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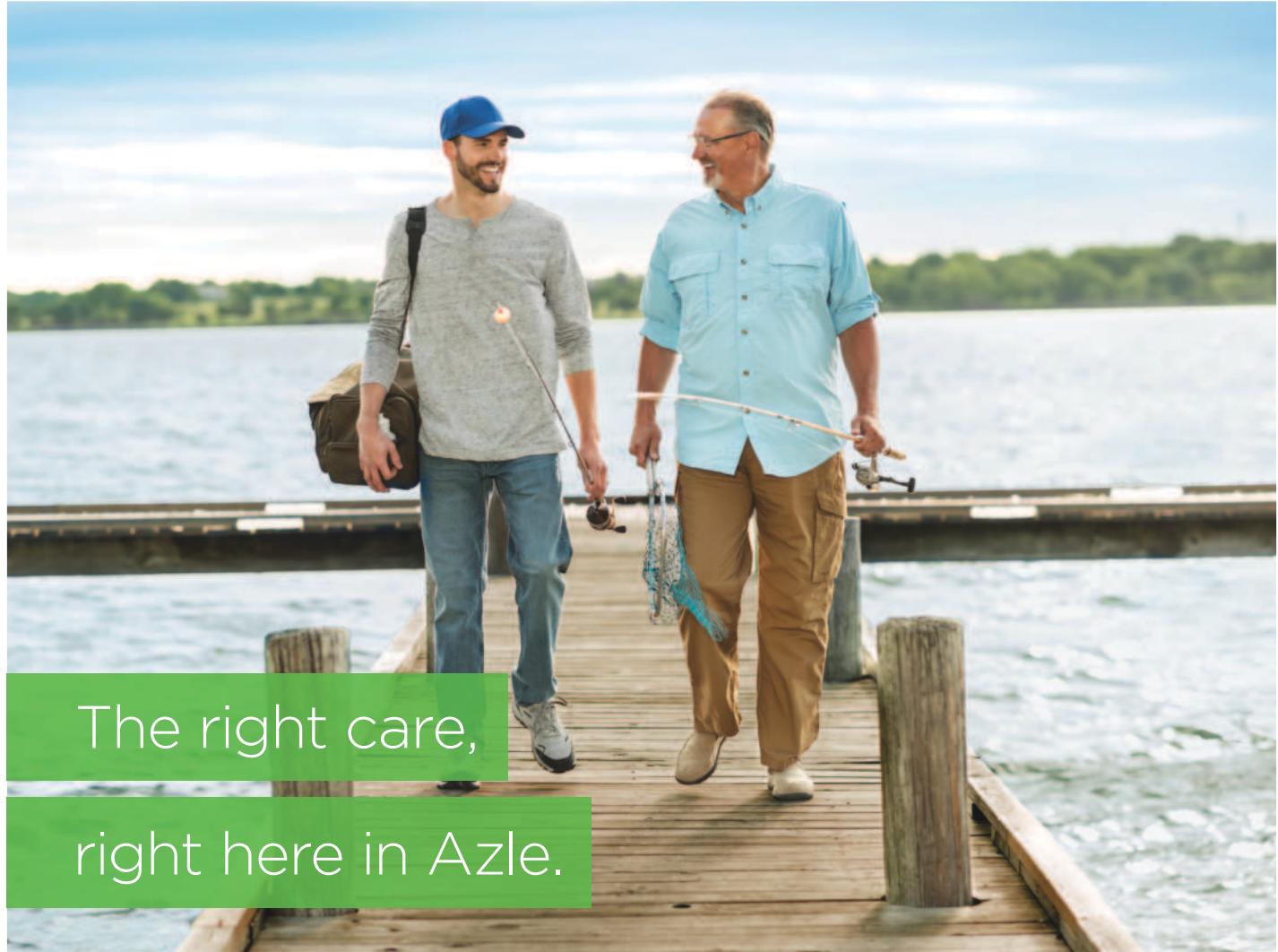
FALL 2021



Azle News



The Springtown Epigraph



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Jennifer Lanham prepares bread from scratch using an Amish white flour recipe.

PHOTO COURTESY JENNIFER LANHAM

Rising to the occasion

Springtown bread ministry born of faith, need

BY SUSAN MCFARLAND

Jennifer Lanham knows when God moves you to do something, you just do it.

"As I was making bread, I heard the Lord speak over me, and He said, 'This is what you can be doing right now,'" Lanham said. "I had a choice—I could either worry about the future or find purpose in the moment."

What started out as six loaves of bread for her worship team, turned into a bread ministry in Springtown.

"If you would have told me a year and a half ago I'd be doing this now, I would have laughed at you," Lanham said. "I'm just following God's lead."

Lanham owned By Faith Massage Therapy in Aledo. Then she had to



Jennifer Lanham (l) with her daughter Cheyenne, 14, at the Veal Station Market and Bakery.

PHOTO BY SUSAN MCFARLAND

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The Veal Station Market and Bakery (the little building in the pasture), 1400 Veal Station Road in Springtown, is open Friday from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

PHOTO BY SUSAN MCFARLAND

shutter her doors as the pandemic reached Texas. She never thought she'd become the "Springtown bread lady."

She handed out the bread she made at the Springtown Brookshire's parking lot as COVID emptied store shelves. She recalls the lines of people waiting for her every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 5 p.m.

People would line up, not just for fresh, homemade bread, but also for words of encouragement from Lanham when many were feeling their lowest.

Her efforts did not go unnoticed. In May, the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce honored Lanham at their annual awards banquet.

Throughout the pandemic, Lanham made and distributed thousands of loaves of bread, nourishing her community both physically and spiritually. She had gone from kneading muscles to kneading dough.

Her ministry gives away homemade bread and farm fresh eggs to those in need and she sells baked goods, jams and jellies weekly.

"It took off in a way that we never expected it to," Lanham said.

Her bread is made from scratch using an Amish white flour recipe. She never uses a bread machine, eggs, or dairy. She can bake up to 12 loaves of bread in her bright red, 1940s Wolf antique commercial oven that was originally used at a bed and breakfast in Pasadena. To make way for even more loaves, a huge deck oven was delivered in July.

Lanham closed her massage clinic in June and is now focusing solely on baking bread to help her community. She recently opened Veal Station Market and Bakery (the little building in the pasture) at 1400 Veal Station Road in Springtown.

Each week leading up to market day, which is Friday from 4:30 to 6 p.m., Lanham posts items she will have that day

on The Springtown Bread Lady Facebook page. Orders are placed in the thread of the post, or via instant messaging. She can also be emailed at jennifer@byfaith.info. It is not necessary to place an order to come to the market, she said, walk-ins are always welcome.

Lanham offers free homemade white bread, free eggs, Bibles, New Testament copies, children's devotionals, and prayers at market day.

She sells baked goods including her best-selling cinnamon rolls, salted caramel cinnamon rolls, lemon rolls and cookies and cream rolls (\$10 for a pack of four). Cookies are \$8 per dozen (or two dozen for \$15) and specialty breads — jalapeño cheddar, Italian herb, cinnamon raisin, sourdough, and cheddar and garlic — sell for \$5 per loaf.

Other goodies available at market day could include fudge brownies, cupcakes, candles, wreaths, fresh salsa, cherry and plum jam, candied pecans and freeze-dried fruit. She also takes custom orders for pies and cakes.

"We always have extras, and you never know what other great sweets we'll throw in," Lanham said.

On a typical market day, one could see several cars lined up along Veal Station Road at the edge of Lanham's property, waiting for her to drive over from the house, unload goods from the truck.

Azle resident Autumn Anderson goes weekly for her family's favorites: chocolate chip cookies, freeze dried fruit and cinnamon crunch muffins.

"Her cheddar jalapeno bread is to die for, it makes a great grill cheese sandwich," Anderson said.

Lanham greets most of her guests by first name and takes time to visit with each one. As she chats up customers, her 14-year-old daughter, Cheyenne, sidles up to the register to help her mom. She also bakes all the cookies.

Lanham's 12-year-old son Lane makes the jams and jellies, including his best-selling strawberry jalapeno. Sarah Beth,



Jennifer (l) and Kevin Lanham

4, is the inspiration for the dresses Lanham sews, her mother-in-law Pam Lanham makes the wreaths and her husband Kevin Lanham "makes all of our dreams come true," she said.

Jennifer said her husband, who is a sergeant with Parker County Sheriff's Office, "believes in me more than I do myself most of the time. He puts everyone in the house before himself."

"He is my best friend," she said. "We love to be together. Kevin plays guitar, we sing worship songs together. We have fun, there's a lot of laughter and silliness when we're together. We spend a lot of time trying to figure out what our purpose is, not define who we are but what we do."

For now, the bread lady is focused on God's will. She'll continue to bake.

"We want to create a community fellowship center with a large market and food pantry," she said. "We want a place where people can worship and be true to who they are. You don't have to fit on our loaf pan for us to love you."

Then there is the plan for the family: "We plan to have more children and live on a multigenerational property," she said. "Someone is always hungry."



The Lanham children: Lane, 12, Sara Beth, 4, and Cheyenne, 14.

PHOTOS COURTESY JENNIFER LANHAM



This Azle music haven will surprise you

Grammy-winning producer Chuck Ebert shares a peek inside his recording studio

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

A roadrunner is not something you often see crossing your path on the way into a recording studio, but at Chuck Ebert's place expect the unexpected.

"Rabbit, deer, birds ... We've got all kinds of wildlife out here," says Chuck Ebert, a Grammy-winning music producer who calls Azle home.

On approach, The Cabin Record

Company's home looks like another 2,400-square-foot metal shed in the heart of rural Texas — with a screen door welcoming guests.

Step inside, though, you are transported to a place you'd never think to see among the tall grass, mesquite and live oaks.

Inside is one of the coolest — both figuratively and literally — metal

buildings around. This is a full-service music studio, equipped with all of the tools artists need to make musical magic. A full drum set fills the center of a large room, a grand piano set back in the corner, and stands of colorful guitars fill up the space.

True to its name, the studio is made to look like a cabin. The ceiling and walls are lined with light-colored logs,

the floors are solid wood. Even the electrical outlets are wooden.

But the wood does more than make this room pretty. According to Ebert it helps give the songs the sound he wants.

"I'm an acoustician," he said. "I designed this space myself using what I know about the science of sound and how to make the space work best for the music."

The centerpiece of the studio, a point of pride for Ebert, is his mixer. Taking up as much room as a king-size bed, the mixer sits in the middle of his studio space surrounded by fans helping to keep the space cool.

He pulls up samples of the music he has been working on and listens. Hands constantly in motion, first playing the air guitar, then piano and drums, like a conductor or magician,

conjuring magic out of the Texas air.

"The role of the producer is to pull the best out of the artist, the arrangement, the musicians," he said.

Ebert has been nominated for a Grammy eight times and won the Best Southern, Country, or Bluegrass Gospel Album category in 2002 for his work on the gospel album "We Called Him Mr. Gospel Music: The James Blackwood Tribute Album."

Artists from all over come to The Cabin from all over to see if Ebert can cook up a little of his magic. What the musicians find is that they get more than the maestro's musical genius. He makes sure they get a great meal too.

"I love to cook, I'm a foodie for sure," Ebert says. "When I get an artist here, I tell them we're going to work five hours a day in the studio max. You don't want to overdo it. And then, I'm

gonna feed them."

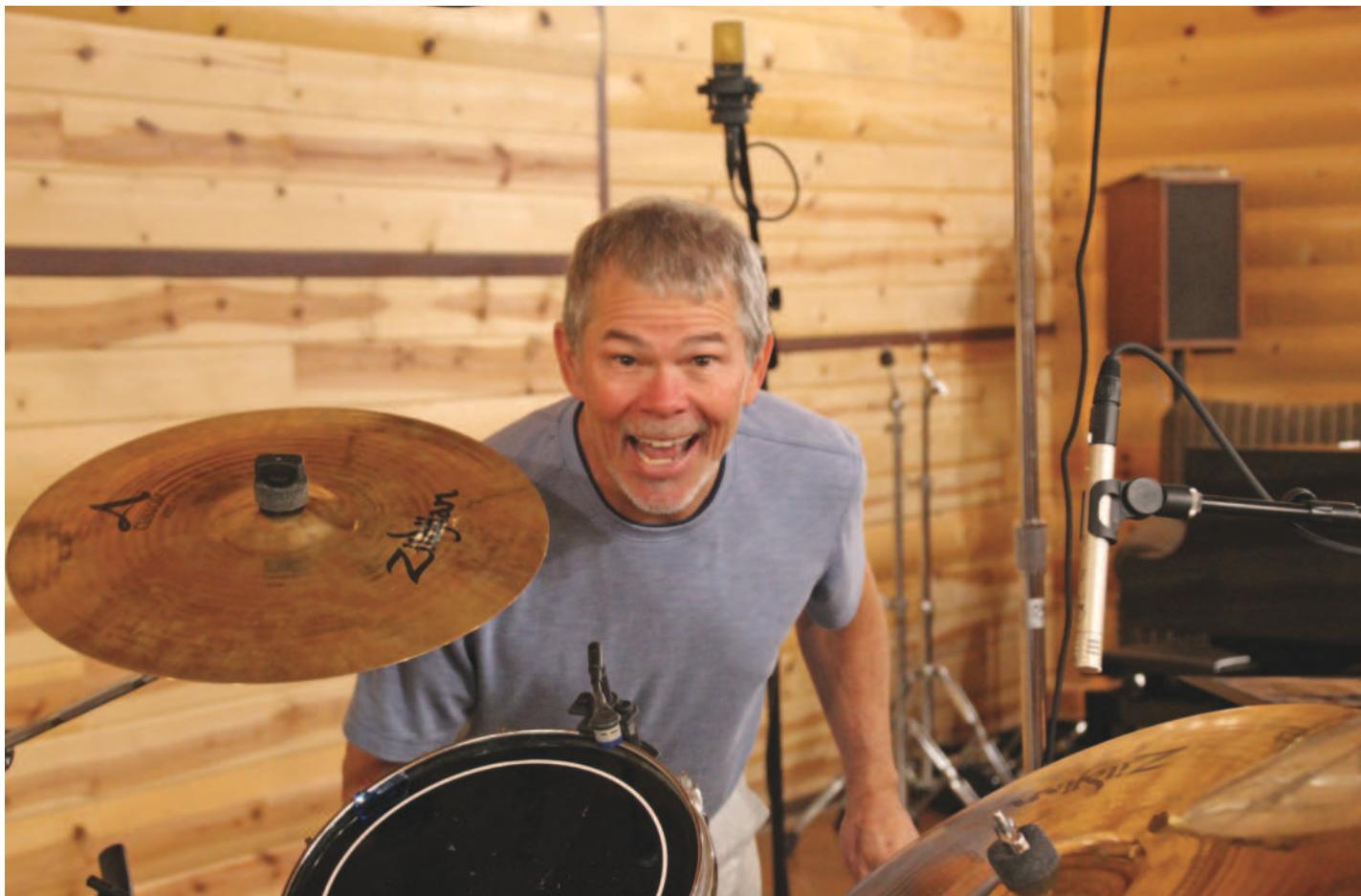
When asked what his favorite dish is to prepare, he didn't skip a beat: "Tilapia Vistoso. It's a dish I created myself." He proudly declares it as "a colorful dish of premium tilapia filets saavored with select vegetables in a vibrant tomato sauce ... a one of a kind delicioso!"

Ebert has had a lifelong love affair with music, starting when he was 12, and it has soaked into his soul ever since.

"I was playing guitar when I was young, 12 or 14," he said. "By the time I was 16, I was engineering music, and at 18 I was producing."

He learned it all by teaching himself.

By the late 1980s, Ebert was part of his own band, Joker. Glam metal bands dominated the decade until the raw sound of the Pacific Northwest began



Ebert has had a lifelong love affair with music, starting when he was 12, and it has soaked into his soul ever since.

PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY



Ebert is a multi-instrumentalist, playing guitar, bass, drums and piano. A grand piano sits in the corner of his studio.

PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

“To be able to harness those sounds and create something amazing, that’s what I love the most.” – Chuck Ebert

spilling out of Seattle’s dingy music halls. By the 1990s, grunge was taking over the airwaves and the record stores.

Ebert knew it was time to find a new path for his music career, and fast.

How about as a producer?

“I play guitar, bass, piano, some drums,” said Ebert. “I love it all.” It seemed maestro suited him just fine.

“To be able to harness those sounds and create something amazing, that’s what I love the most.”

On the rare occasions that he does get a breather, Ebert can be spotted around town tracking great eats.

“La Choza (in Lakeside) is my favorite,” he said. “They have the best chile relleno.”

Or he kicks up his heels at home — a log cabin built from the original Willie Nelson Texas Roadhouse — with his wife of 19 years, Katy Gaby, and their two yorkies, Tinker and Bunny. He’ll be whipping something up in his kitchen, holding a glass of his favorite local wine by Cooper and Thief, or a lowball of his new Buffalo Chip whiskey.

“It’s our slice of paradise out here,” said Ebert. “I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”



The studio's ceiling and walls are lined with light-colored logs, and the floors are solid wood. Even the electrical outlets are wooden.

PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY



Palette for life

Ron Fleming finds joy in artful creations

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

A stunning hand-carved wooden bed frame that nearly touches the ceiling and a matching marble-topped dresser are the first things a guest will see inside Ron Fleming's home at Legacy Oaks of Azle.

Next to Fleming's bed sits his favorite piece: "Dragon Dance," a wooden bowl he carved himself.

"Those are happy dragons," Fleming said. "That piece took about 400 hours to make."

His room is an homage to a prolific career rooted in the arts.

Illustrations adorn the walls, including one of his favorite pieces called "Budderfly," a whimsical illustration of a Budweiser bottle blossom seducing an approaching butterfly.

"Having art around me gives me comfort," he said.

On the wall opposite the bed, in stark contrast to the turn-of-the-century antique bedroom furniture, sit an Apple computer and printer, a haven for him to create more art.

Art defines this man's life. It's all this 83-year-old ever wanted to do.

As an 8-year-old, he said he decided he wanted to be a commercial artist.

Today, he said he is happy with what he has accomplished.



Ron Fleming's Dragon Dance, bronze, is in a private collection.

PHOTO COURTESY RON FLEMING



Ron Fleming's *Fern Platter*, 48% lead crystal, is in a private collection.
PHOTO COURTESY RON FLEMING

PARTNER IN ART

The art business has been good to him. It has not only brought him professional joy, but it's where he met his wife, Patti Sue.

He and Patti Sue created a unique home from a 1940s incinerator building in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The couple called it Hearthstone.

"It took a lot of work getting all of the ashes out of that place," said Randall Fleming, the artist's son. "But once it was all done, it was amazing what they turned that place into."

The home was a studio, where their visual masterpieces were on display on the walls, on stands, everywhere you turned.

In the center of their home, on the lower floor, was a hot tub.

"We'd sit in that hot tub and talk about design," Fleming said.

The couple were both into it.

"She was an illustrator working with Dillard's on their advertising," he said.

They built a life together, traveled, and learned from one another.

Patti asked Fleming to teach her how to carve, and the pieces she created were "stunning."

"She could put so much life into a piece," Fleming said. "I told her, 'Now you can start selling and I can relax.'"

Seventeen years ago, Patti Sue passed.

BUDGING CAREER

"I was 13 when I got my first paying job," Fleming said. "I did a painting of orange trees for an orange grove operation out of South Texas."

At 14, he went to work at a print shop in Bethany, Okla-

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homa, and he credits the work with teaching him a lot.

His mother and grandfather were supportive of his creative pursuits, although his father hoped that he would become a butcher, just like he was.

"My mom and grandpa bought me supplies to work with," he said. "Whenever they brought home dry cleaning, I'd take the cardboard out of the shirts and that's what I used to draw and paint on."

In high school, Fleming was introduced to airbrushing.

"It's my favorite," he said. "Back then, they only had right-handed airbrush tools, and I was left-handed. It took a little while to get the hang of it, but when I did, oh man, I loved it."

'MY OWN BUSINESS'

As a young man, Fleming studied civil engineering. It was a good place for him to be. Combined with his artistic skills, he landed a job with Douglas Aircraft as an artist doing technical and cutaway drawings of aircrafts and parts.

"I put together a portfolio of my work, went up there and said I was interested in a job," Fleming said. "They said they didn't think they were hiring, but I told them I'd at least like to show them my work. So, I showed them what I brought and they said, 'When can you start?'"

He stayed on with the aircraft company for a number of years, up until the moment an executive made the comment that Fleming "wouldn't make it as a commercial artist."

"I said, 'If that's how you feel, give me my last check,'" he said. "Then I left and started my own business."

And, man, did he prove them wrong.

The commercial artist's business grew, servicing a five-state area around Oklahoma. Advertising, product labels, technical cutaway drawings—if a project needed his team's skills and expertise, they got it done. They became one of the most sought-after teams in commercial design.

"We knew to collaborate and there were no egos there," Fleming said. "I trusted them to do the work their way and gave them freedom to make changes."



The Flemings converted a 1940s incinerator building in Tulsa, Oklahoma into a unique home. The couple called it Hearthstone.

PHOTO COURTESY RON FLEMING



Hearthstone was the perfect space to display their artwork. PHOTO COURTESY RON FLEMING

When their business grew, soon agents in New York and San Francisco were finding even more work for the company.

"It was fast-paced," Fleming said. "I was completing a project a week, about 50 a year myself."

When he left the corporate world behind, Fleming sought a new creative outlet, and that is when he found woodturning.

Most often, woodturning is a utilitarian craft — creating bowls or balusters or chair legs. Fleming went well

beyond that, creating stunning fine art pieces from a chunk of wood.

"I received an award from the American Association of Woodturners for introducing art and design into woodturning," said Fleming.

His creations have become renowned, with some being displayed at the Smithsonian, and earning him a trip to the White House.

"Not many artists get that recognition," said Fleming. "I didn't think I'd even achieve the status of 'artist' in my lifetime."



Hollywood hits home for Charlie Cloud

Depiction of life inside Fort Worth orphanage resonates with this former lawman

BY CAITLYN OXFORD

Going barefoot was a way of life growing up in the mid-1960s for Charlie Cloud.

Cloud said that inside the Masonic Home Orphanage in Fort Worth, "We went barefoot every summer."

The kids didn't know any better.

They didn't know they were poor.

But they were poor together, and that was enough.

"We didn't have a lot, but we had what we needed," he said.

This month "12 Mighty Orphans" was released in theaters across the United States. The movie, staring Luke Wilson, Martin Sheen and Robert Duvall, tells the story of a successful and inspirational football team during the Great Depression at the Masonic Home Orphanage and School District.

"There are certain things in the movie that as I watched it that really brought things home. It made me reminisce and think about things that I really hadn't thought about before," Cloud said. "In one of the parts of the movie, Rusty Russell, played by Luke

FACING PAGE

COMING HOME: Former Granbury law enforcement officer, Charlie Cloud, recalled his days at the Masonic Home Orphanage and School this week. Cloud's former home helped inspire the story told on the big screen in the new movie "12 Mighty Orphans."

PHOTO BY RUSSELL HUFFMAN

Wilson, is talking to Doc Hall, played by Martin Sheen, and all the boys are all standing there barefoot. Rusty says, 'Where are their shoes?' and Doc says, 'Well, we have two seasons here. We have shoe season and no shoe season.'

That moment resonated with him. It was true of his 11 years in the orphanage.

TOUGH DECISION

The circumstances that landed the former Hood County Sheriff's deputy and Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) agent in the orphanage were not unique. It was a common thread of desperation — of finding a way out of poverty — for many of the boys and girls in the home.

"My mom making the decision to put us in the home was a tough decision to make," he said, "but at the same time it was the best thing in the world that could have happened to the three of us."

Cloud said that when his mom was pregnant with him, his father abandoned the family. It was then up to his single mother to take care of him and his two brothers.

"She was pretty overwhelmed. She had three boys and no help," Cloud said. "We came from a family of Masons, and my uncle was a graduate from the Masonic Orphanage school."

Cloud's uncle and grandfather recommended that his mother consider placing the three boys in the Masonic

Home, so she did what she had to do. Cloud was 6, and his older brothers, Frank and Dan, were 9 and 10 when they entered the orphanage. Each of them went on to graduate from the Masonic Home.

It was a good experience for Cloud and his brothers. He calls his stay at the home a life-changing opportunity, and he and his brothers do not blame their mom for her decision.

"The home helped make good, productive and value-driven citizens," he said. "I'm sure my mom felt horrible about dropping us off there, but she did the right thing."

After he graduated in 1977, Cloud went to college and then spent time working at the home.

"My high school football coach, Coach Walker, called me and asked if I'd be interested in working at the home. They flew me out there from El Paso and I interviewed for a job as the dean of boys. They hired me."

FRUITFUL EXPERIENCE

Cloud was the youngest Dean of Boys the home ever had, at 19 years old. He worked at the home for several years before leaving to go to work for the Hood County Sheriff's Office.

"I started out in the jail," Cloud said. He and his brother Frank were working together there. Several months later, Frank made the jump to street patrol, and Cloud soon followed.

He said he enjoyed his time in the sheriff's department, moving on to the district attorney's office as an investigator for several years. Eventually he ended up going to work for the TABC's state police. He stayed with TABC for 26 years, retiring in 2012 with the rank of major.

Cloud credits his time at the orphanage for his moral compass, the strength of his faith and an indefatigable work ethic.

"We had basically 200 brothers and sisters," he said. "Was it all cake and ice cream? Absolutely not. There was adversity just like anywhere, but the home instilled in you a value system. You were in church on Sunday morning, and you had chores to do. Everyone had a place and a job. You had to be at certain places on time, you had to make good grades and you had to keep your dormitory clean."



NOW A MASON, TOO: A graduate of the Masonic Home, Charlie Cloud became a Mason himself and is proud of his Masonic ring.

PHOTO BY RUSSELL HUFFMAN

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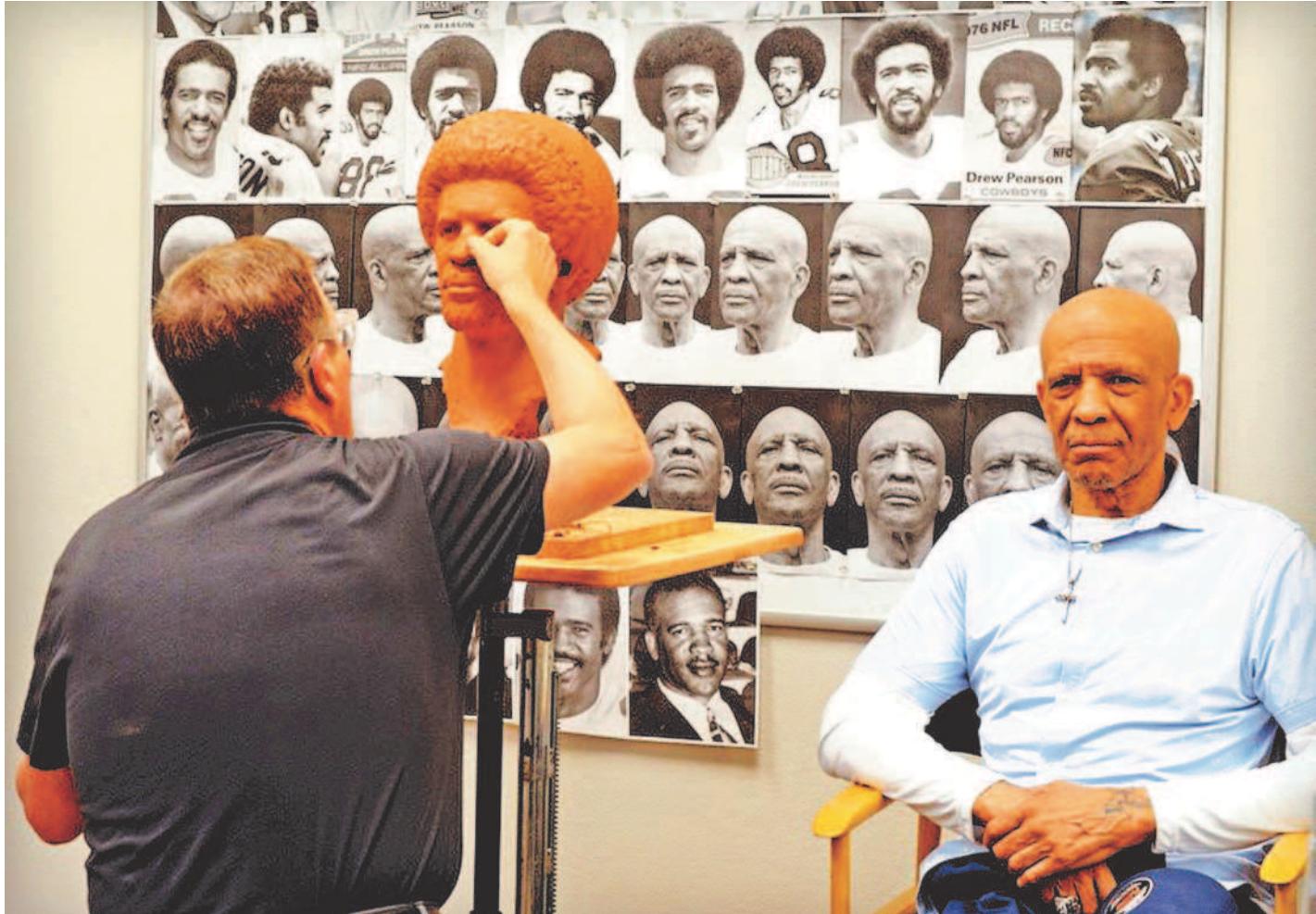
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Scott Myers works on a bust of Drew Pearson for his bust in the Hall of Fame.

PHOTOS COURTESY SCOTT MYERS

Myers honored to create Pearson Hall of Fame bust

BY ASHLEY INGE

Local veterinarian Scott Myers is diligently working on sculpting a bust of former Dallas Cowboys wide receiver, Drew Pearson, for his induction into the 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, this fall.

Pearson was known as "Mr. Clutch" from several of his catches in game-winning situations, most notably his "Hail Mary" reception from quarterback Roger Staubach that sealed the victory over the Vikings in a 1975 playoff game. It is known as one of the most famous plays in NFL history.

Myers, 62, has been sculpting busts

for the NFL Hall of Fame since 2003.

Pearson is the sixth member of the Dallas Cowboys' organization Myers has sculpted. The others were Bob Hayes, Charles Haley, Rayfield Wright and Cliff Harris, along with team's former vice president of player personnel Gil Brandt. Pearson is the 24th Hall of Famer Myers has sculpted at the request of the Hall of Fame.

"The concept is they need to look like when they played. You don't do them as they are today," Myers said. "Then, you want to make sure that the player's involved and they pick where in their

career they would like to be depicted or look. He (Drew) got to pick and he wanted to be 1975-1976."

Myers uses pieces from several photos of the players throughout the years to get a "likeness" in order to sculpt an exact replica of the person for the bust.

"It's a process and there's a lot of anatomy, so we do our best through photographs to go back in time and you turn this older person into a younger person," he said. "I get a likeness as an older person, and then I gently go back in time, so that they can become 30."

Each player also gets to choose their

expression on the bust, whether it's happy, angry or intense. Pearson told Myers he wanted to be "serious and focused."

"The expression's a big deal," Myers said. "The way you just put a little bit of change in the mouth, a little bit of change around the eyes, a little bit of a wrinkle can make a world of difference."

He said it takes him about six to eight weeks, working 30-36 hours a week to complete one bust.

"I sculpt the piece here and make the mold in Texas," Myers said. "We ship the mold to Utah, the piece is cast in Utah, then the piece has the color patina put on all at the same time, so all the heads will match. Those heads are photographed, then they're shipped to Canton, Ohio, and then they're going to ship that head from Canton back to Dallas when he gets his day at AT&T Stadium."

Myers said when he was in school, he was known as the "class artist." His junior high school art teacher took him to art galleries, where he developed an interest in sculpting and painting. She told him to get a job and do his art on the side, so Myers decided to attend Texas A&M University and earned a doctorate in veterinary medicine. He sold his art to pay his way through college.

"Finally, I got to a point I said, 'I really want to become a sculptor.' I found people that I wanted to take instruction from and so forth. Well, one of the sculptors that I really admired, he had a student, and his student was just beginning to do some work for the Pro Football Hall of Fame," he said. "I studied with the student for 12 years, and then I was given an audition. Three years later, another audition. And then after that, it went from there to being steady work."

There are two other artists who sculpt busts for the Hall of Fame, but they both sculpt full time. Myers has been a full-time veterinarian at the Pet Hospital of Granbury since 1990.

He said he enjoys sculpting for the Hall of Fame and being given an assignment with a deadline.

"I like being part of history," Myers

said. "Drew Pearson is a very, very well-known iconic Dallas Cowboy, and his story is well known of how long it's taken him to get into the Hall of Fame. He should have gotten in, in my opinion, years ago. I watched him as a kid, on December 28, 1975. I watched him catch the ball that made him famous that was called the Hail Mary. I never in my wildest imagination thought that when his day came to go in the Hall of Fame, number one, he would take so long and number two, I would be doing his head which is really kind of a neat thing."

Drew Pearson's bust is currently unfinished and will be unveiled during a home Cowboy game this fall.

"He (Drew) was very easy to work



with," Myers added. "I'm excited for him. He's well deserved and way past due."

The Pro Football Hall of Fame's Class of 2021 will be enshrined Sunday, Aug. 8, 2021, in Canton, Ohio.

The Pro Football Hall of Fame will also be holding its enshrinement ceremony for the Class of 2020, which was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021.



Scott Myers, left, with Drew Pearson and the completed bust. PHOTO COURTESY SCOTT MYERS

Mr. Whiskers will get you hooked on catfish

BY RUSSELL HUFFMAN

If you want to land more catfish, you need to bait your treble hook with Mr. Whiskers bait.

That is a bold statement when it comes to fishing, but the proof is in the pudding. In this case, the evidence is in a container of goop that smells like something you forgot and left in the back of your fridge for six months.

"I've got another one," Granbury's Mike Whitlock said. "How many do you have?"

Whitlock, who represents the third generation of Mr. Whiskers, is tossing a little jab at his grandfather, Tom, who founded the company.

"He's not very big," Tom said with a bit of a jab of his own.

The elder Whitlock barely has little time to laugh at his joke before there is a tug on his line, and he lands a fish too.

While size may matter when it comes to the day's bragging rights, the Whitlock family will tell you right up front, "we are about catching catfish to put in the cooler and into the fryer – it's not about the size of the fish."

It was Tom, 82, who, after "retiring" from a career selling building supplies and appliances, came up with the Mr. Whiskers Cheese Catfish Punch Bait for himself and friends to catch more catfish in 1984. Things started slowly at first, but when people began noticing Tom and his buddies were always on the fish, they began to take notice.

"I gave some away to family and friends," Tom said. "The word of mouth began to get around about it, and we started thinking we should make and sell it."

SECRET TO THE RECIPE

The word-of-mouth business has grown with Mr. Whiskers appearing



Mr. Whiskers is a punch bait, meaning that you don't have to touch the bait to put it on your hook.

PHOTO BY RUSSELL HUFFMAN

on bait shop shelves throughout Texas, Oklahoma, and as far away as Nebraska. Area Walmart stores have also carried the bait, but a vendor passed away and COVID has delayed its return.

The "secret recipe" has two admitted ingredients — cheese, and the plant Bulrush, more commonly known as "Cattails."

In addition to the stinky ingredients, it is the fibers the bait contains that make it so popular among fishermen. Those fibers give the bait the ability to stay on a hook until a catfish comes along and slurps it up.

The plant is harvested before the first freeze (when the cattail is still hard). Over time a network of "growers" has been established to gather the



plants. There's even a little cattail for fishing trips bartering that takes place now and then.

Judging by the smell, mixing up Mr. Whiskers bait is a job best done upwind.

The idea of getting such a smell on yourself is unappealing, and the good news with Mr. Whiskers being a "punch bait," is that you do not have to submerge your digits to bait your hook. Punch bait is designed to use a stick (or another object) to push the treble hook into bait. A slight twist of

the wrist and the bait wraps itself onto the hook and its barbs.

Catfish are bottom feeders, and they are attracted to several kinds of bait, including chicken livers, shrimp, and even hotdogs — but those baits also come with the problem of keeping them on a hook.

HAVING A GOOD TIME

Early one Tuesday morning, all three generations of Mr. Whiskers were on Lake Granbury to demonstrate the potency of their bait.

While Tom may have taught Wendall and had a hand in teaching Mike how to fish, all three have their methods of presenting their bait.

Tom moves his bait along the bottom in a side-to-side manner. Wendall is more up and down with his approach, and Mike likes to let his bait lie still a little bit and then pop it around to settle again. The bait floats and is held down near the bottom with an egg or barrel weight.

All three methods proved efficient



FISHING FAMILY: Wendall, Tom and Mike Whitlock have a wealth of guiding experience.

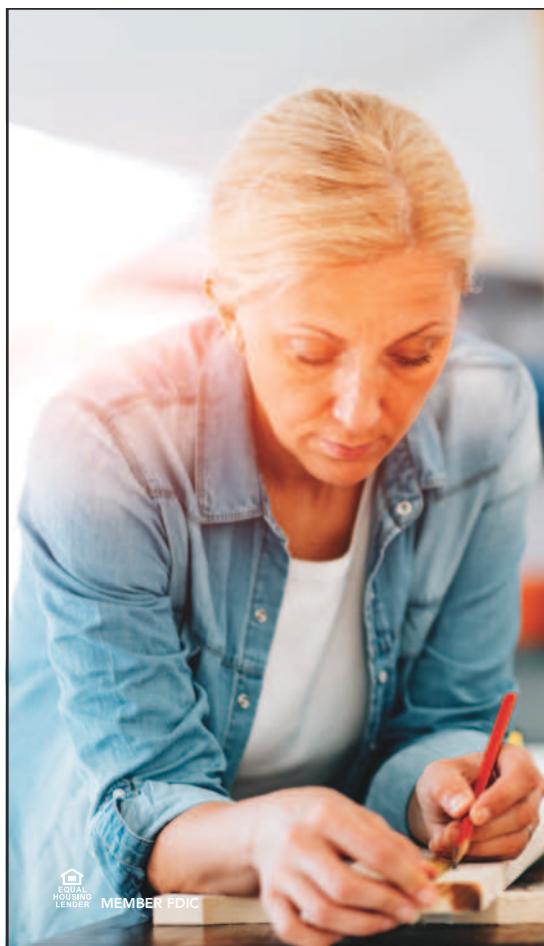
PHOTO BY RUSSELL HUFFMAN

in getting fish aboard one of the three boats the men use as part of their guide service. They take clients on Lake Granbury, Squaw Creek and other area lakes. Squaw Creek is a favorite of the Mr. Whiskers clan. Together the men

produced an estimated 10,000 fish for their customers in a single year.

The one common thread to their success: Mr. Whiskers bait.

"That's all we use," Mike said. "People will bring their bait at times, and it's



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not very long before they are switching back to Mr. Whiskers."

The bait may be the key to catching more fish, but a little experience doesn't hurt.

When Wendall left his trucking job, it was a case of Dad was getting to do more fishing than he was, and the catfish bait business was taking off.

"There's a blue," Wendall said. At the end of his line, the catfish was in 18 feet of water and impossible to see in the murky water.

"Different kinds of catfish approach a bait in different ways," Wendall said as he perfectly balanced his pole on his forefinger. "You can see if they are tugging straight down or side to side."

The trio of anglers hauled in 20 fish in 45 minutes. It does not take much to conclude Mr. Whiskers is the key to their success.

At one point, all three men were hooked up before Tom "early released his fish," complete with a theme song of chuckles from his offspring.

The mood is light, and that is how the Whitlock family runs its guide service. No matter how many fish you catch, you will have a good time.



A WHOPPER: Tom Whitlock, founder of the Mr. Whiskers line of catfish bait, ribs a fellow angler about the size of the catfish in Lake Granbury.

PHOTO BY RUSSELL HUFFMAN

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Mr. Whiskers and the Whitlock guiding services go to mrwhiskerscatfishbait.com or mrwhiskerscatfishbait@charter.net.

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The health benefits of oregano oil



BY JESSICA BRACE, D.C., C.C.S.P.

Oregano is a fragrant herb that's best known as an ingredient in Italian food.

However, it can also be concentrated into an essential oil that's loaded with antioxidants and powerful compounds that have proven health benefits.

Oregano oil is the extract and, although it's not as strong as the essential oil, it appears to be useful both when consumed or applied to the skin. Essential oils, on the other hand, are not meant to be consumed.

What is oregano oil?

Botanically known as *Origanum vulgare*, oregano is a flowering plant from the same family as mint. It's often used as an herb to flavor food. Although it's native to Europe, it now grows all over the world. Oregano has been popular ever since the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations used it for medicinal purposes.

The herb has also been used for centuries as a culinary spice. Oregano essential oil is made by air-drying the leaves and shoots of the plant. Once they're dried, the oil is extracted and concentrated by steam distillation. Oregano essential oil can be mixed with a carrier oil and applied topically.

Oregano oil extract, on the other hand, can be produced via several ex-



traction methods using compounds like carbon dioxide or alcohol. It's widely available as a supplement and can often be found in pill or capsule form. Oregano contains compounds called phenols, terpenes, and terpenoids. They have powerful antioxidant properties and are responsible for its fragrance:

Carvacrol. The most abundant phenol in oregano has been shown to stop the growth of several different types of bacteria.

Thymol. This natural antifungal can also support the immune system and protect against toxins.

Rosmarinic acid. This powerful antioxidant helps protect against damage caused by free radicals.

The benefits for using Oregano are:

I. Natural antibiotic

The *Staphylococcus aureus* bacterium is one of the most common causes of infection, resulting in ailments like food poisoning and skin infections.

One particular study looked at whether oregano essential oil improved the survival of 14 mice infected with *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Research has also shown that oregano essential oil may be effective against some potentially antibiotic-resistant bacteria. This includes *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *E. coli*, both of which are common causes of urinary and respiratory tract infections.

2. May help lower cholesterol

Studies have shown that oregano oil may help lower cholesterol. In one study, 48 people with mildly high cholesterol were given diet and lifestyle advice to help lower their cholesterol. Thirty-two participants were also given 0.85 ounces (25 mL) of oregano oil extract after each meal.

3. Powerful antioxidant

Antioxidants help protect the body from damage caused by free radicals. It's thought that free radical damage plays a role in aging and the development of some diseases, such as cancer

and heart disease. Free radicals are everywhere and a natural product of metabolism. However, they can build up in the body through exposure to environmental factors, such as cigarette smoke and air pollutants.

One older test-tube study compared the antioxidant content of 39 commonly used herbs and found that oregano had the highest concentration of antioxidants. It found that oregano contained 3-30 times the levels of antioxidants in the other herbs studied, which included thyme, marjoram, and St. John's wort.

Gram per gram, oregano also has 42 times the antioxidant level of apples and 4 times that of blueberries. This is thought to be mostly due to its rosmarinic acid content. Because oregano oil extract is very concentrated, you need much less oregano oil to reap the same antioxidant benefits as you would from fresh oregano.

4. Could help treat yeast infections

Yeast is a type of fungus. It can be harmless, but overgrowth can result in gut problems and infections, such as thrush. The most well-known yeast is *Candida*, which is the most common cause of yeast infections worldwide.

In test-tube studies, oregano essential oil has been found to be effective against five different types of *Candida*, such as those that cause infections in the mouth and vagina. In fact, it was more effective than any other essential oil tested.

Test-tube studies have also found that carvacrol, one of the main compounds of oregano oil, is very effective against oral *Candida*. High levels of the yeast *Candida* have also been associated with some gut conditions, such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

How to use oregano oil

Oregano oil extract is widely available in capsule and tablet form. It can be bought from Brace Chiropractic and Wellness Center, or at your local health food store. Dr. Brace currently carries the Young Living brand.

Oregano is a "hot" and should be diluted with a carrier oil when applied to the skin and taken in a capsule with plenty of water. There's no standard effective dose of oregano essential oil. However, it's often mixed with around 1 teaspoon (5 mL) of olive oil per drop of oregano essential oil and applied directly to the skin.

If you're interested in taking oregano oil extract but currently taking prescription medications, make sure to consult your healthcare provider before adding it to your regimen. In addition, oregano oil extract is not generally recommended for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.



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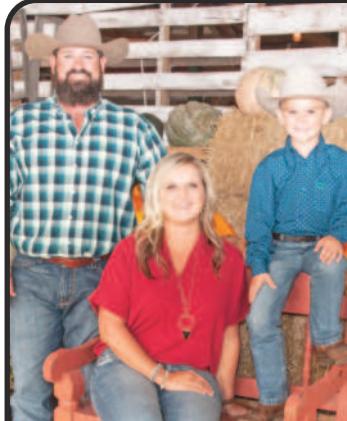
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