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M A G A Z I N E

OCTOBER 2023



The Art of Attitude

Kevin Scott utilizes mind over matter

You've Earned It

What do Medicare Advantage plans offer?

Also inside:
Scavenger Hunt

In the Kitchen With
Helen Shelton Oliver

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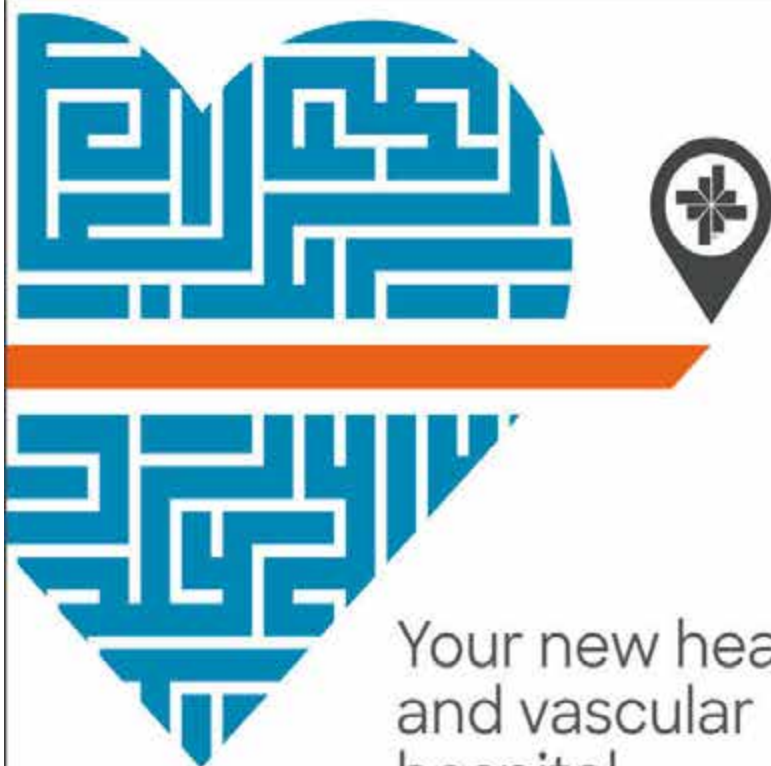


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Oct. 13 – District Holiday (No School)

Oct. 23 – Board Meeting

Oct. 23-27 – Red Ribbon Week

Oct. 27 – Staff Development (No School)

Nov. 4 – Special Needs Christmas Market

Nov. 5 – Daylight Savings Ends

Nov. 10 – District Holiday (No School)

Nov. 13 – Senior Citizen Luncheon

School Board Meeting

Nov. 17 – Staff Development (No School)

Nov. 20-24 – Thanksgiving Break

ON THE COVER



Positive thinking has impacted Kevin Scott's health, hobbies and family for the better.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Putting things in context ...

Anyone who knows me well, knows I'm a text message girl. Given the choice between speaking on the phone and texting, I'll choose the latter every time. While I've always been interested in social graces — *Emily Post's Etiquette* book was on my birthday wish list in middle school — I've also come to learn that as times change, so do perspectives. When I began my career, email was relatively new and, as a writer, I was in heaven! It allowed me to give greater consideration to what I wanted to say, but phone calls and face-to-face communication were generally considered most professional.

Eventually, emailing replaced much office correspondence. When texting became an option, it was primarily used between friends. Today, it is my favorite way to chat with those I know. To me, it's like passing a note to a pal in school (way back before cell phones existed). But when it comes to office etiquette, is texting acceptable? The Emily Post Institute suggested: "Avoid misunderstandings by speaking face-to-face or over the phone whenever possible," yet said written communication (like emails and texts) was perfectly fine for conveying factual information such as "Who? What? When? And Where?" (Almost *all* the queries.) Asking/answering the question, "Why," they say, is perhaps more appropriate by phone, as voicing opinions in writing can be trickier, leading to potential misinterpretation.

Ultimately, it seems good manners means knowing your audience's expectations. Professionally, I invite you to give me a call, shoot me an email, text or even a DM. As we all know, times are continually changing, as do the ways we communicate. Whichever way you prefer to reach out, I look forward to hearing from you ...

No pretext here!



Angel

Angel Morris
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THE ART OF ATTITUDE

— By Angel Morris



Kevin Scott is proof that a positive mindset can change everything. From health challenges to artistic endeavors, attitude has made all the difference for the 39-year-old local. “When I was 22, I woke up one morning with one eye turned the wrong direction,” he recalled. “Doctors told me it was either brain cancer or multiple sclerosis.”

Ultimately Kevin was diagnosed with MS and began a regiment of medications that left him shivering on the floor “like having malaria symptoms,” he explained. Another treatment carried the risk of shutting down his central nervous system.

MS caused a lack of balance and coordination, as well as memory issues. It impacted Kevin’s grades in college and his ability to work. “Some days I could walk. Other days I had to be carried out from my job,” he remembered. “By age 25, I was in a wheelchair living the high life on \$800-dollar-a-month disability.”

Constantly fighting flu-like symptoms and feeling life was passing him by, Kevin had a moment of clarity during one of many doctor’s visits. “I watched him look online for medications to give me and thought, *Well, I could do that myself*,” he said.

Then, Kevin took control of his own destiny. A book, *The Secret*, helped him re-frame his mentality. “When I was given the book, I figured it was a crock, but what did I have to lose?” he reflected.

Based on the laws of attraction, the book shares the pseudo-scientific idea that one’s thoughts directly impact one’s experiences. “It intertwines with other things, like exercise and diet, but mindset is key,” Kevin explained. “If you focus on negative, you stay negative. I quit telling people I was sick because I didn’t need the energy of them feeling sorry for me.”

In 2010, Kevin threw out his medicine and began overcoming obstacle after obstacle. “Within two years, I had completely changed my life,” he admitted. “I went from a skinny college kid eating junk food to working out and eating right. By 2017, my MRI showed no inflammation and my neurologist agreed I didn’t need medication, even though he was blown back by that.”

Sharing his journey on Facebook led to speaking engagements at area colleges and businesses for Kevin, who has since become a railroad passenger conductor. Besides educating people worldwide through his MS journey, Kevin also rediscovered his passion for art. “I was into art in high school and attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University thinking of becoming an art teacher,” he noted.

Art took a backseat to MS recovery. Then, “A cousin talked me into trying the dating app Tinder and, surprisingly, it worked,”

Kevin joked. He met and married Jordan, and they had two children. Their daughter, Peytyn, is now 3, and their son, Lucas, is 9 months.

“During the big freeze of 2021, I got bored being stuck in the house, and I drew a picture of my daughter. I had always liked pencil drawing because you can erase and start over,” Kevin admitted. “I hadn’t ever been able to draw faces. The proportions were all wrong. But today, portraits are all I do.”

From doodling on notebook paper while his high school teachers were talking to studying artists like Charles “Chuck” Close, Kevin continues to grow. “Close had muscle weakness, and he had a spinal stroke that left him partially paralyzed. He began drawing with dots rather than lines because his hands would shake,” Kevin explained. “His photorealism inspired me.

“Now I’m very picky when I draw. I make light lines and gradually go darker and darker the closer to the image I get. I started with a No. 2 pencil, then learned mechanical pencils give really fine lines.”

After a drawing of Kevin’s niece was posted online, people began requesting portraits to give as gifts. “I only agree to it if I can get a very detailed image to draw from. Every drawing I do takes 15 to 20 hours. I’m OCD and get carried away,” Kevin shared.

Before long, more than two dozen drawings lined a wall in Kevin’s home. “I’m drawing Clint Eastwood now. When I finish, they get posted, framed and put away because what was my art space is now my son’s room.”

Another of Kevin’s artistic endeavors is rebuilding cars. “My dad was a car guy, and he used to have me clean the chrome. At around 19, I started rebuilding them, and now I’m on about my 180th one. I also detail cars on the side.

“When my dad would start working on a car, I’d pull up the seats to look for coins,” Kevin continued. “I found an 1865 Indian coin, and my coin collecting began.”

Now, Kevin has not only cars and coins to pass on to his children, but the wisdom that you can do whatever you set your mind to — whether that’s related to health or hobbies. “What’s the worst that can happen?” he asked. “You fail? You learn!” **NOW**

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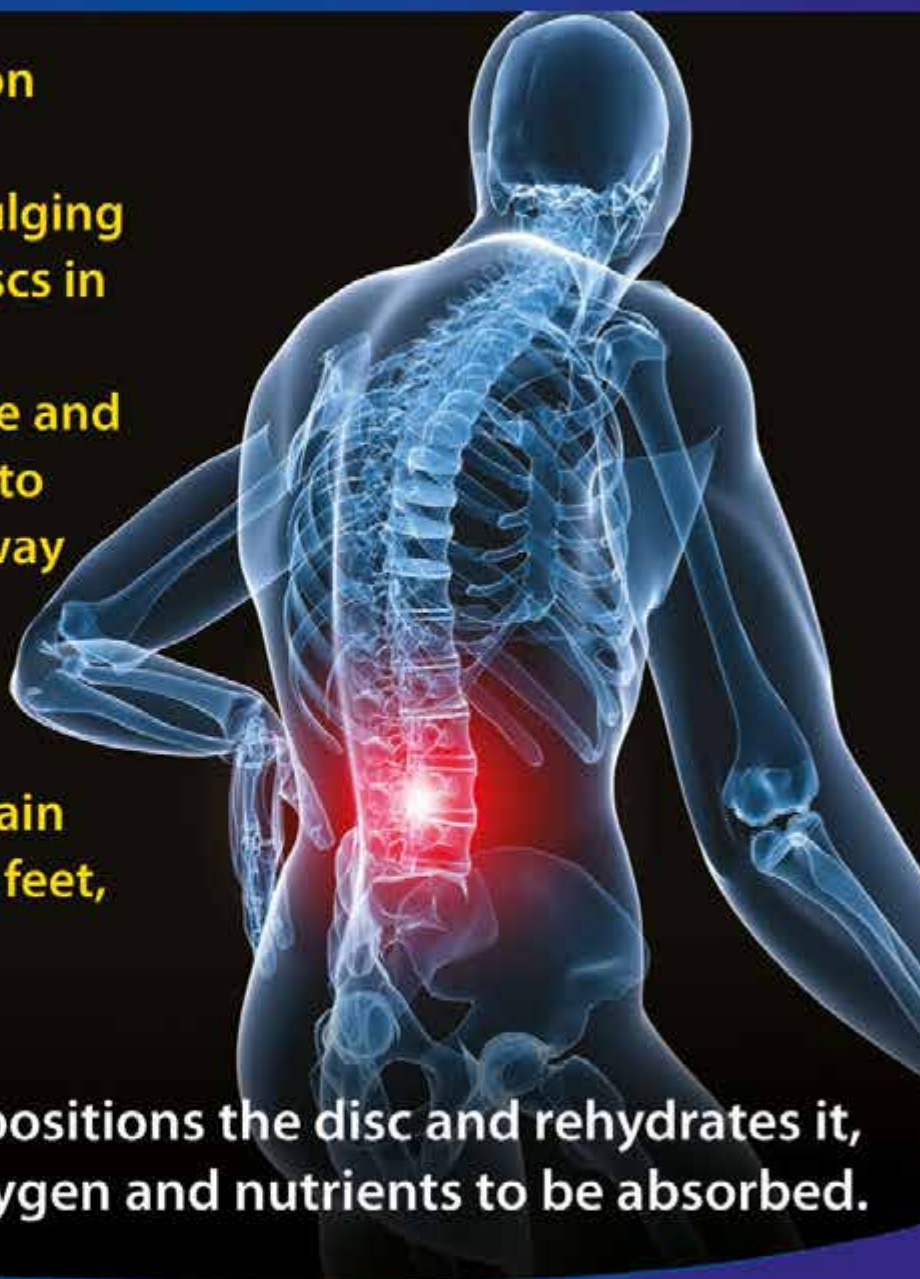
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You've Earned It

— By Virginia Riddle



With 65 birthdays and more years of work behind them than in front, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers look forward to successful retirement years. An important ingredient is maintaining their health as economically as possible on fixed incomes. Whether shopping for a friend, relative or yourself, learning about Medicare and Medicare Advantage is critical to choosing the right plan.

Within six months of one's 65th birthday, and within annual open enrollment periods, it's advisable to shop and compare plans. Basic Medicare with supplemental gap insurance policies (A, B, C, D, F, G, K, L, M, N) was instituted in 1965. It pays for most hospitalization charges and other medical costs, but not all. Medicare recipients have the choice of gap insurance — some with high or low deductible choices — to help pay for charges Medicare doesn't cover.

Understanding the basic "Medicare Maze" might seem daunting, but it's only a start in making wise choices,

depending on personal health needs. Medicare Advantage plans offer an alternative to basic Medicare and fill needs much as the medigap plans do, but the "Advantage" plans are different. If choosing a Medicare Advantage plan, an enrollee doesn't deal directly with Medicare, except for paying monthly premiums for Part B and perhaps Part D, that pay some of what basic Medicare doesn't cover.

Medicare Advantage plans offered in most geographic areas take two forms: managed care plans and fee-for-service plans. Managed care plans charge a low or no monthly premium and small copays, but the plans limit enrollees' choices of doctors and other providers. These plans limit treatments and length of hospital stays. With fee-for-service plans, any doctor or provider can be used if they accept Medicare and the Medicare Advantage plan's restrictions and amount of payment. The enrollee can choose to pay the difference or select another provider.

Since Medicare Advantage plans are provided by private health insurance companies, enrollees must also evaluate the stability of possible choices and the geographic areas that each company chooses to cover. Whether the premiums and copays rise in price is another question to research. One's local State Insurance Assistance Program, Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program or the www.medicare.gov

site can be accessed for these answers and comparative charts.

Some Medicare Advantage plans include the Medicare Part D prescription program, while other plans require enrollees to choose a separate stand-alone Part D plan. Compare the plans' approved drugs, copays and premium costs.

Is the Medicare Advantage managed plan a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) or a Provider Sponsored Organization (PSO)? HMOs maintain a network of physicians and providers who must be used unless there's an emergency. Premium prices are usually the least expensive, but enrollees must make sure their hospitals, doctors and providers are "in network." A negative to these plans occurs when the in-network listings change, and enrollees must travel to in-network doctors close to their area.

PPOs work much like HMOs, but these plans offer a point-of-service option, which lessens the cost to enrollees if they use an in-network provider. PPOs tend to have higher premium costs, but many enrollees like the flexibility of choosing doctors.

Private fee-for-service Medicare Advantage plans often have a cap on the amount of out-of-pocket payments an enrollee must pay each year. However, these plans have strict rules for providers, aren't always accepted by providers and may charge for extra services and other costs.

Whatever the choice, remember it's sometimes difficult to change from basic Medicare with gap insurance to a Medicare Advantage plan and vice versa. It's best to make a wise choice, and review that choice annually. **NOW**

Sources:

1. www.medicare.gov.
2. Social Security, Medicare & Government Pensions. Matthews, Joseph L., NOLO, 2021.

Editor's Note:

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Zoomed In:
Emily Coker

By Angel Morris

Ellis County Sheriff Brad Norman recently recognized Emily Coker — who was supervised by Investigator Katie Cheek — for assistance as a Crime Scene Unit intern. As part of her pursuit of a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice with a minor in Forensic Science from Sam Houston State University, Emily spent 10 weeks in the local program.

According to Sheriff Norman, Emily played a significant role in one particular theft case, processing evidence that ultimately led to an identification and arrest warrant. “My goal is to work as a CSI specializing in blood spatter,” Emily said. “I’m so thankful my high school teacher, Jessica Soto, helped me find this passion — and to Investigator Cheek for her mentorship that definitely helped me further my skills.”



Mayra Llanes, of Global Maniac Balloons, stages a photo booth for the Barbie Block Party hosted by Fruitful Designs Salon & Spa.



Beau Bennett learns an art technique from Reece Carson at Red Oak Public Library.



Community leaders participate in a ribbon cutting for the City of Red Oak Government Center.



The eight inaugural graduates of the Glenn Heights Public Safety Academy pose with city officials.



Options Plumbing's Don Hill (far left) and Marjorie Williams (far right), support Molly Hughes and dad, Phillip Hughes, owner of Gravy N More, at the restaurant's ribbon cutting.



Tammy Howard spends Labor Day weekend fishing in Matagorda.



Laura Villa and Margie Caballero showcase Margie's Puddings & Other Desserts at a community festival.

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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With HELEN SHELTON OLIVER

— By Angel Morris

As a child, Helen Shelton Oliver discussed her school day as her mother prepared dinner. “She helped me understand life, while teaching me to prepare a nutritious, colorful meal,” Helen recalled.

Helen’s mother shopped at Dallas Farmers Market every other day, and her grandmother was in charge of cleaning the fresh vegetables. “I’m not a vegetarian, but my favorite food is vegetables,” Helen admitted.

A graduate of Southern Methodist University, Helen said her careers were a “means to an end.” Her biggest accomplishment is, “raising four responsible ladies of character,” she said.

“The holidays were always a big family event at our house and included turkey, ham and dressing,” she explained. “These recipes are simple, and exactly what Mama and Grandma would cook. If you make them with love, they will be good!” **NOW**

Yellow Squash Casserole

A low-carb alternative to Macaroni 'n' Cheese.

- 8-10 yellow squash, sliced
- 1 sweet onion, diced
- 1 8-oz. container sour cream
- 1 egg
- 1 stick butter

- 1 16-oz. bag Colby Jack, mild or sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste

1. Boil the squash until tender. Drain well; mash in a large bowl. Add the onions and sour cream. Add the egg.

2. Put the ingredients in a small casserole dish. Add the butter; top with the grated cheese.
3. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Macaroni 'n' Cheese

My seven grandkids' favorite!

- 1 7.25-oz. box elbow macaroni
- 1 16-oz. container heavy whipping cream or half-and-half
- 1 pt. cottage cheese
- 5 cups your choice of cheddar, Colby Jack, Monterey Jack or sharp cheese, shredded (divided use)
- 1 stick butter
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- Paprika, to taste

1. Cook the macaroni according to instructions on the box; drain.
2. Warm the cream with the cottage cheese. Add half of the shredded cheese to the cream mixture; blend well.

3. Pour the mixture over the macaroni; blend together. Transfer to a casserole dish. Add the butter, salt, pepper and paprika. Top with the remaining cheese.
4. Cover and bake at 350 F for about 30 minutes. Uncover and bake until the cheese melts.

Marinated Shrimp and Sugar Snap Peas Salad

- 2-3 lbs. large fresh shrimp, cleaned and de-veined
- 1 16-oz. bag sugar snap peas
 - 2 .7-oz. pouches dry Italian seasoning
 - 3 green onions, chopped
 - 1 32-oz. bottle capers
 - 1 16-oz. bottle Italian dressing
- Endive or romaine lettuce, to taste

1. Boil or sauté the shrimp and sugar snap peas; drain. Sprinkle on the seasoning, green onions and capers.
2. Marinate the mixture in the Italian dressing for about 2 hours.
3. For presentation, line your prettiest bowl with endive or romaine lettuce leaves. Pour the shrimp mixture atop the leaves, draining any excess dressing. Serve cold.

Collards, Turnips and Mustard Greens

- 3 bunches or 1 large bag fresh greens
- 2 32-oz. boxes broth (chicken or vegetable)
- 1 sweet onion
 - 1 red or yellow bell pepper, diced
 - 1 garlic pod, minced
 - 1/4 cup brown sugar
 - 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
 - 1 stick Kerrygold Garlic Butter
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a saucepan. Season to taste.
2. Cook 2-3 hours over medium heat.

To search for more great recipes from any of the 9 NOW Magazines publications, visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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Hello, FALL

OCTOBER

Some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press. Check with individual organizations or your city or Chamber websites to verify dates and times.

10/2

National Night Out Against Crime:

Family event featuring emergency vehicles, vendors, games and free refreshments. Free. 6:00-8:30 p.m., Red Oak Government Center, 101 Live Oak St. Learn more on Facebook @ Red Oak Police Department.

10/7

Take-A-Kid Fishing:

Red Oak Parks and Recreation Department with Te'Jun The Texas Cajun-Red Oak hosts this youth fishing event. Pre-registration not required, free rods and reels on a first-come-first-served basis. Trophies will be awarded to the top three

anglers under and over 8 years old. 8:30-10:30 a.m., Pearson Park, 200 Lakeview Pkwy.

For more information, visit www.redoaktx.org/parks.

10/13

Ellis County Homeless Coalition Benefit Concert:

Free, but donations support continuing efforts to help those facing eviction or experiencing homelessness in Ellis County. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Railyard Park, 455 S. College St., Waxahachie.

10/14

50th Anniversary Gala:

Red Oak Chamber of Commerce hosts dinner, dancing, live and silent

auctions. 6:00-10:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Learn more at redoakareachamber.org or email office@redoakareachamber.org.

10/14-11/18

The Miracle League of Ellis County Fall Ball:

Volunteers and participants sought for inclusive baseball league. **Saturdays:** 9:00 a.m.-noon, Waxahachie Family YMCA, 100 YMCA Dr., Waxahachie.

10/21

Red Oak Fall Festival:

Family event including rides, crafts, a petting zoo, fall decor

and gift shopping, delicious food vendors and more. Free. 3:00-6:00 p.m., Pearson Park, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Visit www.redoaktx.org/fallfestival.

10/28

27th Annual Texas Country Reporter Festival:

Join Kelli and Bob Phillips, hosts of the weekly TV show, for this one-day arts and music festival, including a free concert with Neal McCoy. More than 350 booths and three food courts. Free. 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Downtown Waxahachie.

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

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