CitySend hits Longview

Remembering Ricky Nelson

Stock Market rewards patient investors

Rise of the super athlete

Taking care of your floor art

and more

Christine Moulds-Merritt: The wife, mother, and surgeon

www.infinitieplus.com
Two theories of gender presuppose the notion of equality and inequality. One of them is the egalitarian which believes men and women are equal in all respects. The second one is the complimentarian which says that men and women are equal in essence, but have different roles in society. What are the effects of these two theories or positions as they affect gender relationship at home and society in inferior-superior continuum? In Christian domain, Apostle Paul asserts, "There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free man. There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ." (Galatians 3:28). Jesus Christ in Christian Bible recognized both the equality and the differences in creation with the respect to women as demonstrated in His interactions with women in His day even though the culture of the prevailing norm was opposite to the recognition He showed women. He highly raised the status of women in an Ancient Near East society (i.e., the current Middle East down to Asia) that placed little value on women, thereby setting a standard that every society should emulate, or at least those professing the Christian faith.

It is significant to know that Paul the apostle for his Good News to the rest of us or the Gentiles who was not physically with Jesus but an adept scholar of the tradition of separatism as regards genders' power in their society clarifies the confusion. Paul admonished individual husband to love his wife as Christ loved His Own (i.e., the Church) and gave His life for her. Women are to submit to their husbands as Christ submits to God. The notion of submission based on semantics has been associated with inferiority or ignorance of the female gender in some unscrupulous minds leading to various grades of disrespect and abuse. What most of today's opinion creator lacks in this inferior-superior argument is lack of the knowledge of socio-economic arrangements of the ancient times? Again, it is hard to separate economic, physical, political power riding on human selfishness and innate propensity of dominance power in human supporting those types of egoistic argument of slave-master continuum. What is learned and demonstrated by various studies in today's world are the inalienable abilities of women to equal and exceed the male counterpart in majority of the areas that were taboos to women such as CEOs in corporation and even combat ready in the military.

Gender difference is of God for sustaining life. The choice is how we as human manage our emotions in the positive and peaceful direction. More importantly, it reflects the Trinity and the Imago Dei in us. There are differences in role and authority in the Trinity, and it should be the same for our relationships. Again, gender diversity is intended for our sanctification - where we are helping each other improve on our weaknesses as well as strengths while fully pursuing God.

To all the fathers who love their little girls, the brothers who defend their sisters, the men who love their girlfriends, the sons who honor their mothers, the husbands who encourage and give their lives for their wives, we thank and salute you for your love and immense efforts. Remember that if we love one another as commanded there will be no gender theories. God bless you. God bless America.

One of this month's national celebrations is Women's History Month. Some events celebrating women include Longview Regional Medical Center's annual Stars over Longview and Women in Longview Day. I had the privilege of interviewing an influential and kind woman who, with the help of her husband, has found balance between family, community and career. Dr. Christine Moulds-Merritt's interview speaks to the yearning of so many women today. How can a woman juggle family, community and career? This question begs for answers.
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from the cover
In celebration of Women’s History Month, Dr. Christine Moulds-Merritt is truly an inspiration as she balances the roles of wife, mother, AND accomplished surgeon. Read her story on pages 4 and 5, and also test your women’s history IQ on page 6.
CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

Dr. Christine Moulds-Merritt is a surgeon, but does not allow career to interfere with her family. Women are natural caretakers, hence the many women in the medical field. Merritt’s affection for people and medicine started with her family of origin. Her parents John and Marilyn Moulds were medical lab technologists. Her father wanted to be a family physician, but the military draft prevented him from pursuing his dream. In those days, women did not have the choices or opportunities they have today. A woman had to sacrifice her family at the altar of the corporate ladder.

A LITTLE GIRL’S DREAM

When Merritt was only nine years old she decided to become a physician. Her parents worked at the blood bank, and she wanted to be a forensic pathologist. She would tag along sometimes when her father gave lectures, and her affinity for medicine continued to develop. Once, her father introduced her to a forensic pathologist who explained the 12 years of schooling the profession requires. In medical school she changed her mind and decided on general surgery.

MERRITT THE SURGEON

Her mother, Marilyn Moulds, fondly remembers Christine’s childhood. “She said she would be a doctor,” Moulds said. “And in medical school she surprised the head of her department when she said she wanted to be a surgeon.” According to Moulds, her daughter comes from a line of people who care for others. Moulds herself wanted to go to medical school, but, “Women did not have a good chance of going to medical school in 1967,” she said. She is glad that things have changed since then.

“My parents were great role models with their work,” she said. “Only at that time you had to sacrifice your family if you wanted to climb the career ladder, but that is not so today.” “We have the great benefit of wonderful husbands who support us, but those who don’t can still find that combination.”

FAITH AND FAMILY

During her residency at Scott and White hospital in Temple, Texas, women travelled from afar to see her. She was the first female resident in a long, long time. However, the Merritts soon moved to Longview, Texas. According to Merritt, her husband suggested breast care because as a trauma surgeon she had no control over her time. Her family: husband - Daniel Bartley Merritt II,
MD; sons - Daniel Bartley III and Matthew Ryan, are important to her. “My husband is a straight Catholic who received an excellent Catholic education,” she said. “He has a deep faith in God, and having our children grow up in their faith is important to us.” Merritt serves on St. Mary’s School Board and in several other capacities. “I love the school,” she said.

DO UNTO OTHERS

When asked what influenced her kindness, she says her faith and from sitting in the seat her patients sat. “If that was me in that chair how would I want to be treated or have the doctor explain whatever it is to me,” said Merritt. She fondly remembered how her father wanted her to succeed in anything she wanted. However, when she met her husband life got even better. “He is very smart and has a gentle spirit,” she said. “He supports me and does not get frustrated. He is patient and explains things gently.”

THE BIG PICTURE

Merritt was trained as a general surgeon. When she started to have children, she made adjustments and limited her practice to breast care. “I like being active in the school and camps with my children and the St Mary’s Catholic School,” Merritt said. “My patients are fabulous. They understand and know that I will not be available during Spring and Christmas breaks.”

Her two sons enjoy the company of their mother, who drives them to school in the mornings and picks them up in the afternoon. She credits her fellow physicians and their teamwork. “I work with great physicians who care and adjust their practice for their families, too.” According to Merritt, life works best when women find what works for them and incorporate it into their families.

BREAST HEALTH

Once, Merritt was a speaker at the Longview Regional Medical Center Healthy Woman Seminar. Attendees were early because they had many questions. They were not in the least disappointed because she covered a lot of ground on the importance of breast health. Women hear about colon health, bone health, but not enough on breast health. She gave an overview on breast anatomy. “Good nutrition is very important,” she said. Good nutrition also starts early. Merritt said children must have good nutrition in order to grow up healthy. Even at the tender age of 8, a mother should begin to educate her daughter on the importance of nutrition. In addition, limiting caffeine starts early for women. Power drinks should be avoided at all costs.

THERE IS MORE

Moreover, if breasts are malformed, parents and their daughters can make the decision to have corrective surgery. Merritt conveyed the message of leaving no stone unturned when it comes to breast health. Even young women should learn how to do breast examinations. For women who are not so young and are taking any type of medication, “Evaluate why you are on medications. Do you need hormone replacement,” Merritt asked. “Have a talk with your doctor about the medication you are taking. Review your risks and evaluate the benefits.”

MID-LIFE BREAST CARE

Merritt said that in midlife, breast health is crucial. Early detection is the key to surviving breast cancer, therefore mammograms are very important. “Fear is horrible, and it holds people down,” she said. “However, we must know that it is better to find out early than later. Do not let fear hold you.” Besides, the new digital mammography is less invasive. She took questions from the audience, explaining that mammogram does not break breast implants.

Since one in eight women in their lifetime will get breast cancer and no one can make predictions as to who will, all women can lower their chances if they:

• Lead a healthy lifestyle and maintain a normal weight.
• Make the time for regular exercise
• Cut out junk and eat nutritious food. Reduce red meat intake and add fish to your diet, especially salmon.
• Get regular checks ups and discuss any breast changes with your doctor as soon as possible.

Merritt continues to serve others in innumerable ways.

In January 2010, Merritt was honored as one of the Stars over Longview – women who have made their mark in the community. She saw a need in Longview and filled it making life better for women. She realized that women needing breast care often go to one place for testing, then another for things like biopsies and yet another for treatment. Compassionate and receptive, Merritt realized all the running up and down added stress to an already stressful situation. Consequently, in 2009, she opened the Diagnostic Clinic Center for Breast Care. This way, once a woman starts the process in a place where she feels comfortable, she can stay there for the entire journey.

If you need more information or would like to contact her office, please call the Diagnostic Clinic at 907.757.6042.

“I like talking to people and fixing things.”
Christine Merritt, MD.
Q. What woman became America’s first agriculturist and the creator of a profitable cash crop when she successfully hybridized indigo?
A. Eliza Lucas Pickney (1722-1793)

Q. Who was the first known American woman to advocate for women’s right to vote?
A. Abigail Adams (1744 – 1818)

Abigail Adams is best known as the wife of John Adams, the first Vice President and second President of the U.S., and as the mother of John Q. Adams, the sixth President. Her husband was often away, leading the young country, so historians have been able to find out about her personal life through reading the many letters she wrote to him. In one of these letters from March 1776, Abigail asked her husband to “remember the ladies” when he and the other male politicians wrote the Constitution and provide women with the right to vote. Like other people from that time, her husband laughed at the idea, and women did not gain the right to vote for decades, in 1920.

Q. Who was responsible for making Thanksgiving a national holiday?
A. Sarah J. Hale (1788 - 1879)

Sarah J. Hale, a writer and the editor of a popular women’s magazine, Godey’s Ladies Journal, published numerous editorials urging several American presidents when they were in office to nationalize the celebration of Thanksgiving. Sarah’s hard work paid off, and in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation declaring Thanksgiving a national holiday.

Q. Whose research on the horrible conditions of insane asylums is credited as the first piece of social research conducted in America?
A. Dorothea Dix (1802-1887)

The founder of a school at age 14 and author of five textbooks, Dorthea Dix spent most of her life advocating for the humane treatment of the mentally ill. Over the years, Dix traveled from state to state, and later country to country, systematically observing and gathering data on how poorly the mentally ill were treated; most were given inadequate food, little clothing, were locked in jail cells, and many were chained to the walls. She lobbied state and national legislatures to create humane, state-supported institutions. By the time she died, she had inspired the construction of thirty new institutions.

Q. While attending a temperance meeting, which two members formed a friendship and political alliance that would lead to the birth of the women’s rights movement?
A. Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902)

A dynamic duo, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton worked tirelessly to end slavery and gain better rights for women. Their efforts slowly changed laws and women’s place in society.

Q. What female ex-slave developed effective war and espionage strategies long before women served in the military?
A. Harriet Tubman (c.1820 – 1913)

Between 1850 and 1860, Harriet Tubman led 300 slaves to freedom in the North and Canada through her Underground Railroad. Tubman created a system of encoded letters, songs, and prayers for safe communication, carried a loaded revolver, forged travel passes, and used a variety of disguises for herself and the slaves she was guiding. Not once did Tubman lose a slave during her 19 journeys back and forth between the North and the South. Tubman, the leading black female abolitionist of American history, also developed highly successful strategies for covert military action.

Well Read

*Test your IQ with this Q&A...*

*The Nameless World*

**One Boy’s Journey from Underdog to Hero**

By Kelly Bell

Most readers will, after reading the opening passages of this book, assume it is an obvious takeoff on *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and/or *The Chronicles of Narnia*. However the story evolves into a surprisingly original and imaginative chronicle of a young hero deeply committed to heroically saving the lives of complete, needy and lovable strangers menaced by a lethal situation beyond their control, much along the lines of Dorothy in Oz. In the end he is rewarded by being returned to his home, although one wonders why he would even want to get back to such a dismal existence.

The plot is sufficiently strong to make the story line plausible, but becomes a little too complex near the end. Also, Payer-Smith makes the preparations for the culminating revolt much too simple and easily accomplished to be taken seriously. Still, this is not terribly noticeable and hence no great shortcoming. Gregor does an excellent job of being Noah’s Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion all rolled into one.

The entertaining, lively narrative distracts the young readers (for whom this novel is obviously intended) from the tale’s flaws, and will keep them turning the pages. Overall *The Nameless World* provides ten to twenty-year-olds with an excellent alternative to video games and television.
By Kelly Bell

Ricky Nelson was born into show business. Coming into this world May 8, 1940 in Teaneck, New Jersey his parents Ozzie and Harriet Nelson had their own radio comedy show, The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet. Ricky joined the program as a child and became its most popular character for its 20 million listeners. In 1947 the show transferred to television, becoming a pioneering, immensely popular and long-running hit. As family entertainment it became an American institution. It was also a major development tool for budding star Ricky Nelson.

As soon as he was added to the script little Ricky’s wisecracking, bubbly demeanor made him a staple that added greatly to the program’s longevity. His trademark infintie antics, many of which were drawn from his real-life escapades. Refusing to give in to his life-long affliction of asthma, his brilliance at tennis almost lured him into that profession. It, too, became a repeated story line for the show. Yet as he entered adolescence his off-camera activities were not as wholesome as his stage persona.

Idolizing singer/musician Carl Perkins he studied clarinet, drums and guitar while honing his singing voice in the shower. During 1956-1957 his father arranged with Verve Records for him to release the Perkins song Blue Suede Shoes and the Fats Domino number I’m Walkin’. He also recorded A Teenager’s Romance and You’re My One and Only Love during this period. Seventeen-year-old Ricky Nelson was becoming a music sensation.

With his father as his agent, Nelson moved on to Imperial Records in the summer of 1957, where his first single Be-Bop Baby generated 750,000 advance orders. It eventually sold more than one million copies and reached number three on the charts. After touring with a band of older jazz musicians during the summer of 1957 his first album, Ricky, came out in October, reaching number one before year’s end.

Forming his own band, Nelson recorded the successful Believe What You Say, and then, in 1958, his first number one single, Poor Little Fool. In December 1958 he released his second album, Youth Authority, which sold more than two million copies and reached number two on the charts. It was the most successful period of his life. As is the case with all superstars it could not last.

In 1959 he collaborated with John Wayne and Dean Martin in the classic western Rio Bravo. In 1960 he released an incredible 30 Top-40 hits. Many of his 45rpm records were hits on both sides. His career took off into the movies. In 1959 he co-starred with John Wayne and Dean Martin in the classic western Rio Bravo. Then in 1960 he starred in the movie The Wackiest Ship in the Army, and in 1965 in Love and Kisses. It was the most successful period of his career going by becoming a pioneer in the country-rock music genre, but it would be 1970 (after the Beatles’ break-up) before he again reached the Top 40, recording the Bob Dylan song She Belongs to Me. His last Top 40 hit would be the 1972 classic Garden Party.


On December 31, 1985 a 45-year-old Ricky Nelson and his band were en route from Alabama to Dallas where they were slated for a New Year’s performance. They almost made it. Their 40-year-old DC-3 developed engine trouble and slammed into a wooded area outside DeKalb, Texas. His was a terrible loss, but as with all giants of his calling we still have his music.

“Anyone who knocks rock’n’roll either doesn’t understand it, is prejudiced against it, or is just plain square!”

Ricky Nelson
How to be part of the growing, obsessive mob of marathoners, triathletes and extreme cyclists

RISE OF THE SUPER ATHLETE

By Joycelyne Fadojutimi
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The Greek town of Marathon hosted a monumental battle in 490 BC. In this famous engagement the Athenian army defeated the Persians. Marathon, the athletic long-distance endurance race, gets it name from the legend of Pheidippides, a Greek runner who carried news of the miraculous victory to Athens. It is believed he ran the entire distance of 26 miles without stopping.

However, after delivering the message, “Nenikekamen” meaning, “We have won!” he collapsed and died from exhaustion. In antiquity “Runners” or “Heralds” functioned as telegraphs, carrying news from one town to another. In 1896, during the first modern Olympics in Athens, the marathon race was introduced thanks to French philosopher Michel Breal.

Travis Russell of Longview Computer Network is an avid runner.

In the beginning, health had absolutely nothing to do with his running, though it does now. “Everything was a competition. At 10 years old I was 4’2” and only weighed 42lbs,” Russell said. “I thought that my life was already half over and I hadn’t accomplished anything.” But he soon realized that trying to be the best at everything was exhausting and decided to find one talent he could excel in.

There is more.

He tried football but cracked a rib just playing touch football. He was given the water boy position on the basketball team. “I had bigger dreams than being a water boy,” said Russell. His break came at Cross Country tryouts where he became an instant success. He was a miler running 4:17 in high school. He ran his first marathon at 18 after becoming a High School All American in a two mile run. He came in at 2:52 and qualified for the Boston Marathon. “That was an experience I would never forget,” said Russell who has ran 7 marathons - all qualifying for the famous Boston marathon. Nonetheless, he likes to run 5Ks. He has ran all over the country - California, Nebraska, Kansas, Washington DC, Texas, Georgia, Louisiana and Oklahoma and more.

While in the military, he ran in Germany competing in both military and civilian races.

Training

Russell said the most important thing is consistency plus varying training for fast and slow days; long and short runs; rest days and cross training such as biking and plan for more fast training if training for the 5K and more long runs for a marathon.
“NUTRITION CAN MAKE A GOOD ATHLETE GREAT OR A GREAT ATHLETE GOOD.”

According to Justin Klein, LRMC Registered and Licensed Dietician what you put into your body is just as important as training:

**NUTRITION** Whether you are a super athlete or just physically active, Justin Klein, a registered and licensed dietician at Longview Regional Medical Center, says proper nutrition is important not only to runners, but to all active individuals. According to Klein, exercise and athletic performance are enhanced by optimal nutrition. His favorite quote is “Nutrition can make a good athlete great, or can make a great athlete good.” He says you can be in the best shape of your life, but if you are not fueling your body properly your performance will suffer, and no one wants that.

To boot, the timing of nutrition is especially important. "Proper nutrient timing helps athletes and active individuals train more effectively, maintain high levels of performance, delay fatigue and recover faster from workouts and injuries," he said.

**HYDRATE** Klein says nutrition is not just limited to food. What's more, fluid consumption is an important factor in performance. "Dehydration leads to many conditions, including fatigue, which hinders performance. If you are dehydrated to begin with, then you will be starting at 90% of your performance capabilities," he said. "One thing to remember is thirst is not a good indicator of hydration status either. It is important to drink fluids throughout the day to maintain optimal hydration status."

Runners may differ on the definition of “super athlete,” but one thing is clear – they share the qualities of fitness, endurance and drive to rank them among elite athletes, often associated with endurance events like the 5K, 10K, marathons, and triathlons.

And the number of people attracted to these sports is growing, experts say.

“The number of finishers in half marathons and marathons has increased each year since 2001 (when the numbers were skewed in light of the tragedy of Sept. 11),” says Chicago-based endurance running coach Brendan Cournane. “There has also been a tremendous increase in the number of half marathons, marathons and ultramarathons as well as the increased number of finishers.”

Many local runners are training their families

**ABOUT JUSTIN KLEIN** Justin graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 2005 with a Bachelor of Science in Health and Exercise Sciences and a Masters degree in Nutritional Sciences in 2008. He is currently employed by Longview Regional Medical Center as a Clinical Dietitian. Justin is a registered and licensed dietitian. Additionally, he is certified in Adult Weight Management. He is currently working towards his certification in Sports Nutrition and Strength Conditioning.

Continued on the next page
IS EXTREME EXERCISE FOR YOU?
Endurance-running coach Brendan Cournane’s three tips before deciding whether to embark on a marathon or other endurance sport:

1. GET A PHYSICAL “Explain to your doctor that you want to train for a marathon, triathlon or century (100-mile) bike ride (or whatever the desired event). Many athletes are unaware of physical conditions, some of which may be congenital and dormant in everyday life activities (but exacerbated with vigorous exercise). Be sure the doctor is knowledgeable with athletes (I always recommend seeing doctors whose practice area includes athletes and/or who are athletes themselves – this provides a better understanding of the purpose of the physical examination and the upcoming training), supportive and understands both the rigors of the training and the importance of knowing medical history and performance – and how important it is for you to exercise.”

2. EXAMINE YOUR MOTIVES “Ask yourself, ‘Why am I embarking on this journey?’ For example, it could be for health reasons; it could be to handle a loss in life (marriage, job, death of a loved one, etc.); it could be to develop a healthy alternative to ‘life as you know it’; it could be to re-connect with a sport in which you have not participated in years; or it could be one of several other reasons. But each of us brings something that stirs the soul. Identify the motives and the passion in order to keep the goal in sight and the exercise enjoyable. By understanding our motives, it is easier to stay with the goal when we face setbacks, inertia or injury.”

3. SET A GOAL THAT IS SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE AND REALISTIC – AND WHICH HAS A DEFINITE TIME PERIOD “By setting this ‘SMART Goal’, the athlete can measure progress. Any new endeavor brings highs and lows. There is a sense of euphoria when starting an exercise program, and this often leads to running ‘too much, too soon’, resulting in injury or burnout. With a SMART Goal, it is easier to handle any temporary setback in training. It will take 6 to 8 weeks for a person to get into a routine of running. During this period, many runners fall off the wagon because they are injured or unfocused. By establishing SMART Goals, it is easier to keep an eye on the target until running becomes a regular part of life.”
At Wellness Pointe, everyone is provided exceptional quality of care. The center has expanded into a multi-practice clinic that includes obstetric care, pediatrics, general medicine, family planning and dentistry. Medicaid, Medicare (with eligibility on-site) and most private health insurance is accepted. Reduced cost primary health care and counseling services are provided for people who are eligible. Services also include education, intervention, and management of many social issues that affect our community.

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10 Reasons to Visit Longview, Texas

1. Celebrate Real East Texas
Find Real East Texas family fun at one of Longview’s many festivals – The Great Texas Balloon Race, AlleyFest, Longview PRCA Rodeo, Party in the Pines motorcycle rally and many more!
For a calendar of events go to VisitLongviewTexas.com

2. Stroll Through Downtown Longview
Discover a thriving downtown district with beautifully renovated buildings, restaurants, museums and shops. Whether you’re looking for a cold beverage, hot lunch, unique gifts, or an interesting history lesson, you can find it in Downtown Longview.

3. Get Inspired by the Cultural Arts
Longview supports a vibrant cultural arts community, including the Longview Museum of Fine Arts, the Longview Symphony, Artsview Children’s Theater, and the East Texas Opera. The S. E. Belcher Jr. Chapel and Performance Center at LeTourneau University also provides a world class venue for many national productions.

4. Explore the Outdoors
Set in the heart of Texas Lake Country, Longview is just minutes from many of the most beautiful recreation areas in the state. Fishing, hunting, hiking, boating, birdwatching or just picnicking – it’s all here in East Texas.
Come Play with Us
Outdoor enthusiasts are treated to unlimited sports options in Longview. Miles of trails wind and curve their way through the piney woods on the city’s extensive walking trail system. Delight your natural spirit with a bike ride on a forest trail or by teeing off at one of Longview’s many golf courses.

Savor the Flavors
Longview is more than just barbeque and fried catfish. We are the home of popular national chains, as well as quaint cafes, Asian bistro's, and home-cooking at its finest. Longview will satisfy every appetite, no matter what you are craving.

Choose Your Vintage
Find old world splendor in the piney woods of East Texas at one of our local wineries. Enoch's Stomp Vineyard & Winery and Los Pinos Ranch Vineyard offer beautiful settings to relax and enjoy a glass of wine. Stop in at a special event or schedule a fun tour for the entire family. Hours are seasonal.

Shop and Relax
Escape the daily grind at one of Longview’s unique shops or luxurious spas. Longview has many trendy boutiques and retail centers to find a special item with East Texas flair. Our day spas and health boutiques offer the perfect ending to a long day of retail therapy.

Find Your Past
Embark on a voyage of exploration as you discover the history of East Texas at Gregg County Historical Museum. Trace your own ancestry at Gregg County Genealogical Society or the Longview Public Library. Points of interest include our historic cemeteries, dozens of designated historical markers, and our Downtown Heritage Plaza.

Just Moments Away
Venture into the history of the area, go antique shopping, or enjoy a day of outdoor recreation by planning a day trip in Real East Texas. Nearby attractions include Caddo State Park near Uncertain, antiques in Gladewater and the East Texas Oil Museum in Kilgore.
Bon Appétit

We are coming into the most wonderful time of the year for me. I love the bounty that East Texas offers. Our table will be filled with the "Primavera" of produce that will be harvested locally. Farmers markets will start opening soon and that makes for some very healthy recipes. We must keep in mind all that we ingest for the betterment of our bodies and overall well-being.

Combining different types of vegetables and spices, such as zucchini, tomato, Noonday onions (which are in the herb and spice family), and some fresh blanched green beans, make for a savory light lunch. Add a few pine nuts, roasted chicken and parmesan over some fettucini for a delicious dinner.

Blending varieties of produce allows us to avoid using spice blends that have added ingredients that our bodies cannot use. Get to know our local producers and ask them questions. It has always been said to go directly to the source. Get creative in the kitchen when it comes to vegetables. Use minimal amounts of seasoning blends and season to taste with salt and pepper. Let’s allow our food to be the guest of honor at our table this spring. Although, the cook is the true star! Enjoy!

MARCH...

Primavera

Get to know the local farmer and eat fresh for overall well being

By Chef David Lichty
A carpet is a floor covering consisting of an upper layer with an under padding. The carpet’s legendary popularity inspired fables of magic carpets that transported long-ago and far-off heroes instantaneously (or at least quickly) to their destinations.

The word “carpet” is descended from Old Italian “carpire,” meaning to pluck. As a term “carpet” is used interchangeably with “rug,” but they are not the same thing. Carpet stretches from wall-to-wall while a rug does not. Though this is considered a modern American usage and rugs have been considered in the past as of lower quality and/or of smaller size, carpets quite often have finished ends.

However, with the 17th Century’s expanding trade routes, Persian Rugs were introduced to Western Europe. Historically the word was also used for table and wall coverings, as carpets were not commonly used on the floors of European interiors until the 18th century.

Pakistan, Kashmir in India/Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, North Africa, Nepal, Spain, Turkmenistan and Tibet are premier contemporary centers for rug production.

Indian silk rugs:

The art of weaving first developed in the Indian subcontinent. Indian carpets have always been renowned for their designs, which combine meticulous attention to detail with presentation of realistic attributes. The Indian province of Kashmir is world-famous for its hand-knotted silk rugs which are in such permanent high demand in the West.

Iranian carpets:

Iran, meanwhile, is the world’s largest producer and exporter of handmade carpets, producing three-quarters of the world’s total output and garnering 30% of global export markets. Iran is also the maker of the largest handmade carpet in history, measuring 60,546 square feet.

Also, Turkish carpets, sometimes known as Anatolian, are among the most well-known and established handcrafted art works in the world.

Andy Breaux, owner of Floor Medic, and his crew in Longview specialize in taking care of expensive Oriental rugs. According to him, rug wear and tear are inevitable. Moreover, storage of these pieces of fine art is vital in order to avoid mildew and dry rot. Breaux said Floor Medic will be glad to prepare clients’ rugs for shipment or proper storage.

They are also available to answer any questions about rugs and moths. Besides moths, rug owners should watch for excessive humidity and sunlight, both of which can damage fine rugs. Apart from insects and weather, proper padding is central to the longevity of Oriental rugs. Breaux and his team have evaluated dozens of different rug pad materials hence they carry the finest padding. The best part is that the cost is nominal and your rugs will thank you for taking good care of them.

Cleaning Rugs: The best kept secret in East Texas

When it comes to cleaning Oriental rugs, Breaux has cornered the market. In the United States there are 40 machines made specifically for cleaning Oriental rugs. These machines are from Poland in Europe, and only 2 of the 40 can be found in Texas. One is in Austin, and the second at Breaux’s Floor Medic on Tyler Street in Longview. This is a machine made specifically for expertly cleaning rugs. Breaux and his crew have many years of rug-cleaning experience. Moreover, he will soon become a certified Master Rug Cleaner. For more information, call Floor Medic at 903.663.5509 and they will be glad to answer any questions about cleaning carpets and rugs, wood, tile, stone, upholstery cleaning and emergency water extraction.
In surveys over the years, Longview residents have consistently asked municipal leaders to prioritize hiking, biking and walking trails in the city’s Parks and Recreation to-do lists. The city has responded, using state and federal grants, donations and voter-issued debt to build and maintain at least 15 miles of trails across the city, from paths along creek beds to surfaces that once served as a railroad.

Cargill Long Trail is a 2.5-mile rails-to-trails conservation that, in one way or another, has existed at least a century. It traces its beginnings to about 1910 or 1912, when Col. L.P. Featherstone and a Galveston financier wanted to develop the iron ore industry north of Longview. Featherstone built a railroad line between Longview and Ore City to transport the iron ore, but his attempts to sell his enterprise to steel companies on the East Coast and Belgium failed.

The Texas Railroad Commission rejected Featherstone’s request to permission to abandon the line, whose bridges later caught fire and burned, according to Doyal T. Loyd’s 1966 publication of A History of Upshur County.

Longview’s portion of the old rail line, between Loop 281 and Marshall Avenue, is now among 1,600 such trails supported by the nonprofit Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, which works to create a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors. It spans 43 acres and is recognized as a Certified National Recreational Trail.

Guthrie Park Trail, spanning 1.25 miles in central Longview, allows pedestrians, joggers, skaters and cyclists to move through a 28-acre park with a disc golf course, a basketball court, lighted tennis courts and a picnic area along Guthrie Creek.

Paul Boorman Trail is named for a retired 25-year municipal employee who served as Longview’s community services director and manager of the Parks and Recreation Department. The trail’s first phase between Marshall Avenue and Fairmont Street was completed in June 2007 after nearly a year of construction and $1.68 million in expenses, paid for with early debt retirement from the city and a $1.28 million Statewide
Transportation Enhancement Program grant.

The city completed Phase II of the trail on Nov. 20, 2010, opening an additional 9,200 feet and giving it nearly three miles of total concrete walking surface and five main entrances. Longview voters approved more than $3 million to extend the trail more than a month before Phase I of the Boorman Trail was completed. Community Services Director Laura Hill said the city does not collect data on usage of any of its trails, though walking trails remain among the most sought-after amenities at local parks.

"I can say that all of the verbal feedback concerning Paul Boorman is positive, except for requests for more parking and the need for more restrooms, which I guess symbolizes the popularity of the trail," Hill said. "We do get calls, typically from non-profits, that they want to hold their 'Fun Runs / 5-Ks' on the trail, and several have done so, so it's popular for those types of events."

Parks officials have tried to respond to residents' suggestions. When one lady walked her dog on Boorman Trail and noticed dog waste stations along the route, she suggested the stations for the recently resurfaced Julieanna Trail near McWhorter Park. "And we did," Hill said.

This past November, the city unveiled Longview Stragent Dog Park, a nine-acre property adjacent to Boorman Trail dedicated to off-leash recreation between dog owners and their pets. Stragent Foundation donated more than half of the proceeds needed to build the facility, and KSA Engineers, which was the designer of the Boorman Trail, Spring Hill Park and many other public facilities, set the alignment stakes and fencing for Stragent's small- and large-dog sections.

"It's really fantastic to watch dogs enter the park and see how excited they are, as well as their owners," Kristen Ishihara with Longview Dog Park Inc., who worked on the project for more than two years, told KSA Engineers. "The purpose of the park is to provide an off-leash area where dogs can receive sufficient stimulation, both mental and physical. It also provides an area where dogs and owners can socialize. Ultimately we hope and expect that this park will promote responsible dog ownership by providing an outlet for exercise that an owner might not previously have had, as well as exposure to other dog owners and their knowledge."

In March 2010, the Parks and Recreation Department completed a master plan for walking, hiking and biking trails within Longview. It involves linking the Boorman, Cargill Long, Guthrie, Akin and other trails while expanding trails through the city’s south side.

How that plan is pursued and which areas...

Continued on the next page
Community Connections

Stragent Dog Park

Stragent Dog Park Ribbon-cutting
would be linked first would almost certainly be a community decision, as development of the plan relies on donations, residents' input, grants or other funds. "Those decisions could make all the difference in whether Boorman Trail extends from its current south terminus at Marshall Avenue to the south, or to the northeast through Towne Lake," Hill said.

"We could actually work on the land between Hollybrook Drive and Delwood Lane and develop McHaney Park and that trail linkage, so we have several options," Hill said. "We would probably do some citizen input to see what the next priority would be, and probably the other factor that would weigh into that is grant availability."

If funding were to become available for a trail expansion, parks officials would first determine the availability of resources and what those resources could accomplish, such as the trail length, bridges or parking. That knowledge ultimately determines how the city proceeds with design, bidding and construction, all part of a process that takes about 18-30 months, Hill said.

City officials hear frequently a lament from residents about a lack of sidewalks, but linear trails such as Boorman and Cargill are similar to trails in other cities, including Katy Trail and White Rock Creek Trail in Dallas, that can navigate pedestrian flow in a community. Hill said the linkages suggested in Longview's Parks Master Plan of 2010 "takes that idea even further linking numerous neighborhoods of single family and multifamily homes with parks, schools and retail areas."

In continuing that linkage, the City Council voted Jan. 26 to allow Hill to seek a state grant that would pay for concrete surfacing and pedestrian bridges at the Akin Park trail. The 2010 Master Plan includes the idea of connecting Cargill Long and Guthrie trails through Akin Park.
Money Talk

Stock Market rewards patient investors

By Terry Savage

It happened so quietly and under the cover of volatility that you might have missed it. But two weeks ago, the stock market reached its highest level since May 2008. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at its highest level since before the September 2008 Lehman Brothers collapse — which triggered all sorts of mayhem and pushed the index down to the 6,700 level the following March.

The new Dow high happened under cover of all the headlines about Europe’s financial woes and the worries about global financial disaster. Even more deeply “undercover,” the Nasdaq Composite Index, spurred by a surge in technology stocks, jumped to its highest close since December 2000!

And all of this happened while most ordinary investors were still scared to invest. In fact, $20 billion flowed out of domestic equity funds in December — thereby missing the nearly 4 percent market gains in January.

In fact, total inflows to all kinds of mutual funds dropped by $20 billion last year as scared Americans decided to hoard cash in the banking system, while deposit accounts expanded by about $2 trillion in the past few years.

And now we’re at new highs. If you stuck with your plan of regular investing in your 401(k) or IRA, despite the volatility, you would have accumulated quite a portfolio — at much lower costs than today’s headlines.

It was tough to stick to the plan. That’s the point of discipline. As I’ve noted in earlier columns, in 2011 the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 608 points. But if you added up all the closing point changes (up 300 points one day, down 150 the next, etc.), the index traversed a total of 28,032 points on a closing basis during the year.

That was enough to give any investor heartburn and indigestion on a daily basis. But those who were able to keep their emotions in check over the past few years have been well-rewarded.

Now what? That’s the question on the mind of all investors, whether they are market participants or wishing they were. And it’s no easier to make that call now than it was back in March 2009, when this column begged stock investors to merely stick to their plan of regular investing.

Certainly there will be more volatility. And equally certainly, there will be announcements of fund managers who have “beat” the market — and of market timers who have called the turns in between the ups and downs of the past few years.

But it’s as tough to be right about which market technician to follow or which mutual fund to choose as it is to call the market itself. Every year or so, a different group of stocks is “in fashion.” But fashion can change quickly. Last year’s most popular stocks can move to the bottom of the list more quickly than your favorite NFL football team. Mutual funds that loaded up on finan-
cial stocks in 2011 suffered huge losses, but the banking group has been a winner so far this year. Meanwhile, last year’s list of winners was topped by utilities — a much ignored, stodgy group in previous years but one that performed well in 2011 because of the higher and more secure dividend yields that utility stocks offer.

It’s easy to move from understanding the importance of being in the market to trying to “beat” the market by picking the best mutual fund or stock group. That’s where most ordinary investors go wrong, because the challenge of doing better than the market is so daunting. Yes, the pros who manage the funds are paid for beating their benchmark indexes. But for ordinary investors trying to build assets for retirement, that’s quibbling around the edges.

Your most important decision is not which stock, stock group, or mutual fund. It’s just the decision about being invested in the market. In the long run, that’s the decision that will have most impact on your financial future.

And please don’t hide behind the oft-heard excuse that the market is rigged to favor the professional investor. Yes, the headlines about “inside trading” have been disconcerting. Even worse, Congress is finding it tough to ban its own members from “legal” inside trading.

But for the vast majority of us, the long-term gains potential of the stock market is not driven by any inside knowledge. It is driven by the long-term growth potential of the American economy.

And if it makes you feel better, even the professional money managers have a tough time “beating” the market. According to Morningstar, in 2011 just 23 percent of equity mutual fund managers beat their relative benchmark — the worst performance in more than a decade.

Yes, it’s tough to watch your hard-earned money go into the risk pool of the stock market, especially when you saw money melt away in past market declines. That’s why you have to decide — based on your situation in life and your personal risk tolerance — how much of your money belongs in the stock market. But the time to make that allocation decision is not in the heat of passion when the market is making new highs — or lows. That’s when fear and greed override common sense.

Since it’s almost impossible for most investors to control those emotions, the best course of action is to make a plan that you can carry out over the long run. Then stick to the plan. You can start any time — even now. And that’s the Savage Truth.

Terry Savage is a registered investment adviser and is on the board of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. She appears weekly on WMAQ-Channel 5’s 4:30 p.m. newscast, and can be reached at www.terrysavage.com.
By Joycelyne Fadojutimi
jfadr@infinitieplus.com

According to the gracious hosts of the recent Longview Cattle Barrons’ Ball (CBB) kick off, Drs. Samir Germanwala, an intervention cardiologist and his wife Gana Nadiga, an Opthamologist volunteering their home was the right thing to do for a wonderful cause.

Natalie Feuquay, co-chair of CBB is a Cardiac Cath Lab nurse who works with Germanwala. According to Feuquay, their goal this year is $110,000. Todd Johnson, chief financial officer at Longview Regional Medical Center (LRMC,) said the hospital is always glad to be a sponsor of CBB and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future.

Champagne & ChoColate kicks off big

Community Connections

STOMPING CANCER

CBB Sponsor Chair Gina Dehoyos thanked everyone for coming. She also thanked the sponsors for their generosity. She reminded the audience that sponsorships are still available and that all are welcome to avail themselves. According to Dehoyos the funds from CBB stay in East Texas. CBB financing is used for purchasing gas cards, taxi and bus fares; wigs, bras and many other everyday necessities needed by cancer patients.

The recipients of CBB funds (called the “Signs of Hope”) were on hand to give their testimonies. Cheryl Porchia, a 48-year-old mother, was first diagnosed in 2006, and has been fighting cancer since then. In 2009 she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer stage 4, and survived. That is not all. In 2011, she was again diagnosed with stage 4 cancer, this time of the brain. “I
am happy to say that the tumors have shrunk,” she said.

Porchia’s cancer is gene-related. Her mother is the carrier. The silver lining came last year when she learned the gene was not passed on to her daughter. “I feel good and I am going to keep fighting.”

Kandra Askew’s case was similar. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008. Her faith and belief in God has anchored her and her family. According to Askew they have been blessed in many ways and learned to receive graciously. She said, “I chose to remember that I am not fighting God. I am fighting cancer.” She has also learned that through fund raising with her students she can help others in the cancer center. “Life is not all about you,” she said. “It is about other people.”

Your support is needed in the fight against cancer, so please consider donating to the Longview Cattle Barrons’ Ball.

For more information please contact co-chairs Natalye Feuquay at 903.736.9622 or Dawn Olivas at 903.736.4276. Meanwhile get ready for the upcoming ball on Saturday April 14. Entertainment will be provided by:

Dagnabbit – Opening band
Chuck Wicks – Headliner
Miller Row – Closing band
By Allen C. Lizza, CPA
Perry D. Reed & Company, P.C.

If ever there was a time to pay attention to navigating the “uncharted waters” of our present tax code, 2012 is the year. Compounding the futility of taxpayers, and tax preparers, to “chart” tax savvy plans, 2012 is an election year which brings with it an assortment of other impediments for safe passage, most notably the reluctance of elected officials to guide us, by “plotting a course” that might adversely impact their election plans.

I recently attended a tax seminar for certified public accountants, an annual eight hour ritual with the focus being to provide tax preparers with the most recent developments in tax legislation, as well as providing a summary of tax-related legislative changes that will be coming and going in the upcoming tax year. This year’s tax theme was “uncertainty” which, for a room full of accountants, sounds as comforting as depending on the weatherman to guarantee a safe passage across the Gulf of Mexico during the heart of hurricane season.

2012 is indeed full of uncertainty, and as we move into 2013 more ominous changes are on the horizon. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, approximately eighty-four tax provisions expired at the end of 2011. These include a plethora of temporary “tax extender” provisions, effecting both individuals and businesses. For individuals, these include the mortgage insurance premium deduction, sales tax deduction, teachers’ deduction for supplies, tuition and related expense deductions, the alternative minimum tax (AMT) exemption amounts, and a host of other provisions that will effect both those individuals who itemize their tax deductions, as well as those who do not.

The likelihood of any legislative activity taking place prior to the upcoming November elections is slim, leaving Congress but a short period of time during the subsequent “lame duck” session to address and agree upon legislation that may impact millions of tax payers in 2012 and subsequent tax years. Temporary provisions are just that. Letting a temporary provision expire, in essence, results in a tax increase. It is estimated that the cost of extending the numerous temporary tax provisions through the end of 2012, including those which have “sunset” in 2011, would be in the area of $250 billion dollars.

In addition to temporary provisions, unless congressional action is taken there will be a return to higher individual tax rates, the phasing out, down or the complete loss of numerous personal and business deductions, and the re-characterization of certain income components from present preferential capital gain treatment to inclusion as items of ordinary income, potentially subject to higher taxation.

Navigating the rough waters of the 2012 tax year and those on the immediate horizon without proper guidance may potentially result in lost deductions and a higher tax bill. Your tax preparer can help you assess the benefits of accelerating or deferring the recognition of income, as well as the timing for taking tax deductions. Contacting your tax professional during the year will help you to “stay the course” and navigate the pending tax code changes. Perry D. Reed & Company, P.C. offers extensive tax planning and consulting services. For more information, call us at (903) 757-4071.
Lexi is a sculpture by Dorothy Robbins Skeans, artist and Longview Museum of Fine Arts advisory Board member. LMFA will have #3 of this edition of ten commissioned by the Ross Perot Arts Center in Texarkana. It was provided by LMFA Advisory Board Members Betty Bodenheim, Evelyn Bolding, Linda Buie, Suzanne Cook, Holly Forbes, Claire Foster, Carolyn Fox-Hearne, Neal Garland, Shirley Griffin, Keith Honey, Tiffany Jehorek, Pete Lamothe, Stephen McDaniel, Nancy Ivy Mobley, John B. Ross, Dorothy and Ted Skeans, Linda Thomas, and Charlotte Wrather.

**Amazing ARTIST:**
Dorothy Robbins Skeans

Dorothy Robbins Skeans looks on as husband, Ted Skeans adjusts her sculpture at a recent viewing.
Grubs Up

Irish Food for the 364 Days of the Year,

**Other than St. Patrick’s Day**

“Favorite Food at Home: Delicious Comfort Food from Ireland’s Most Famous Chef”

By Rachel Allen (William Morrow, $24.99)

By Lisa Messinger

Forget St. Patrick’s Day. Well, have fun, frolic and perhaps eat a bowl of stew, a slice of Irish brown bread, a serving of shepherd’s pie or a big plate of corned beef and cabbage. But after that, forget it. Instead, for the rest of the year expand your view of Irish food to be as broad as Rachel Allen’s.

Who’s Rachel Allen? Many of the Irish are as familiar with the feisty chef as they are with the country’s centuries-old traditional meals — and glad for the breath of fresh air. With her five cookbooks and multiple U.K. cooking shows, including on BBC, Allen is easily considered Ireland’s most famous chef.

Even though she was raised in Dublin, and at 18 was studying at the famous Ballymaloe Cookery School in Shanagarry, County Cork (where she now also teaches), Allen has made it her trademark to expand Irish techniques and ingredients into an extremely wide array of innovative recipes.

It may start simply with just taking gourmet twists with common well-loved Irish foods. Consider her baked potatoes. First, she gives expert baking tips, however, her toppings are in a class by themselves. In just one of multiple tater treats, her toppings are in a class by themselves. In just one of multiple tater treats, her toppings are in a class by themselves. In just one of multiple tater treats, her toppings are in a class by themselves.

Baked Potatoes with Serrano Ham, Manchego Cheese and Walnut Dressing

2 large baking potatoes in the skin, scrubbed clean
1 tablespoon walnut oil
1 generous teaspoon white wine vinegar
1/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard
Salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 slices Serrano ham (or Parma ham)
4 thin slices Manchego cheese (or grated parmesan cheese)

Preheat oven to 450 F.

Place the oats, seeds, coconut and flour in a large bowl and mix together. Melt the butter and corn syrup together in a saucepan, then mix in the brown sugar, apricots, peanut butter and vanilla extract. Pour into the bowl of dry ingredients and mix until evenly combined.

Preheat oven to 325 F.

Line a 7-inch by 11-inch baking pan with nonstick baking parchment, leaving a little hanging over the edges for easy removal later.

Place the oats, seeds, coconut and flour in a large bowl and mix together. Melt the butter and corn syrup together in a saucepan, then mix in the brown sugar, apricots, peanut butter and vanilla extract. Pour into the bowl of dry ingredients and mix until evenly combined.

Press the mixture into the prepared pan and bake in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes, or until golden and slightly firm when tested with a utensil. Allow to cool in the pan, then remove still in the paper. Cut into 18 bars (or whatever size you prefer). Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week. These also freeze well.

Yields about 18 bars.

Lisa Messinger is a first-place winner in food writing from the Association of Food Journalists and the author of seven food books, including “Mrs. Cubbison’s Best Stuffing Cookbook” and “The Sourdough Bread Bowl Cookbook.” She also writes the Creators News Service “After-Work Gourmet” column.
DESIGNATE A DRIVER
AND ENJOY THE GREAT TIMES.

Choosing a designated driver is an important part of every great time. It’s why 141 million American adults have either been a designated driver or been driven home by one. And it’s why your friends at Budweiser salute each of you.

*Source: GFK Custom Research North America

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY
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Technology always makes life easier, so the City of Longview is using cutting edge technology to improve customer service for residents. To that effect Longview has launched a new customer service tool called CitySend that allows residents to report and track service requests by using a Smartphone or computer. CitySend users are able to snap a photo or video of an issue, pinpoint the location on a map, and then submit the concern directly to the proper civic destination. Afterward, residents are able to track the response.

“Customer service is very important for the City of Longview, and we are hopeful that this can be a great tool for our residents,” said Longview Mayor Jay Dean.

One of the key features of CitySend is its ability to attach a photo and a specific location to a reported issue. “When someone calls in a service request, we don’t always have a clear idea of how big the issue is or what exactly needs to be done until we get to the site. With CitySend, though, we can receive a picture and location of the concern in advance, which should be helpful in managing the response,” says City Manager David Willard.

In addition, this tool allows residents to see other reports as well as receive feedback. As of February 15, when infinitieplus magazine spoke with Shawn Hara, Longview relations manager, residents have reported potholes, lights that are not working, and more. “It is a lot more open,” said Hara. “This is an additional tool for our local residents and the City as well.” Moreover, CitySend has a news feature that provides updates for local
City Launches Mobile and Online Service Request System

news and public notices.

According to Hara, the City would prefer that residents not send the information anonymously so they can be able to get back to you. Be aware that although CitySend is handy, it is not immediate. It will run its process, but should nevertheless make things easier for residents.

Furthermore, there is an RSS feed from the Longview Police, the Fire department and City twitter that can be assessed at any time for updated information. The app is available for free download on iPhone, Android and Blackberry devices. The app is also available on Windows mobile devices.

To boot, the goals of CitySend are:
* Customer service: track and send
* Easy to use: Most residents have smart phones and the City is using it as a tool. There are other cities where CitySend is already in use.
* Residents can also track a request on the website. When the job is done, it will be deleted.

For more information or to submit a request, please visit LongviewTexas.gov.

It is very important to remember for emergencies, please dial 911.

Step by Step

1. See an issue.
2. Snap a photo.
3. Select the location.
4. Select issue from list.
5. Submit it.
6. Track it.

Is it possible to redefine who you are?
Is it possible to change what you know about banking?

We think so.

Visit the redefined TBTonline now
www.texasbankandtrust.com
By Mark Maynard

The 2013 Lexus GS sport sedan debuts the new face of the brand in an efficient but powerful statement. The stronger design and more luxurious interior are hoped to attract a new type of buyer. The five-seat sedan will be sold in three trim levels — Luxury, F Sport and Hybrid — in rear or optional all-wheel drive.

The car went on sale last weekend at the same starting price as the 2011 model: $47,775, including $875 freight. AWD adds $2,550.

The new face is highlighted by its “spindle grille,” with wide lower fascia. Also look for Audi-esque arrowhead-shaped LED daytime running lights.

The re-engineered sport sedan is the same length as before, but 2 inches wider at the rear and an inch wider at the front. It has a rakishly low 0.26 drag coefficient.

Interior craftsmanship has been enhanced (as if Lexus was ever short in quality feel and appearance). Simple, useful additions include a three-blink-to-pass signal feature and guidance lines (finally) in the standard rearview camera. Interior options include red leather and metal-trimmed pedals.

The 306-hp, direct-injection 3.5-liter V-6 will push the 3,795-pound sport sedan to 60 mph in 5.7 seconds. The engine has an intake sound generator for that husky growl of power. The six-speed transmission, with paddle shifters, is about the only carryover piece. Fuel economy around town is 19 mpg and up to 28 on the highway on 91 octane.

The GS450h hybrid has a 338-hp, Atkinson-cycle version of the 3.5-liter V-6, which has fuel economy of 29/34 mpg city/highway. Trunk space in the hybrid was improved over the previous model by stacking the batteries to give more cubic footage. The lower rear valance conceals the exhaust tips for that look of stealth running.

The GS debuts Lexus Enform multimedia system with Safety Connect. Enform connects to music, information and entertainment services through the user’s smartphone. Passengers can check in with Facebook, access Bing for a local search, Yelp for feedback and go to OpenTable and MovieTickets.com. There also is Pandora and iHeartRadio. A text-to-speech feature allows the driver to read text messages and send preset responses.

SafetyConnect features automatic crash notification, stolen vehicle location, emergency assist, enhanced roadside assistance and destination assist.

Standard equipment includes Smart Access locking and push-button ignition; leather-trimmed seats; 10-way adjustable front seats; electric parking brake; rearview camera; 8-inch high center touchscreen; multifunction, tilt-telescopic steering wheel; Bluetooth phone connection; 12-speaker surround-sound HD-radio audio system with auxiliary iPod and USB ports; 17-inch alloy wheels standard (18-inch optional and 19-inch staggered on F Sport); bi-HID headlights; heated mirrors with puddle lights and turn signals; ultraviolet and infrared ray-reducing tinted glass for all windows; and lightweight asphalt sheets for cabin soundproofing.

The F Sport package ($5,690) includes 16-way power sport driver seat (includes power side bolsters, thigh support and four-way lumbar); 19-inch, staggered-width, split five-spoke wheels with summer tires (single width with all-season tires for AWD); sport-tuned Adaptive Variable Suspension; 14-inch front discs with high-friction pads; rear lip spoiler; sport interior of aluminum trim; unique perforated leather trim and black headliner; sport front bumper and rear lower valence; and mesh grille inserts.

Variable gear ratio steering is a highlight of the F-Sport package.

This is the rear steering assist that at low speeds counter-steers to chop the turning circle in half, to 17 feet, and at high speeds, it turns the car in the direction of the front tires to tuck back into the lane. This rear steering gear is an excellent around-town feature that should be available as a stand-alone option. Even if it were an $800 extra, it would be worth it.

Other options include: navigation system ($1,735), night vision, head-up display, blind-spot monitor and lane-keep assist with lane-departure warning.

Mark Maynard is driving in cyberspace at Mark.Maynard@UnionTrib.com. Find photo galleries and more news at Facebook.com/MaynardsGarage.
By Peter McKay

Like almost every other American household this year, our home ended up after the holidays with a lot of new electronic items. I got an iPad. It was one of those gifts you don't know you want until you have it. Suddenly, I could check my email and watch silly YouTube videos from any spot in the house, even the bathroom. My 15-year-old daughter, who loves to read, got her own dream gift—a Kindle e-reader—and immediately went about buying some books online.

It turns out my iPad could also double as an e-book reader much like the Kindle. Once I got tired of checking email every five minutes and watching endless YouTube videos, I signed into our Amazon account to see what my daughter had already purchased. The only books in our account were from the "Hunger Games" series. I'd never heard of them, but my daughter said they were really thrilling and that I'd love them. (I'm not the only cheapskate in the family. We gave my father-in-law a Kindle for Christmas, and so far, the only book he's put on there is a Sherlock Holmes book—because it's the only free download he could find. When I tried to show him how to actually pay for a book on his computer, and pointed to the "buy it now" button on the screen, I thought he was going to snap my finger off when he thought I'd authorized a payment.)

The Hunger Games, for anyone who might be a male of the species and/or over the age of 17, is a series of books about a teenage girl in the future who battles against an oppressive dictator while, of course, having to choose between two really hunky boys. Mostly, though, the books are about a teenage girl who has to choose between two really hunky boys. (Books aimed at teenage girls seem to have a common theme: The world might be hanging in the balance, with good and evil might be fighting to the death, or maybe your neighborhood is crawling with vampires and werewolves, but all that really matters is whether you pick the dark, mysterious boy or the earnest, wholesome one.)

Once I started reading, though, I kept going. Would Katniss, the pretty girl from District 12, survive in the arena against her bloodthirsty adversaries? Would she challenge the evil President Snow and free her people? Who was cuter, Peeta (the wholesome blond), or Gale (dark and mysterious)? OMG!

All was well until my wife looked over my shoulder one day and noticed I was reading tweenage girl fiction. She could have let it go, but she gave me a long, hard look like she had walked in the room and found me playing with Barbies. (She never has. Honest.)

The ribbing hasn't stopped since. At the mall, she asked me if I wanted to buy a Twilight T-shirt. She asked me if I wanted to put a Justin Bieber poster on our bedroom wall. She even offered that I could have some girls over for a sleepover and rent "Titanic."

My daughter and I, however, have something to talk about. She has to be careful not to say anything to spoil the story. (I'm a slow reader, and she's way ahead of me.) And when the movie comes out in March, I'm taking her for opening night, even if I have to elbow a few middle school girls out of the way to be first in line.

We profoundly disagree, however, on one issue. The other day, I was walking through the kitchen, and she asked, out of the blue, who Catniss should end up with. I didn't even have to think it over. Peeta, of course. He was, after all, the nice wholesome boy with the winning personality. She made a gagging noise. Nice boys like Peeta, she assured me, were boring—girlish, almost. She'd dump him in a second for the brooding, dangerous Gale.

Nice guys, the kind who would read a book just to have something to talk to their daughter about, get a bad rap. I was really offended. So much so that I don't think I'm going to let her read the copy of "Twilight" I downloaded last night.
Faster. The 30-Minutes-or-Less E.R. Service Pledge.
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