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M A G A Z I N E

JUNE 2023

Stitching Memories

Jacki Byers gives back
with keepsake blankets

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Featured Business:

Lorenzo Brown and Associates

In the Kitchen With
April Lynn Prentice

PFAFF

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Dr. Raza is a Board Certified Physician in Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine practicing in the Dallas area since 2006. She completed her residency at Columbia University New York and has been medical director of the wound care program at Methodist Hospital Dallas since 2010. She is an ardent supporter of the concept of limb salvage and has developed a comprehensive program for healing diabetic foot wounds in a timely fashion. She is a member of Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society.



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ON THE COVER



A Red Oak mom finds therapy at her sewing machine while preserving memories for others.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

June To-Dos ...

If you investigate any day of the year, you'll discover some "official" reason to celebrate. Interesting about this month, is the number of days tied to foods. In the spirit of summer, let's look at ways to spend June.

Buy someone a pastry for Donut Day on June 1. June 2, treat yourself to ice cream on National Rocky Road Day. On Egg Day, June 3, debate which came first, the chicken or the egg? Mark National Cheese Day on June 4 with a grilled sandwich like when you were a kid. Bake cookies for National Gingerbread Day on June 5. June 7 wraps up National Fishing Week — catch and/or fry your own!

Spend June 8 with your BFF for National Best Friends Day. June 11, do something you enjoy for National Making Life Beautiful Day. Eat Nutter Butters on National Peanut Butter Cookie Day on June 12. Catch a peewee game on June 13 for National Little League Baseball week. Fly a Kite on June 15 to commemorate Ben Franklin's famous experiment of 1752. June 16 is National Fudge Day — prepare some to give Dad for Father's Day on June 18, which is also National Picnic Day. (Ignore June 17: Eat Your Vegetables Day.)

Sip your favorite flavor for National Ice Cream Soda Day on June 20, just in time to celebrate the first day of summer — June 21 ... also Go Skateboarding Day. June 24 is UFO Day — watch a documentary about Area 51 and decide for yourself! June 25, read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* for author Eric Carle's birthday. Share a Snack Pack on June 26 for National Chocolate Pudding Day. Capture your favorite people and places on June 29 for Camera Day. Work off all that extra food by pitching a tent for National Camping Month!

Enjoy each day!



Angel

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Stitching Memo

— By Angel Morris

Having a collection of special clothing sewn into a keepsake blanket is a way to remember important times in one's life or hold on to a loved one who has passed. For Jacki Byers, piecing these together for others is therapeutic. "I have five sons — three who are still at home, so my life is very chaotic at times. Sewing gives me a way to relieve some of that stress," Jacki noted. "This is truly something I do for me, so that I have something that's mine. Then I share it with others."

Jacki is no stranger to putting others first. She and her husband, Jeff, moved to Red Oak eight years ago for their children. "We like living in a small town, and the schools are excellent," she explained. When her youngest was about to enter school, Jacki realized she would have more time on her hands. "My husband had gotten me a nice sewing machine, and I thought while the kids were at school I could make blankets in my free time — something I've always wanted to do."

An acquaintance asked Jacki to sew a memory blanket. "She loved it. And from there I found something I truly love, too," Jacki admitted.

Typically made from clothing collected through the years, memory blankets begin with the selection of pieces one wants to preserve. "People bring me the items they want me to use. Just dropping off the clothes can be very emotional," Jacki

said. "I use T-shirts, dress shirts, denim, corduroy, you name it. "Then I cut them up and determine my pattern before sewing them all together," she continued. "Cutting them was more difficult than I imagined. One of the first ones I made took me two days to cut. I didn't want to make a mistake."

An especially touching blanket was for a girl who was turning 16 whose father had passed years before. "Her grandmother wanted to give her a blanket of her dad's clothes. I put a message on one of his shirts with a pocket and made a heart from some of his old denim, stuffed with pieces of his old shirts, that I fit inside the pocket.

"That was a very emotional blanket at pickup, and I still get messages from the grandmother about how much the granddaughter loves it," Jacki continued. "That makes my part very rewarding. More so than just, say, making a dress."

Another special creation was for a woman who had collected T-shirts with her husband from a different casino each year on their anniversary. Jacki sewed the husband's shirts into a blanket after he passed away.

"I like to keep any imperfections. If there's a ketchup stain on a shirt, I include that. People will see it, and they remember exactly when the stain was made," Jacki reiterated. "Clothes carry such sentiment for people. These blankets trigger those memories."

Jacki estimates 10 to 15 hours go into sewing each memory blanket and considers it time well spent. "I have a good friend who was interested in learning to sew, and I told her the biggest thing to overcome is being intimidated by the machine. Jumping in and learning your machine is the first step. Then you'll find your confidence.

"The key is to buy the machine you really want to sew on. Every machine is different and knowing your machine is the



ng ories

biggest challenge,” she explained.

Jacki is glad to see a resurgence in sewing. “Some generations had to do it for financial reasons, so it became a chore. Now people are starting to look at it again as enjoyment,” she said. “My youngest son watched me do it and became interested. Now he’s learning simple things like pillow cases. I’ve introduced my daughter-in-law to it, and she’s made baby blankets and aprons.”

When not making memory blankets or baby blankets for her first grandson and other friends, Jacki also makes homecoming mums. “I have all boys. Mums are my girl thing,” Jacki joked. “For about three months it’s a mum explosion in my house.”

As a result, Jeff built Jacki her own 20x20 studio to sew in. “He has been my biggest fan, offering support and encouragement every step of the way,” she credited. “He said with my particular hobbies, I needed my own space!”

From that space, Jacki brings joy. “Sewing can become an addiction,” she stated. “Seeing the emotion when someone picks up their memory blanket — when it’s far beyond what they imagined and knowing it will be treasured — it’s emotional for us both. It’s just a very therapeutic thing.” **NOW**

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Lorenzo Brown has been preserving citizens' rights and the rights of their loved ones for more than two decades. "My practice has been at its present location since 2000,"



Lorenzo Brown of Lorenzo Brown and Associates reported. "Before that, my practice was located in the Bank of America building in Oak Cliff. Today, we serve Dallas, Ellis and surrounding counties and beyond."

A graduate of Southern Methodist University and SMU's Dedman School of Law, Lorenzo has been practicing since 1976. "Now we are a full-service law practice, focusing on probate, family law and automobile accidents," he explained. "Probate is the process of your property changing hands after you die — with or without a will."

"The purpose of a will is to designate who gets your property after your death," Lorenzo continued. "Without a will, the State of Texas decides what happens to your property. Texas law divides all of your property between your legally married spouse and your blood relatives. Probate can result in a lot of hurt feelings, and people you meant to take care of are left with nothing."

Lorenzo helps clients create legally binding wills to help avoid such circumstances. "A will is the way to ensure that your estate is divided the way you want it to be. Even if you

don't think you have much to divide, you never know how you are going to go. If you go in an accident or by wrongful death, your estate could be much more valuable after your death than it ever was before," Lorenzo explained. "A will is the way to make sure that only the individuals [who are] designated [beneficiaries] inherit what you want them to inherit."

“Without a will, the State of Texas decides what happens to your property. Texas law divides all of your property between your legally married spouse and your blood relatives. Probate can result in a lot of hurt feelings, and people you meant to take care of are left with nothing.”

Another large part of Lorenzo’s practice is family law. “Probably 50 percent of my practice is probate and wills. The other 50 percent is divorce and automobile accidents,” he calculated.

Lorenzo said in divorces in which children are involved, about half of the time there is no question which parent will have primary custody. “Only about 10 percent of cases involve serious disputes about custody, and most of those are really fights over child support. Some divorces are very complicated, and you may have rights you don’t know about,” Lorenzo stated.

“We strive to educate our clients and inform them of their options so we can get them the best results,” he continued. “We are committed to providing our customers with the highest quality of service and hope you’ll allow us to help you through these challenging life events with our many, many years of experience.” **NOW**

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Zoomed In: Alejandro Castillo

By Angel Morris

Something taught at Red Oak High School recently helped Class of 2023 graduate Alejandro Castillo save a life. While working at Hugo's Mexican Grill & Cantina, Alejandro noticed a customer was choking. "I asked if he was OK, and he said no. So, I performed the Heimlich maneuver that I learned at school," Alejandro explained. "Everyone was confused on what had just happened, then they began to clap."

A social media post about Alejandro allowed the community to praise the young man's actions. As for the customer who he helped? "He was scared, then thankful," Alejandro recalled.

The mayor and ROISD superintendent both presented Alejandro with awards for his lifesaving efforts. While Alejandro is still on hand to help restaurant customers, his future goal is to become a pipeline welder.



The Ellis County Livestock Show and Rodeo names its Court, including Princess Taryn Ross, Teen Abigail Johnson and Queen Autumn Charnoski.



Royce, Roman and Dustin Silas enjoy the weather by the water at Te' Jun Restaurant.



Life School Red Oak recognizes the first place winners at the school's annual Gifted & Talented Expo Awards.



Meg Habasevich and Lynne Grandstaff attend the Hearts and Flowers Ladies Tea Party at First United Methodist Church Red Oak.



Red Oak Chamber Board Director Ben LaFleur welcomes Dondra Womack, owner of HSG Healthy Hair, during her ribbon cutting.



Betty Vaught, of Red Oak, delights in a hug from her granddaughter, Caitlin Pruett of Waxahachie, at her recent 90th birthday party.



Maddy Walton and Will Walton compete in a Dallas Polo Club monthly match in Red Oak.

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APRIL LYNN PRENTICE

— By Angel Morris

While April Lynn Prentice learned baking methods from home economics at Red Oak High School, cooking came later. “I barely knew how to make mac and cheese and Hamburger Helper. I was notorious for burning water in a pot!” April admitted. “I learned as I got older, and now I’m pretty good at it.”

Providing entertainment and wedding planning services through her job as DJ Wild Thang, April’s schedule is hectic. “I have little time to cook, but when I finally get to, I really do put love into it.”

April also loves serving as activities director of the Senior Citizen Center of Red Oak. “I had no idea what job opportunity I was walking into,” she admitted, “but I love these people and can’t imagine life without them!” **NOW**

April’s Enchiladas

- 2-3 cans Wolf Brand Chili**
- 1 20-count pkg. flour tortillas**
- 3 8-oz. pkgs. shredded sharp cheddar cheese**
- 1-2 large white onions, diced (optional)**

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Warm the chili in a saucepan; warm the tortillas in

the microwave for 30 seconds to get them flexible to roll. Place a small handful of shredded cheese and a bit of the diced onion along the center of the tortilla.

2. Roll up the tortilla; place in a 9x13-inch glass pan. Keep repeating until the pan is full of rolled, filled tortillas, somewhat tightly packed (typically 15-17 tortilla rolls).

3. Pour the chili all over the tortilla rolls until completely smothered. Top with lots

of shredded cheese and more onions. Bake about 30 minutes, or until the chili and cheese is very melted and sizzling. Store wrapped leftovers in the refrigerator. When reheating in the microwave, the enchiladas are even better!

Tuna Casserole

Great served with broccoli, peas or green beans.

- 1 16-oz. bag wide egg noodles**
- 2 12-oz. cans tuna (in water), drained**
- 2 14.5-oz. cans cream of celery soup**
- 1 16-slice pkg. Kraft American or Velveeta cheese**

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Cook the noodles as directed; rinse and drain. Pour into a 9x13-inch glass pan.

2. In a saucepan, blend the tuna and cream of celery soup, cooking only until warmed up.

3. Stir the noodles into the tuna mixture really well; spread the combined mixture in the pan. Lay slices of cheese all over the top of the noodle mixture, covering completely (usually about 12 slices total).

4. Bake 25-30 minutes, or until the cheese is well melted and starting to bubble.

Monkey Bread

- 2 16.3-oz. cans Pillsbury Grands buttermilk canned biscuits
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup Karo syrup

1. Preheat the oven according to the biscuit cans' instructions. In one bowl, combine the sugars and cinnamon. Melt the butter in a separate bowl. Pull apart the biscuits into pieces.
2. Coat the biscuit pieces in melted butter, then the sugar/cinnamon mixture. Stack the prepared biscuit pieces in a buttered bread or cake pan. Repeat the process until all the biscuits are in a stacked pile in the pan. Any remaining sugar/cinnamon mixture can be evenly distributed atop the pile of biscuits.
3. Drizzle the Karo syrup all over the biscuits. Bake according to the temperature and time frame on the biscuit cans. Serve with a little extra drizzle of Karo syrup on top!

Delicious Healthy Salad

- 1 chicken breast, pan-cooked and cubed
- Lettuce of your choice (iceberg, romaine, spring mix)
- 1 small red apple, cored and cubed
- Glazed walnuts, to taste
- Bacon bits, to taste
- Diced red onion, to taste
- Dried cranberries, to taste
- Raspberry or balsamic vinaigrette, to taste

Optional Toppings:

- Cheddar cheese, shredded, to taste
- Feta cheese, to taste
- Croutons, to taste

1. Mix the first 7 ingredients in a bowl.
2. Add the toppings of your choice. Drizzle with raspberry or balsamic vinaigrette.

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HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

JUNE

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

6/2

Movie in the Park:

Family Camp (rated PG), plus free snacks while supplies last. Located indoors, but bring folding chairs or blankets. 7:00 p.m., Red Oak Public Library, 101 S. Live Oak St.

6/10

Take a Kid Fishing:

Free fishing event for kids 16 and under. Bait and some fishing gear for those without while supplies last. Prizes awarded. 8:30-10:30 a.m. Sponsored by Te'jun Restaurant, 301 I-35E.

Red Oak Library offers stories, crafts and educational fun throughout June and July. Story times for toddler-age 5: **10:00 a.m. Tuesdays**; craft/theme days: **2:00 p.m. Wednesdays**; family fun nights: **7:00 p.m. Thursdays**. For more information, call (469) 218-1230.

Monthly

Dallas Polo Club:

Offering polo lessons and monthly sporting events. 730 Bent Trail, Red Oak. Learn more at <https://www.dallaspoloclub.org/>.

First Mondays
Red Oak Lion's

Club Meeting:

Joining Lions Club is a way to network with other businesses, community leaders and civic-minded people while helping your community. 6:30-7:30 p.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. To learn more, call (469) 571-7265.

Third Mondays

Book Club:

New members always welcome. 6:30-8:00 p.m., Red Oak Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. For more information, email redoakbookclub@gmail.com.

Wednesdays
and Thursdays

Senior Citizen

Center of Red Oak:

Enjoy coffee, juice and donuts each morning, as well as a sponsored lunch on first-third Thursdays and a potluck on fourth Thursdays. Also, games, puzzles, bingo and informative guest speakers. 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. Call (469) 218-1217 for more information.

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

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Theresa Robinson won a \$50 cash prize courtesy of North Ellis Co. NOW Magazine!



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