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October 2009

Biker for
BACA

**Running
Down
A Dream**

Art in
The Family

At Home With
Shellye Smith



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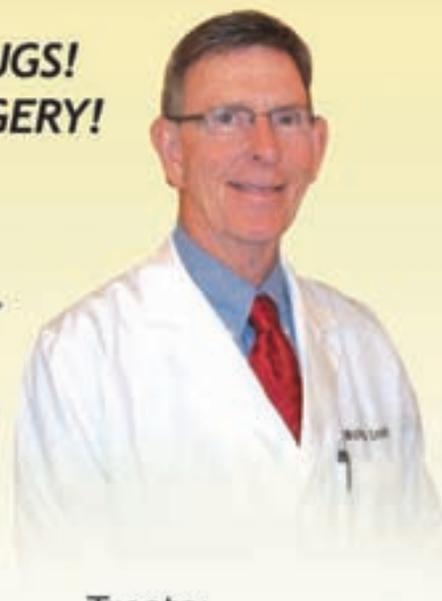
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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our October issue of *Red OakNOW*. The local residents featured in this issue are fascinating people. Just like the fall leaves paint the landscape with beautiful colors, they paint our community with heartfelt lessons, stories and talents.



Please enjoy as you read about our wonderfully diverse residents. They come from all walks of life, are passionate about helping others and thrive on sharing inspiration with all whom they meet.

Be sure to catch some of the upcoming color and beauty of the season by attending a community fall fest, and do not forget that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. You can make a difference by participating in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Dallas on October 17. You can register online by visiting www.komen-dallas.org/race. until 2:00 a.m. on October 13.

Whatever you do, get outside and be inspired!
Diana Merrill Claussen
 Red OakNOW Editor

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“Our purpose is to empower kids to not be afraid of the world we live in.”

Biker for BACA

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

For retired Air Force civilian and Red Oak resident Ron Reaves, keeping active during his retirement was not only important, but necessary. Since 1966, Ron has enjoyed riding motorcycles. “I was in my 30s [when the cycle interest began],” he said. Ron’s involvement with motorcycles started with the encouragement of a few buddies from work.

Ron bought his first bike over 42 years ago. “I’ve always owned a cycle on and off since then,” he said. About a year-and-a-half after he retired, “I became bored,” Ron explained. So, he went back to work full time, and by chance learned of a biker group whose mission was more than just to ride.

One day while shopping at Walmart, “I ran into a guy who worked in the fishing department who was wearing his riding gear,” Ron said. As they talked about fishing, Ron asked the fellow if he rode. “We started talking about how he was a member of BACA, Bikers Against Child Abuse,” Ron said. Within a month, Ron attended his first meeting to learn more about the organization. “That was in October 2006,” he said. “By November, I became a full-fledged member of the organization.”

Since then Ron has been riding his purple Suzuki 1500. “I catch a lot of flack for it because it has a custom paint job. It’s purple with white lace painted on it. When I saw it at the dealership, though, I knew ‘my kids’ would love it,” he exclaimed, referring to the children the BACA organization helps.

“I joined BACA because I wanted to find a group to ride with that wasn’t a club,” he explained. Ron soon learned BACA was actually so much more. The purpose of the organization is to befriend children in “the system” who have endured many different aspects of family crisis. “We work with CPS and CASA, the district attorney and even law enforcement,” Ron stated. “Our purpose is to empower kids to not be afraid of the world we live in.”

Ron is the president of BACA’s Buffalo Creek Chapter in Waxahachie. “Our chapter started in 2006 and has over 40 members. Texas has 20 chapters, over 700 members. [BACA] is also an international organization,” he said.

To become a BACA member each person must pass a thorough background check. Because the organization’s purpose is to work with and befriend children in need, there are rules and guidelines when visiting and interacting with





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them. It all starts when there is an active court case involving a child. “We have kids assigned to us by one of the protective organizations. Then that child service agency will call the guardian and ask if they would like their child to be a part of our program.”

“Once the guardians give their consent, we go out and meet the child, along with a liaison officer [and] visit with both the guardians and the child,” Ron said. That initial visit allows the



Ron Reaves poses with his daughter, Kelly, and grandson, Gavin.

family and BACA to get to know each other. “Once the club ‘adopts’ the child, he/she then gets to choose a ‘road name.’ When we adopt them they are only known by their road name [for privacy purposes].”

The child’s road name “helps the kid to feel more of a member of the BACA family,” Ron said. “We are there to be a friend that they can trust, because in most cases, they have lost trust [in] everyone.” What is it about the biker persona that helps the child to feel more secure? “They tend to trust the tough biker image because we are different from the ‘normal’ people that they have had problems with,” Ron explained. “We are somebody from the outside that comes in and supports the kids through friendship.”

The first few times Ron went on adoption visits, “I got hooked forever! Since then, I’ve become a fanatic [for

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the organization].” After the initial adoption visit, “We bring the whole chapter to visit the child, give them an official BACA member certificate, and even give them their own leather vest with their name on it,” Ron smiled. “The child also gets a ton of gifts from the members such as blankets, pins, hats and a pillow case that all of the members sign.” Some of the members drive to or from other states just to be a part of these memorable visits.

“We try to make it a big event because we want it to be special for the child and something they will remember for a long time,” Ron said. Sometimes during these visits, there are a few tears shed by the BACA members. “There are also some things that will tear your heart out, especially when you hear some of the things that have happened to those kids,” Ron said.

Occasionally, the children request that BACA members accompany them to court hearings, so Ron has heard many of their stories firsthand. “Sometimes a child will be afraid to testify [against someone who has victimized them] so we will go to court with them and be there to show the child support.” When a child is on the stand, they have to give details about their ordeal. It is usually a pretty emotional experience for the child, their [guardian] family and their BACA family.

BACA members have been known to provide security for families if they have been threatened. “We have literally held camp and surrounded the houses of some of our kids to protect them from possible perpetrators who have made threats,” Ron said. “Generally, if a perp sees a bunch of bikers surrounding a house, they won’t bother the family.” One security detail consisted of members from all over the country and lasted for three weeks.

“Everything is on a volunteer basis, but our chapter survives from donations which go directly to the kids,” Ron said. “I never thought I was a kid person, but when you see a sad child, all you want to do is make them happy; I love working with them.” **NOW**

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ESTATE of Being

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Shellye Smith came from humble beginnings and grew up, “right here in Red Oak.” Shellye believes in the importance of expressing yourself. Although she does not think of herself as artistic, Shellye’s sense of self can be seen in her personal artwork. “I have over 17 tattoos,” she smiled. With that in mind, it is hard not to be curious about the interior decor of the stately 5,100-square-foot home she shares with her two children Maisye, 12, and Blayne, 8.

From the redbrick “castle’s” stately circular drive, you cannot help but notice the balconies and towers of the home, which sits upon 10 acres of well-manicured land.

Upon entering the four-bedroom, six-bathroom, two-story home, the high ceiling in the entry seems to reach heavenward and is accented with many blown-glass chandeliers. When creating the plans for her home, Shellye made sure that every nook within the home was more amazing than the next.



The adventure of experiencing the Smith residence begins as soon as you step onto the entry’s rust-stained, concrete floor. “I love the stained concrete because it’s easy to clean,” Shellye said. From the living room, wall-length windows provide a view of the backyard, showing the lanai (porch), black pebble-tech saltwater pool, rock-covered hot tub and tropical palms and flora. Behind the pool is a new red barn along with a pasture where

their thoroughbred horse, Sydney, roams. “I love watching the horse from the living room,” Shellye said.

Having such an open floor plan was something Shellye planned when she created the home’s blueprints. “I first picked different designs from books that caught my eye, and then took

pictures of those ideas. I then put all of the pictures together to create what I like,” she said. “I enjoy putting stuff together.” Once the plans were drawn, the home was custom-built by Shellye’s father and completed in January 2008.

The expanse of the living room is furnished with plush leather couches and accented with many of Shellye’s signature touches — items she has acquired from weekend trips to First Monday Trade Days in Canton, Texas. Her wooden and weathered coffee table doubles as a storage box. A gas pump from 1978 sits next to the Oklahoma river rock accented fireplace. “I bought that gas pump because it is from the year I was born,” Shellye said. The room has beautiful hardwood plank “hand-scraped” flooring. The scraping leaves ridges on the wood giving it an even richer and unique texture. “The process left shavings everywhere,” Shellye said.

Next to the living area is the Smiths’ large kitchen and breakfast area. The appliances are stainless steel and include a commercial-sized refrigerator. There are many cabinets and niches throughout the room for Shellye to display more of her personal treasures, such as her vintage Barbie doll cases and her roller skates from childhood. The vintage dinette set and barstools make the kitchen both functional and fun.

The excitement of the residence and



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its eclectic decor does not end in the kitchen; it can be found throughout this non-pretentious, yet stately home. The dining area features a wine room complete with an iron grapevine door and an imported Hungarian hutch. The biggest showpieces of the home are the oil paintings created by a local artist that are displayed upon the dining room walls. The paintings portray *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) and feature fun skeletons in funky scenes. The artwork fits perfectly into Shellye's outlook and appreciation for the unusual. "I'm a huge Day of the Dead fan," she said. "The weirder stuff is, the better it is for me," she laughed.

Weird is not what visitors would think when they enter the Smith home. *Unique* would be more like it. Shellye's artistic eye combines a mix of contemporary, rustic, vintage and eclectic accents to give the home its own unique character. All of the pieces and accessories fit together perfectly in a conglomeration of fabulous fun!

"I'm always on a mission to find something odd," Shellye smiled. "It's my goal to freak people out and to find things that no one else has. I want people to come to my house and be overwhelmed." The Smith home is quite a shock to the senses, but in positive ways, for who would expect to walk from the dining to the master bedroom and run into an alcove with a life-sized pirate with his own treasure trove? The pirate alcove is accented by a beautiful wood and iron spiral staircase. Down the hallway is Shelley's office complete with a massive, hand-made floor-to-ceiling desk and a turtle ottoman. It is accented with vintage Barbies and zebra chairs.

Down the hall and around the corner is the master bedroom. Located atop the two side tables found in the room, are skull lamps that add to the room's theme. The bed is covered with a tattoo-themed comforter and piled with tons of pillows. "I never have to move out of my bed," Shellye exclaimed

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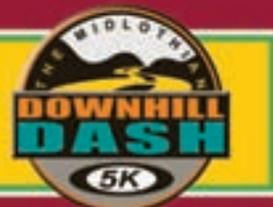
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in reference to a beautiful fireplace with a flat screen TV located over the mantle. There is also a full-length bay window overlooking the beautiful grounds and pasture.

Situated in front of the window sits an actual replica of the sexy “leg lamp” from the 1983 movie, *A Christmas Story*. Of course, it would not be the most talked about piece in the house if

it did not come with the fishnet stocking and, yes, black spiked heel. “*A Christmas Story* is my all-time favorite Christmas movie,” Shellye exclaimed. Just like in the movie, the full-sized lamp sits atop a wooden crate with FRAGILE stamped on its side.

Walking into Shellye’s closet is like walking into a regular-sized living room with quite a shoe collection. “I

have a sweet tooth for shoes!” she exclaimed. The closet is not the only area in the master suite that is sure to stun the senses. The master bath contains what Shellye calls her “car wash shower,” which is fully open at both sides. The most stunning piece of this amazing room is the black pedestal tub surrounded by granite, slate and marble tile.

“Nobody takes a shower upstairs, they all use mine,” Shellye smiled. Both Maisye and Blayne have their own themed baths and bedrooms. Blayne’s is a rock ‘n’ roll/skater theme, while Maisye’s is decorated with horses. From a horse-shaped topiary to a prancing horse mural on her wall, this room is every equestrian lover’s dream. Over Maisye’s door is a sign that reads, “I love you to the moon and back,” which is a quote from the first book Shellye ever read to her daughter. The saying and memory means so much to Shellye that, “I have the quote as a tattoo,” she grinned. **NOW**

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Art in the Family

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Good work can be hard to find, a good artist is even harder. Becoming good at anything, including art, takes a lot of time and much practice. Local photographer Rebekah Greenawalt was destined to become who she is today, a very talented photographer, and she has been working toward that goal since childhood.

“When I was little, my dad worked for a TV station and would also do photography for nonprofit organizations,” Rebekah said. “I loved photography, and I’ve always been drawn to it.” Rebekah remembers when her photography interest began. “When I was 5 years old, I would walk around the house and shoot video stories with our family camera,” she reminisced.

Later in high school, Rebekah delved into photography. “That’s when I got seriously into it, and went to work for a photo company that shoots school pictures,” she said. “I also helped start a company where we would create wedding albums for photographers to give to their customers. The company even won a ‘Hot One’ award,” Rebekah added.

When Rebekah turned 18, she was given the opportunity she had always dreamed about. “There was a young couple I was friends with, and they knew I had won a lot of photo awards during high school. So, they asked me to shoot their wedding,” she said. “That first wedding was very scary, but I loved it!”

Rebekah always thought she would pursue a career in photojournalism, but from the moment she began shooting her friend’s nuptials, she realized her calling was to specialize in wedding photography. “I love the storytelling aspect of it,” she said. “When I shoot a wedding [my mission] is to capture the day and the moment. I enjoy that challenge.” Rebekah believes the key to getting the perfect shots is to get to know her subjects and understanding their ideas, needs and personal taste or style.

Standing behind the lens is not where Rebekah’s photographic and artistic interests end. She edits her own photos using Adobe Photoshop PS3. “It’s a fabulous program and has a great aperture feature where you can use different plug-ins to edit your work,” she said.

“I [also] collect cameras because I love the history of photography,” she said. One of her most prized cameras is a second edition Kodak Brownie from the early 1900s. “All the shutters still work on it, too,” she said. She also owns a “Kodak Ball camera where you could autograph your name on the film.”

Whether using one of her collector cameras or her favorite Cannon 5D Mark 2 with a 50 mm 1.2 lens, Rebekah not only loves how photography enhances her life, but loves to share this artistic passion with others. “I started a photography club for ladies in our area called We (heart) Photography,” Rebekah said. The club, which does not charge membership fees, is an outlet allowing women who love photography to get together with their cameras and go out to shoot all over our area. From nature, to events, “Getting out to shoot and using your creative outlet brings a fullness to life,” she said. Ladies often put their artistic abilities on hold because they are too busy with their families. “Just because you have kids doesn’t mean you should put your camera down,” Rebekah encouraged. “There is life in

creating something because you thrive when you exercise your passion.”

Rebekah’s club gathered up their camera gear and headed to the State Fair of Texas in September for a day of creative fun. They photographed whatever they found inspiring or interesting while gaining experience and enjoying the day with other female photographers. “We also went to see Denis Reggie earlier this year. He is one of the top photographers in the world,” Rebekah said.

Rebekah offered a few more insights for those who might be picking up a camera for the first time or are considering dusting it off. “If you are just starting out in photography, you

.....
 “I would just die if I didn’t have photography. I just love how the camera isolates moments.”

first have to develop your ‘eye,” she said. “When considering if something is photo-worthy, ask yourself why you like what you see and find out if you like it because of the lighting, the subject matter or how it moves you. (I have a passion for lighting because it can highlight detail and reflections. It can also assist in creating fun, traditional or just about any type of theme.) After that, just keep shooting, don’t stop, and make sure you take your camera everywhere. Once you develop your eye and learn to master your camera, then you will be ready to learn about the technical aspects such as aperture and shutter speed.”

One of Rebekah’s favorite times of year to shoot is during the fall season. “To me it’s the most magical season because of the dark rich tones and vivid colors,” she said. She loves the dramatic effect caused by falling leaves. “Fall is very fairy tale-like to me,” she said. “I would die if I didn’t have photography. I just love how the camera isolates moments.” **NOW**

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Running Down a Dream

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Children are known for changing their minds about what they want to do when they grow up on almost a daily basis. This is not the case for Red Oak High School (ROHS) sophomore Jeremy Brady. “When Jeremy was 3 years old, he started playing football on pee-wee teams,” his mother, La Tonya Brady, said. “After pee-wee, I never stopped playing the sport and am constantly involved in football with my brothers and friends all the time,” Jeremy added. “I was always a very physical kid. My mom was even afraid I was a bully.” Although he really was not a bully, “I just loved knocking people over,” he smiled.

Coming from a predominantly basketball-loving family, Jeremy grew to love the hoops almost as much as football. Jeremy’s mom and dad both encouraged him to see how well he could do at both sports. However, his heart is on the football field. “My older brother, D.J., played football and basketball, but he kept switching between the two sports,” Jeremy said. “Now, D.J. is a senior and plays varsity basketball at Red Oak High School.

“When I first started playing football, my dad was my coach, so I really started getting into it and loved it,” he explained. His dad, Dexter, started a city football team, and as Jeremy grew up, he found himself playing the sport with the same children throughout the years. His talent and desire for the sport grew. “I just got better and better and started thinking, *Hey, I’m pretty good at this.*”



After working hard on city leagues, Jeremy played in middle school and later junior high. “As I got older, my junior high coaches started talking to me, and they would really motivate us,” Jeremy said. “When he left junior high he would work out two to three times a day because his goal was to make the varsity team as a freshman,” Dexter said.

However, at the beginning of his freshman year at ROHS, Jeremy was placed on the freshman team. “I would go to their [varsity team’s] sessions and watch their films. I guess that showed I was motivated and determined,” he said. “Then when the head coach came to talk to me, I was surprised.

“[After] I played my first junior varsity game, the coaches would have me practice more, and they would watch how I would improve,” he said. “I guess they thought I’d be very helpful on the varsity team.” By the third game of the season, “I started playing varsity.” Jeremy’s first game on his new team just happened to be the homecoming game. “That was one of the scariest games of my life,” he said. This freshman on the varsity team was being observed. “The coaches wanted to see how I was doing, and it turns out they thought I did pretty well,” he smiled. They won their homecoming

game, and Jeremy deservedly earned his spot on the team.

Jeremy's talent and love for the game continued to grow. "The coaches kept motivating me, and I kept improving," he said. "That year, [last year] we ended up making playoffs. Being in varsity was a great experience for me and my future, and I know what to work for, for that future," he reflected.

Part of Jeremy's plan is to continue to work hard, be disciplined and grow. This past July, he started working out three times a day with a personal trainer who is also a former National Football League (NFL) professional. "My trainer and I have sessions in conditioning and techniques," he said. It is Jeremy's dedication and heart that have helped him to become a success. "He's a good and smart kid," La Tonya said. He is an A/B student and his favorite subject is math.

For the rest of his high school years, Jeremy plans on working hard for his team and making his parents proud. Once he graduates, he has more dreams to accomplish. "After high school, I want to go play football for any college that wants me," he grinned. Those who know Jeremy say he will probably have many colleges to choose from. "I've received a couple of questionnaires and information sheets from college scouts and coaches," he said. "That made me feel good; it also made me more focused on what I can do for them."

Jeremy's positive outlook, good grades and integrity are a reflection on his upbringing. "I listen to my parents," he said. "They've been telling me to be good and do the right thing since I was little," he grinned. "They also encourage me to stay motivated and hungry. They tell me that all the time. I also pick good friends and talk to everybody." For now, Jeremy is looking at his immediate and bright future. "I want to win a state championship," he smiled. **NOW**

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Eye Help

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

When Dr. Maurice Lynch was in his junior year in college, he knew he wanted to be in healthcare. The catalyst that helped the premed and chemistry student decide to become an optometrist was very personal. “I had a lot of family members that had eye problems such as glaucoma and cataracts,” he shared. This led Maurice to attend Morgan State University and later the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in Philadelphia.

While in school, Dr. Lynch met his wife, Jermisha, who encouraged him as he worked toward his goal of opening his own practice within five years after his graduation. As Dr. Lynch worked toward this goal, he also decided he wanted to gain additional experience regarding specialty procedures such as refractive surgery management.

After receiving his degree and working within the operative field, the Lynch family moved to Desoto. “After we moved here, I went to work for Carter Eye Center in Dallas,” Dr. Lynch recalled. “I managed cutting edge procedures in other ocular conditions such as macular degeneration.” This experience enhanced the doctor’s knowledge in many eye conditions. Dr.



Lynch then took this valuable experience and opened Red Oak Eyecare with Jermisha. He met his very personal goal of having a family optometric practice. “We like the family-oriented community and the people are friendly here, too,” he said.

Today, with Jermisha by his side as the office manager, Dr. Lynch is glad to be a part of the Red Oak community. “[At] Red Oak Eyecare, we provide the full scope of optometry needs to our patients,” he explained. “We also use different comprehensive testing equipment like corneal mapping and retinal photography.” Experience in optometry, surgeries, specialty eye conditions and eye health help this doctor, who not only cares about his patients’ eyes, but also their well

being. "I am very big on the healthcare aspect of the eyes and am not just about giving someone glasses," he said. "I also have a personal interest in the care of my patients." This helps Dr. Lynch fulfill another dream: helping all people, regardless of their eye conditions.

To the doctor, the eyes are the windows to a person's physical well being. Sometimes when a patient has an underlying medical condition, the effects of that condition can be seen during a routine eye exam. "If we see a problem with the eyes, it helps tell us what is going on with the patient's body," Dr. Lynch said.

"Too many of us take our eyesight for granted, and we only get one pair of eyes."

Dr. Lynch and his staff provide eye exams, glasses and contacts, and they inform and treat patients with eye conditions and suggest possible surgical options as needed. At Red Oak Eyecare, "our motto is to provide good quality vision services," he noted. Dr. Lynch sees patients from the age of 6 years old and up, but, he advised, "a child's first eye exam should start at 6 months of age." Even young children can develop vision impairments. "The sooner you catch certain conditions, the better the outcome," he said. "Too many of us take our eyesight for granted, and we only get one pair of eyes."

Red Oak Eyecare is located in Suite 300 on 303 East Ovilla Road. Their hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. You may also reach the clinic by visiting the Web site at www.redoakeyecare.com or calling (972) 617-8000. **NOW**

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What Adds Up

— By Kyle Irion

The classic vision of a teacher is an older woman standing in front of her class, ruler in hand, mercilessly drilling her students on the “three R’s.” She is a despot in a cardigan. As untrue as this stereotype may be in most cases, it is even less appropriate when applied to Bryan Rogers: teacher, minister and mentor. Bryan is a teacher of a different breed. He, himself, will admit to as much. “I’m definitely different — not a typical youth minister. I don’t fit stereotypes,” Bryan said. He sees his teaching methods as more than a means to raise test scores, but as a way to improve the lives of his students long after they have left his classroom.

Bryan has been doing youth ministry for the past 20 years, first in Sherman, then in North Carolina, where he was a full-time minister for a time. Now he is in Cedar Hill, ministering at Cedar Heights Baptist Church. Youth ministry has been a source of consistency for Bryan for the past two decades. He attended Texas Tech University, where he received a Bachelor of Science in engineering. With this degree, he did four years of engineering work, a career track he found unfulfilling. What the job lacked was the one-on-one mentorship Bryan utilized in his years as a youth minister. His history as a youth minister instilled in him a strong sense of satisfaction from working with young people. So, he left engineering and



became certified to teach. He now teaches mathematics at Red Oak High School, and is respected for his ability to help even the most hard-to-reach students.

Bryan’s teaching philosophy is deeply personal. He described it in three steps: connect, relate and teach. He strives to connect with the students as people and then relate the subject to them in terms they can understand and with which they identify. Finally, once you have connected with the students and found terms that they can understand, you teach them. This, the “teaching” step, is where the student really begins to grasp and learn the material. This personal approach to teaching is rooted in Bryan’s firm belief that students are, “Created with infinite value, dignity and worth.” Too often, Bryan believes, students are taught as a collective, a mass, rather than a collection of individuals, each with their own unique set of needs. He believes in meeting students “where they’re at.”

When a student is having a particularly hard time, he will look at their situation and from there draw out what the student needs in order to learn. Bryan looks at their background, what kind of unique hardships they are dealing with — be it academic, familial, financial, etc. He does things like shaking the hand of a student as he or she enters the room and asking them what they thought of the game the night before. He creates a rapport with his students, a feeling of mutual trust and respect, and once this is created, the learning can really take place. This is not a 100 percent fix, however. “There is not always a correlation between a strong personal relationship with the student, and that student performing well academically,” Bryan admitted.

The challenge for most students when it comes to math is, according to Bryan, that it “builds on itself — and there’s a logical thinking that has to go along with that. So, people struggle

with how to break a problem down and solve it like that.” To remedy this problem, Bryan attaches abstract ideas to concrete things students deal with on a daily basis — things like the weather or sports scores. What he is trying to do when making these associations is make math a thing of value to the students. “Simple truth is that if someone doesn’t value what they’re learning,” Bryan explained, “they’re not going to learn it, so you have to create value.” Many times,

“I’m definitely different — not a typical youth minister. I don’t fit stereotypes.”

there is a great gulf placed between the subjects students are taught in school and the activities of their daily lives. This value creation stretches beyond student to math. It applies to Bryan’s entire philosophy. He creates within the student a value for him or herself. Once they see that they are worth it — worth his time, his patience, his efforts — *then* they start to learn because they believe they can.

Bryan’s longtime devotion to the Christian faith has taught him the importance of patience when dealing with students. What is at the core of his approach, however, is not simply a cool hand waiting out a tantrum. It is an outstretched hand, held with a deep desire to help his students — in his ministry as well as in his classroom. Bryan’s faith is inseparable from his teaching methods. His desire to teach is simply an outgrowth of his belief in the power of compassion and belief in the individual’s ability to succeed beyond even their wildest imagination. **NOW**

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Around Town

It is that time of year again — when sleeping in and relaxing by the pool is replaced by early morning alarms and football games. Red Oak students, young and old, began the new school year with spirit, patriotism and learning new things.

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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

Red Oak Fire Rescue is fortunate to have the cooking talents of Assistant Chief Larry Johnson. His call to cooking began when he was in junior high. “My parents both worked. One day after school, I decided to cook dinner for the family,” he recalled. “They liked it, so I tried it a few more times. Then it was expected of me.”

Now, Larry enjoys cooking for his wife, Carol, their family and friends on several occasions, including Christmas and the Super Bowl. “On Super Bowl Sunday, I always cook gumbo and homemade bread. A friend of mine gave me a sour dough starter about 17 years ago and I still use it,” he explained. “My daughter doesn’t like seafood, so I make one pot of chicken/sausage and one pot of crawfish gumbo.” **NOV**

To view more of your neighbors’ recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

IN THE KITCHEN WITH LARRY JOHNSON

SHRIMP CREOLE

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 cup water
- 1 6-oz. can tomato paste
- 1 16-oz. can stewed tomatoes
- 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- salt, pepper and season salt, to taste
- 2 lbs. raw shrimp
- 1/2 cup parsley, chopped
- 3 Tbsp. instant roux

Place all vegetables and garlic in a large pot with half of the butter. Sauté until tender. Add water, and all ingredients except shrimp, parsley, instant roux and remaining butter. Simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. In a separate pan, simmer shrimp in remaining butter until shrimp loses its translucency. Add shrimp mixture, roux and parsley to the large pot and boil 10 minutes. Serve over hot rice.

BAKED RED SNAPPER WITH SHRIMP STUFFING

- 1/2 cup butter
- 3 tsp. green onion, minced
- 1 Tbsp. flour
- 1/2 tsp. basil
- 1 Tbsp. parsley, minced
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 14-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1/2 lb. cooked shrimp (about 1 cup), chopped
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 3 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 4-6 lb. red snapper

Melt 1/4 cup of the butter in a skillet. (I prefer Teflon.) Add onion and cook until transparent. Stir in flour, basil and parsley. Gradually add milk, stirring to form a thick sauce. Stir in mushroom soup; simmer until soup is dissolved. Add shrimp, rice and lemon juice. Stir until blended and remove from heat. Cut the tail from the fish to prevent burning. Place fish in a foil-lined pan. Fill body cavity with stuffing. Use tooth picks to hold stuffing in the cavity. Melt remaining butter and pour over fish. Bake at 400 F for 50 to 70 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Baste with butter occasionally. Serve garnished with lemon

slices and parsley.

LJ'S BARBEQUE BRISKET

- brisket
- 1 cup barbeque sauce
- 1 cup marinade of your choice

Place brisket in a roasting pan, fat side up. Cover tightly. Cook at 200 F for 6-8 hours. The brisket is done when you can rake the fat off easily with a spoon. Remove all fat. With a sharp knife or electric knife, make cuts halfway through and across the grain of the meat. Mix barbeque sauce and marinade in a large cup. Pour over the cut side of the brisket. Using a butter knife and the flat side of a spoon, open the cuts and smear the sauce into the cuts. Wrap loosely with foil. Make a charcoal fire over to one side in a grill. When the charcoal is burning well, place some sort of green wood on the charcoal (pecan, mesquite, hickory, oak, etc). Place the wrapped brisket on the opposite side from the fire. Do not place the brisket directly over the fire, or it will dry out and become tough. Close the lid and let the brisket smoke for at least 3 hours. The secret to tender, moist brisket is keeping it covered, low heat and extended cooking time.

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Renting Your Life Insurance — Information about Term Policies

— By Nickie Weyrauch

There are many kinds of life insurance, but they generally fall into two categories: term life insurance and permanent life insurance. The following information will focus on term policies.

Term life insurance is in some respects similar to renting a home. When you rent a home, you get to take full advantage of the entire property immediately so long as you continue paying rent. As soon as your lease expires, you must renegotiate your lease or move elsewhere. Even if you rented the house for 30 years, you have no “equity” or value that belongs to you.

This concept could be applied when thinking of term life insurance. You establish a term, or amount of time you’d like life insurance protection for, and you will pay the premiums for this certain period of protection. At the end of the term, you can choose to renew at a new rate, discontinue protection or select a new policy.

Advantages of a Term Life Insurance Policy

One of the biggest advantages of term life insurance is the lower initial cost. However, as years pass and your policy comes up for renewal, you can anticipate the cost of term insurance to increase. To renew the policy, you may have to present evidence of insurability. If you’re still in good health, you might re-qualify at a reasonable rate. But if your health has deteriorated, you may find that with continually increasing premiums, it may be too expensive to renew your policy or you may not even re-qualify.

Term life insurance is often a good choice for young families or those on a tight budget. It allows them to buy higher levels of coverage when the need for protection is often greatest. Many times, term life insurance makes sense when you have

a need for coverage that will disappear at a specific point in time. For instance, you may decide that you only need coverage until your children graduate from college or a particular debt is paid off, such as your mortgage.

On a cautionary note, oftentimes insurance needs continue beyond these milestone events. Consider:

- **Can you achieve your financial goals without life insurance?**
- **Would your family be able to maintain the same standard of living without insurance?**
- **Would your financial plan, without life insurance, enable your spouse to maintain the lifestyle you worked so hard to achieve?**
- **Would you be able to pass on something to your children or grandchildren?**

When considering term life insurance, make sure to consider product features as well as price. You may be able to add extra features or “riders” to your term life insurance policy. Some provisions include accelerated death benefits, disability waiver of premium and accidental death benefits. Additional fees may apply.

Another feature to consider is convertibility. This feature, usually available during the first few years after a policy is issued, allows you to convert to a permanent policy without submitting evidence of insurability. This may be useful to have if you realize you need coverage for a longer period than you originally thought. **NOW**

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Every Monday

Celebrate Recovery meeting: First Baptist Church, 103 W. Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-3591. www.redoakcelebraterecovery.com.

Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist, 505 W. Marvin. Call Cheryl Bell at (972) 723-0341.

First Tuesday

PrimeTimers Senior Group: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Oaks Fellowship, 777 S. I-35 E. Fun, food and fellowship. (214) 376-8208.

First and Third Tuesdays

Red Oak Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-3577.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Alcoholics Anonymous meeting: 7:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-9100.

Every Wednesday

Family Story Time: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. (469) 218-1230. www.redoakpubliclibrary.org.

Wednesdays and Thursdays

Senior Citizens Club meeting: 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. Games, exercise and activities. (972) 576-2777.

First and Third Thursday

Senior Luncheon. Free for residents, \$5 for non-residents. Pre-register the Tuesday before each event. Call Jennifer at (972) 576-3414.

Third Thursday

American Business Womens' Association meeting. www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

First Friday

Worship Jam: 6:30 p.m., Bubba Que BBQ's front porch.

First Saturday

Red Oak Fire Rescue CPR classes: 9:00 a.m. Call early to register. (469) 218-7713.

Second Saturday

Lonestar Cowboy Church Motorcycle group ride: 1011 E. Ovilla Rd. (972) 576-0900.

Third Saturday

Lions Club Pancake Breakfast: 7:00-11:00 a.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. \$4 per person to benefit RO Lions charities.

October 10

Midlothian Fall Fest: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Hwy 287 Bypass at S. 14th St., Midlothian. (972) 723-8600.

Waxahachie Fun Run Open Car and Tractor show:

Getzendander Park, Waxahachie. Benefits Texas Baptist Children's Home. Music, door prizes and dash plaques for the first 75 entries. Entry \$20. Call Joe at (214) 587-1643 or Alan at (214) 808-4019.

October 19

Canterbury Episcopal School of De Soto's Cougar Golf Classic: Thorntree Country Club, 825 W. Wintergreen Rd.,

Desoto. (972) 572-7200.

October 23, 24, 25

Midlothian Arts Council Painted Art Show: Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle, Midlothian. (972) 723-7919. www.midlothiancenter.com.

Waxahachie Community Theatre presents "Oliver" in the historic Chautauqua Auditorium in Getzendaner Park. For show times, call (972) 723-6976 or visit www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com.

October 24

Red Oak City Park fall clean up: 9:00 a.m. Volunteers needed.

October 31

6th Annual "A Day With The Kids" Car, Truck and Bike Show with Midlothian Classic Wheels: 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Presbyterian Children's Home, Brookside Road and I-35 E., Waxahachie. \$15 entry fee. Proceeds go to children's home. Show judging done by the children. Free food and children's Halloween costume contest.

Ellis County SPCA's 7th Annual Halloween Bow Wow Hustle: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Ennis Bluebonnet park. Doggie fun run, costume contests and door prizes. (972) 935-0756. www.elliscountyspca.org.

RO Fall Fest: 5:00 p.m., RO City Park. Carnival, haunted trail, live music, bounce houses, vendors and much more. (972) 617-3638.

For more community events,
visit our online calendar at
www.nowmagazines.com.



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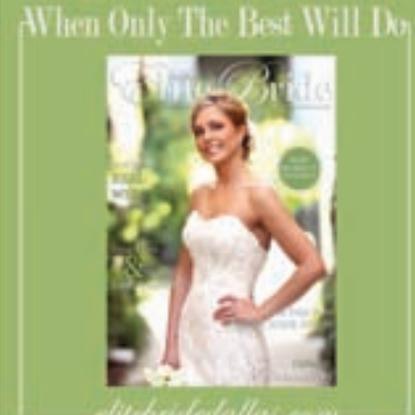
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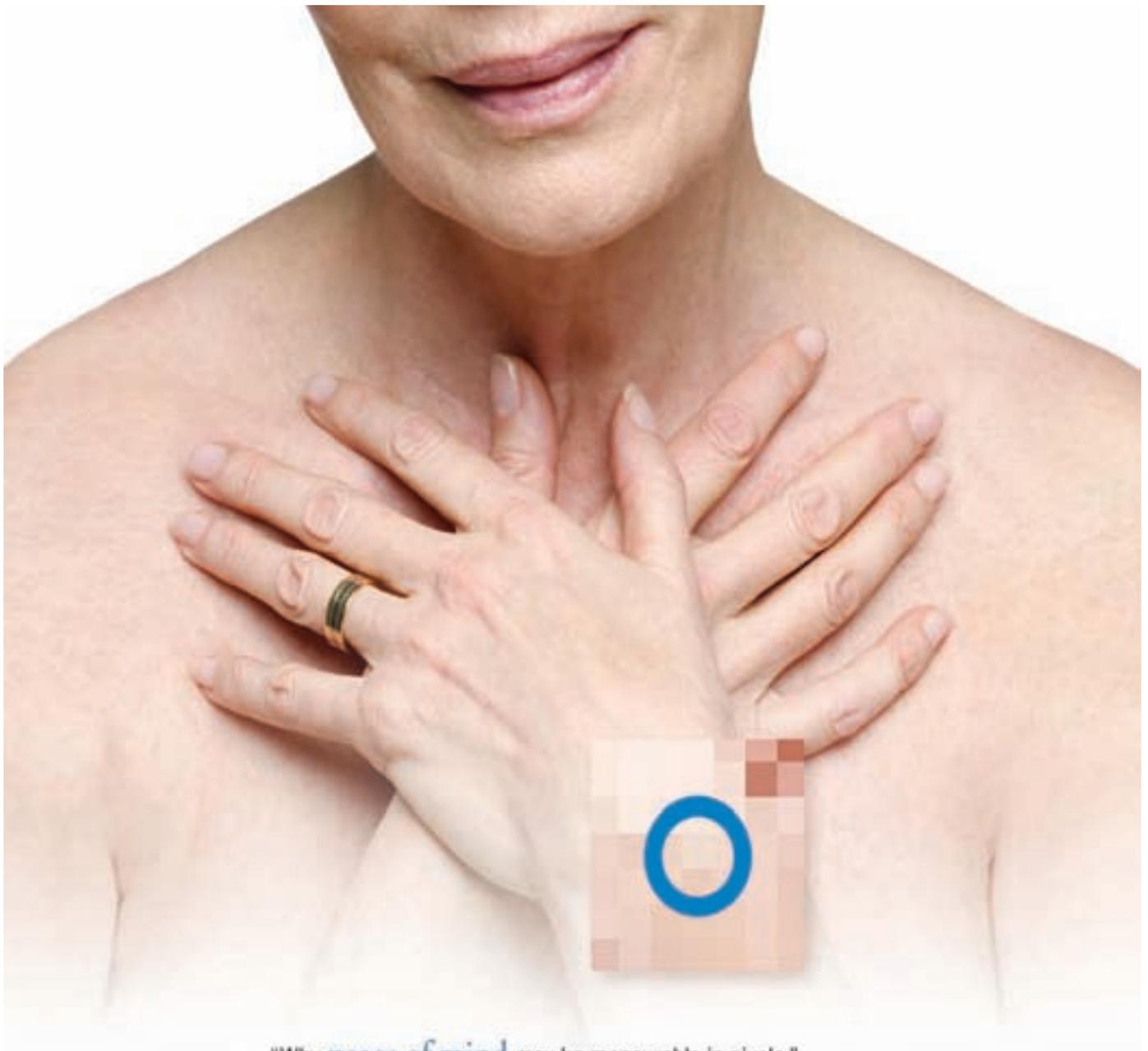
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