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OCTOBER 2011

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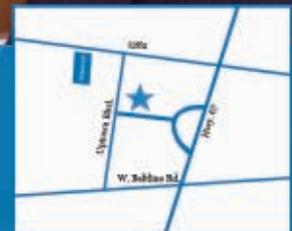


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On The Cover



The Red Oak Library offers good, old-fashioned books, but also contemporary conveniences.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

No tricks — this class is a treat ...

If you're beyond donning Halloween costumes, why not change your focus to a uniform? Registration is open for the Red Oak Citizens Police Academy, a free educational program familiarizing the public with our "men and women in blue."

Those age 20 and older who live or work in Red Oak may apply for the 11-class course that begins February 10, 2012. If you've ever wondered what happens behind the scenes of your local police department, now's your chance to witness things firsthand. Contact Officer Nathan Bickerstaff at (469) 218-7710 or nbickerstaff@redoaktx.org before the December 31 registration deadline. In another matter, let me offer my apologies to Shannon Hendricks. Due to a production error, part of her story did not run in last month's issue. A corrected file has been uploaded to our Web site. You may read the complete article by visiting www.nowmagazines.com.

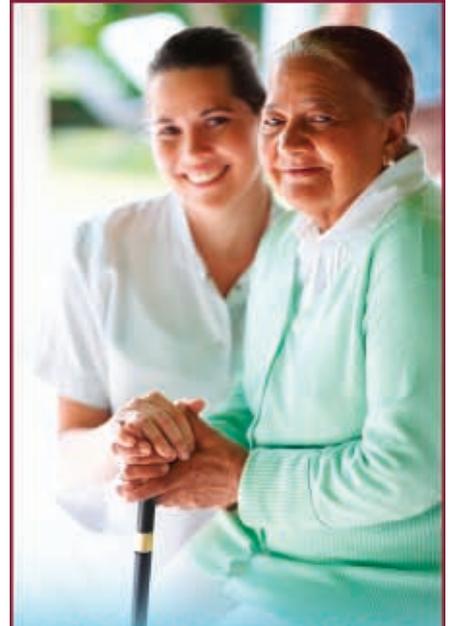


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Check Her **Out!**

— By Angel Morris

It's her favorite time of year and a great time to settle down with a good book, according to Red Oak Library Director Theresa McNutt. When not busy with library programming, Theresa loves to read, completing 125 titles last year. "I'm very cliché. I was a huge bookworm as a kid and still read a lot in my free time. My father had boxes in our attic full of old Analog Science Fiction and Fact magazines, and I found them and read them all, which is probably responsible for my continuing love of sci-fi/fantasy books," Theresa said.

Born and reared in New York, Theresa earned a Bachelor of Arts in linguistics with a minor in Japanese from State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo. "As an undergraduate student, I worked for the computer, information and technology department, first as a cybrary assistant, then as a troubleshooting computer consultant, and finally as cybrary supervisor for our largest undergraduate library on campus," Theresa recalled.

But library work was not Theresa's original career goal. "I wanted to teach English as a Second Language (ESL), so I joined the JET [Japanese Exchange & Teaching] Program, an initiative

“We help people of all ages, need levels and personalities, and a huge part of the job is just knowing how to personalize your interactions and service to meet individual needs.”

funded by the Japanese government to bring native English speakers to Japan as cultural ambassadors and teachers,” she explained.

Theresa lived in a small town in Japan, Hokkaido, for one year before returning to the U.S. “During that amazing year, I discovered that I really didn’t like being so far away from family and friends, as most ESL jobs require. So I came home, moved to Texas, and started looking for a different career that suited me better,” she said.

Shortly after moving to Dallas, Theresa began library work in Fort Worth and Hurst. “I loved the work and decided to begin my master’s degree in the summer of 2009,” she said. In December 2010, Theresa graduated from the University of North Texas with a Master of Science in information science. She came to Red Oak after applying to work for Library Systems & Services Inc. in Farmers Branch. “As these things tend to work out, I didn’t get the position I originally applied for but was encouraged to apply for the position of Red Oak library director, and here I am!” she said.

Today, Theresa busies herself with the ever-advancing work of library programming. “Libraries are not just about books anymore. We have a great diversity of services — public computing/printing; circulating audio books, CDs, DVDs; computer classes and assistance; programming for children, teens and adults,” Theresa said. We “also [have] digital libraries and scholarly reference databases, downloadable e-books and media, community meeting spaces . . . oh yes, and print books, magazines, newspapers and those reference materials that you cannot access for free online!”

Because they provide free access to large quantities of information that a single individual cannot afford to match, Theresa noted librarians possess training and experience necessary to retrieve information quickly and efficiently, with a depth of specificity and access to the deep web that free online searching doesn’t provide.

“We help people of all ages, need levels and personalities, and a huge part of the job is just knowing how to personalize your interactions and service to meet individual needs,” Theresa noted. “Something I’ve found others are surprised by is the fact that most librarians do have a degree in either library or information science. There is also a lot of stress in the library field, which surprises those who think we work in the quiet, reading books all day.”

As director, very little of Theresa’s job has to do with books.



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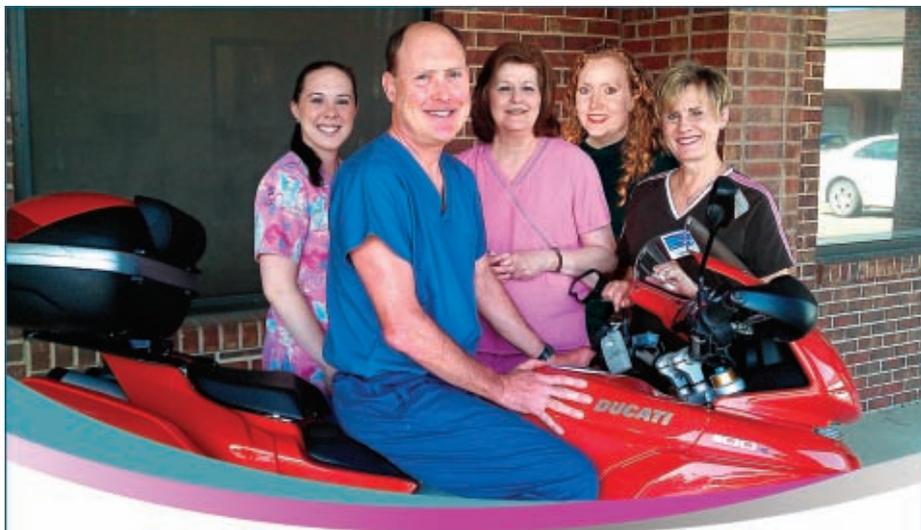
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"I do order new materials, but apart from that, most of my day is spent on budgeting, programming, public relations and special projects." Theresa also works to address the challenges facing local libraries today.

"The biggest challenge facing public libraries is overcoming an outdated and antiquated image. I have seen so many journal articles and comments online about how libraries are the last remnants of a bygone era, usually from people who haven't stepped into a library in 30



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years!" Theresa said. "I would like to emphatically state that there is a pressing need for libraries in today's society."

Nonetheless, proposed cuts to state grant funding for libraries continue to impact what services and upgrades libraries offer. For Red Oak Library, lack of space is another continued concern. "We occupy a 1,200-square-foot room, restricting the size of our collection, the number of computers we can fit and seating space for those who want to read or study in the library," Theresa said. "We are investigating grant funding to reduce the cost of eventual expansion and hope to work with the city to create a solution that is adequate for our growing population's present and future needs."

Theresa's other goals include growing the library's community presence, upgrading to faster Internet and newer



public PCs and increasing programming for all ages. “We are starting a Teen Club this fall and beginning to introduce new technologies such as e-book lending, QR codes, RFID, and mobile apps that will help people access the information they want more efficiently,” she said.

While Theresa doesn't own an electronic reader herself — “I'm surrounded everyday by just about any book I could want to read!” she said — the library does offer e-book lending through NetLibrary, a database available through the Texas State Library. “We would love to invest in a vendor to be able to lend the most popular e-books and audio books. At the moment, we are researching our pricing options and trying to fit that into our future budget,” she said.

In the meantime, Theresa looks forward to meeting as many library patron needs as possible. “If you have a program you would like to run — a book club, story time, teen activity, hobby club, etc. — come to us, and we can work together to make it happen! We already have great volunteers who lead library programs, but we would love to have more. We are also seeking to start a Friends of the Library group.”

When not in library mode, Theresa enjoys twice-a-month potluck dinners with friends, charity work, video games and a unique new hobby: “My friend recently convinced me to take a belly dancing class, and it's fun!” But, Theresa is most excited about making things happen at the library.

“I think the citizens of Red Oak take great pride in their city and have very firm ideas about what they want to see happen over the next few years,” Theresa said. “That passion is amazing, and I want to encourage people to approach the library with their ideas.” **NOW**

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Playing Hardball

— By Sydni Thomas



The future was bright for then 13-year-old Taylor Lynch. As an avid athlete, Taylor played almost every sport her school offered, and then drove to McKinney on weeknights and weekends to play softball with her select travel team. She had been playing on a softball diamond since she was 4 and dreamed of where it would take her one day. Those dreams nearly came crashing down during a volleyball match in October 2010.

As Taylor dove to save the ball, so did another player, and their knees collided. In the stands, Taylor's mom, Pam Lynch, knew this was not another bruised knee. They drove to the hospital and learned that Taylor would need an operation as soon as possible. The next day, they wheeled her back to the operating room for what Pam and Taylor's dad, Richard, were told was a fairly quick knee repair.

By midnight when the surgeon approached them, the waiting had become almost unbearable. "He told us to pray," Pam said. "Never in my life have I experienced something like that. Surgeons usually come out and comfort the families, but not this time. This was supposed to be a routine surgery."

Once the operation began, the surgeons discovered that two pieces of bone had been broken off — not just one. They had to open Taylor's leg to graft bone. After the surgery, the doctors didn't want to get Taylor's hopes up about returning to sports. She would have to heal for four months before she could begin rehabilitation. The slightest misstep or bump could cost her greatly. "During her softball career, she has never been injured worse than bruises," Pam said. "We let her play basketball, and



she broke her wrist. Then this happened with volleyball. Taylor, Richard and I decided that if she came back from this injury, softball would be her only sport.”

Afraid of falling behind and losing her strength, Taylor, now 14, began building her upper body almost immediately after her surgery. She would sit on a step ladder and throw for hours. Being on crutches also gave her the opportunity to build strength. “There wasn’t a moment that I let myself think I wouldn’t come back from this,” Taylor said. “If I gave into those thoughts, I would not have come back from it. This has been the hardest thing I have ever faced in my life.”

Taylor’s tenacity had her back on the field by April. She was back to her former playing abilities by June. She gradually regained her sprinting speed, with the help of her running coach.

“I still get nervous each time she slides into the bag,” Pam said. “I ran from the bleachers one time because when she got up she looked like she was in pain. Turns out it was just her funny bone.”

Playing for a select travel team requires a lot of sacrifices from the family. Taylor joined her first select team when she was 6. Her older brother, Richie, had played baseball, and her sister, Tiara Whitsell, had been a cheerleader. Taylor

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knew she wanted to be as committed to her sport as they had been to theirs. Taylor currently plays for Texas Glory out of McKinney, Texas. Most of her weekends are spent traveling throughout the country for tournaments. Some tournaments last up to a week, but during the school year they are usually just on weekends. She's traveled to Colorado, California, Indiana and Illinois to play games.

While traveling the country might seem like one big slumber party for a group of teenagers, the coaches make them treat it like they're on business trips. When she isn't at a tournament or team practice, Taylor is still thinking about softball. She works out with a hitting coach and running coach, after team-scheduled practices. On the occasional free day, Taylor is outside with her dad practicing, running sprints in the driveway or hitting into a net in the yard.

When spring approaches next year, things will be even busier in the Lynch household as Taylor joins one of the Red Oak High School softball teams. "I've had to pass up on a lot of parties and trips to the lake because of softball and all of the traveling it requires for practice and games," Taylor said. "My softball team is my family, and I don't miss those other things."

"It's like having one large family," Pam said. "We're together so much, that the other parents become like another set of parents to your own child. Everyone takes care of each other."

Through this journey, Taylor and her family have learned one valuable lesson. It's never too early to start thinking about college. Taylor's ultimate goal is to continue playing once she reaches the collegiate scene. To reach those goals, Taylor's focus on academics must be as strong, or stronger, than her focus on softball. She has already started studying for the SAT and ACT and will take both this fall.

Despite her already full schedule, Taylor still finds time to volunteer for the Red Oak Lions Club and the Red Oak Education Foundation. Colleges are already hearing the buzz about Taylor and scouts have shown up at a few games. "You never know who is out in the bleachers watching you during a game," Taylor said. "It could be a college scout or a little girl who wants to be just like



you when she grows up. I have to keep a good attitude at all times. Getting onto a college team is not just about academics and athleticism. It's also about attitude."

Richard and Pam never miss Taylor's games. Out-of-state games turn into short vacations where the main site-seeing attraction is a softball field. Taylor jokes that wherever she chooses to attend college, her parents will probably buy a condo because there is no point in starting to miss games then. Even as a young player, Taylor knows that most athletes do not get the opportunities in life that she has had so far.

"My parents have always made sure I had the best of everything and have been dedicated to seeing that I succeed," Taylor said. "They let me be a part of the best teams, no matter how far away. They made sure I had the best coaches and doctors. There are so many people who have made it possible for me to play the sport that I love. Without these people, I would not have recovered like I did and would not have been given these great opportunities in my life." **NOW**

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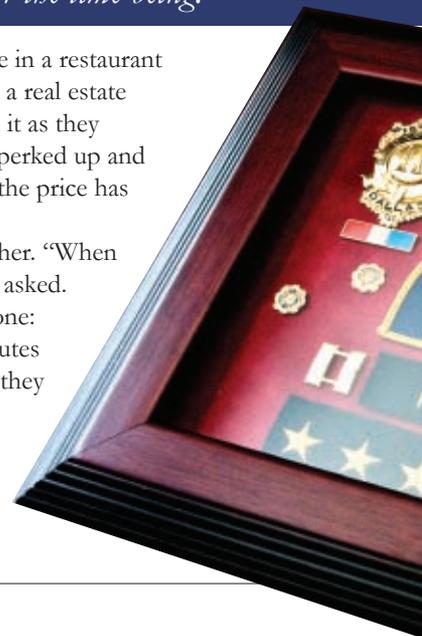
Decision-making has never been a problem for Dale or Rhonda Martin. In the spring of 2007, the two Cedar Hill residents were planning their summer wedding and looking for a home. As soon as Dale and Rhonda saw the floor plan for a 1998, three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath home in Ovilla, they knew it had everything they wanted. However, since the price was a bit above the range they had agreed upon, they tabled it for the time being.

Just a few weeks later, they were in a restaurant for dinner. Rhonda had picked up a real estate magazine and was leafing through it as they finished their meal. Suddenly she perked up and said, “Hey, here’s that house, and the price has been reduced.”

She and Dale looked at each other. “When would you like to go see it?” Dale asked.

Rhonda already had her cellphone: “I was thinking about, oh, 20 minutes from now.” By the next morning, they had placed an offer on the house and moved their wedding date up to March, to coincide with the home closing.

What makes some people so





decisive, while others can barely pick out a shirt? Dale and Rhonda's backgrounds offer a clue. As a Dallas Fire Department captain, now retired, Dale spent years making countless rapid decisions every day. Rhonda's 23-year career with Inwood National Bank strengthened her ability to act with certainty, as she has been a branch manager for eight years and a bank officer for 16.

The couple met at a community celebration organized by Dale's brother, Steve. They credit Steve's wife, Janice, with being the "matchmaker." The sudden move to shift their wedding up by almost half a year would throw off many people's planning, but Rhonda took it in stride. "It was actually more exciting — very few people knew we were going to get married when we did. It also gave me less time to worry about it." Now just a few months away from their fifth anniversary, Rhonda still describes their union as "true wedded bliss."

Soon the Martins had settled into the house, along



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with Rhonda's Schnauzers, Gretchen and Heidi. Then they set about making it more their own. The first project was simply to paint the interior to better suit their furnishings and style. Again, Rhonda did not hesitate as she selected bold earth tones from the vast array of samples. "In fact," Dale said, "she knew what she wanted before she ever went to the store." Now, warm tan or cool green walls and white trim set off the dark-colored, comfortable furniture in

each room. A few minor repairs and other projects wait on the back burner until Dale can get around to them.

Both Dale and Rhonda quickly claim the backyard as their favorite part of the property. They love to entertain, and Dale likes cooking — especially at the grill. Naturally, many of their gatherings revolve around the patio's grill center and the pool. "The first two years we lived here, we had company so often that we

had to plan ahead to schedule an open weekend," Rhonda recalled.

Besides home improvement and their demanding professions, both like to keep busy with other things. Dale stays outside a great deal with gardening and yard work, which he describes as "therapy." He works hard to make the lawn a weed- and ant-free zone, and then spends as much as possible of his remaining spare time playing golf.





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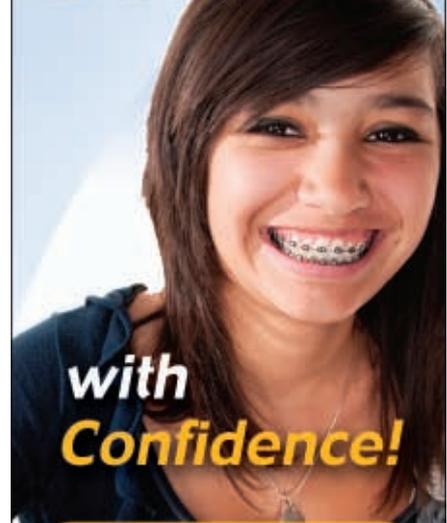


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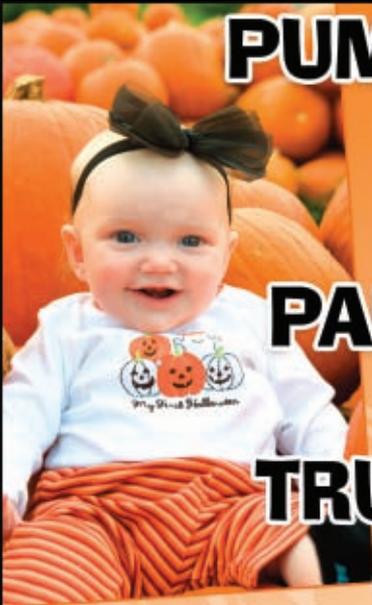


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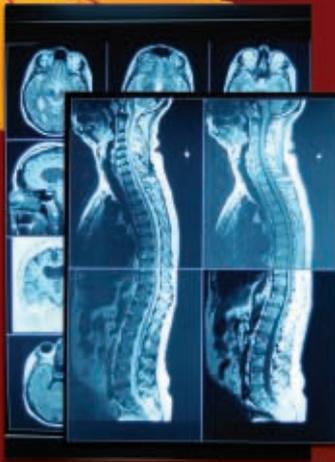
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Rhonda has a long résumé of civic involvement with the Duncanville Chamber of Commerce, Epsilon Sigma Alpha service sorority and the Duncanville Education Foundation. She has chaired or co-chaired many fundraisers. Dale proudly added that Rhonda was named Duncanville's 2008 Woman of the Year.

But this hectic social calendar changed last spring when their son, Will, was born. These days, when they are not working, Rhonda said, "We wash bottles." She and Dale embrace parenting with the same enthusiasm they show for other areas of life, and their calm, cheerful little boy thrives on the attention.

As Dale transitions to retired life, the Martins look forward to a revamped calendar involving the whole family. Rhonda anticipates getting back to traveling, which she and Dale both love. "We like to go to the State Fair — well, maybe next year — and visit Fredericksburg. We love the Hill Country."

"We would move to the Hill Country," Dale added.

Rhonda smiled and went on, "We'll probably visit the Arboretum this year for their fall concerts. I think Will would enjoy it." And naturally, they will continue entertaining family and friends. Rhonda thoroughly enjoys the planning and anticipating stages; she finds it easy to organize get-togethers large or small.

Their home's open kitchen and living areas and large windows overlooking the backyard create an inviting space for those gatherings. Leather furniture, a corner fireplace and tasteful decorative accents add to the comfortable atmosphere.

The Martins' house is tidy and free of clutter, even Will's colorful nursery. Dale and Rhonda attribute this to their decisive, no-nonsense approach to the "stuff" that tends to accumulate. "All our possessions are on four-season

October is Breast cancer Awareness month

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the 5th leading cause of death in women. One way to help screen for this disease is regular mammogram. Once a woman turns 40, she and her physician might consider the need to implement this additional preventive screen into her well woman examinations. It is important that screenings are performed, as this gives physicians an opportunity to address the problem early!! And men ... you are not exempt from breast cancer. It's not as common in men, but for every 100 cases of breast cancer, men make up less than 1 percent.

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probation,” Dale said.

Rhonda explained, “If we haven’t used it in a year, out it goes. We donate it or throw it away.” She added, “I’m not a collector. I don’t collect anything that I can’t actually use.” This sometimes frustrates relatives who are looking for gift ideas, so Rhonda designated Fiesta Dinnerware as her one “collection.” She likes their art-deco look and, of course, when you invite crowds over for meals it is hard to have too many dishes.

Dale’s office does harbor a few mementos that may not be considered strictly “useful.” Among his most treasured possessions is a United States



flag that was flown over an Army base in Afghanistan on September 11, 2010. Will’s godfather, who was stationed there at the time, had a Certificate of Authenticity prepared and signed to accompany the flag. He presented it to Dale to honor his assistance to the New York Fire Department after the September 11 attacks nine years earlier. Dale explained that the Dallas Fire Department had sent rotations of firefighters to New York to attend funerals and otherwise support the New York department’s diminished ranks.

So, does that mean the historic flag is exempt from the Martin “four-season probation?” Dale feels just as sure about what he wants to keep as he does about what he can throw away. “You bet,” he said. “It isn’t going anywhere.” **NOW**

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Glen and Derek Grier are the father - son duo behind G2 Plumbing, specializing in residential and commercial repair. Also pictured is Derek's daughter, Kali.

Piping Up for the Environment

This father-son team gives a nod to earth-friendly plumbing.

— By Angel Morris

Glen Grier had worked in plumbing for many years when he decided to open G2 Plumbing in Red Oak. His vision was a family-owned-and-operated business providing honest plumbing services to the community. "Today our staff has more than 40 years of plumbing experience, and we are known for our affordable prices and same-day service," Glen said.

With son, Derek, at his side, Glen and G2 Plumbing specialize in residential and commercial repair but also handle new installs or new construction needs. Environmentally sound products are at the heart of G2's efforts. "Of course, we do your basic plumbing repairs, and we are here to help 24 hours a day. But, we also like to help our customers maintain their plumbing and even take it to the next level," Derek said.

Plumbing has some of the greatest potential when it comes to helping the environment through your home. From toilets using as much as 60 percent less water per flush to tankless water heaters that use less energy, G2 Plumbing can help customers "go green." With this in mind, G2 Plumbing sells, installs and repairs standard and tankless water heaters. The company installs Noritz and Rinnai heaters in homes and businesses.

"Whether you have an old heater that needs repair or you need a brand-new heater, we offer fast and efficient Energy Star-approved service," Glen said. "If you want to make your bathroom look unique or enjoy an unlimited supply of hot water, our plumbing service team can handle the job."

Unlike a traditional tank that heats a reservoir of water 24

Business **NOW**

hours a day, a tankless unit activates only as needed. When there is a demand for heated water, cold water travels through the tankless unit, where a gas burner quickly heats it to a preset temperature. Studies report tankless systems can cut operating costs in half for homeowners. "This can mean big savings for customers," Derek said.

G2 not only manages tankless water heaters but also toilets, sinks and pipes, as well as water lines and slab leaks. "These services will make sure that your system continues to run efficiently," Glen said. "And our staff provides gas-leak repairs, gas tests and washer installation services, too."

G2 offers the latest and greatest in plumbing fixtures, with an eye toward the environment and green products. Using minimal chemicals and saving energy are bonuses of green plumbing, along with conserving water.

With just one percent of the earth's water being useable, Glen notes saving water is important. As cities like Red Oak grow and the population increases, conserving water becomes a more important step in

"Today our staff has more than 40 years of plumbing experience, and we are known for our affordable prices and same-day service."

making sure that everyone has access to a clean water supply.

"You have the choice of new faucets, shower heads or toilets that can transform the way your bathroom or kitchen look and work, at the same time making your home's water usage more efficient," Glen said.

Whether customers need a simple repair or want to learn more about energy-saving, earth-friendly plumbing for their homes, G2 can answer the call. "We can fix up what you've already got, or, once you choose the right fixtures for your needs, we can quickly install them at your location," Glen said. "Either way, give us a call. We're friendly, fast and affordable and have your best plumbing interest in mind!" **NOW**

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Plan for the Expected — But Prepare for the Unexpected

— By Michael Ewing

To enjoy a comfortable retirement lifestyle, you'll need to have adequate financial resources in place. And that means you must plan for the *expected* — but prepare for the *unexpected*.

In planning for the expected aspects of your retirement, consider these factors:

• **Your vision of your retirement lifestyle** — What do you want to do during your retirement years? Spend more time with your family? Volunteer? Open your own business? Your expectations of your retirement lifestyle will dictate, to a large extent, your savings and investment strategies.

• **Your expenses** — Once you've established a vision for your retirement lifestyle, you can begin to estimate the expenses you expect to incur during your retirement years.

• **Your income** — You can expect to receive income from a variety of sources: Social Security, pensions, part-time employment and investments, such as your IRA, 401(k) and any taxable investment accounts you may have. You'll need to estimate about how much income all these sources could provide.

• **Your withdrawal rate** — If your investments are going to provide a significant part of your retirement income, you need to carefully manage annual withdrawals from your portfolio. Your withdrawal rate is key in helping to ensure your portfolio provides for your needs as long as you need it.

• **Your portfolio reliance rate** — Related to your portfolio withdrawal rate is your portfolio *reliance* rate — how much you rely on your portfolio to provide income. For instance, if you will need \$50,000 per year in retirement, and \$30,000 will come from your portfolio, your reliance rate will be 60 percent (\$30,000 divided by \$50,000). Your reliance rate will help determine how

sensitive your strategy might be to outside events, such as market fluctuations.

While you need to be familiar with these expected elements of your retirement, you also must be prepared for the unexpected aspects, such as these:

• **Living longer than you expect** — How long you can expect to live is somewhat of a mystery. If you were to live longer than you anticipate, would you be financially prepared? To help make sure your money lasts throughout your lifetime, you may need to consider investments that can provide you with a lifetime income stream. And your longevity will obviously also affect your annual portfolio withdrawal rate.

• **Inflation** — At an average inflation rate of three percent, your cost of living will double in about 24 years. That's why, even in retirement, you will need some growth-oriented investments, such as quality stocks to ensure you can maintain your desired retirement lifestyle. But if the unexpected happens, and inflation takes off at a much higher than average level, you may need to consider a greater amount of investments that offer the potential for rising income.

• **Health care** — Even after you're on Medicare, which won't cover everything, you need to prepare for the unexpected, such as a lengthy illness or the need for some type of long-term care. You may also wish to "self-insure" to a certain extent by setting aside funds in a liquid, stable account.

By positioning your investment portfolio for both the expected and the unexpected, you can go a long way toward enjoying the retirement lifestyle you seek. So plan ahead — and make the necessary adjustments as time goes by. **NOW**

Michael Ewing is an Edward Jones representative based in Red Oak.

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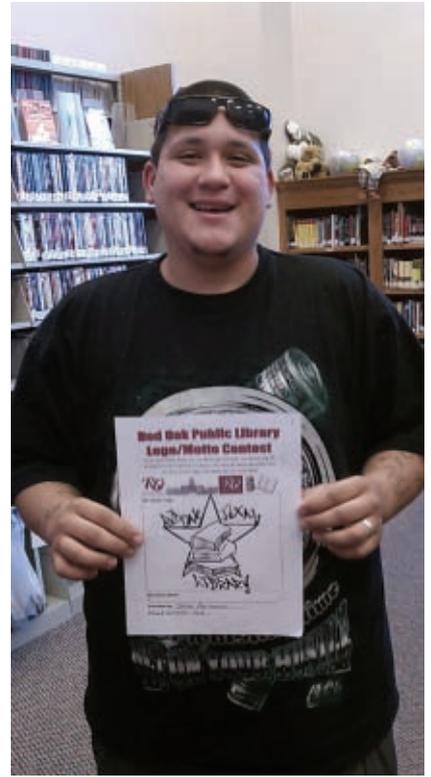
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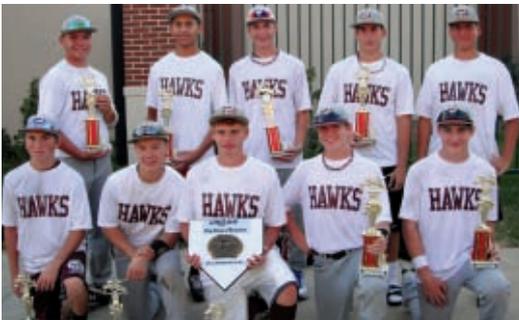
Red Oak Police Department teams up with Chili's in Waxahachie to raise money for St. Jude.



Cheerleaders from Red Oak Pee Wee Football Association pose at Cowboys Stadium during a fundraiser event.



Joshua Buchanan is named winner of the Red Oak Library logo competition.



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Throughout the Month

Pumpkin Patch: Daily at First United Methodist Church, 600 Daubitz Drive. Proceeds from pumpkin sales benefit the church playground fund, as well as children's needs in the community. The sale culminates in a party **Oct. 29**, followed by "Trunk or Treating" in the parking lot.

October 1

Bowling for Badges: 5:30 p.m. check-in; 6:00 p.m. bowling begins. Hilltop Super Bowl, 2010 W. Hwy. 287 Business, Waxahachie. Red Oak Service League hosts this bowl-a-thon benefiting Red Oak police and firefighter associations. Admission of \$5 includes a Texas Shoot-Out prize entry. Contact Melanie Peterson at (214) 864-8014 or melanie.ROSL@gmail.com.

October 3

Red Oak Education Foundation Golf Tournament: 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Thorntree Country Club, 825 W. Wintergreen Road, DeSoto. Four-man scramble including hole prizes and raffle event benefiting ROISD. www.PartnershipChallenge.golfreg.com.

October 4

National Night Out: Residents are encouraged to organize block parties, visits from local

police, parades, exhibits, youth programs, etc. in their neighborhoods to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness. Contact Red Oak Police Department Community Relations Officer Nathan Bickerstaff at (469) 218-7710 or nbickerstaff@redoaktx.org.

October 7

The Bully Report: 7:00 p.m., Red Oak Junior High School, 154 Louise Ritter Blvd. Recognizing October as National Stop Bullying Month, ROJHS Theatre Department II presents *The Bully Report*. Admission: \$5/adults; \$3/children; free/3 and younger.

October 21-22

Munster Mansion Charity Event: 7:00 p.m.-midnight. Tour this private home, a replica of the home used in TV's *The Munsters*. Event benefits the Ellis County SPCA. Midway games, food, children's costume contest, bounce houses, prizes. Live band, face painting and appearances by special guests. Adults \$20; children 12 and under \$12. Visit www.munstermansion.com/2011.html for parking/shuttle details.

October 22

"Get Out and Wine Down" Chamber Auction: 6:00-11:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Parkway. Contact Shelley Oglesby at

(972) 617-0906 or admin@redoakareachamber.org.

October 29

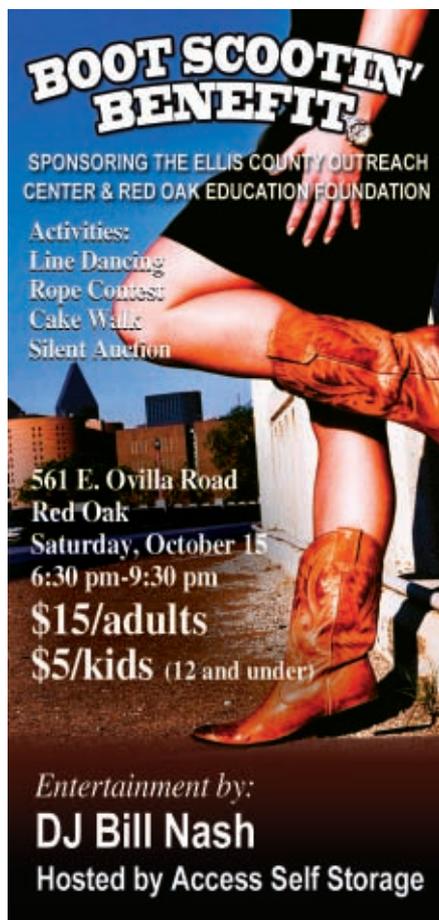
Fall Festival: 4:00-8:00 p.m., Pearson Park (behind Red Oak Municipal Center), 200 Lakeview Parkway. Enjoy vendors, a haunted hayride, carnival by The Oaks Fellowship, costume contest by the Red Oak Lions Club and more family fun. (469) 218-1202 or lfindley@redoaktx.org.

Fun Run: 1 Mile: 8:00 a.m. 5K: 8:30 a.m. Awards: 10:00 a.m., Ovilla United Methodist Church, 1403 Red Oak Creek Rd. Benefiting OUMC and United Methodist Missions. Visit <http://ovillaumc.org/5K-fun-run> for registration/ deadline information, or contact (972) 617-8840 or ovillaumc@sbcglobal.net for vendor details.

October 30

Blood drive: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 Daubitz Drive. Carter Blood Mobile will accept donations in the parking lot of the church.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to angel.morris@nowmagazines.com.



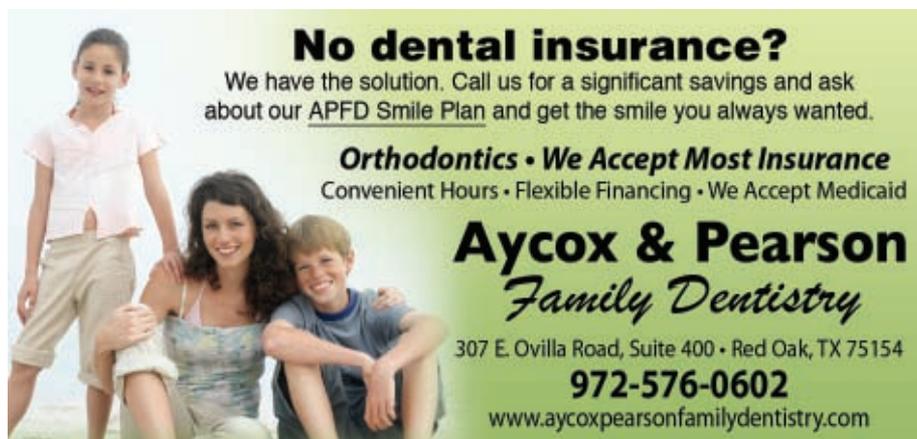
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In The Kitchen With Jennifer Chaney

— *By Angel Morris*

Jennifer Chaney believes “good food brings good people together,” which inspired her to begin Recipe Roundup, a social networking page where folks share ideas. “You take the recipes and make them your own,” she said. A proud stay-at-home mom of four children, Jennifer is a “short-order cook around the clock,” and loves to feed her high-school-sweetheart-turned-husband. “I’m not a professional cook, but I haven’t heard any complaints from the hubby!” she said.

Jennifer’s favorite thing to make is dessert. “I find the most joy in baking, and sweets are always my favorite way to end a meal!” Someday Jennifer hopes to return to her business of preparing hand-dipped chocolate treats. “But until then I’m content sharing recipes and learning from other cooks every chance I get!” **NOW**

Chicken Spaghetti

- 2-3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, thawed**
- 1/2 block Velveeta**
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of mushroom soup**
- 1 10-oz. can Ro*Tel**
- 1/2 lb. spaghetti**
- Red or green bell peppers, chopped (optional)**

- 1.** In a large pot, boil chicken breasts until tender, about 30 minutes. Reserve broth for cooking pasta.
- 2.** In a separate large pot, combine Velveeta, cream of mushroom soup and Ro*Tel. Cook, stirring constantly, until cheese is melted.
- 3.** Cut or shred chicken breasts and add to cheese mixture; mix well.
- 4.** Cook spaghetti in reserved broth according to al dente package directions; drain and add to cheese mixture, mix well.
- 5.** Add red or green bell peppers, if desired. Serve immediately.

Mexican Casserole

- 1 lb. ground beef**
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of mushroom soup**
- 1 10-oz. can Ro*Tel**
- 1 bag tortilla chips**
- Shredded cheese (your favorite type, as much as desired)**

- 1.** In a large skillet, cook beef and drain.
- 2.** Return beef to skillet. Add cream of mushroom soup and Ro*Tel; mix well.
- 3.** Cook on medium heat until warm.
- 4.** Cover bottom of large casserole dish with tortilla chips. Pour beef mixture over chips; top with layer of cheese.
- 5.** Bake at 350 F for 15 minutes.

Breakfast Casserole

- 1 lb. breakfast sausage**
- 1 lb. bacon**
- 1 1/2 dozen eggs**
- 1 loaf white bread**

Approximately 8 oz. mild cheddar cheese, shredded

- 1.** In large skillet, cook sausage until brown and crumbled; remove from skillet and set aside.
- 2.** In the same skillet, cook bacon until crispy; crumble and set aside.
- 3.** Break eggs into a large bowl and stir as you would for scrambled eggs.
- 4.** Cover the bottom of a large casserole dish with white bread and pour eggs over the bread layer.
- 5.** Place sausage on top of egg/bread mixture; place bacon over sausage.
- 6.** Cover with shredded cheese and bake at 350 F for 20 minutes.

Made-From-Scratch Pancakes

- 2 cups self-rising flour**
- 1 egg**
- 1/2 stick butter, softened 10 seconds in microwave**
- 2 cups whole milk**
- Butter**
- Syrup**

- 1.** In a large bowl, combine flour, egg, butter and milk. Stir until mixture is a lumpy cake batter consistency. (You may need to add a little more than 2 cups milk.)
- 2.** Heat a well-oiled griddle (or skillet) on medium heat. Add pancakes 1/4 cup at a time.
- 3.** Once air bubbles begin to rise through pancakes and bottom turns a golden brown, flip pancakes and cook the other side until golden brown.
- 4.** Remove from heat and serve with butter and your favorite syrup.

Banana-less Banana Pudding

- 1 large box banana cream instant pudding (or 2 small)**
- 2 cups whole milk**
- 1 large container Cool Whip**
- 1 box vanilla wafer cookies**

- 1.** In a large mixing bowl, combine pudding, milk and half the Cool Whip. Use a whisk to combine.
- 2.** In a medium glass serving bowl, lay wafers on bottom of the bowl and pour half of pudding mixture on top. Make another layer of wafers and add remaining pudding mixture.
- 3.** Top with remaining Cool Whip and more wafers, if desired. Chill until fully set, about 1 hour.



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