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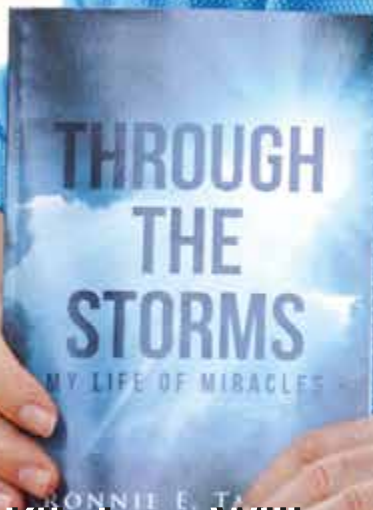
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M A G A Z I N E

AUGUST 2022

Lifetime of Miracles

Ronnie Taylor encourages
others to persevere



In the Kitchen With
Julie Harris

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Featured Business:
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Dr. Maryam Raza

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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Saturday, August 6
8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Red Oak High School

FREE immunizations and health screenings, plus a limited supply of clear backpacks and school supplies for Red Oak ISD students (*must be currently enrolled*).

Registered students can complete online registration to receive a **fast pass** to the event. Buy your **spirit shirts** and **sweatshirts**, participate in **fun games and activities** for the whole family, sample student nutrition food, and support the **Mighty Hawk Band** with food purchases!

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**Meet
the
Teacher**

All Elementary Schools

Thursday, August 11, 6-7 pm at each campus

Red Oak Middle School (ROMS 101)

5:30-6:30 pm

6th Graders: Monday, August 22

7th Graders: Tuesday, August 23

8th Graders: Thursday, August 25

EVENTS AND SCHEDULES

for Secondary Schools

Schedules and/or class assignments for 2022-23 will not be released for your child until the online registration process is complete, including the two (2) Proof of Residency documentation.

Red Oak Middle School

- Talon Camp for 6th Grade Students (and new 7/8 students)
 - Fri. August 5
 - AM Session - 8 - 11:30 am
 - PM Session - 12:30 - 4 pm
- Schedule Pickup
 - Wed. August 10, 8 am - 4 pm
 - Thur. August 11, 4 - 8 pm

Staff will be on hand to assist with registration and accept documentation.

Red Oak High School

- Hawk Freshman (9th graders) Camp & Schedule Pickup
 - Tuesday, August 9
 - Last Name A-M
8 am - 12 pm
 - Last Name N-Z
1 - 5 pm
- Schedule Pickup (10-12)
 - Wed. August 10
8 am - 12 pm; 2 - 6 pm
 - Makeup Day
Thu. August 11
8 am - 12 pm; 2 - 6 pm

ON THE COVER



His books and music chronicle Ronnie Taylor's words of encouragement.

Photo by
Shane Kirkpatrick.

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General Manager, Rick Hensley*

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

Angel Morris
North Ellis Co. NOW Editor
angel.morris@nowmagazines.com
(972) 533-7216

Hot diggity dog!

Are you, like me, belly crawling while clawing your way through the dog days of summer? Oh, sure, every year I write about the offensiveness of Texas heat, but this year? *This* year, I'm seriously contemplating waving the lone-starred flag in surrender. I may willingly relinquish my Native Texan card for a one-way ticket to someplace, *any* place less hot and humid than here.

To get my mind off the heat, I did what I often do, which is to distract myself through research ... How have this summer's temperatures differed from other years? How long is this heat expected to last? Why does "global warming" sound so cozy, when what it really means is "the roof, the roof, the roof is on fire?"

Even though Texans may endure 100-degree temps well into September, for some reason, August heat is daunting. Perhaps it relates to the origin of the phrase "dog days of summer," which has nothing to do with dogs but with Greek beliefs about the dog constellation called Sirius. From early July into August, Sirius rose before the sun, indicating the hottest days were ahead. Fever, catastrophe, even war were associated with "dog days," when the heat seemed to drive people mad. In Texas, temperatures can have similar effects. Drivers become more impatient on the road. Our clothes are sticking to us by the time we reach the mailbox. If our AC dies, more than likely, so do we. The only good thing about sharing in this hellacious weather is that it gives Texans a special, albeit sweaty, bond. I love you, Texas, but I'm more than ready for fall. Until then ...

Don't be so Sirius!

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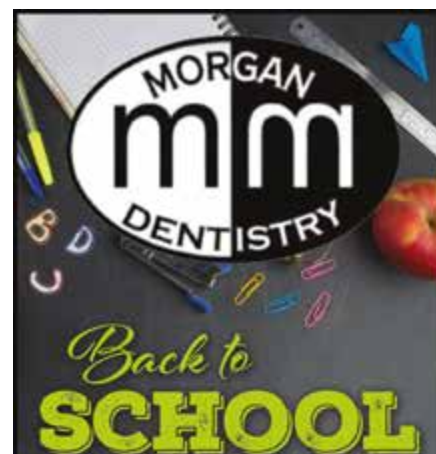
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Desiree Gruben, May 2022 Graduate

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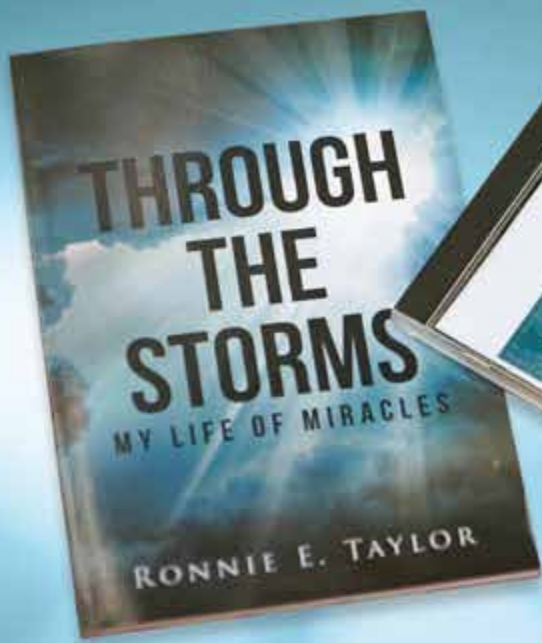
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LIFETIME OF MIRACLES

— By Angel Morris



Ronnie Taylor came to Red Oak by way of Tecumseh, Oklahoma, after graduating high school and moving to Texas to attend Southwestern Assemblies of God University. While he's had many achievements in his 60 years, he prefers to focus on sharing moments that have changed his life. "My hope is to encourage people to never give up and that my story will touch someone long after I'm gone," Ronnie said.

Before a series of events that would prompt him to eventually pen his biography, Ronnie began life as the son of a secretary and a truck driver. He recalls being in diapers while riding in semis alongside his father.

He also remembers the first boat his family owned ... and what he calls the first near-death experience of his life. "One night, we were headed out in the boat to fish. We caught our limit and were headed back across the lake to camp," he reflected.

"All of a sudden, my mom yelled out. Our boat was headed to hit a tree dead center. Dad spun the wheel, and the boat was going to flip!" Ronnie continued. "The prop caught the tree

and was destroyed, but somehow, we were all OK."

A few years later, Ronnie had another near-miss event. "On one of the rides I took with my father, he pulled over and bought peanuts from a roadside vendor. I kept eating those peanuts, even though he told me to stop," Ronnie admitted.

In his book, Ronnie details what happened following that overindulgence — an experience he considers the second miracle of his life. He goes on to share another unique memory involving an escaped pet parakeet.

Ronnie also writes about a brush with death after earning his motorcycle license at age 14, and explains that after that, much of his teen life was spent sharing his faith through good works with Royal Rangers, Bible Quiz, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Youth Alive. Ronnie was president for the Tecumseh High School Class of 1980, president of Fellowship of Christian Athletes and president of Youth Alive. He worked full time as a high school senior, saving money for his move to Waxahachie to attend SAGU in the fall of 1980.

Long before he decided to become an author, Ronnie appreciated he had some interesting stories to tell. Just two years into college, he was diagnosed with a rare disease called sarcoidosis. Affecting fewer than 200,000 Americans a year, the disease causes swollen lymph nodes, lung growth and skin patches, and can lead to organ damage. "There really is no cure," Ronnie, who shares the outcome in his biography, stated.

Ronnie's book outlines how he went on to serve in many

leadership roles during his career, and met and married his wife, Helen, to whom he has been married 25 years. In 2017 however, Ronnie faced one more challenge that would prompt him to put his life story on paper.

"I started having back spasms, and my stomach had a knot on the side the size of a grapefruit," Ronnie described. "I went to the nearby ER, and when they called me back, I took a few steps, collapsed and lost all feeling in my legs."

About 50 blood tests, four MRIs, two CT scans and two days in the ER later, doctors were still puzzled by Ronnie's condition. His book — *Through the Storms, My Life of Miracles* published by Christian Faith Publishing — explains his recovery and subsequent release from the hospital just in time for Christmas.

"The book took almost a year, from start to publication. The picture on the book cover was my design and the layout of my book was hours of work and editing," Ronnie described. His second book, *Get Your Praise On*, is slated for release in 2024.

Today, Ronnie says he uses his book, as well as two musical CDs — *Inner Strength* published in 1997 and *Heart of Worship* in 2002 — to speak to the public about miracles and faith. "I started singing in church in 1970. Over the years, I served as the praise and worship leader at several churches," Ronnie outlined.

Inner Strength was mixed and recorded at a studio in Oklahoma, including three songs that Ronnie wrote the words and music to. *Heart of Worship* was mixed and recorded in the Dallas area at Green Acres Studio featuring musicians from Kiestwood Assembly of God Church.

"We spent two full days in the studio and thousands of dollars working on the *Inner Strength* project. Several famous musicians were involved!" Ronnie reflected. "After its release, Helen and I traveled across the U.S. ministering in word and music."

When not writing or offering motivational messages at speaking events, today Ronnie's hobbies include boating, fishing and swimming, as well as enjoying faith-based movies and books. He hopes his own books will leave readers with one message: "No matter what you face in life," he promised, "... you do not face it alone!" **NOW**



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HOTWORX

— By Angel Morris

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Saturdays: 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Since May, HOTWORX has been revolutionizing fitness in Red Oak with a patented, infrared workout sauna for the ultimate in hot fitness. HOTWORX uses research that shows an acceleration in metabolism occurs when exercise is paired with exposure to heat and infrared energy.

“During COVID-19, I started working out at the Waxahachie location. It made me feel like a new person, and I loved the benefits of the infrared sauna,” franchise owner Laura Blevins admitted.



After 24 years in a corporate career, Laura had enough faith in the HOTWORX method to leave her job in the legal field and open her own facility. “I was all about the convenience as well as the quick results. I loved the concept, and I love to help people. So after lots of research, I prepared a business plan and presented it to my husband. He was my biggest supporter and has believed in this concept every step of the way.”

HOTWORX is a virtually instructed fitness program created for members of all fitness levels to experience the benefits of combining heat, infrared energy and exercise for maximum calorie burn. “The 24-hour access gives members a ‘no excuse’ fitness destination, regardless of their hectic schedules and limited availability. Having 24/7 access to our functional training area, with various 30-minute isometric and 15-minute High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) infrared workouts, provides limitless combinations,” Laura noted.

“This results in incredibly high adherence to our fitness programs. We provide a unique cross-training opportunity for members who love both the variety and consistency they can get,” Laura continued.

At HOTWORX, members practice things like compression postures, Pilates, athletic-style yoga, ballet barre and/or resistance bands. Workouts also focus on glutes, abs, hips and lower back. "Research has shown that exercise and exposure to infrared energy and heat can accelerate the metabolism. When infrared training is combined with intermittent fasting and a disciplined logging of food intake, your fitness results can catapult onto the fast lane," Laura reported.

"WE PROVIDE A UNIQUE CROSS-TRAINING OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS WHO LOVE BOTH THE VARIETY AND CONSISTENCY THEY CAN GET."

HOTWORX Sweat Here package is \$59 a month. It includes unlimited sessions, 24-hour access, FX Zone and guest privileges, plus the HOTWORX app that makes it easy to book sessions, track calories and compete with other members.

The Sweat Everywhere package is \$79 a month. It includes all of the above, plus access to any standard location in the U.S., exclusive virtual personal training on the app, exclusive HOTWORX at Home on the app and Diet Trax.

"This is such a unique and well-delivered concept. The positives range from overall health and achieving one's personal fitness goals to the benefits of infrared energy and the positive effects it can have on various types of medical conditions," Laura explained.

With the "best staff a business owner could ask for" and "incredible support of her family, friends and HOTWORX coaches," Laura's goal is to bring better health and pain relief to as many people as possible in the community. "We are also working on opening a second location in Midlothian!" Laura said, where she and her staff look forward to showing kindness to their members, while introducing them to all HOTWORX has to offer. **NOW**



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Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County Quilt Show Chair Victoria Spears relaxes after the group's successful quilt show.

Zoomed In: Amberlee Upshaw-Velasquez

By Angel Morris

Amberlee Upshaw-Velasquez, a special education resource teacher at Schupmann Elementary, loves capturing photos of ordinary days and of special moments in people's lives. This interest came to life after the birth of her first child in 2008. "I'd taken 375 photos of Addyson before she was 2 weeks old!" Amberlee recalls.

With the addition of two more children and the constant taking of pictures, Amberlee was dubbed a "momtographer" by her kids. Now in her sixth year as an educator, Amberlee has expanded her hobby into JAG Studios, including a selfie station, to help others experience the joy of photography. "While I believe in living in the moment," Amberlee noted, "COVID-19 taught me that it's equally important to photograph it to remember forever."



NOW Magazines General Manager Rick Hensley, right, welcomes advertising representative Jeremy Young to the team.



Glenn Heights Officer Gerrell Crawford wears the new Axon 3 body cameras that all GHPD officers recently received.



Glenn Heights firefighters show the department's new SCBA masks with built-in thermal cameras.



Zoe and Emmanuel Martinez show off crafts created during the Red Oak Library Summer Reading program.



Koltyn Nelson gives Raylan Nelson a lift at the Independence Day activities.



Lynne Grandstaff and Jane Aberg dish up treats for Bingo & Banana Split Night at First United Methodist Church Red Oak.

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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

JULIE HARRIS

— By Angel Morris



After growing up in Waxahachie, Julie Harris moved to Red Oak in 2016, where she and her husband, Donald, are raising their family. “Baking is my favorite. My family gets excited when I make homemade treats out of the blue. They especially love my chocolate chip cookies.”

A mom of five, Julie’s youngest still anticipate what will come out of the oven. “My daughter is 9 and my twins are 6. Their faces light up to see what I’ve baked,” she said. “I love to play with decorations on cakes and cupcakes. My kids call my creations, ‘Mama’s treats,’ and I hope to have a baking business named that someday,” Julie admitted. “I’m not a professional yet. I just try to get a little better each day.” **NOW**

Chocolate Chip Cookies

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup white sugar
1 cup brown sugar, packed
2 eggs
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. hot water
1/2 tsp. salt

3 cups flour
2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Cream together the butter and sugars until smooth. Beat in the eggs, one at a time; stir in the vanilla.
2. Dissolve the baking soda in the hot water; add to the batter along with the salt.
3. Stir in the flour and chocolate chips.
4. Drop by rounded spoonfuls onto a baking

mat atop a cookie sheet. Bake 10 minutes until the edges are nicely browned.

Cheesecake

16 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
2/3 cup granulated white sugar
Pinch of salt
2 large eggs
1/3 cup sour cream
1/3 cup heavy whipping cream
1 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 325 F. In a large bowl, using a handheld mixer, blend the cream cheese until smooth and creamy.
2. Add the sugar and salt, mixing for 2 minutes and scraping sides of the bowl as needed.
3. Add the eggs, mixing until thoroughly combined.
4. Add the sour cream, whipping cream and vanilla until well combined.
5. Pour the batter into a round baking dish, smoothing mixture into an even layer. Place

the round dish inside a roasting pan filled with about 1 inch of water.

6. Bake for 45 minutes until the cheesecake is firm to the touch, not jiggly.

7. Remove the round dish from the roasting pan; place on a wire dish to cool for 1-2 hours.

8. Once cooled, place the baking dish into a freezer until the cheesecake becomes solid, about 2-3 hours. Serve chilled.

Scratch Sugar Cookies

3/4 cup sugar

3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened

2 eggs

3 tsp. vanilla extract

2 1/4 cups flour

2 1/4 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. salt

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Using a hand mixer, blend the sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, blending well. Add the vanilla extract.

2. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add the mixture, one cup at a time, to the original mixture, forming one ball of dough.

3. On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough for about 1-2 minutes. Cover the dough with plastic wrap; refrigerate for 10-20 minutes.

4. Once chilled, place the dough on lightly floured parchment paper. Roll the dough out to 1/4-inch thickness. Use your favorite cookie cutters to cut shapes from the dough. Reuse dough remnants by rolling pieces into new 1/4-inch-thick pieces until all is completely cut and used.

5. Place the shaped dough on a parchment paper-covered cookie sheet; bake 6-8 minutes. The center may still be doughy, but it will harden when you remove the cookies from the oven to a cooling rack. Once cooled, decorate with the icing and toppings of your choice.

Homemade Buttercream Icing

1/2 cup softened butter

4 1/2 cups powdered sugar

1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

5-6 Tbsp. milk

1. Mix all the ingredients together thoroughly; spread on the dessert of your choice.

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Welcome BACK TO SCHOOL

AUGUST

Due to COVID-19, 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.

8/1

Ellis Christian Women's Job Corps' Fall Class Registration Begins:

Free courses include computer training, Bible study, money management, setting boundaries, résumé writing and interviewing. For class dates and times or more information, visit <http://elliscwjc.life/> or call Lauri Henderson at (972) 937-6620.

8/5, 8/10, 8/25, 8/31

Foster Care/Adoption Event:

Online sessions for adults interested in fostering and/or adopting children with Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services. Times vary. For a link, call

(512) 212-5700 or email FosterAdopt@pchas.org.

8/6

Essential Foundation Back 2 School Bash:

EFI is sponsoring 150 children in need with backpacks and school supplies. 105 E. Red Oak Rd. Learn about sponsorship opportunities by calling (469) 552-6246, or emailing admin@efiinc.org.

8/14

Back to School Celebration:

Free haircuts, free school supplies, teachers' lounge of supplies and prayer over the

school year. 9:00 and 10:30 a.m. services, Oaks Church, 777 S. I-35E, Exit 408.

8/26

Sporting Clay Classic:

Benefiting the Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center, this event supports responsible, lawful, gun ownership and promotes safety and sportsmanship. 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Ellis County Sportsman's Club, 407 W. Sterrett Rd., Waxahachie. Purchase tickets at www.elliscountycac.org/events.

8/27

Red Oak Founder's Day:

More than 100 vendors,

children's activities and live music and entertainment celebrating the founding of the city of Red Oak. Parade begins at 9:00 a.m. from Red Oak Road/Main Street to Watkins Park, where free family-friendly events are from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Free parking and bottled water for the event at First United Methodist Church, 600 Daubitz Dr. Participation and vendor registration: <https://business.redoakareachamber.org/events>.

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

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***Urgent
Health
Warning:***

An Important HEALTH WARNING for Men and Women Age 55 or Older!

***Do You Suffer from Pain, Burning, Numbness,
or Tingling from Nerve Damage Caused by
Diabetes, Infection, or ANY of the Other
Conditions Listed in this Urgent Special Report?***

***If so, now you can virtually end your discomfort,
protect your health, and help you live a more active life.***

Dear Suffering Friend:

Tens of millions Americans have nerve damage — a condition known as “neuropathy.”

The most common symptoms of nerve damage are pain, burning, tingling, and loss of feeling in your feet, legs, and fingers — with the pain ranging from mild to almost unbearable.

If you are diabetic, and especially if you are also age 60 or older, odds are that your nerve damage has been caused directly by your diabetes — although many younger diabetics also have nerve damage from this potentially deadly disease.

But many OTHER people with these symptoms — pain, burning, and tingling — are NOT diabetic, yet also suffer from nerve damage.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the many diseases and conditions that can destroy the nerves in your extremities and limbs include:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------|
| ✓ Alcoholism | ✓ Repetitive motions such as typing | ✓ Chemotherapy |
| ✓ Autoimmune diseases | ✓ Bone marrow disorders | ✓ Tumors |
| ✓ Vitamin deficiencies | ✓ Certain prescription medications | ✓ Infections |
| ✓ Liver disease | ✓ Falls, sports injuries, and other trauma | ✓ Kidney disease |
| ✓ Underactive thyroid | ✓ Wearing a cast or using crutches | |

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