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North Ellis Co. NOW Scavenger Hunt





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ON THE COVER



Shelby Elder juggles homeschool, CrossFit and the demands of BMX racing with ease.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Giving history its due ...

Our custom of celebrating Thanksgiving the fourth Thursday in November only officially began after Congress declared it law in 1941. Before then, the holiday bounced from week to week and even month to month. Some date the first Thanksgiving to the fall of 1621, when the feast between around 50 pilgrims and 90 Native Americans celebrated an especially abundant harvest ... relying on a manuscript by the governor of Plymouth, Massachusetts, William Bradford, and his account of a peaceful meal between the two factions.

In the 1800s, Bradford's journal landed on the desk of magazine editor Sarah Josepha Hale, who appreciated the romanticized tale passed down through generations so much, she petitioned five American presidents to establish a national day of thanks. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln seized the idea as a way of uniting a country divided by the ongoing Civil War, officially declaring Thanksgiving the last Thursday of November. Since some years the month has four weeks, and other years it has five, retailers later pressured President Franklin D. Roosevelt for a move to the fourth (rather than last) Thursday of the month as the official day of gratitude. Why? To give shoppers more time between Thanksgiving and Christmas to shop, of course!

While the idea of two cultures coming together in gratitude is the spirit with which Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, the Native American account of what happened between their people and English settlers is far less romantic. There have long been movements to see the holiday as an opportunity to appreciate how Wampanoag Peoples shared their wisdom, land and food to make that first Thanksgiving possible, and what they ultimately sacrificed as a result. Efforts toward peace are, most certainly, always something for which to be thankful.

Remembering where thanks is due ...



Angel

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GREAT FROM THE GATE

— By Angel Morris



Bicycle motocross, better known as BMX, is a type of off-road bicycle racing thought to have originated in California in the 1970s. Today, California native Shelby Elder flourishes in the sport here in Texas. “My brother raced, and I decided to go to the track one night and thought it looked cool. My parents bought me my first race bike in 2013,” Shelby reflected. “Last year, I was ready to quit, but my old team manager, Mike Santamaria, encouraged me to keep going and to keep pushing my own limits.”

As a result, Shelby earned fourth place in the USA BMX Grand Nationals last year. “I’ve had so many exciting

moments, but most definitely the best is winning a race,” she explained. “Grands is basically the greatest race on earth. This is my sixth year racing at Grands over Thanksgiving.”

For those who don’t know, BMX derived from motocross racing and involves sprint races on off-road, single-lap tracks built for the sport. As Shelby’s confidence on the track has grown, so has her style. “I used to ride an Orca frame, which is an all-carbon bike, and it was a good frame. My first-ever bike was a zebra print frame, and I was so sad to get rid of it,” she admitted. “But my parents surprised me with a tiger-print frame, and it definitely was more colorful and joyful! I currently ride a RIFT frame, and I absolutely love how it rides.”

Prior to a race, Shelby has her own routine. “Before I get in the gate, I take two deep breaths looking straight ahead, and when I’m in the gate, I take one last deep breath and remind myself that I can do it and to keep my head up,” she described. “And I keep a smile on my face if I have a bad lap.”

Shelby has overcome some obstacles in the sport. “When I was in full gate — eight riders on the track — I would pull my brakes and not get a good placing or maybe not even be



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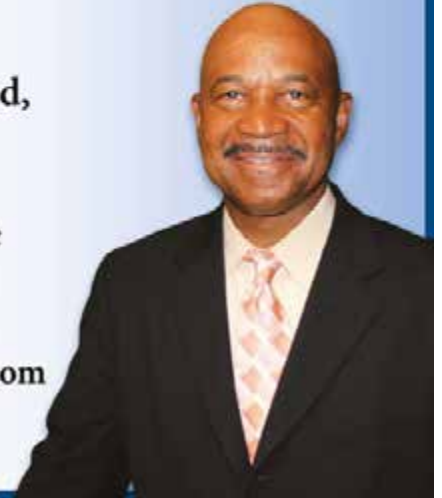
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are all so supportive,” she said. “Last September, I got the confidence to go down the big hill in Kentucky! Kentucky is one of the biggest races, and the big hill is where all the pros race down. It’s taller and much steeper than a normal hill. Everyone looks up to the pros that ride down the big hill because it’s so cool to watch.”

Shelby is glad to be part of the BMX family, where participants range in age from 5 to 65. “I’m definitely proud of myself and the other racers — especially the little ones. They definitely have some confidence for being out there so young!”

Since moving to Red Oak in 2021, Shelby has focused on completing her homeschool education and will graduate in 2024. Fitness is also important to her. “Homeschooling has given me more time for BMX training and competition, and for doing CrossFit, my other passion,” Shelby stated. “Shout out to Buffalo Creek CrossFit and Monica Conell for being a big role model in my fitness!”

Shelby also thanks her mom, “For always being there and getting to



places even when she’s really busy,” and her “built-in best friend” and sister. “My sister is my biggest supporter in general, and my dad definitely supports my racing more than anyone,” Shelby credited. “My brother is still someone I look up to. My family is amazing.”

Those closest to Shelby know she always wears a smile. “Because I’m quiet, some people think I’m mean. But I’m genuinely one of the most joyful people you could meet!” she described.

And that spirit translates into her advice for others who might be considering BMX. “Try it! Racing is fun, and it’s good for people who like to be active,” she encouraged. “My advice is don’t be scared, and challenge yourself to try something new every time!” **NOW**

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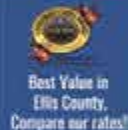
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Zoomed In: Ricardo Miller

By Angel Morris

Ricardo Miller greeted visitors to his booth at Red Oak's Founder's Day, introducing them to his book, *Effective Living: Your Guide to Creating A Life You Don't Need to Take a Vacation From*. "It feels great to be involved with the city of Red Oak," Ricardo noted, "especially at such a successful event."

Originally from Nassau, Bahamas, Ricardo has served in children's ministry for more than 25 years. He is a motivational speaker, life coach and author of seven books, sharing stories of growing up on inner city streets and other life challenges. He said, "I help people understand the balance of doing what you need to do with what you want to do — all toward a spirit of fulfillment."



Kaira Morgan participates in a STEAM program at Red Oak Public Library.



Shae Jordan, owner of Every Body Needs a Massage, relaxes attendees at a community event.



Don Ivory, Jim Scott and Danny Alexander lower the Reindeer Manor arch from the entry gate. After 49 seasons, the property has been sold to make way for development.



Red Oak School Board Trustees Michelle Porter and Melanie Petersen, and Superintendent Brenda Sanford, experience the push-in of Red Oak Fire Truck No. 181.



Jurnei Boyd showcases her homemade pet snacks at a fall festival.



Patches and C.J. Foley, of the Ovilla Trailriders group, take an outing through Waxahachie Creek Park.



Emmanuel Orr enjoys Montessori work in his pre-K class at Little Schoolhouse in Red Oak.

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THANKS-CRAFTING DAY DECOR

— By Emma McKay



PUMPKIN PLANTER



CANDLED APPLE





As the holiday season approaches, Thanksgiving celebrations for friends and family commence. With that comes the need to decorate the house, but it can be difficult finding just the right touches for your fall party. Here are some unique crafts that will certainly be conversation pieces.

PUMPKIN PLANTERS

Supplies: A Sharpie, a large fake pumpkin, a ruler, a box cutter or a precision knife, hot glue, a floral foam block and artificial flowers, preferably in fall colors.

Step 1: Using a Sharpie, draw a circle around the stem of the pumpkin that is about seven to eight inches in diameter, depending on the size of your pumpkin.

Step 2: Use the box cutter/precision knife to cut out the circle and remove the top of the pumpkin. The pumpkin should be hollow inside.

Step 3: Squeeze some hot glue onto one side of the floral foam block, and place it glue-side-down inside of the pumpkin to secure it.

Step 4: Arrange the flowers by sticking them into the foam block. This might take some time to get just right, but once you do, this decoration will last for seasons to come.

BOOKISH PUMPKINS

Supplies: A 300-plus page paperback book, a piece of paper, a pencil, scissors, a precision knife, clamps, acrylic paint, paint brush, hot glue and a stick.

Step 1: Grab the book, and rip the front and back covers off. Sketch a half circle no larger than the book on a piece of paper, then cut it out. Line up the straight edge of the half circle with the spine of the book, and use the half circle as a stencil to trace onto the first page of your book. Use a precision knife to cut around the half circle you traced onto the book, then rip the excess paper from the spine. Repeat this step until all the pages have been cut away. Use scissors to trim any rough edges. Once

you are done with this process, the book should look like the outline of a letter D.

Step 2: Place the clamps on the top and the bottom of the book. This should keep the pages in place while you paint them. Using the acrylic paint, paint the edges of the pages. Once the paint has dried, remove the clamps, and separate the pages.

Step 3: Open the book to the middle and lay it flat, bare spine up, on your workstation. Place a moderate amount of hot glue along the middle of the spine, leaving the top third of the book unglued, then press the spine together. Once the glue has dried, glue the front and back pages together. When standing up, the pages of your book should fan out so that it resembles the body of a pumpkin. If it does not stay in place like you want it to, apply glue close to the spine every few pages.

Step 4: Finally, squeeze a generous amount of hot glue onto one end of the stick. Shove the stick into the unglued portion of the spine. This acts as the stem. Now you have a unique decoration for your mantel.

CANDLED APPLE

Supplies: A votive candle, an apple, a Sharpie, a paring knife, a melon baller, a strand of faux cranberries, florist wire, hot glue, star anise and a cinnamon stick.

Step 1: Center the candle over the stem of the apple, then, using the Sharpie, trace a circle around the top of the apple.

Step 2: With the paring knife, cut into the apple following the path you traced with the Sharpie. Scoop the flesh of the apple out with the melon baller. Use the candle to check if your hole is wide enough. If it is not, use the paring knife to widen it, a little bit at a time. Place the candle inside.

Step 3: Wind the strand of cranberries into a wreath just large enough to rest on top of the apple like a crown. Use a piece of florist wire to twist the ends of the wreath together, so they keep their shape. Finally, hot glue the star anise and the cinnamon stick around the cranberry wreath to garnish.

Note: Do not glue the wreath onto the apple. That way, you can reuse it for the next apple. Also, keep an eye on the flame. Do not let it stray too close to the wreath. **NOW**

CookingNOW *In the Kitchen With* ANDREA WALTON

— By Angel Morris



As a State Farm Agent, Andrea Walton is on call 24/7. That's why on-the-go recipes are important to her. "It's a challenge to find healthy foods my kids will eat," she admitted. "Downtime in the kitchen with its inviting smells is precious to us. Time is our most valuable gift, and we only slow down to eat!"

Andrea baked sweets as a child with her mom — cookies, chocolates and homemade donuts — but savory foods and meals that can be heated up as leftovers are favorites today. Along with her husband and son taste testing her recipes, Andrea also enjoys cheering on her kids in tennis, ROTC and Dallas Baptist University volleyball. She noted, "Celebrating family and community is what keeps us centered." **NOW**

Old-fashioned Bread

Starter:

1 cup lukewarm water
1/2 cup sugar
1 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup oil
1 Tbsp. salt

Bread:

1 pkg. dry yeast
1 1/2 cups lukewarm water
1 Tbsp. salt
6 cups flour (divided use)

2 eggs, room temperature
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup oil, for covering the bowl

1. *For starter:* Place the first 3 ingredients in a bowl at night. Cover; leave out overnight. The next morning, add the next 3 ingredients. Place 1/2 of this mixture in a container and refrigerate for later use.
2. *For bread:* Dissolve the yeast in the water; mix well. Combine the salt, 4 cups flour and the eggs with the starter. Add the remaining cups of flour and the sugar.
3. Throw on a floured surface; knead 5-10 minutes.

4. Oil a bowl well; add the dough, flipping it so the top will be oiled. Place in a warm place to rise; it will double in 3-4 hours. Work down; divide into 3 loaves. Let rest for 15 minutes.
5. Grease the loaf pans; place in a cold oven. Set temperature to 300 F; bake until the top is golden brown, about 40-50 minutes (test with a toothpick).
6. Let cool; enjoy with butter!

Super Easy Crock-Pot Quiche

Fast and easy protein meal!

Olive oil
8 eggs
1/2 cup spinach, chopped
4 small broccoli heads, grated
1/4 cup garlic and herb cheese
Cheddar or mozzarella cheese, to taste
1 tsp. pepper

1. Turn the Crock-Pot to low. Pour a ring of oil into the Crock-Pot; crack the eggs on top of the oil. Add the spinach, broccoli and garlic and herb cheese.
2. Top with cheddar or mozzarella cheese and pepper.
3. Cook for 45 minutes to 1 hour until done.

Breakfast Pie

- 1/2 lb. chopped ham bites
- 1 unbaked piecrust
- 1 cup Swiss cheese, shredded
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 1/2 cups evaporated milk
- Sprinkle of salt
- Sprinkle of pepper

1. Cook the ham; put it in the piecrust. Add the cheeses.
2. In a separate bowl, combine the eggs, milk, salt and pepper; pour the mixture over the meat.
3. Bake at 350 F for 35 minutes. Serve warm.

Salmon Soup

- Sofrito:*
- Extra-virgin olive oil, to taste
 - 1 green onion, chopped
 - 1 bell pepper, chopped
 - 1/2 clove garlic or 2 Tbsp. garlic powder
 - Fresh dill, to taste

- Soup:*
- 1 14.5-oz. can chicken broth
 - 2 potatoes, thinly sliced
 - 1/2 cup carrots, chopped
 - Sprinkle of fresh dill
 - Sprinkle of dry oregano with coriander
 - Sprinkle of cumin
 - Pinch of kosher salt
 - Pinch of black pepper
 - Splash of lemon juice
 - 2 4- to 6-oz. pink salmon fillets, without skin

1. *For sofrito:* Heat a bit of extra-virgin olive oil in a large pot. Cook the onions, bell peppers, garlic and dill, tossing regularly for a few minutes. Look for everything to soften, and it's going to smell awesome!
2. *For soup:* Add the broth and vegetables to a pot. Add the spices; stir to combine. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium. Cook for about 5 to 6 minutes.
3. Add the salmon, seasoned to taste with additional kosher salt. Reduce the heat; cook for 3 to 5 minutes, or until the salmon is cooked. (It should flake easily.) Remove from heat and serve.

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