. But, if you put everything in there, it will come out eventually. And that’s what we want — that knowledge to be there.” **NOW**



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In The Kitchen With Dianne Vraa

— By Faith Browning

Like most women, Dianne Vraa experienced the love of cooking from her mother. "My mom was a wonderful cook and baker," she said. "She was the 'Test Kitchen' for our neighborhood grocery store in Fargo, North Dakota. We got to try new products like cake mixes introduced in the 1950s before they were on the store shelves."

Dianne is one of the original volunteers with the auxiliary at

Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. She enjoys promoting the auxiliary's fundraisers like Holly Days coming up on December 3 and their cookbook, *A Taste of the Auxiliary*, which is available at the hospital's gift shop. She prepares many of the cookbook's recipes for the pleasure of others. "I enjoy cooking for my family and friends," she said. "It's always rewarding to share a wonderful meal and create memories." **NOW**



GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

Not your average green bean casserole.

8 slices bacon
1 med. onion, chopped fine
2 cans green beans, drained
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
22 Ritz crackers, crushed

1. Cook bacon; remove and crumble.
2. In bacon drippings, cook the onions until translucent.
3. Combine all ingredients except Ritz crackers; mix well.
4. Place in a buttered casserole dish; top with crackers, pushing some down into mixture. Bake at 350 F for 30-45 minutes.

DOCTORED REFRIED BEANS

2 16-oz. cans refried beans
A handful of shredded cheddar cheese
1 8-oz. can green chilies
1 Tbsp. olive oil
Dash of garlic salt

1. Mix all ingredients; place in an oiled casserole dish. Top with extra cheese, if desired.
2. Bake at 350 F about 25 minutes.

GREEN CHILI RICE

1 cup rice, cooked
2 cups sour cream
1/2 lb. cheddar cheese, grated
2 sm. cans chopped green chilies, not drained
Butter
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

1. Combine first 4 ingredients; place in a buttered casserole dish. Dot with butter;

1. sprinkle with Parmesan.
2. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

SOUR CREAM-GREEN CHILI-CHICKEN CASSEROLE

It looks different, but it's not!

1 lg. clove garlic, chopped fine
Olive oil
6-8 ripe tomatoes, chopped
5 sm. cans chopped green chilies, not drained
1 onion, chopped
Pinch of oregano
Salt
1/4 to 1/2 cup water
2-3 whole chicken breasts, cooked, shredded
2 cups sour cream, plus extra
1/2 lb. cheddar cheese, grated
10-12 flour tortillas

1. In a large saucepan, sauté garlic in the olive oil. Add tomatoes, chilies, onion and oregano; salt to taste. Add water to cover mixture; cover and cook for 20-30 minutes or until mixture thickens.
2. Mix chicken, 2 cups sour cream and cheese.
3. Lightly fry both sides of tortillas in oil to soften. Layer tortillas between paper towels to remove excess oil.
4. Spread 1 Tbsp. sour cream on tortilla. Next, spread on 2-3 Tbsp. of tomato mixture. Place 1/3 cup of chicken mixture across the middle of the tortilla. Spread 2-3 Tbsp. tomato mixture over chicken. Roll tortilla and place in a lightly oiled baking dish. Repeat until dish is full. Cover with remaining tomato mixture.
5. Bake at 350 F for about 40 minutes. Serve with extra tomato mixture or salsa. Great for entertaining. Can be

made a day ahead and refrigerated. They freeze beautifully, thaw before baking.

SUGAR COOKIES

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
3 Tbsp. milk
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla (or other flavoring)
3 cups flour
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt

1. Cream together the butter and sugar until smooth and fluffy. Add milk, egg and vanilla; blend well.
2. Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Add to wet mixture. Mix until well combined. Chill dough for 1 hour.
3. Roll dough onto floured* surface to about 1/4-inch thickness; cut into desired shapes.
4. Bake at 400 F for 5-9 minutes. Watch carefully; remove from oven when edges start to brown. Keep unrolled dough in refrigerator. *Mix flour and powdered sugar together-it tastes better.

EASY COOKIE FROSTING

1/2 cup vegetable shortening
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 tsp. vanilla (or other flavoring)
4 cups powdered sugar
2 Tbsp. milk
Food coloring, if desired

1. In a food processor, combine shortening, butter, vanilla and sugar. With food processor running, slowly add milk until smooth and creamy. Add more milk if needed.

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Scoliosis

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

It could not happen at a worst time — a diagnosis of scoliosis right before puberty. Scoliosis is an abnormal sideways curvature of the spine. The progression of the atypical curvature happens most often during the growth spurt of the teenage years. Children commonly compare themselves to others and a condition that causes physical deformity such as scoliosis can severely

impact the emotional well-being of a young person on the cusp of adulthood. At a time when they struggle with normal body-image issues, they must now face the prospect of contending with a condition that will alter the physical shape of their body.

The most common type of scoliosis is Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis (AIS). Idiopathic means the cause is unknown although there is some evidence of hereditary factors contributing to this condition. Many children with AIS do not experience pain. It is when the spine curves beyond its normal range that the child and others will notice a problem.

A beginning clue that something is wrong may be one leg seeming to become longer than the other one, which would cause clothing not to fit properly. When bending over, the curvature of the spine is more noticeable as one shoulder is higher and protrudes more than the other one. There will be visible curving of the spine to either the right or the left. A serious case of scoliosis can alter the chest cavity and affect the person's breathing capacity. Left untreated, the deformity could become

severe; however, with proper treatment there is a good possibility that progressive curvature can be stabilized as the child grows. A brace properly prescribed and worn will help the condition from worsening. The brace may have to be worn until skeletal maturity and the bones stop growing. In some cases, surgery is necessary to straighten and provide support for the spine.

As the spine curves and becomes more noticeable, the child's body image shifts also. Significant psychological distress may be noted. Some children complain of feeling isolated socially and not having many friends. A treatment plan for the physical condition should consider their emotional well-being as they often have low self-esteem. Providing a support group for pre-teens and teens would give them an outlet for their frustrations. In addition, speaking with other kids who have successfully undergone treatment and/or surgery could give them a great boost of confidence.

It is important for parents to understand all of the risks and benefits associated with any treatment plan. Understanding what is happening gives the family more options for an optimal outcome. **NOW**

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



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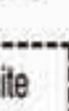
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GETTING YOUR TREES READY FOR WINTER

— By Nancy Fenton

Did you notice how many limbs some of the trees lost this year? Let's talk about what happens when trees are not pruned on a regular basis. The worst case scenario would be for a rather large branch to drop through your roof or on your car! The second worst incident would be for the falling limbs to take out electricity or close bridges and roads. We may not like it, but our local utility companies and counties have to pick up the slack when safety becomes an issue. Let's face the reality; tree trimming can be a costly procedure, and if we do not do it ourselves, someone has to.

The county and the utility companies do not cut the limbs over your roof, but they do protect the lines that power our homes as well as the roads on which we drive. They have a lot of territory to cover, and it is an economic reality that they will move through as quickly as possible. Each one of us could pick up the cost of having our trees trimmed the way we want it done — as long as the safety issues were addressed. All it takes is a plan and a phone call to the utility or the county. Hey, it



saves them time and money, so they would be delighted to see the homeowner/landowner take care of it.

Most of the trees around our homes are the slow growing, beautiful ones like live oaks, maples, burr oaks and pecans. Hackberry trees, poplars and cedars are fast-growing and short-lived. Even though they may look awful when the utility or county workers are forced to cut them back, they will cover the road again in two years if not "whacked back" again. Of course, any landowner has the option to trim back any trees on their property. The county and utility companies only do it to keep us safe on our public roads. The pictures taken on our public county roads may look bad right after the trees are trimmed in the spring, but drive back by in the summer months, and you will see lush growth everywhere.

This is the month to start scheduling your own tree trimming if you do not do it yourself. The first freeze is usually around Thanksgiving, and you do not want to be cutting on your trees anytime after October 1. The trimming stimulates growth, and you do not want the freeze to really damage your trees.

Call a licensed and insured tree service now to get on their schedule, and get ready to sit back and smile as others scurry to repair roofs, get electricity turned back on and even to get out of their driveways when the big storms come! **NOW**

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Approved Home Health Care is Awarded CHAP Accreditation

Millothian, Texas — July 7, 2010 — Community Health Accreditation Program, Inc., (CHAP) announced today that Approved Home Health Care has been awarded CHAP accreditation under the CHAP Core & Home Health Standards of Excellence. This is the beginning of the fourth year CHAP accreditation has been awarded to Approved Home Health Care.

CHAP accreditation demonstrates that Approved Home Health Care meets the industry's highest nationally recognized standards. Rigorous evaluation by CHAP focuses on structure and function, quality of services and products, human and financial resources and long term viability. Through CHAP accreditation, Approved Home Health Care is also certified as a Medicare provider.

“We are very pleased that Approved Home Health Care chose to continue CHAP accreditation,” said Terry A. Duncombe, CHAP President and CEO. “Voluntarily selecting to achieve CHAP accreditation and meeting our high standards of excellence demonstrates Approved Home Health Care’s commitment to quality. CHAP is delighted to work with their entire team through the ongoing process of quality improvement.”

Approved Home Health Care provides a variety of nursing and therapy services to patients and their families in Ellis, Johnson, Tarrant, Dallas counties and surrounding areas. They are locally owned and operated by hometown folks with over 50 years combined home health experience.

“We are extremely proud of our entire staff for making this possible. They are, after all, our greatest asset.” says Louis Ponder, owner of Approved Home Health Care. “We are excited that we are able to provide high quality, compassionate health care services with a home town feel for our community,” chimes in co-owner Kelly Kavanaugh.

CHAP is an independent, not-for-profit, accrediting body for community-based health care organizations. Created in 1965, CHAP was the first to recognize the need and value for accreditation in community-based care. CHAP is the oldest national, community-based accrediting body with more than 5,000 agencies currently accredited nationwide. Through “deeming authority” granted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), CHAP has the regulatory authority to survey agencies providing home health, hospice and home medical equipment services, to determine if they meet the Medicare Conditions of Participation.



For additional agency information, contact Kelly Kavanaugh, RN, HCS-D, COS-C, Owner/Administrator at (972) 723-2933.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Genealogical Treasure Trove

— By Adam Walker



If you are researching your family history and do not yet know about the Texas Collection at Baylor University in Waco, you are missing a valuable resource. Tucked away in the historic original library and chapel building from 1903, the Texas Collection is one of 25 depositories for the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Regional History Department. Baylor's collection includes such valuable documents as: marriage, birth, death, tax and probate records for McClennan and the surrounding counties, but the riches to be mined do not stop there.

Baylor has built an impressive collection of small-town newspapers, which can provide birth and wedding announcements and obituaries, as well as wonderful gossipy details about your ancestor's lives and times. Where else will you learn that your ancestor had out-of-town visitors, or went visiting relatives in another county? What other source would tell you about your ancestor's fortunate recovery from a long illness or the new business venture he or she had launched or the rumor that an engagement was in the works?

Also included in the Texas Collection is a large number of county histories from near and far. Often these histories can give a researcher invaluable information about ancestors by recording information retained by another branch of the family. But Baylor is also actively collecting histories of individual towns and communities, along with histories of local churches and civic organizations to which your ancestors may have belonged and contributed. These documents could offer insights into an ancestor's standing in the community, religious beliefs and civic spirit.

Cemetery and funeral home records are also part of the collection and can often supply valuable clues. Your ancestor's epitaph could include vital information for your search, as could the mortician's or undertaker's notes about the circumstances of your ancestor's death.

If this sounds like a large collection, it is, but the collection of 125,000 books continues to grow by 150 books a month as they actively solicit donations of city directories, yearbooks from kindergartens to colleges, records of fraternal organizations, family cookbooks and cookbooks produced by churches and other organizations, which often include family stories.

Another category of books they are actively soliciting is family histories.

"They are hard to get," the librarian, Amie Oliver, reported, "because families don't often think to donate copies to libraries, but they have lots of information. We have quite a few, and we always want more."

The Texas Collection is also a repository of oral histories, and their collection of genealogical periodicals, and general periodicals of all sorts

relating to Texas, is impressive. If you are ready to take your genealogical search beyond the census records at your public library, Baylor's Texas Collection might be the perfect next stop on your journey of discovery.

The Texas Collection, located in the Carroll Library Building at 1429 South 5th Street, Waco, TX, is open Monday-Friday, 8:15 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Check their Web site, www.baylor.edu/lib/texas for Saturday and holiday hours. Call ahead at (254) 710-1268, and they will even pull your records for you and have them waiting for you when you arrive! **NOW**



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Happening **NOW**

Second Monday

Metro Beekeepers monthly meeting: 6:30-8:30 p.m., United Cooperative Services Building, 2601 South I-35 W. We discuss items of interest to both novice and expert beekeepers in Texas. Contact Terry Botkin at (214) 837-7256, or visit www.metrobeekeepers.net.

First and Third Tuesdays

Senior Dance: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Mansfield Activities Center. The event features a different live band every week. Snacks are served during the fun which is held in the gymnasium at 106 S. Wisteria. For more information, please call Suzanne Newman at (817) 453-5420.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Kiwanis Mansfield Afternoon Club meeting: 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Fat Daddy's on Debbie Lane. For more

information, contact Cheryl Litke, Secretary, at (817) 453-5106.

Second Thursdays

Four Powerful Workshops for Everyone in the Mansfield Community, hosted by The Wesley Mission Center, 777 North Walnut Creek Drive: Employment 101, for learning to write job-winning résumés and prepare applications that make it to the top of the pile when everything nowadays is done online: 1:00-2:00 p.m.; Computer Class, for learning basic computer skills such as Word, Excel and navigating the Internet: 2:30-4:30 p.m.; Budgeting Classes, taught by Danny Wilson with Texas Trust: 6:00-7:00 p.m.; Legal Clinic, provided by the law firm of Landrith & Kulesz: 6:00-8:00 p.m. by appointment only. To register, call the Wesley Mission Center at (817) 473-6650 or e-mail teresas@fumcmansfield.org.

Every Saturday

Mansfield Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 150 E. Broad Street. The market provides fresh produce to the public, grown by local farmers. Vendors set up in the historical downtown district and sell not only fruit and vegetables, but also antiques, plants and flowers, processed foods and more. Anyone interested in being a vendor should contact Rex Wenger at 6916 Hollow Oak Trail, Mansfield, TX 76063.

August 7

Improv Comedy Show and Spaghetti Dinner hosted by Boy Scout Venture Crew 1993 and sponsored by Accutech Roofing: 7:00-9:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church (across from Walmart). This will be a family-friendly event to raise money for equipment; the dinner and show will be presented in the gymnasium.

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For more information, call Wayne Simmons at (817) 239-4438.

August 8

Benefit Concert for Ronnie Day, who once restored an *Andy Griffith Show* squad car and now is recuperating from quadruple bypass heart surgery. This Texas-roots music festival goes all day into the evening at Diamond S&D Ranch, on Highway 4 between Cleburne and Grandview; noon-10:30 p.m. Call Matt Day at (817) 966-0211 for more information.

August 9

Mansfield City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., City Hall, 1200 East Broad St. Call Vicki Collins at (817) 276-4204.

August 12

Employment 101: 1:00-2:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church's Wesley Mission Center at 777 North

Walnut Creek Drive. This is a one-hour group workshop for anybody within the community who is seeking additional information on how to conduct the flawless job search. If you desire a one-on-one job search consultation, you can get one of those by appointment only. To register, call Wesley Mission Center at (817) 473-6650 or e-mail teresas@fumcmansfield.org.

August 16

Stars & Pars Golf Tournament, the first annual fundraising event to help promote Historic Downtown Mansfield, consists of 9 holes in the day, dinner, and then 9 holes at night. Glow sticks/glow balls provided in gratitude for your donation of \$150 per player. Hosted at Tierra Verde Golf Course, 7005 Golf Club Drive, Arlington, TX 76001. Registration begins at 3:00 p.m. Shotgun start

at 5:00 p.m. and play goes until midnight. For more information, contact Discover Historic Mansfield, Inc., at 900 N. Walnut Creek, Ste. 100 #267, Mansfield TX 76063.

August 18

Lunch 'n Learn: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Chamber of Commerce, 114 N. Main. This event is sponsored by Charter Business, which will give a workshop about "Content... Creativity...and Cost" in your Web site development. Enjoy a fine meal. This luncheon will be free for the first 15 attendees, and then \$10 per attendee thereafter. Register via Tami frontdesk@mansfieldchamber.org.

August 23

First day of school for Mansfield Independent School District. Call (817) 299-6300 for more information.



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Happening **NOW**

Mansfield City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., City Hall, 1200 East Broad St. Call Vicki Collins at (817) 276-4204.

August 24

Board meeting for Mansfield Independent School District: 7:00 p.m., 605 E. Broad Street. Call Julie Moye at (817) 299-6382 for more information.

August 25

Wake Up North Texas! 7:00-9:00 a.m., hosted by the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce at Aristide Event & Conference Center, 601 Strada, Suite 109, in Mansfield. This is a networking event, which only costs \$2.00 per person, for businesspeople from all around the Metroplex. Contact Tami at (817) 842-1212 or frontdesk@mansfieldchamber.org for more information.

August 26

Robin's Wings, a free quarterly program for women only, designed to encourage and uplift women of the Mansfield community: 6:00-8:00 p.m. The event will be hosted at the First United Methodist Church's Wesley Mission Center at 777 North Walnut Creek Drive. Get more information and register by contacting Heather Stephen heathers@firstmethodistmansfield.org or call Wesley Mission Center at (817) 473-6650.

August 28

34th Annual Style Show produced by Barbizon Model Agency in Dallas and the Women's Division of the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce to benefit local charities: 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Walnut Creek Country Club. The show includes a room full of booths for shopping opportunities before the show and even some live entertainment including the Mansfield High School Show Choir. To buy tickets, go to www.mansfieldstyleshow.com.

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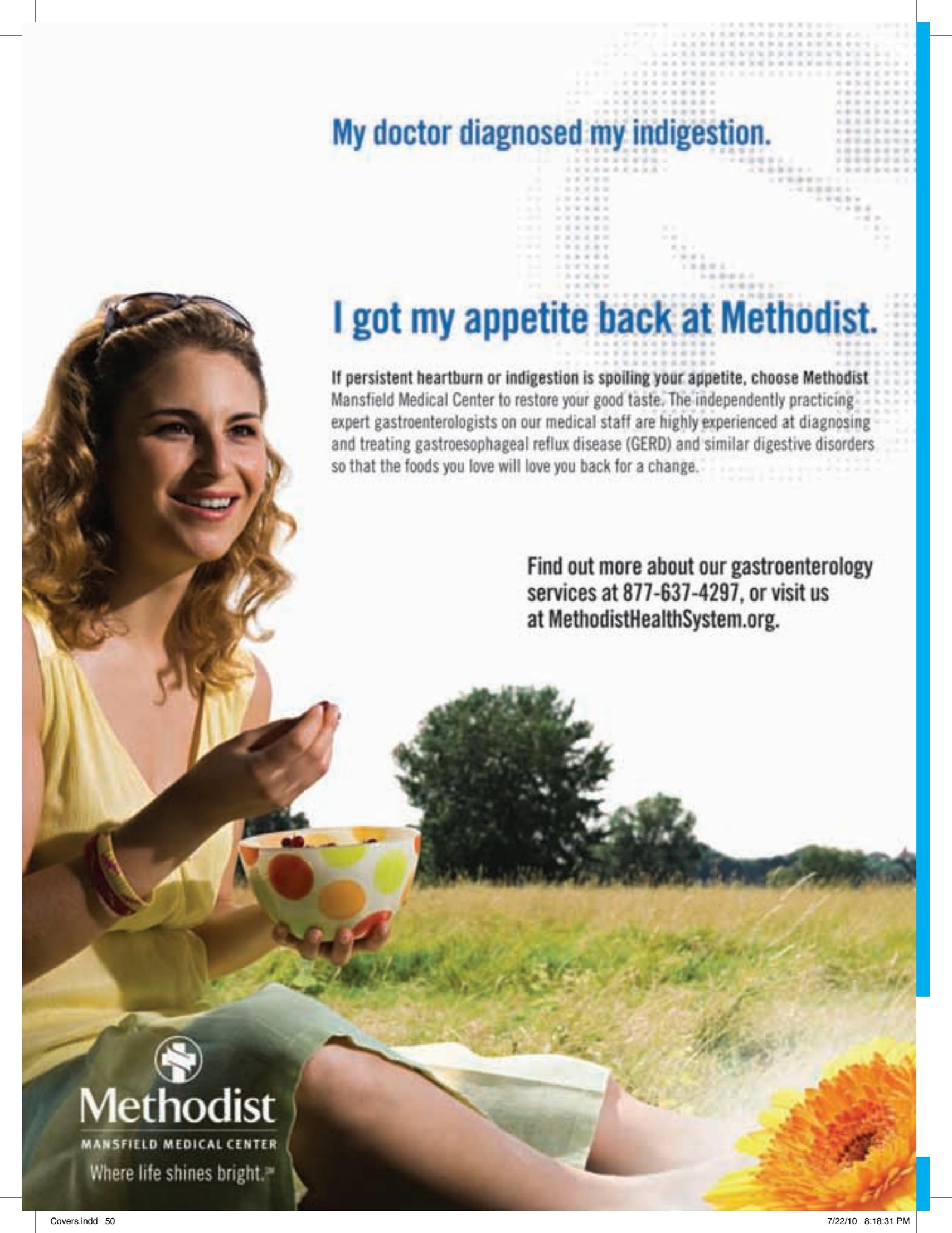
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