

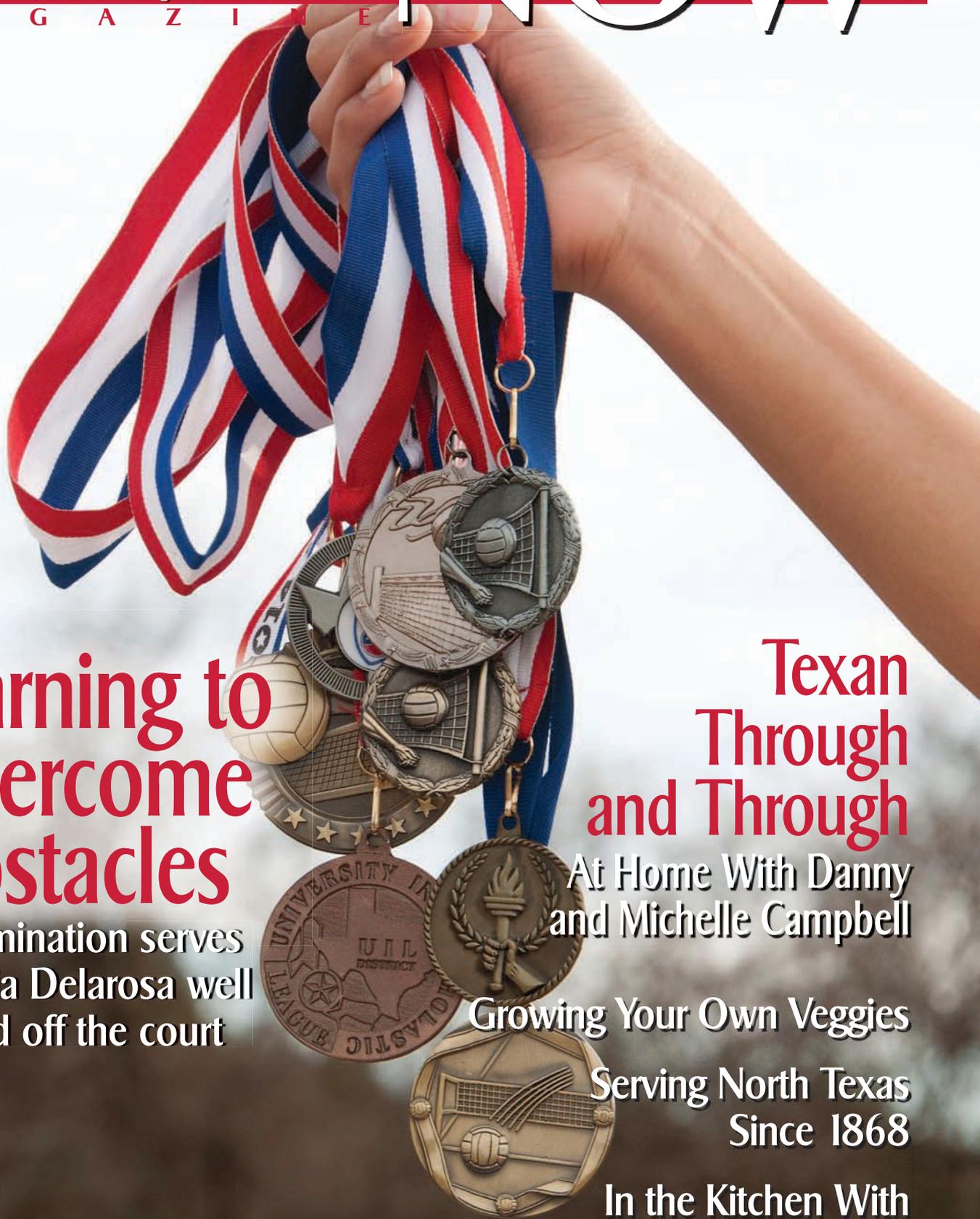
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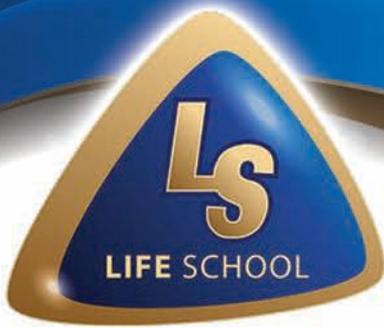
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Perseverance is the name of the game.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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# Editor's Note

*Greetings Fellow North Ellis County Residents!*

Not long ago, we were in the middle of the holiday hustle, and now it's March. Time flies! I remember when my husband and I were excited about becoming parents. Time flew, and we were desperate for a good night's sleep. Now, we're excited about Devin's visits when she comes home from college.

If there's a lesson in any of this, it might be the value of living in the moment. It's nice to have something to look forward to or to wait for

something full of anticipation. But while you're waiting, remember to be grateful for the present — each day really is a blessing. And learning to balance the harmony of anticipation for the future, with gratitude for the present, is a precious lesson in equilibrium from which we should all strive to learn.

Peace and blessings,

*Dianne*

Dianne Reaux  
North Ellis Co. NOW Editor  
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# Learning to *Overcome* Obstacles

— By Dianne Reaux

*When Cynthia Delarosa was a little girl, she had one goal — she wanted to play volleyball. But there were two problems. She didn't have a volleyball, and she didn't have a net. And even if she had the equipment, she didn't have anyone to play with. But Cynthia wasn't going to allow a few obstacles keep her from playing her favorite sport. So at a very young age, she developed a strategy for overcoming difficulties that worked on and off the court.*

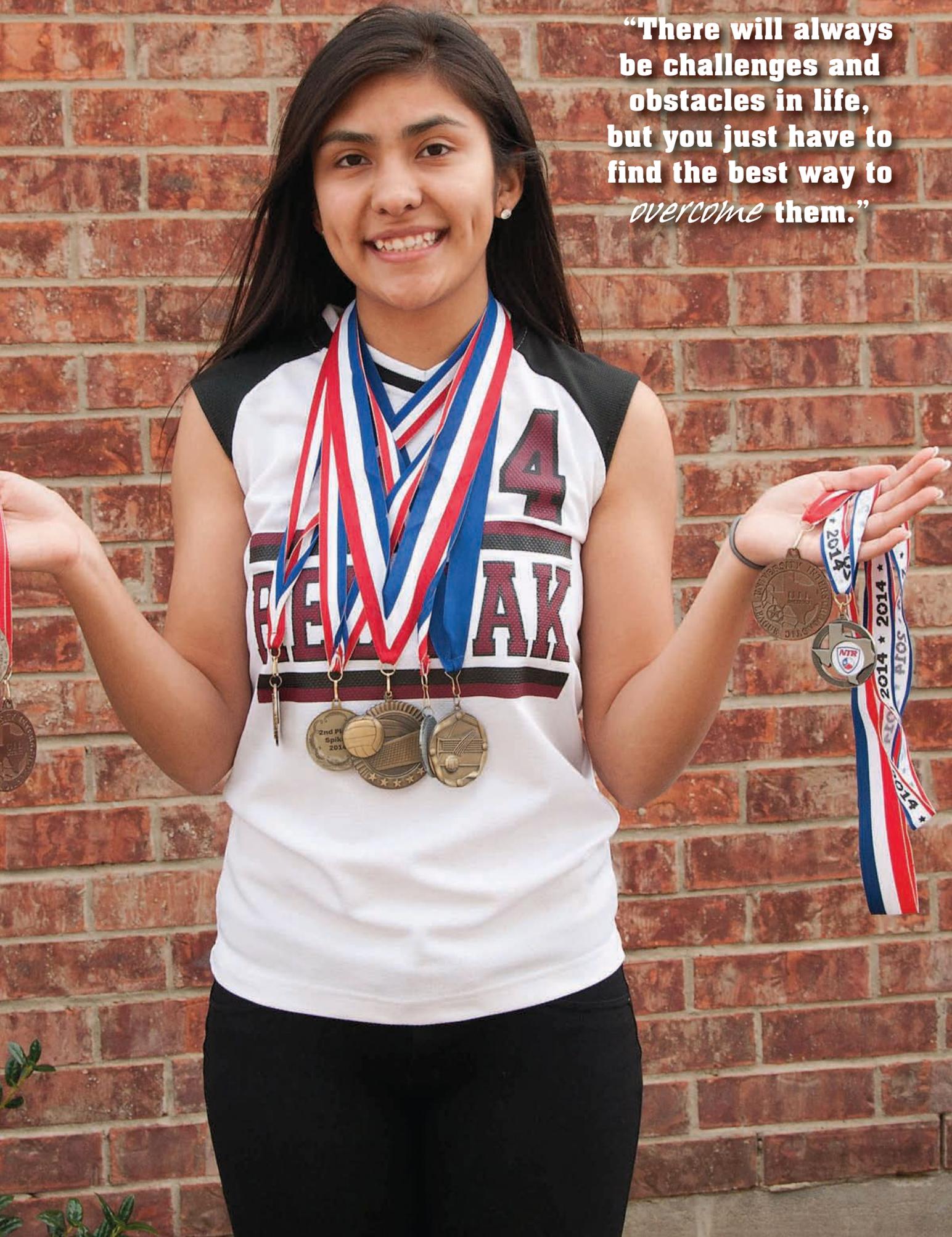
Cynthia has always loved volleyball. “When I was around 8 or 9 years old, I can remember watching the Olympics,” Cynthia stated reflectively. “I was fascinated by women’s volleyball. I watched as many of the matches as I could. I really think watching the women compete is what sparked my own desire to play.”

But Cynthia knew if she wanted to become a volleyball player, she would have to overcome a few basic hindrances. She smiled as she remembered how she started playing the sport she loves. “First of all, I had to convince my mother to get me a ball and a net,” she said, which as it turned out was the easy part. Once Cynthia’s mother purchased her a toy volleyball set, she knew she couldn’t play alone. Volleyball was a team sport, and she wouldn’t need one team — she needed two. Cynthia summed up her situation, looked at her options and decided on a course of action.

“There were three kids in my family. I had one brother and a sister who wasn’t interested in volleyball,” she stated. “And there weren’t any other little girls in my neighborhood. I knew that I couldn’t play alone, so I recruited my brother. I made the other little boys who lived on my street come over, so we would have enough players to make two small teams.” Cynthia was around 10 years old when she formed her first volleyball teams. Although she was young, determination and glimpses of leadership skills were becoming evident. These qualities were an indication of the



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find the best way to  
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type of team leader she'd eventually grow up to become.

"It was fun playing volleyball with my brothers and their friends," Cynthia stated, "but I was looking forward to playing in *real* volleyball games." In seventh grade, she finally got the opportunity she had been waiting for. "Right after the beginning of the school year, I learned volleyball tryouts had been scheduled. My friend and I were so excited, but I didn't make the team, and I was devastated," she shared. "All of my friends made the team, and that made me feel even worse."

But although Cynthia was disappointed, she was not willing to give up her goal. For the second time in her young life, she looked at her situation, summed up her options, and what she did next is a lesson from which many people could learn. "My friends who made the team told me there was an opening for team manager," she stated. Cynthia expressed her interest in the position. "I knew that if I couldn't be on the team, I still wanted to be *part* of



the team. During practices, I would make sure the equipment was ready, and the coach allowed me to handle the ball on the side of the court and mimic team drills."

But Cynthia didn't stop there — she signed up for



select volleyball and played on the NRG team. Her parents, Juan and Nora Delarosa, recognized Cynthia's dedication to volleyball and signed her up for private lessons. "I played and practiced at Dallas Baptist University and Bob Knight's Field House where I learned the techniques of serving, passing, setting and hitting," Cynthia stated. "Now that I look back, playing on a select team and the extra lessons were good for me, because I learned the fundamentals of volleyball." Cynthia continued, "The select team also held mock tryouts to help players build confidence. At school, I participated in band, track and cross country to keep myself busy, so I wouldn't have time to think about not making the volleyball team."



When eighth-grade tryouts rolled around, Cynthia was ready. "I was still nervous," she recalled, "but I just tried to concentrate on the things I learned while playing for NRG." Cynthia's determination paid off, and she was selected to play on the junior high B team. Two weeks into the season, based on her skill level and performance, her coach moved her up to the A team.

As the season progressed, so did her confidence and skill level. Cynthia

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alternated with two other players for the libero position, a defensive specialist position in volleyball. Cynthia was voted team captain her freshman and sophomore years. But during her junior year, Cynthia faced difficult challenges that almost derailed her high school volleyball career.

“Cynthia sustained multiple concussions her junior year and missed the majority of her first year as a varsity player,” explained Hope Porter, Cynthia’s varsity volleyball coach. “But she committed to working through physical rehabilitation — she worked hard to overcome her injuries and ended up being a team leader and standout player on the Lady Hawks volleyball team. She was captain of her volleyball team all four years, and the coaches of the district voted Cynthia to the Second Team All-District.

“The 2014 season was difficult for our players because for the first time in 26 years, our team didn’t make the playoffs,” Coach Porter shared. “But thanks to Cynthia and the other senior leaders, we ended the season a stronger and more resilient team.”

Cynthia is now looking forward to graduating and plans to attend The University of Texas at Austin where she wants to study speech and language pathology. She is excited about becoming a college student, and knows it will be a lot of hard work. She also realizes challenges will be part of the journey. Cynthia has gained wisdom well beyond her years. “I know that it can be really hard when someone tells you no or that you’re not good enough, but don’t let it discourage you or keep you from going after what you want,” she advised. “There will always be challenges and obstacles in life, but you just have to find the best way to overcome them.” **NOW**



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# TEXAN Through & Through

— By Callie Revell



*When Danny and Michelle Campbell met in 1979, they were still attending high school in Duncanville. Five years later, they were married, and Danny began his career as a fireman for the Dallas area. Their lives led them to Red Oak in 1992 with their two children, Amanda and Austin. “We wanted a small town to raise our two kids,” Michelle said. “They were 4 and 2 when we moved here. We wanted a place they could go from kindergarten all the way up through high school.” After living in Red Oak for 10 years, they began searching for their dream home.*

The house they chose in 2003 had been a model home built in 1999 in a new development by Bob Hamlin. Danny and Michelle loved the house and its location on a cul-de-sac. “We drive in from the highway and the road winds underneath huge trees and over the bridge,” Michelle said. “Every time I take that drive, it feels so peaceful and woodsy. It’s kind of like being in the country, but we’re still close to the city.”

The couple describes the house as a perfect fit for them. “Bob Hamlin was one of the first builders we saw who used stone on the front of houses,” Danny explained. “That’s what first drew us to it. We like the Texas stone from Austin.” The house is full of fascinating nooks and crannies, including a built-in desk in one of the bedrooms and a high-ceilinged study off the front entryway. The den features angled corners and a very unique fireplace with a space hollowed out above for a television, although it has proved a challenge to adapt the space

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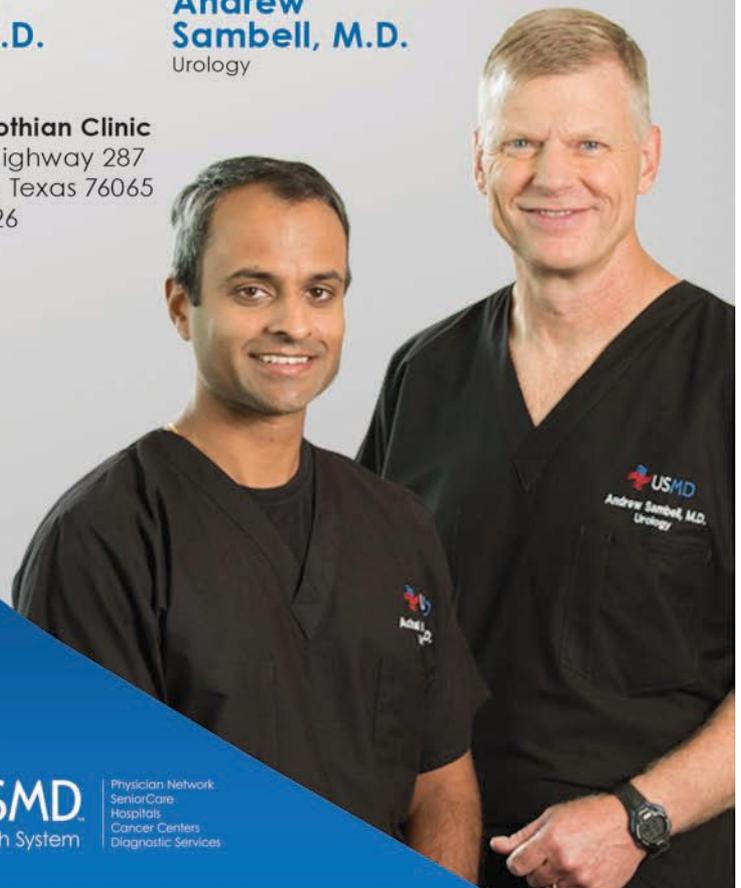
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as technology has evolved. “When the house was built in 1999, TVs were built up instead of out. So, I had to go with a smaller TV,” Danny said. “If it was built in the present time, it would be built wider.”

Michelle’s favorite room in the house is the master bathroom, which features a corner tub and a walkthrough shower in



the opposite corner. “I love this room,” Michelle said. “I spend a lot of time in here.” The room also holds sentimental value for her. After her mother passed away in 2001, Michelle discovered her mother had visited the house when it was a model home and adored the master bathroom. Her mother had even made plans to replicate the design in another location. “I found this house online, and when I showed my brother the pictures, he said Mom had been in this house,” Michelle said. She keeps a picture of her mother in the bathroom with an angel figurine to remember her.

Danny and Michelle love living in Texas, and their pride for their state is evident all over their home. “Our house shows a lot of Texas heritage,” Danny said, pointing out that most of the house is constructed from Texas materials. He chose rustic wood floors to help tie the theme together, and he collects large iron stars to place around the home. “They are unique, especially the one out front that has 1836 on it, the year Texas declared independence.”

Danny and Michelle have a perfect system worked out to divide the work on the house. “I’m the inside decorator, and

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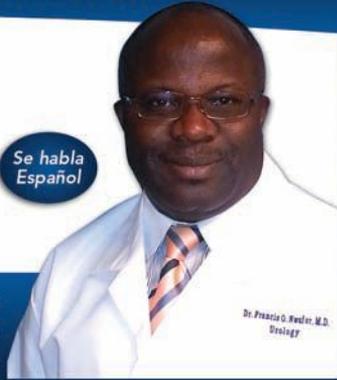
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he does the outside landscaping,” Michelle said. “It’s like therapy to me. I can just get creative, and Danny is good with that. I feel like God has blessed me with a talent for putting textures and colors together. I just love making a house a home.” Michelle chose to decorate with rustic Texan touches, and some rooms are completely filled with antiques they have inherited. “Our style is original, but not off-the-wall,” Michelle said. “We’ve tried hard to make this feel like home and make our personalities stand out. Our house is not elaborate, but it’s comfortable.”

Many of Michelle’s decorations reveal her family’s priorities and what is most important to them. “If you look around, you’ll see a lot of crosses and a lot of family pictures,” Michelle said, pointing out pictures of Austin, Amanda and Amanda’s husband, Kevin. “Our lives are focused on God first and our family second. We don’t have a big family, but we love each other.”

Danny’s love of landscaping has transformed the backyard into what the couple describes as their personal oasis. “Landscaping and creating flowers, that’s therapy for me,” Danny said. “Growing up, we had a small greenhouse. My mom was really great with plants, and I took that



from her. I enjoy the color and creating something different — something I've never seen before or expanding on something I have seen." The couple added a beautiful pool and surrounded it with colorful flowers and banana trees. There is even room for a side yard for the couple's four dogs. Because the land behind their house is privately owned, their view includes open pastures, big trees and grazing horses. "When we built our fence, we made it 6-foot on the sides and 4-foot on the back side so the view isn't blocked," Danny said. From the living room's large bay windows, it doesn't even look like there is a back fence since the yard slopes down.

Their master bedroom includes a door leading to the back porch. "We have two big, wooden rocking chairs on the porch. It



is just so peaceful and pretty," Michelle said. "We sit out there and discuss life's problems and solve them all." Michelle loves how the backyard helps her enjoy time with the family. They enjoy music by the pool and use the grill to cook out. "The kids love it," she said. "Everyone comes back home when it gets warm." Michelle appreciates all of Danny's hard work to keep the backyard so beautiful. "It's all him!" Michelle said. "He might get my input, and I might suggest some colors, but he does it all. That's his thing. It's amazing."

When they first moved in, they only planned to stay for five years. Now that they are going on 12 years, they are taking things one day at a time and enjoying everything their house has to offer. They are thankful for the memories they have made and will make in their home. "This house is truly our blessing," Michelle said. **NOW**

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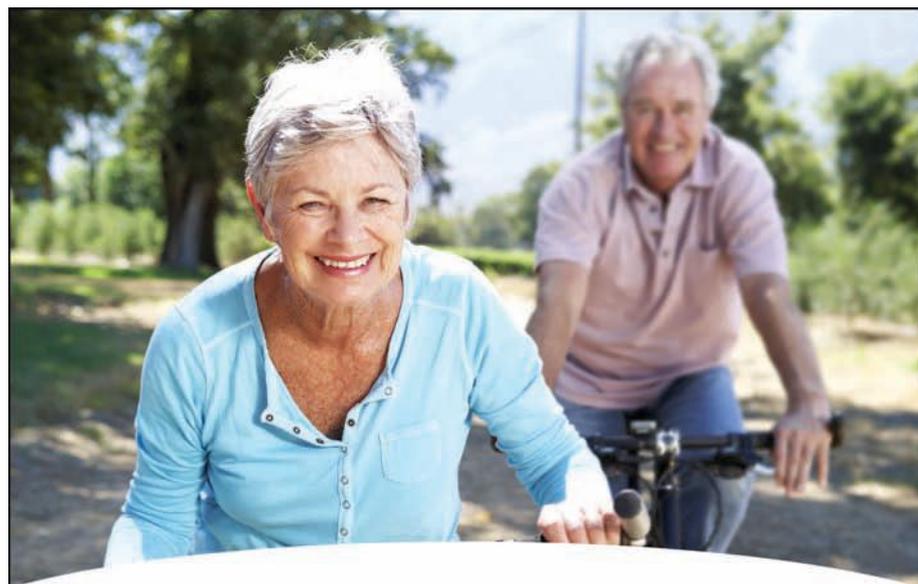
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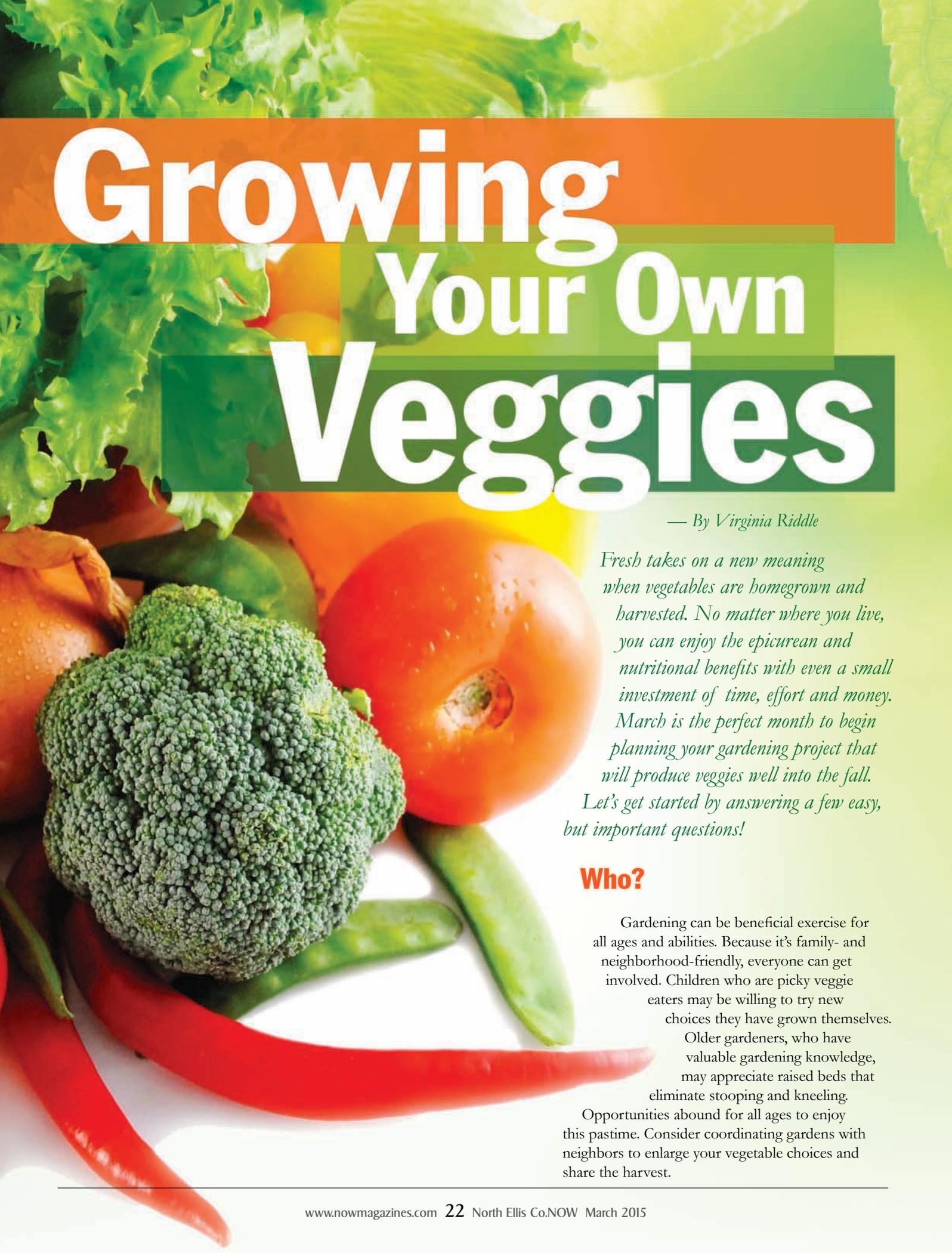
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# Growing Your Own Veggies

— By Virginia Riddle

*Fresh takes on a new meaning when vegetables are homegrown and harvested. No matter where you live, you can enjoy the epicurean and nutritional benefits with even a small investment of time, effort and money. March is the perfect month to begin planning your gardening project that will produce veggies well into the fall. Let's get started by answering a few easy, but important questions!*

## Who?

Gardening can be beneficial exercise for all ages and abilities. Because it's family- and neighborhood-friendly, everyone can get involved. Children who are picky veggie eaters may be willing to try new choices they have grown themselves.

Older gardeners, who have valuable gardening knowledge, may appreciate raised beds that eliminate stooping and kneeling.

Opportunities abound for all ages to enjoy this pastime. Consider coordinating gardens with neighbors to enlarge your vegetable choices and share the harvest.

## What?

Endless vegetables are easy to grow depending on the season of the year. If you are a first-time veggie gardener, keep things simple. Plant easy-to-grow vegetables or your favorites that have been recommended by neighbors or nurseries in the area. Spring and summer plant choices include all varieties of tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, summer



squash, peas, beans, okra and nearly all herbs. Swiss chard is a green that will survive the Texas summer heat.

## Where?

Most veggies require a sunny, well-drained area, but if that's not possible, try a potted garden or a hydroponic system in a sunny patio or balcony area. One patio tomato plant can produce a plentiful and continuous supply when planted in a pot. Local garden centers have a large range of pots. You can also create your own pot by cutting drainage holes into the bottom of a potted soil bag, splitting open the top of the bag, removing about half the soil, rolling the bag's sides down, and finally, planting a vegetable inside. Hydroponic systems are pricier but can yield produce for years to come. And since most vegetable



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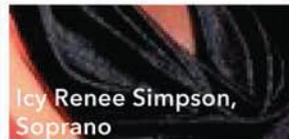
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plants blossom, they are attractive when incorporated into favorite sunny flower beds.

If you are carving a vegetable plot out of your backyard, have your soil tested. Use either a commercial kit or ask your county extension agent for advice. Almost any type of soil can be amended to give good plant growth. Your choice of mulch and fertilizer depends on soil type and available supplies.

What kind of watering system is available for your location? For small gardens or potted veggies, a watering can or diffused sprayer may work well. However, for larger plots, you may wish to lay soaker hoses on timers.

Invest in great time-saving gardening tools and keep them sharpened, cleaned and organized throughout the years to come. Simple hand tools are available, as well as powered tools.

### When?

Planning begins now. However, planting out-of-doors needs to wait until the danger of a late frost or freeze is over. One of the best indicators of that date is when you notice buds on native-to-Texas pecan or mesquite trees. Vegetables, even tomatoes, can be started from seeds planted in starter trays purchased, along with quality potting soil, at your local nursery. Just follow the directions on the seed packet. The trays

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are easy to set outside during warm days and nights but move them to a heated location when temperatures dip down below 40 F.

## How?

Now is the time to choose between organic or nonorganic vegetable gardens. Start a compost pile and investigate appropriate choices for fertilizer and pesticides that work best in your area. Your local garden nurseries, county extension agents and Master Gardeners are great resources for information that will help you whether you decide to go organic or not.

If your veggie garden is going to encompass more than a few square feet, rent or purchase a tiller from an area garden center or hardware store. Break the soil and turn the subsoil at a depth of about 6 inches. Remove rocks, make furrows for proper drainage, plant seeds or seedlings and lay down a 3-inch layer of mulch for weed control and water retention.

Plan your plantings so mature, larger plants will not shade smaller ones. Larger plants, like tomatoes, may need to be staked as they grow. To save space, beans, peas, melons and squash can be grown on easy-to-construct trellises, cages or A-frames.

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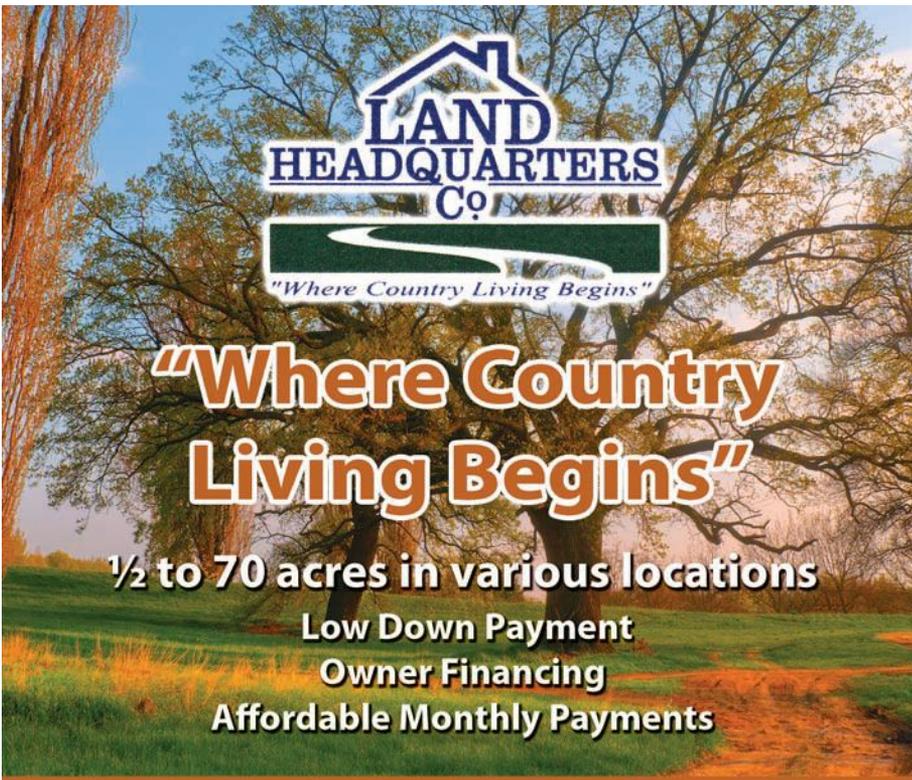

and pull weeds that crowd your plants, taking water and nutrients from the soil. Water when moisture cannot be felt 1-inch deep into the soil and fertilize on recommended cycles. Harvest veggies when they are at their ripest point or before damaging weather, such as hail is predicted.

## Handling the Harvest!

Pick, wash, eat and enjoy your produce each day, but if your bounty exceeds your gastronomic limits, here are some easy tips:

- **Most veggies can be frozen, canned or dehydrated for future use.** Research methods online or with your county extension agents. Follow food-handling safety tips exactly.
- **Donate produce to a local food bank.** Their clients love to see fresh vegetable offerings. Your charitable donations may be tax deductible — check with your income tax specialist.
- **Share with friends and family.** They will know it is a gift from your heart!

Growing your own vegetables can be a fun, educational experience for family, friends and neighbors, and the physical exercise and healthy eating can elevate your spirits after our cold winter days. Welcome spring by enjoying watching your new veggie garden thrive! **NOW**



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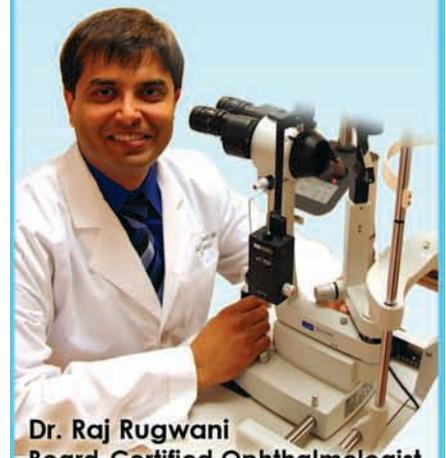
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*CNB is helping to strengthen the community, one relationship at a time. — By Dianne Reaux*

Citizens National Bank of Texas has been around for a long time. If you're curious enough to wonder how long, CNB was part of Ellis County when land sold for \$2 an acre, Texas was on a gold basis and national bank notes, (also known as greenbacks) were worth 66 2/3 cents on the dollar.

CNB first opened its doors for business on July 1, 1868 in Waxahachie, Texas. "CNB started with a group of residents who realized the community needed a bank about 20 years after the city was originally chartered, so we've been around for a mighty long time," stated Mark Singleton, current CEO and president. Citizens National Bank of Texas and the Singleton family have deep roots in the community. Mark's great-grandfather quickly became involved with CNB, and Mark represents the fourth generation of bankers to serve his family's business.

Mark has a passion for promoting the highest ethical standards in banking, and works hard to distinguish the bank's brand. Like most businesses, banks have different strengths. One of CNB's strengths lies in truly being a community bank. "Our employees live here, and our kids go to school here. It's our community, and it's our home.

"One of our favorite sayings is, 'We do what we say we're going to do,'" Mark stated. "This is one of our core values, and if we fail in some way to measure up, we have plenty of people who will hold us accountable. And the reverse also holds true. When we meet our standards, customers recognize it and appreciate our efforts.

"From a banking standpoint, we support our community. We take local deposits and keep those funds local for the people

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and small businesses that live and work here,” Mark stated. “CNB is also involved with much of the economic development activity in North Ellis County, and we now have a branch in Burleson, Texas. We have 10 branches with employees who are dedicated to helping build stronger and better communities.”

CNB is also a strong corporate citizen. “We’re very active in every aspect of our community, as well as in Texas, as a whole,” Mark shared. “Many of our employees serve in key leadership positions in local churches and civic organizations like the YMCA and United Way.” And leading by example, Mark currently serves as mayor pro-tem for the city of Waxahachie. Altogether, CNB employees volunteer about 15,000 hours of community service each year.

Since 1952, CNB has awarded over \$5 million in academic scholarships to over 700 graduates who live in our communities. The bank’s philosophy on giving is simple. “We just try to pay back our community for what we’ve been blessed to achieve,” Mark reflected.

*“We do what we say we’re going to do.”*

“We’ve been in business for 146 years, and we plan to be here for generations to come. If we make our community strong, we’ll remain strong,” Mark explained. “It’s a symbiotic relationship, because helping our community helps all of us grow and prosper. We believe in finding out what needs to be done, and we get it done — that’s our motto. We can talk about things for a bit, but then it’s time to stop talking and actually get things done. Let’s make positive things happen.” **NOW**

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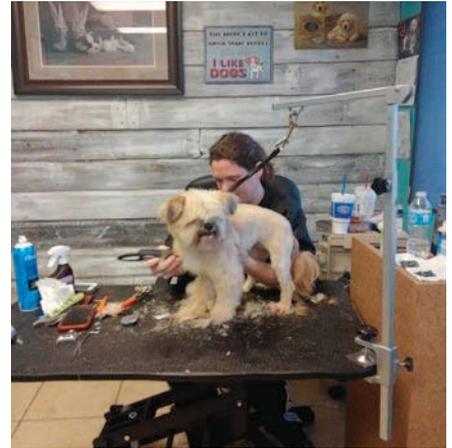
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*Adriana, Heather and Lindsay of the Ovilla Road and Methodist Street Sonic are all smiles as they look forward to warmer weather.*



*Amanda DeViney enjoys an afternoon of browsing for antiques at Red Oak's Southern Details Treasure Shop.*



*April Warren, owner of April's Pet Grooming, gets Toby ready for his close up shot.*



*Debra Robinson enjoys being pampered during the grand opening of Natural Nails in Red Oak.*



*Dr. Jack, Taylor and Bones take time out to pose for a picture.*



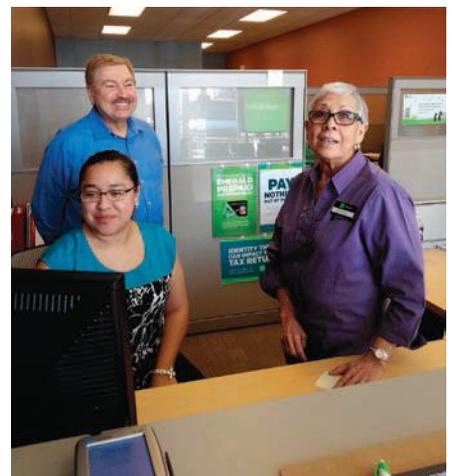
*Elia Suarez and her daughters, Abigail and Sophia, picked a prime location and a beautiful day to sell their Girl Scout cookies.*



*Kenny Tyler has a camera ready smile thanks to Corinne Pearson, D.D.S. and Evelyn Young, R.D.H. of Pearson Family Dentistry.*



*Pamela Davis visits the Wal-Mart optical department for an expert fitting with her new glasses.*



*Red Oak H&R Block team, Walter Pearson, Pilar Mayball and Elvia Popoca, are prepared to help with professional tax needs.*

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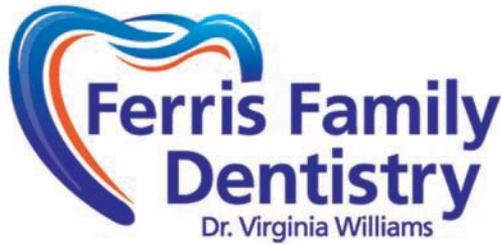
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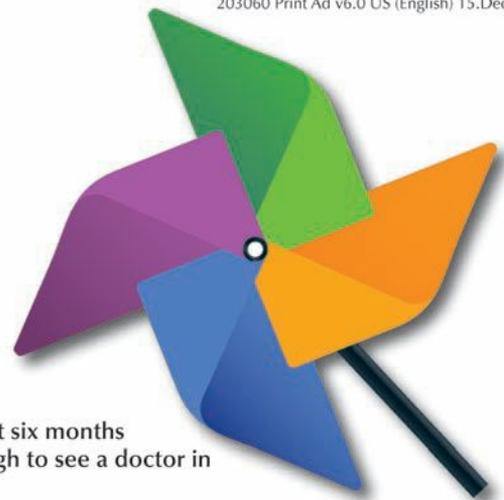
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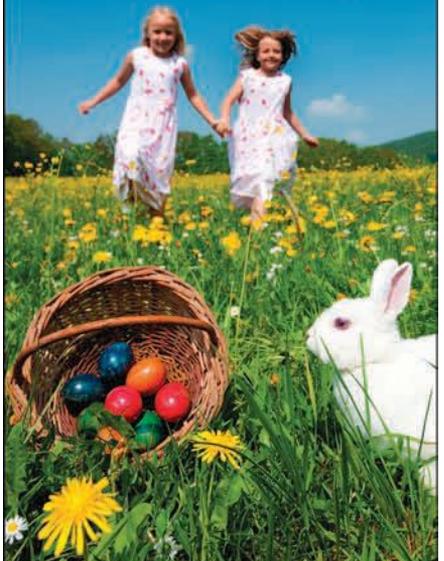


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# Poison Beware

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

No one wants to be poisoned. However, if it happens, you will want to do everything you can as soon as you can to counteract the toxins. National Poison Prevention Week is March 15-21, the third week of that month every year. The main goal is to raise awareness in preventing accidental poisonings. It's important to remember anyone at any age can be poisoned by just about anything that can be ingested or has the potential of affecting the body in any way, if it is used inappropriately.

If you think you have been poisoned, there are things you can do before you seek the service of professionals. Poison Help, a website from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services writes:

- If the person inhaled poison, get to fresh air right away.
- If the person has poison on the skin, take off any clothing the poison touched. Rinse skin with running water for 15 to 20 minutes.
- If the person has poison in the eyes, rinse eyes with running water for 15 to 20 minutes.
- Your poison center can give you other first-aid advice and may save you from a visit to the emergency room.

Before you ever get to that point of dashing to fresh air or running water, a serious look at things in your environment can be helpful. A few of the more obvious ones are: plants, medications and cleaning agents.

Plants can be trouble, so it is always helpful for the sake of children and pets, to move them to a place that is out of reach. Keep in mind that just because a medication is in a child-resistant container does not mean that it is childproof. Avoid putting medications on tables or countertops easily accessible to children. Keeping cleaning agents unavailable to children and pets is a given. What is not often considered is following the label on the container. It could be dangerous to mix certain ingredients. Always check. Storing chemicals or even medications in containers other than the original is a bad idea. It makes it too easy for accidents to occur. Those laundry and dishwasher pods are very handy but can also be delicious looking to the eyes of children. Too many children have been poisoned already because of them. Store them out-of-reach.

The Poison Help line is 1-800-222-1222. It will connect you to your local poison control center. If a possible poisoning has ensued, there is help available at your fingertips. **NOW**

**Source:**

[www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/what-can-you-do/national-poison-prevention-week/](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/what-can-you-do/national-poison-prevention-week/).

*This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.*

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### March 1

Annual Bridal Event Show:  
11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle Dr. Admission is \$3 per person. Creative food, beverages, DJs, dancing, fresh floral arrangements, photographers, table and room décor and more. Call (972) 723-7919 or visit the website at [midlothiancenter.com](http://midlothiancenter.com).

Free College Fair: 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m., The Canterbury Episcopal School, 1708 N. Westmoreland Rd., DeSoto. Colleges and universities attending include The University of Alabama, Howard University, Mississippi State University and many others. For a complete list of schools, visit [www.TheCanterburySchool.org](http://www.TheCanterburySchool.org). To RSVP for this event, visit [RSVP@BoosterClub@TheCanterburySchool.org](mailto:RSVP@BoosterClub@TheCanterburySchool.org).

### March 7

Cedar Hill Recreation Center Citywide Block Party: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Alan E. Sims Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Come out and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the recreation center with food, friends, fitness and fun for all. Event includes program performances, a health fair, petting zoo, bounce house, gaming truck and community vendors.

Dogwood Canyon Volunteer Training: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center at Cedar Hill, 1206 West FM 1382, Cedar Hill. Volunteers contribute by offering expertise during special events, administration and habitat maintenance, providing visitor support, guiding hikes and more. To learn more or register for training, contact Julie Collins at (469) 526-1991, or [jcollins@audubon.org](mailto:jcollins@audubon.org).

### March 8

Daylight Savings Time Begins. Don't forget to spring forward.

### March 14

Ferris Fire Department & CareFlight host Community Wide CPR Class: 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Scout House, 514 S. Mable St. Class will instruct the basics of performing CPR, and participants will also learn how to use an automatic defibrillator. Call the Ferris Fire Department at (972) 842-2898 to get your name on the list for this free event.

### March 17

Happy St. Patrick's Day.

### March 25

Red Oak Area Chamber Luncheon: Noon-1:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200

Lakeview Pkwy, Red Oak. \$15 for members with RSVP, \$18 for members without RSVP and \$20 for non-members. For more information, visit their website [www.redoakareachamber.org](http://www.redoakareachamber.org).

### March 28

Ellis County Master Gardener Lawn & Garden Expo: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln. Enjoy the day at the Lawn & Garden Expo with your family. Workshops for adults and children will be taught by Master Gardeners. Tickets are \$5 for adults and children under 12 are free. Free tickets are available by visiting an expo sponsor. A list of sponsors can be found at [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com).

Red Oaks Annual Vaccination Clinic: 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m., Public Works Department, 411 W. Red Oak Rd. Vaccinations will be offered by Countryside Vet Clinic and will be available for dogs and cats. Please make sure all pets are leashed or in a carrier. Call (972) 223-5641 for information on specific vaccines and prices.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [dianne.reaux@nowmagazines.com](mailto:dianne.reaux@nowmagazines.com).*



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## In the Kitchen With Devin Reaux

— By *Dianne Reaux*

Devin Reaux grew up in Red Oak, but her French last name is a clear indication of her southern Louisiana roots. “My father’s family is from Lafayette, and they love to cook huge family meals,” she said smiling. “When I was little, I didn’t like spicy foods, but I guess I’ve eaten so much of it, the spicier the better!”

She grew up watching her parents cook, and as she got older, she enjoyed helping. “I started out helping with small things like icing cakes. Eventually, I was doing most of the baking,” she said. Devin, now a sophomore attending The University of Texas at Arlington, is becoming more independent — which translates into cooking for herself and her roommates. And she has sage advice for students who will soon be leaving the nest. “Pay attention when your parents try to give you cooking tips. One day you’ll be on your own, and you’ll be glad you listened!” **NOW**

### Shrimp Casserole

- 1 1/2 cups long-grain rice, uncooked**
- 1 1/2 lbs. medium-size raw shrimp**
- 1/2 cup butter**
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped**
- 1 onion, chopped**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 4 green onions, chopped**
- 2 10 3/4-oz. cans cream of shrimp, or cream of celery soup**
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper**
- 1 cup shredded cheddar-Colby cheese blend**
- 1/4 cup fine, dry breadcrumbs**

- 1.** Prepare rice according to package directions.
- 2.** Peel and devein shrimp.
- 3.** Melt butter in a large skillet over medium

- heat; add next 4 ingredients. Sauté 10-12 minutes, or until tender; add shrimp and sauté a few more minutes. Add soup.
- 4.** Combine shrimp mixture and rice; add pepper. Pour mixture into a lightly greased 13x9-inch baking dish. Sprinkle evenly with cheese and breadcrumbs.
  - 5.** Bake at 350 F for 25 minutes, or until cheese is melted.

### Cajun Chicken Salad

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise**
- 2 Tbsp. mustard**
- 1 Tbsp. cider vinegar**
- 2 tsp. paprika**
- 1 tsp. Cajun or Creole seasoning**
- 1 tsp. prepared horseradish**
- 2 eggs, hardboiled and chopped**
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped**

- 1/4 cup green onion, chopped**
- 1 lb. boneless chicken breasts, cooked (grilled is best)**
- Salt, to taste**
- Tabasco or other hot sauce, to taste**

- 1.** In a large bowl, mix first 6 ingredients together.
- 2.** Mix in next 3 ingredients.
- 3.** Cut chicken breast into chunks and add to bowl along with remaining ingredients. Season mixture with salt and hot sauce. Chill before serving.

### Merle’s Spinach Appetizers

- 2 10-oz. pkgs. frozen spinach**
- 2 cups herb-flavored stuffing mix**
- 1 large onion, finely chopped**
- 6 eggs, well-beaten**
- 3/4 cup margarine, melted**
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated**
- 3/4 Tbsp. cayenne pepper, or to taste**
- 1 1/2 tsp. garlic salt**
- 1-2 tsp. Tony Chachere’s Creole Seasoning (optional)**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 325 F. Lightly grease cooking sheet.
- 2.** Cook spinach according to package directions; drain well, squeezing to remove excess moisture.
- 3.** Combine spinach with remaining ingredients. Mix well. Shape into 3/4-inch balls and place on cookie sheet.
- 4.** Bake 15-20 minutes.

### Salmon Cakes

- 1 16-oz. can salmon**
- 1 Tbsp. flour**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 2 Tbsp. onion, finely chopped**
- 2/3 cup cracker crumbs**
- 2 eggs, beaten**
- Dash pepper**
- Dash onion powder**
- Dash garlic salt**
- 1 Tbsp. green pepper, finely chopped**
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil**
- 1 Tbsp. bacon drippings for extra flavor**

- 1.** Remove bones from salmon and flake; add remaining ingredients and mix well. Form into cakes.
- 2.** The oil and bacon drippings should be hot enough to sizzle when patties are placed into skillet. Fry patties for approximately 5 minutes on each side, or until they are evenly browned on each side.

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