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October 2007

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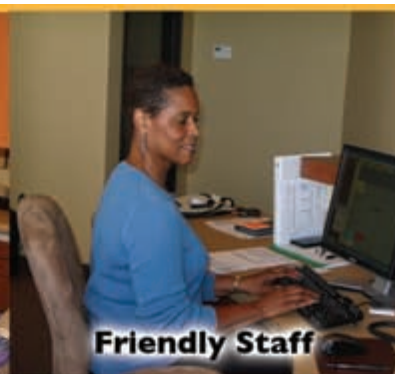
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Teaching Our Future



*On the Cover: A pumpkin canister helps Cindy Belote set the mood for the fall season.*

*Photo by Rod Cordsen.*

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## Editor's Note

*Dear Neighbors,*

Fall is a time to celebrate change. Whether it is the change in weather or in foliage, many within our cities will be celebrating and sharing their colorful and inspiring tales about transformations within their own lives and in the lives of others.

In this issue, we hope you are awed by the Bennett family of Red Oak who hand-built their entire home as their "family project." They are great examples, showing the power of togetherness. Meet local teacher and resident Cindy Belote who encourages the city's first-graders to grow and mature through lessons of kindness and compassion. Good examples of these traits are also reflected by local artists Branden and Daniel Bernheimer and Bear Cooper, who use their art to help others; while John and Mary Young show their dedication by making a difference to those within our communities.

Although the colors change and the leaves may fall, there is much splendor radiating throughout our towns!

*Diana Merrill Claussen*

Red Oak Editor

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# Returning the Favor

— By Sandra McIntosh

John and Mary Young are parents, grandparents, business owners and the best of friends. Throughout their 20-year union, they have learned the importance of giving back to the community that once took care of them.

"When we were first married, I remember eating beans and rice," Mary said. "We didn't have a car, so people in the Red Oak community helped us out."

Looking back, the couple realizes they will never be able to give back as much as they received. Yet they will continue to find joy and satisfaction in knowing they are returning the favor as often as humanly possible. "What goes around comes around," John said. "We just can't give back enough."

The humble, volunteer spirit found within the pair is evident just minutes into the conversation. Working in tandem over the years has grown them closer, not only to each other, but also to the community they love to call home.

When the couple's four children were small, John was a member of the Red Oak Lions Club. "Once the kids got to a certain age," he said, "they became my priority." John's name may no longer be listed on the Lions Club roster, but he has always remained actively involved. "Even if you aren't a member, you can still get involved in giving back to the community by participating," he said. "A good example is the spaghetti supper. It's not only an annual social event, it's a time where a person can give back." John said giving back could include, but is definitely not limited to, donating time to help prepare the meal, making a monetary donation to help lessen the financial burden or by attending and purchasing a spaghetti dinner while spending an evening with friends.



John also finds great satisfaction in giving back to his hometown as an active member of the Methodist Men, an organization that meets at 8 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month at the First United Methodist Church of Red Oak. John remembers how the

group first got started, "We needed a smoker for our annual Lord's Acre event," he said, "but, we also wanted to share the smoker with the community."

Over the years, sharing with the community has grown to encompass not only the Lord's Acre event held the last Saturday of September, but the Methodist Men have also been called upon to help in the fundraising efforts for local Boy Scout Troop No. 652, the North Ellis County Outreach Center (NECO), Relay for Life and, most recently, the annual gathering for the families with autistic children. "We smoke a lot of meat at these events," John said, "but we've also been able to give several monetary donations, too." Those donations included \$1,000 to help purchase gear for the Scouts' trip to summer camp, as well as an annual donation of \$50 to what is known as "God's Band-Aid," a charity within NECO. "They help NECO stock nonprescription medications and items for families in need," Mary explained further. "The congregation is small, so the Methodist Men are starting small within their own community."

The Methodist Men have their annual fundraising event



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during Red Oak's Founders Day. Throughout the entire day, weather permitting, they grill meat on the smoker for a donation. In fact, it has become somewhat of a tradition.

Mary, always the supportive wife, is quite the volunteer herself. When asked to list what all she is currently involved in, Mary's first response was teaching Sunday school. "I've taught the 3 and 4 year olds for the past 17 years," she said, without a moment's hesitation. "When they come to me, they are unable to cut with scissors, color within the lines and properly use a glue stick. After two years with me, I feel like I help set the foundation as they go on to kindergarten." Known as "Miss Mary" to her young charges, Mary knows without a doubt that she is learning more from them than she could ever possibly teach. "I love this age group," she added.

As the toddlers grow into youth, the "Miss Mary" label becomes "Mama Mary." "I go on mission trips with the youth," she said, referring to her position as cook within the Central Texas Conference Youth in Missions group. "I'm not all about pizza and hot dogs. One night, we even had brisket with all the fixings." Mary is also a member of the Central Texas Conference Volunteers in Mission, the chancel choir and serves as the disaster response coordinator at First United Methodist Church. "If another big hurricane should hit South Texas," she said, "we're ready."

As if she is not busy enough, Mary plans on participating as a member of



the "Beth Brigade" at this year's Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure three-day event. "I walk for several different reasons – my mom, Millie Jeffers; John's mom, Joyce Coate; and my brother, Jon Jeffers – and they all happen to be survivors," she said. "Now that I'm able to leave home for three days, I couldn't find one reason not to walk." The hardest part of the walk, Mary said, will be collecting the \$2,250 in donations needed to participate.

As a couple, John and Mary thoroughly enjoy working in their garden. They garden the same way they volunteer – all out and full speed ahead. "This year's garden would have been great," Mary explained, as John agreed. "We had to till the entire garden up," he added. "We just had way too much rain."

The youngest two children, Travis, 19, and Whitney, 17, still live at home. It is common for John and Travis to spend a couple evenings a week at a friend's house. "They play pool and foosball," Mary laughed, "while I stay home and cross-stitch." Whitney is a senior at Red Oak High School this year, so Mary has been a regular visitor on campus.

A blizzard in Iowa brought Mary to Texas, and a hailstorm in Red Oak which damaged John's roof, caused their paths to cross when he went to ask his cousin for assistance with the re-roofing project. John's cousin just happened to live across the street from Mary, and it was at this time that they first saw one another. As a couple who thrive on volunteering, they have become somewhat of a welcome storm within the Red Oak community. Good things just seem to happen when they are part of the forecast. "We are also instilling the spirit of volunteering into our children, as well as our five grandchildren. It's all about being there for others when there's a need," Mary said. "We give back to our community because they willingly gave to us first, and because it's the right thing to do." **NOW**

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# A Family-built Home

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

At Home With  
*Tony and Charlotte Bennett*

Calling a house your own usually means having a place in which to build memories. To Tony and Charlotte Bennett of Red Oak, the beginning of their journey of memories was wrapped up in a home they had not yet built. It all began in 1996 when they decided to buy a 12-acre tract of land located on Bells Chapel Road. "When we originally bought the acreage from one of our friends, we knew we could build a house out here," Tony said.

Early in the process, the Bennetts decided to pay for their home one truckload of construction supplies at a time. Charlotte said constructing their home in this manner kept them free of a mortgage, and it also gave



them the opportunity to plan the home down to its smallest details. The designs drawn up by the couple and their two children, Chris and Carolyn (who has since moved out on her own) produced a stunning, two-story, 4,250-square-foot beauty that leaves every guest with a feeling of awe.

The exterior of this lovely home is accented with dual wraparound porches, one located on each floor. The interior features four bedrooms, a front parlor, formal dining room, built-in bookcases throughout, over 100 custom cabinets and a soon-to-be-completed library that showcases one of their three fireplaces. "Anywhere you have two pieces of wood stuck together, we did it," Tony said, emphasizing that the project was truly a family one. They made sure the children were included every step of the way.

Upon entering this spacious home, it literally captivates



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you. The first noticeable thing is the 28-foot ceiling in the entryway, which seems to go on for miles. To the right of the entry is a front sitting room reflecting the style of a Renaissance-era parlor. Ornate touches are found in this room: golden crown molding,



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corner appliques and intricately detailed and scrolled headers (which can be found in most of the home's rooms) accent the parlor doors and windows. The parlor's two main walls are emphasized with wood framing, which Tony designed himself.

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"To create the framing, I used three-quarter-inch plywood and cut it into strips," he said. "Then I added framing for the raised paneling, which surrounds the room." Charlotte commented on Tony's artistic talents, and he also praised hers. "Charlotte was the official painter for many of



the rooms," Tony said. "She also painted and sponge-finished some of the wallpapered areas, too" Many of Charlotte's other talents can be seen throughout the home. From drapes with matching pillows and tablecloths,

to crocheted blankets, she handcrafted

many of the home's woven treasures.

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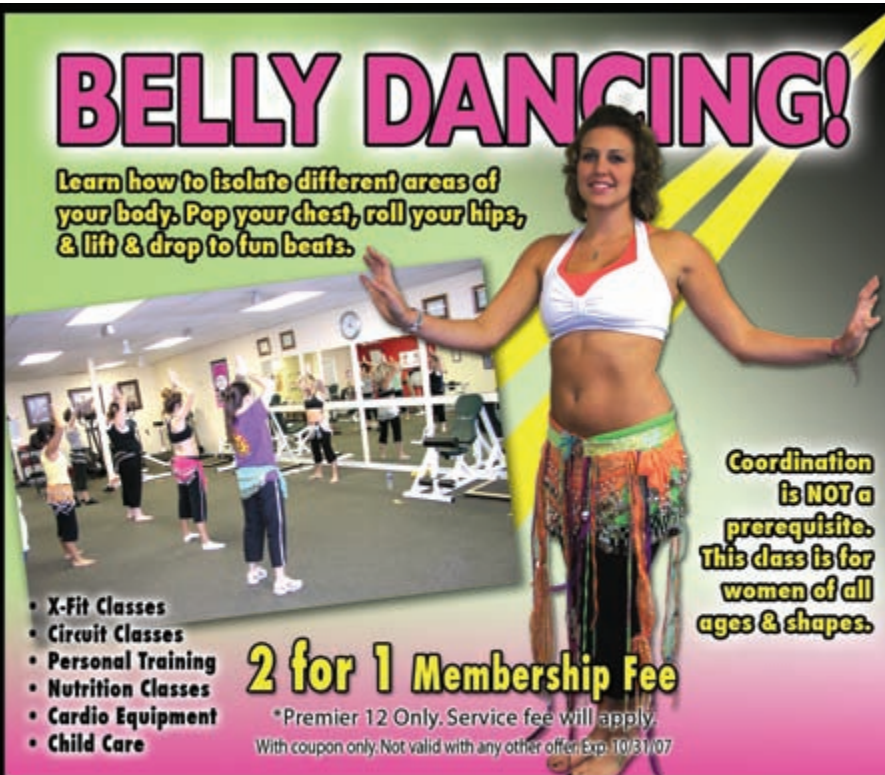
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and functional flooring is located throughout the home. A sense of inviting warmth greets each guest as they pass through one of the columned entries into the family's main gathering area. This room features a large fireplace surrounded with many art niches.

Adjoining the family room is the Bennetts' 168-square-foot kitchen. In the kitchen Charlotte pointed out their exceptional use of space. "Behind the stove, there was an open area between the wall and the butler's pantry. So, we made that area into a broom closet," she said. "I used every square inch of space all throughout the house."

When passing through a pair of French doors from the kitchen into the octagonal-shaped, formal dining room, you are guaranteed to lose your breath. Exquisite accents display Charlotte's intricate creations. "I hand-painted the medallion accents located on the walls and around the chandelier," she said. "I also re-upholstered all of the chairs to match the tablecloth and drapes."

On the far side of this royal banquet



room is another pair of French doors opening to the home's entryway. After revisiting the entry, you may choose to meander up the winding staircase, which is accented with fine wainscoting. The top of the stairs gives way to a second story of equal grandness that includes: a 40-foot-long, hardwood hallway complete with custom, built-in



bookcases, the master suite, an office and Chris' room.

"Chris came up with the design of the landing, hallway and some of the built-in bookcases," Charlotte said. "We really gave a lot of thought to the impact this project would have on the kids."



One of Charlotte's favorite projects was decorating the master bedroom suite, which contains a regal fireplace, complete with marble trim, and a sitting area with a picture window and a built-in cedar bench that houses the family's many cloth and crochet treasures. This fine room features an entry leading out to the second-story balcony that extends the entire length of the home. The balcony was inspired by a hotel the Bennetts visited in Jamestown,

California. "We love the balcony because we can open the doors and listen to the spring-fed creek," Charlotte commented.

The master bath is complete with a blue-marbled Jacuzzi spa and over 40 glass cabinets. The cabinets are a spectacular sight, which leaves you wondering if the home is real or simply a dream.



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As you stroll down to the other end of the spacious hall, you will find roomy storage closets, an office and Chris' room. Yet you might want to



remember you are in a bedroom.

Each room was created with its own "theme." The Bennetts always kept this idea in mind while building their



Bennetts have become part of Home Depot's advertising campaigns, and currently, their home-building story is featured in training videos and on the company's Web site. "We will also be featured in HD's local and national magazine ads by the end of the year, and in *Better Homes and Gardens*, *People* and *Oprah* magazines," Tony said.

It took a lot of work, time and effort to build their home, but Charlotte said it has been worth it. "The best part of this journey is that we did it all as a family," she said. They are looking forward to sharing the upcoming holidays together in their family-built home. **NOW**

## "The best part of this journey is that we did it all as a family."

call his room more of a theater than a bedroom. It is a media-lover's dream, featuring hundreds of DVDs stored on built-in bookcases, autographed pictures of movie and TV stars and movie memorabilia. Not until you see the California King bed do you

home brick-by-brick, one truckload at a time. Another fact that makes this home unique is 95 percent of those truckloads came from local Home Depot stores. Eventually, word of the family's successful creation reached the company's executives. Since then, the

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**ARTS  
NOW**

# A Trio of Talent

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Located in the heart of downtown Red Oak there is a family with talents and skills, which defy the imagination. This family of artists consists of husband and wife team Daniel and Branden “Chaos” Bernheimer, and stepbrother “Bear” Cooper. This talented trio is becoming quite well known for creating works covering a wide range of the artistic realm.

Daniel has been involved in creating walls, windows and doors using glass block, while Branden and Bear originally started creating their masterpieces through painting. “We have done many painting and faux finishing jobs especially in the DFW area,” Branden said. “One of our works we created is located on the Renaissance Tower building in Dallas and it is a 4,000-square-foot mural which we painted on glass. We’ve also done some work for Pegasus Bank and donated our talents to help many nonprofit organizations.”

One organization the family has volunteered to help is the North Ellis County Outreach Center. “They are such a wonderful organization, and when we heard they were in need of having their truck painted, we decided to donate both the supplies and labor and painted the truck for free,” Bear said.

Branden, who feels blessed to have her talents and loves using them to help others said, “I love Pennies from Heaven at the outreach, they do so much good with the money they receive. Bear and I just did all the work for free because we wanted the outreach to keep on doing good things for the community.”

Although Branden and Bear still do custom painting, they have also branched into creating custom glasswork for businesses and homes across the globe. “While I was doing a lot of painting, my husband never saw much of me, so I decided to find something closer to home,” Branden said. “Since my husband already works in block glass, I decided I’d start working in glass, too.”

Five years after Branden and Bear’s decision to add glass into their repertoire of artistic mediums, they now create every type of custom glasswork imaginable: housewares, accessories, sculptures, windows, doors, countertops, dishes,



shelving, waterfalls and fountains are some of the many types of pieces they create for their clients. “I had never worked in glass until five years ago, although Daniel has over 20 years of block glass experience,” Branden said. “Now, we are one of eight studios in the world that creates three-dimensional glasswork.”

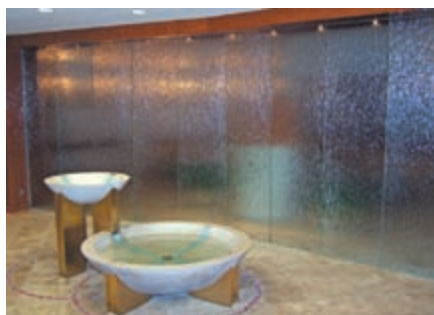
Whenever they have a customer, the first step of their process is to learn what the client wants them to create. “We tell our customers if they can imagine it, we can create it,” Branden said. “Once they share their needs with us, we draw it out, mold cut and then carve the design. Then we melt glass over the piece to create the finished 3-D glass design.”

Sometimes during the process, a piece might need a touch of etching, molding or sandblasting as well. When the product is ready, they may also use methods of glass fusing or slumping to add additional depth and accent. During and after the creation of the piece, they use their own custom kilns to fire the glass. “We have our own custom kilns which we hand built ourselves,” Branden said. “The kilns can fire a piece as big as 55” inches wide and 120” long. The kiln also works in a range of temperatures from 1,300 – 1,500 F depending upon the product and the thickness of glass.”

The finished product always reflects their amazing talents. From custom-etched, 3-D glass shower doors to fireplace mantel waterfalls and fountains complete with copper accents and water pumps, their talent knows no bounds. They have been known to create custom glass jewelry and holiday



# ARTS NOW



decorations, as well as creating innovative one-half inch thick glass countertops as seen in the Argumaniz family's home here in Red Oak.

These artisans live and produce their work in Red Oak, but their two showrooms are in Dallas. "Illuminations in Waxahachie also carries some of our pieces," Branden said.

The Bernheimers' creations can also be seen annually at the Scarborough Renaissance Festival in Waxahachie and the Irish Fest Trunk Show. During the month of October, they will be attending the Texas Architect Show in Austin where they will be representing their studio and work.

Whenever she travels or speaks with other artists, Branden tries to impart an important lesson she learned many years ago. "If you're going to be an artist, you need to learn to create in multiple mediums of art," she said. "Many people ask me what it's like to be an artist. I tell them, 'I don't know what it feels like to be anything else.'" **NOW**

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**Sports**  
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# A Season of Change

— By Diana Merrill Claussen



When a team has a change of players, that team will be impacted. When one of the key team players is a newly assigned head coach, the impact can be felt from the field, throughout the school and even within an entire city. Red Oak recently experienced such a change, and thankfully, the impact has been positive, re-kindling a spirit of playoff hopes and dreams. Who is this new head coach instilling a renewed sense of team vitality in the Red Oak Independent School District's football program? He is a very optimistic, humble and well-mannered man named Mike Shields.

This season is Mike's first year in this position, and his goals and desires to see his football teams succeed are infectious, even to those who are not normally interested in the sport. "Before coming to Red Oak, I was the head coach in Italy, Texas, for five years in 2A. Then in the 2006 season, I started as an assistant coach here in Red Oak," Mike said. "Red Oak is 4A, and there are more kids and coaches in

4A than there were in 2A. It's a busier job, and I like it."

"Busy" is Mike's unofficial middle name. Not only is he the head varsity coach, he is also one of the high school's Algebra II teachers, holding two classes per day. On most days, Mike's work schedule is from 6:30 a.m. until about 6 p.m. "During game days though, I usually work until 10 or 11 p.m.," he said.

With few planning periods throughout the day, Mike's hours are mainly spent at the high school and junior high campuses. You might find him in the field house, his classroom or on the field with the high school teams. "I also like to pop my head in on the 6:30 a.m. seventh grade practice to get to know the kids a little better," he commented.

When asked about his plans for the season and how he will lead his players from the seventh grade up, his eyes began to shine as he spoke about learning from the district's past and allowing those lessons to play a large part in formulating the future. "The coaches



## Sports NOW

recently had a meeting with the schools' new superintendent, Scott Niven," Mike said. "Mr. Niven asked some of us why we hadn't been winning in previous seasons, and we all came to a few conclusions."

He also reflected on some of the reasons they were not able to achieve playoff advancement in recent years. A few of those reasons were not what you might expect. "For starters, we didn't believe we could win," he said. "We know we can't win every game, but we



definitely will have a good chance to win, if we believe we can. We also saw a need to increase our number of players from the previous years. A good 4A needs to have 200 kids; this year we have increased to about 150."

According to Mike, the staff and superintendent have also realized that ensuring a long-term coaching staff will be instrumental in the success of the district's football teams. "If we have coaches that stay awhile and establish programs from the seventh grade on up, that would be great," Mike said. This would help ensure success because by the time the students reach high school, they would be very familiar with the coaching styles, terminology and

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## Sports NOW

expectations, giving them a better edge on the field and over their opponents.

Although Mike has hopeful expectations, he does admit the district is pretty tough. Yet he does not let that phase him. After all, he came from a team in Italy, which not only won numerous district games, but carried an overall record of 47-14

**“My entire objective is to teach young kids the values and traits needed to ensure their success.”**

during his five years as their head coach.

Moving from Italy to Red Oak was something Mike and his wife considered a good career move. They also thought it would benefit their three children.

“When I started coaching, I decided I wasn’t going to be a coach that continually moves my kids around,” he said. “So we thought Red Oak would be a great place to be and raise our family; so we bought a house here.”

Mike considers his football teams as family. With 19 football coaches on his team, it is clear Mike values each of them for the skill and determination they are contributing to this season.

“I always say anytime a program is successful, it takes more than one person to make it a success,” he said. “We’re only as good as the whole team, and our staff truly wants this program to continue to be heading in the right direction.”

“My entire objective is to teach young kids the values and traits needed to ensure their success,” he commented.

“Yes, I want to win the games, but the most important thing is to be here for the students and the kids.” **NOW**





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## Business NOW



# Patients Come First

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Upon entering the Red Oak Chiropractic and Therapy Clinic, you might sense you are entering a peaceful retreat instead of a doctor's office. As friendly staff members greet you, you might notice this practice offers more than just standard service. "When our clients come in, the first thing they notice is the tranquil, scone-infused lighting and relaxing music," Co-owner and Operations Manager Tamra Zuber said.

Tamra said the clinic does not overbook, keeps all appointments and provides quality care, while remaining cognizant of their patients' needs and schedules. "Our patients come first," she said. "We strive to provide personal patient care and focus on having a quality-, not quantity-based practice. We want to cater to our patients' every need."

Those who visit Red Oak Chiropractic come in with various medical problems and needs. The doctors and staff are ready and able to help their patients through almost any

condition or diagnosis. The practice uses state-of-the-art equipment, and their doctors have over 40 years combined chiropractic experience.

According to Tamra, the clinic looks at all of a patients' needs and provides multiple varying methods of care for clients of all ages. "The ages of our clients range from infant to elderly," Tamra said. "Besides providing chiropractic care,

we also offer massage, occupational and rehabilitation therapy, along with nutritional counseling and specialized rehab methods such as ART," Tamra said.



ART (Active Release Therapy) is an active, stretching and massage technique used by Dr. Neil Dukes who practices at the clinic. ART is good to use in conjunction with chiro-care because it helps relax the muscles before many adjustments. "Sometimes with ART, the patient doesn't even need a chiropractic adjustment," Dr. Dukes said. "This method is



## Business NOW

innovative and gets great results.”

Through Dr. Dukes, the clinic also offers insight on personal training, nutrition and sports-muscular therapy.

“We see patients also going through pre- and post-surgery, or there are some in need of Kinesio Taping,” Tamra said. “We have one of the few accredited Kinesio Taping specialists in the state.” This taping method for treating injuries is credited with providing the maximum amount of benefits and healing in the shortest amount of time – especially for those with sports-related injuries.

These are not the only benefits to be found from the highly accredited and certified providers at Red Oak Chiropractic and Therapy. “We also have an occupational therapist on staff and a therapy and rehab room,” Tamra said. “Plus all of our massage and treatment rooms provide a relaxed environment that is warm and inviting. Since we are a family-oriented business, we provide a play area for our clients’ children as well.”

The clinic is a big proponent of family-based businesses and Tamra’s husband, Marc, is even one of their practicing doctors. Dr. Bob Hollander is also a part of the Red Oak Chiropractic family. He is the former president of the Texas Chiropractic Association.

“At our clinic, patients come first,” Tamra said. “We love that we are able to spend time with our patients and get to know them.”

With the combined experience of highly trained and qualified doctors and staff, the family at Red Oak Chiropractic and Therapy said their doors are open Monday - Thursday, 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. and on the first and third Saturdays of the month from 9 a.m. - noon.

This month the clinic will offer a free half-hour massage to all new chiropractic patients. They are located at 200 East Ovilla Road in Red Oak and can be reached at (972) 576-5501. **NOW**

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# Around Town

## NOW



The Red Oak Hawkeye Band, top left, held a car wash fundraiser in Ovilla. The Red Oak Girl Scouts, top right, rode in a covered wagon during the Founders Day Parade. "Uncle Stinky" and his "ghoul-friends," middle left, had a hauntingly good time on Founders Day. A "Meet the Hawks" pep rally, middle right, was held recently. Sierra, bottom left, gets her pretty face painted. Queen Abdullah and her little sister, Jadore, bottom right, had fun playing with their puppy at the Harmony neighborhood park.



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## Around Town NOW



Children from Venture Crew 3 and the local Boy Scouts, top left, helped "dig in" to get Reindeer Manor ready for Halloween. Girl Scouts of Red Oak, top right, took a "step back in time" as they modeled uniforms dating back to 1928. A ribbon cutting, middle right, was held at Allstate Nickie Weyrauch. Emma Sanden and her dad, Randal, bottom left, enjoyed time in the warm sunshine. Denise Butler of the North Ellis County Outreach, bottom right, received the Businesswoman of the Month award from Councilman Goodwyn.

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# Education **NOW**

## Teaching Our Future

— By Ashley Carlino

What qualities make a good teacher? Are they patience, kindness and intellect? Maybe it is the ability to be empathetic and child-like, or perhaps it is a job for the young at heart. Whatever the answer, it takes a special and dedicated person to do it well.

Being a good teacher goes well beyond preparing lesson plans and grading papers. It takes a yearning to see children grow. “I really like watching kids learn – that spark in their eyes, that inquisitiveness. I like helping them believe in themselves,” said Cindy Belote, first grade teacher at Donald T. Shields Elementary.

A graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington, Cindy obtained degrees in physical and elementary education. Her career began as a swim instructor and a gymnastics teacher. Cindy taught second grade in DeSoto for several years, then moved to Duncanville to teach at Merrywood School. She was later hired at Donald T. Shields Elementary, where she has taught first grade for the past seven years.

“Our principals are very supportive, and so are our parents. There are opportunities for working parents to volunteer as well. Just helping their kids do their homework is the best thing,” Cindy stated. The parents are also very influential in teaching these



*Cindy and Bill Belote value their family time with daughters Lexi and Chelsea.*

first-graders to read. “There are so many different ways to teach reading. We have such a battery of people to help,” Cindy noted. In her class, math and reading homework are assigned Monday through Thursday nights. By working as a whole class, in small groups and individually, Cindy can identify a student who might be having trouble with a particular subject. “Small groups allow for more one-on-one attention,” she added.

“Our Reading Recovery Program is really good. We screen the students on the first day to figure out who is having the most trouble,” Cindy explained. “To me, reading is power. I help them to learn how to find good books to read, and to use the dictionary if they can’t figure out a word.” During autumn months, the children have a lot of fun studying pumpkins, scarecrows and participating in what Cindy refers to as an “advanced leaf collecting learning experience.”

Cindy also teaches important life skills. She teaches her students how

important it is to help others and to be kind. “You’ll never regret being kind to someone,” she said. She also emphasizes to the students the importance of believing in themselves. “Our goal is to teach them how to go out on their own,” Cindy said.

These same principles are incorporated into her own role as a parent. She and her husband of 25 years, Bill, have reared two very successful, intelligent and mature young ladies. Lexi is a sophomore at Red Oak High School and her sister, Chelsea, is a sophomore at the University of Texas at Austin. “Our rules are consistent. Be present. You can’t parent from far away. Be ready to talk to your teenagers whenever they are ready to talk,” Cindy said, referring to those 11 p.m. conversations.

They also spend a lot of time together as a family. “He was always supportive of us,” Lexi said, referring to her father, who walked Chelsea into school every day until the third grade. “He wanted the girls to know they were worth the extra effort,” Cindy remembered. They



## Education **NOW**

have spent many Sundays at church together, and they always look forward to the annual Lord's Acre event. Every fall, they visit the Texas State Fair, watch the Texas Longhorns play football and pick the perfect family pumpkin.

Consistency, guidance and close parental involvement have contributed to the girls' success. They each share their mother's passion for learning. Lexi favors biology, math and writing. She is an anchor for the Hawkeye News at ROHS. "I enjoy learning," Lexi said. This 15-year-old student keeps herself busy with numerous activities and clubs, from cheerleading to the National Junior Honor Society. Whatever she does, she does with enthusiasm. One reason Lexi tries so hard in school is her deep respect for the teachers – for their time and effort. Lexi had perfect attendance last year. "If you always hear the teacher, it helps. I listen in class, but I have to study," she added.

Chelsea, 19, was also very active in high school, and has adjusted well to the college environment. "[Red Oak High School] has excellent teachers. If you do what they say, you'll be prepared [for college]," she noted. This ambitious young lady is studying to become a lawyer. She enjoys subjects such as linguistics, communication and psychology. Her strong determination and drive to excel compelled her to stay on campus after all other students had gone home for the semester. She did so only to retake a final exam, improving her grade from a B to an A.

Whether it is teaching first-graders or learning about her growing daughters, Cindy uses her kind spirit and gifted teaching ability to help others feel good about themselves. Her gentle and creative nature makes those around her want to learn and grow. She instills hope in her students that anything is possible. What great lessons to carry these students into a promising future! **NOW**

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# Look Who's Cooking

— By Melinda Hines

## IN THE KITCHEN WITH JULIE WEYAND

### SNICKERDOODLES

3 cups sugar  
1 cup butter, softened  
1 cup shortening  
4 large eggs  
5 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
4 tsp. cream of tartar  
2 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 cup sugar  
2 tsp. cinnamon

Heat oven to 400 F. Mix sugar, butter, shortening and eggs in a large bowl. Stir in flour, cream of tartar, baking soda and salt. Shape into 1 1/4-inch balls. Mix 1/2 cup sugar and the cinnamon. Roll balls into cinnamon-sugar mixture. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 8 - 10 minutes or until set. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on wire rack. Makes 6 dozen.

*\* After they have been rolled in the cinnamon-sugar mixture, I place them on a cookie sheet and freeze them for about 30 minutes. Afterward, I put the cookie balls in Ziploc bags and keep them in the freezer. When I want a fresh batch of cookies, I thaw a dozen for 15 minutes and then bake as directed.*

### MOLASSES COOKIES

1 1/2 cups shortening  
2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup molasses  
2 eggs  
4 cups flour  
4 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. salt  
3 tsp. cinnamon

Cream shortening and sugar. Add molasses and eggs and beat well. Add flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. Mix well. Form into 1-inch balls. Roll in sugar. Place on ungreased cookie sheet 2 inches apart. Bake at 375 F for 8 minutes. *\* Can be frozen for later use as indicated in the Snickerdoodles recipe.*

### OLD-FASHIONED CINNAMON ROLLS

5 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, divided use  
1 pkg. dry yeast  
1 cup milk  
5/6 cup butter, divided use  
1/3 cup sugar  
1/2 tsp. salt  
3 eggs  
3/4 cup packed brown sugar  
1 Tbsp. cinnamon (or to taste)  
3/4 cup chopped pecans  
1 Tbsp. half-and-half  
Powdered sugar glaze

In large mixer bowl, combine 2 1/2 cups of flour and the yeast. In a small saucepan heat the milk, 1/3 cup butter, sugar and salt just until warm and butter is almost melted, stirring constantly. Add to flour mixture. Add eggs. Beat with an electric mixer on low speed for about a minute, scraping sides of bowl constantly. Beat on high speed for 3 minutes. Stir in 2 cups flour. Turn out dough onto floured surface. Knead in another 1/2 cup flour. Knead for about 5 minutes. Shape into ball. Place in a greased bowl and let rise for an hour in a warm place. For filling, combine 1/2 cup butter, 1/4 cup flour and cinnamon. Cut in butter till crumbly; set aside. Punch dough

Julie comes from a long line of chefs and bakers and enjoyed watching her mother and grandmothers in the kitchen. "I got an Easy-Bake Oven when I was 4," she said. "My mom wanted me to feel like I was contributing to the family, so she bought me real pans, mixes and utensils, too."

Julie has always enjoyed being in the kitchen, and still loves to bake for her husband and three children. "I enjoy baking the most, from cakes, to cookies and cheesecakes. It's not good if it's not full of calories," she jokingly said. As the administrator of Ovilla Christian School, Julie also enjoys baking treats for her staff, and her cheesecakes are among the top sellers at the annual school auction. **NOV**

down. Turn onto a floured surface. Roll dough into a 12" x 18" rectangle. Sprinkle filling over dough; add pecans. Roll up; pinch edges to seal. Cut slices about 1 1/2 inches. Arrange in a greased 13x9x2-inch baking pan. Cover dough with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2 - 24 hours. Uncover and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. (Or, for immediate baking, let rolls rise in a warm place 45 minutes.) Brush dough with half-and-half. Bake at 375 F for 25 - 30 minutes. Remove from oven. Drizzle with Powdered Sugar Glaze. Serve warm. Makes 1 dozen.

### POWDERED SUGAR GLAZE

1 1/4 cups powdered sugar  
1 tsp. corn syrup  
1/2 tsp. vanilla  
1 - 2 Tbsp. half-and-half

In a bowl, stir together all ingredients until well blended.

### GRANDMA'S APPLE PIE

7 - 8 Granny Smith apples  
1/4 cup flour  
3/4 cup sugar  
2 - 3 Tbsp. cinnamon  
1 recipe Never Fail Pie Crust  
1 stick butter

Peel, core and slice apples. Mix flour, sugar and cinnamon together. Place a layer of apple slices into crust. Sprinkle sugar mixture over slices enough to cover. Dot with thin slices of butter. Continue layering with apples, sugar mixture and butter. *(I like to make my apple pies piled high!)* Roll out



## Who's Cooking NOW

second piecrust using wax paper. Remove wax paper, turn over and place on top of pie. Pinch edges together and scallop crust. Bake about an hour at 350 F. Serve warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. *I like to sprinkle ground cinnamon over ice cream before serving.*

### NEVER FAIL PIE CRUST

1 1/2 cups shortening  
3 cups flour  
1 tsp. salt  
1 egg, well beaten  
5 Tbsp. cold water  
1 tsp. vinegar

Cut shortening into flour and salt with pastry blender. Mix egg, water and vinegar together. Add to flour mixture; mix well. Divide dough in half. Place between two pieces of wax paper and roll until about 1/4 inch thick. Remove top layer of wax paper. Turn over and place into pie plate. Crust should drape over sides of plate.

### PUMPKIN CHEESECAKE

30 crushed ginger snaps for crumb crust  
1/4 cup melted butter  
5 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened  
1 cup sugar  
5 eggs room temperature  
1 cup canned pumpkin  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 cup evaporated milk

Mix ginger snap crumbs and butter together. Press into a 9-inch springform pan. Set aside. Blend cream cheese with mixer until smooth. Gradually add sugar to cream cheese. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well. Remove about 1/2 cup cream cheese mixture. Set aside. Stir pumpkin, cinnamon and evaporated milk into cream cheese mixture. Pour into crust. Use reserve cream cheese mixture to spoon over pumpkin mixture. Use the tip of a knife to marbleize both mixtures. Place a bowl of hot water inside the oven. Bake cheesecake at 350 F for about 45 minutes. Loosen edges immediately. Turn oven off. Leave cheesecake inside oven with oven door slightly opened until oven is cool. Refrigerate cheesecake until ready to serve. *I like to top each serving with whipped cream and sprinkle with ground cinnamon.*



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## Finance **NOW**

# Life Insurance: It's For the People Who Live

— By Andrea Walton



Life insurance is a practical way to protect your family's financial hopes and dreams.

The death of a family member can be devastating to survivors, both emotionally and financially. Life insurance can provide cash to help with your family's immediate and

long-term needs.

- Immediate needs include funeral expenses, unpaid medical bills and taxes.
- Long-term needs include care for a disabled child or elderly parent's expenses and, in general, the chance for members of your family to continue to live the life to which they are accustomed.

Life insurance is not for the people who die, but for people who live. It's wise to explore options while you are still healthy; health problems can make life insurance expensive or unavailable. Three forms of life insurance are most common today:

**Term life insurance.** This is temporary life insurance for a specific time period (one, five, 10 or more years). It can provide short-term coverage on a limited budget. Term insurance, however, costs more to buy as you get older.

There are two common types of term life insurance:

- Level term: the amount of protection remains the same during the coverage period.
- Decreasing term: the amount of protection gradually declines during the coverage period.

**Whole life insurance.** Premiums are generally level with cash value growth throughout the life of the policy. Cash values can be borrowed (with interest charged) during the insured person's lifetime to help meet temporary or emergency needs.

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Coverage amounts and premium payments are flexible to help meet changing needs during an insured person's lifetime (subject to certain conditions).

When you buy life insurance, you buy a promise of protection against financial loss caused by death. The promise is only as good as the company that stands behind it. In today's marketplace, life insurance buyers should be concerned about the financial strength of the insurer, and its level of customer service. **XXXV**

*Andrea Walton is a State Farm Insurance agent based in Red Oak.*



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# Breast Cancer: Factoring Your Risk

In the U.S. alone, more than 250,000 people are diagnosed with breast cancer every year, but if detected at an early stage, the chances of survival are extremely high. According to Valerie Gorman, M.D., general surgeon on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie, every woman should be vigilant about her own breast health, especially if she is considered high risk.

"There are many different risk factors for breast cancer, most of which you cannot change, but being aware of your risk and not neglecting your annual breast screenings is essential for early detection and effective treatment," Dr. Gorman said.

According to the American Cancer Society, major risk factors for breast cancer include:

However, Dr. Gorman said there are also risk factors you can control, including:

- Having your first child before age 30.
- Reducing your use of birth control pills.
- Avoiding hormone replacement therapy.
- Breastfeeding for one-and-a-half to two years.
- Limiting alcohol to less than one drink a day.

"There's no way to prevent breast cancer 100 percent, but you can further reduce your risk by maintaining a healthy weight, exercising

and not smoking," Dr. Gorman added.

**"Annual breast screenings are essential for early detection and effective treatment."**

• **Age** — The risk of developing breast cancer increases as a woman ages.

• **Family History** — If you have two or more blood relatives who have been diagnosed with breast or ovarian cancer — especially before age 50 — you could be at a higher risk.

• **Genetics** — Most genetic breast cancer is the result of a mutation of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. Fortunately, there are genetic tests available that can detect this mutation.

• **Menstrual Cycle** — Women who began their menstrual period early in life (before age 12) or went through menopause late in life (after age 55) are at an increased risk.

**"Reduce your risk by maintaining a healthy weight, exercising and not smoking."**

For early detection, Dr. Gorman recommends following these guidelines:

• **Monthly breast self-exams** — Check your breasts every month after your menstrual cycle, or on a date you will remember, such as the first of every month.

• **Clinical breast exams** — Your doctor should examine your breasts every three years up to age 40 and yearly after that, or as recommended based on your risk factors.





## Health NOW

• **Mammograms** — A baseline mammogram is recommended between age 35 and 40 and yearly mammograms starting at age 40, or sooner if your risk is higher.

• **Breast ultrasound** — This test can help evaluate abnormalities that show up on mammograms.

• **Breast MRI** — This scan can screen women who are newly diagnosed with cancer and those with a 20 percent to 25 percent lifetime risk of the disease. **NOW**

*\* Physicians are members of the medical staff at one of Baylor Health Care System's subsidiary, community or affiliated medical centers and are neither employees nor agents of those medical centers, Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie or Baylor Health Care System.*

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# Great Outdoors **NOW**

## Past, Present and Future

— By Nancy Fenton

Our gardens and landscaping are always affected by our past, present and future. The severe drought of last year is still to be seen in our big trees. Maybe you have noticed a good many leaves dropping early around your yard. After a bit of research, I realized that those big guys still have not had time to rebuild their feeder root systems. The plentiful rains this year have stressed the underdeveloped feeder system, hence the leaf drop. Some of our oaks have been mistakenly thought to need more

water. Actually, what is happening is they cannot take up the available water because of the reduced feeder system, and they are drowning. If you have soggy soil under your trees, check your drainage and get some of that water away from the tree for a while! We would hate to lose those 150-year-old trees!

Our present is upon us, and now is the time to make those last minute trimming decisions on your shrubs. Freezes will be upon us in November and the growth stimulated by trimming needs at least 6 to 8 weeks to harden off. If you are through trimming, think about planting some bulbs like tulips, daffodils or crocuses. They can go in the ground now to come up early in the spring. You can even plant them under the trees that lose their



leaves, knowing the bulbs will get the sun they need before the trees leaf out!

Our future is a yard that is as pretty as you are willing to make it! A balanced fertilizer can go on your irises and daylilies after Halloween and up to 4 inches of mulch can be added at any time on all those shrubs and flowerbeds. Lawn fertilizer can go on after the first freeze in November to be ready for that spring growth spurt. Planning for new beds is always a way to freshen and spruce up your landscape.

Know that Mother Nature is very flexible and forgiving. So, look at the past and present and get going for the future! **NOW**

*Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.*

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# October 2007

## Community Calendar

### First and Third Tuesdays

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

### 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 Wednesday and Thursday

Red Oak Citizens Socials. Call Joanna Johnson (972) 576-2777.

### Every Thursday

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

### Second Thursday

Cancer dialogue support group, sponsored by American Cancer Society, 7 p.m., First United Methodist Church of Red Oak, 600 West Red Oak Road.

### October 1 - November 3

Reindeer Manor Haunted House and Trail Tours start at 7 p.m., 410 Houston School Road, Red Oak. www.reindeermanor.com.

### October 6

Ace Hardware Blood Drive 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., 138 East Ovilla Rd. Free T-shirt with donation (972) 515-8500.

### October 9 and 12

Moms on Mission (Christian mom's group). Coffee Club begins at 8:30 p.m. on the 9th and they will visit the pumpkin patch on

the 12th. Contact Melinda Hines at (972) 937-5083 for information.

### October 10

Ellis County Early Childhood PTA "Get Acquainted Mixer," 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Childcare available during meeting. Contact Courtney Atwood for information at (972) 875-2668 or eceptamembersip@hotmail.com.

### October 12 - 13

Ellis County Art Association's "Off the Wall" Benefit Art Sale and Garage Sale, 7:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at the Ellis County Fine Arts Museum, 501 West Main, Waxahachie.

### October 13

5th Annual Bow Wow Howl-O-Ween Hustle supporting the SPCA of Ellis County, 8 a.m. - noon at Getzendaner Park, Waxahachie. Race registration: 8 - 9 a.m. Races: 9 a.m. Contests and costume judging following the races. Call (972) 935-0756 or e-mail dana@savetheboxers.com.

### October 16

Red Oak Mayoral Election. Early voting October 1 - October 12, 200 Lakeview Parkway, Red Oak Municipal Building.

### October 20

Chamber Gala and Annual Auction, 6 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Parkway. Dress: casual to cocktail. Event is \$50 per person and includes auctions, hors d'oeuvres, catered dinner and cocktails. Contact the Red Oak Chamber at (972) 617-0906.

Car show at the Presbyterian Children's Home and Services in

Waxahachie, 1 - 5 p.m., Brookside Road and I-35. \$15 entry fee. Free burgers and hot dogs; please bring a side dish. Proceeds go to the children's home. Contact Joe at (214) 587-1643 or www.midlothianclassicwheels.com.

### October 27

12th Annual Texas Country Reporter Festival, 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. in historic downtown Waxahachie. Join Bob Phillips and enjoy a free concert by the Bellamy Brothers.

### October 27 and 28

"Age of Elegance" Elegant and Depression Glass Show and Sale presented by Fostoria Glass Society of North Texas at the Waxahachie Civic Center. For information, contact (817) 545-5856.

### October 26 - 28

*The Music Man*, by Waxahachie Community Theatre at Getzendaner Park, Waxahachie. October 26 and 27, 7:30 p.m. October 28, 2:30 p.m. Tickets at the door. Call PJ Searsy at (972) 723-6976.

### October 31

City of Red Oak Halloween Carnival, 6 - 8 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Building. (972) 617-3638.

To have your events posted on the community calendar, e-mail us at: [dclaussen.nowmag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dclaussen.nowmag@sbcglobal.net).

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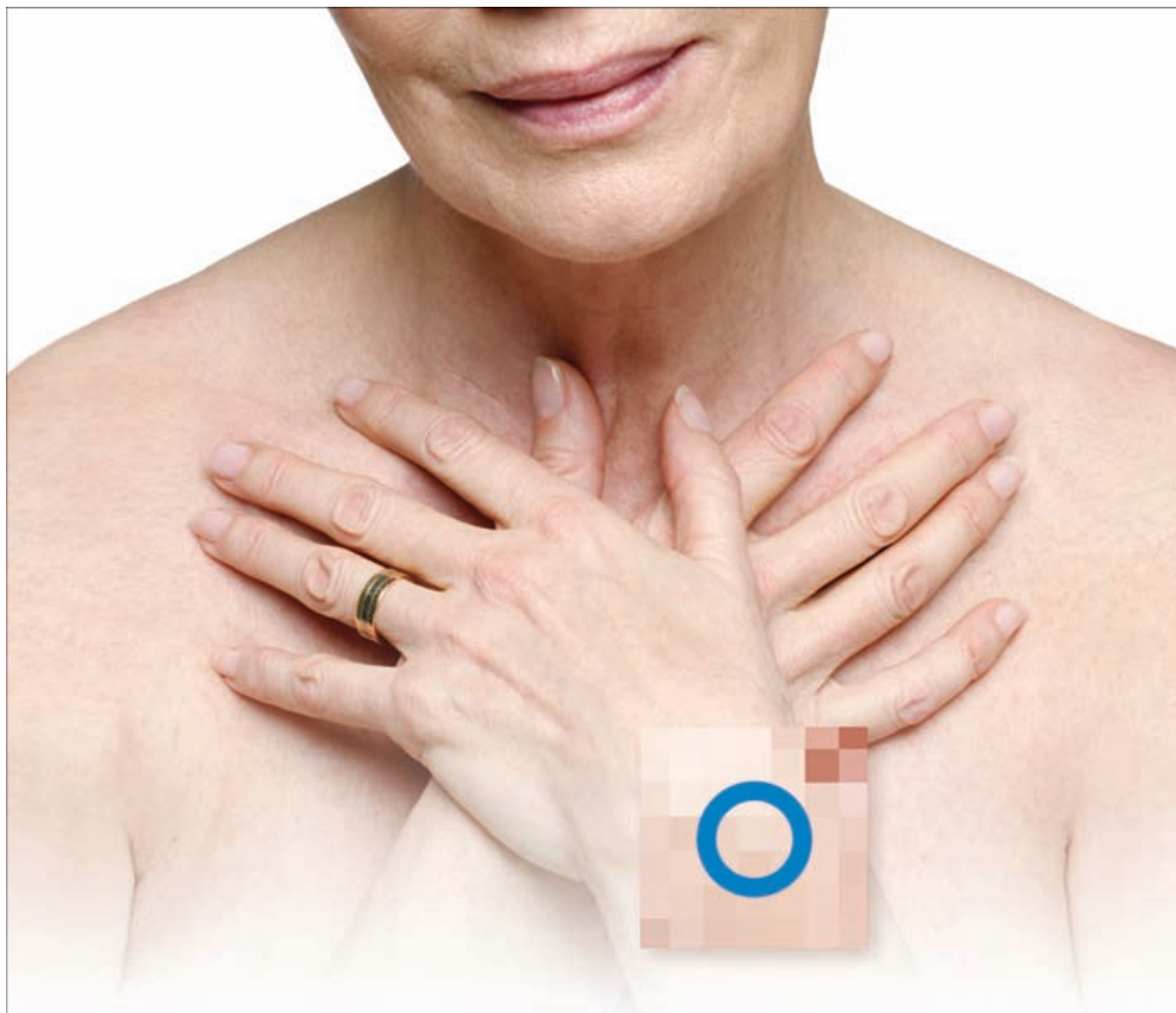
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