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& Melissa Moorman

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EDITORIAL

Managing Editor, Becky Walker
Weatherford Editor, Melissa Rawlins
Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong
Editorial Assistant, Beverly Shay
Writers, Amber D. Browne . Gregg Davis
Betty Tryon
Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony
Pamela Parisi

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla
Artists, Julie Carpenter . Casey Henson
Martha Macias . Felipe Ruiz .
Connie VanderBeek . Arlene Honza
Brande Morgan . Shannon Pfaff

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rise
Photographer, Monica Anderson
Paula Campbell . Thomas Freylack

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Advertising Representatives,
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ON THE COVER



Madison Ward first competed in Playdays with the Weatherford Comancheros Riding Club.

Photo by Thomas Freylack.

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Hosting Halloween

— By Amber D. Browne



They do their best to make their Craftsman Victorian home look spooky at Halloween. But, the warmth of the home and its current residents actually invites guests to enter. Each year, Thomas and Melissa Moorman and their neighbors on West Lee Avenue go all out for Halloween, offering buckets of candy to hundreds of children. “Lee Avenue is a very popular street on Halloween,” Thomas explained. “They warned us about that when we bought the house,” he chuckled. The couple bought about 200 pieces of candy their first Halloween in the house. They ran out within 30 short minutes.



At Home With Thomas and Melissa Moorman

Each year, the crowds have grown, with 1,800 visitors passing through their home last year. The Moorman's house is considered home base for their family, friends and fellow church goers. "They go trick-or-treating from here, and we pass out candy in the front yard," Thomas said.

They enjoy decorating the home to draw people in, so, each year, they choose a different theme. "This is the first place I've ever been where we decorated for Halloween. It changes every year. We did spiders one year, mummies one year and ghosts one year," Thomas' wife of 19-years, Melissa, explained.

"It is a happy house," Melissa said.

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“We are only the third owners.” Thomas and Melissa have heard stories over the years, giving them an insight into the home’s history. The 1902 house was featured a couple of times on the local Tour of Homes. “We met people during the tour that lived upstairs during the war,” she said. “You feel like a steward of the house.”

When they first purchased the home eight years ago, Thomas dove right in and began renovations. “It was pretty rough. Holes in the floor; holes in the ceiling; the electricity didn’t work,” he recalled. “It was definitely a project.” Thomas patched more than 100 holes and completely replaced the electrical system,

most of the plumbing and added central air and heat.

The front yard boasts of well-kept shrubs and colorful flowers. “There is something blooming all the time,” Melissa said. The covered, wrap-around porch extends almost to the backyard. Century-old trees canopy the home, cooling it off in the summer. A tree house sits atop one of the many large trees outside, giving the children a perch where they can play. They painted over the white exterior with an organic sage green, making it more noticeable to passersby. “Given the foliage and the green of the lawn, I couldn’t imagine that green wouldn’t be beautiful,” she said.

Inside, the sturdy home boasts rich wooden floors covered with area rugs and antique furniture passed down from previous generations. Unpainted wood frames surround doors, many topped with transoms. The high ceilings open up the spacious rooms even more, and large windows bring the outside in.

To the left of the foyer is the men’s parlor. A fireplace with the original mantel and colorful tile warms up the



room. Melissa sewed the heavy velvet drapes, and the family added a pull down movie screen above the pocket doors. They often close the drapes, get comfy on the burgundy leather sofa and chair and enjoy family movie night. The movie screen is the youngest Moorman’s favorite feature in the house. “You pull it down with a stick that has a hook on it. You can play movies on there,” 7-year-old Bennett explained. He has all the *Star Wars* movies and loves watching them with his family.

Behind the men’s parlor sits an office where Melissa runs her public relations and marketing firm. Melissa started the business before Bennett was born, and

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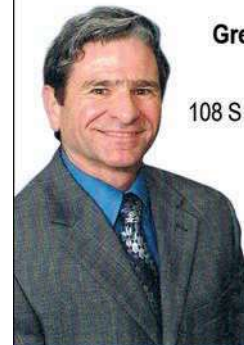
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Thomas works as the vice president of student affairs at the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. On the left side of the foyer sits the women's parlor with French doors and yet another fireplace featuring a more elegant fleur-de-lis design. Thomas was born in Germany, and a glass cabinet showcases steins and other items from his heritage.

The dining room behind the women's parlor features a Swarovski crystal chandelier the couple purchased in Germany on their fifth anniversary. It is proudly displayed above their dining room table, which was passed down from Melissa's grandparents. A fireplace also shines brightly in the dining room. Thomas converted all of the home's fireplaces to electric during renovations.

The kitchen can be found further down the central hallway. Its walls are lined with wooden cabinets, and a huge island stands solidly in the center of the room where the family gathers to share stories and delicious food. Artwork is hung throughout the home. Many pieces come from local artists, including their 12-year-old daughter, Emma. Her talent can be seen in several paintings sprinkled throughout the home.

Up the sturdy wooden staircase, the family's bedrooms await. Emma uses the upstairs, screened porch as her art studio. Her favorite room is her own cozy bedroom with clouds painted on the ceiling. Bennett's room sits across the hall with two old fishing rods found in the attic hung on one wall.

Melissa stenciled a floral pattern on each green wall in the master bedroom,



giving it an earthy feel. A fourth bedroom serves as the guest room and game room for the children. “They like to stay up here because they can look out the window, and you’re up above the trees,” Melissa said. Emma and Bennett spent several hours after returning from a three-week summer vacation in Italy building a replica of the Coliseum with Legos. They enjoy traveling the world, and before heading home, they often shop for a keepsake piece to incorporate into their home decor. A golden doorbell purchased in Florence is their latest addition.

The children always make their way upstairs at Halloween and during other holiday get-togethers hosted at the house. They enjoy all the toys and have Nerf dart wars. “I think it’s a lot of fun, because I get to see most of my friends in costumes. We can play around in the yard,” Bennett said. Candy is also a perk, especially Tootsie Rolls. “I get to eat free candy!”

Emma enjoys spending Halloween at home, too. “I get to see a lot of my friends from church and school,” she said. “It’s fun, because we all just come together.”

The family describes Halloween in their neighborhood as a scene from the movie, *E.T.* “Where the streets are full of people,” Thomas explained. He enjoys seeing all the homemade costumes and passing out candy to the children. The Moorman family plans to host Halloween at the home for years to come. “When you walk in, it just has a very good feeling to it,” Thomas said. “It just feels comfortable. It feels like home.” **NOW**




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