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August 2007

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Paints a Life

A Positive
Approach

The
Encouragement
Factor

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At Home With

Mary Bishop



Red Oak

Independent School District

2007-2008 District Calendar



August 2007						
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Aug . 20-23 *Staff Flex Days Campus Holiday Oct. 1 Nov. 19 & 20	Aug . 24 Jan. 22 June 6	Sept. 3 Nov. 21-23 Dec . 24-Jan. 4 Jan. 21 Mar. 17-21 May 26 July 4	(Tentative) Feb. 19 April 7, 8, 28, 29, & 30 May 1 & 2	Aug. 27-Oct. 5: 28 Days Oct. 8-Nov. 16: 30 Days Nov. 26-Jan. 18: 31 Days Jan. 23-Feb. 29: 28 Days Mar. 3-April 18: 30 Days Apr. 21-June 5: 31 Days
School Year	Early Release	Bad Weather	New Teacher	9 Weeks Grading
First Day: Aug . 27 Last Day: June 5 PSAT October 20	Nov. 16 Dec . 21 Jan. 17 & 18 June 4 & 5 (All District)	May 5 & 23 	Aug . 14-16	Aug. 27-Oct. 31: 46 days Nov. 1-Jan. 18: 42 days Jan. 23-April 4: 46 days April 7-June 5: 43 days 177 Student Days 187 Teacher Days

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Contents

August 2007, Volume 2, Issue 8

6



A New Best Friend

8



A Dream Come True

At Home With Mary Bishop

12

ArtsNOW
A Scrapbook
Paints a Life

16

SportsNOW
A Positive Approach

18

BusinessNOW
Kwik Help for
Your Car Needs

20

EducationNOW
The Encouragement
Factor



On the Cover: Mary Bishop has a collection of more than 100 cameos, some dating back to the 1800s.

Photo by Terri Ozymy.

15 **Around TownNOW**

26 **FinanceNOW**

24 **Who's CookingNOW**

28 **HealthNOW**

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Editor's Note

Dear Red OakNOW Readers,



With the rains subsiding, hopes of a more enjoyable summer are on the way. With that, we would like to present several ideas on how to spend your summer hours in our August issue. How about creating a scrapbook with local scrapper, Jennifer Garrison, or taking advantage of summer car care specials at Gardner Kwik Kar? For those who are looking for athletic family adventures, you can be inspired to get in shape with Darla Bicknell or have the kids join a summer sports program with ROISD Athletic Director Mike Burns. If volunteering is more up your alley, then we hope you are inspired by local educator, Jacque Morris, who changes the lives of local children every day for the better.

No matter how you and your family spend the summer, may it be safe, fun and memorable!

Diana Merrill Claussen

Red Oak Editor

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A New Best Friend

— By Sandra McIntosh

Darla Bicknell used to have a best friend. That best friend's name was food. Sitting at her kitchen table today, she can now readily admit she ate for all reasons, both right and wrong. "Everyone would always congregate at my house because I love to cook," she remembered. "I'd eat when I was happy. I'd eat when I was depressed. I'd eat when I was bored. I'd eat for just about any reason. Everything we did as a family was centered around food."

As a petite woman standing just a few inches over five feet, her 260 pounds was way too much for her small frame to carry. After she began having difficulty with her knees, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, she decided it was time to take a serious look into doing something to change the way she was living life. "I was scared that if I didn't make some needed changes, I might not be living life much longer," Darla said.

She thought long and hard about what steps she was willing to take in order to lose an excessive amount of weight. Darla had read and heard a lot about bariatric gastric bypass surgery. Wanting to learn more about the so-called life-altering procedure, she immediately started doing her homework. "I attended a bariatric seminar at big Baylor in Dallas. There were close to 200 people at this meeting," Darla said. "Not finding the answers I was looking for, I attended a second seminar at Presbyterian Hospital where only seven people showed up."

It was at this second seminar that Darla felt like a real person. The much smaller group afforded her the opportunity to have a voice. She was finally able to get the answers she was looking for in her journey to a better lifestyle.

Prior to surgery, Darla had heard many success stories. She had seen firsthand the great results others were experiencing just months following their procedures. Knowing at the time there were only eight doctors who were board-certified to actually conduct the surgery, left Darla somewhat frightened about the long-term effects, possibly even death. "I prayed a lot during this time," she said. "I finally found peace in the decision to move forward with the surgery."

Since undergoing the gastric bypass procedure on August 12, 2003, Darla's best friend these days is life. "The decision to have the surgery wasn't instantaneous," Darla said, now able to look back at the memory with a laugh. "It took months of getting my family on board, psychiatric counseling and understanding that a meal wasn't as important as my overall health."

Ten days prior to the surgery, Darla was sentenced to a liquid diet. For 16 days following it, she continued a liquid diet. Darla would love to report that she was in and out in a hurry, and that all went well from the very beginning. For her, that was not the case. During surgery, she experienced some internal



bleeding, and had an allergic reaction to the surgical tape. Regulating her food intake once she returned home proved to be the most difficult complication of all. "It was a long eight months," Darla said, referring to the overall time it took for her to feel somewhat normal again.

Darla has now recovered from the procedure and her life and health are on a positive path. She credits her success with the surgery to her surgeon, Dr. James Davidson, and his wonderful staff. "He is a surgeon among surgeons," she said. "Chris Arrowsmith was the program director. He wasn't just my dietician, he was also my accountability partner."

Now at age 51 and still 125 pounds lighter, Darla is living the life she had only dreamed of before the surgery. As an actress, the old days of only being called back for a second audition for the overweight parts are long gone. "I am currently playing roles against men who range in age from 30 - 35," Darla said. "The weight loss has opened up so many more doors to acting than I had ever experienced before. I used to land two out of 10 roles. Now, I'm landing eight out of 10. That's a pretty good feeling."

Darla's name has appeared on marquees all across the area including Ennis,

Corsicana, Rockwall, Plano, Waxahachie and Cedar Valley College in Lancaster. It seems she is either rehearsing for a part she has landed or making preparations to read for an upcoming audition. "Directors are calling me to come audition," she said. "No longer am I waiting around for a callback that never comes. For an actress, that's huge!"

The newer, improved Darla is filled with energy and stamina she never had before. She exhausts this energy with yoga workouts four times a week to keep in shape. She not only attends vocal and acting classes, but has also been dabbling in teaching younger actors the craft she has always loved.

Since the weight loss, Darla has been able to fulfill almost all her dreams. "I just have a couple more I'd like to accomplish," she said. "These last two dreams aren't just for me. They are for the entire community."

The first thing Darla would love to see reborn is *The Gospel According to Scrooge*. This live performance is

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* retold in a Christian format. "We'd go to Trinity Assembly at Cedar Hill to see their annual performance," Darla said, referring to the family outings the Bicknell family took during the holiday season each year. "It's been



Darla played the role of the Fairy Godmother during a recent performance at the Rockwall Community Playhouse.

gone from the area for over 10 years. The message is phenomenal, and it would be an outreach supported by many. It had an impact on my family, and I'd like to play a part in passing that impact on to others."

Darla would also like to see the Entertaining Performers Interest Club (EPIC), of which she is an active member, find a nesting place so they might conduct regularly scheduled monthly meetings. "We're a group of 16 who love to act and we just want to bring the arts to Red Oak," she said. "The dream is to get the ball rolling."

Five granddaughters keep Darla pretty busy these days as well. The girls, Alyssa, Allison, Kaylee, Jolie and Kylin, range in age from 5 months to 6 years. Alyssa just won "The Next American Idol" award for what her "Lala" (grandma) said is a wonderful singing voice. "They are all talented," Darla said. "Am I blessed or what?"

Part of her future plans may very well include going on the road to speak publicly about her life's journey. Whatever Darla does decide to add to her plate, you can guarantee it will be healthy and in proportion with the lifestyle she has grown accustomed to living today. **NOW**

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A Dream Come True

— By Alex Allred

Forget the expression, “a room with a view.” Standing in Mary Bishop’s living room, the room *is* the view. With a few steps, you can walk through centuries, experiencing history from the Victorian era to old English and early Colonial times to late 19th century. Through the décor and the amazing array of collectibles, history simply comes alive. “Is it too cluttered?” Mary asked, worrying about the antique showcases filled with Victorian porcelain statues and glassware.

In truth, it is dizzying, almost like a treasure chest opened for appraisal. Yet Mary has a remarkable sense of style and



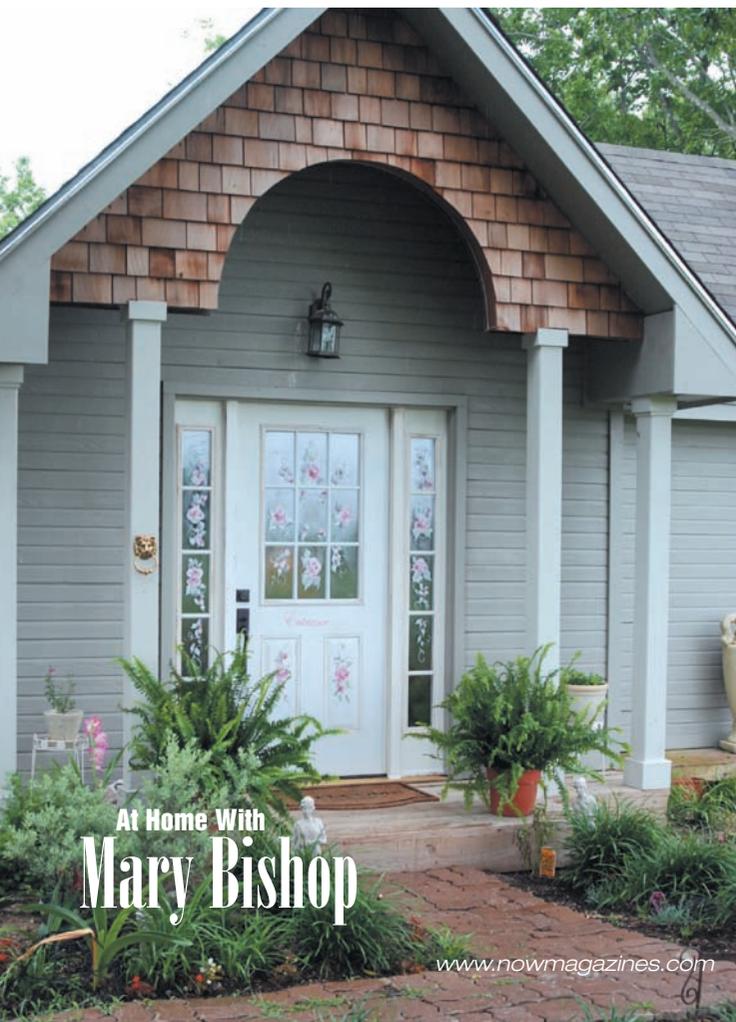
detail, pulling everything together so that the feel of the house is warm and cozy. Though never formally trained, Mary has been decorating homes since she was a child.

“I always tried to make things pretty,” Mary said, referring to her domestic interests and childhood training. As the oldest girl of six children, it was Mary who tended to the house. “When we were growing up, we really didn’t have much,” she recalled. She said they always had enough to eat, but theirs was a humble beginning. “Mother just didn’t care about things like I did,” Mary added. When she was 10 years old, Mary’s mother became ill and the duties of the house fell squarely onto Mary’s shoulders. That was when she began collecting.

On Saturdays, she would clean house for a wheelchair-bound neighbor for one dollar. “A dollar,” Mary laughed. But it was enough to allow her to make her first purchase — a glass powder box in the form of a lamb. She bought the figure for 59 cents. Today, that very lamb is displayed in her house.

While the pay was minimal, the experience of her first cleaning job was a training ground for the upkeep of all the collectibles she has in her home today. “I had a friend ask me how I keep up with all the dusting,” Mary proudly said. “It is work, but I love it.” The Bishop household is immaculate, and only a person who loves and appreciates the history of “things” could take such care of it all.

Mary and her husband, Harold, moved from Duncanville to Red Oak more than 25 years ago. They wanted to rear their four children, two boys and two girls, in the country. The country setting was ideal for Mary as she decorated her



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Mary Bishop

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rooster-themed kitchen. After they gutted and redesigned the kitchen, Mary had a rich oak floor-to-ceiling cabinet installed to display a vast array of antique china and beautiful glassware. The rooster theme and the warm yellow, red and brown color scheme combines the unusual regal and country styles.

Mary insists there is no single theme or design in her house. "I see something I like and buy it," she explained. She has never met an estate sale, a garage sale or antique shop she did not like. Therein lies her talent — her knack for

putting it all together. In fact, she would much rather have nothing than something she did not "feel right" about. "We went almost a year without furniture," she said, "because I had to find just the right things."

From overstuffed couches, antique chairs, refinished turn-of-the-century rocking chairs and showcase furniture to old portraits and a medley of special "finds," each of the five bedrooms has its own theme. The hunting dog room is decorated by rich fabrics and dog statues that give it an old English feel, while the antique room is filled with collectible dolls and antique clothing. Ironically, this is the room where past meets future for Mary, as it is her home office. It is where her passion for antiques and their history have brought her to modern technology. As a gift, her brother-in-law presented Mary with a new computer. "He said I needed one to research some of my antiques," she said. "I'm not very good at it, but I'm learning."



Mary has a true talent for recognizing and identifying vases, portraits and treasures from different periods and places. Her favorite piece is a Powell, Bishop & Stonier vase from England. Appraised as an 1880s creation, it initially caught her attention simply because she "liked the floral pattern." Only upon research did Mary learn its true value.

In the living room, standing before a 1909 iron stove, is an antique cameo showcase. "Harold gave me my



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first came for our 15th wedding anniversary,” Mary said. Today, she owns more than 100 cameos, some dating back to the 1800s.

Although she said it is simply a hobby, Mary researches the history of each new find as thoroughly as a dedicated professional, and she cannot keep this passion to herself. Her sisters and both daughters have also become collectors, often calling Mary for ideas or help with research.

Mary’s passion has expanded from

her house into her backyard. “It’s a dream come true for me,” Mary smiled, while looking at her backyard. After four years of construction, a beautiful cottage with a vaulted ceiling and rustic front porch sits on a 16 x 20 slab foundation. She has so aptly named it the Backyard Cottage.

It is Mary’s dream to open the cottage to the public, sharing the collectibles she has acquired and researched. She feels that the story of the collectible is as important as the item itself.

“Sometimes,” she said, “I just come out here to relax.” Truly, the path that leads toward the cottage is soothing, preparing the visitor for a quieter and gentler time. An arched entrance decorated with hand-painted ivy greets you, and flowers adorn the narrow windows on either side of the cottage’s front door. It is a combination of an old farmhouse and a Southern plantation where, Mary admitted, “The roosters came, too.”

Finding room in which to put all



her special things is a challenge for Mary, but it would be impossible for her to stop collecting. It is in her blood. Even after heart surgery, she cannot stop her day-to-day activities. With five acres of land, it is Mary who tends to both the lawn maintenance and her home. She designed the Backyard Cottage and continues the constant historical research of her newest and latest treasures. Once called “the hardest-working woman” by a neighbor, Mary is proud to say her love of the past drives her forward. **NOW**

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A Scrapbook *Paints a Life*

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

The art of reflection and recollection can be created and portrayed in many different ways. Some people capture their special moments through painting; others use photography as a way to collect meaningful moments and revisit special occasions. For local resident Jennifer Garrison, scrapbooking is her own timeless way of reliving cherished memories. Using unique keepsakes of captured moments as her canvas, she preserves her family's experiences and priceless memoirs, though this is not the only reason Jennifer has been involved in the art of scrapbooking since she was a teen.

"Since I was young, I always saved everything," Jennifer reminisced. "I saved the ticket stubs or even gum wrappers that a boy I liked gave me. I used to cut out pictures to keep in photo albums, but noticed the pictures would eventually become one with the paper or would fall out of the book."

That led Jennifer to find a different and better way to save her special memories. She started to accompany her artist mother on outings to various art stores. Through these excursions, she would build her scrapping collection by

accumulating more albums or supplies. "As I got a little older, I attended scrapbook clubs, classes and gatherings to get more stuff," she stated. "I eventually did so much scrapbooking that I became a collector of scrapbook supplies."

Although scrapping started as a hobby, it eventually became her passion. This newfound zeal, along with her treasure chest full of goods and her many years of experience, led her into the realms of organizing and running scrapbooking clubs and parties. One of these clubs is located here in her hometown. "My club in Red Oak meets every third Thursday at 9:30 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church on Red Oak Road," she said. "Sometimes we'll just



Jennifer enjoys meeting with scrapbooking friends of various ages.

meet for two hours, other times we'll be together all day. Anyone is welcome to visit our club, but might want to contact me beforehand at (972) 617-5090."



These club members, while diverse in age, really enjoy spending time together doing something they all love. Jennifer is glad her scrapping club brings different generations together in fun and friendship.

“Scrapbooking makes for a great mom or girls day/night out,” she enthused. “One thing about the club is that you can come in, have fun and complete something you will be proud of. Many of the ladies, including myself, love to do this because it gives you such a sense of accomplishment when your book is done. That’s the one thing about mom-hood; you rarely ever get to finish anything.”

Being in the club and finishing a scrapbook page or whole album not only provides the ladies with a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment, but also gives them extra doses of inspiration for future projects. “The club members really inspire each other, especially when they see how creative they are,” said Jennifer. “I love to see them inspired.”

Through the club, the members have not only made special family-, holiday- and event-themed albums, they have also made accordion books and homemade cards. Jennifer’s preferred project is the albums, mainly

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because creating them reflects her core purpose for collecting and carrying on her treasured history. "I always loved scrapping because it not only preserves special memories of my life, but it is also a good form of genealogy. It's especially neat when my mother will look through the pictures in my books and she can remember timeless things from long ago."

Jennifer likes her albums to tell a tale and strives to arrange her pages so the story within speaks for itself. "Telling your story is the best thing about scrapping for me," Jennifer explained. "It also helps you to define yourself and get to know who you are. I also like being creative, and this is a great creative outlet and pastime, which I enjoy and feel that I am good at, too."

Jennifer currently has many projects in the works, but lately, her time has been busily filled with scrapbook classes, organizing the club and planning for the future. "We are thinking about starting a scrapping club for kids during the summer at one of my club locations. There are some really neat kits made for kids out there. My daughter recently made her own pages about her last Halloween using the kid's kit. She's only 8 and was able to make her page with very little help from her mom," she stated proudly.

Getting kids and parents involved in such a positive hobby is not only good for the family, but Jennifer believes it is great for the community as well. It helps link people of different generations, ethnic groups and creeds together through a common interest or pastime.

"I would love to see us start growing our own arts community here," she asserted. "Red Oak is growing, and you want something to grow the right way and with its own personality. I feel that promoting the arts provides that opportunity." If a picture paints a thousand words, for Jennifer, a scrapbook paints a life. **NOW**

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Members of the Red Oak Lions Club, top left, served free refreshments to those who attended an event at the Red Oak Library. RO Fire Department, top right, recently participated in the MDA "Fill the Boot" drive. Shown, from left, are local fire personnel Holly Neuman and Tanner Schlottman. Local Girls Scouts, middle left, passed out packages of cookies at the Dallas VA Medical Center to honor veterans on Memorial Day weekend. Mr. Isbell, middle right, picked up his boots from Gene Gannon at Ovilla's LBJ Market. As a member of the Ovilla Art Club, Sylvia Gordon, bottom left, enjoyed selling plants at this year's annual Tour of Gardens event. First-grader Gavin Yates, bottom right, recently recited his 50 states at a city council meeting.

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A Positive Approach

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

There is a new athletic director in town who comes with a positive attitude and a desire to make a difference through the athletic programs in the Red Oak Independent School District (ROISD). “This year, I became the ROISD athletic director, and my hope is that through this opportunity, I will be able to impact Red Oak’s athletic program,” Mike Burns said. “I have been an administrator for nine years and have coached and taught for a total of 19 years. Throughout my career, I’ve had the opportunity to teach an assortment of subjects while coaching a variety of sports.”

Mike said he is looking forward to the recent transformations within the district, especially the ones that have benefited from the recently passed Red Oak ISD bond. “We’re thankful for the support that we received from the recent bond election,” Mike said. “When people move their families, they want to go somewhere that has good school systems. The bond will not only help achieve that for the city, but it will create positive growth for the community.”

Positive growth within the schools

and their programs is a necessary facet that will ensure the city’s core goal of providing exceptional programs within its educational system. Mike said that the positive growth would not have been possible without the continued support of the citizens of Red Oak.

“There is a great deal of community and parental interest in the schools,” Mike said. “I appreciate how supportive the people of Red Oak have been with the schools. Many of them are very positive people who have been quite active in increasing the relationship between the school and the community. I want to let the residents here know that my staff and I will do anything we can to continue to foster that relationship within our city.”

Mike said one surefire approach to fostering a connection between the community and the sports programs will be through this season’s all-star coaching staff. “We have an excellent and dedicated coaching staff, and they not only have the kids’ best interests at heart, but they do an outstanding job of getting the kids motivated,” Mike commented. “Our goal is to create

the best athletic program possible, and I believe we are well on our way to becoming known statewide for our program.”

Mike’s hopeful attitude radiates his desire for helping the programs excel through a positive outlook. This outlook has been said to have been indispensable in the renaissance of numerous positive changes that have occurred within our city’s schools and athletic programs. “We do have an outstanding athletic program,” Mike said. “There is a very positive attitude here, and everything is upbeat.”

Positive and upbeat, however, are not only appropriate words to describe the schools’ athletic programs, but they are also suitable for describing Mike himself. His infectious optimistic attitude is not only inspiring to the community and coaches, but to the players as well.

“I want our programs to continue to be an outlet that will help students to become more productive members of society by teaching discipline, dedication and teamwork. ... I see that the students ultimately become better citizens and

people for having participated in Red Oak athletics," Mike commented.

According to Mike, participating in school sports also teaches the importance of learning to work with all kinds of people while putting others first and excelling at doing it. "We recently had a few students like Carley Dear, Michael

"There is a very positive attitude here, and everything is upbeat."

Carter Jr. and Corwin Pace who won top honors at state competitions," Mike said. "We also had Coach Aaron Cattrell win District Coach of the Year while Laurie Norrell won Female Coach of the Year, and [was] named Coach of the Year for region 2- 4A girls soccer," he proudly beamed.

With his talented coaching staff and highly ranked teams, Mike said they are currently gearing up for the beginning of season practices. "This year, our teams will be looking forward to improvement and they will be very competitive," he said. "Our first day of football and volleyball practice is on August 6th, and anyone who would like to participate just needs to have their physical in by that day and be ready to go."

Mike said he is really glad that the ROISD is able to offer these community programs and he believes offering school and public sports programs to youngsters is an integral part of the education system. "For many kids, sports are the reason they come to school, and it's the motivator that keeps them in school," he said. "It's important to keep the kids active and involved and away from some of the distractions out there. Through these programs I hope to keep the kids on the practice fields and off the streets." **NOW**



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Kwik Help for Your Car Needs

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

The Gardner family and their experienced Kwik Kar staff are ready to meet your mechanical needs.

Gardner Kwik Kar of Red Oak is known for providing fast and friendly service to their customers. One of their staff even greets you at your car as soon as you drive onto their property. This is the kind of personal service Kwik Kar customers have come to expect from this local business. To owner Scott Gardner, his customers and his business are the reasons he lives and works here in Red Oak.

“When we first moved to Red Oak, I liked the country setting. There is not a lot of traffic, and we really like the people here. I also liked the idea of only having a three-and-a-half-mile commute here to work/Kwik Kar.”

These days, it is extremely rare to run across a family-owned and operated business. Scott said being in the community and serving his neighbors

helps his business to create a close, friendly rapport with customers. Scott said his family and staff really value their customers.

“We just run our business fairly and honestly,” Scott said. “We have a low-pressure atmosphere, because we want to be known as a service facility that our customers can trust.”

Reflecting on the family’s dedication to serving the community, Scott said, “Usually my dad, Bill, or I are always here at the location so that we may provide our clients with genuine personal service. It is a true family business.”

The Gardner family has owned the Red Oak Kwik Kar for six years, and they specialize in oil changes, tune-ups, brakes and state inspections. They also have a certified ASE mechanic on staff. “We run a good, clean, up-to-date

facility,” Scott said. “All of our equipment is new, and we have very cutting-edge software we use to track all of the history of the work done to your vehicle.”

When it comes to their primary business goals, Bill Gardner said quality and good hometown ethics are an important part of Kwik Kar’s principles. “We stand behind what we do and believe in keeping money in the local economy,” he said.

Supporting the city is something that both of these gentlemen work toward accomplishing on a daily basis. One way to provide that support is by giving their customers good information so that they can make well-informed decisions when it comes to their car-care needs.

“It’s good to always maintain your

vehicle's fluid levels, especially the radiator fluid, during the summer months," Scott said. "Also, during the summer you want to make sure your car tires have proper air pressure and your belts, hoses and A/C [air conditioning] get checked yearly."



During the month of August, Red Oak Kwik Kar will be running a \$9.99 tire rotation special, which will include a free brake inspection. "We also have two state inspection machines to make the inspections more convenient for our customers," Scott said.

Scott and his family are also proud to be a part of the community and the city's public events. "We are members of the Red Oak Chamber of Commerce. We try to stay involved in the community by sponsoring local events, like the city's annual National Night Out celebration," he commented.

When not at the shop helping customers with their car-care needs, Scott enjoys spending time being a father to his two daughters, Addison and Hallie. "Anytime I have off, I like to spend time with them," he said. "They really love to be outdoors with me, but they don't really show any interest in cars or taking over the family business just yet."

Gardner Kwik Kar, located at 136 E. Ovilla Road, is open Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. If you have questions, please call (972) 617-2256. **NOW**



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The Encouragement Factor

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

There are very few people who cross our paths during life that we can credit as angels. These special people are selfless and giving. They not only love us for who we are, but they also mentor and inspire us, many times in spite of ourselves. To many of the Red Oak youth, a local teacher named Jacque Morris is one such person. To the many children she has touched through the years, she is known as a teacher and a friend.

“I have been teaching for 25 years,” Jacque said. “I am the coordinator for the ROISD’s [Red Oak Independent School District’s] PLATO program and also teach students who are in the district’s homebound program.”

PLATO is a program taught through the ISD for students who have fallen behind. Essentially, these youth may attend PLATO for any number of reasons. Jacque encourages her students, by first reminding them of their value – even if it is through a simple, homemade meal.

“I like to start the kids’ day off right, so I’ll usually come to school and make them biscuits to help them wake up,” she said. “I’m also known as the grilled cheese maker at PLATO. Sometimes kids come by my office and ask me to make them a sandwich,” she



“All kids are worth saving, but it has to be in their own time.”

laughed, cognizant of the fact that her meals sometimes mean more to the students than just a free lunch.

Her biscuits and grilled cheese sandwiches may be whipped up with encouragement and tenderness, but they are not the only types of nutrition that Jacque is known for providing. She said catering to all of the students’ needs, whether physical, mental or emotional, is part of the growing process. Sometimes that process also requires a little tough love. “I am strict with my kids and I do expect a lot out of them, but they know I love them,” she said. “Throughout our program, I let them know that I will never give up on them because they feel like everyone else has written them off. So, during this process, I help show them they can do it [learn] and they eventually get a love for learning.”

Love for her students and the job is what gives Jacque the strength to roll up her sleeves and when they are ready, she helps her students put back the pieces of their lives that may have been lost during the tumultuous situations they have endured. “Some of these kids have always been told that they can’t achieve success, but they really can,” Jacque said. “All kids are worth saving, but it has to be in their own time. Later, when they accept my help, they thank me for believing in them when no one else did, and that really fills my emotional bank account.”

Jacque said that it is her heart that drives her to reach out to these students and encourage them to grow and learn from their life circumstances. Instead of labeling them as troubled or lost, she encourages them. “Some of these kids are beat down enough,” she said.

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Jacque believes in the value of education and loves what she does. She said for a child to gain self-confidence and begin believing in themselves, requires nurturing from all parties involved. “The best thing to do is to spend individual time with each of your kids and with a group of their peers,” she suggested. “If education is highly regarded in the home, then it becomes important to the child.”

She also advised that setting boundaries, being consistent and adhering to strict standards does make a difference to the child. “It’s important to be consistent and strict with them because it does eventually pay off. You can’t just start becoming strict because they are older. Be interactive and be the parent. A parent/child friendship will come later, after many trials and tribulations. A child can change overnight when they have success in their life and not failure,” Jacque commented.

For Jacque, it is a blessing to be able to be a part of touching and changing her students lives. The positive impact she has means a lot to her students, especially for those who cannot physically attend school. “I’ve been part of the district’s homebound program for 14 years. Through the program, I provide educational services to any child who is not able to attend school on a regular basis due to any type of health issue,” she said.

Teaching homebound students involves supplying the students with their missed schoolwork and tutoring them so they will understand the work they have been given. Jacque said these students also need good doses of encouragement. Being their encourager is what keeps her positive and motivated. “I’m just their cheerleader,” she said. “They’re the ones who do all of the work.” **NOW**

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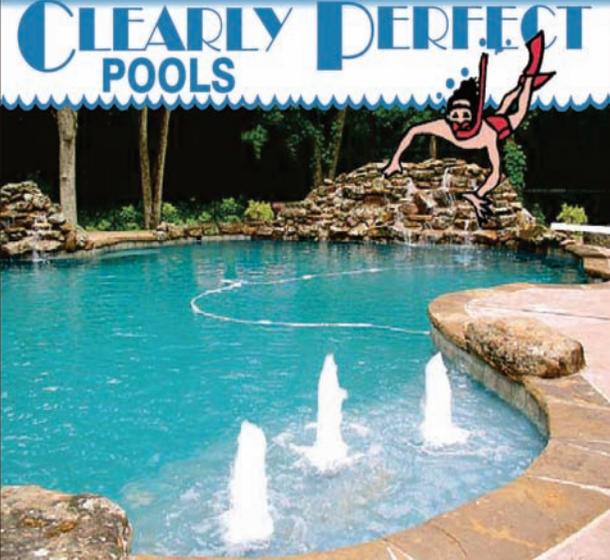


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Look Who's Cooking

—By Melinda Hines

IN THE KITCHEN WITH LINDA DAVID

Linda learned to cook by watching her mother. “There were four of us kids when my mother went to work when I was in junior high,” Linda said. “I made dinner one night before she came home and pretty much every night after to help out.”

Linda said she has always loved to cook. “People tease me that I don’t eat much, but I enjoy cooking for others,” she said. Linda especially enjoys cooking her Mexican casserole for friends and family. “My kids would often bring friends home, and I would make my Mexican casserole,” she commented. “My son started joking that if you eat the casserole you won’t stay single long, because engagements would often take place after eating it.” **NOW**

MEXICAN CASSEROLE

- 1 1/2 lb. hamburger meat
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 1 8-oz. bottle taco sauce
- 1 10-oz. can enchilada sauce
- 1 4.5-oz. can green chilies
- 12 corn tortillas
- 2 cups shredded Colby or cheddar cheese

In a large skillet brown the hamburger. Drain grease and add salt and pepper to taste. Add soups, sauces and chilies. Stir well. In a large casserole dish tear six of the corn tortillas into small pieces and cover the bottom of the dish. Pour half of

the meat mixture over tortillas and top with half of the cheese. Repeat layers in the same order, topping with cheese. Place in 350 F oven for 25 - 30 minutes. Serve hot.

CHOCOLATE PIE

- 1 cup sugar
- 3 Tbsp. flour
- 2 Tbsp. Hershey's cocoa
- 1 cup milk
- 1 12-oz. can evaporated milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 3 eggs, separated
- 1 baked pie crust

Mix dry ingredients in double boiler. Add milk and beaten egg yolks. Mix well. Add

vanilla and continue cooking until thick. Pour into a baked pie crust. Make meringue by beating reserved egg whites with a small amount of sugar until stiff. Cover pie with meringue and brown in oven.

CORN SALAD

- 4 15-oz. cans whole kernel corn
- 1 chopped bell pepper
- 1 chopped purple onion
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 9-oz. pkg. chili-cheese corn chips, crushed

Drain corn and place in large bowl. Add bell pepper, onion, cheese and mayonnaise. Just before serving, add crushed chips.

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CRANBERRY SALAD

- 1 3-oz. pkg. lemon Jell-O
- 1 3-oz. pkg. cherry Jell-O
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 20-oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 peeled and dices apples
- 1 12-oz. bag fresh or frozen cranberries, chopped
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Dissolve gelatins in water. Add sugar and stir until dissolved. Stir in pineapple. Chill until thickened. Add remaining ingredients and chill until firm.

CHICKEN SPAGHETTI

- 1 whole chicken
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 chopped bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 3/4 cup butter
- 1 small can chopped mushrooms
- 1/4 cup chopped ripe olives
- 1/4 cup chopped pimentos
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- salt to taste
- pepper to taste
- 2 cups cooked spaghetti
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Cook chicken in boiling water until done. Cool, debone and cut into bite-size pieces. Set aside. Sauté onion, bell pepper and celery in butter. Add mushrooms, olives, pimentos, soup, salt and pepper. Add chicken to the mixture. Drain cooked spaghetti and add this to the mixture. Pour into greased dish. Cover and bake in 300 F oven for 1 - 1 1/2 hours. Put cheese on top when nearly done. Serve with garlic bread.

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Do Not Let External Events Keep You From Investing

— By Renee Chase

If you look for reasons not to invest right now, you could find them – global unrest, high gas prices and so on. Yet, if you wait until “things settle down” before investing, you will have difficulty achieving your financial goals, because there will always be some external events that could keep you out of the market. The smartest investors look beyond today’s headlines are often rewarded for their patience and perseverance.

Want proof? Look at every major event of the past century that could have given investors the jitters, such as assassinations, wars and political crises. You will find that after just a few years, and in some cases a few months, the stock market not only gained back the ground it initially lost, but moved to new heights.

For a dramatic illustration of this pattern, consider the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Immediately following this event, the stock market closed for several days. When it reopened, the Dow Jones Industrial Average immediately fell 684 points. By Sept. 24, the Dow was off 14.3 percent, its worst weekly percentage loss in 61 years. For 2001, the Dow lost 7.1 percent, closing the year at 10,021. But if you fast-forward five years to 2006, the Dow had recouped its losses several times over, closing the year at 12,463 – a 24 percent gain since the 2001 close.

In short, while it is true that past performance is no guarantee of future results, history shows that the stock market has been resilient enough to overcome even the most cataclysmic of events. So do not head to the investment “sidelines” in reaction to troubling news. You may need to change your investment strategy in response to some events, but, by and large, they should be events related specifically to your individual situation or your existing investments. Consider the following scenarios:

• **You move closer to retirement.**

During much of your working years, you are trying to build financial resources for retirement. Consequently, you will need to invest a sizable amount of your portfolio in growth-oriented vehicles, such as stocks. As you move closer to retirement, and even during

retirement, you will still need some exposure to stocks, because you will need their growth potential to keep ahead of inflation. However, you may want to work with your financial advisor to rebalance your portfolio to provide more income-producing opportunities, which may come from bonds, certificates of deposit or even dividend-paying stocks.

• **You see a change in your existing investments.**

Many people sell some of their investments due to short-term price fluctuations. This is generally not a good idea, because long-term performance is what counts. However, if you notice other changes in your holdings, it may be time to make some moves. For example, if you own stock in a company whose management or business objectives have changed, or whose products or services no longer seem competitive, you may be better off selling your shares and moving on to new opportunities.

You may find other reasons associated with your life or your portfolio to make changes, but do not be swayed by the events of the day. If you invest wisely, and keep on investing, the future can be bright. **NOW**

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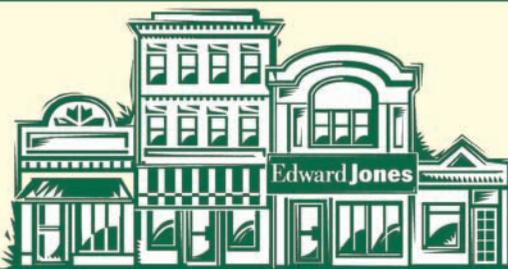
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Back Pain Safety



Dr. James Ellis, an orthopedic surgeon on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie, offers the following tips for dealing with back pain, a common and complex condition. On average, about 25 percent of Americans experience chronic or sporadic back pain. There are many different possible causes, the most common being accidents, muscle strain and sports injuries. While many back injuries are minor and temporary, more serious injuries can include a fractured vertebra, a slipped vertebra or vertebrae and damage to nerve function called cervical radiculopathy. "The majority of back pain that I

see comes from people who have been injured," Dr. Ellis said.

Most back pain can be treated with a combination of therapies, including physical therapy, pain medication and/or anti-inflammatory medications. "In some cases, surgery may be required, but that all depends on the individual patient and their condition," Dr. Ellis said.

In most cases, back pain can be more annoying than debilitating. However, a trip to the doctor is

advised should you feel numbness or tingling. Your doctor may use an X-ray, CT scan or MRI to further assist in pinpointing the area of concern.

To relieve common back pain:

Rest: If you have been doing strenuous activities such as moving or lifting heavy objects.

Heat: A heating pad can help to alleviate some of the pain and help increase your movement.

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Strengthen: Working on your abdominal muscles can also help to internally support your spine.

Standing: While standing you should keep your head up and abdominal muscles pulled in. You should also avoid wearing high heels.

Sleeping: You may have to try out soft and hard mattresses in order to find one that will not give you back pain.

Sitting: When sitting in a chair it should be of an appropriate height for you and should give you adequate lumbar support. **NOVA**

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Red Oak Public Library offers practice tests for TAKS, SAT, PSAT, GED, GRE, EMT, Realtor, police officer and about 200 other practice tests: available online. For information, visit RedOakPublicLibrary.org.

First and Third Tuesdays
Red Oak Lions Club meeting, 7 p.m. at 207 West Red Oak Road. Call (972) 617-3577.

Second and Fourth Mondays
Texas Ladies Networking meets from 11:45 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Fire Mountain Grill in Waxahachie. Call (214) 587-1221.

Second and Third Wednesdays
Red Oak Public Library and Red Oak Fire Department host a children's story time from 11 a.m. – noon at the library. Call (469) 218-1230 or visit RedOakPublicLibrary.org.

Every Thursday
Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered recovery ministry, meets at First Baptist Church of Red Oak, 103 West Red Oak Road. Call (972) 617-3591.

Second Thursday
A cancer dialogue support group, sponsored by American Cancer Society, meets at 7 p.m. at First United Methodist Church of Red Oak, 600 West Red Oak Road.

August 1
After Hours Improv Workshop for Teens from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. at Sims Library in Waxahachie. Free for teens ages 11 - 12. Learn the fundamental skills of improvisation. Call (972) 937-9839.

August 3 - 26
You Can't Get There From Here by Pat Cook at the Ennis Public Theatre. Call (972) 878-PLAY.

August 5
Motorcycle Rally at New Beginning Bible Church. Free barbecue and refreshments starting at 10 a.m. Bring your motorcycles to participate in the games or just come and watch. Location:

1970 FM 983, Ferris. Call Kenneth Dunlap at (972) 842-2800.

August 7
National Night Out from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. in City Park. Call (972) 617-7632.

August 8
Waxahachie Night at the Rangers from 4:45 p.m. - 11 p.m. hosted by the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce & Convention and Visitors Bureau. Texas Rangers take on the Oakland A's at the Rangers Ballpark in Arlington. The chartered bus leaves at 5 p.m. from the Chamber of Commerce office, 102 YMCA Drive. Boarding begins at 4:45 p.m. Tickets are \$50 per person and include: transportation, Terrace Box seat on the 3rd base side, dinner and unlimited refreshments in the air-conditioned Corner Club. The trip is sponsored by Linebarger, Goggan, Blair & Sampson, LLP. To make a reservation, call 972-937-2390.

August 11
After Hours Improv Comedy Show — 8 p.m. at the Texas Theater. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$6 for children 10 and under. Buy tickets at www.AfterHoursImprov.com or call (972) 937-9839.

August 24
Summer Moonlight Movies in Downtown presents *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Show begins at 9 p.m. in historic downtown Waxahachie. Free. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

August 27
Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meets at St. Paul Episcopal Church, Hwy. 287 at Ovilla Rd., Waxahachie. 7 p.m. Visit CQGuild.org.

To have your events posted on the community calendar, email us at:

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