SKY'S THE LIMIT

The past, present, and forecast of Chief Meteorologist Travis Meyer

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FEATURE: It was the beginning of an idea, the formation of a ministry. Community Spirit magazine published its first issue seven years ago with the familiar face of one of Oklahoma’s most beloved meteorologists, Travis Meyer, on the cover. Here we are, seven years later, revisiting an old friend at his farm and catching up on lost time.
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Campbell is a bump in the road. It’s a small corner of earth in Kansas where farmers work before sun up and stop after harvest. Visitors were rare. You spent hours alone, listening to the breeze, smelling life in the air, and surrounded by God’s creation.

It’s the place Travis Meyer fell in love with the weather. It’s the birthplace of his passion.

“The weather was what I watched all day long, sitting on the tractor, moving up and down the aisles,” said Travis, Chief Meteorologist at News Channel 6 and forecasting veteran.

We sat on a stone bench on his ranch, the weather in the low 70’s, the trees swaying, the birds yakking about the good ole days, and a few of his dogs antsy for attention. He leaned against a tree, comfortable in his cowboy boots and jeans, a man at home with the emotional tides of Mother Nature.

“I love the weather. It’s always made me feel closer to God,” he said.

In Campbell, the business of weather was life or death. The rain determined food supply. The winds determined survival. A hailstorm felt like the wrath of God. And in the center of this wrestling match between the farmer and the elements, his future was sown.

“There were lots of things given and taken away because of the weather, because of the crops. If a bad storm hit, I knew I was not getting anything for Christmas,” Travis said. “I knew not to expect much. If I got something, I was very grateful.”

His mother worked as a schoolteacher, trying to bring in a steady income. And they also raised chickens and sold eggs in town, a trade agreement—eggs for groceries.

“It was a hard life. You worked all the time. The only time you got a break was Sunday morning,” Travis said, remembering his mother’s frustration over being tardy every church service because they had to feed the animals first. The Meyers always had seats on the front row.

“The weather was such an important part of your life. A drop of rain was a gift from God,” he said.

It was difficult. But not necessarily bad. Travis spent his days in the playground of God, watching the clouds, listening to the song of creatures unknown, finding peace in the midst of the storms.

“I feel more alive when I’m close to nature. I feel close to God that way,” he said, sitting under the shade tree, the wind listing from side to side at the sound of his voice.

It was his mother who first encouraged him to seek a college education and go into meteorology. As he explained, his father was the constant, his mother was the encourager.

“Take a chance. If it doesn’t work, you can always come back and work for us,” she told him. The thought of all that toiling labor kept him diligent through chemistry and physics and biology and the cosmic world of weather.

Within a year of graduation, Travis began his career at KTUL-Channel 8, leaving Kansas to begin his new career in Oklahoma as the man people seek in crisis. When the clouds darken, when the rumbling thunderstorms move in like an unstoppable marching band, he became the face of solidarity, the one talking eastern Oklahomans through what we know as severe weather season.

Beginning his career under Don Woods and his infamous car-
toon pal Gusty, Travis changed positions two years ago, leaving KTUL after 23 years to work with Chief Meteorologist Jim Giles at KOTV Channel 6.

“A lot of friends couldn’t believe I up and left. But I love 6. Love that it’s owned by a local company,” Travis said. “If I’m living here, that’s who I want to work for. To know they are true blue Oklahomans, to know the money stays in the state.”

Jim Giles and Travis had always been friends, an oddity being competition, but they were. They talked frequently, about their kids and their cattle and their love for weather.

“These have been the best two years of my career,” Travis said. “I thought I knew quite a bit because of my experience. But Jim knew more. He’d been through the Vietnam War, taught at a university, and worked for the National Weather Service. I was always drilling him for information.”

When Jim Giles died last winter, Travis said it was a difficult time for the station, a difficult time for Tulsa, and a hard loss to accept.

“It took the station by shock. We knew he was sick but...you don’t expect people like that to retire and die. I was stunned,” he said.

But what does live on is the memory Giles left behind of a man of integrity, a knowledgeable and life-saving meteorologist, and one last evening that was nearly perfect.

“I knew he was extremely sick. But he put on his best face, as he always did. Gentleman Jim—as I call him,” said Travis, remembering the lighting ceremony during this last year’s Rhema Bible College Christmas display. Jim Giles made his last public appearance. His family was there. His grandkids were there. The weather was a stunning 65 degrees. The night was poised for awe. And then Jim Giles threw on the Christmas lights. Spectacular.

“It’s an evening I’ll never forget,” Travis said.

His future, like the sapphire sky over his farm and hovering just above our heads, is clear. He wakes up at 4:30 a.m. He calls in the morning forecasts to the local radio stations. He might get a wink of sleep afterward. And then he starts the day anew, spending time with his children, out the door to meet the public at weather shows and speaking luncheons, at work by 2 p.m., at home by midnight, and weather every moment in between. 🌩️
This was going to be interesting. The interview was set for a Friday afternoon, during the last workday hours where everyone begins slowing down their workweek, speeding up their weekend. Brent and Janis Sharpe had agreed to meet with me about their new book, “The Making of a Marriage,” and a provoking chapter inside.

We were going to talk about communication, what often becomes the unknown tongue inside of marriage. With them, I had witnessed it first hand.

Just shy of a year earlier I had met the Sharpes at a singles retreat where they spoke on, “Enjoying the Journey,” holding lively sessions that kept the attendees laughing while feverishly taking notes.

The Sharpes had tossed the conversation back and forth, like a game of catch well orchestrated and smoothly executed. It had been simply entertaining just watching them. Communication did not seem to be a problem. I wanted to know how they figured it out. How were they exempt from the typical confusion between sexes? What secret handshake did they know that eludes the rest of us? And if one existed, would they share?

So on this casual Friday, sitting dressed casually in jeans, relaxed in their professional yet casual office at Life Connection Church—where Brent is Co-Senior Pastor—I casually started the conversation.

The Foreign Language

Janis came home fuming. Work was terrible. Things weren’t working. She needed to vent.

Insert husband.

Brent was ready. They hadn’t been married long, and he was prepared to be that sounding board. So he sat, he listened, and then she made a statement forcing his response.

“I’m just going to quit,” she said.

Insert husband’s response.

“You can’t do that,” Brent said. They had just purchased a new vehicle. They had bills. They had responsibilities. She just needed to talk to her boss, explain her frustrations, stick it out. Quitting was not an option.

The conversation ended with tears from Janis, believing her husband didn’t care about her feelings, didn’t care she was upset, and was only thinking about the bills. And Brent was scratching his head. What he said had been completely logical.

This story they told me while laughing at their early reactions to each other in marriage.

Heart-to-Heart Talk
Do you and your spouse speak the same language?

TARA LYNN THOMPSON
“She was just communicating her feelings,” Brent said. She had no intentions of quitting. She just needed him to listen, to understand, and to offer sympathies. He, instead, wanted to offer help.

“Now I hear Janis talking more from her feelings and I value it. Even if it’s the most confusing thing, it must be valued,” he said. “You value first. Understanding may just have to come later.”

“Can men and women EVER speak the same language?” I asked them.

“Not as their native tongue,” Janis said. “We’ll never be fully fluent.”

“Until we have a brain transplant, we’ll never fully understand each other,” Brent said. “But we can go a long way in understanding their heart. We just speak from different perspectives.”

No Hablo Espanol

Speaking Martian when your Venutian, or vice versa, takes time, takes effort, and takes listening. And still, your dialect may be lacking.

“In our culture, we’re poor listeners,” Brent said. “We’re more interested in what WE have to say.” So we listen only partially, spending most of our thoughts not on what is being said but on how we are going to respond to it.

“It takes slowing it down,” Janis said. Much like learning a new language, the words spoken have different meanings than your native tongue.

For example, Janis said, when she says she hates something—from Brent’s behavior to eating brussel sprouts—she means it displeases her at that moment. Brent, on the other hand, uses the word rarely because it means something more severe, complete, and loathing.

Using it in conversation, therefore, would often evoke a much stronger reaction from him than she intended. Eventually, she learned his interpretation.

“Like Spanish class, that sentence means this,” Brent said.

A Good Reason

Men and women are different. No argument. So their reasons for communicating are different too. And that can create an argument.

Talking is part of the relationship for a women. “For her, that is building the relationship,” Janis said.

For men, not so much. They communicate to fix things, to solve problems, to deal with issues and resolve them. Their communication, often, has a goal, an end result. For most women, the end result is simply the action of communicating.

“We try to encourage guys to just keep listening. If she wants your input, she’ll ask for it,” Brent said.

“Men tend to solve things. Not necessarily because they want you to shut up and stop talking but because they love the people in their lives and don’t want the people they love to hurt,” Janis said.

In turn, if women can give their husbands room when he’s upset, a little space to work through their issues, not pushing them to communicate, the husband will eventually come around.

“Men tend to pull away, process it through,” Brent said.
“Men often struggle with anger because they don’t have a well developed emotional vocabulary.” Not fully understanding that what they feel is bewilderment or disrespect, confusion or hurt, even disappointment, men can react instead with anger.

“They come home from work and are mad. The wife and kids assume they are mad at them which causes them to feel hurt and shrink back,” Brent said. “If you provide openness instead of judging, it makes him feel free to speak.”

Instead of forcing him to talk about what’s bothering him, Janis recommends women try a different approach. First, give him some space and give him some time. “Then say, ‘It seems something is going on. If you want to talk about it, I’m here. Let me know what you need.’ She’s respecting the way he is handling it and not withdrawing from him,” Janis said.

“You can say, ‘I’m not judging it, I’m inquiring about it.’ Ask them, ‘I feel something is wrong, am I wrong?’” Brent said.

I Almighty

The key to the door of communication is selflessness. Instead of judgment or comparison, instead of trying to change your spouse to be more like you, the Sharps said you must get past yourself.

“It’s about getting beyond ourselves. Pulling down the great I,” Janis said.

We tend to be self-centered. Watch TV. Couples shout at each other. We value more in what we say to you and how we can impact you,” Brent said. Instead, it’s about listening, about caring, and not about who is right or wrong.

“We don’t think we have to work at it,” Janis said. “If it takes work, we think there is something terribly wrong with this relationship so we’ll just go find someone who is easy to be with.”

Instead, healthy and productive communication comes from listening and actually caring what your spouse is saying and feeling.

“We think if we criticize someone it will lead to change and it never will,” Brent said.

Different is Good

“God is absolutely convinced that in His creation there is strength in diversity,” Brent said. “Differences joining together make a whole. If you could marry someone just like you, one of you is unnecessary.”

Can men and women learn to speak each other’s language?

“I believe we can resolve this together. Our God is big enough to handle this,” Janis said.

But couples must learn the “tools” needed. They aren’t innate. They are learned.

Brent and Janis Sharpe are Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists who, since 1982, have helped thousands of couples maximize and heal their marriages and relationships. They are founders of The Life Connection Counseling Center in Tulsa. Brent and Janis travel the country sharing their experience through marriage seminars and training leadership in premarital, marriage and family counseling. They are authors of, “The Making of a Marriage,” which can be purchased at any bookstore, including online at Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. Or visit their website, www.brentandjanissharpe.com.

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a testimony of hope by Christy Phillippe

Ever since I was a little girl, I dreamed about the day I would one day get married. It would be beautiful: red roses, candles, a long, flowing dress—and, of course, a handsome groom waiting for me at the end of the aisle.

On December 6, 2003, those dreams came true.

I had met Brent Phillippe a few years earlier in the Jabez community at Asbury. We started dating and really hit it off. I’d been through many years of bad relationships, but this one seemed destined to work. For two years, we were practically inseparable, and then, finally, on a hot-air balloon ride above the Oklahoma countryside, he asked me to marry him.

Our wedding was perfect. It was Christmastime, and the candles glowed brightly as we said our vows. The next day we left for our honeymoon, and I felt like we were living a fairy tale. In a way, we were.

Shortly after we got home and started our new life together, we learned that my dad had colon cancer. His surgery and recovery were difficult on all of us. Soon other problems began cropping up and taking their toll, as well—and we began to lose the great communication we’d always had when we were dating.

Before I knew it, it seemed that our marriage had unraveled. Miscommunication and hurt feelings compounded themselves, and a year and a half after our beautiful wedding, I moved out.

The next six months were the hardest I’d ever faced in my life. The anxiety and despair were almost unbearable as Brent and I headed for divorce. Things got uglier and then uglier as we began to fight over everything through the lawyers—right down to the DVD collection.

The divorce was final on December 9, 2005—almost two years to the day after our wedding. As soon as the judge banged his gavel, I knew that it was a terrible mistake. What had happened to the vows I took—“till death do us part”? Was there any way to put the broken pieces of our marriage back together?

I approached Brent at a Christmas party a few days later to ask him to talk about what had happened. We didn’t meet in person right away, but started e-mailing each other. By Christmas we had worked our way up to phone calls. In January, we had a “first date”—and we started marriage counseling.

Our second wedding, on July 19, 2006, was completely different from the first. There was no music, no cake, no dress—and my flowers came from Wal-Mart. I couldn’t keep from crying as we renewed our vows with close friends and family gathered around us.

This time around, it’s completely different. We both know how precious God’s gifts can be—especially of each other. We’re certainly not perfect, but we are a “work in progress.” And my hope and prayer is that as we grow in our marriage, we will continue to become a beautiful example of God’s grace, forgiveness, and love.
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Jake and Cassie called it quits. Through their attorneys they divvied up the house, cars, finances, kids, pets and knick knacks. They left nearly no stone unturned. But what about the friends? Who got custody of Mary and Paul and Lisa and Ted? For Jake and Cassie, it was easy, but it is not so easy for a good majority of divorcing spouses in our day and age…or is it?

First, let’s take a look at how Jake and Cassie chose to handle not only their divorce, but their marriage. Yes, that is what we said—their marriage. The way you handle your marriage will influence the way you handle your divorce, and subsequently how you handle yourselves when attempting to continue friendships you had as a couple.

We tell our couples that the biggest way to go down the aisle of confusion and heartache is to allow your friends and relatives into your relationship. You must remember that the marital relationship is sacred, and bringing relatives and friends into your marital problems will not only cause more difficulty for you, but will, in the end, cause untold damage to your outside relationships.

Jake and Cassie went to a counselor and a pastor and did their marital work through those people. What they learned was though they were both great people, they made some poor choices prior to the marriage. They failed to clearly look at huge differences in personality, lifestyle, culture and expectations. Jake had even had an affair, and though most would think this would cause Cassie anger and unforgiveness, she took responsibility for her part. She had ignored the warnings of the premarital counselor who informed them this was a red flag and needed to be addressed to avoid a problem down the road. Jake’s father had been a cheater for years, but Cassie put the counselor off stating, “Jake doesn’t want to be anything like his dad—he would never do that.”

Fast forward to the point they decided their union was over. Cassie and Jake, with the help of their counselor and pastor, decided their primary goal was the children. They did not want to upset their friends and family any more than they already would. As they began to share the news about dissolving their marriage, they did so in a way that promoted respect of each other. They also clearly communicated they needed understanding and support for themselves and the kids and only gave need-to-know information.

Birthday parties and holidays continued where Cassie and Jake—and ultimately their new partners—participated together. Friends and relatives were always invited, and the behavior of the now divorced couple, as well as their new spouses, made friends and family comfortable and at ease. Every interaction they had made their relationship clear—they had mutual respect for each other, and together, they were a team.

So what about the friends? There was no need to split them
up because Cassie and Jake exhibited mutual respect and teamwork. Friends felt no need to “take sides.” During life changes, the first person they told was the other—this avoided gossip and the potential to learn something of the other’s life through a third party. The friends continued to be the friends and were a great support to Cassie and Jake through the divorce process and the new adventures of dating and new mates.

The way you handle your marriage and divorce will determine the outcome with friends. Though Jake and Cassie’s divorce was painful, their communication determined how others perceived the situation. Cassie made it clear that though there was no excuse for Jake’s terrible decision to cheat, she had to admit she had refused to address the issue when she was warned. Any potential villainization of Jake was diffused by Cassie’s handling of the situation.

So how do you handle it if you had a nasty split with collateral damage involving friends? If you can’t repair the damage, he could take his friends and she take hers. On a braver note, you can ask forgiveness for any discomfort you may have caused your friends, and ask for a new start. Respect any answer they give you and move forward accordingly.

There are times when nothing you do will help because of the personality of the friend. A friend that is fiercely loyal may not break out of the “hatred” mode for your ex. Continue to move forward in forgiveness for your own healing, and set boundaries with this friend not to discuss the issue further. Don’t try undoing damage that was done; simply ask forgiveness and move forward. You may find that in the end, you lose unhealthy friendships and gain rich friendships that will support you for years to come.

Kim Beair is a Licensed Professional Counselor and National Certified Counselor and the Counselor at Tulsa First Baptist Church. Together, she and Dr. Todd Clements have written the book “First Comes Love, Then What...Challenging Your Assumptions on Dating, Love & Commitment.” It will be released by Focus on the Family during the summer of 2007. She can be reached for workshops at 918.809.6953.

Todd Clements is a Psychiatrist in practice at the Amen Clinics in California. He was formerly Chief Resident of Psychiatry at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Clements has written books for Focus on the Family and those can be accessed on the internet through Tyndale Publishing.
Broken Arrow has come a long way since farmers first used it as a marketplace for crops. A century of growth has turned it into a community of world-class technology, education, sports and culture. Recognized nationally as a city that offers opportunity within a family-friendly, faith-friendly culture, *Money Magazine* named it one of its top 100 places to raise a family. And Morgan Quitno Press calls it the “Safest City in Oklahoma,” and one of the safest in the nation.

But Broken Arrow’s charm did not develop simply from the right economic circumstances. Nor did it spring forth as only a bedroom community of its sister city to the northwest. Local leaders groomed Broken Arrow to stand on its own as fertile ground for strong values with a moral compass keeping it on track.

Out of respect for its leaders, its businesses, schools and churches, *Community Spirit Magazine* is proud to honor Broken Arrow as this month’s “Community of Spirit.” This new section is designed to share some of the exciting things God is doing in building strong communities in the Tulsa Metropolitan area.

Be proud Broken Arrow. You truly are a “Community of Spirit” worthy of respect.

NOTE: Our thanks to the Broken Arrow Chamber of Commerce, the Broken Arrow Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, and Steve Anderson for their help in supplying photographic images.
People are discovering Broken Arrow. Spilling into town from all directions, they are coming to shop, eat and play. And nothing has fueled this interest more than the development of the Bass Pro Shop area. If it doesn’t already, the district will soon have something for everyone as stages two and three provide a wide array of shops and exciting restaurants. The Dixie Real Estate Corporation recently announced another large development to the west of the Bass Pro Shop area. Calling the area “The Shops of Albany Hills,” company officials describe it as an open-air shopping environment with a variety of retail, restaurant and entertainment venues that will attract local and regional shoppers.

Along with the new entertainment, Broken Arrow has been able to hold fast to its small town charm. From its quaint downtown to its new park, football stadium, gymnasium and aquatic center, Broken Arrow is a mixture of small town and big opportunity.

Rooster Days continues to be an annual favorite, bringing thousands to town to watch the parade, crown this year’s “Miss Chick,” and enjoy days full of food, music and carnival rides. This year’s featured entertainment will have a high-flying twist as the BMX stunt riders thrill the audience with jumps, flips, tricks and, hopefully, soft landings. You can buy your Mega Pass tickets to enjoy all the carnival rides at the Broken Arrow Chamber of Commerce.
Nienhuis Park Community Center is open Monday-Friday 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. and Saturday 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. and is located at 3201 N. 9th (55th and Lynn Lane) in Broken Arrow. The community center has a recreation room, two meeting rooms, an outside patio, and two gymnasiums. Citizens enjoy billiards, ping-pong, or shuffleboard in the recreation room and shoot hoops, or play a game of volleyball in one of the beautiful new gyms. Classes are also offered at Nienhuis including dance classes for all ages, pom, family kung fu, tai chi, and many exercise classes like Jazzercise. For younger children, they also offer a Tiny Tikes Tumbling class. Nienhuis does require you to obtain a City of Broken Arrow ID card available at both Community Centers in Broken Arrow.
Broken Arrow offers nearly every choice you could imagine. Enjoy the small local diners such as Burke’s Kenosha Café, The Back Creek Deli or Uncle Vinny’s Pizza. Or try the specialty restaurants such as Ted’s Café Escondido, Runts Barbecue and Bass Pro’s Islamorada Fish Company. And of course, there is a full selection of the chain restaurants such as Pei Wei, Los Cabos and Red Robin.

The Joy Class of Asbury Methodist Church knows good restaurants when they see one. Last year when the class decided to go out to eat together, Reverend Bill Mason’s wife, Jane, asked, “Where are we going to go next week?” The group laughed and then picked another restaurant. They quickly discovered that mixing Christian fellowship with calories was a pretty healthy idea. Now some 50-plus restaurants later, the group of 40 or more has continued their search for the best spots around. Restaurateurs have come to know the group, describing them as “those Christians who eat early, have lots of fun, and are good tippers.” Community Spirit’s Tom McCloud caught up with these restaurant connoisseurs at one of their favorite spots…Broken Arrow’s Stone Mill Barbecue and Steak House. Describing the place as having the best ribs in town, they admitted often breaking their restaurant search to come back to the Stone Mill. “Broken Arrow has lots of great restaurants, but this is one of our favorite,” said one pair of rib-smacking lips. During dinner, the Joy Class presented Community Spirit with a plaque of appreciation for being “Tulsa’s Premier Faith Magazine.” “It was a great honor,” said Tom. “But where are we going to go next week?”
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Broken Arrow has many churches, “One on every corner,” is the standard remark. Though that is an exaggeration, the town indeed has a strong Christian influence. Churches tend to be both “large” and “active,” making their voices heard. But most impressive is their willingness to work together. Putting down their differences, ministers from nearly every denomination have formed the Broken Arrow Ministerial Alliance. Meeting on a regular basis, they have formed the Broken Arrow Ministerial Alliance. They work together to provide spiritual leadership to the community. They hold an annual Thanksgiving interdenominational service and on a rotating basis. They also volunteer to ensure that every city council meeting opens in prayer.

Broken Arrow is proud of its schools, both public and private. Most of its residents attend Broken Arrow schools, although those living in the western portion of the city attend Union Public Schools. Both school systems are considered among the state’s best, receiving top honors in academics, sports, music and fine arts. Broken Arrow currently has 14 elementary schools, five middle schools, two intermediate schools, and one senior high school.

The city also has highly respected private Christian schools including All Saints Catholic (Pre-K through eighth grade), Summit Christian (a ministry of Broken Arrow Assembly of God serving grades K-12th) and Immanuel Christian Academy (a ministry of Immanuel Lutheran Church serving grades K-8th grade).
Broken Arrow is also proud to have Northeastern State University within its city limits. The Broken Arrow campus of NSU is the Tulsa/Broken Arrow area’s only public four-year state university offering 26 undergraduate degrees and 11 graduate programs.

In addition, Broken Arrow is the home of RHEMA Bible Training Center. The school, founded in 1974 by Kenneth W. Hagin, has brought countless students to Broken Arrow, many of whom have remained in the Tulsa area, making a huge economic and faith impact on our community. The 110-acre campus currently consists of 23 buildings, including a 96-unit student housing complex. In addition, RHEMA has training centers in 14 other countries.


Broken Arrow is known for its high school marching band. “The Pride of Broken Arrow” brought home the Grand Nationals Band Championship trophy in Indianapolis in 2006.

Photos: Douglas L. Young
As Broken Arrow Assembly officially dedicates its new building, it does so with an eye on both the past and the future. A growing congregation with a historic reputation, it is excited about the future.

On Sunday, May 6, Broken Arrow Assembly will hold their official ribbon cutting at the new location, a 40-acre site at 3500 W. New Orleans Street. Sunday service will begin at 9 a.m. at their current location, 200 E. Broadway. An hour later, church members will caravan to the new facility on New Orleans Street. Members will witness a ribbon cutting, experience the first worship service in the new church, and sign an historic document marking the day. The first full Sunday services will be held at the new location on May 13.

“God has been faithful to Broken Arrow Assembly,” says Senior Pastor Michael Goldsmith. “The new facility will provide new and expanded opportunities to fulfill the potential and vision God has for Broken Arrow Assembly. When a church is firing on all cylinders, lives are changed and God’s power is evident.”

The church began as a result of a tent meeting held in 1912. Its congregation grew and secured a building at the corner of Detroit and Main Streets in Downtown Broken Arrow. In 1917 the church was incorporated with the Secretary of State’s office. In the same year, the church affiliated with the General Council of the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri.

Since 1998 attendance has grown just over 125 percent. The church’s two Sunday morning services combined consistently average between 1,150 and 1,350 people. The church has eight full-time ministers and a combined staff of almost 75. Broken Arrow Assembly has more than 75 ministries in operation and supports both home and foreign missionaries.

Broken Arrow Assembly operates an Oklahoma state licensed childcare facility (Small World Learning Center), and an Oklahoma state recognized K-12 school (Summit Christian Academy). Summit Christian Academy is the first A.C.T.S. (Association of Christian Teachers and Schools) Christian accredited school in Oklahoma. The instructional staffs of Small World and Summit Christian are Oklahoma State certified.

Broken Arrow Assembly has been meeting at its primary facility at 200 East Broadway in downtown Broken Arrow. The church met for almost 90 years just two blocks east at 305 North Main Street. During these years Broken Arrow Assembly became known as a cornerstone of the Broken Arrow community.

In 2005, Broken Arrow Assembly members held the groundbreaking ceremony for their new 65,000 square-foot facility on the 40-acre site on New Orleans Street. Phase One of the construction will seat 1,400 people and includes a worship center, children’s and nursery areas and Christian education areas.

Five years after purchasing the property, newly elected Senior Pastor Michael Goldsmith challenged the congregation to trust God and retire the $400,000 debt on the property. Through an amazing series of events, the congregation responded with enthusiasm, giving far above their regular tithes and offerings. It was clear the congregation was ready for this move.

The finishing touches are now being placed on the building as the members anxiously await this monumental day.
Michael Goldsmith
Pastor, Broken Arrow Assembly of God

Since Goldsmith came to Broken Arrow Assembly in 1998, attendance has grown by more than 80 percent. Writing is a passion with Michael Goldsmith. His non-published works have been circulated in a number of circles. In 2002, one of his papers was selected to be included in the curriculum in 151 Bible schools in seven countries; Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Moldova, Turkey, Israel, and China.

Michael Goldsmith is a published author, writing a chapter in “Living Like Jesus,” edited by Ken Horton and James Davis, published by Onward Books. Goldsmith’s “Living at the Speed of Blur,” is a contemporary look at the subject of maintaining focus in ministry.
During the last seven years, Community Spirit has been blessed with the support of many ministries, churches, businesses and schools in Broken Arrow. We are honored to count them as friends and each are worthy of honor.

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Clair McKean is no stranger to danger.

In the sixth grade, he broke the top two vertebra in his neck when he dove into a swimming pool. Though saddled with a neck brace for the summer, he escaped paralysis.

Throughout college, he drove multiple hundreds of miles back and forth from his home in Pennsylvania to Arkansas to attend a Christian school, yet escaped accidents.

In his early 20s, he fought in Vietnam. Though he escaped injury, the Air Force cargo jet bringing him home barely missed crashing into the Saigon harbor on take off. Its cargo had been incorrectly loaded. Nevertheless, he arrived home safely.

So, in early 2004, when told he had a very aggressive cancer which had already invaded his prostate “90 percent on the left and 30 percent on the right,” and that “only complete surgery will save your life,” his first response wasn’t panic, but thoughtful.

After all, he had no symptoms of cancer. He’d only gone in for a routine physical. His PSA score had only risen slightly. And now the biopsy was showing cancer. Was “castration,” as the physician bluntly put it, the only option?

“If I do have cancer, and if it’s as aggressive as you say, what would be your procedure?” McKean asked.

The physician explained that McKean would be given a monthly shot of Lupron for three months to reduce the size of his prostate and then he’d undergo surgery.

After some additional questioning, McKeen requested a second opinion and asked the doctor if he could recommend anyone. The physician told him anyone he recommended would agree with him, and that if McKean wanted a second opinion, he needed to find someone himself.

So, McKean took his first Lupron shot and left the office with his wife Jara. At the time, he was a high school principal in Texas living with his family, which included six sons and one daughter. His youngest son was 11 years old.

On the way home, their conversation mirrored the conviction of their faith in God. McKeen remembers telling his wife, “This has to be in God’s hands. I don’t know where He’ll take us. It will either be back to good health, or He’ll take me home to heaven, but, either way, we need to make the most of every moment. We need to do the best we can...
and use every chance to reach out.” His wife agreed.

A short while later, they drove to Coweta, Oklahoma, to visit Jara’s folks. While there, they shared the diagnosis and stated they were going to seek a second opinion. Jara’s folks suggested Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) in Tulsa. They’d heard good things about it from people they knew but didn’t know the phone number. Just as McKean and his family were pulling on their coats to get into the car for the drive back to Texas, a CTCA commercial began airing on the television. They wrote down the number and headed home.

At 10:30 p.m., back in Texas, they called and talked to an oncology information specialist. In a few short hours, she had verified McKean’s insurance, made travel arrangements for him and his wife to CTCA’s Midwestern Regional Medical Center in Chicago (where he’d have to have treatment due to insurance restrictions) and begun scheduling tests and appointments.

“What a treat it was to arrive at CTCA where their holistic approach meant every area of my life was cared for,” McKean recalled, choking back tears at the memory. “By the time we finished visiting with other patients in the hospital, all of whom were so satisfied, we were convinced this was the place to be.”

McKean learned the original diagnosis had been right, but that he had other options for treatment. From March through May 2004, he first underwent external-beam radiation to reduce his prostate and contain the cancer and then had a surgically implanted radiation procedure, called brachytherapy, to kill the cancer.

Due to the time he’d lost from work as a result of knee surgery and the cancer treatment, McKean decided it was time to close out his 35-year career in education. He and his wife, who he calls his ‘inspiration,’ had always talked about retiring in Oklahoma to be near her folks. So they packed up and moved to Tulsa. Today, both he and his daughter work at CTCA, she in Marketing, and he in Transportation.

“I’m doing well,” he said. “I have all my follow-up treatment here. And it’s a joy for me to work here, helping people who come to CTCA, hearing what they say, relating to them because of my similar experience. I love what we do at this organization.”

He continued, “I told my children when I shared my cancer diagnosis with them, ‘I’m not through working with you, so we’re going to trust God with whatever He decides to do.’ Even though life is a vapor we mustn’t take for granted, He must have decided I wasn’t through working with them either. So, I still get the opportunity to be effective in this life, not because of my goodness, but because of His purpose.”

I still get the opportunity to be effective in this life, not because of my goodness, but because of His purpose.
Throughout history there are names of friends who are linked forever: David and Jonathan, Lucy and Ethyl, Stephanie and Lili. Stephanie and Lili? Who are they? They are two Tulsa senior citizens who have maintained a wonderful friendship throughout their lives.

Lili Grubb Anderson and Stephanie Hewett Jackson met in Mrs. Rutledge’s Kindergarten Class at Holland Hall in 1948. Their first memories of each other are on the school playground riding the merry-go-round and climbing the jungle gym. As they rode round and round on the carousel, how could they know that this circular path was symbolic of their future never-ending friendship?

During grade school at Holland Hall (HH), their friendship blossomed. Classes were small at HH so Lili and Stephanie were always in the same room. They were also together on the athletic field. There were two athletic teams for girls at HH and Lili and Stephanie, by luck of the draw, were both on the same team, the Sakawas. It would have been very hard for their classmates to imagine Stephanie and Lili on opposing teams.

Many of their memories of grade school are centered on their teachers. There was Mr. Love, their fifth grade teacher, who was named appropriately since all the girls had crushes on him, and Mr. Hitchcock, the sixth grade teacher, who kept the children’s attention by throwing chalk in their direction.

Both girls were born in the same hospital with the same doctor delivering them. They were also both children of older parents, a fact that helped the parents become friends, as well as their children. “All four parents communicated and got along very well,” Lili said.

They were both born into Christian families but of different denominations. Lili, the daughter of Howard and Julita Grubb, was baptized and confirmed at Christ the King Catholic Church. Stephanie, the daughter of Chappie and Anne Hewett, was baptized at Trinity Episcopal Church and was a member of the first confirmation class at St. John’s Episcopal Church. Stephanie is proud to say she was confirmed at St. John’s before the main sanctuary was even built.

When Stephanie was 13, tragedy turned her world upside down. Her mother died. “Lili and her parents were there to help me in every way possible. At the time I didn’t realize how much they sacrificed to help me,” Stephanie said. “They included me in their activities and changed their plans so they could help me. They took me to places no one else even thought to take me like Tulsa’s Rose Garden.”

“We just did what we could to help her. We wanted to be there for her,” said Lili, remembering that difficult time. “They helped me in so many different ways and so unobtrusively that I didn’t realize how much they were doing for me at the time. They were always there for me.” Stephanie said.

Especially meaningful to Stephanie was Mrs. Grubb’s knitting instructions. “Mrs. Grubb knitted me a beautiful afghan and then taught me how to knit one like it. With
the afghan came detailed instructions how to knit the afghan.” Stephanie has knitted literally scores of these afghans which she lovingly calls “Mrs. Grubb’s Afghan.” Stephanie later taught her own daughter Anne to knit Mrs. Grubb’s Afghan. Now the tradition is firmly established between Stephanie and Anne all because of Mrs. Grubb’s kindness.

Some people use distance as an excuse for losing touch with friends but not Lili and Stephanie. When Lili and her husband, Eric, moved to Newton, Iowa, the two women remained just as close as ever. When Lili went into 72 hours of labor before delivering her son Eric, Jr., Stephanie was in constant contact by phone, encouraging her friend all the way. “We always are there for each other,” Stephanie said.

When Eric and Lili moved back to Tulsa, it was Stephanie, of course, who was chosen to be the baby’s godmother and when Stephanie and her husband had their daughter, Anne, they named Lili as the godmother.

When their children were old enough to travel, Stephanie and Lili and their husbands started taking vacations together. Trips to Six Flags, San Antonio, Padre Island, Destin, Florida, and Colorado are only a few of their vacations. “Our husbands and children got along and we all traveled together very well,” Lili said.

“When we say we are there for each other, we mean even at 1 a.m.,” Stephanie said. She was referring to the time when she and Lili worked at Mayfest until 1 a.m. and then drove non-stop to Colorado so Stephanie could attend a train show honoring her late grandfather who started a railroad in Colorado. Lili sacrificed a good night’s sleep in order to accompany her friend on a trip down memory lane.

Lili and Stephanie have done a lot of volunteer work together. For years they were both dedicated volunteers at the Recreation Center for the Physically Limited. As members of the Junior League of Tulsa, Inc., they worked on several League projects, as well as working for the Holland Hall Book and Art Fair. For the past 25 years they have worked each year as volunteers for Mayfest and the Chili Bluegrass Festival.

Throughout their nearly 60 year friendship, their relationship to Jesus Christ has remained firm and strong. “Relationship with Christ has impacted our friendship as well as it has impacted every other aspect of our lives.” Stephanie said.

“Believing in Him and His teachings should affect everything a person does. Your morals, ethics, and beliefs all affect friendship.” Lili said.

What advice about friendship do Stephanie and Lili give? “If you have a close friend, do everything to keep her,” Lili said.

“Friendship takes effort. Like any good thing, you have to work at keeping a friend. Never take a friendship for granted,” Stephanie said.

Both women remember how at age 82, Stephanie’s father still kept in contact with friends he had made in elementary school in Quebec. Hundreds of miles and international borders didn’t keep Chappie Hewett from contacting childhood friends. This has served as an inspiration to both women who try to keep in touch with other classmates.

Lili Anderson and Stephanie Jackson have lived the wisdom found in Proverbs 18:24: “…a true friend sticks closer than one’s nearest kin.” NRSV 📚
Friendship is a central part of our lives, yet it is one of the hardest things we learn as a child. For many children, friendship comes easily while for others it is a struggle. Children learn from an early age the importance of friendship. Even in preschool you can see a child console a classmate when he is sad. It is the beginning of empathy and of learning to accept others.

Friendship can be a learning tool, or a point of contention. As parents, we must look out for our children and be aware of their friendships. Today’s world can be daunting if you have no friends or if you have the wrong friends.

I have watched my own children struggle in different ways as they have grown in their social skills. One of my daughters is outgoing and extremely social, while the other is more reserved and sensitive. They both have taught me so much about being a friend and about making friends. Their personalities influence who their friends are and how they interact with those friends. It is our job as parents to listen, to gently lead them through finding “good” friends, and, even more importantly, pray.

Children between the ages of one and two begin the process of learning to be friends through play. Toddlers play beside one another. Their interaction does not go much farther than playing side by side. They are fun to watch as they mimic peers, teachers and parents.

The toddler doesn’t understand taking turns, but that doesn’t mean we allow them to always get their way. It is in these beginning stages of friendship we learn we are part of a whole. We are not the center of the universe. There is something bigger than us.

Friendship is formed when two toddlers laugh together or play beside each other. It is in the smiles they share and also, unfortunately, in the bites.

It is not uncommon for children before the age of two to bite one another. At this stage, biting is a way to communicate. Learning to communicate is vital to learning to be a friend. Giving toddlers the words to use even before they can speak is a great building block.

As children move into the preschool years they also grow in their social interactions. They begin playing together in groups or with one special friend. Friends become an important part of their lives.
In a preschool class, or church Sunday school class, you will see children begin to interact with each other. Preschoolers begin pretending together or making intricate structures together out of blocks. These friendships begin to become more solid, more recognizable by adults. A preschool child will ask to go to school or church because they want to play with their friends. They are beginning to understand that friendships are a good thing and meant to be treasured.

As children move to the elementary years they begin to interact with other children in a more complex way. They can also become very cliquish and want to only play with certain children. As parents and teachers we should be aware of children who are on the outside. Good role models and helping children become part of the group can help them overcome obstacles to forming friendships. The best thing for parents to do is stay involved! Talk to your child about friendships. Drop by your child’s school at lunch time to see if she is sitting with friends. Talk to teachers and find out with whom they spend time. Encourage them to be accepting of all their peers, not just their own group.

As we reach beyond elementary we begin to get into the true logistics of friendship. If your child has had a good start and developed social skills as they have matured, then they are on their way to forming long lasting friendships. The key is to stay involved and informed. Know who your child hangs out with or who they want to hang out with. Be open to listening without judgment. Teenagers are tough and it is not an easy thing to watch our children go through the ups and downs of friendship, but it is a very important time in their lives and in ours as parents.

Ecclesiastics 4:10 says, “If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

Learning to form friendships is a necessary process in growing up. Parents need to provide opportunities through play groups, preschool, or other social settings for their children to form positive relationships. The best place to help your child to grow in social skills is church. Taking your child to church helps them form those relationships in a safe environment and allows us as parents to get to know other families and form friendships of our own.
The key is communication. And in the rustic beauty of 3 Strand Cord Ranch, where the wind whispers, the wildlife chatter and nature leans back and sighs, conversations often come easier.

The ranch is dedicated to families and individuals in crisis, a peaceful place where therapy and God’s creation meet to give visitors much needed renewal. And it started with a simple desire.

“We moved here with a passion to build a ministry to help families in crisis,” said Phyllis Wright, LPC and owner of 3 Strand Cord Ranch along with her husband, James Wright, a Horse Specialist. The ranch, located just outside of Haskell, is a ministry to those needing a little extra help processing their struggles, their fears, and their plans for a healthy future. And Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP), what they specialize in, provides 40 to 60 percent more success than just talking, Phyllis said.

EAP is a form of therapy where horses are used as a tool for emotional growth and learning. With help and directing from a licensed therapist and a horse professional, clients participate in activities with the horse, followed by discussion of their feelings, behaviors, and patterns.

“The interactions with the horse are non-threatening,” Phyllis said. “It’s about how they respond to a horse and how the horse responds to them. It helps by bringing out areas they need to work on for better communication.”

EAP addresses many mental health and human development needs like depression, eating disorders, attention deficit disorder, relationship problems and communication issues. It helps build self-confidence, develops self-esteem, and empowers, especially children, with the ability to communicate with another living thing.

“It helps people to define their roles and find out who they are. Without knowing who you are, you don’t have a purpose,” Phyllis said.

The ranch, which opened a year ago this month, will be holding an open house, welcoming anyone interested in learning about the ranch. The open house will be held on Saturday, April 21 from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 22, from 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.. Refreshments will be served and entertainment provided. Tours will also be available. Grand tours will be provided on a hay trailer. Or you can opt for the mini tour through a power-point presentation.
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Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus’ “Mamma Mia!,” the smash hit musical based on the songs of ABBA, returns to the Tulsa PAC on May 8 for eight performances only!

Inspired by the story-telling magic of ABBA’s timeless songs, writer Catherine Johnson’s sunny, funny tale of family and friendship unfolds on a Greek island. On the eve of her wedding, a daughter’s quest to discover the identity of her father brings three men from her mother’s past back to the island they last visited 20 years ago. Songs including “Dancing Queen,” “The Winner Takes It All,” “Money, Money, Money” and “Take a Chance on Me” are all featured in this feel-good night of fun and laughter.

With more productions playing simultaneously around the world than any other new musical, “Mamma Mia!” is now “the world’s number one show.” There are currently ten productions of “Mamma Mia!” running concurrently around the world. With a worldwide gross of over $1.6 billion dollars and audiences of more than 27 million people, “Mamma Mia!” is acclaimed by the Associated Press as “quite simply, a phenomenon.”

Welcomed by Primeaux Kia, “Mamma Mia!” will be at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center May 8-13, for only eight performances. Tickets may be purchased via phone 596-7111, (800) 364-7111, in person at the Tulsa PAC ticket office, or via the internet at www.MyTicketOffice.com. Discounts are available for groups of twenty or more; call Celebrity Attractions at 796-0220 for discount prices.

The Tulsa engagement of “Mamma Mia!” is presented by Celebrity Attractions, and is part of the company’s 2006-2007 Broadway Season.
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**Tulsa Company makes an ‘Impact’ with Faith-based Films**

**Tulsa-based Impact Entertainment**, an innovative Christian movie production and grass roots marketing company, has joined with The Weinstein Company (TWC) to produce and acquire theatrical and direct-to-video titles for the faith-based community.

For the past 25 years, Impact Entertainment has been a leading provider of entertainment for people of faith around the world. Impact will continue this mission by seeking out compelling projects that are both entertaining and inspired by Christian values to be financed, produced and distributed by TWC.

As part of the deal with Impact, TWC has acquired the rights to adapt some of the highest selling and most beloved and respected works in the faith-based community. These projects include “The Penny,” based on the semi-autobiographical book by the New York Times #1 best-selling author Joyce Meyer who was selected as one of the most influential evangelical leaders in America by Time Magazine and “The Christmas Candle,” based on the book by award-winning writer Max Lucado who was once named “America’s Best Preacher” by Reader’s Digest. TWC and Impact will also be working with Meyers on a second unnamed project.

“I am so happy to have this opportunity to work with The Weinstein Company on a movie to be based on ‘The Penny,’ the novel I am co-authoring with Deborah Bedford,” said Joyce Meyer. “Bob and Harvey Weinstein have proven their finesse in the movie industry with success after success. I believe their venture into movies of faith will be very well received by moviegoers everywhere as they answer the cry for quality family entertainment.”

“The Penny” tells the story of Jenny Blake, a remarkable young girl living in an abusive home in 1955 segregated St. Louis. One afternoon, Jenny picks up a penny and unwillingly sets in motion an unusual chain of events that foils a robbery, lands her a job at a jewelry store, and exposes her to the struggling civil rights movement and the power of friendship and spirituality.

“The Christmas Candle” is about a candle maker and his wife living in rural 1860s England who receive a special blessing from an angel every 25th Christmas to pass onto a community member in need. After discovering that 1864 might be the last year the angel visits, the community comes together hoping for a miracle and ultimately learns about the true nature of love and the power of prayer.

“The marriage of Weinstein’s experience and the opportunity for faith-based films will result in a new generation of quality productions,” said Max Lucado. “Tom Newman, of Impact Entertainment, embodies energy, creativity and devotion. He is the right man to lead this process.”

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**Exciting Women’s Conference!**

**Hebrew 12:1-2**: “Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus.”

Attention Ladies...need some time away from everyday life? Do you desire to hear God speak to your heart in a life-changing way? Because of Jesus Ministries, a teaching ministry of Connie Witter, invites you to enjoy a weekend filled with inspired teaching, drama, praise and worship, delicious food, fellowship and fun at one of Tulsa’s finest hotels.

“This is an opportunity for you to treat yourself to a refreshing time away focusing on God’s goodness. After all, you are a genuine princess and a daughter of the King. Come to the Renaissance for a royal weekend with Jesus and walk away from this conference experiencing the freedom that Jesus purchased for you,” Connie said.

“Join us and immerse yourself in the wonder of God’s love and grace. Let Him wash away all your cares, fears, frustrations, and feelings of inadequacy. Come and break free from the bondage of trying to live up to all that you think God requires. Embrace His grace that empowers you to trust God with all your heart and rest in the truth that you are already qualified for all of His blessings because of Jesus.”

Connie Witter has been teaching Bible studies since 1993. Her heart and vision is to see God’s people really come to know who they are in Christ and receive the unfailing love that He has for them.

The 2007 Women’s Conference called “Embracing Grace” will be held at Tulsa’s Renaissance Hotel on April 27 and 28 from Friday, April 27 at 3:00 p.m. to Saturday, April 28 at 5:30 p.m. Sign up before April 15 and the registration fee is only $65.00. This fee includes a luncheon on Saturday. Connie encourages all women to “Treat yourself like a princess” and come stay at one of Tulsa’s finest hotels during the Because of Jesus Women’s conference. Conference attendees will receive the special nightly rate of $99.00 single occupancy or $49.50 per person for double occupancy.

If you have any questions, visit the website at www.BecauseOfJesusMinistries.com or please contact Connie directly at Connie@conniewitter.com.
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Frankly, sometimes I feel like my insurance agent is speaking a foreign language. In fact, as bad as it sounds, I have often caught myself telling him…”Whatever you think. Just tell me what it will cost.”

But recently, I did some digging on all this stuff. After all, homeowner’s insurance surely doesn’t have to be so confusing. In the process, I decided to narrow it all down to real English and share it with you. Granted, and here is the disclaimer, I do NOT have my insurance license, so just consider it as advice from a friend. Call it “Insurance for Us Dummies.”

I offer it not to interfere with your own agent’s advice but rather because understanding the terms just may equip you to talk to him or her and in turn, save you a bunch of money.

“Replacement Cost” Insurance. A policy which fully replaces the damaged property at no additional cost to you. For instance, if your roof is damaged, they pay the full cost of replacing it.

Now, policies without this feature, depreciate the value as your house (or roof in this example) ages, potentially leaving you liable for some of the replacement cost. Oh, they will still write you a check, but there is no guarantee that it will cover the cost of the new roof.

Most agents suggest you buy this replacement cost coverage. As long as you insure the house for its full replacement value, you can probably rest easy. Over time, as the general construction costs increase in your community, your agent can advise you on how much to raise the limits of your coverage.

One thing to remember, however, since your possessions inside the house generally depreciate faster than the home itself, many companies still depreciate the contents of the house. So, you might find yourself with a house as good as new but without enough money to replace your valuables inside. So ask questions…”buyer beware.”

Insuring Personal Property. Your personal property such as jewelry, paintings, gold or silver items, and coin and stamp collections may not be covered at their full replacement value. In fact, many policy limits can range from $500 to $5,000. So, how do you fully insure such items? You can “schedule” them or name them in the policy. Especially for jewelry, this often requires the items to be appraised by an authorized firm. But I have found the hassle and the added premium costs normally are worth the expense.

Exclusions and limitations. Of course, all policies have them. Insurance would be too expensive if insurance companies were required to cover everything in every situation. For instance, standard policies here in the Tulsa area normally don’t include damage from earthquakes even though damage is possible. (There was an earthquake in the 50’s that did damaged some houses.) Policies for such things are available for extra premiums, but it is up
to you to determine if you want to purchase coverage for such things as earthquake, flood, and other catastrophes.

**Personal Liability Protection.** Insurance which protects you against claims (other than auto related accidents) directed at you or any family member who lives with you. For instance, if a visitor falls down those steps you meant to have fixed, this part of your homeowner’s policy is designed to provide some financial protection against a lawsuit. The limit depends on your policy, but some basic policies have only an automatic limit of $100,000. In today’s world, it may be wise to pay a bit extra to increase this limit to $500,000 or higher.

**Other Coverage?** Some homeowner’s policies now even offer identity theft protection and limited mold damage coverage. If either is a concern to you, ask your insurance agent for more information.

So now, hopefully armed with the English version of the basics, go see your agent and review your homeowner’s policy. If it is worth paying for, it is surely worth your time to make sure it matches your needs.

**TIP**

Why new windows? New windows give your house a neat, well maintained look and can increase the value of your home for resale. New windows can be more energy efficient, easier to clean, and also provide the right amount of light and air to make your home more comfortable.

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Isn’t there something incredibly soothing about the sound of water? Have you dreamed of having a backyard pond but have been leery of the upkeep of the fish, plants and stuff that go with it? Or maybe you’ve thought having a pond might present a safety hazard for your small kids or grandkids? Well, no worries! Here is a way you can have all the splash and beauty with much less hassle, maintenance and danger.

Landscapers call them pondless waterfalls or depending upon the style...“bubblers.” Now, it may be hard to imagine a waterfall, stream or fountain without standing water, but Daryl Carter, owner of Emerald Lawn and Landscape, said it is really quite simple.

“We start by digging a hole and installing a rubber pond liner. We then stand cinder blocks on their ends to support a plastic grate covering the entire hole. This gives a platform for decorative rock. A water pump in the bottom of the hole pumps water from the hole up to the top of the water feature. Obviously then, the water runs down the waterfall, through the decorative rock and back into the hole where the cycle starts all over again.”

Daryl explained that most companies don’t use the cinder blocks but instead fill the hole entirely with rock. But he found that this method doesn’t provide enough water storage, causing the homeowner to refill the waterfall every few hours during the hot summertime. “Using the cinder blocks and the plastic grate allows us to have more water storage, keeping the homeowner from having to refill the waterfall as often,” he said.

“Bubblers” use the same concept but are designed to take up even less space. We found many styles to choose from at Sanders Nursery in South Broken Arrow. These “natural” fountains can be placed in a corner of your yard or right up next to your covered porch. In any case, they provide a simple water feature that will add both interest and sound to your landscape.

Pondless waterfalls can be as big or as little as your imagination and your budget will allow and all of the materials can be purchased at places such as Hard-
scape, located on South Memorial. However, there is a certain amount of art required in making a truckload of rocks look like a natural stream. And when it comes down to it, you may opt to simply call Daryl. Then sit back and watch as he brings the sounds of “nature” within earshot of your own back porch.

Emerald Lawn and Landscape is locally owned and operated. They are known for their ability to turn the most challenging area into a beautiful, low maintenance landscape. They do everything from installing and repairing irrigation systems to installing retaining walls, pavers, outdoor fireplaces, and yes, even waterfalls...both the pondless and the pond type. Daryl can be reached at 355-5792. Call him for a quotation on your next project.
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I thought of calling this article “Beauty Is As Beauty Does” because a formal entertaining area frequently “is” a beautiful area that “does” very little to earn its keep during most of the time you spend in the home. However, you still have to invest in furnishings for it. And you still have to dust, vacuum, and otherwise maintain this area. This is a fairly common scenario in formal areas. Are you wondering why I dared to question this?

Yes, as a decorator I love to design smashingly creative interiors. But I personally still have a very strong desire for function as well. As a result, I consistently seek that balance between beauty and usability. Are you still surprised that I dared to question the way we typically decorate and use formal areas? Well, I smile and ask you—with my German name, Änna, isn’t this love of creative form and a strong practical streak what you might expect? I think you, too, are going to smile and discover that can be a very good combination.

This formal living area featured is perfect for reconsidering the single use approach for a space. Instead I used a multipurpose approach for their formal living and dining room design project. The household population includes mom, dad, grandmother, and teens. Everyone has an active social life, and they all entertain a wide variety of guests from small to large groups in diverse activities.

First, in considering this project as part of the whole home, it seemed logical to pack as much function as possible into every square inch of living space. With the decision for a practical multipurpose approach, I could let my mind find ways to design something beautiful.

This living area actually now functions as a formal dining and entertaining area, a small group meeting area, a home office, a place to a play piano, and an elegant but comfortable area for family members to relax on the sofa and chairs.

When entering, you immediately notice the new cabinetry. I first looked at the empty wall realizing it could earn its keep if some cabinetry provided some much needed space for home office tasks, as well as making it easier to serve dinner guests. But it should add beauty to this formal area.
So, I designed a wall of very functional cabinetry that looks like beautiful traditional decorative furniture. There are broken pediment tops with the two side pediment units slightly lower than the one on the main center section. These pieces were stained in one of the new white sheer stains and just a hint of gold was applied to the finials and a few small areas on the fronts. The various furniture design details make the pieces look like fine furniture instead of built-in cabinetry.

The center china cabinetry unit holds no surprises. The center cabinet was designed to look like a traditional china cabinet. It holds serve ware for entertaining, and you use it as you typically would in a formal dining area.

However, the armoires at each end are not merely two additional armoires serving as your typical storage pieces. Together they secretly serve as a home office for everyday use. When the pocket doors are opened, the armoire on the right contains file drawers, a pullout for a multifunction copier-fax-scanner, and other office supplies. Behind the pocket doors on the armoire on the left is a computer desk complete with keyboard pullout, drawers, and additional pullout shelves.

The furniture arrangement also makes this room serve many functions. The seating area at the front when you enter can be easily rearranged for a small ladies’ Bible study simply by pulling around the two dining table arm chairs. Padded backs were added to the two dining arm chairs to add a sitting-chair feel to them. This brings the interesting fabric on the chair seats up to an easily visible level.

A very wide mural border was painted at the sides of the room and around the chandelier as a way to ground the pattern in the fabrics and to add visual impact to the room. A similar motif from the ceiling mural was painted on one section of wall, as well. This was a nice alternative to the typical artwork approach for this section of wall and further ties in the ceiling mural.

This wonderful room is really earning its keep beyond formal entertaining. However, the beautiful new design plan has also inspired some new neighborhood fellowship. This last holiday season, for the first time, this family opened their home to the neighbors on their block and enjoyed some new fellowship that may become a wonderful new tradition.

That was a neat but unexpected good thing that came out of the project. It is delightful when a design plan truly enriches peoples lives even beyond what I had planned.

Anna D. Wright is an IDS Associate with Genesis Design Group, LLC. She specializes in home and community interior design, construction and remodel plan and management, and Genesis-Style Design Seminars. She can be reached at 918-585-2662, anna4genesisdesign@yahoo.com, or by fax 918-524-0386.
There is no cure for Spring fever. Nothing can be done, except...maybe...getting outside. The warm winds, the budding flowers, it could be the perfect medicine.

As the season warms, so do the thoughts of your yard, your garden, and your flower bed. What should you plant this year? And once you decide, how do you go about lighting this garden of flowers?

We decided to ask Lee Electric for a few outdoor lighting and landscaping tips. Here are what the experts recommend:

- Get gasketed light fixtures so they don’t get water in them.
- Use UL listed connections to keep them from corroding.
- Photo cells are better than timers. You don’t have to adjust to the time and sun changes.
- In areas with underground electric service, do not plant shrubs or other foliage around pad-mounted transformers. This foliage will make repair or maintenance work difficult. Dense growth around these transformers can also provide a home for undesirable wildlife or insects.

Landscaping and tree planting can enhance the beauty and enjoyment of your property, but be sure to consider the proper placement of trees and shrubs. Lee Electric suggests inspecting the planting area and then selecting low-growing trees or shrubs that will not touch overhead power lines. Today’s sapling could cause an electrical hazard a few years from now.

Use the underground cable locator service to have the placement of underground lines determined before you begin your landscaping project.

When planting near a transformer, maintain a distance of ten feet from any side with an opening and three feet from other sides. Electrical workers need space to safely open the transformer when working on underground power lines. If landscaping is placed too close to the transformer, service restoration efforts can be delayed. In addition, workers must sometimes cut down the plantings to perform the restoration work.

Electric lights require wiring and cables. As long as you chose a 12V transformer, installation can be a do-it-yourself job. If you want bright light then electricity is the way to go. A transformer must be used for electric lights. The transformer acts as a power board. It is plugged into the power point and lights are plugged into it. Check instructions for the number of lights per transformer. You may need more than one per garden.

When doing landscape lighting here are some things to keep in mind:

- Halogen lights are the original landscape lights. They produce a yellow light, use more energy than LED lights and can become hot to touch.
- LEDs produce a much purer white light, which portrays a truer color of the landscape. LEDs are up to 90 percent cheaper to run and don’t get hot.

Uplighting. Light is directed upwards to highlight a feature such as a tree. They also provide a bit of light for the surrounding areas.

Spotlights. Spotlights are a bright light aimed at one particular feature such as a tree, sculpture or water feature.

Downlights. As the name suggests, downlights are positioned at a high level and light downwards. An example would be a light in the roof of a carport, shining down on the car.

Path lights. Path lights are used for safety and security. Place them at intervals along your path or walkway.

Surface lighting. Surface lights are built into walls, highlight deck and step surfaces and can be put in the ground. They enhance security and visibility.
I believe because of...eyebrows.

Yes, those silly little tufts of hair over our eyes testify to me that we were “intelligently created” rather than somehow “evolving out of nothing.” These odd bits of hair have a purpose. I once knew a guy with a strange illness that eliminated every hair on his body. The sweat nearly blinded him each summer as without eyebrows, nothing kept the sweat from running directly into his eyes.

So did “natural selection” cause eyebrows to form? Now that is a silly mental picture as I imagine every creature without eyebrows running blindly into the mouths of the nearest wild beast. No, I have to believe that eyebrows are only one of a long list of “oddities” which prove our bodies were created with great intellect and precision.

I also believe because of the testimony of those around me. The voices of the hundreds of people we have interviewed over the last seven years shout out to me of a God big enough to create the world and yet personal enough to want a relationship with those He created.

Yes, I believe in God and He has never let me down. I could tell you stories of mysterious checks arriving just in time to make payroll, or of friends who were miraculously healed to live out a specific purpose. Call me and I will share such things with you. But for the sake of this short statement, just suffice it to say that I believe in a God who takes care of every detail...even those perfectly placed little lines of hair called “eyebrows.”
When you first meet Jonathan Townsend, April’s FCA Athlete of the Month, you know him to be a quiet, unassuming young man. But speak with him for five minutes, and you’ll understand he is a focused, driven, passionate athlete and Christian.

“All I’ve ever wanted to do is play baseball,” Jonathan said. “From second grade on, I knew I was going to play college ball and in the Majors. I believe that God means for us to be successful. He can guide you if you give it all up to Him, and I know that this is what I’m supposed to be doing. So I don’t fight it.”

Jonathan said with a grin. “The path is clear. If He says, ‘Go left’, I go left!”

As a junior at Central High School, Jonathan bats third and is “the emotional leader for the Tulsa Central Braves,” said assistant coach and dad, Charles Townsend. His bat-
Jonathan is a player and leader that totally gets it. He does whatever we ask and does it 100 percent.

His batting average is among the highest in the state. As a freshman, he batted .528 and continued with .537 as a sophomore. This year he is focused on continuing his power at the plate and improving his defense as shortstop.

Being a Captain with the Braves has given him an opportunity to be an example both on and off the field.

“We have started a program this year that is all about doing what’s right,” said head coach William Dye. “Doing what’s right means concentrating on the fundamentals on the field but also doing what’s right academically and socially off the field. It’s more than just about a game. Jonathan is a player and leader that totally gets it. He does whatever we ask and does it 100 percent.”

Off the field, Jonathan swings a big bat, as well. His GPA is “somewhere in the 3.7 range,” he said again with the slow grin. He has been a National Honor Society member for two years and named in Who’s Who Among American High School Students also for two years.

Jonathan has attended First Baptist, North Tulsa since the day he was born.

“I’ve always been in church, same church, every week.”

“Jonathan is a great example of what a teenager could and should be,” said Bernard Mason, who attends church with Jonathan. “He’s like a mentor, a good influence on my 13-year-old son.”

Helping and mentoring are two big reasons for Jonathan’s FCA involvement. His heroes are the men who were leaders at the FCA Summer Camps when he was younger and that he now gets to work with as a camp counselor: men like Coach Bill Blankenship from TU and Coach Hill from East Central, players like Tulsa University’s Paul Smith and David Johnson and Oral Roberts University’s Caleb Green.

“The younger kids really look up to me when I’m a counselor. It’s funny—they want my autograph!”

Phillippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” is motivation for Jonathan.

“I’m really competitive. It’s not just a game for me. But I want everyone to know where my power comes from. My drive. More than the weight room, or the practice field, my strength is in God.”

Do You Have a Financial Game Plan?

Randy Cowell, MS, LUTCF, CFP, CSA

Whether you are referring to chess, baseball, or personal finances one thing is certain. If you want to succeed you had better have a game plan for success. Meandering through life willy-nilly and without any idea of what the future holds is like sailing without a rudder. You might have a final destination in mind, but without a game plan how will you navigate the course?

If you feel you are out of control with no real financial plan, take heart. We have a tremendous opportunity as Christians to light the world with our successful financial stewardship. Here are some basic areas that must be understood if you truly want to develop a winning game plan.

- How to develop a budget that actually works.
- Have a clear understanding of how financial institutions conduct business.
- Have a working knowledge of the economic principles that control your wealth.
- Husbands: Take responsibility for your finances and become the leader your family deserves. If you’re single-tag you’re it!
- Wives: Support your husbands. Single ladies, don’t settle.

Budgets are those nasty things that can be highly divisive if not handled properly. Avoiding the “B” word is often the result of multiple failed attempts. If I had a nickel for every client who shared their budget failures with me, I would be a wealthy man. Unfortunately, avoiding the subject will not correct the problem of mismanagement.

I recommend three separate checking accounts to manage God’s resources. The household account (HA) is used for all non-discretionary expenses such as mortgage, auto payments, tithe, etc. The wealth accumulation account (WAA) is designed to automate your investing and facilitate all automatic bank drafts. Examples of this would be life insurance, mutual funds, etc. The head of the household is in charge of these. The last account that should be established is the fun and sun account (FAS). This account is managed by-you guessed it-the wife. She is the CFO and every discretionary expense comes out of this account. Remember, for any budget to succeed there must be shared tasks and communication. For additional information about how to design a budget that works, contact me.

In today’s economy everyone must have at least some dealings with financial institutions. Understanding how they work will make you a better consumer and steward. OPM, or others people’s money, is one of the most basic of economic principles. Financial institutions everywhere must be exceptional at utilizing it or they will inevitably find themselves out of business. Every financial institution, regardless of their products or services, utilizes OPM rules of finance. Understanding how financial institutions utilize the principle of OPM is essential if you desire to be an educated steward.

In this modern time the next subject may not be well received by some and might even be condemned as “politically” incorrect by others. Perhaps the financial condition that we find many Christian households today might be enough evidence to warrant a brief discussion as to who the head of the household should be. Since the beginning of time the man/husband has been considered the spiritual head of the household. As the leader of the home, they have been commissioned with the ultimate responsibility of management. Responsibility, however, is a funny thing. When hard decisions need to be made it is only human nature to share the responsibility with your mate. Let’s face it, it is easier to relinquish control, share a tough decision, and blame each other when things don’t work out.

We must raise up men likened to the Men of Issachar. Men “who understand the times” and know what their families should do; men committed to love their wife like Jesus loved the Church, sacrificially and without reserve. I have never known a wife that, when presented with the prospect of having that kind of husband, objected to being treated as the “weaker vessel,” and anything but glad to submit to her husband’s God-given authority. Simply stated once again, the husband must be responsible for the financial condition of the household.

Young men, here is a news flash: Even in this postmodern world in which your future spouse is residing, she is longing for a real man that will love her in a Godly Christ like manner. She is searching for someone responsible and willing to assume the role of spiritual leader and family steward.

Developing a successful financial plan based on Biblical Christian Principles requires courage, discipline, much desire and a Game Plan. Do you have what it takes to grab hold of the rudder and navigate a course for Christ? I welcome your thoughts and prayers.

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