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DECEMBER 2011

## A HEART FOR ART

Jana Jennings  
gives back to the  
community through a  
love of painting.

### Also Inside

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In the Kitchen  
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CHILDHOOD  
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A YEAR-ROUND  
CHRISTMAS STAR  
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**On The Cover**



All things sparkle during Christmas at the Riojases' Oak Leaf home.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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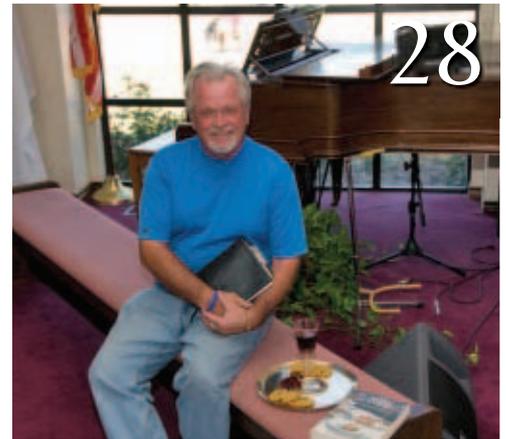
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# Editor's Note

*Let's hear it for silent nights!*

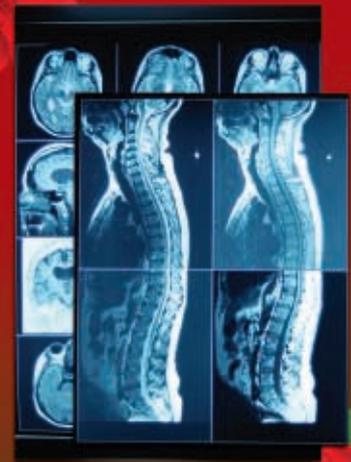
One of my favorite December activities is sitting in my living room once the rest of the family is asleep. I take in the holiday decorations, the sparkling white lights of my tree and the splendor of the solitude. These silent nights are the perfect time for reflection on the abundance and blessings that I sometimes overlook.

As much as I enjoy the planning and baking and shopping and wrapping, watching my little one's face on Christmas morn, and the occasional times I am able to surprise my hubby with an unexpected gift, I find the silent nights are the greatest moments of all. They are times to recharge in preparation for being the best I can be for those who need me — not perfect, by any means, but rested and, more importantly, grateful.

Wishing you a month of silent nights!

*Angel*

Angel Morris  
 Red OakNOW Editor  
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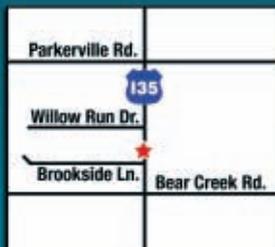
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# A HEART FOR ART

— By *Angel Morris*



*Art has been a part of Ovilla resident, Jana Jennings', life for as long as she can remember. Today she gives back to the community she loves, and the children in it, by passing on her passion for painting. "I look at it as an extension of those who have previously given to me," Jana said.*

*Jana started taking oil painting lessons at the age of 6 in her home town of Ennis. "I had five talented teachers by the time I had graduated high school," she recalled. "I received four scholarships through my oil paintings, which allowed me to attend The Art Institute of Dallas."*

A graduate of Ennis High School, Jana moved to Red Oak in 1991 with her son, Justin Prachyl. Shortly thereafter, she married Michael Jennings and was immediately "blessed with two terrific stepchildren," Jordan and Kyle Jennings. The family resided in Red Oak for eight years, until they built their current home in Ovilla, where they have been for 12 years — since November 1999.

"I love making my home in Ovilla because of the open space and the country lifestyle. I am a native of Ellis County and don't plan on leaving. I love the area and the people; it is my home," Jana said.

A graphic designer for 27 years, Jana only began teaching oil and acrylic painting four years ago to students ranging in age from 9 to 16. "I love sharing my craft the way it was taught to me when I was young. The best reward is when your students are proud of the painting they just created and can't wait to show it off. It is really amazing the progress they make from week to week," Jana said.

Jana considers herself an impressionist and has two favorite techniques. "I paint a lot with brushes, but I also love to paint with a palette knife. With the palette knife, I can paint quickly, and it provides a lot of texture and depth," she said. "I have fans who like my brush paintings, and I have fans who like my palette knife



Left to Right: Emily Walden, Lainey Bartlett, Allis Poarch, Maddy Bartlett, Jana Jennings and Ellie Toon.

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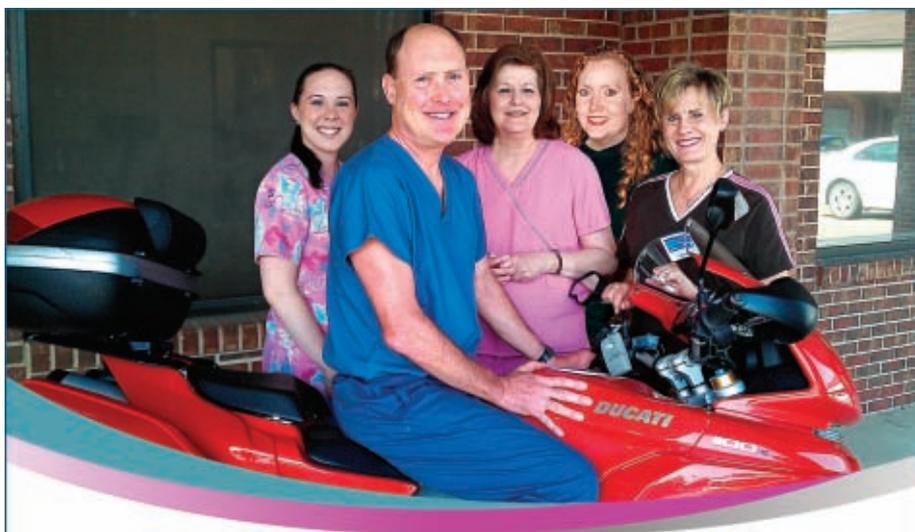
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work. Doing both allows me to show my different techniques and gives me alternative forms of expression. That is the greatest thing about the creative arts — it is about what you are feeling at the time.”

Between creating graphic designs through the computer, teaching and painting at home, Jana said she invests about 50 hours a week in some form of art. Not long ago, however, her creative art was not part of her day-to-day life. “I stopped painting for about 15 years to raise my children, and it has taken me awhile to re-hone my craft. But I wouldn’t change a thing. My family has been my art, and I love what I have created,” she reflected. “Today, I have three children, a new daughter-in-law and two grandchildren to be proud of. My husband, Mike, is my biggest fan. He takes my paintings to his office, changing them out monthly for his personal gallery. Those at his work seem to enjoy it as well.”

Today, Jana works full time as a graphic designer, but her goal is to produce her art all day, year-round. “Until then, I will create my paintings as often as I can. I am developing a Web site and blog at the moment and will have it available soon for others to enjoy and interact with me,” she said.

In the meantime, Jana does commissions and displays her paintings at My Father’s House Antique Store in Waxahachie and Interior Ideas in Ennis, on occasion. “My home is really my gallery. Every wall is covered with my paintings. It’s not my doing. My family has set high expectations of me, and I just try to keep up. It’s fun, and let’s face it, where would I be without them?”

Jana said.

A member of the Ellis County Art Association (ECAA) for the past eight years, Jana credits the group with the continuance of her art education. "When I was a senior in high school, ECAA gave me a scholarship to use toward my tuition in college. I would have never been able to attend without the help of the ECAA and a couple of other local clubs in Ellis County," she said.

As a result, Jana joined ECAA to give back to the organization what it had provided for her when she was younger. "ECAA is still offering scholarships to graduates each year to any student who attended school in Ellis County. All students pursuing a continuing education in art are eligible to apply for the scholarship program. They also have an art show every spring showing off art from children of all ages, giving out many awards and more scholarships," Jana explained.

ECAA began 53 years ago and today owns a three-story historic landmark building housing adult and children's art classes, art workshops, plays and civic meetings. The group has a permanent art collection exhibited throughout the building at 501 W. Main Street in Waxahachie, which is open for tours and visitors Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Besides ECAA, Jana has been inspired by her longtime friend and mentor, LaJuan Schlegel. LaJuan is a renowned bluebonnet artist with a studio in Ennis. "She makes anything she paints come to life on canvas. She has a unique talent that I am humbled to be around," Jana said. "I have learned many techniques and life lessons from LaJuan. She has molded my future, and I am anxious to learn much more from her." Jana also admires Fort Worth artist Henrietta Milan, who displays her art at the Milan Gallery. "I really enjoy her work, especially her pallet knives," Jana noted.

A lifelong art student herself, Jana said she is thrilled to continue learning and teaching. While she instructs children, she stresses one is never too old to try their hand at art. "I would encourage anyone who is interested in art to go for it. It has been a huge part in my life and gives me pleasure in so many ways," Jana said. "In a word, art is amazing! It simply makes a more beautiful world." **NOW**

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# Childhood Dreams

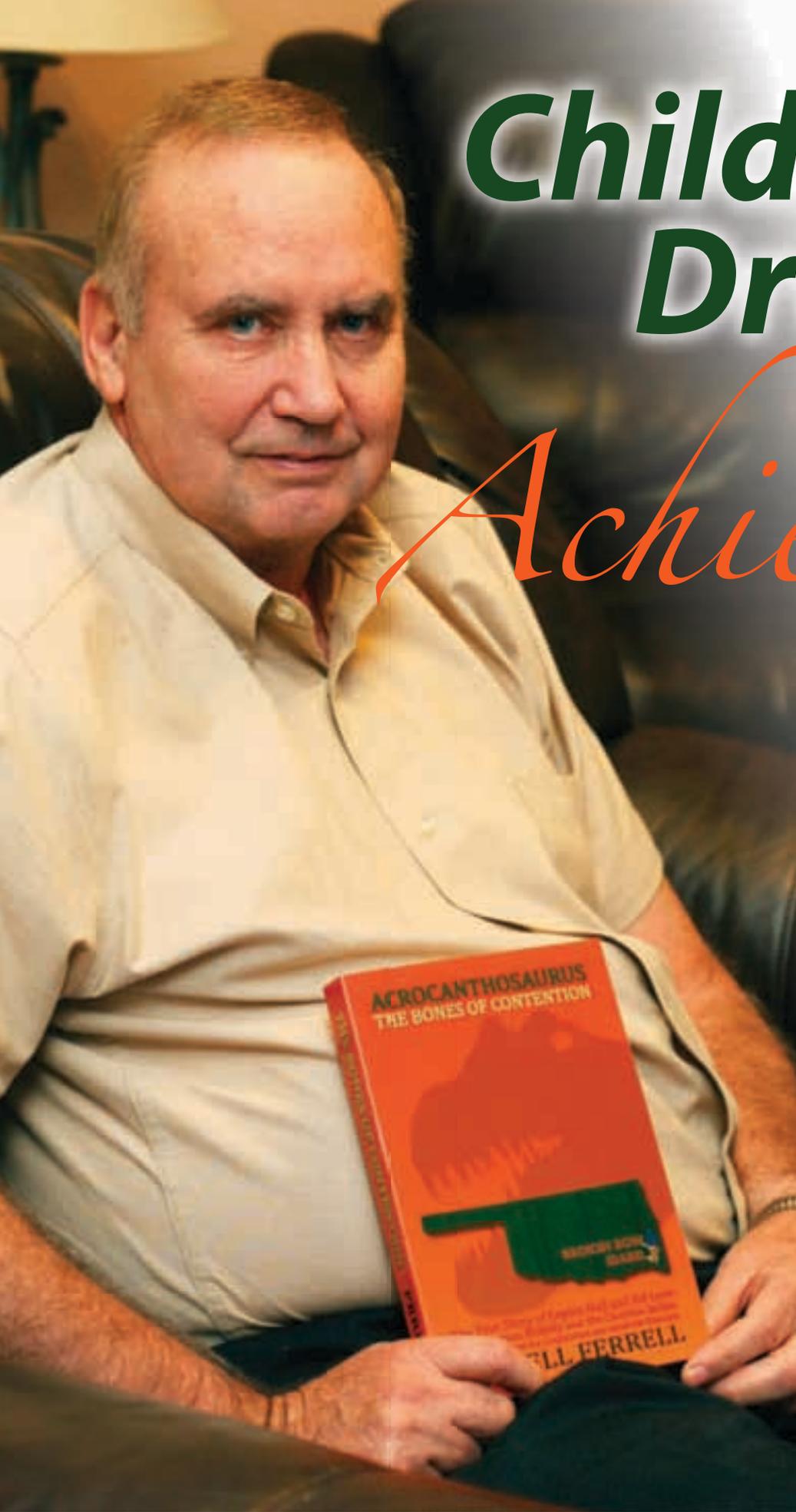
## Achieved

— By Sydni Thomas

*Some people are satisfied with one career their whole lives, but not Russell Ferrell. He has taught children and inmates, worked for the government, built houses, ran a cattle ranch and done countless other jobs during his lifetime. Semi-retired, Russell is far from completing his list of careers. He just recently added author to that list.*

Russell, born and reared in Dallas, attended East Texas State University, now Texas A&M University-Commerce, where he earned a degree in biology. For almost two decades, Russell enjoyed a career as a teacher. Most of that time was spent teaching biology and history in public schools to high school and junior high students. The rest of the time was spent teaching female inmates in state prison.

His main objective was to prepare them for the GED by teaching the four core subjects — math, science, history and English. “Teaching in prison was one of my favorite places to teach,” Russell said. “The whole system is different than



teaching in public schools. I had to teach more subjects, but my students had the choice of whether they wanted to be there or not. They were there to learn and accomplish something.”

While teaching was a large part of Russell’s career, he did manage to squeeze other jobs into the mix. Early on, he worked for a newspaper as a reporter and sports writer. He also built houses and did construction for a while. Then there was his 12-year stint with the U.S. Postal Service. When he got close to retirement, he decided to go in a different direction and moved from Texas to Oklahoma in pursuit of running a cattle ranch.

After the cattle ranch, Russell and his wife, Waynetta, moved to Red Oak. They’ve lived just outside the city limits for six years. Not able to stray from his teaching past, Russell works as a substitute teacher for Red Oak ISD. “Being a substitute teacher is a lot different than when I had my own



classroom,” Russell explained. “I still get to teach and work with students, but I’m not in the same class every day. It still allows me to work on my other projects and ventures.”

The idea of writing a book came to Russell as a child. He enjoyed reading and writing while growing up and thought that one day he could do something with it. As the years passed, making a living took up Russell’s time. Writing would have to wait until he retired. He never gave up the dream and kept a list of book ideas throughout the years. “Time started slipping up on me,” Russell said. “I was in my 50s when I began writing. Looking back, I realize now this is

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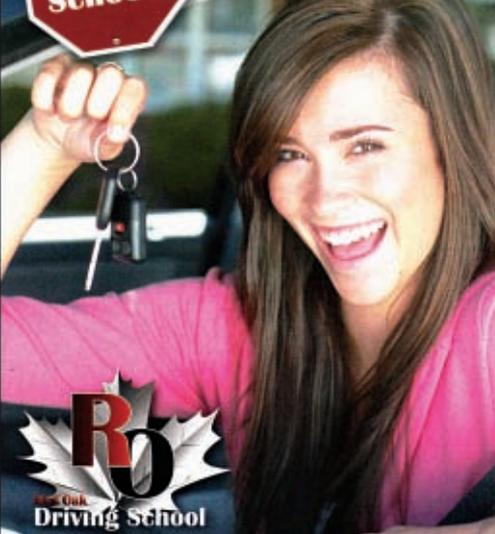
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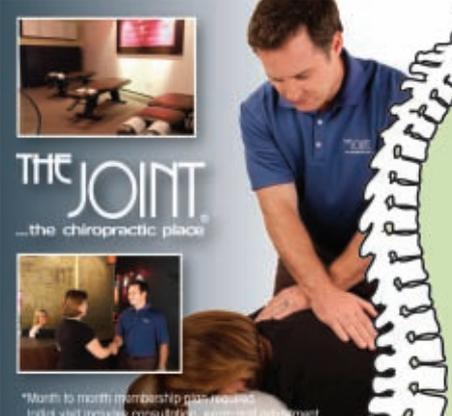
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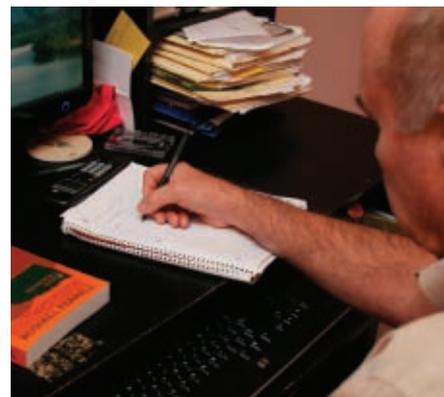
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something that I should have started when I was younger.”

Up until the point when he sat down with pen and paper, Russell was more interested in accumulating knowledge through the careers he pursued. Most of those careers have influenced his path into historical subject matter. Once Russell set his mind to writing a book he began the research process. He had several books in mind, but was able to narrow it down to two subjects for the time being — barbarians and the Celtic mystique. Little did he know that a pile of dinosaur bones would delay his projects and set him on the task of writing three books.

Russell’s grandchildren, Halee and Christian, love rocks. They took a family vacation to Beavers Bend in Oklahoma and came home excited about a rock story they discovered. During the trip, they stopped at a rock shop run by Cephis Hall. He began telling them about his greatest adventure and discovery — the time he and Sid Love discovered the Acrocanthosaurus. The whole family came back excited about what they’d learned and told Russell about it straight away. His son, Thomas, convinced him to travel back to the shop to hear the story himself. Inspired by what they heard, Russell and Thomas began planning a father-and-son project to tell the story of Cephis and Sid’s great adventure.

The research required a lot of travel and time away from their families. Thomas soon had to step away from the endeavor. Consumed by the story, Russell continued spending weeks at a time searching Oklahoma libraries, talking to those involved and falling into the world of bone wars. “I was never interested in dinosaurs prior to this project,” Russell admitted. “It was all inspired by my

grandchildren. Now that I'm finished, I probably won't do any more writing or research on dinosaurs. However, I was able to learn a lot more about dinosaurs than I ever knew before."

The story turned out to be more than two men finding a pile of bones. Russell discovered the story of two ordinary men, one an Arkansas hillbilly and the other a Choctaw Indian, who changed the dinosaur world. As amateurs, they uncovered Oklahoma's biggest secret, the *Acrocanthosaurus*.

The discovery and recovery of the bones took years since the two men were not sponsored by a university or a commercial fossil company and paid for everything themselves. "As I got further into my research, I began to learn how unique this story was," Russell said. "It's my understanding that they are the only amateurs ever to independently excavate a dinosaur of this magnitude in great condition. Two decades after their discovery, the *Acrocanthosaurus* became Oklahoma's State Dinosaur."

Information slowly trickled in on the *Acrocanthosaurus* and the men who discovered it. Russell began writing with the information he had, and would rework the materials as he received more. In the beginning, he had no idea what shape the story would take, its purpose, or how long it would be. The amount of information Russell compiled became too much for one book. Instead, he has written three versions of *Acrocanthosaurus* — *The Bones of Contention*, a historical, science and soon to be released novel-like version.

Even though Russell completed a lifelong goal once he penned the last words of the book, it is far from over. He has been approached by a film company to turn his story into a docu-drama and has several other books on his list to write.

Russell is semi-retired, but with his rental properties, substitute teaching position, and the many book ideas forming in his head, he is never without something to do. "I make time at home to read a lot," Russell said. "There is still a lot of research to be done on the first two books I started writing. It's a lot harder being an author than I thought it would be, but I learned a lot during this process. I think I will always write." **NOW**

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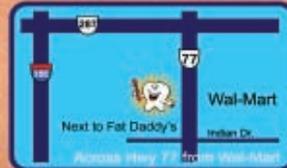
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# A YEAR-ROUND CHRISTMAS

# Star



— By Janice C. Johnson

## AT HOME WITH HERMAN AND JULIA RIOJAS



Left to Right: Raquel Riojas, Herman and Julia Riojas, Roxanne and Michael Chapman and their children Tran (white vest) and Anhelica.

*If you notice a warm glow above a quiet corner of Oak Leaf on December nights, relax — it is probably not a fire. The Christmas lights on Herman and Julia Riojas' house are more of a beacon, something like the star over Bethlehem. Instead of a baby, though, visitors may find one of the couple's two daughters*

*or son-in-law, one or both grandchildren, a long-term house guest or assorted friends.*

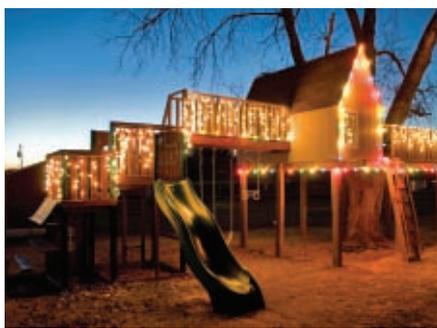
Herman and Julia, who came from small towns near Lubbock, married in 1972. Both are retired from the former Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, which transferred them to the Dallas office in 1985. As they looked for a home in a small town with good schools, they were drawn to the Red Oak area, especially Oak Leaf, which was not





incorporated at the time. “We looked at a lot of houses,” Julia said, “but it was easy to choose once we saw this one.” The open, inviting spaces appealed to their strong sense of hospitality.

From the beginning, Herman took meticulous care of the lawn and outside of the house, while Julia kept the inside ready for company. Roxanne, the couple’s oldest daughter, said, “Mom always wanted people to feel comfortable. She



didn’t want the house to be stuffy or have things that people were afraid to touch.” As a result, “People love to come here.”

At no time is that hospitality more evident than Christmas, when Julia hosts a dinner fiesta for the family each year. As the extended family has grown, around 30 people now gather in her home. Her traditional midday turkey dinner is complemented by the homemade tamales

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her mother, Josephine Milstead, brings from Lubbock. “Mom can’t provide gifts for everybody, so making tamales is how she shares her heart,” Julia said.

Even before the fiesta invitations went into the mail that first November,

Herman was applying his detail-oriented attention to decorating the home with lights. Nothing was exempt, even the satellite dish.

“Dad never does anything halfway,” Roxanne emphasized.

“We had a joke: ‘Don’t stand still long or Herman

will put lights on you.’” The display grew from year to year.

To make the massive job easier, Herman prepared the components to be

put away as-is. For instance, he made thin wooden frames to hold the lights lining the front windows, numbering them to correspond with each. Every piece is labeled and put away in order. The elaborate display delights neighbors and draws visitors from as far away as north Dallas.

Some years ago, Herman got sick and considered skipping the outdoor decorating that December. That is when the Riojases’ youngest daughter, Raquel, stepped up to preserve the tradition. Herman taught her his system, directing her as she put up frame after frame of lights, a job she has yet to relinquish. Now she gets help from Tran, Herman and Julia’s oldest grandchild.

While Herman was developing his outdoor extravaganza, Julia added to the festive atmosphere in the house. Besides the large decorated Christmas tree in the living room, clusters of small, lighted, column-shaped trees began to gather in various corners, along with a few papier-mâché reindeer. The tree population continued to grow. “Herman finally had to tell me to quit buying them,” Julia

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Pain is caused when the sciatic nerve roots are irritated, scraped, twisted, stretched or pinched as they exit the spine. Causes of the impairment may be chemical, physical or the emotional stress of everyday living. A full-blown sciatic flare-up can involve the entire sciatic nerve path, resulting in symptoms of lower back pain, burning, cramping or numbness that radiates into the thighs, legs, ankles, feet and toes. Pain may also be limited to various points along the nerve, such as the buttocks, knee area and calf.

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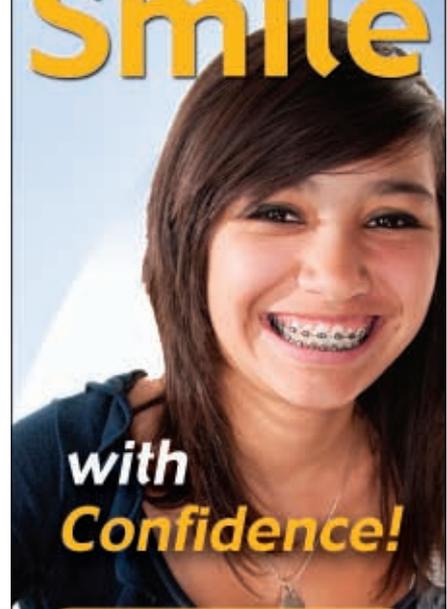


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admitted. She also lovingly displays her collections of holiday nutcrackers and Nativity scenes in every imaginable style and material.

Several years ago, Herman noticed a magazine picture of a Christmas quilt that appealed to him. He gave the picture to his mother, Elvira Riojas, who was an expert quilter. She promptly undertook the project of making a similar king-size quilt for Herman. Though all of Elvira's offspring have her quilts, the bold, cheerful wreath design is her only Christmas one. The family treasures it all the more since Elvira passed away in 2009.

Roxanne and Raquel were just little girls when the family moved to Oak Leaf, and both were in elementary grades when they began attending Red Oak schools. Their parents strongly supported the girls' education, hosting groups of their friends at home and volunteering at the schools. Julia took a job with the Red Oak Independent School District (ISD) Police Department. Herman was known for his famous fajitas.

"Everyone knew our parents," Roxanne recalled. "We knew that whatever we did, Mom and Dad would hear about it." Rather than chafing under the attention, both sisters wanted to avoid disappointing their parents.

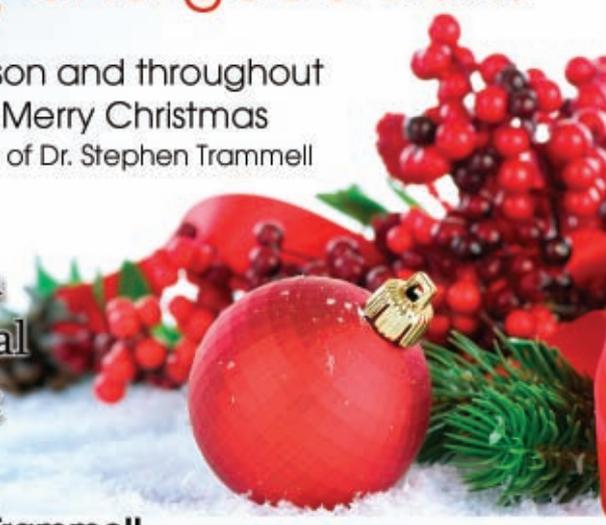
The open-door policy continued as Roxanne, then Raquel, completed high school. Herman and Julia's close association with young people gave them many chances to support and encourage at-risk teens. By this time, the couple had accepted leadership roles assisting the youth minister at their church, Duncanville's Southwest Harvest. They had already exerted a positive influence with some of their daughters' friends; now they began to take into their home teens who needed extra adult support. Some of these were threatened by or already in the grip of gang involvement. Julia admits that she and Herman made mistakes, but they treated all of the young people with love and respect. As she explained, "God has given us a heart for troubled kids. We want to make a

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difference in people's lives."

The many awards in Herman's home office only hint at the extent of that difference. Among them, Julia was named Red Oak ISD Employee of the Year, and the Red Oak Chamber of Commerce awarded the couple a "Citizens of the Year" plaque. Appreciation plaques from Ellis County Juvenile Probation Department and the 1999 graduating class stand with the others. As his greatest public accomplishment, Herman received The Texas State School Board's



"Heroes for Children" Award, one of only 14 given each year statewide.

But in the end, no honor means more than that received from family and friends. At Herman and Julia's 38th wedding anniversary celebration, planned entirely by their children, they were surprised and honored by many of the people they once helped as teenagers. Now adults in their 30s, they still call Julia and Herman Mom and Pop.

One young man spent lots of time in the home. He had been a gang member, but Herman and Julia "prayed him out of the gang" and he now serves as a Dallas police officer. At the anniversary dinner, the young officer told the Riojases, "The difference between you and everyone else is that you took the time to care."

Like their lighted house, Herman and Julia's influence has been a beacon for both ordinary students and at-risk young people. They do not know how many they have helped. "It's been a rewarding experience," Julia said, "seeing lives grow. We may never know this side of heaven." **NOW**

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**Bottom left:**

Katy Lamb, receptionist



# MyClinic Wants to Be Your Clinic!

*A new facility in Red Oak is a health care one-stop shop.*

*— By Angel Morris*

Celebrating its Red Oak opening in August, MyClinic is a brand new family practice center, open late and on weekends. “We are here to serve the entire Ellis County community with its medical needs. Our doctors and providers are committed to delivering the very best medical care to our patients, in a facility that understands the fast-paced lifestyle of our customers,” MyClinic’s Christine Loya said.

MyClinic was started by a caring physician, Dr. Federico Maese, who says great medical care starts with great practitioners. Dr. Maese is a Cardiologist and Internal Medicine doctor who has served the community for more than 10 years at his Ferris and Dallas practices. Dr. Maese is solely responsible for bringing MyClinic to the Dallas area and for soliciting

hospital and physician partners to come to treat and teach its members. When not assisting patients, you can find Dr. Maese checking in on everything at MyClinic.

Dr. Maese is joined by a team of talented Providers: Charles Williams Sr., D.D.S.; Derrick Askins, D.D.S.; Physicians Assistants Kristina Harvey and Mary Koetting; and Nurse Practitioner Miladys Friesen. Located at Ovilla Road and I-35, MyClinic has a wide array of medical services for the entire family. Just as important are its in-house services that keep patients from running all over to meet their medical needs.

MyClinic provides a convenient in-house pharmacy, clinical laboratory, digital X-ray and ultrasound. “Even more unique is that we provide comprehensive in-house dental services,

weight-loss programs, fitness center, minor wound care, allergy testing, full cardiology, including stress tests, cardiac nuclear imaging, pacemaker and defibrillator checks,” Christine said.

Perhaps most surprising is that MyClinic even goes so far as to offer a sleep disorders lab on-site, audiology testing and spirometry. “While we handle all of these things on-site, we can also direct patients to off-site MRI and CT imaging. Generally, we handle as much as we possibly can at the clinic,” Christine explained. Additionally, MyClinic is



able to coordinate and refer to specialty care including women’s health, diabetic care, general and bariatric surgery, podiatry, cardiology consultations, mental health evaluations and much more.

“The staff at MyClinic was hand-selected — from our administrative staff, to our nursing and technical staff, right down to our doctors,” Christine said. “Please stop in to say hi and let us explain how we can meet all your health and wellness needs.”

MyClinic accepts all insurances, including Medicare and Medicaid. For those patients without insurance, MyClinic offers membership plans at \$1 a day. Also, MyClinic plans have the potential to save significant amounts on monthly health care premiums when blended with major medical coverage for catastrophic events. “Everyone should come in to find out about the affordable and accessible MyClinic plans. We also offer blended insurance plans for major medical services, including ER and hospital care,” Christine said.

MyClinic is fully bilingual, accepts new patients and walk-ins are welcome. Call for an appointment at (972) 515-8700. **NOW**

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# Love, Honor and Financially Protect — Newlywed Ideas for Planning and Saving

— By *Celeste Fonseca*

Growing old together means planning, preparing and saving together. The vow you take to cherish one another includes ensuring the financial protection and well-being of your newly formed family.

Savings is the base of your personal financial pyramid. It's the foundation of your family's well-being, and it's the starting point to building wealth. Starting a sound savings program isn't difficult, but it takes some thinking and, just like a marriage, commitment.

According to a survey by the Association of Bridal Consultants, more than 67 percent of newlyweds believe the most serious conflict in their first year of marriage is over money. With the variety of savings and insurance vehicles available today, financial professionals play an important role in helping newlyweds consider how they can build a foundation as they marry their financial lives together.

Banking services, life insurance, disability policies and college savings plans are the types of products available to help prepare and protect you and your family. It's a financial representative's responsibility to cultivate a deeper awareness of the products available and the protection benefits they provide.

With winter engagement season quickly approaching, here are five financial foundation tips to ensure your fairy-tale wedding comes true:

**• Build the money you'll want on hand for immediate and short-term needs.**

This money could be for a specific upcoming expense like a honeymoon or

an education for your future children — anything you expect to pay for in the near future.

**• Set aside enough savings to serve as an emergency fund.**

This takes the role of basic financial protection in the event of a medical emergency, household catastrophe, job loss or other unforeseen expense. Financial professionals generally suggest saving the equivalent of three to six months of your household expenses as a rule of thumb.

**• Make a list of specific savings goals.**

This is important because you'll be able to match your goals to dollar amounts and track your progress toward meeting them. Your list might include the down payment on a home, four years of college tuition, a new car or simply a vacation.

**• Prepare a household budget.**

By preparing a budget you can examine the money that comes in and the money that goes out. You'll likely spot places where trimming your expenses can help you put money aside on a weekly or monthly basis.

**• Devise a savings strategy that maximizes your return.**

Check what bank accounts can offer the best interest rate, and make the most appropriate choices for your savings. **NOW**

*Celeste Fonseca is an Allstate Insurance agent based in Red Oak.*

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### December 1-3

Festival of Trees: **Thursday and Friday:** 3:00-8:00 p.m. **Saturday:** 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 Daubitz Drive. Dozens of decorated Christmas trees, wreaths, stockings, gift baskets, centerpieces and other holiday items donated by the community. Trees are sold by silent auction at event's end. (972) 617-4320 or [foundation@redoakisd.org](mailto:foundation@redoakisd.org).

### December 3

Holiday Market: 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., hosted by Yoga 4 Love, 558 Bluebird Lane. Holiday shopping with various vendors, food and fun. Event also features yoga and exercise demonstrations, fashion show, chair massages, goody bags and door prizes. (469) 437-1334.

### December 5, 12

Toy Drive: All day, Red Oak fire or police departments, 547 N. Methodist St. Drop off new toys for distribution to local children in need as the police and firefighters partner with North Ellis County Outreach. Volunteers needed for **December 16** distribution of toys. (972) 617-7632, (469) 218-7710 or [nbickerstaff@redoaktx.org](mailto:nbickerstaff@redoaktx.org).

### December 10

Ellis County SPCA Volunteer Training: Noon-1:00 p.m., 2570 FM 878, Waxahachie. Meeting for new volunteers with the ECSPCA or current volunteers who would like to be more involved with the organization. ECSPCA will host pet adoptions December 10-11, as well. [coordinator@elliscountyspca.org](mailto:coordinator@elliscountyspca.org).

Christmas Parade and Events: 5:00 p.m., Pearson Park, 200 Lakeview Parkway. Join the Red Oak Parks and Recreation Committee in celebrating the holidays, starting with a parade. Events include visits with Santa (bring your camera), arts and crafts, bounce houses, food, live performances and a toy drive.

### December 13

Christmas Comedy Show: 7:00-8:00 p.m., Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Parkway. A collection of hilarious holiday skits performed by Purely Amateur Theatricals. The library's regular monthly programming continues, but the library will be closed for the holidays December 24-26 and December 31-January 2. (469) 218-1230.

### December 15-17

Waxahachie Community Theatre's *You Better Watch Out*: **Thursday and Friday:** 7:30 p.m. **Saturday:** 2:30 p.m., McCafferty Hall, Southwestern Assemblies of God University, 1200 Sycamore Street, Waxahachie. For more information, contact [www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com](http://www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com) or (972) 646-1050.

### December 17

Breakfast with Santa: 8:00-11:00 a.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. Red Oak Lions Club offers all-you-can-eat pancakes for \$5/person and pictures with Santa for \$5/person.

### December 19-January 1

Winter Break: Red Oak ISD schools and offices closed. **January 2** is a staff work day. Classes resume **January 3**.

### December 23-26

Most city offices closed. Check your city's Web site for specific holiday schedule details.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to [angel.morris@nonmagazines.com](mailto:angel.morris@nonmagazines.com).*

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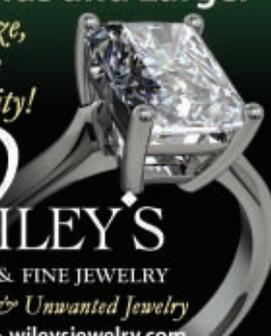


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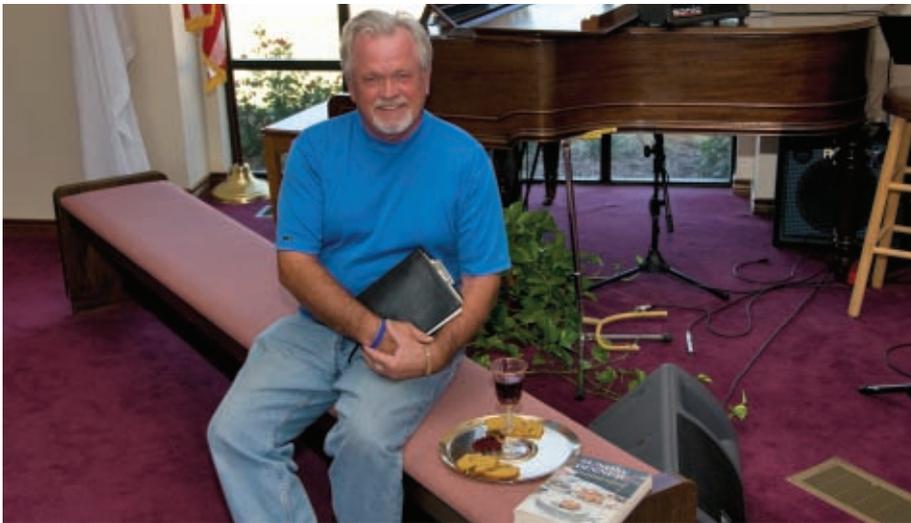
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## In The Kitchen With Pastor Ron Adams

— By Angel Morris

Pastor Ron Adams learned through trial and error but admits a cooking secret. “I watch TV cooking channels. I take what I learn and put my own twist on it,” Ron said.

After leaving the military, Ron spent 15 years as a musician and another 15 years in insurance. Today, he is senior pastor of Ovilla Road Church of the Nazarene. “I cook mostly for my wife, but I love to cook for the entire church,” Ron said. “It’s very satisfying to make a couple hundred folks happy at the same time.”

Having grown up in Okinawa, Chinese and Japanese are some of Ron’s favorite foods. But one meal stands above all others. Ron reflected, “The most memorable meal in the history of the world was the night before Jesus was crucified!” **NOW**

### Frittata Mexicana

- 1/2 lb. bacon, diced**
- 1 onion, diced**
- 1/2 lb. mushrooms**
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped**
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda**
- 1 dozen eggs**
- 1 16-oz. can refried beans**
- 3 Tbsp. water**
- 1 jar picante sauce (your favorite brand)**
- 2 lbs. Mexican blend cheese**
- 16 oz. sour cream**
- 16 oz. guacamole**
- 1/2 head lettuce, shredded**
- 1 tomato, diced**
- 1 lb. tortilla chips**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F
- 2.** In a large skillet, render bacon until almost crisp; then add onions, mushrooms and bell pepper. Cook until onions are translucent.
- 3.** Add baking soda to eggs and beat.
- 4.** Add eggs directly to skillet and lower heat to medium-high for about 3 minutes.
- 5.** Remove from burner; put into oven for about 15 minutes; remove from oven.

- 6.** Heat refried beans with water to thin; pour and spread mixture over frittata in skillet.
- 7.** Cover with picante sauce; then cover with cheese.
- 8.** Return to oven under broiler until cheese browns. Remove from oven and let cool.
- 9.** Top with remaining ingredients.

### Grilled Chicken Salad

- Boneless skinless chicken breasts (one per guest)**
- Soy sauce or Teriyaki sauce (your choice)**
- Seasoning salt, to taste**
- Lettuce (Boston or Romaine)**
- Asparagus**
- Hearts of palm, sliced**
- Roma tomatoes, sliced**
- Queen olives**
- Avocado**

- 1.** Grill chicken breasts and top with soy sauce if you like them savory or Teriyaki sauce if you prefer them to be sweeter.
- 2.** Sprinkle with seasoning salt.
- 3.** Slice lettuce head into sixths and place one wedge on each the plate. This is an

- entrée-size salad, so use the full plate.
- 4.** Slice chicken on the bias and place on plate against lettuce.
- 5.** Slightly grill asparagus. The top 6 inches or so is the best part; cut where the green begins.
- 6.** Add hearts of palm, tomatoes and olives to plate.
- 7.** Cut avocado into wedges, serving half an avocado per plate.

### Kitchen Sink Soup

- 1 whole chicken**
- 1 medium onion**
- 1/4 cup soy sauce**
- 1 stalk celery**
- 3 bay leaves**
- 2 Tbsp. liquid smoke**
- 1 lb. link sausage, diced**
- 2 yellow squash, sliced**
- 1 stalk celery, sliced**
- 1 large can diced tomatoes**
- 1 head cabbage, thinly sliced**
- 1 lb. mushrooms, sliced**
- 1 onion, sliced**
- 2 green squash, sliced**
- 1 bag small carrots**
- 2 small cans yellow hominy**
- 1 lb. bag elbow macaroni**

- 1.** Make broth by placing first 6 ingredients inside a strainer within stock pot filled 2/3 full of water and boil for 1 hour.
- 2.** Remove chicken and let cool.
- 3.** With stock pot 1/2 full of water, add remaining ingredients, excluding macaroni.
- 4.** Remove chicken from bone while soup boils for 30-45 minutes.
- 5.** Turn off burner; add chicken and macaroni to the pot.
- 6.** Cover and let sit for 30 minutes. Season to taste.

### Grandma’s Summer Afternoon in Maine Spread

- 1 pkg. cream cheese**
- 1 jar salad olives**

- 1.** Combine ingredients and use mixture as sandwich or tortilla filling, or add additional juice from the olive jar to make it thinner for a dip. It is wonderful with Fritos. It can also be wrapped up in a tortilla and sliced for an appetizer.

*Variations: Cream cheese can be combined with chives or pineapple pieces or placed by brick into bowl and covered with picante sauce for a dip with chips.*

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