

MIDLAND

FALL 2011

Living

Weddings & My Friend Emily

As a girl in her 20's
from West Texas, when
someone says etiquette
I think Emily –
Emily Post that is.

Memories of Hotel Scharbauer

It's been gone for thirty-eight years,
but Midlanders haven't forgotten
the legendary showplace.

The Game of Kings and Queens

At the Midland Polo Club, families have
been gathering to play for generations.

The Wild, Wild West Revisited

A salute to "old-timers" for their longtime
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Photo by Andrew Southam

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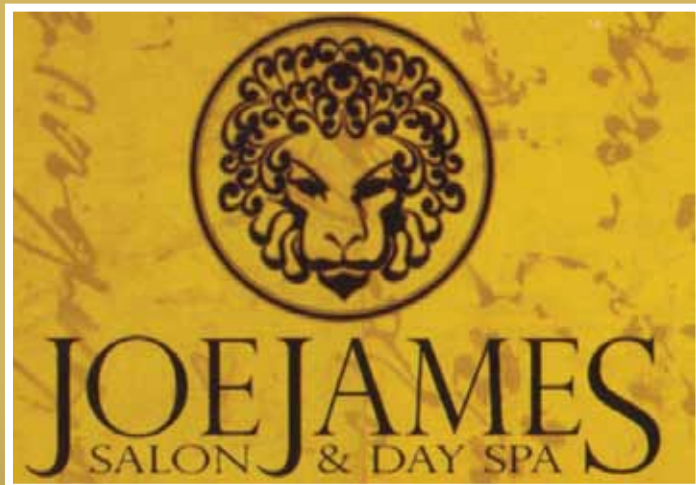


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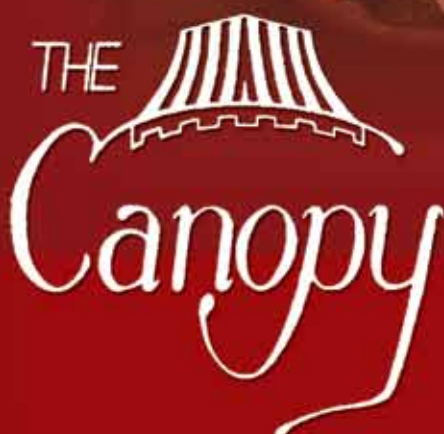
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Our family has been in the publication business for over 30 years and we are very excited to bring a magazine that personifies “hometown living at its best” to you. My wife, Heather, is from West Texas and has previously worked here in the oil and gas industry – so we know firsthand what a special place this is to call home.

Midland Living Magazine is a semi-annual publication with winter and summer editions. Our pages are dedicated to the people, places, and things that make Midland such a wonderful place to live. Midland offers everything that a “big city” does, culture, cuisine, and society, with the southern charm of a distinguished West Texas town. On the cover, “My Friend Emily” displays gorgeous pictures from resident photographers of local hometown weddings. Wedding season is almost upon us and what a fun time of year it is! “Memories of Hotel Scharbauer,” the once beautiful landmark, will be a blast from the past for many lifelong Midlanders.

In this premier edition native, Cindi Mladenka, our social scene writer has covered many fun events throughout town that will be seen in the “Hometown Happenings” section. You will see familiar faces, maybe even your own, at various social scenes – please also feel free to submit your organization’s events to us to be featured as well! Whether you are new in town or never left, we hope you are able to learn something you did not know about this great city.

We want to thank our wonderful advertisers for their patience and contribution. Their involvement allows this publication to come free of charge to you! All of us at *With You In Mind Publications* continue to look forward to a long relationship with this area and many more issues of *Midland Living* to come!

Many Blessings,

Matt, Heather & Baby Gathlyn Martin
Casey & Trisha Perkins

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Midland Living

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Red Hot Days Bring Out the Cool Blues

The first annual Tall City Blues Festival made a smashing entrance with three days of fun filled entertainment while leaving the crowds wanting more and looking forward to next year.

The group of men sat in chairs, with guitars propped up on their legs just right, as the man at the front of the room, began to strum his guitar. He stopped and looked up at the group long enough to ask, "What got you interested in the Blues?"

Alan Parsons said he had "always loved the Blues", and David Pitts agreed, mentioning that he had "picked it up in college." Each man in the room had his own reason to be there - to learn an acoustic sound from one of the greats, Bernie Pearl, who was accompanied by bass guitarist, Mike Barry, for the class, "How to Jam the Blues: Acoustic".

Next door you could hear laughter, and then a long, slow draw on a harmonica followed by a burst of crystal clear notes that sounded almost human. Laughter followed again, and this time, it was the descriptive, fast-paced talk of harmonica 'ace' Jose Ruiz that grabbed his audience's attention, as he encouraged his students to 'think outside the box' of traditional harmonica styles.

"It's about being 'tasty'", Ruiz explained, "choosing your notes, and your ideas, and hearing music in your head, and then delivering that sound." He continued, "The guitarist is the guy drawing the picture, and the guy playing the harmonica is the coloring guy. The harmonica is the box of colors."

While the temperatures continued to heat up West Texas, the cool sounds of blues and jazz wafted throughout Centennial Park, as music from two stages - the Main Stage and the Community Stage (placed on opposite ends of the Park) - kept





Besides music, a big part of the festival was the educational workshops. In conjunction with Midland College, classes were held in areas such as "Contemporary Blues Songwriting 101" to "Blues Guitar 202: Deconstructing SRV Licks". A class for kids in "Harmonica for Kids" given by Jose Ruiz and Woody Russell, also gave each child his own harmonica.



the audience swaying and moving to the sounds of such bands as Andy MacIntyre and The Primal Groove, Gasoline Alley, Jeff Strahan, and Jennifer B. and The Groove Kings. Even BB King's band, James Boogaloo Bolden Blues Band, offered spectacular sounds later in the evening, keeping the enthusiastic crowd mesmerized.

Tall City 'Blues Fest' was the brainchild of Lisa Grissom and Ronn Reeger, partners in Promising Projects Productions, whose vision was to bring the community together with a weekend of great music, education and an experience like no other. The premier three-day event was packed with performances by musicians from all over Texas, and as far away as California, Louisiana and Colorado.

When asked, "Why Blues music"? Lisa was quoted as saying, "Everyone can relate to Blues music! Whether you consider yourself a fan of the Blues or not, is irrelevant. We can all relate to Blues music..."

The First Annual Tall City 'Blues Fest' previewed with a VIP Party on Thursday night at the Lone Star Bar, where guests

gathered to receive packets with passes to the entire weekend's events. The party, catered by the Hog Pit, also featured the sizzling sounds of rock and blues from award-winning guitarist, Reuben V, of San Antonio.

Music performances were balanced throughout the weekend, each stage alternated continuously with a band, so that there was never 'dead air'. Concertgoers could also take a break from the heat, but never miss a beat, inside the Midland Center, where the Chamber Acoustic Jam Stage (sponsored by the Midland Chamber of Commerce), hosted bands that performed acoustically. Offering something for everyone, shoppers also strolled along the aisles, enjoying booths that sold everything from food to fashion.

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"Everyone can relate to Blues music!"

Whether you consider yourself a fan of the Blues or not, is irrelevant."

[Lisa Grissom, co-partner in Promising Projects Productions with Ronn Reeger who both had a vision to bring the community together with a weekend of great music, education and an experience like no other.]

Anthony Stauffer, blues guitar teacher and creator of StevieSnacks - one of the world's premier online blues guitar lesson sites- offered the audience a chance to delve deeper into the Blues genre with his two presentations, "Blues in Strange Places" and "Why Do You Play the Blues?".

The Festival continued into the night, with after-hours "Juke Joints" (various venues within walking distance of the Festival featuring different musicians) and the 'Midnight Troubadour' Jam Session. Both were an exceptional way to get 'up close and personal' with the musicians and their music.

Once the Festival began to wind down, questions began to arise, that just had to be answered.

ML: Of the overall weekend, what was your favorite part (besides music) of the production that you enjoyed the most?

Ronn: "I was able to attend the Midnight Troubadours session on Saturday night; it was attended by James Bolden, Eddie Turner, and several of the other band members. It was an awesome experience to get to hear and see these talented musicians get together and just jam with each other for a while. You could tell they were having as much fun playing together as the audience was having just being a part of listening to them."

Lisa: "Watching how much fun people were having. Not just the folks I didn't know, but the people I knew that weren't necessarily Blues music fans. It's like the music just opened up their hearts, and they really enjoyed it."

ML: Did Blues Fest meet your expectations?

Ronn: "Yes, in the sense that we confirmed Midland is hungry for an event like this and that people were, and still are, excited about the Blues and future possibilities."





Lisa: "Yes, events like this tend to develop a life of their own, which is what you want, after breathing life into it. The things that people did to help make it happen also indicated it was growing into an awesome event. I can't begin to tell you how many phone calls, emails, and people that walked up to me at the event, have told me what a great event Blues Fest was."

ML: What do you see in the future for Tall City Blues Fest? What is your dream or goal?

Ronn: "Hopefully, this will develop into a signature event for the area. One that people naturally think about when they think of Midland. We want this to become a 'don't miss' event that people plan their summer vacation around."

Lisa: "I would like to see this as an event that puts Midland 'on the map' for music festivals. I would like Midland to be known as the 'home of a fabulous Blues music festival that draws people in from all over the world'. In addition, the economic impact that the thousands of people attending would make on Midland, would also make an impact on all that Midland could do!" ✦ **MLM**

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Jack Wood
President & CEO, Western National Bank

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3

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Pick a bank that is connected.

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The 3-story home featured below is custom designed for Rick and Kim Gasser. It is accented with iron doors, iron gates and balconies, and includes a full basement with a high definition virtual reality golf simulator, four kitchens, six and one half baths, three iron staircases, and an elevator. It boasts high energy efficiency throughout which includes geothermal heating and cooling. On the second floor and overlooking the family room is beautiful stain glass windows, an elegant theatre designed in the glamorous style of old Hollywood, and a fabulous game room. For more youthful entertainment the home hides a slide in the attic from the 3rd story playroom to a brass fireman's pole, and for even more fun a beach entry swimming pool with a hidden cave. These are only a few of the many amenities that enrich this beautiful home.

Susan Yanacek's design work is portrayed throughout the home's interior and exterior. The iron driveway gates that she designed for the Gasser's home was entered in NOMMA's National Top Job competition by iron fabricator Rod Lambirth, and won second place among two hundred entries. Frank, Susan and staff at Tradition Builders wish to commend the sub-contractors that participated in making this a winning project.



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THE BEACH FAMILY IS
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FORWARD TO EACH DAY.

by Rebecca Bell



Midland College (MC) employees often refer to one another as the “MC family.” For Denise and Justin Beach, the term “MC family” extends to more than just being coworkers. This husband and wife team has not only found a home in Midland, but also found fulfilling careers at Midland College. In fact, both have recently received promotions within their respective departments.

Denise works in the MC Business Office as a Student Account Assistant/Cashier, and Justin has found his MC niche as the Multimedia Promotions Coordinator in the Media Services Department. Denise says, “Having jobs in different departments and buildings on campus allows us to have some ‘career independence,’ but we can still have lunch together. Working for the same organization has brought us closer together, and MC employees really have become our extended family.”

Denise and Justin moved to Midland from Montana with their two oldest children in September 2005 because Justin had an opportunity to start a video production company in Midland. He still does a little bit of independent video production work, but since February 2009, most of his videography has focused

on MC events and promotions. Justin is responsible for producing digital animation for MC’s online advertisements; coordinating audio/visual needs for special events, seminars and workshops; and producing a great deal of MC’s video recruitment and marketing materials. J. Don Wallace, Justin’s supervisor and Director of Media Services, says, “We were so fortunate to find Justin. His original job description did not include extensive videography and computer animation responsibilities, but with recent changes in technology, we found a need to do more in-house digital productions. Justin had the expertise and came along at the right time.”

Denise’s job is completely different. She has been employed in the MC Business Office—specifically, the Cashier Department—since August 31, 2009. “Having an office in the Scharbauer Student Center means that I have more contact with students than Justin does, which is something I really enjoy,” says Denise. “Justin is the creative one in the family, but I am definitely more analytical and logical.” Justin agrees, “It’s a good thing the College lets Denise handle the money, instead of me!”

“We are so fortunate to have moved to Midland,”

"Jacob is a delightful child.
He does not let his size stand in the way of taking
charge of any situation. He is always 'on the go,' full of
energy, very intelligent, loves computers and
lets nothing get in his way of success! "



says Justin. "Denise and I love our jobs, and we have found Midland to be a great place to raise a family." Their family consists of three children—two boys and a girl. Jesse, the oldest son is 8 and in the second grade; Hannah is 6 and in the first grade; and Jacob is 4 and attends the Helen L. Greathouse Children's Center at Midland College. "That's another reason we love Midland," says Denise. "The Children's Center is so accommodating for Jacob."

Jacob has a form of dwarfism called achondroplasia, which is the most common among the 200+ different dwarf forms. Achondroplastic dwarfs have short stature, with an average adult height of approximately 4 feet. The prevalence is approximately 1 in 25,000. "He's the only little person in the Children's Center," explains Denise. "In fact, when he was born, he was the only little person we knew! Now, we have a network of people that we have met who have children with the same physical condition. The Children's Center has the accommodations that allow Jacob to be himself—be little and be independent."

Being a little person doesn't slow Jacob down one bit. Rita Stotts, Director of the Helen L. Greathouse Children's Center, says, "Jacob is a delightful child. He does not let his size stand in the way of taking charge of any situation. He is always 'on the go,' full of energy, very intelligent, loves computers and lets nothing get in his way of success! "

"Jacob is also the true Texan in the family" says Justin. "The rest of us are transplanted from Montana, but Jacob is proud of the fact





that he was born in Texas!”

Jesse and Hannah have made a home for themselves in Texas, as well. They enjoy attending school at Sam Houston Elementary, and they are both active in Upward athletics. Jesse plays basketball, and Hannah is a cheerleader.

All three children are involved in the S.H.A.R.E. (Sharing Hands, a Respite Experience) program, administered by First Christian Church in Midland. The program is designed for families with special needs children to support efforts to establish and maintain strong and successful relationships. “The S.H.A.R.E. program has really made us stronger as a family,” explains

Denise. “It doesn’t just focus on the child with the special needs—it provides activities for everyone. Our favorite thing is the Friday evening activities. From 6:00-10:00 p.m. on one Friday every month, the program provides activities just for the children, and our children LOVE it. They look forward to it each month. Justin and I do, too. It’s ‘date night’ for the two us!”

Denise continues, “Being working parents with three children—one with special needs—is demanding. However, every evening Justin and I come home from great jobs and feel blessed to be in a city we love.” ✠ **MLM**

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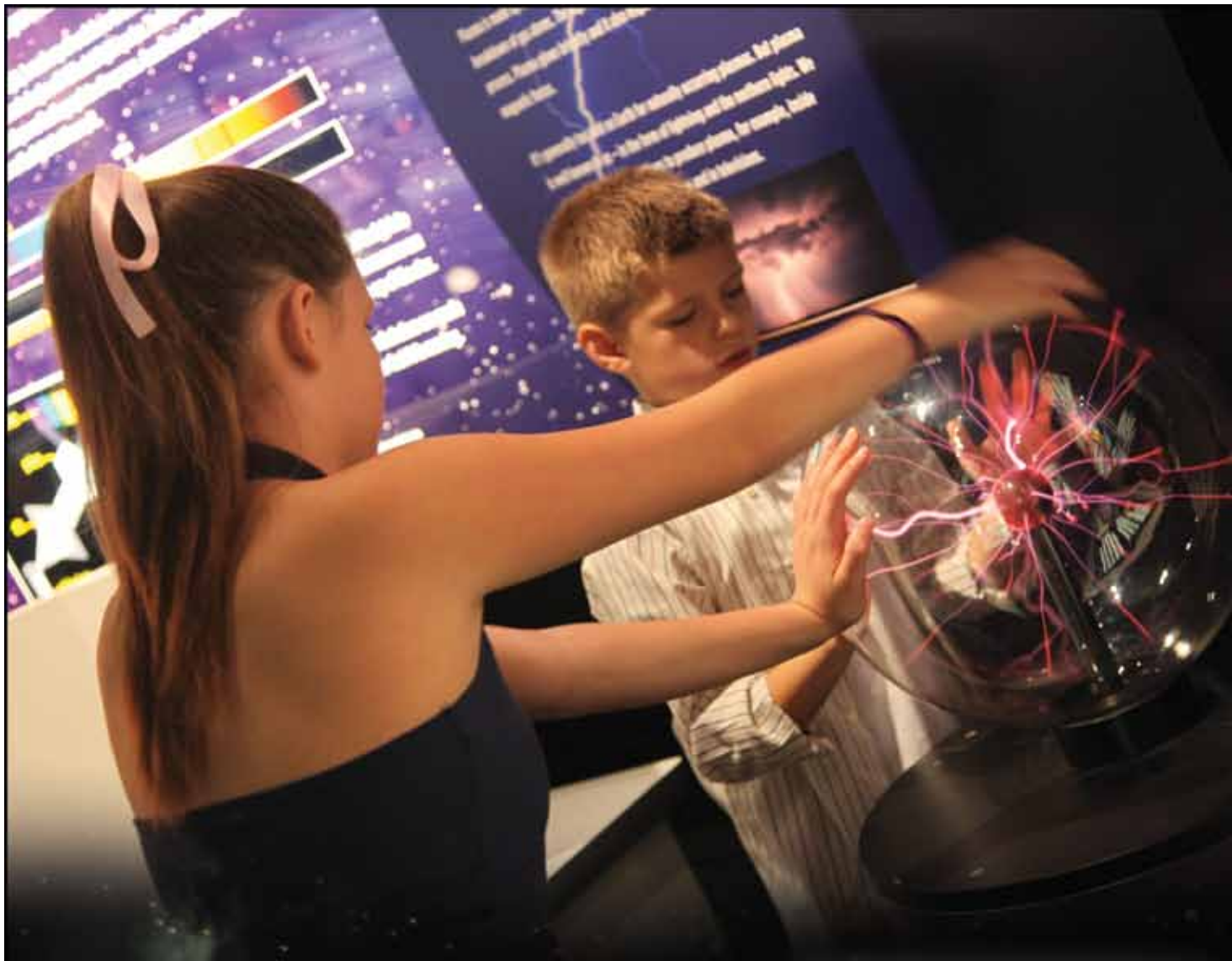
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THE GAME OF *Kings* AND Cowboys

story by Chandra Perkins

At the Midland Polo Club, families have been gathering to learn and play for generations.

B

Beside a polo ground in Gilgit, Pakistan, these words are inscribed on a stone tablet: “Let others play at other things. The king of games is still the game of kings.” This famous verse connotes the pride that polo players feel regarding the deep and distinguished history of the game. Polo is widely argued as the oldest recorded team sport in history, thought to have originated between 2,000 and 2,500 years ago in China and Persia as a method of keeping horses and soldiers ready for war. Today, members of the British monarchy are often photographed while playing polo. Interestingly, England was a relative latecomer to the sport, not being introduced until 1869. Seven years later, the game was brought to the United States.

Some may consider the history and challenge of the game a bit intimidating, but here in Midland, where horses are at *least* a part of life and, for many, a way of life, there are absolutely no limits to what sport can be enjoyed on horseback. Thanks to the Midland Polo Club, you don’t have to have royal blood, just some free time and a love for horses running through your veins.

The actual sport is a rigorous competition between two teams of four players each on horseback. Each team attempts to score goals by getting the ball in the other team’s goal using long mallets. It may sound easy. Most people have some experience with the same basic conventions in soccer, golf, and other sports. However, the horsemanship required to play well brings an entirely different level of challenge than any other sport.

When asked what it feels like to play polo, Carolyn Stimmel says, “It’s a team sport, which I really love. It’s about bringing out the best in each other and in your horse, and it’s about riding.” Stimmel has been playing for over twenty five years and agrees with people who say that horsemanship is eighty percent of the game. “You could have great hand-eye coordination if you’ve played golf or tennis, but if you can’t get your horse over to the play in time or get him turned around to hit the ball, it just won’t work!” For this reason, players have to have a close bond with their horses, making it possible for them to think and act together.



Louisa Fikes, Midland native and long-time member of the Midland Polo Club, describes the people involved as anybody and everybody, and their dog - literally. Dogs are welcome to come as long as they are leashed. Depending on the season, MPC visitors will see lessons, team practice, pros visiting from around the world, horses being trained, not to mention the excitement of game days.

“Polo is such a great sport because it’s something that children can learn and enjoy at a young age, and then continue to play well into their adult life,” says Carolyn Stimmel, and she would know. Carolyn grew up riding and working on horses, but wasn’t introduced to polo until she married Harley Stimmel in 1985. Today, the forty seven year old mother of four is still a respected player in the competitive polo world. This past summer, Carolyn was honored to play in the prestigious, invitation-only Women’s Competitive Tournament in Santa Barbara, California.

The actual sport is a rigorous competition between two teams of four players each on horseback. Each team attempts to score goals by getting the ball in the other team’s goal using long mallets. It may sound easy. Most people have some experience with the same basic conventions in soccer, golf, and other sports.



Louisa agrees that polo is a sport you enjoy for a lifetime. Her family, the Musselmans, have a deep polo history. Her father, Henry Musselman, initiated Polo on the Prairie, a polo tournament held every spring at the family ranch in Albany benefiting MD Anderson Hospital. The Musselmans have been involved at Midland Polo Club for close to thirty years, and the relationship goes both ways. Every year, MPC is well represented at Polo on the Prairie, sending players to support the Musselmans’ work. “It’s really a

family affair,” Louisa says, and to listen to her casually list families that have passed down a love of the game through generations, “Beal, Stimmel, Wilson, Musselman, Evans, Duke” it’s clear that the family aspect of the club is what keeps it thriving today.

The Beal and Stimmel families, for example, are two that have left indelible marks on the legacy of the club, paving the way for the many families to come. In 1949, Carlton Beal and Jim Stimmel were living and working in California when a sense of American





entrepreneurship and adventure called them to relocate their families to Midland. Professionally, they were involved in getting BTA Oil Producers off the ground in Midland. After hours, Beal and Stimmel put their heads together on a different project – creating the Midland Polo Club. Both men were active polo players in California and saw great potential for more players in a city where horsemanship is so valued. In 1962, the club was opened up to the Midland community.

Jim and Marcie Stimmel have retired and returned home to California, but their legacy continues in Midland. Their son, Harley, was practically raised at the polo club and cultivated his seemingly genetic talent for the sport as a boy. Today, he remains a fixture of the







club. Harley Stimmel instituted the Midland Interscholastic Polo Team about ten years ago and continues to serve as their head coach. This team is made up of seven area high school students (including the Stimmels' youngest son, Russell) who have committed traveling and competing against teams spanning a region from Houston to Indiana. A tribute to their hard work and good coaching, they made it all the way to the national polo competition in Charlottesville, Virginia this past March.

Carolyn Stimmel is also instrumental in the creation of the MPC's Polo School, where players with little or no experience are given at least two initial private lessons followed by group lessons covering tack, swing, and basic rules of the game. This newest project has proven to be a large undertaking, and members are very excited about the potential growth. "The polo school is huge right now," Carolyn says, "and I couldn't do it without Louisa's help. She's such a blessing."

Clearly, MPC is thriving today. The magnetism of the game to families that love horses, love competitive play, and love being together has brought new families to the club – the Eben, Watson, Reddell, and Hagist families are just a few that could speak to the special bond that the game provides.

That vitality has also attracted pros from all over the world. Currently, there are three pros at the club offering expertise to students and players. Hugo Nunez, Ernesto Natividad, and Miguel Silvestre came to Midland from Mexico and Argentina anxious to make a living playing a game that they love. Nunez and Natividad both have children playing on Coach Stimmel's team, a sign that they have also passed down that passion to the next generation.

If you're interested in becoming part of the Midland Polo Club, go to www.midlandpolo.com to see pictures of teams, register for lessons, or check out the fall schedule of weekend games. Remember that admission is free, so bring the whole family to enjoy this game of kings... and cowboys! † **WCM**



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Always Chasing a Classic Chevy

STORY BY K.W. ZACHRY | PHOTOS BY KATANNA ZACHRY

This Midland couple has spent years collecting and restoring vintage automobiles, some of which they proudly display in a custom-made, 3,900 square foot addition to their home.

OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE

On one of their frequent road trips, the couple parked their 1962 Chevy Nova in front of the Oasis Filling Station (on the highway between Ft. Davis and Valentine, TX). This gas station was used in the movie, "Dancer, Texas." The Huckabees have parted with this 1949 Chevy convertible, but they keep a photo to remind themselves of how much they enjoyed it. This 1962 Corvair Spyder has a turbo-charged motor. The classic Corvette that was named "Best in Show"! The Huckabees collect miniature cars as well as life-size ones!



Just utter the words "classic cars" to Jim Huckabee and his wife Billie, and broad smiles immediately light up their faces. The Midland couple has spent years collecting and restoring vintage automobiles, some of which they proudly display in a custom-made, 3,900 square foot addition to their home.

Inside the "museum", as Jim calls it, is displayed an immaculate 1957 Aztec copper Corvette (one of only 304 ever made in this color), a 1955 modified Chevy with a chrome engine, and a bright red 1969 Chevelle.

Their show room also contains a 1957 Cushman Eagle motorcycle, a completely restored child's pedal car, a 1911 restored barber's chair, a 1975 Honda Trail 70, and numerous gasoline pumps. Metal signs from various oil companies hang on the walls, complementing the larger collectibles. What you don't see are hundreds of smaller pieces of "automobilia" and miscellaneous auto parts which

Jim uses to restore the treasures he has found as he travels around the United States. These are stored until they're needed or ready to display.

"I've been interested in cars—or anything that ran and made a noise—since I was three years old," says Jim, who is now seventy-three. His first set of wheels was a tricycle from the Sears and Roebuck Company, and he soon grew to "like everything that raced—race cars, dirt track racing, drag racing. I drove a tractor when I was ten years old!" His father gave him his first car, a 1952 Chevy, when Jim was sixteen, and he's been a Chevy man ever since. However, when he first met his wife Billie in Andrews, Texas, she was driving a 1955 Ford and she remembers Jim making fun of it. Despite her taste in cars, Jim married her in 1960 and they left on their honeymoon, not in a Chevy, but in a 1959 Ford.

Billie soon became as enthusiastic about classic cars and other nostalgic collectibles as Jim. The two of them have shared their passion for classic cars with their daughter and two granddaughters. According to Billie, the rest of the family knows as much about the rare cars as she and Jim do.



“I’ve been interested in cars—or anything that ran and made a noise—since I was three years old.”

[Says Jim, who is now seventy-three.]

“We’ve always done everything together,” Billie adds. “Car shows, swap meets, and collecting became family activities.” As Jim surveys the large room that he and Billie planned, organized, and decorated together, he smiles at his wife and says, “I couldn’t have done it without her.” He then asks with mock seriousness, “Do you know the only thing that will make a collector sell a classic car? A divorce!” Certain pieces hold special meaning for the Huckabees. A Gulf gasoline pump, for instance, came from Jim’s hometown of Bonham, Texas.

Other car collectors who were willing to share their expertise taught Jim how to restore the vintage cars. He, in turn, has shared his skills with anyone interested in the hobby. “The hardest part about restoration,” Jim confides, “is the patience you must have. You can’t give up or get in a hurry and use just any part when you’re restoring something. It has to be exactly right. But I enjoy doing my own restorations.” Billie describes her husband as a “perfectionist.” “He won’t stop until something is perfect”, she says proudly. Jim explains that quality restoration increases the value of an item. “A classic car which has been restored to its original condition can end up worth five times what it was worth unrestored, and that’s if you pay someone else to do the restoration.”

Jim and Billie have learned to buy cars that they refer to as “milestones” (ones that are sure to increase in value). “That way we don’t lose money,” explains Billie. Convertibles are particularly desirable, (“If the top goes down, the price goes up!”) and a red vehicle always stands out from the crowd. “Resale Red” is a familiar expression to collectors. The trophies that line the walls of their living room are sparkling testaments to what judges in numerous car shows thought of the Huckabee’s classics.

The first car Jim can vividly recall is the original 1953 white Corvette on display in a showroom in Lubbock. The first of its kind, the Corvette sold for about \$3,500. A brand new Chevy pickup sold for about \$1,800 at that time. Perhaps this is what prompted Jim to purchase his first classic car in 1984, a 1957





Since 1952 Jim has been a Chevy man.

LEFT TO RIGHT In this newspaper photo Jimmy proudly displays the plaque his classic Corvette won as "Best in Show"! The 1969 cherry red Chevelle is the vehicle the Huckabees sometimes drive around town and to out-of-town car rallies. Jim standing proudly next to his Chevrolet signature.



Corvette. He and Billie found it in Odessa. Other collectors thought he paid too much for it, but today it is worth five times what Jim paid for it in 1984. Anything this valuable has to be protected, so the Huckabees use a large trailer to move the vehicles from car show to car show. Jim's personal motto? "You don't drive a 'show car', and you don't show a 'driving car!'"

As much as Jim and Billie love their collectibles, Jim admits that they will sell them "if I can get the price I want", and Billie recalls that they have "made a profit off every one we have ever sold." Before they surrender them to new owners, however, they photograph each vehicle. Framed photos of those automobiles from yesteryear hang on the walls like old friends.

The Huckabees are uncertain about the exact number of items in their massive collection. When they moved from Andrews to Midland a few years

ago, they packed up their treasures, and even they were shocked at how many items they had managed to collect. They sold some of the vintage cars, but an appropriate place to store and display the rest of the collection became an integral part of their new home. Walking into the carefully designed "museum" attached to their beautiful home is like stepping back into Mayberry. Even though the array of vintage oil signs and gas pumps and scooters, not to mention those fabulous classic cars, almost makes your head spin, there's always room for more. The Huckabees continue to search for specific items to add to their collection. "I've always wanted a Kurtis Midget race car from the early fifties," admits Jim, "and a 1957 pickup—Chevy, of course!" Chances are, some member of the family will locate these missing treasures, and when that happens, Jim and Billie will eagerly rearrange the museum, or, who knows --- even add on to it! ♣ **MLM**

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HOMETOWN LIVING AT ITS BEST 51

WEDDINGS

My Friend Emily

story by Rebecca Rister

photos by Curtis Routh and Heather Rowland

PERHAPS EMILY POST
SAID IT BEST WHEN SHE
DEFINED ETIQUETTE.

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OF LIVING. IT EMBRACES
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AS A GIRL IN HER 20'S FROM WEST TEXAS, WHEN SOMEONE SAYS ETIQUETTE I THINK EMILY –

Emily Post that is.

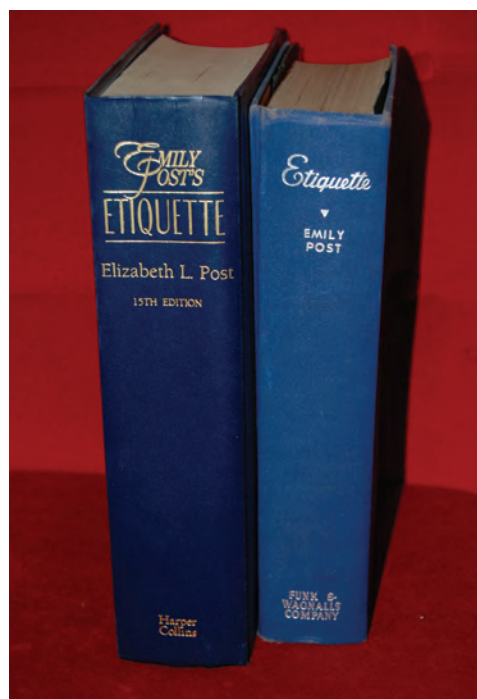
While attending college in the metroplex I was astonished to hear just how many young ladies were not acquainted with Miss Emily and her rules of decorum in association with weddings, showers and the like. Fortunately in Midland with organizations, such as, The Minuet Club, The Women's Club, Junior League, and more these time honored traditions of do's and don'ts are not forgotten.

Cindi Mladenka, owner of Pink Perfection, who specializes in parties, proposals and weddings, shared her insight on Midland's variety of reception locations. The Museum of the Southwest, formerly the Turner Mansion, is located in the heart of Midland's historic district. "It has a timeless traditional flavor; its elegant landing, iron door, and dramatic staircase give it a feel of home." If you are looking for a more causal

venue then The Willows Event Center may be more your speed. Named appropriately for the willow trees surrounding several ponds, ceremonies as well as receptions are allowed here. Let's not forget the traditional country club reception. We all know Midland has many golf course clubs to choose from. Another club not to be overlooked is the established

downtown Petroleum Club. The Petroleum Club is also home to the Minuet Club Debutante Presentation each December. The Midland area has several popular choices which will create a fun reception event to remember. The formality associated with engagements, weddings, and receptions has been overlooked and forgotten in many parts of the country, but at home in the south these traditions are still in play.

Emily Post would roll over



SHOWN Curtis Routh Photography: Ballard/
Burris Wedding – 7.19.2008 – Cody & Christen.





SHOWN Heather Rowland Photography: Megan Trotter (Maiden name Hale). She married Sean Trotter this past June 2011. **OPPOSITE PAGE MIDDLE** Sloan/Baker Wedding – 9.24.2011 - Thomas and Sharla. **OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM** Curtis Routh Photography: Sissom/Berry Wedding – 8.8.2009 – Kyle and Amber.



“IT HAS A *timeless*
TRADITIONAL FLAVOR; ITS
ELEGANT LANDING, IRON DOOR,
AND *dramatic* STAIRCASE
GIVE IT A FEEL OF HOME.”

[Cindi Mladenka on her view of The Museum of the Southwest]

in her grave if she ever saw registration locations listed on a wedding invite. An appropriate gift to celebrate the union of a marriage goes without saying and should never be listed on the invitation, and I mean never. In addition, it is in poor taste to request money only in lieu of gifts. While many rules have changed with the times, some things are better left untouched. For example, parents and siblings of the bride and groom should never throw a gift shower for the couple. These parties should be hosted by friends of the couple instead. Family is responsible for bridal brunch/luncheon, wedding, and receptions – non-gift events. The correct invitation wording varies based on wedding location, family situation and more, so it is always helpful to reference the proper verbiage to avoid confusion and mistakes.



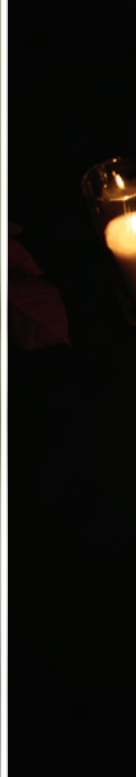


In the event of a second marriage, Emily simply states that the bride should not expect her family to throw her another extravagant wedding which would add financial strain. The cost should fall on the bride and groom. Long ago it would have been taboo for a bride to wear white for a second wedding, but today that is no longer the case. Brides can wear any color they prefer, but white is still expected and the most common color adorned on their day. These weddings may be indoors or out, large or small, but regardless – don't cut corners on pictures. It is the one thing, with the exception of your spouse, that you will have to look back on in remembrance of your special day! † **MLM**

TOP Curtis Routh Photography: Smith/Barnes Wedding - 7.25.2009 - Grant and Abby.

ABOVE Curtis Routh Photography: Sissom/Berry Wedding - 8.8.2009 - Kyle and Amber









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Memories of HOTEL SCHARBAUER

STORY BY K.W. ZACHRY

This landmark building hasn't existed for thirty-eight years, but Midlanders haven't forgotten the legendary showplace.

Q

West Texans are pragmatic; they understand you can't continue to lose money. But they're also sentimental, which explains why 15,000 Midlanders watched sadly as the old Scharbauer Hotel was imploded in 1973. Thirty-eight years later, they still recall "the hotel that Clarence Scharbauer built" and how proud they were of the beautiful lobby and Crystal Ballroom. Former First Lady Laura Bush even mentioned the hotel in her autobiography. Nelda Lee, an art dealer from Odessa, recalls meeting clients like George Abell in the hotel lobby so that they could choose artwork for their offices and homes. "I remember the lobby being full of well-dressed ranchers and oilmen sitting around sipping drinks and making deals as they had their boots polished," she says, smiling. LIFE magazine had heard these stories, too. In 1948, it photographed the famous lobby and described it as "an informal stock exchange."

Clarence Scharbauer, Sr. and his wife, Ruth, spent \$500,000 in 1928 to construct a hotel that would serve as headquarters for the ranchers and oilmen that were putting Midland on the map. The few remaining photos show marble floors, richly paneled walls, and beautiful chandeliers. Jean Stickney treasures a newspaper clipping showing her father-in-law, A. B. "Slim" Stickney, and his friends sitting in the hotel lobby. "I keep that clipping tucked in my Bible," she explains. Penny Willhite recalls hosting an anniversary party for friends in the beautiful ballroom "because that was where they wanted to celebrate." That same ballroom became the site for wedding receptions, banquets, and even high school dances.

The hotel also contained businesses that the locals often frequented. A coffee shop, beauty shop, barber shop and a full-service garage were patronized by locals and guests alike. Evelyn Nelson remembers the barber shop with its old-fashioned striped barber pole. "I took my four-year-old to get his hair cut there," she explains. Inside the hotel's



ABOVE The interior of the hotel was renovated in 1953 and a parking garage was added. **RIGHT** A nostalgia last round-up was held in May of 1973 to bid the grand hotel a final "farewell". **FAR RIGHT** Clarence Scharbauer, the hotel founder.

Photos in this article were provided by: Martha Scharbauer Adams, Lynn Scharbauer Collett, Midland Historical Society, Midland Reporter Telegram, Marv Esterly, Jana Morrison, Nelda Lee, Joy Morgan, and Ray Sale, and LIFE Magazine.





SHOWN The ballroom floor was donated in memory of Relda Sale's parents, Anna Mae and Homer Brinson; Brinson saved the flooring by purchasing it at auction. **LEFT TOP** In the Midland Historical Society's Museum is a table and chairs from the coffee shop. **LEFT BOTTOM** The "S" didn't stand for "Sheraton"; it stood for "Scharbauer"!

Woodford Drug Store was a popular soda fountain. At one time a travel agency and radio station KCRS were also housed inside the hotel. What the general public didn't see was the seventh floor penthouse that was home to Clarence Scharbauer and his family and apartments that became homes to others.

Two sisters, Martha Adams and Lynn Collett, have special memories of visiting their "Aunt Matie" who lived in the hotel. "Aunt Matie" was Mary Scharbauer, widow of Philip Scharbauer, Clarence Scharbauer's uncle. After her husband's death, she moved into the hotel. Martha's father, Arnold P. Scharbauer, was a second cousin to Clarence Scharbauer. He and his wife May began taking their young daughter to visit Aunt Matie in the hotel in the 1930s. "I was about five," Martha recalls, "and very excited because I always got to push the button in the elevator. I remember the colorful carpet that lined the hall to her apartment. I would hop from pattern to pattern." She also has memories of an oil painting of cherubs that hung over the aunt's bed. Years later Martha came home from nursing school to briefly help care for the dying aunt. A happier memory is of her husband, John Adams, hiding their car in the garage of the Scharbauer Hotel so that no one would decorate it during their wedding.

Martha's younger sister, Lynn, also recalls her parents taking her to visit Aunt Matie, but her most vivid memory involves the soda fountain inside the drug store. Mae Scharbauer was treating her six-year-old to a chocolate milkshake. Lynn remembers leaning backwards on the three-legged stool and ignoring her mother's warnings that

she was going to fall. She tilted too far back, fell, and landed underneath the table; the chocolate milkshake covered her from head to toe. "To this day I remember how embarrassed my mother was. She yanked me up and scolded me all the way home!"

The soda fountain brings back memories to other Midlanders. Joy Morgan worked there during the 1960s when "Cokes were five cents." She recalls that one of billionaire, J. Paul Getty's grandsons, once stayed at the hotel. "I was younger and more attractive then," she chuckles, "so when he walked by, he waved at me!"

Jana Morrison's grandmother, Lovie Newman, also clerked in the drugstore. Due to miscommunication, she may have inadvertently cost the drugstore a customer. One day an unassuming well-dressed rancher sat at the counter finishing his lunch. Before paying, he asked Lovie if the store carried Picopay. Lovie assured them it did. "What sizes?" he asked. "Small, medium, and large," she answered. "May I see the cartons?" he inquired politely. Lovie grabbed three boxes of prophylactics off a shelf and held them up for the rancher to examine. "See," she smiled, "small, medium, large." The gentleman's face reddened, and without a word, he paid for his lunch and walked out of the store, leaving a bewildered Lovie still holding the prophylactics. Another clerk who had witnessed the exchange sidled over to her and whispered, "Lovie, the man wanted TOOTHPASTE!" Most guests made repeat visits to the hotel; that gentleman might not have.

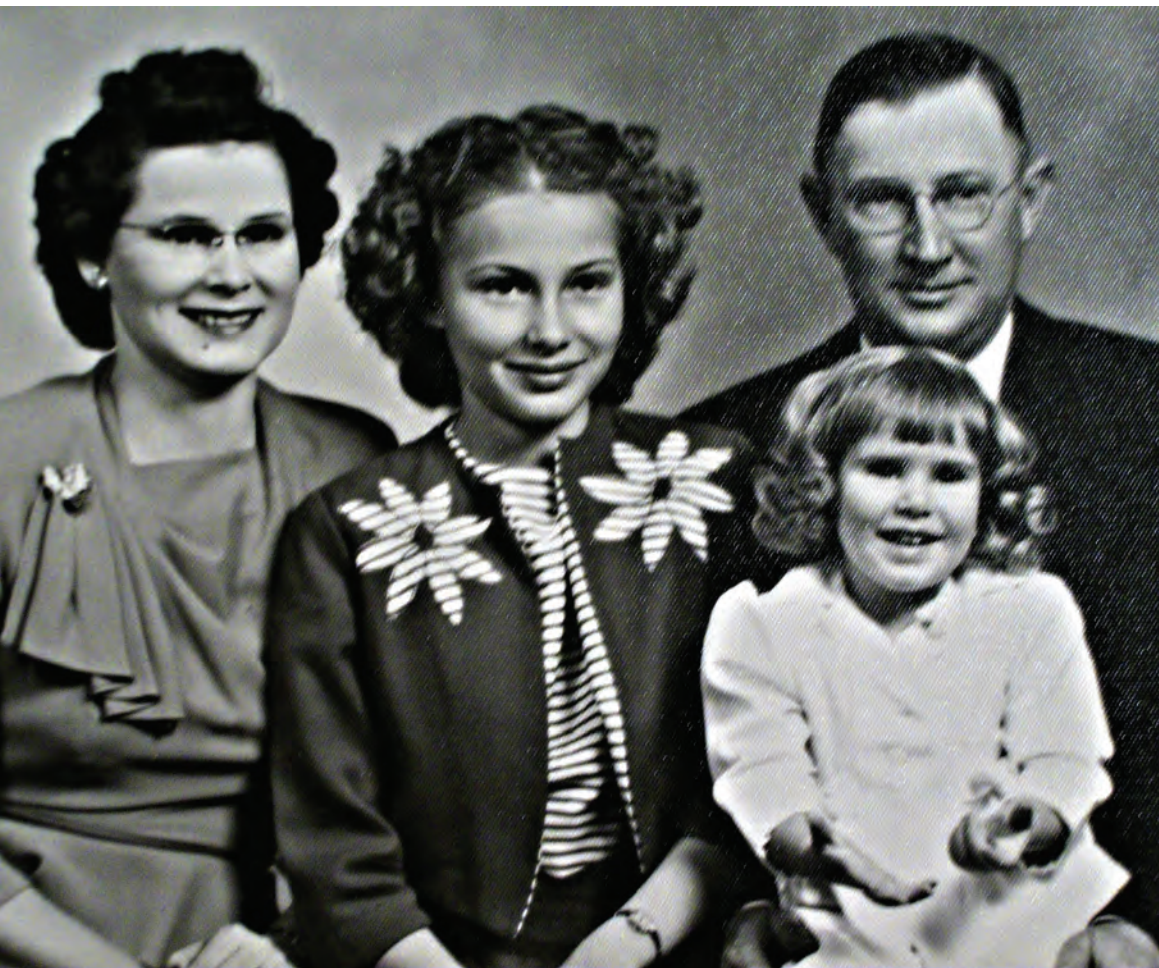
Jana, like many others, also recalls the beautiful furniture in the hotel, but she remembers seeing it in her father's

LOOKING BACK AT *Bygone Days*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The famous lobby of the Hotel Scharbauer in the 1940s with its ornate furniture and carpets. The 1953 renovation included modernizing and enlarging the coffee shop. A balcony opened off the second floor Crystal Ballroom. Clarence Scharbauer (right side, second from front) and friends enjoy steaks in one the hotel's private dining rooms. The exterior didn't change in the 1960s, but the cars and fashions did!





ABOVE Many of the Scharbauer family members are buried in Midland's Fairview Cemetery. **TOP LEFT** Arnold and Mae Scharbauer with their two daughters, Martha and Lynn. The family often took their aunt out to eat on Sundays. **TOP RIGHT** Lovie Newman, Jana Morrison's grandmother, to worked at the soda fountain in the hotel's drugstore.

upholstery shop. Dub Watley spent years reupholstering the sofas and chairs that the thousands of hotel guests used. Jana still has a table and chairs from the hotel that was given to her father.

When Midlanders learned that the historic hotel was to be demolished, many of them wanted something to remember it by. Fortunately, the furnishings and décor were auctioned off. Penny Willhite remembers the auction and people buying large pieces of furniture. But smaller items were desirable, too. "I think I came away with a trashcan," she laughs. Items like placemats, matchbook covers, telephone book covers, and pictures that hung in the guest rooms can still be found in estate sales, antique shops, and even on Ebay. The late Nancy McKinley made sure the Midland Historical Society got hotel memorabilia to display. But Homer Brinson may have saved one of the best parts of the hotel. He purchased the actual ballroom floor! Years later his daughter and son-in-law, Relda and Ray Sale, donated the oak flooring to Midland's Greentree Country Club. Thanks to their generosity, Midlanders can still twirl on the polished floor and pretend they're dancing at the fabled Hotel Scharbauer! † **MLM**

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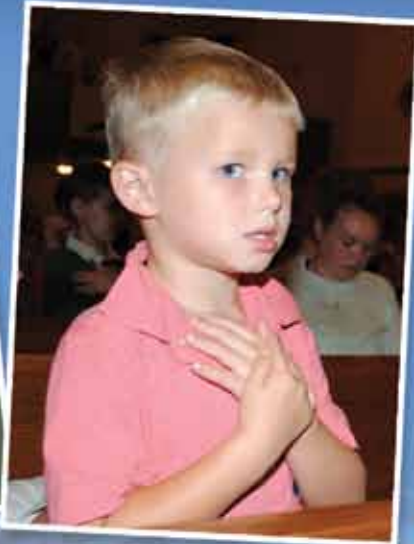
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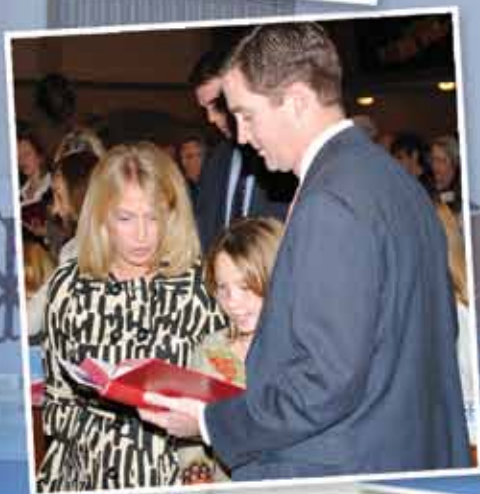
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CONCRETE JUNGLE

story and photos by Rebecca Bell

Thanks to the persistence of a group of Midland parents, the William-Sam Memorial Skate Park in southwest Midland is providing youth with exercise, fun and weekly opportunities for Christ-centered discussions.

Fakie, FS 540, 50-50 Grind, Ollie, McTwist and Mongo-foot. These are all terms heard frequently at the William-Sam Memorial Skate Park located inside Midland's Beal Park. When most people think of parks, images of trees, green grass and colorful

flowers come to mind. However, to many Midland youth, the concrete bowl skate park in southwest Midland is truly a beautiful paradise.

That is certainly the case for two of the skate park's frequent visitors: Christian Gonzales and Stefan Garcia,

who are both 14-year-old Midland Freshman High School ninth graders. On a Saturday afternoon in mid-September, the two friends were at the skate park enjoying each other's company, getting some exercise and practicing their "tricks."



“We come here almost every day,” says Gonzales. “We live close by, and we can walk or ride our bikes. It’s our hobby, and we love it!”

While Gonzales has been a skateboard enthusiast for approximately two years, Garcia has only been skateboarding for about seven months. “Unlike organized sports, such as basketball or football, skateboarding has no set arena or rules,” explains Garcia. “We do our own thing. It’s kinda like an ‘art form,’ but it’s also a sport.”

The park, which first opened in spring 2003, is named for William Wooten and Sam Geer, two Midland pre-teens who were accidentally killed in October 1998 while skating on Midland Drive. A couple of months after their death, William’s mother, Tammy Wooten, contacted a group of concerned parents, who just a year earlier had joined forces to organize a group known as the Citizens for Midland Skaters.

Led by Lisa and Don Sutton, Dennis and Pam Sledge and John and Terry Staub, the group’s goal

was to procure a safe environment in which Midlanders could skate and skateboard. After the tragic deaths of Wooten and Geer, Tammy joined the group and became their spokesperson. Then, there was no stopping this powerful force of parents.

The group met with Chuck Swallow, Director of Development for the City of Midland, and gathered over 500 names on a petition, which they presented to the city council to show that there was indeed an interest in building a skate park. Some council members were reluctant to approve construction of the park because of its rather high price tag. However, Wooten prevailed by contacting Mike Canon, the mayor of Midland at the time, on several different occasions in order to get the park on the council’s agenda. Her efforts were rewarded on Tuesday, September 24, 2002, when the Midland City Council voted unanimously to build the William-Sam Memorial Skate Park. Over \$400,000 was raised to fund construction through the city’s participation and through private





and public donations.

Today, the park not only provides a concrete haven for skateboarders, but also serves the Midland community through a unique Christ-centered missionary effort known as “Real Talk.” Every Wednesday night, Bo Celenze, a professional skateboarder, convenes a group of approximately 20 young people at the skate park. His mission is to just “be real” with them—“to share daily struggles and problems, and explore Christ’s Word.”

The youth come to the park with their skateboard tucked under one arm and a Bible under the other. Celenze says he has no idea ahead of time as to where the weekly group conversations will lead; however, he always manages to find scripture that will relate to the evening’s topic.

“Some of the kids don’t like opening up in a large group,” says Celenze. “Those are the ones who often approach me afterward for a personal discussion. It’s a tough world for young people. Some are suicidal and drug addicts, but most are just undergoing typical teenage stuff of peer pressure, bullying, girlfriend or boyfriend struggles and problems with parents. I guess they feel they can talk to me because I’m approachable. I don’t look like your typical church pastor, but my message is the same.”

Christian Gonzales and Stefan Garcia have both participated in Celenze’s weekly gatherings. “I like it,” says Gonzales. “We can just be ourselves. We meet in a group for about 30 minutes, and then do





LEFT Stefan Garcia and Christian Gonzales are regulars at the new skate park. They also attend Bo Celenze's Wednesday night meeting where they share daily struggles and explore the Bible. "I like it," says Gonzales. "We can just be ourselves."

some skateboarding. Sometimes, while we are waiting for our turn in the bowl, we talk about what we just discussed in the big group. It's not a bad way to spend a Wednesday evening."

Whether it's Saturday afternoon or Wednesday evening, Garcia says that the two boys will continue to "hang out" at the skate park and practice their "tricks." "It really is our favorite thing to do." †MLM



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SHOWN The 2011 Foy Proctor Cowman Award Honorees are (left to right) Bill L. Lea of Buckeye, New Mexico; John Dublin of San Angelo, Texas; H. G. Bedford of Midland, Texas and Cole Armstrong of Pecos, Texas. (Biographies on these men can be found on the Haley Library website www.haleylibrary.com.) **OPPOSITE PAGE TOP** Executive Director Pat McDaniel is shown 'heating the irons'. **OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM** The front of the Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library & History Center.

THE WILD, WILD WEST... *Revisited*

For these "old-timers" this is no ordinary day. This is a moment in history that honors them for their longtime devotion, strong dedication, hard work and achievement in an industry that is sometimes overlooked or forgotten. These are men of a time long ago, and of today. These are the kind of men John Wayne looked up to. They are the 'real deal'. These are cowmen.

[story by Cindi Mladenka | photos by Hendershot Photography]



They sit, wearing crisp white shirts and blue jeans, on stuffed leather chairs set on a platform stage in front of approximately 300 people. Each of them quietly waiting, as they reflect on what it was that actually brought them there. One by one, the introductions and biographies are read, a name is called, and then suddenly they realize it is their turn. Their turn to hear their own story unfold. So begins the evening for Cole Armstrong of Pecos, Texas, H. G. Bedford of Midland, John Dublin, Jr., of Midland and Crockett County, and Bill Lea of Buckeye, New Mexico.

For these "old-timers" this is no ordinary day. This is a moment in history that honors them for their longtime devotion, strong





From West Texas to the corners
of New Mexico, Colorado and
beyond, the men and women
chosen represent what is
good and true.



ABOVE A few storytellers have a laugh, as they get the event underway with a few stories of their own. Seated (left to right) are: Mike Capron, Cotton Elliott, Skip Woodard, Snap Woodard and Honoree John Dublin with Dick Winters, emcee of the event. **LEFT BOTTOM** Honoree John Dublin (facing camera) enjoys looking at an old Texas map with family members. **RIGHT TOP** Cole Armstrong, Jr. burns the family brand for his father, Honoree Cole Armstrong, at the 'Burning of the Brands' the evening before the festivities.



dedication, hard work and achievement in an industry that is sometimes overlooked or forgotten. These are men of a time long ago, and of today. These are the kind of men John Wayne looked up to. They are the 'real deal'. These are cowmen.

Born as far back as the early 1900's, these cowmen are usually of four- and five-generation families that were cattle ranchers in Texas and New Mexico. They lived off the land during the worst of times. The Great Depression. The Dust Bowl Days. These men would've made John Wayne proud. They possess 'true grit'. As the story of each man is told, there is laughter and there are tears. It's a very emotional moment for them and their families. Even the audience is affected, as several wipe their own tears away. The big moment that all have been waiting for finally comes. Each 'old-timer' is called up, one by one off of their leather seat, to the podium on center stage and is officially 'crowned' when the "Foy Proctor Memorial Cowman's Award of Honor" is placed around their neck. This honor is bestowed by the Board of Directors of the Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library and History Center upon those that have made a significant difference in the cattle and ranching business.

This is the 12th year for the presentation, with four honorees, and a special award going to Mr. Evetts Haley, Jr., bringing the total up to 60 honorees. From West Texas to the corners of New Mexico, Colorado and beyond, the men and women chosen represent what is good and true. They stand on the stage on behalf of a generation of integrity, hard work, commitment and determination. Men among men, each one accepts their honor in front of their peers, with graciousness and with humbleness. There is no 'showboating'. Just good old-fashioned thankfulness. To receive such an honor that represents above all, a true and honorable cowman - Foy Proctor - each cowman repeatedly mentions the distinguished man, and his contribution to the old West.

It always makes me proud to be a Texan, and even better - the great-granddaughter of a Texas cowman. The stories of Indian tomahawks flying through the air past my great-granddad's head as a little boy have haunted me for years. I hope you take the



opportunity next year to set the weekend aside in mid-October and attend this wonderful fall event. Watch as each honoree's own ranch 'brand' is represented through a red hot iron pressed against rough wood on the Haley Library fence, at the 'Burning of the Brands'. Enjoy the friendships from the High Plains, as the ranch families come together once more to celebrate their own. Then take in all the deliciousness that the Rick Newcomb family provides, when they serve up a brisket dinner, authentically prepared and cooked

from a covered Chuck Wagon and Dutch Ovens, just like so many did before them.

Nothing compares to the true, real-life stories told by these special historians, as they actually happened. The Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library's "Annual Fall Gatherin' Ranch Storytelling and Foy Proctor Memorial Cowman's Award of Honor" event is worth every moment. One that will pass all too quickly. Just like the stories of a day long ago, on a western plain... ✚ **MLM**

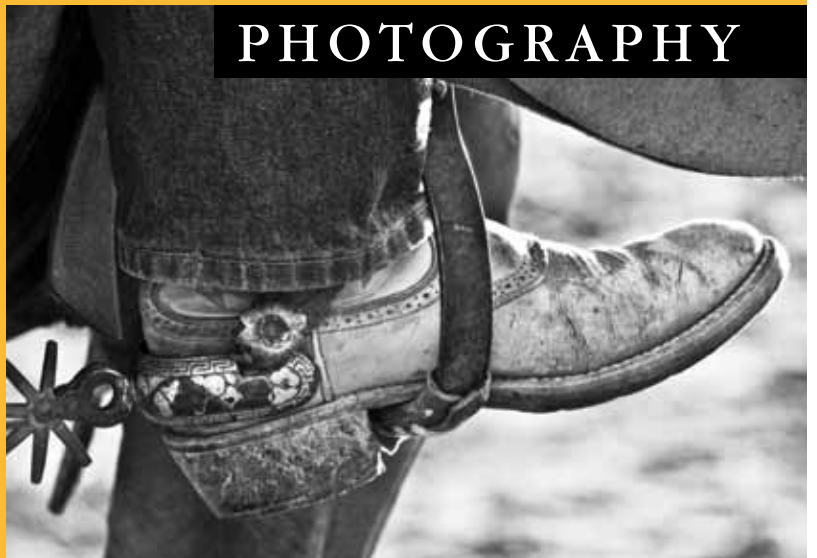


ABOVE A special recognition award was presented to J. Evetts Haley, Jr. for his inspiration, creation and support of the Haley Library. Shown presenting Evetts with a tooled leather briefcase is his daughter, Mary Ann Haley Cosner, along with Board of Trustees President Brian McLaughlin. **LEFT** The Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library and History Center Board of Trustees (left to right): Robert Carr Vincent, Brian McLaughlin (president), Joe Sullivan, Jeff Haley, and Bill Carruth.



Amy E. Becker

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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5 ARK	6 ARK	7 ARK
8 SPB	9 SPB	10 SPB	11	12 ARK	13 ARK	14 ARK
15 SPB	16 SPB	17 SPB	18	19 SAN	20 SAN	21 SAN
22 SAN	23 CC	24 CC	25 CC	26 CC	27 SAN	28 SAN
29 SAN	30 SAN					

May

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 CC	2 CC	3 CC	4 CC	5 FBI
6 FBI	7 FBI	8 FBI	9	10 SAN	11 SAN	12 SAN
13 SAN	14 FBI	15 FBI	16 FBI	17 FBI	18 CC	19 CC
20 CC	21 CC	22	23 SWA	24 SWA	25 SWA	26 TUL
27 FBI	28 FBI	29	30 SWA	31 SWA		

June

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 SWA	2 TUL
3 TUL	4 TUL	5	6 CC	7 CC	8 CC	9 CC
10 FBI	11 FBI	12 FBI	13 FBI	14 SAN	15 SAN	16 SAN
17 SAN	18 FBI	19 FBI	20 FBI	21 FBI	22 SAN	23 SAN
24 SAN	25 SAN	26 SAN	27 FBI	28 FBI	29 SAN	30 SAN

July

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 ARK	2 SPB	3 SPB	4 SPB	5 ARK	6 ARK	7 ARK
8 SPB	9 SPB	10 SPB	11	12 FBI	13 FBI	14 FBI
15 FBI	16 CC	17 CC	18 CC	19 CC	20 SAN	21 SAN
22 SAN	23 SAN	24 FBI	25 FBI	26 FBI	27 CC	28 CC
29 CC	30 CC	31				

August

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 FBI	2 FBI	3 CC	4 CC
5 CC	6 CC	7	8 SWA	9 SWA	10 SWA	11 TUL
12 TUL	13 TUL	14	15 SWA	16 SWA	17 SWA	18 TUL
19 TUL	20 TUL	21 CC	22 CC	23 CC	24 CC	25 FBI
26 FBI	27 FBI	28 SAN	29 SAN	30 SAN	31 SAN	

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“YAPPY” HOUR GOES TO THE DOGS

With a mission of saving and changing lives, the focus of this benefit is to make a positive difference in the lives of the animals.

by Cindi Mladenka

In West Texas it's a well-known fact that we take care of our own. The care and concern doesn't just apply to the two-legged 'animal', but also to the four-legged kind. So it comes as no surprise that a fundraiser was held to benefit the fuzzy and the furry of the area.

The adorable invitation, in bright fiesta colors, proclaimed “‘Ay Chihuahua! Yappy Hour’, a benefit for the doggies and kitties at the Lone Star Sanctuary for Animals.” Held outdoors at the Racquet Club, the event featured a ‘Fiesta under the tent’, with an opportunity to ‘meet and greet the shelter residents’.

The Lone Star Sanctuary for Animals came about after a friend of Mr. Kirk French told him about the animal shelter (formerly known as Lone Star SPCA) that needed some help. Taking on a rather overwhelming job, Kirk French stated “the shelter was in such a dismal condition, but the past eight-and-a-half years have not only been some of the most difficult, yet, the best years of my life. Changing the name to the Lone Star Sanctuary for Animals, aligned it with their mission of ‘Saving and Changing Lives’, with the focus to make a positive difference in the lives of the animals.”

Lone Star Sanctuary for Animals is a no-kill shelter and whose goal is to find each animal a ‘forever home’. If no home becomes available, the shelter keeps these animals and makes the shelter their home where they are loved and cared for.





Lone Star Sanctuary for Animals is a no-kill shelter and whose goal is to find each animal a 'forever home'. If no home becomes available, the shelter keeps these animals and makes the shelter their home where they are loved and cared for.



PLAN ON IT!

Accepting only cats and dogs, the Lone Star Sanctuary's "Yappy Hour" will be an annual event each fall, with next year's planned date already set for Thursday, September 6, 2012.





Accepting only cats and dogs, the Lone Star Sanctuary's "Yappy Hour" will be an annual event each fall, with next year's planned date already set for Thursday, September 6, 2012. A live and silent auction helped to raise approximately \$33,000 that will be spent directly on the animals and maintenance of the facility. Around 120 guests attended this year's first event.

The 'Yappy Hour' Committee included Joanie Holt, Lyn Ford, Marion Goudeau, Suzanne Melchiorre, Dolores McCall, and Barbara French. The Lone Star Sanctuary Board of Directors is Dolores McCall, President, Barbara French, Secretary/Treasurer, Kirk French, Cheryl Bains, and Mary Ann Snow. A special thanks goes to all the underwriters, vendors and donors that

helped to make the first annual 'Yappy Hour' so successful. Included were Underwriters: Marion & Tim Goudeau, Lyn & Aaron Ford, Joanie Holt, Kathryn & John Stuard, Debra & Fred Westmoreland; Vendors: K9 Cookie Company, Luv Bugs Bow Wow Boutique, Cathy Eastham, Donors: Larry Bartlett, Bobby Boyd, DVM; The Canopy, Marcia Fuller French, Carol & John Gogas, Marion & Tim Goudeau, Joanie Holt, The Ivy Cottage, Monroe Jackson, Dolores McCall, Stephen McGee and Lissa & Cy Wagner. † **MLM**



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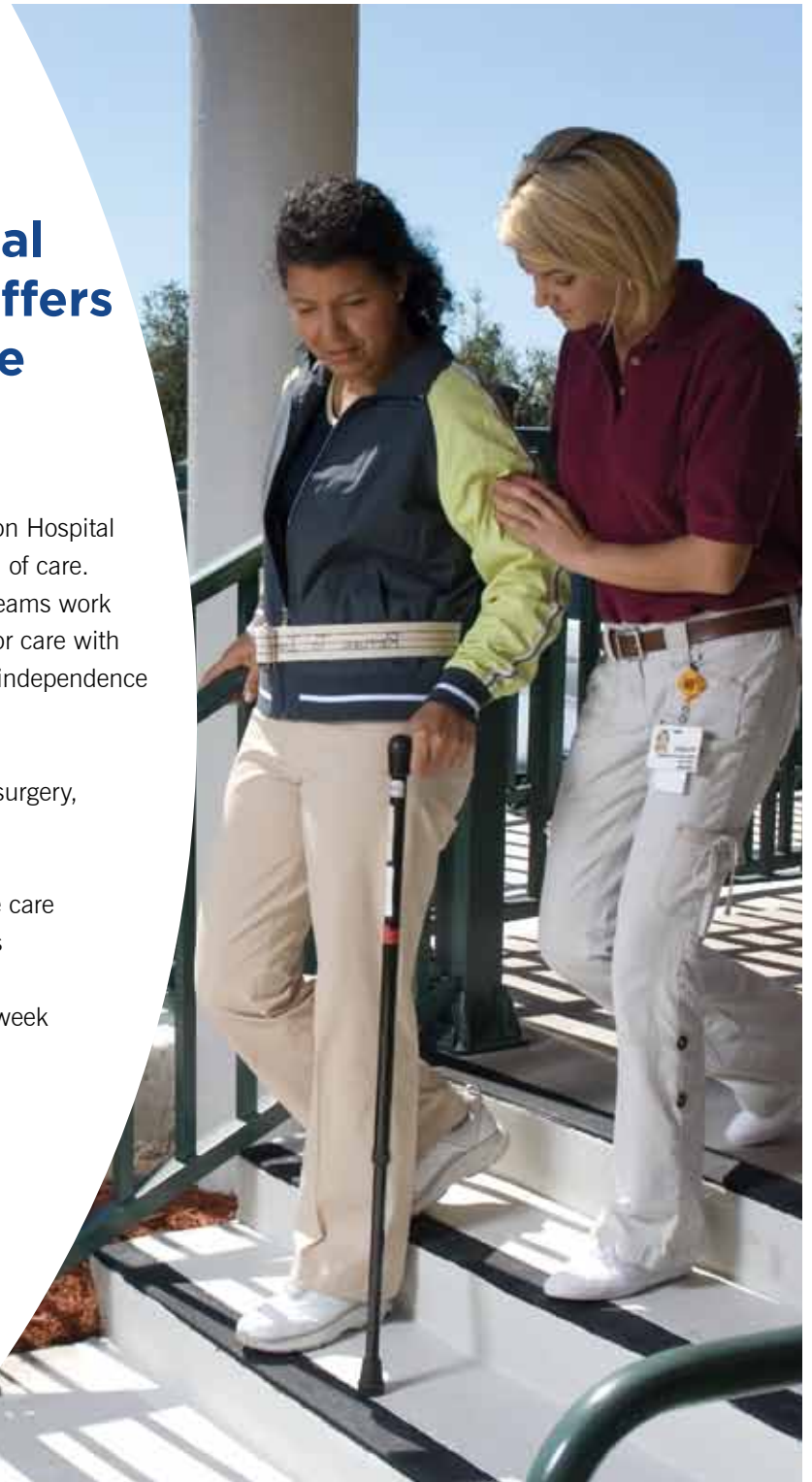
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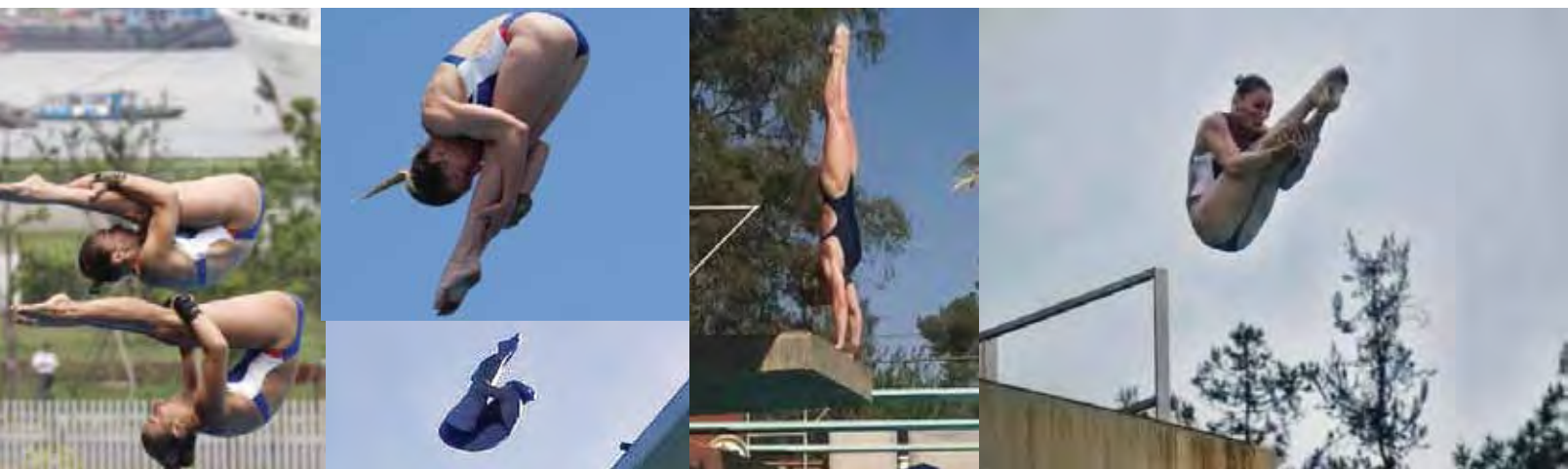
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by Suzan Marks

These two Olympic hopefuls share a winning formula for success which includes a loving family's support, strong mental attitude and the legendary West Texas work ethic.



T

he COM Aquatic Center is a seriously impressive place. With multiple pools, physical therapy, retail, competitive programs and community services, the center is an oasis in Midland, Texas. Established in 1967, COM boasts a winning tradition. The Aquatic Center has produced numerous, state, national and Olympic competitors over the years. But, never before in the Center's impressive history has a swimmer and a diver qualified to compete at the 2012 Olympic trials. This year is a first. Diver, Anna James and swimmer, Natalie Hinds, both earned a shot at the 2012 London Olympic Games.

Each of these two athletes is remarkable and has an individual formula for success that includes a strong mind, family support and an incredible work ethic.

Tall, with the long reach and strong shoulders of an elite swimmer, Natalie Hinds has spent the last two years propelling herself toward global competition. This year, Hinds made her third straight appearance at state and won the state championship in the 100 butterfly with a time of 52.96 seconds which barely missed the state record, 52.70 seconds, held by Olympian Dana Vollmer. Hinds also grabbed silver in the 100 backstroke. In the process, she was named Female Swimmer of the Meet for Class 5A. Plus, she was honored this past spring as the Outstanding Athlete of the Year at the Midland High School Academic Forum. The award is based on both athletic and academic performance.

Just seventeen years old, Hinds will graduate early from Midland High School, December 2011. Hinds suggested this strategy to her COM coach, Andy Korda. She wanted this time to concentrate on winning a lane in the 2012 Olympics. "That shows her level of maturity. She has finished with recruiting trips and will have this time to focus on the trials," said Korda. A top college prospect, Hinds will choose from four of the country's best Division 1 programs. After trips to Texas, Florida, USC and Arizona, Hinds said, "I liked every one of the recruiting trips. All were fun and each university was different. I am still in the process and will make my decision by November."





ABOVE Anna James with her mom Christy and Dad Steven. **LEFT** Anna's beautiful diving technique graces the cover of ESPN Magazine.



Hinds spoke about her family and coach in one breath. “He (Korda) is like my big brother. No one has a closer relationship.” Korda added that their teasing and banter finally “gets on my wife’s and her mother’s nerves.” Hinds added that she is grateful for her family support and encouragement. “My mom was a swimmer so she made sure we swam. I found a ribbon from when I was four years old and won a race. Mom is going to put it in a quilt she is making out of all my ribbons. My dad is my travel buddy. He makes almost all of the meets and helps me keep my focus.”

The 2012 U.S. Olympic Team Trials in swimming is the one of the fastest, exciting, suspenseful and pressure-filled competitions held in the United States. Hinds will travel to Omaha, Nebraska, June 25-July 2, to compete for the honor of representing the United



States in the pool at the London Olympic Games.

Small, compact and powerful, Anna James epitomizes the phrase “still waters run deep.” But, when she spoke of winning the 10-meter synchronized diving competition at the USA Diving World Championship this past May, her face lit up with a 100-watt smile and she exclaimed. “*That* was an emotional moment”!

With the victory, James and her partner, 2008 Olympian Mary-Beth Dunnichay, earned a spot at the FINA World Aquatic Championships in Shanghai, China. James and Dunnichay finished 11th in the women’s 10-meter synchronized diving competition. The competition was James’ first outside of the country, and she also became the first diver from the COM Aquatic Center to qualify for the world championships. James is just 15 years old and has only been competing on the 10-meter platform for about a year and a half. She hopes this is just the start of her chance to succeed on the international stage.

James switched recently to home school. In that way, she explained “I can keep up with academics while we travel.” James was careful to point out her parent’s role in her success. They make so many sacrifices and pay the expenses. “My mom travels with me, and so does my Dad, whenever it is possible. They are my support.”

James’s long standing coach at COM is John Proctor. He believes that Anna is the real deal. Proctor described her mental toughness, and work ethic, but pointed out that James also has a loving home life. “She’s got great parents,” he said. James talks about John Proctor like he is part of her family. “He has worked with me since I started...at 10.” She explained that Proctor is her coach, family travel partner and



ABOVE Anna James with her Coach John Proctor.



ABOVE Natalie Hinds at a swim meet. **BELOW** Natalie at COM Ballpark Night.

friend. She added that he helped develop her confidence and encouraged her rapid ascent onto the platform of world class 10-meter diving competition. The bond between the two is apparent. Proctor stated with pride that James deserved the limelight, “She has a great work ethic and deserves all of the recognition.” Even with all of her remarkable accomplishments, James remains quiet and unassuming. She said simply, “I like it best, when I’m trying to perfect something.”

For Anna James, the road to the 2012 Summer Olympics in London will run through Federal Way, WA, a suburb of Seattle. The trials will be held June 18-24, 2012 at Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center. More than 100 of the nation’s best divers are expected to vie for spots on the 2012 Olympic Team.

The Olympic Games is an unbelievable event where athletes from all over the world come together to compete and represent their countries. It is a time when the world can forget about problems and focus on the amazing talents of so many fantastic athletes. It is a great tradition that started in 776 BC and hopefully will go on forever. The Olympics represent all that is good within the human spirit. Throughout the history of the Olympic Games, we have had some of the greatest moments, most talented athletes and unbelievable stories. †MLM



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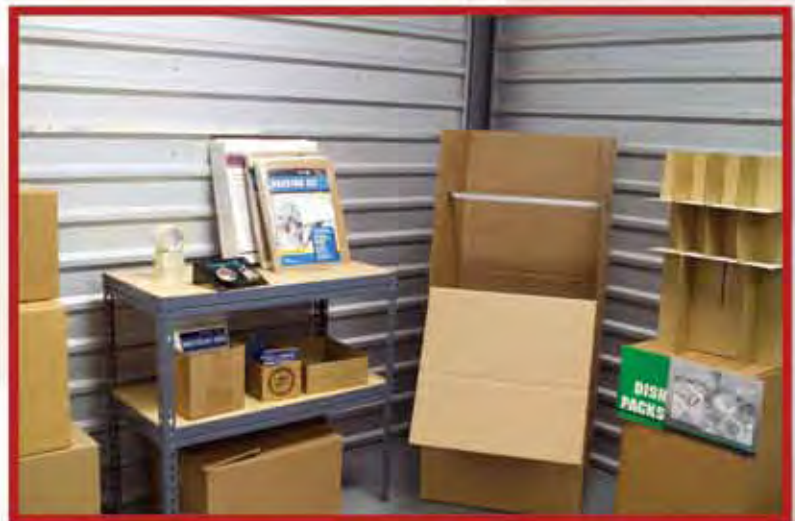
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THE LLANO ESTACADO Law Man

Al Mitchell has spent a good deal of his life putting criminals behind bars on the dry and treeless high plains straddling the Texas-New Mexico border.

story REBECCA BELL ∴ photos KATHERINE INSKEEP

He was raised on the Llano Estacado in Eddy County, New Mexico. Al Mitchell says if he ever writes a book of his adventures, it will be called *The Llano Estacado Law Man* because he has spent a good deal of his life putting criminals behind bars on the dry and treeless high plains straddling the Texas-New Mexico border. In 1972, Al Mitchell joined the Texas Rangers and was the first non-native Texan to become a Ranger. Mitchell says, “I was honored when I was invited to join the Rangers. It’s tough to get those Ranger badges. They don’t just come out of a Cracker Jack box.” He was assigned to Ranger Company E in Midland, and a large part of his responsibilities involved investigating oil field crimes and major criminal cases and apprehending persons responsible for committing those crimes. It was also during this time that Mitchell

started taking classes at Midland College. He says, “I figured that if I was going to stay in the Rangers, I needed to get an education. That was before they built the beautiful campus on Garfield Street. We took classes at lots of store front properties in the city. I can’t even remember where all my classes were held. It seems like wherever they could find room, they’d hold a class.”

“Since I was already employed in the law enforcement industry, I challenged [tested out of] a lot of the classes, and I passed all the classes that I challenged,” continues Mitchell. “I remember John Hyde was one of my teachers. At that time, he was a young city attorney and taught at MC part-time. I challenged his criminal evidence class—I guess I was the only person who had ever challenged his class. So, he developed a challenge exam just for me. It contained





five questions, and it took me 88 pages on a legal pad to answer them, but I passed it!” And so, in 1975, despite having an extensive case load while working as a Texas Ranger, Al Mitchell managed to receive his Associate of Applied Science degree in Criminal Justice. Mitchell was enjoying his life in Midland and career as a Texas Ranger. Then, in 1977, public and private oil companies started taking notice of him. Shell Oil Company offered him a job working in their corporate security department with a very lucrative salary, but Mitchell was hesitant to accept because he says, “I did not want to leave the Ranger service. I could have stayed there the rest of my life.” Mitchell asked his friend, Tom Brown, owner of Tom Brown, Inc., to “evaluate” the Shell job offer and let him know if it was any good. At the time, Tom Brown, Inc., was the largest independent oil company in Texas. Brown’s response: “You don’t want to go to work for a major oil company and have to move to Houston. Come to work for me. We would have offered you a job a long time ago, but we didn’t know we could hire you out of the Ranger service.” Mitchell replied, “I don’t know if you can.” Mitchell explains, “I did everything I could not to go to work for those oil companies.” But, then he

calculated what his retirement would be if he stayed in the Texas Rangers, and he showed that figure to Tom Brown. Brown said, “I’ll give that to you in stock options. Now what else do you want?” So, Mitchell left his beloved Rangers and began a 24-year career working for Tom Brown as his director of corporate security.

Mitchell credits his current employment to the experience he gained working as a Texas Ranger and later in the corporate world. Today, he owns a private investigation and consulting firm in Midland. His firm, Ranger Professional Services, Inc., specializes in civil and criminal corporate investigation. Mitchell is usually contracted by insurance companies to perform investigations in defense of their corporate clients. Part of his success in investigating the truth for his clients is due to his uncanny ability to relate to people from all walks of life—whether it is the oilfield roughneck or the company CEO. Mitchell explains, “I talk to people, investigate, find out the truth and develop the necessary evidence—right, wrong or indifferent.”

Mitchell also still maintains a close association with the Texas Rangers. He has served as president of the Former Texas Ranger Association and is working with his fellow former Rangers to establish a Texas Ranger Education and Heritage Center in Fredericksburg. This purpose of the Center will be to provide information and educational materials about the history of the Texas Rangers from its establishment by Stephen F. Austin in 1823 to the present.

It is apparent that Al Mitchell takes pride in the Ranger tradition, in his Llano Estacado heritage and in his family. He and his wife Ellen have been married for 48 years. Mitchell says, “Behind every good Ranger, there’s a good woman.” They have two grown children, who also live in the Permian Basin, and six granddaughters. Mitchell

says, “I’ve seen Texas Rangers come and go from this part of the state. I’ve probably stayed the longest. I’ll be here until I die. I tell the young Rangers who are transferred here, ‘Stay here until you wear out one pair of boots—you won’t ever go back!’” ✚ **MLM**



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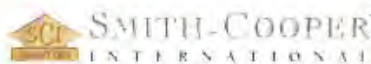


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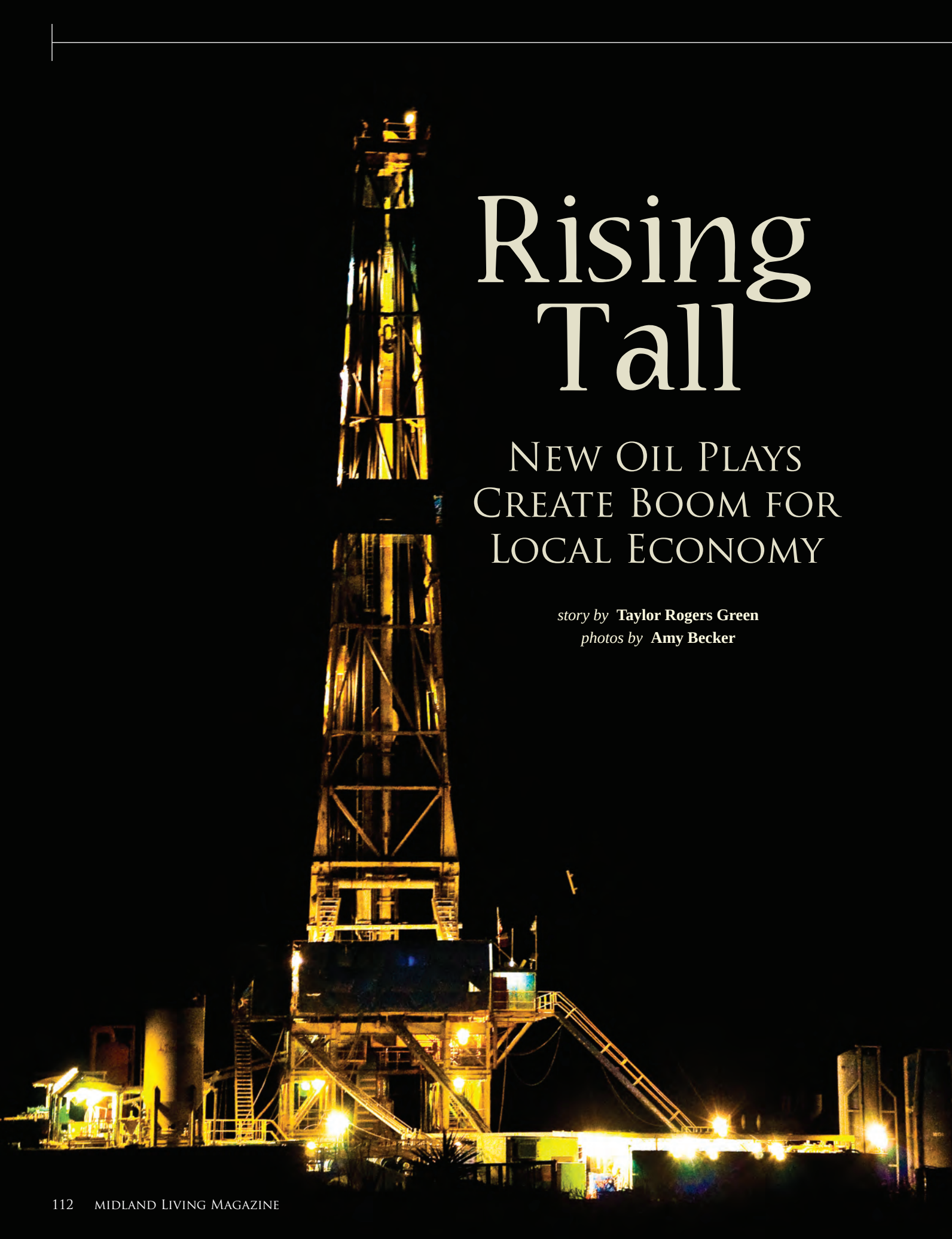
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Rising Tall

NEW OIL PLAYS
CREATE BOOM FOR
LOCAL ECONOMY

story by **Taylor Rogers Green**

photos by **Amy Becker**

These emerging plays, such as the Wolfberry in Midland, Glasscock and Martin Counties, the Wolfcamp to the south, and the Bone Springs to the west have breathed new life into the Permian Basin.

Point to any county in the Permian Basin on a map, and you are more than likely to find an emerging resource play. Once considered to be played out, the Permian Basin in West Texas has recently become a Mecca for oil and gas activity in the United States. High oil prices and recent advances in drilling techniques and technology have created a flurry of activity in Midland and surrounding areas as oil and gas companies move west to explore and develop these oil rich fields. These emerging plays, such as the Wolfberry in Midland, Glasscock and Martin Counties, the Wolfcamp to the south, and the Bone Springs to the west have breathed new life into the Permian Basin. With them comes economic growth for the area.

The Permian Basin has a rich history dating back to the 1920's when Midland was merely a stop on the Texas and Pacific railway line, halfway between Fort Worth and El Paso. A quiet little ranching town, Midland was known as a place to buy supplies and ship cattle. But with the discovery of oil in the Permian Basin, Midland was quickly transformed into a central hub for oil and gas activity in West Texas.





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In 1920, the Texas and Pacific Abrams No. 1 well was drilled in Mitchell County making it the first successful well drilled in the Permian Basin. The discovery of the Yates Oil field in Iraann followed shortly and became one of the largest and most profitable oil fields in the United States. Perhaps the most famous of these pioneer wells was the Santa Rita No. 1, which gushed so much oil in 1923 that people traveled from as far as Fort Worth to see the famous well blow oil over the top of the derrick. News of these discovery wells spread like a West Texas wildfire and soon wildcatters and investors from all over the country flocked to the Permian Basin in search of oil.

Midland quickly became the center of activity for the Permian Basin. Thousands of businessmen, oilfield workers and investors moved their families to the city, establishing businesses and promoting growth and development in the area. Along with the influx of new citizens came new restaurants, stores, hotels and even a new airport. The oil business was booming, and Midland was thriving.

During the early 1930's, the Great Depression took its toll on Midland. Due to the decrease in demand for oil, many of the businesses that had flourished during the 1920's went under, leaving many citizens without jobs. But by the end of the decade Midland began to recover. By 1940, Midland had grown considerably, with many new businesses and oil companies. During the late 1930's and 1940's many new oilfields were discovered and Midland was once again a growing oil town. During this time, the discovery of the Spraberry Trend, a large oilfield covering six counties, contributed considerably to the city's growth.

From 1945 through the 1960's, Midland continued to grow as oil and gas production in the Permian Basin continued to increase, and the city continued to attract more businesses. Midland grew from a small oil town into the city we know today. Another boom period occurred during the 1970's due to a sharp increase in the price of oil, and thousands more relocated to Midland as the city continued to grow.

Rigs can be seen popping up on the horizon throughout West Texas again today. Through technological advances in the drilling process, big oil and gas companies once again have their sights set on Midland and the Permian Basin.

Since its discovery in 1943, oil and gas companies have been drilling in the Spraberry Trend, as well as similar trends such as the Dean in the Permian Basin. But due to limited technology, these early wells barely tapped the vast potential of oil these formations contained, thus making them uneconomical. Today, however, new technology is allowing companies to capitalize on the resources and opportunities of the Permian Basin. These new technologies, such as horizontal drilling, 3-D seismic and hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking", have been used to enhance production from these existing fields, as well as from new fields such as the Wolfberry.

Fracking is a proven technology for extracting oil and natural gas, which has been around for over sixty years. The fracking process involves pumping large amounts of pressurized water down the well, along with a proppant, usually made up of sand,

into the underground rock formation. The water pressure creates tiny openings in the rock which is held open by the sand, thus allowing the oil or gas to flow freely and escape through the well to the surface. This technology, combined with horizontal drilling, was perfected in the Barnett Shale, and has allowed oil and gas operators to produce massive amounts of oil and natural gas from geological formations in the United States which were once considered uneconomical to drill.

At the beginning of June, 2011 there were 349 rigs operating in the Permian Basin, with twenty nine of those in Midland County alone. This number is expected to rise in the next twelve to eighteen months as more companies move west. With this new technology, there will undoubtedly be more activity in the area as these plays continue to expand and develop, and with that comes new jobs and opportunities for the citizens of West Texas.

At present you'd be hard-pressed to find an empty motel room across the Permian Basin. Courthouses are packed with landmen, sometimes elbow to elbow, researching mineral title for the county. Oil company workers, rig hands and others fill the local restaurants and stores. Hotels are booked weeks, sometimes months in advance.

The commercial real estate market is also on the rise. Many oil and gas companies with operations in the Permian have leased office space in Midland and surrounding areas, and some established companies in the area are starting to expand and acquire new space. All of this comes as a result of the recent oil boom that has hit West Texas once again.

Companies in the oil and gas industry are also taking advantage of the rising business opportunities. From frac tank rental companies to water haulers, land brokers to well service companies, signs that the new oil and gas activity is here to stay are everywhere and

showing a big boost in these small town economies. In a time when the rest of the nation is suffering from lack of jobs and unemployment, many of these companies are actively hiring locals. The Texas Workforce Commission reported in March that Midland's unemployment rate fell to 4.6 percent, the lowest in Texas, and 3,600 jobs have been added in the last year. There is no doubt that opportunities abound in the Permian.

Thank you to the oil and gas businesses that choose to do business in the area for your contribution not only to the workforce, but to the community as a whole! † **MLM**

The Permian Basin has a rich history dating back to the 1920's when Midland was merely a stop on the Texas and Pacific railway line, halfway between Fort Worth and El Paso. A quiet little ranching town, Midland was known as a place to buy supplies and ship cattle. But with the discovery of oil in the Permian Basin, Midland was quickly transformed into a central hub for oil and gas activity in West Texas.





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A Heart for the Young People

The Marks's have touched literally thousands of lives in their tireless dedication to Jesus Christ and their calling to "share the adventure" with the students and professional athletes of West Texas.

BY SUZAN MARKS



For Ken, it is the fruit of the spirit that he enjoys so much. "Those that graduate from high school, apply to come back as Huddle Leaders for the junior high age kids. They stay in touch, so we hear that this one has started a street ministry, and that the next is a youth minister and yet another has started a new FCA Huddle. We've begun to see the second generation attend FCA, and we are blessed", said Ken. Mary Lea, known simply as "Momma" to countless area athletes, said it best, "We have a heart for these young people."

For almost three decades now, Ken and Mary Lea Marks have offered up a fun-loving mix of sports, food, and fellowship in Jesus Christ to the area's youth. As district team leaders for Fellowship of Christian Athletes and through Ken's service as team leader for the Midland Rockhounds Baseball Chapel, the Marks's have touched literally thousands of lives in their tireless dedication to Jesus Christ and their calling to "share the adventure" with the students and professional athletes of West Texas.

The year of 2010 provided just such an adventure. The Rockhounds' banner 2010 season included playing in the Texas League Championship series and a national award for the general manager, Monty Hoppel. Then just when things could not get much better, the Rockhounds received Baseball Chapel's celebrated Bowie Kuhn Award.

Presented during the Baseball Winter Meeting in Orlando, Florida, the award was accepted by general manager Monty Hoppel and Ken Marks, who served as Baseball Chapel team leader for the club for two decades.

Established in 1973, Baseball Chapel serves "those in professional baseball who care to deepen their Christian faith, but who are unable to attend Church." The program ministers to nearly 3,000 people every week during the baseball season, beginning with spring training.

Hoppel commented, "What an honor to receive the Bowie Kuhn Baseball Chapel award. Only one team in minor leagues wins this award each year and, it is



humbling that we were recognized. Ken Marks has done our Baseball Chapel for twenty years and deserves all the credit,” Hoppel continued, “Ken does so much for our franchise, and he touched the lives of many of our players and coaches.”

Spring of 1990, Ken was contacted by the chapel team leader who knew he would be transferred in the coming months. Ken’s predecessor was aware of the Marks’s involvement with Fellowship of Christian Athletes and invited Ken out “to take a look at Baseball Chapel.”

Only four or five days later, the transfer came through; Ken was contacted and told “it’s all yours.”

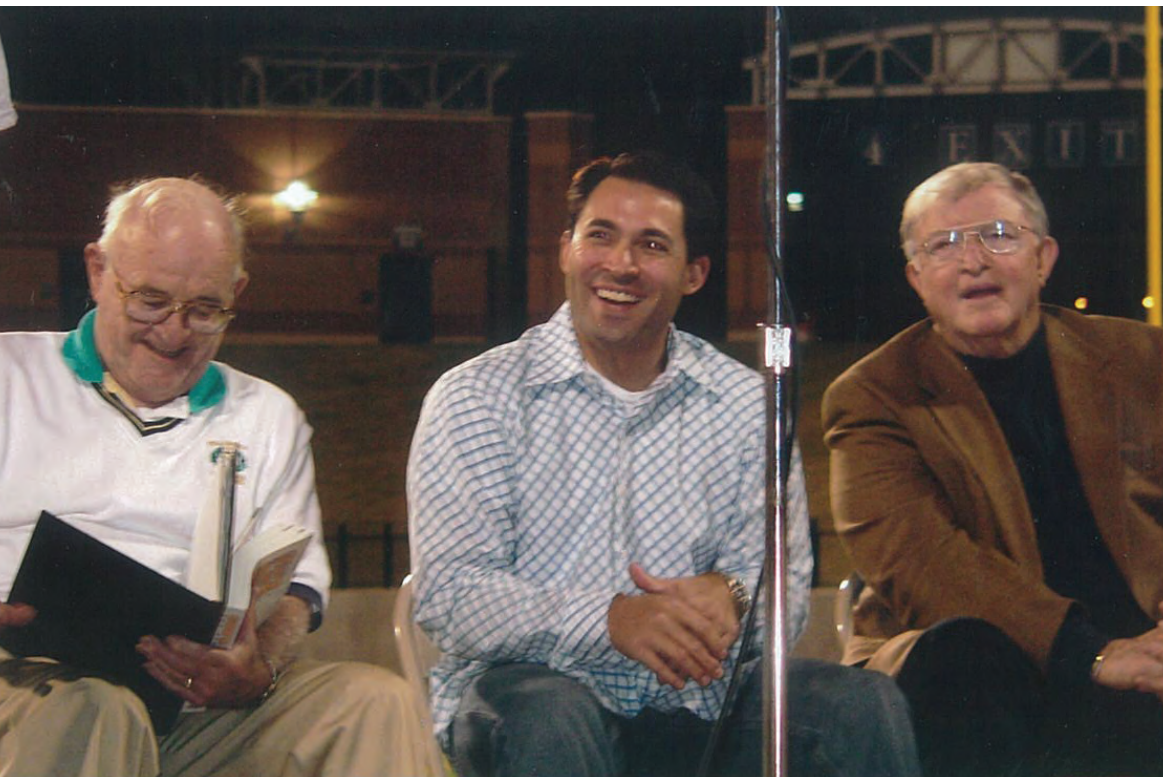
“It is almost impossible to put into words just how much this ministry has meant,” said Ken. “And to be recognized out of more than 170 baseball clubs in the minor leagues is very humbling. It’s a joy and pleasure to be able to provide an opportunity for young men to worship and share their faith.”

Some of the players seen in Baseball Chapel have made it to the Major Leagues. Tim Salmon, Brad Ziegler, and Cliff Pennington are examples of the many with whom Marks stays in touch. Marks conducts chapel every Sunday on which the Rockhounds have a home game. Services are also provided for the visiting team and the officiating crew. Two seasons ago, George Bernal began providing a service for Spanish speaking players. “He provides a comfort level,” Ken said. “The

players chose him. Many of the young men from the Dominican Republic and Mexico want to attend chapel, but language can be a barrier. George communicates so well, and he has added so much to the ministry.”

The first meeting was held at the Midland Lee Field House in 1983. Thirteen boys attended. The following month, FCA held their first event which spotlighted former Dallas Cowboy great, Bob Lilly as the keynote speaker. Four hundred and fifty kids crowded into the fellowship hall at First Baptist Church. The meetings became coed and attendance grew. In 1984, the Marks’s opened their home to the ever-expanding FCA family. On the second and fourth Mondays of the month, equipped with a Juke box, pool table and Mary Lea’s food, the Marks house was the place to be. Through Ken and Eddie’s encouragement and guidance, each young athlete left with a deeper understanding of faith, grace and mercy. The numbers continued to grow. “The night we had ninety four kids here at the house, we knew we had to move to the Midland Lee Youth Center. That was in 1993 and we have been there since,” said Ken.

“Fields of Faith” and FCA summer camp are key, annual events to which members look forward. “Fields of Faith” is a peer-to-peer ministry event. Students invite their own classmates and teammates to hear fellow students share their testimonies, be challenged to read the Word of God and follow Jesus Christ.



"I still love seeing each kid find a special place in nature to pray and deepen their bond with Jesus. It is voluntary and beautiful."

[Mary Lea Marks]



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
LEFT Ken Marks and Grant Teaff. Estes Park Colorado summer 1988 FCA Camp. Ken Marks with Bowie Kuhn Award. The crowd at "Fields of Faith."



An athletic field provides a neutral, interdenominational rally point where a community can come together. The idea to sponsor the first “Fields of Faith” event in Midland came from several of the high school football players. “They about worried me to death,” Ken said. “After attending FCA camp, these guys got it in their heads that they wanted to have ‘Fields of Faith’ at the Grande Communications Stadium.” The students combined with a leadership team and partnerships were formed with local churches.

All of the hard work and prayers

paid off. More than 2,000 young people attended that first event. Spike Dykes, then head football coach at Texas Tech, gave his testimony and highlighted local students in the program which created a powerful connection. Nationally, more than two hundred “Fields of Faith” events were held, and an estimated 400,000 teenagers gathered to worship. The following years were equally special. Baylor’s legendary head coach, Grant Teaff, spoke the second year and numerous NFL heroes were to follow. Yet, year after year, the true success of “Fields of Faith” is rooted in its

simplicity: bring many people together at one time, read Scripture and share personal testimonies and be challenged to read the Word of God and follow Jesus Christ.

In June 1983, Ken and Mary Lea along with Eddie and Nadine McHugh took sixteen kids for the first time to FCA Camp in Estes Park, Colorado. More than twenty five road trips and hundreds of relationships later, the couple still make the annual pilgrimage to FCA camp, now held at Lake Texoma. Camps are a time of “inspiration and perspiration” for



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athletes and coaches to reach their potential by offering comprehensive athletic, spiritual and leadership training. When asked about her favorite memory, Mary Lea was quick to answer, "Quiet Time." She went on to explain that the youth were given a dedicated time for daily prayer and meditation. The kids looked forward to this time and during those meditative moments some found their Salvation. "I still love seeing each kid find a special place in nature to pray and deepen their bond with Jesus. It is voluntary and beautiful."

For Ken, it is the fruit of the spirit that he enjoys so much. "Those that graduate from high school, apply to come back as Huddle Leaders for the junior high age kids. They stay in touch, so we hear that this one has started a street ministry, and that the next is a youth minister and yet another has started a new FCA Huddle. We've begun to see the second generation attend FCA, and we are blessed", said Ken.

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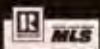


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Gone but not Forgotten

BY PHIL RIDDLE

Former Midland resident takes lessons he learned here to build a successful career.

He has worked in hospital administration from Las Vegas to Houston in his thus far 15-year career.

But Midland gave him the impetus and the beginnings of a skillset he still uses.

Cory Countryman, a shining star in the healthcare field, gives much of the credit for his success to the dozen years he spent in Midland.

"It was very formative for me, as far as the importance of relationship building, friendliness and community," Countryman said. "I always really like the people here. I think Midland has a very strong work ethic that was instilled in me by being out here."

Countryman moved to the Permian Basin when he was three and stayed here until he was 15. Though now 38, he still has friends and fond memories of the time he spent here.

"I remember having a lot of friends," he said. "And all the wide open spaces. It seems like we were always doing things outside."

Now the Chief Executive Officer at Weatherford Regional Medical Center in North Texas, Countryman claims a chance encounter





led him into healthcare administration.

After a stint in the U.S. Navy, he transitioned back into civilian life, needing employment.

“When I got out I was looking for a job and I started talking to a guy at a restaurant one day who happened to work at a hospital,” Countryman related. “He asked me what I was wanting to do. I said I just needed to get a job and start going to college,” he continued. “He offered me an opportunity there as the nighttime admitting clerk which is about as low as you can get in a hospital.”

That opportunity was all Countryman needed to slingshot into his career.

“I started working there and developed an understanding of the importance of building relationships with people,” he said. “I made some relationships with doctors and different folks and became an integral part of the hospital. “

As he worked his way up the corporate ladder, he

got an education, earning his bachelor of science at Dallas Baptist University, then, getting his master’s in business administration from the University of Texas – Permian Basin.

His education boosted him into a job with Price Waterhouse and Coopers, where he lent his growing healthcare administration skills to various facilities. “I traveled the countryside there consulting for different hospitals,” he said. “I was hired away by one of my clients. Went to work in Odessa in 2004. That was my first administrative job in healthcare and I loved it. I moved up a position or two over the next couple of years and I got to be a CEO.”

Countryman came into his current position in Weatherford just a year ago. He had served there five years ago as the hospital’s Chief Operations Officer, then took on the CEO mantle at a Houston facility before returning to North Texas to be nearer his family in Kaufman.



He said getting into healthcare was an easy decision after his humble beginning.

“The best part of the job is being able to help people in some of the most difficult times of their lives,” he said.

Conversely, he admitted the least palatable part of his career is when children are involved.

“Oh, man,” he said, “seeing children come into the hospital in pain is hard. I can’t stand seeing children scared or in pain.”

His soft spot for children is probably home grown. He is a single dad to 7-year-old Jonathan, who is his traveling buddy and sports partner.

“He is a star soccer player,” Dad, who is also Jonathan’s soccer coach, said proudly. “He is also doing very well in all his classes. We spend a lot of time playing sports outside. We get to spend a lot of time together that way.”

As a kid, Countryman began playing golf in Midland, something he and Jonathan have begun to enjoy together.

“I think it’s so important to have things like that you can do together,” he said. “I played a bunch when I was a kid. I won a tournament as a 10-year-old. I golfed a lot with my own dad when I was growing up.”



The father-son duo also enjoys hitting the road together.

“We love to travel,” Countryman said. “We go to California a lot, to South Texas. Any beach; we love the beach.”

Sports and travel aside, Countryman says the bulk of his unscheduled time is happily spent doing everyday activities with his son.

“Really, most of my free time is related to him and me just hanging out and going to bookstores and things like that,” he said. “A lot of playing catch with the football out in the front yard.”

But with having two such time consuming jobs – CEO and single dad – aren’t the challenges overwhelming?

“There are a lot of challenges in that combination,” Countryman admitted. “One of the things that work best, however, is by being the CEO I can dictate a lot of the schedules and meeting times. I can make sure they don’t conflict with his itinerary. I can make sure practices are not on the same night as hospital meetings.”

With the demands of running a hospital on the western edge of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, coupled with the parallel demands of being a father, does the former Midland resident have time to return to the Permian Basin?

“I do,” he said. “I’m going to try to go back early in the spring. I still have some friends there.”

Friends who invariably were part of the inspiration Countryman gained from 12 formative years spent in the Tall City. ✦ **MLM**





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Hometown Happenings

Out and About



Miss Meredith Westmoreland was honored with a graduation 'Top Dog' Luncheon by her aunt and uncle, Debra and Fred Westmoreland. Classmates were treated to hot dogs from Brad Logan, the 'Hot Dog Guy' and cupcakes at the luncheon. Pictured: Ceci and Todd Westmoreland, Meredith, Debra and Fred Westmoreland.



Dr. Steve Thomas, President of Midland College, enjoys a VIP event held at the new Lone Star Bar. Shown with Dr. Thomas is Midland Chamber VP, Gayna Olivias, co-owner of Lone Star.



One of Midland's busiest, Judge Jody Gilles, still finds time to volunteer within the community, as he is shown here helping a student at Bynum School with his hippotherapy (horse therapy).



At an event recognizing 9/11, several Gold Star families were remembered, including those of (left to right) Sylvia Macias, Carolyn Hobby, Leta Henson, Melissa Volker Back and Denise Garza. (Photo by Wallace Craig)



U.S. Representative Michael Conaway and wife Suzanne along with many others, enjoy the Memorial Day event held at the American Air Power Museum, formerly known as the Confederate Air Force museum. (Photo by Wallace Craig)



Tim Baker, founder of The Springboard Center, was honored for his hard work, his vision, and leadership in creating a state of the art treatment facility for addictive disease. Proclamations were issued by the State of Texas and the City of Midland declaring Thursday, June 23rd, as "Tim Baker" day. Shown with the honoree are City Council members Jeff Sparks and Jerry Morales. (Photo by Wallace Craig)



Metta Preas shares a laugh with former newspaper columnist, Ed Todd, at her recent retirement party held at the Museum of the Southwest. Metta, the longest employee at the museum, retired after 32 years of managing the Turner Mansion, home of the Museum of the Southwest. (Photo by Wallace Craig)

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Hometown Happenings

ANDREW HANCOCK PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWING



Former Midlander, Andrew Hancock, son of Jill and Barry Russell, and also Melinda and Jerry Hancock, was honored with a showing of his digital photography, as part of the Studio 3600 Series at Midland College.

Several of his photographs were on display in the McCormick Gallery of the Allison Fine Arts Building at Midland College. Among them were three prints that have been published on the covers of Sports Illustrated.

Andrew is pictured with his wife, Mary Ann.





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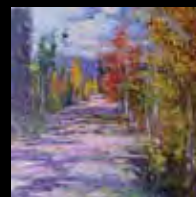
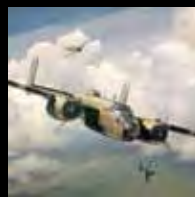
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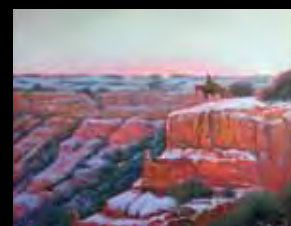
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