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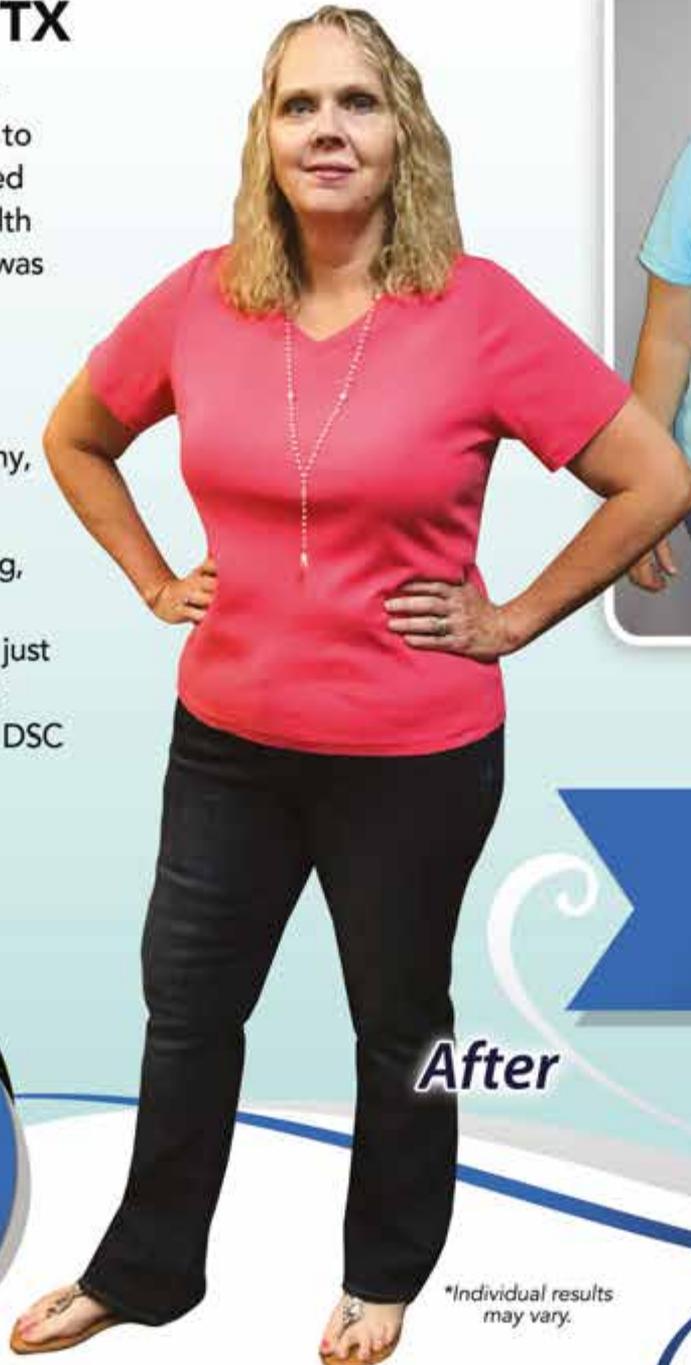
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ON THE COVER



Skylar Millhouser and her Welsh pony, Shiner, are both national champions.

Photo by Joy Elmore.

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# Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

What makes the world go 'round? My dad always told me it was love. That was back when we jammed out every Saturday morning to what *Rolling Stone* calls the 87th greatest song of all time, "Ring of Fire" by Johnny Cash. His voice echoes alongside Bobbie Gentry's "Ode to Billie Joe" and Tanya Tucker's "Would You Lay With Me (In A Field of Stone)?" and "What's Your Mama's Name, Child?" in my memories of what makes the

world go 'round. This month, children and mamas and papas have a reason to celebrate what makes the world go 'round. On September 27, Family Day is celebrated in Texas. Originally proclaimed by Governor Rick Perry at the suggestion of a Texan named Hank Hoaldrige, the day is intended to focus people on spending quality time with those they might easily take for granted.

Reminds me of another excellent folk song by Stephen Stills, "Love the One You're With." It was released just about the time Daddy came home from Vietnam — for good.

May your days feel free and easy because of love!

*Melissa*

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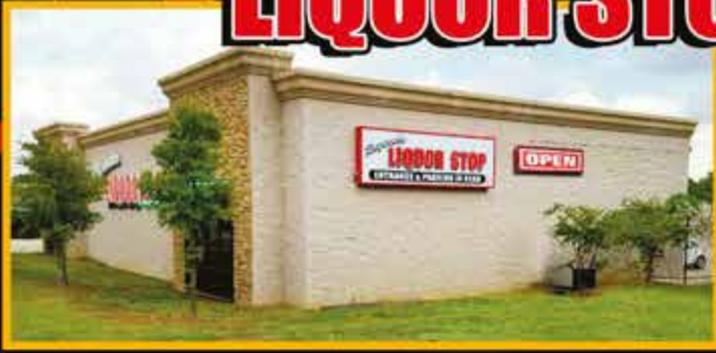
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# Riding TO THE TOP

— By Rick Mauch

*As the old saying goes, “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree,” so Skylar Millhouser being a great equestrian like her mother makes sense. Skylar, a 12-year-old eighth-grader at Mansfield’s Worley Middle School, won six national championships this past season competing in the Welsh Pony & Cob Society of America. It made for a great family vacation to San Francisco, though they had to leave a little extra space in the suitcases for the hardware she brought home from the annual convention in February.*

Skylar was named National Champion All-Around for ages 12 and under. She and her 9-year-old half Welsh/half Quarter Horse gelding named Bailef’s Time Two Shine (Shiner for short) won titles for Short Stirrup Hunter, Short Stirrup Equitation, Half Welsh English Pleasure, Half Welsh Western Pleasure and Stock Seat Equitation. They also earned a national reserve award (runner-up finish) in Junior Handler, and fourth nationally in Junior Trail.

Shiner was named the United States Equestrian Foundation Horse of the Year for Region 4. They also finished third in the nation, both of these accolades in Welsh Pleasure.

Skylar began riding horses around the age of 5. That’s about the same age her mom, Audra Millhouser, also fell in love with being an equestrienne. “I was horse crazy from the time I could say the word,” recalled Audra, who has a few national championships of her own. “A friend of my parents had kids who had a few horses. My mom would take me out there, and I’d ride all day long.”

Ditto for Skylar. However, she has horses on her family’s ranch in Venus, where they still live. “I love being able to ride with my friends,” Skylar said of the competition, which runs from March through November. “When you’ve worked hard, even if you don’t win, it’s good to just be out there.”

But then, Skylar does a lot of winning. She competes in about 13 events at every show — a schedule that takes her throughout the Southwest. She even sometimes competes against older riders and comes out victorious. “It’s more of a challenge, competing against someone who has ridden a lot more than you,” she said. “But I feel accomplished when I win.”



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Skylar began working with Shiner in December 2015. It didn't take long for the two to connect and find success in the 2016 competition year. "I told her this is going to be a learning year," Audra said. "Don't expect to win all sorts of awards. I guess I was proven wrong."

In fact, Skylar was coming off a really good year in 2015, with Lazy J Bailef's Star. The duo won three national championships and three reserve awards, and Skylar was second All-Around Youth. Skylar loved working with Little Star (nickname for Lazy J), but she simply outgrew her. She stands 12 hands tall (a hand is 4 inches) and Shiner is 14.2 hands. "He's the perfect pony for me," Skylar said of Shiner. "I'd be glad to work with him until I go to college."

Speaking of college, though still in junior high, Skylar has given much thought to what she wants to do. Wherever she goes, she wants to join the school's equestrian team. A straight-A student, she was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society in May. Since competition is during the school year, she stays extremely busy. She's usually up by 6:30 a.m., attends school, gets home around 3:30 p.m., does homework, rides and tends to the horses, does more homework when necessary and then goes to bed.

On the way to competitions — and sometimes even at the competitions — she is often doing schoolwork. Her dedication to school runs about as deep as her love for horses. "I have a picture of her in Tulsa sitting in a parking lot on

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her computer,” Audra said. “That’s the only place she could get Wi-Fi, and she had some homework to finish.”

Skylar’s class schedule includes a special off-campus physical education program that involves 15 hours of equestrian activity each week. The district offers this program for non-University Interscholastic League sports, such as equestrian, gymnastics and rodeo. “I have to turn in a report after each six-week period,” Skylar said.



She has participated in other sports, such as martial arts and archery. However, there was never the passion that she has for the equestrian events. “I just wanted to work with horses,” she added. Working with horses is more than training and competition, though. There’s the not-so-glamorous side that she also must take care of, such as stuffing hay bags, cleaning their feet, brushing them and cleaning the barn. “If it’s raining, they go into stalls, and you have to clean them two or three times a day,” Skylar said. “If it’s winter, you have to make sure they have a blanket. You have to feed them twice a day. And when I’m finished, I have a sense of responsibility.”

And that brings a smile to the face of her father, Shane. He likes her realizing that the lives and comfort of her horses are at stake, depending on how responsible she is. “Her chores are a



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little different than others," he said. "The animals are relying on her."

Traveling to the events is more than competition. It's a family affair and a chance to enjoy each other's company. "We have fun. It's always good to have the family together," said Shane, who usually does the driving and sets up the camp.

"He's a good gofer," Audra added with a laugh.

Skylar's older brother, Blake, and Shane, though proud of her, don't share the same passion for horses. They are into hot rods and race cars. Still, they enjoy the excitement that comes from watching her succeed. "It's exciting to watch her do so well, to see that hard work pay off," Shane said.

Competing involves jumping over fences, which have increased in height to 2 1/2 feet this season. Skylar said clearing them isn't scary, but there is always the risk of a fall — and she has taken some. "She always wears a helmet," Audra said. "You go in knowing it's a dangerous sport."

Audra recalled one particularly scary time a year ago. A horse was spooked and threw Skylar. "She fell off and a horse stepped on her," Audra said. "She got up, rode the next day and ended up winning her division."

Skylar wants to compete professionally someday, and not only because she loves the competition. She loves the special bond the sport gives her and her horses. "That closeness is very important. You brush them, you feed them, you pay attention to them," Skylar said. "You learn what their movements are, and they become familiar with you. It's more than just going out and competing. Sometimes, just them being there is relaxing." **NOW**



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# DYNAMO FAMILY

— By Carolyn Wills



## AT HOME WITH ELIBERTO JR. A

It was built in 2012, in nine short months, with 85-percent of it completed by Eliberto and his skilled family and friends. “Leann and I designed it,” he said. They thought to create a simple, square home with a master suite, bedrooms for each of their three teenagers and an office upstairs. “Then we went further,” he smiled. Instead of an office, the upstairs became a game room and balcony, plus three bedrooms. Then, before the ink settled, Leann was pregnant and another bedroom was in order.

Today, the five-bedroom home is testimony to Eliberto and Leann’s vision. Each family member has individual space, plus there’s room for family activities and an entertaining spot for young friends. It is also testimony to Leann’s talents as decorator/designer and Eliberto’s as general contractor, licensed electrician and entrepreneur.

The home sits on 5 acres, which were purchased by Eliberto years ago when he was in his early 20s. On the far right is a machine and auto mechanic shop, which he shares with his father and brother, and on the left, a small house that now serves as the office for Jeseq, Inc., Eliberto’s contracting and

*Eliberto and Leann Sanchez’s contemporary country home is undeniably gorgeous. For style, size and superb craftsmanship, the 4,500-square-foot, Austin stone-and-brick beauty has it all, including breathtaking property. Most importantly, beyond its good bones and charm, this stunning home is the perfect, and sometimes humorous, reflection of a dynamic and fun-loving family.*



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electrical business. The two-story home, located in the middle of the central and largest part of the land, is accessed by a long driveway.

A walkway leads to the front door, and once inside, guests are greeted by a view of the dining and living rooms, which are distinguished by archways, crown moldings, 10-foot ceilings and bold floors. "My cousin works with concrete," Eliberto said. "He stained the home's actual foundation with a mottled, dark brown color mix called Coca-Cola, and then finished it with polyurethane."

A large dining room to the right of the informal foyer features a long contemporary dining table. "It's my favorite room," Leann smiled. "We like having family dinners at least once a week, and now that the kids are older, getting together is especially important."

When asked about her design style, Leann quickly calls it "learning," however, to a visitor, it appears the work of a professional. Throughout the home are shades of gray and tan with occasional touches of red. "Eliberto likes neutrals, and I love color," she grinned. "In the central area, we stayed neutral. But then we used color in the bedrooms and slowly added some accent walls." Her color choices are complemented by large, contemporary art pieces.

The enormous living room with sophisticated, yet comfortable furnishings, includes a fireplace, as well as a view into the connecting kitchen and a breakfast nook affectionately called Sophia's Art Room. "Sophia is our 4-year-old," Eliberto smiled. "When Leann and I married in 2011, she had a son, and I had a son and daughter. It's because of this house and Sophia that our family has grown closer."

The kitchen has a red accent wall, custom cabinetry, travertine backsplash, granite counters the color of the dark floors, a lovely white chandelier and three white drop-tiered lights. Thanks to Eliberto's expertise, custom lighting exists throughout the house. "We're so used to motion-activated lighting, it's

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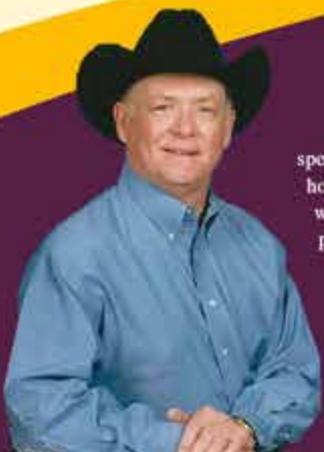
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confusing to enter a room with a light switch,” Leann laughed.

From the kitchen, the master suite and Sophia’s bedroom occupy the opposite side of the house. Light-hued carpet, blue-gray walls, coved ceiling, crown molding and ceiling lights, a giant bath and walk-in closet are just some of the features of the elegant master, but for Leann, every feature is overshadowed by a very special gift from Eliberto. “Leann loves shoes, so I added a wall of shelves in our closet,” he said. “It took 54 hours to build and 15 minutes for her to fill it with shoes!”

A visit to Leann’s high-heeled collection equals a trip to a colorful, contemporary art gallery. “My grandmother loved shoes,” she smiled. “I enjoy shopping for them, but I’m also a thrift shopper and recycler.”



Sophia or “sweetheart” or “monkey,” as she’s also called, is represented by a hot pink bedroom with twinkling ceiling stars, a tree-themed wall mural, a private half-bath and, what else, but her very own shoe shelf. Christian, 19, and Anthony, 17, have rooms upstairs, while Ariel, 15, has a room downstairs, opposite Sophia’s room.

“We put the stairs by the side entry to reduce traffic through the front door and give the kids easier access,” Leann explained. As it happened, the side entry has become the entry of choice. “Our family and friends all use it,” she said with a smile. “Hardly anyone comes to the front door anymore!”

Eliberto’s favorite room is the state-of-the-art Dallas Cowboys-themed game room that the couple painted by hand using brushes and rollers. Because of the time it took, Eliberto has never had a desire to touch a brush again. The huge upstairs space includes a pool table, basketball hoop, foosball table, video games, big-screen TV, custom-built bar



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and Eliberto's collection of Cowboys memorabilia. Of course, the room is painted Cowboys blue and, on the ceiling, a giant Cowboys star framed in crown molding provides a continuous, multicolored light show. This is Ariel, Anthony and Christian's favorite room. They enjoy the privacy the room affords when friends come over.

A wide balcony off the game room is the place for relaxing and enjoying



the view of the big pecan tree in the front yard. "Eliberto says this will be our retirement one day," Leann smiled. "For me, Target is just a jump away, I'm not far from my job at GM Financial, and I love the perfect mix of country and city."

Meanwhile, the backyard is another exquisite aspect of this house. "We have five horses," Eliberto said. "My father, an experienced horseman, helps with them."

There's also a pond with graceful trees and lush greenery, plus evidence of a one-time garden. "I tried gardening," Leann grinned. "My success was watermelons. They were everywhere, at least 20 of them, and since you can't make pies or cakes from watermelon, I decided once was enough."

While gardening wasn't for her, another "family member" is very much a passion — Jewels, Leann's beloved white-and-brown spotted Pit Bull with painted toe nails. "I got her as a puppy," Leann shared. "She's as loved as she is loving and protective. She adores kids and horses, and she's every bit a big part of our family."

When asked what she enjoys most about their house, Leann says it's because it's so unique. "As we were building, we were remodeling," Eliberto smiled. "When the last room is decorated, we will always be starting over." Maybe the greatest part of this uniqueness is a family who understands that, like life, the magic is ever unfolding. **NOW**

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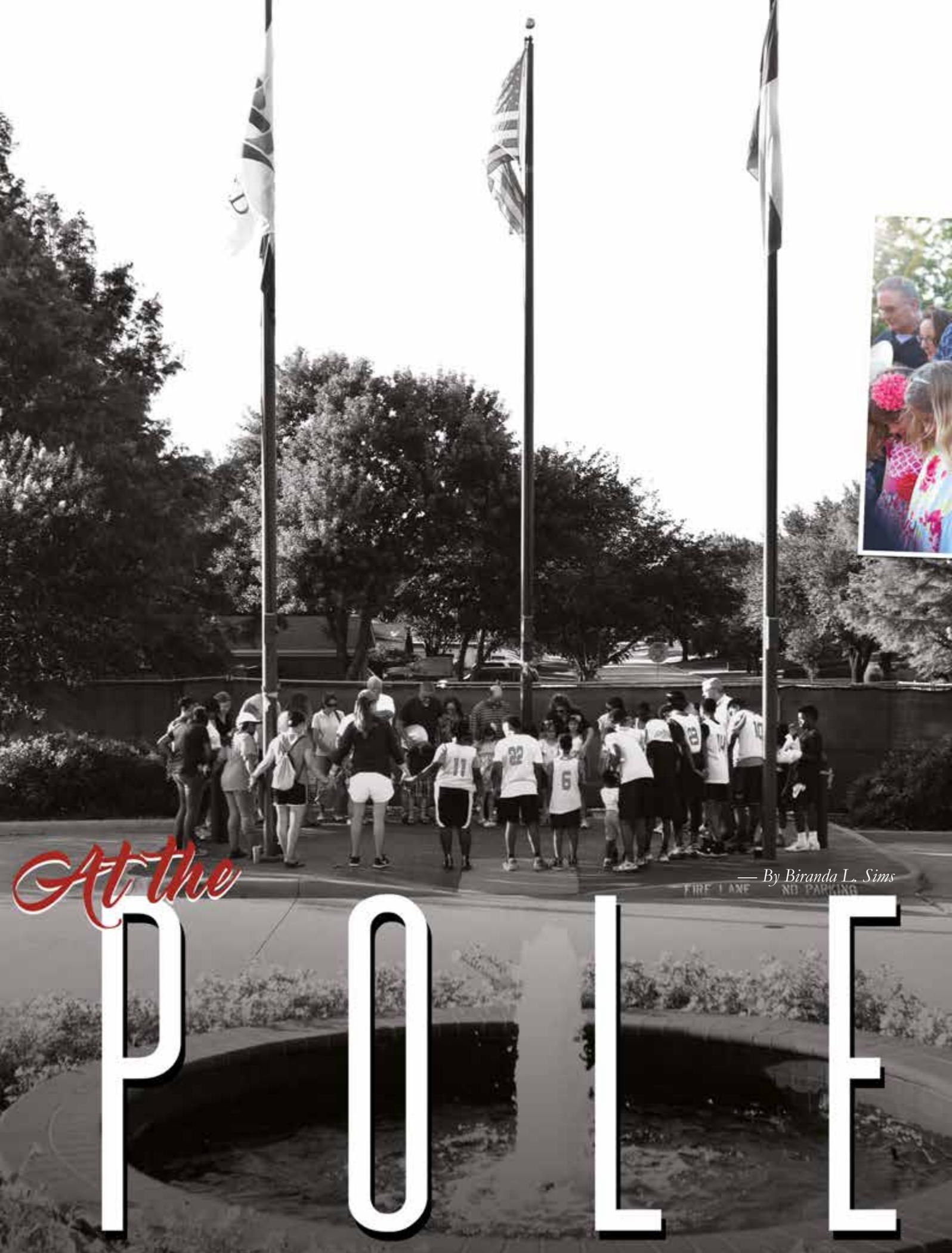
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*At the*

— By *Biranda L. Sims*

# POLE

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*There are many occasions when people come together for a common cause. Christmastime is one such occasion. On Memorial Day, the men and women in the armed forces who died fighting for our freedoms are celebrated. And on September 27, the tradition of assembling will continue with the annual See You at the Pole: Global Day of Student Prayer.*

In 1990, a movement started with a handful of students. They started praying together at the flag pole of their school. Little did they know that the simple act would spread across the United States and outside of its borders. It spread across the world and became one of the largest student-led initiatives ever. See You at the Pole was and is completely student-oriented. Although teachers and faculty are welcome to supervise the students at the pole, they didn't initiate the 28-year-old event. "I thought it had kind of faded away,"



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Willie Brown Elementary parent, Amy Mathiesen, stated as she talked about her first time participating in the event as an adult.

She first attended one of the meetings as a student at Martin High School in Arlington. Now, she has four children, and they have been participating for four years and counting at their elementary school. The first year they participated, no one other than their family showed up. Amy was confused and started to wonder if this powerful organization had fizzled out. So, to make sure that as many people as possible knew about it for the future, she and her girls handed out flyers, spread the word by mouth and utilized many other forms of advertisement. Each year, it has gotten bigger and bigger.

Amy and her family are no strangers to prayer. "I remember my grandmother, Ardelle Hopper, praying for me and with me ever since I was a little girl. She is the godliest woman I know and just happens to live in Godley, Texas," Amy laughed. "I learned so much from her example. My goal is to leave a legacy of prayer to my children. I want them to know and understand that prayer is powerful and effective."

Andy and Amy Mathiesen are the parents of Hannah, Hayley, Megan and Michael, ranging in age from 5 to 11. Hannah, the oldest, was born with Down Syndrome, and at the age of 2, she developed Type 1 Diabetes. "It was a shock, but she has been one of our biggest blessings," Amy confessed. "It's been a journey with Miss Hannah. She has taught us what is truly important in life. She keeps us more focused on the things that really matter." On September 27, they will all be joining more than 3,000,000 people in over 20 countries, all praying together at the same time. And Hannah will be leading the prayer at the pole at Willie Brown Elementary.

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Hannah's parents prayed for her and her brother and sisters even before they were born. Andy and Amy are teaching their children to pray anywhere, anytime. "We don't just pray at dinnertime or at nighttime," she said. "I want my kids to be comfortable with praying anywhere and to experience how it can change their world."

See You at the Pole can produce curiosity and a host of questions ranging from, "Why are you doing this?" to "What is prayer and how do you do it?" Yes, many people are familiar with the religious act of praying. People often hear and see the word *Pray* for this or that when a tragedy occurs. Following the devastating events of 9/11, the words "Pray for New York" or "Pray for the United States" could be seen scrawled on poster boards and car windows. Thoughtfully poised, Amy explained that prayer is simply a conversation with God.

When individuals surround the pole, they pray for several things. "We pray for the teachers, for the students and their families, for our community and for our government. I don't care what denomination you are, just come and see what it does for your life," she beckoned.

None of the tests predicted Andy and Amy would have a child with Down Syndrome. As Amy prayed to God for an answer to this curve ball, her answer came in an amazing way. "I was sick when I had Hannah, and it was very late at night. I had just given birth, and it was so crazy. No one saw this but my husband and I," Amy explained. "After my family left, I was nursing and trying to figure all this out. There was a nurse who came into the room. Her name was Donna."



Mayor David Cook, left, and MISD Superintendent Jim Vaszauskas join the Mathiesen family in supporting the student-led See You at the Pole.

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As she continued, her voice weakened by the emotion of the memory. "There was a light around Donna. I believe she was an angel that God had sent to me," she shared, struggling through tears. "I can never not cry when I tell this. She said, 'Amy, you were chosen. Everything will be fine.' We never saw Donna again."

See You at the Pole was born through the minds and hearts of the young. It has continued to be a meeting place for all religions, races, genders and denominations. The miracle of simultaneous praying around the world is available to any and all who want to participate. "I encourage parents and their children to go and pray at the pole before school starts on September 27," Amy said. The possibilities are endless by simply going to the pole.

September 27 will be a global day of prayer for students, families, churches and communities. As a family, there are several things you can do to prepare for this special day. First, students need to have a plan in place on who will lead the event at their school and decide to pray in small or large groups. Parents are encouraged to pray for their children to be leaders in their schools. Next, students need to publicize to their friends at school and church by social media, posters, flyers or word of mouth. Lastly, students and parents pray for people to be changed and given hope when they come to pray at the pole.

"Who knows what can come of getting up a little earlier in the morning and starting your day off right," Amy said. "My favorite thing about coming to pray with others is to see God's blessings on us when we are unified for His purpose." **NOW**

*Editor's Note: For more information about See You at the Pole, visit [www.seeyouatthepole.net](http://www.seeyouatthepole.net).*

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# NEW *and* IMPROVED

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

*While spring may be the time for a deep cleaning of your house, autumn is a natural time to give things around the house a facelift. School, television shows and fiscal years are all starting anew, and the end of the extreme heat is perfect for starting those labor-intensive projects you have been putting off all summer. Here are some ideas for home improvement projects, big and small, you could do this fall.*





## Change Simple Things

• *Keep with the times.* Trends and styles change frequently, so think about swapping light fixtures and faucets. Chrome and oil-rubbed bronze are popular now, and changing fixtures can be a simple way to update your look. If you are working with electricity, be sure to turn off your power and test to ensure your breakers were labeled correctly before working with what could be live wires. If you are changing pipes, consider swapping your old connections for push-to-connect fittings that will make future plumbing work easier. And if cost is an issue, there are lots of metallic spray paints that will allow you to alter the look of your existing fixtures.

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• *Look above for a simple fix.* A step above just replacing light fixtures and lamps, swapping out your ceiling fan can alter the entire look of your room. If you are changing the color or style of the lighting in a room, it is probably a good idea to get a new ceiling fan to match. While you could technically take the fan apart to paint it to match, there are so many working parts that buying a new matching one is usually a better idea. When deciding on your new fan, you can keep it simple or get fancy when picking from the dozens of styles available at any local hardware store. Changing fans can be a two-person job, so think about getting a helper, and be careful to make all the hardware and electric connections to manufacturer's specifications.

• *Make a statement.* Painting the entire house can be an exhausting, time-intensive task. But painting a room, or even just adding an accent color on one wall, is a relatively easy way to achieve a drastically different look. You can even let each child choose a color to make their room their own. The key to any good interior paint job is the preparation. Tape off the trim, get plenty of drop cloths and give yourself enough time for the paint to dry before moving furniture back against the wall.



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## Know Your DIY Limits

• *Carpet has a shelf life.* If your carpet is hard to clean, fraying around the edges or just getting out of date, it may be time to call the professionals. Though you can install new carpet yourself, you need to weigh the cost of materials, including the tools you will undoubtedly need if you want to tackle the project on your own. If the space requires hiding a carpet seam in the middle of the room, it is likely that you will want an experienced company to do the work. Call around and get several quotes before you settle on someone, and be sure to look for reviews online to get a good idea of the quality of each company's work.

• *Hardwood does not have to be hard.* Decades ago, your choices were essentially carpet, sheets of slick laminate or real wood. Nowadays, though, you can find a variety of manufactured, wood-like floors that offer the refined look of wood without as much expense or difficulty in installation. Any home improvement store will have a selection of vinyl planks that look nearly identical to real wood, as well as ceramic and porcelain tiles offering a wood look. With any of these options, you should know your ability before deciding whether to do the work yourself or hire a company for the project. The flooring is easy enough to install in open spaces, but there is some finesse required for corners and transitioning to another type of flooring in another room.

• *Home needs a range.* While you are updating fixtures, it might be time to add a new cooking range to match the new style. If you have a combination oven

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and stovetop, it is easy enough to take out the old one and replace it with a new model. But, if you have a drop-in range, you need to be sure you know the steps involved before you end up with a hole in your kitchen counters.

## Work Smarter

- *Take advantage of empty rooms.* If you have had any inking to move or change your furniture around, try new ideas while your floors are bare. Once you have taken up the old flooring, test different layouts before you put the new carpet or hardwood down. This will prevent you from scratching or tearing your new floors. This is also the perfect time to paint, as any spillage will be covered once you install the new flooring.

- *Have a plan.* If you are planning to overhaul your whole house, make a list of jobs you want to get done, and devise a plan to maximize your work time. If you are paying professionals, you will probably need to do all major work at once. If you are doing the work yourself, figure out if you need to tackle one room at a time, or if you can knock out several rooms in one fell swoop.

Whatever your home improvement plans are for the fall, planning a timeframe and detailed budget will help ensure your project stays on track. Don't rule out professionals who can achieve the look you want to do harder tasks. Updates can really give the home a new and improved feel. Plus, should you decide to sell in this hot housing market, they can dramatically increase the value of your investment. **NOW**

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The family running The ZigZag Stripe is proud of its brick-and-mortar store in historic downtown Mansfield, where customers enjoy personalized service.

## Beautifully Comfortable

*Women of every size find affordable, boutique clothing at The ZigZag Stripe.*

— By Melissa Rawlins

Imagine acting on your dreams every day. Leslie Hall does. She did it four years ago, when her stay-at-home-mom habit of shopping online triggered a vision. She saw herself designing and selling fashions for curvaceous women who also move around a lot — picking up children, cleaning them up and maintaining a lovely home for their families.

That was four years ago. In 2013, The ZigZag Stripe's online store began selling cute and comfortable fashions out of a 10-by-10-foot room in Leslie's home. One reason sales exploded is Leslie chose models who are stay-at-home moms, schoolteachers and working professionals.

This new family business in Mansfield is a trend-setting company that now operates seamlessly from a warehouse only

a couple miles from their historic downtown storefront. Leslie and her father, Johnny Lindsey, collaborate on purchasing and production. Leslie's assistant, Halee George, organizes trunkloads of fabric and predesigned separates. Leslie's husband, Joel Hall, is a full-time firefighter acting as The ZigZag Stripe's chief financial officer. Leslie's brother, Jake Lindsey, directs the company's operations. Jake's wife, Kalie Lindsey, runs the returns and exchange department. Leslie's mother, Susan Lindsey, directs wholesale and store development. She serves other shops in 25 states where The ZigZag Stripe's brand is sold.

In April 2016, The ZigZag Stripe's first retail store opened in warehouse space on Valcasi Dr. Susan expected just a few followers in Mansfield would shop there. "But it was wall-to-wall

## Business **NOW**

with clothing and people when it opened on that rainy day,” she said, remembering they set up a canopy to keep the line of people out front dry.

Not long thereafter, Johnny was downtown with one of his grandkids and noticed the *For Lease* sign on the building at 122 N. Main St. “Since Leslie always wanted to be in historic parts of town, it was a God thing,” Susan said. A 100-woman-long line greeted the family at the grand opening.

Soon, they opened in two other areas where their over-the-top following, self-professed “ZigZag Stripe addicts,” wanted to touch, feel and try on fashions. The Waxahachie store opened in August 2016, and the Denton store opened in October 2016.

In The ZigZag Stripe’s quaint, historic building in Mansfield, customers enjoy an intimate shopping experience. “Our boutique makes the everyday woman feel confident and comfortable in their own skin,” Leslie said. “Everyone is fighting a battle in their life, one way or another. Having clothes that fit your body and give you a little extra confidence gives you one less thing you have to worry about in the world we live in today.”

Leslie placed a man-chair on the hardwood floors, so husbands can relax while their wives try on clothes. Susan said, “I’ve had husbands tell me, ‘I like shopping with my wife here, because she has such a good time, loves her clothes and feels so good about herself.’”

Women identify with the cheerful staff in The ZigZag Stripe, where customers get personalized help from ladies who know what looks good and feels comfortable. Associate Clara Gamez is innately helpful. Assistant Manager Lexi Brandenburg has been with The ZigZag Stripe from the opening of its first brick-and-mortar store. Store Manager Noel G. Alonso is a mother of three, as is the owner and clothing designer, Leslie, whose boys are growing up in her thriving business.

“We are different because we’re family run,” Leslie said. “There isn’t another boutique out there with the amount of family, or almost family, working under one roof.” As the old saying goes, the family that works together stays together. **NOW**



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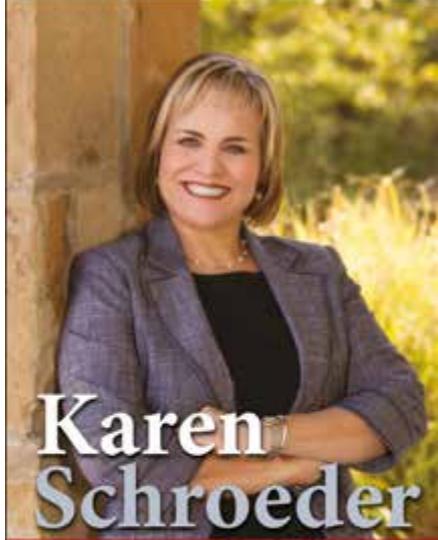
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# Fall Financial Checklist

Summer has ended, at least for students and teachers, and fall is quickly approaching. There may be some tasks for you to complete as we head into the last trimester of 2017. The equity markets have hit several new record highs this year and the Federal Reserve has moved interest rates. Consider the following checklist as we start thinking about the end of 2017.

1. If you have turned 70 1/2 years old, the IRS requires you to take a distribution from your retirement accounts called a Required Minimum Distribution or RMD. Consult your tax professional and your financial advisor about the best way for you to take your RMD.
2. You may have seen some fixed income investments mature or get called this year. If you have had bonds or CDs mature and did not reinvest the proceeds, contact your financial advisor about what to do with the money. They may have some ideas for you that could help diversify your portfolio and generate some income.
3. Take some time to review your life insurance. We all have life-changing events, and sometimes the life insurance coverage we bought 10 or 15 years ago does not match the needs we have today. Your financial advisor may be able to help evaluate existing policies and make suggestions that could improve your coverage or reduce your premiums.
4. Check your statements for any unrealized capital losses. Sometimes you may be able to offset capital gains with capital losses to help reduce your tax liability for 2017. Always consult your tax professional and work with your financial advisor to plan the best way to accomplish this task.
5. Do the children or grandchildren need to start a college savings plan? With

the cost of college rising every year, you may want to consider starting a College Savings Account, also known as a 529 or a Custodial Account, for the children or grandchildren. There are rules and guidelines to follow when opening these types of accounts, so make sure you understand how they work before investing.

6. If you own Traditional or Roth Individual Retirement Accounts, see if you have fully funded those for 2017. While you have until the tax filing deadline of April 16, 2018, to fully fund an IRA for 2017, a good time to invest is usually when you have funds available. Time in the market is usually better than trying to time the market.

7. Meet with your financial advisor to review your investments. When the equity markets are increasing, some parts of the portfolio may grow out of balance. If your plan is to maintain a balanced and diversified allocation, you may consider taking gains from some holdings and reinvesting into other areas.

As always, seek the advice of your tax consultant and your financial advisor before investing or changing your portfolio. This material is for general information only and is not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual. Investing involves risk, including loss of principal. No strategy discussed, including diversification and rebalancing, assures success or protects against loss. Also, rebalancing a portfolio may cause investors to incur tax liabilities and/or transaction costs. **NOW**

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### September 7

Senior Moments or Something More: 6:00-7:30 p.m., Mansfield Public Library. James L. West Alzheimer's Center provides a better understanding of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. RSVP at [morelibrary.org](http://morelibrary.org).

### September 7 — 9

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### September 10

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Children's Community Handbell Choir: 4:30-5:30 p.m., A Building, Room A-217, First Methodist Mansfield, 777 N. Walnut Creek Dr. Students between 2nd-12th grade are invited

from throughout Mansfield to join the handbell ensemble. Contact Beth Lamee at [bethl@fmcm.org](mailto:bethl@fmcm.org).

### September 13

Senior Art Show: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Mansfield Activities Center, 106 S. Wisteria. Free gallery tour by local artists age 55 and over. Art earning ribbons will be displayed at City Hall for one week. (817) 728-3680.

### September 14

Meals-on-Wheels Golf Benefit: 1:30 p.m., Cleburne Golf Links, 2501 Country Club Rd., Cleburne. Help pay for meals for residents in Johnson and Ellis counties who need help. Visit [www.mowjec.org](http://www.mowjec.org).

Coffee and Conversation: 8:00-9:30 a.m., MISD Center for the Performing Arts, 1110 W. Debbie Ln. Visit with your city, school district, county and state officials. Call Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce, (817) 473-0507.

### September 21

Mansfield Water Utilities 100 Year Birthday Party: 5:00-8:00 p.m., The Lot Downtown, 110 S. Main St. Enjoy water education through themed, life-sized games such as Hungry

Hungry Hippos, Battleship and Water Pong during Third Thursdays. Contact Stephanie Zavala at (817) 728-3610.

### September 23

Fabulous Faith 5K & Fun Run: 7:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Katherine Rose Memorial Park, 303 N. Walnut Creek Dr. Bring your family for a beautiful morning at the park. Register online at [www.fabulousfaithsfoundation.org](http://www.fabulousfaithsfoundation.org).

Get Growing Mansfield: 10:00-11:00 a.m., The Garden Tent (next to the snow cone stand), 703 E. Broad St. (817) 728-3612.

### September 24

Swinging for Sarcoma Golf Classic: 7:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Tierra Verde Golf Club, 7005 Golf Club Dr., Arlington. Call (817) 715-1699.

### September 28

Small Business Advisory Council Talk Show and Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Walnut Creek Country Club. RSVP to (817) 473-0507.

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

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## In the Kitchen With Brittany Thomas

— *By Melissa Rawlins*

Brittany Thomas used to simply watch her favorite cook, her mother, since her family tradition is to learn through observation. Finally, a summertime dinner provided Brittany's debut, and she served fried catfish and shrimp po' boys with french fries.

Joining the Ben Barber Career Tech Culinary Arts program in her junior year sharpened Brittany's skills. Before graduating from Frontier High School, she earned the title, executive chef, and ranked second in the Texas ProStart Restaurant Management program. "I have met many awesome people, such as Mrs. Hudgens, my Bethlehem Baptist Church family, my culinary instructors, the teachers who made my senior year great and amazing friends," she said. Brittany entered Prairie View A&M University this fall. One day, she'll teach special needs kids how to cook and evolve in the culinary world. **NOW**

### Aunt Teen's Squash Casserole

*Serves 8 to 10.*

- 2 to 2 1/2 lbs. yellow squash**
- 3/4 cup onion**
- 1 cup margarine (divided use)**
- 15 Ritz crackers, crumbled**
- 2 eggs, beaten**
- 1 Tbsp. Creole seasoning**
- 1 cup cheddar cheese**
- 1/2 tsp. Tabasco sauce**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- 1 1/2 cups Ritz cracker crumbs**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F.
- 2.** Slice squash into 1-centimeter-thick circles; sauté until tender. Drain liquid from squash.
- 3.** Dice onion into small pieces. Add squash and onion to 1/2 cup margarine and begin to sauté at medium-low heat. Once

caramelized, add the 15 Ritz crackers, eggs, Creole seasoning, cheese, Tabasco sauce, salt and pepper.

- 4.** Mix 1 1/2 cups of Ritz cracker crumbs and remaining margarine in a separate bowl.
- 5.** Put squash mixture in a 2-quart casserole dish; cover with the cracker crumble. Bake for 35 minutes.

### Big Daddy's Watermelon Salsa

- 1 small watermelon**
- 1/4 cup purple onion**
- 2 Tbsp. fresh cilantro, roughly chopped**
- 1 jalapeño pepper**
- 1 garlic clove**
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder**
- 1/4 tsp. onion powder**
- 1/4 tsp. chili powder**
- 1/4 tsp. cumin**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**

- 1.** Dice the watermelon and purple onion into small cubes. Place in a large bowl.
- 2.** Add the cilantro. Deseed and chop the pepper finely, and then dice the garlic clove brunoise (smaller than small dice). Mix together with remaining seasonings, and chill before serving.

### Mama Lummus' Red Velvet Cake and Icing

*Beautiful when decorated with halved pecans and cherries.*

*Red Velvet Cake:*

- 2 eggs, well beaten**
- 2 cups sugar**
- 2 cups butter, softened**
- 2 oz. red food coloring**
- 1 tsp. red vinegar**
- 1 cup buttermilk**
- 2 Tbsp. cocoa**
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla flavor**
- 1/2 tsp. butter nut flavor**
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**
- 1 tsp. cherries, finely chopped**
- 1 tsp. frozen strawberries, finely chopped**
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds, chopped**
- 1/4 cup pecans, chopped**
- 3 cups plain flour, unsifted**

*Icing:*

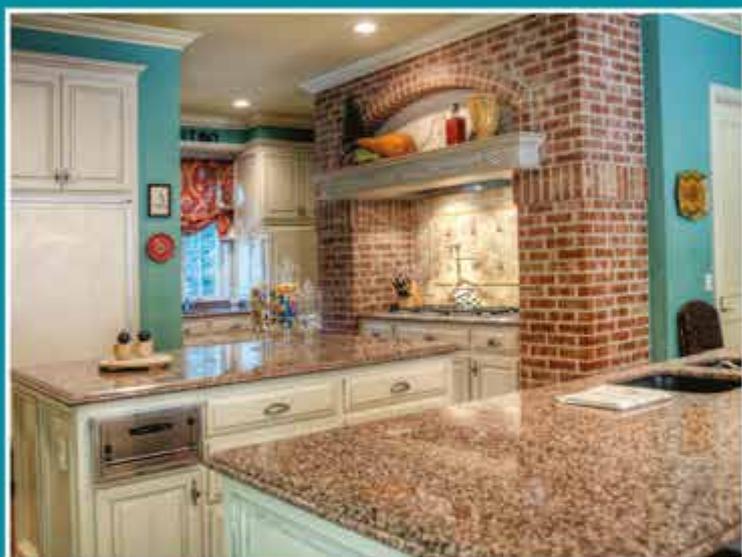
- 1 box confectioner's sugar**
- 1 stick butter, room temperature**
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, room temperature**
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla flavoring**
- 1/2 tsp. butter nut flavoring**
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds, finely chopped**
- 1/2 cup pecans, finely chopped**

- 1.** For cake: Mix all ingredients together in a large bowl until well blended. Pour into 3 greased and floured 9-inch cake pans. Do not preheat the oven. Bake at 350 F for 35-40 minutes.
- 2.** For icing: Add sugar gradually to the other ingredients; mix well. Spread between layers and on top of cooled cake; refrigerate.

**To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).**

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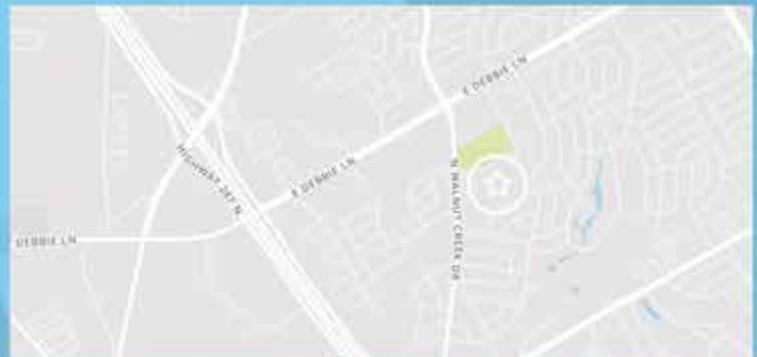
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