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M A G A Z I N E

SEPTEMBER 2024

New Novelist

A Red Oak graduate
authors her first book

The Man Who Ended WWII

How Chester Nimitz became
the highest-ranking officer in
the U.S. Navy

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

In the Kitchen With
Rob Minialoff

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National Voter Registration Day Tuesday, September 17, 2024

Ellis County Volunteer Deputy Registrars will be at each location to register any voter in Ellis County. Complete a new application, change of address, or change of name... they will be ready for you!

- 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM - Ellis Co. Elections Office 204 E Jefferson St. Waxahachie, TX 75165
- 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM - Ellis Co. Sub-Courthouse 207 South N Sonoma Trail, Ennis, TX 75119
- 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM - Italy Community Center 108 Harpold St. Italy, TX 76651
- 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM - Waxahachie Post Office 316 N College St. Waxahachie, TX 75165
- 9:00 AM - 5:30 PM - Ferris Public Library 301 E 10th St. Ferris, TX 75125
- 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM - A.H. Meadows Library 922 S 9th St. Midlothian, TX 76065
- 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM - Navarro College (Bldg. B), 1900 John Arden Dr Waxahachie, TX 75165
- 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM - Red Oak Public Library (Community Side), 101 Live Oak St. Red Oak, TX 75154
- 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM - SAGU Campus (Barnes Student Center), 720 Highland Ave. Waxahachie, TX 75165

Check your voting status by calling the Elections Office 972-825-5195.

October 7th is the deadline to register to vote in order to be eligible to vote in November. Get a voter registration application at a local Post Office, Tax Office, Election Office or Election Website.

General & Special Elections—Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Early Voting begins October 21st thru November 1st

Main Early Voting site: Ellis County Woman's Building (Davis Hall)

407 W Jefferson St., Waxahachie, TX. 75165 *(Note: No voting at Election Office)*

Election Day polls will be open from 7am – 7pm

Visit the website for a complete listing of polling locations, sample ballots and more.

Elections Department: 204 E. Jefferson St., Waxahachie, Texas 75165

Phone: 972-825-5195 • Email: Elections@co.ellis.tx.us

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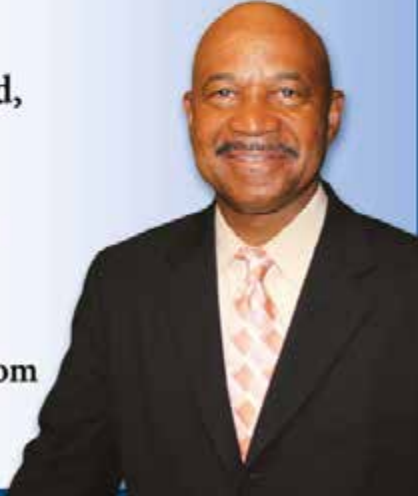
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SCAVENGER HUNT WINNER!



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**Vanessa Lewis won a
\$50 cash prize courtesy of
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ON THE COVER



Rebecca (Moran) Loomis
shares a Touch of Kindness
in her debut novel.

Photo by
Shane Kirkpatrick.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

Angel Morris
North Ellis Co. NOW Editor
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Fair enough?

This year, the State Fair of Texas runs Friday, September 27 through Sunday, October 20 at Dallas Fair Park. Whether you're a die-hard attendee or an occasional fair goer, there's no denying this event has some big attractions (the least of which is Big Tex himself). For instance, its 24-day schedule makes it the longest-running state fair in the United States.

First held in 1886, it has run annually, minus a few significant closures: During World War I in 1918; 1935, to prepare for its semicentennial celebration the next year; 1942-1945 during World War II; and the 2020 pandemic. In 1942, brothers Carl and Neil Fletcher introduced their corn dogs and earned \$8,000 over the course of the fair — equivalent to \$134,000 today.

While corn dogs still reign, the fair is also famous for introducing new foods each year, like fried Oreos, fried Twinkies and (as if it could get any tastier) fried butter. The rodeo, auto show, live performances and arts and crafts competitions are also fair staples. And what's the fair experience without a trip to the Midway, where more than 70 rides provide opportunities for thrill seekers of all levels, and everyone can try their hand at those seemingly impossible-to-win Midway games. (But what a thrill when you capture that life-size plush doll for the equivalent of just \$250 in coupons!)

Admission ranges from \$5 to \$25, but coupons must be purchased for food and activities. Each coupon equals \$1, and a ride or Midway game is typically five-12 coupons (that means \$5-\$12 per game). To be fair (pun intended), there are more than 100 free activities and shows per day included with the cost of admission. Check out bigtex.com to get the most out of this year's event.

Fair play!




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New Novelist

— By Angel Morris

Before Rebecca (Moran) Loomis became an author and educator, she was a Red Oak student. The 2010 ROHS graduate recently released her debut novel, *Touch of Kindness*. “I have always enjoyed writing, but never in my wildest dreams did I think I would become a published author,” she admitted. “I’m an avid reader and thought my little stories would be just that — little stories.”

Rebecca started her writing journey in 2021. “I had no idea where it would lead me. I just knew I had a story that wouldn’t leave me alone until I wrote it down,” she recalled. “Now, stories and ideas fall into my lap. I write when the words won’t go away, like a hammering in my mind begging to be let out.”

Touch of Kindness became available wherever books are sold, worldwide online and in select bookstores and retailers across the country over the summer. “One of the biggest challenges I’ve faced was getting this from being a half-baked story in my head to a published book. Writing the book was the easy part compared to the querying process,” Rebecca shared.

Rebecca contacted 30 different agents and publishers before landing a publisher at the end of 2022. “Then I couldn’t talk about my exciting news until the press release. It wasn’t until this past February that I could tell anyone I had a publisher, and my book would be releasing on June 4,” she noted. “Keeping quiet and waiting really tested my patience!”

The book introduces 18-year-old Dori Livingston, an average girl from a small Texas town living a quiet life. That changes when she befriends a strange runaway. A chain of events leads Dori to a fantasy world, where she discovers her own unique gifts. “I love writing strong female characters and prefer to write in first person, present tense for young adult readers,” Rebecca described. “My books are free from explicit material, focusing on the story instead of shock factors.”

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Rebecca has other books in the works including the sequel to *Touch of Kindness*. “*Touch of Kindness* is the first of a trilogy, and I have many more stories to share with the world,” she said.

Earlier this year, one of her unpublished novels, *Accidental Magic*, won two awards at the Oklahoma Writers’ Federation Conference. “I had submitted the first couple chapters and was mainly hoping to receive feedback. I didn’t expect to win anything,” Rebecca recalled. “I was thrilled when they announced I won first place in the unpublished young adult book category and had thought it couldn’t get better than that.



“Then they announced the Crème de la Crème Award, the best of all the first-placed entries, and it was my name they were calling. I was floored and still can’t believe they picked me. It was very validating to hear my writing was worthy of such an honor, and I feel so blessed to be chosen.”

A 2014 graduate of Oklahoma Christian University with a degree in music education, Rebecca is an elementary music teacher by day. Some of her fondest memories are from experiences in Red Oak schools. “I was a part of many extracurricular activities at Red Oak High School, but one of my favorites was being in theater. I have so many great memories, from eating lunch in the actually green greenroom to acting my heart out on the cafetorium stage,” Rebecca reflected.



“I’ll never forget singing while standing on a table in our fall production of *M*A*S*H* or the smell of summer sausage when I had to carry it with me everywhere in one of our One-Act Plays,” she continued. “I made some great friends and lasting memories that I still smile about to this day.”

An admirer of authors J.K. Rowling and V.E. Schwab, Rebecca writes with a focus on fantasy, dystopia and science fiction, in hopes of “creating a safe place for young readers” through her own writing. Her other hobbies include singing, playing ukulele and baking. “I also love making cards for people at my church and cuddling with my Goldendoodle, Treble,” she noted. “And I am so thankful for the love and support I’ve received during this new adventure of becoming an author. Especially from my parents, Billy and Tammy Moran, and my husband, Greg.”

Rebecca said she has many books left to write and hopes her stories will encourage others to pursue their passions. “For every dream, there’s a story waiting to be written, a world to be created,” she said. “If there’s something you want to do, try. It may not work out, or you may be a roaring success, but if you never try, you’ll never know!” **NOW**

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North Ellis County Outreach's Kim Campbell-Hailey receives the Resilience Award from the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies.

Zoomed In: Jennifer Salzman

By Angel Morris

Jennifer Salzman's family business had completed cabinet installations at shelters across the Metroplex but wanted to help in Ellis County specifically. "Domestic abuse has impacted our family personally. We wanted to create a legacy that would outlive us in the form of a local resource center for such situations," explained Jennifer, who is the executive director of The Heights Ellis County Family Resources.

Located in Midlothian, The Heights partners with dozens of agencies providing resources ranging from counseling to job training. A shelter is being constructed at an undisclosed location. Those in need of assistance can call (469) 672-6494 or visit theheightselliscounty.org. "A single organization can't move the needle like many working together can," Jennifer shared. "Seeing this put into action is my favorite part."



Mrs. Johnny Tune shares fermenting techniques at the Senior Citizen Center of Red Oak.



Travelin' Tom's Coffee and Kona Ice host a ribbon cutting with the Red Oak Chamber of Commerce.



John Gray, Jeff Files and Charles Blake lead Superheroes of the Bible VBS at Lone Star Cowboy Church.



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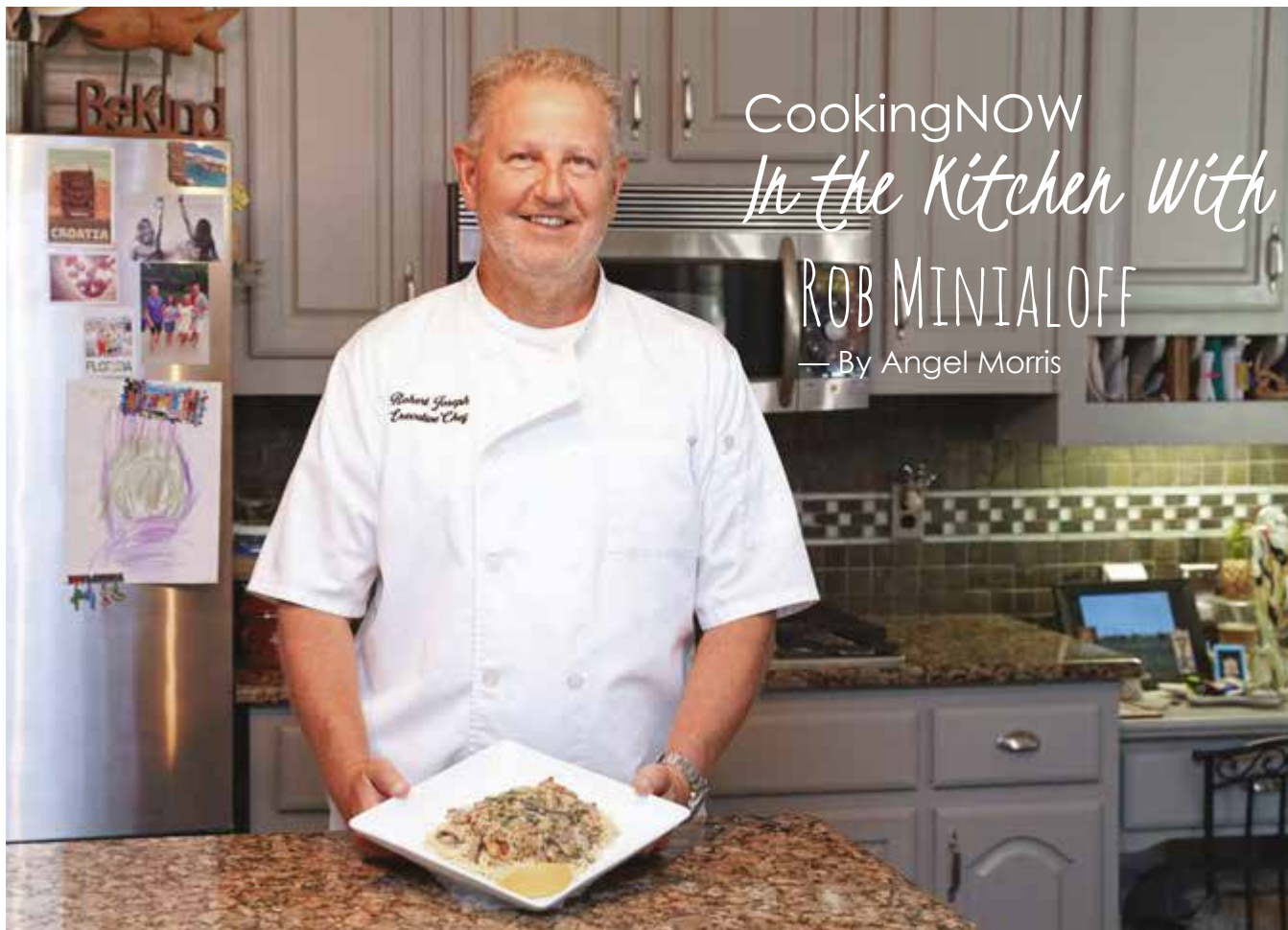
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Originally from Canada, Rob Minialoff moved to Red Oak in 2009 and was sworn in as a U.S. citizen in 2018. When not world traveling with his wife, Julie, he enjoys cooking. “I first became interested in cooking when I tried prepackaged meal kits. I liked how combining ingredients I’d never heard of created such amazing meals,” he recalled. “I love learning, and with food, there is no end to the learning.”

Grilled steak is “Chef Rob’s” favorite simple dish to prepare. “I buy the best steaks I can, with my guests choosing the cuts, usually fillets or rib eyes. I cold smoke the steak and season it with a steak spice from Barbarians Steak House, a 65-year-old restaurant in Toronto, Canada,” he noted. “I love hearing steak lovers say, ‘Mmm! Rob, this is so good.’” **NOW**

Crustless Chicken Pot Pie

Serves 2.

1 shallot or red onion, chopped
Olive oil, to taste
Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste
Chili cumin spice (optional but really good!)
2 chicken breasts, cubed
1 tsp. minced garlic
2 Tbsp. light Italian dressing
2 cups chicken broth
1 cup each poblano/celery/carrots/okra
parsnips, chopped

1. Start by adding the shallots and olive oil to a medium-hot pan. Cook 1-2 minutes until the shallots soften a little. Season the chicken with salt, pepper and cumin, if using. Brown the chicken.
2. Add the garlic; cook until it gets aromatic (about 30 seconds). Add the dressing; cook until the chicken is done. Place the chicken in two bowls.
3. Add the broth and vegetables to the same skillet, cooking over medium-high heat until the vegetables are tender. *Note: If you use carrots or okra, make sure the carrots are not big chunks. Okra takes the longest to cook.*
4. Season again with salt and pepper. Pour over the chicken in the two bowls; serve immediately.

Linguine With Clams

18 littleneck clams
1 12-oz. pkg. linguine (or homemade)
2 Tbsp. olive oil
6 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
1/2 cup shallots, finely chopped
1 cup dry white wine
1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes
Salt, to taste
1/4 cup parsley, finely chopped
3 Tbsp. butter
Lemon zest, to taste
Lemon juice

1. For clams: Buy the clams the day of; refrigerate on ice. Do not seal, as they must breathe. If the shell is open, tap and it will close if it is alive. If not, discard it.
2. Place the clams in a bowl; cover with cool tap water. Let sit for 20 minutes to 1 hour. During this time, the clams will expel sand. When you’re ready to cook, lift and rinse each clam, scrubbing if necessary, to get rid of any grit from the surface.
3. For linguine: Boil the linguine to get it to a little harder than al dente. Reserve some of the cooking water.
4. In a 12-inch pan, add the olive oil; cook the garlic and shallots for 1 minute. Add the wine, pepper flakes, salt, parsley and clams. Bring to a simmer; cover and cook for 6-8 minutes until the

clams open. Discard any that don't open. Remove the good clams and cover them.
5. Add the linguine to the sauce. Mix; finish cooking as it absorbs the sauce. Remove from heat. Add the butter, lemon zest and lemon juice; serve.

**Seared Scallops With Champagne
Beurre Blanc**
Serves 4.

Scallops:
1 1/2 lbs. sea scallops, tough side
ligament removed
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 Tbsp. vegetable oil

Sauce:
1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 small shallot, minced
1 garlic clove, minced
1 cup champagne
1/4 cup heavy whipping cream
3 Tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
2 Tbsp. fresh chives, chopped
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- 1.** For scallops: Pat the scallops dry with a paper towel; season with salt and pepper. Allow the scallops to come to room temperature.
- 2.** Add the oil to a large, nonstick skillet over high heat. When shimmering, add the scallops; sear until browned on both sides and just opaque in the center, about 2-3 minutes per side. Transfer the scallops to a dish; tent with foil to keep warm.
- 3.** For sauce: Return the skillet to medium heat; add the oil. When shimmering, add the shallots. Cook until tender, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic; stir while cooking until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the champagne; bring to a boil, using a wooden spoon to scrape up any brown bits and incorporate them into the sauce as the liquid cooks.
- 4.** Lower heat, add the cream; cook until thickened, about 3 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat; add the butter. Whisk until fully incorporated. Stir in the lemon juice and chives. Season with salt and pepper.
- 5.** Ladle the sauce onto a dinner plate. Top with the scallops.

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SEPTEMBER

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.

9/14

Glenn Heights 55th Anniversary Celebration:

Live music, food trucks, vendors, dancing lessons, car show, kids zone and more. 4:00-9:00 p.m., Heritage Park, 400 E. Bear Creek.

For more information, email amcgee@glennheightstx.gov.

9/20-9/21

Book Sale:

Hosted by the Red Oak Friends of the Library, all proceeds benefit the Red Oak Public Library. **Friday:** 1:00-5:00 p.m.; **Saturday:** 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Red Oak Public Library Community Room, 101 Live Oak.

9/21

Founder's Day:

Celebrating Red Oak's history with a parade plus festival featuring music, family activities, food trucks, vendors and more. 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Watkins Park, 102 N. Live Oak St. (Free parking, water, shopping bag and fan available across the street at First United Methodist Church for this event.)

Learn more at www.redoakchamber.org.

Girls Time Brunch:

Topical discussions for girls ages 13-18 including financial literacy, entrepreneurship, self-love and sisterhood. \$30 admission. 10:45 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Beacon Recreation

Center, 1100 Mansfield Webb Rd., Arlington. Email girlstime0124@gmail.com for more information.

9/28

Ovilla Heritage Day:

Celebrating the small town with a big heart, this annual event features a parade, live music, games, arts, crafts, vendors and food trucks. 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. 105 S. Cockrell Hill Rd., Ovilla. Find the full schedule at www.cityofovilla.org. Email jprice@cityofovilla.org or call (972) 617-7262, ext. 3.

10/4-10/5

The Play That Goes Wrong:

Dinner theater. (Ages 8 and up.) Includes dinner and dessert. Doors open and dinner service begins: 6:15 p.m. Show starts: 7:00 p.m., Park Meadows Church, 3350 N. Hwy. 77, Waxahachie. Tickets must be purchased in advance. www.parkmeadows.org/tickets or call (972) 937-0073.

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



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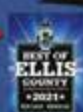
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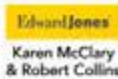
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