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January 2008

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Regina Salik

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BEGINNER'S SEWING

Janet Allen

Room 307

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Fred Smith

Room 574

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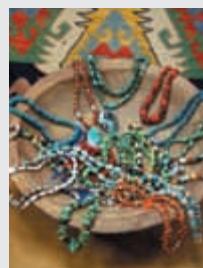
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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscription and editorial correspondence should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates and other information, call (972) 978-5151 or e-mail us at: rhensley@nowmagazines.com.



Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

January is definitely the time when one can reflect on old lessons, and use those past experiences to begin anew. Not often can we say that we are able to have second chances, especially in life. Having a fresh start is what makes this month such an exciting one.

Red OakNOW welcomes 2008 by offering a sampling of new things to try this year. Whether it is getting a makeover at Red Oak High School's cosmetology department, getting glamorous with local resident Michele Goodwin or getting toned and trim with Jason English at MJ Fitness, this issue is full of exciting opportunities to start the new year well, anew! If you prefer to "cook in" the New Year right, we suggest spending some time with Mrs. Marie Carter, who shares her "made with love" dishes that are sure to warm your heart and soul.

Bring in the New Year!

Your neighbor,

Diana Merrill Claussen

Red OakNOW Editor

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BEFORE AND AFTER PICTURES OF ACTUAL PATIENTS



Harnessing Talent

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Red Oak resident, Arnie Epstein, is a bit of a guru when it comes to all things leather. He is known as a talented and caring craftsman by his clients. Those whose lives have benefited from his skills revere Arnie's talents as priceless and life-changing gifts.

He has enjoyed making, building, designing and working with this material to create a vast array of leather products since 1964. From creating and repairing custom belts, wallets, binders, western accessories, gear and saddles, to producing custom purses and cell phone holders, this modern day "Cooper" (someone who worked with leather goods during medieval times) has made just about any type of product or accessory imaginable.

In 2003, Arnie added another line of products to his repertoire. He believes by following this calling, he is able to use his leather-crafting skills to make life-changing impacts on those most in need. "In 2003, a friend of ours invited us to an event where we met a board member with the Assistance Dogs of Texas organization,"

Arnie said. "During the event, I was asked if I could come up with a more comfortable dog harness for service dogs."

From that day on, Arnie has been



greatly impacting the dog harness industry by creating lightweight, highly padded and completely orthopedic and ergonomic harnesses for all of his two and four-legged patrons. His customers love him for his work because he puts time and thought into his creations, caring how they will affect both the animal and human.

During the creation of each harness, he uses pieces like orthopedic fasteners and buckles.

These are not only better for the dog, but also effortless for handlers who often have a hard time using their hands. Throughout the process, Arnie keeps a sharp focus on

the product's design.

"I developed a sizing chart that instructs the client on how to measure the dog," Arnie said. Correct measurements for both the harness and handle allow the device to perfectly fit both the animal's body and the owner's hand grip. This personalized fit also helps to protect the dog's sensitive back from slight pull pressure. "I design each harness to eliminate pressure off of the dog's backbone, therefore, allowing the dog to work more freely and comfortably," Arnie explained. "You don't want the pressure to be on the back because there are nerves in that area."

"When I first started making them I attended an international conference in Phoenix and brought some of my



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harnesses to show people," Arnie recalled, sharing how he has grown to learn more about his clients' needs. "From that, those people gave me more ideas on how to improve my harness." Priceless in the evolution of the harnesses has been the input from within the



industry and from those who use them.

"I listen to my customers and they have really helped me to improve," he declared. "The harness has mainly been developed by those with the need who have taken the time to work with me. I don't take credit for it, and I thank God many have communicated their needs to me. So far, the [harness has] undergone 10 evolutions, and it just gets better every time I make it."

Arnie himself has evolved from this experience. "Lately, I have time to take classes and go to schools to get better at working with leather," he shared. "Since I am always revolutionizing the harnesses, I have been able to add slight touches to the product that the naked eye can't always see." Some of those "touches" have to do with the use of soft leathers and real sheep skin padding located throughout many of the underside areas of the harnesses.

When creating each harness, Arnie first listens to a customer's needs and learns the purpose for the dog harness. He then goes over the dog and handle grip measurement sizing charts before beginning the process of creating the client's perfectly fitted harness. "First I make a cardboard pattern from their sizing sheet," Arnie explained. "Then I cut the leather pieces from that pattern." The harness itself consists of three pieces. The girth goes under the dog's legs and connects to the second piece, which covers its chest area. Both of

these pieces are made from soft leather and are very highly padded. Lastly, there is the saddle piece which goes over the top of the animal. The underside of the saddle is lined with three-fourths-inch saddle shearling.

"I then sew all of the pieces and add all of the hardware," Arnie said. While the handles are custom-sized to the owner, the dog and the dog's purpose are vital in helping determine the handle's height. "Sometimes the harnesses are used for guide dogs for the blind or to assist in pulling wheelchairs," he continued. "Other times they help to provide balance or support for those with other needs. It is also important to determine the amount of time the user will be holding onto the harness."

The handles are made from lightweight, heavy-duty one-fourth-inch aircraft aluminum. Once the outfit is complete, Arnie sends the prototype to his client for testing. During this time, the client is instructed to give Arnie feedback regarding any additional needs or adjustments. "I guarantee the fit and comfort of every harness," he stated. He insists the client send back the harness if any changes need to be made. It is this policy of care and service Arnie has operated under since the days when he worked at his father's gas station. "When I worked at that gas station you gave personal service," Arnie shared. "Since I like to help people, that's always been my way of thinking."

From providing the free prototypes to donating his time and products to nonprofits, Arnie's love of helping people and his talents fit together perfectly. "I have put a lot of research into my harnesses, and try to keep the price fair," he said. "I usually don't get the money back out of the time and details I put into each harness, but it's something that I do because I enjoy doing it. I'm not looking to get rich from this because it's really just a labor of love for me. Both my wife, Norma, and I really believe in serving the community and this is my way of giving back." ❖❖❖

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At
Home
With
Lem
and
Diana
Wilson

Welcoming Their Future

In a two-year span of time, Lem and Diana Wilson have been able to create a small slice of heaven in their Ryland-built, five-bedroom, three-and-one-half-bath home located in Red Oak. The move from Los Angeles, California, may have been a little bittersweet for the couple and their two girls, Jazlyn and Justine, 10 and 4 respectively, but they are learning to adjust. "I accepted a transfer with Stevens Global Logistics, an air flight forward company," Lem said, explaining that the business is similar to UPS and Federal Express, only they deliver much larger packages. "Diana and I wanted a better life for our kids, so we came to Texas."

Diana left the majority of her family back in L.A., while oddly enough, Lem feels as if he has returned to his roots. "My mom was from Texarkana, Texas," Lem explained. "When I used to come visit, I always said I'd never live here. I always thought it was way too hot in Texas." As the old adage goes, never say never.

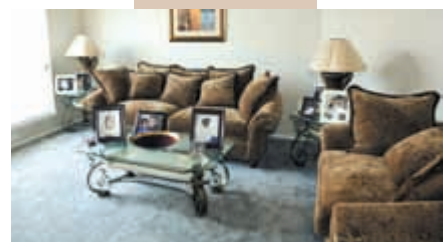
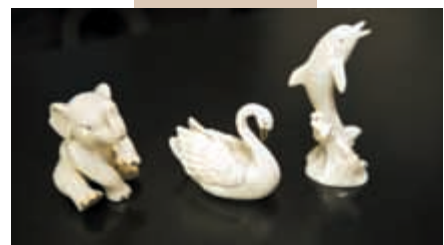
Lem spent his first three months in Texas living in a hotel in the Las Colinas area, while the two-story, contemporary

casual style home was being built. His "girls" got here just in time to spend the first night in their new home on December 19, 2005. "We needed a change," Diana admitted, "and he has always liked a challenge." The first year proved to be an adjustment period for Diana — a 12-month hiatus from the workplace. "It gave me time to get settled into the house while also getting used to driving around the neighborhood and learning the city," she said. Once this transition was mastered, she began looking for employment, soon landing her current job as a corrections officer with the Dallas County Sheriff's Department. "This is the same type of work I did for 11 years back in California," she noted, adding that the need for corrections officers in Texas is great. "Finding this job really wasn't too difficult."

When planning, designing and building the home that boasts of a unique exterior in a mix of white stone and bricks which appear to have been whitewashed, it seems as if Lem and Diana thought of everything. They knew exactly what they wanted, so



— By Sandra McIntosh





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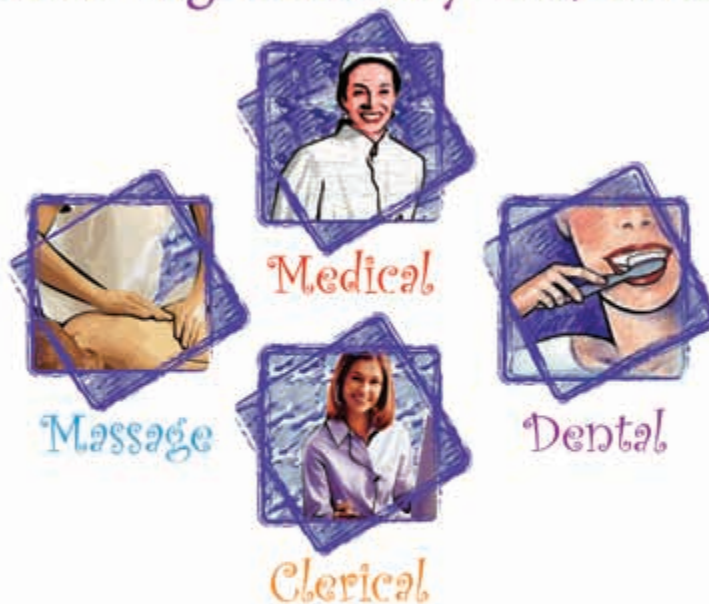
Lem has his upstairs game room getaway. "I designed it to mimic a sports bar," he said, referring to the oversized, open area that houses an air hockey and pool table, a dart board and slot machines for Jazlyn and Justine. "I put my heart into this room. I wanted a place where I could come to entertain friends and watch sports, while remaining at home with my family." Needless to say, Lem successfully got all this and so much more. "He has a total of five TVs," Diana added, rolling her eyes for emphasis as she continued to describe her husband's favorite indoor space. "He can play spades or bid wiz, a game similar to spades, at the card table. He never has to leave home and that's exactly what he wanted." The couple's love for jazz music is represented through several figurines displayed in the game room, as are three very special Lennox figurines. "My mother gave them to me six

months before her passing," Diana said with a tearful voice. "They have a lot of sentimental value."

Diana has her relaxation room on the lower level, with a breathtaking view of the backyard and beyond. The only piece of artwork adorning the walls is a colorful print of three African American women dancing. "It's her room," Lem said, "and I'm not allowed in it." Diana spends her free time in this room relaxing, reading books that "grab her interest" and working on jigsaw puzzles. "I look for specific scenes when I go to buy a puzzle," Diana shared. "I like the black heritage puzzles and anything that challenges my mind." When asked if Lem ever works puzzles with her, she just laughed. "No, he doesn't help," she said. "He needs instant gratification!"

Lem's second favorite place to be is outdoors. He has worked double time to provide the girls with a safe, fenced area out back for imaginary playtime and hours of fun. At first glance, it

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resembles a public park. "That's what I was going for," he declared. "We had to remove the overgrowth in between all the trees. We wanted it to look untouched." The area farthest from the house is home to a swing set, a picnic table and an open air cabana.

Even though it is the dead of winter, the Wilsons are looking forward to the spring and summer months with great anticipation. Due to the large amount of rain the area experienced last summer, the family's in-ground pool was not complete until the end of the season. The fountain and waterfall, both located within the hot tub area, add a soothing sound drawing some of nature's finest creatures to the yard, as well.

Lem really enjoys the time he spends "digging in the dirt." He has what many would call a "green thumb," as evidenced by the pristine landscaping that envelopes the home's foundation. The live houseplants found throughout the home confirm his natural talent even further. "I love working in the yard,"



he added. "It's an all-day event on Saturday that can easily overflow into Sunday. I never thought I'd love sitting behind the wheel of my riding lawn mower." It appears that Lem is learning the importance of never saying never.

With a new year, resolutions come that are generally broken within the first month. Lem and Diana, however, have several resolutions they plan on keeping. Diana is going to practice patience. "I'd also like to be more responsive and more involved with the children," she shared. Lem's resolutions include more work in the yard on the



projects he has yet to complete such as a retaining wall in the backyard and finishing touches on the front flowerbeds. "My ultimate resolution," he revealed, "is to continue focusing on owning my own business."

While focusing on the coming year, you can be sure that as concerned parents, the passion Lem and Diana have for providing a better life for their children will not wane. "Coming to Texas has been a huge adjustment for all of us," Lem said, as Diana nodded her head in agreement. "We plan on being here as long as we can." **NOW**

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Ring in the Bling!

— By Diana Merrill Claussen



For New Year's, many look forward to starting their year a little differently than the ones before. For 2007, local resident Michele Goodwin decided to go for a new look by cutting off her long brown hair, donating it to the Locks of Love organization and getting her tresses fashioned into a shorter and lighter style. She not only decided to change her own look, but decided she would also help others in creating their new look, one accessory at a time.

Specializing in creating handcrafted jewelry, Michele said her original works of art are each made with semiprecious stones such as turquoise, fresh water pearls, amethyst, onyx and spiny oyster shell. Her love of wearing turquoise and silver was the catalyst sparking her interest in learning the craft of jewelry making.

"I have always worn this kind of jewelry," Michele said. "It all started when I bought a bracelet at the stock show in Fort Worth and had to take it to the Bead Barn in Waxahachie to get [it] fixed." The ladies at the store showed her how easy it was to repair the bracelet, and she then became inspired to start creating her own pieces.

"I initially started making a few pieces for myself, but then people started seeing my jewelry and liking it," she said. "So, I thought I would do it as a business." Michele has been making her wearable art for about two years now, and said she

loves creating exactly what she wants. Creating the jewelry is something she truly enjoys.

"This is also a hobby for me, so it's very therapeutic," Michele said, sharing how she also likes creating special pieces to give as gifts. "I make jewelry for my friends' birthdays," she added with a smile.

Michele's jewelry ranges from a vast array of turquoise

colors and corals to ornaments of different shapes and sizes she strings together to create her wonderful works. These include matching necklace and earring sets. "All of my pieces are 100 percent sterling silver and I use only genuine stones," she commented. Besides creating necklaces, ankle and wrist bracelets and



earrings, Michele loves to create gypsy and vintage cowgirl jewelry. "The gypsy jewelry and cowgirl pendants are very popular; I wear mine with everything," she said.

Michele said the lengths of her gypsy necklaces range between 18 and 24 inches long. They are made up of many un-matching pieces that look fabulous when strung together. Michele intermingles all types of stones, sizes, shapes, cuts and colors to create fun ensembles and sets. "When I first start on a piece, I'll measure out how long to make the necklace. I want to make sure it is all uniform," she said. "I usually make

ARTS NOW

my necklaces the average 18 inches long, but I also make custom sizes. Sometimes, though, I'll put together a necklace I won't like, tear it apart and make it all over again."

From lime green to red, various turquoises to bright pink or white corals, Michele's jewelry is great for any occasion. "I love turquoise. There is such a variety and so many different colors to choose from. It not only goes great with everything, but it especially goes with pearls and even T-shirts," she said.

With beautiful treasures such as these, it is not always easy to share them with others. "It's hard for me to make my jewelry and not keep them all," Michele admitted. When she gives away her handcrafted and wearable art, she feels as if she is giving a way a piece of herself. Michele's love for her work is apparent; her jewelry is her art. She not only uses her talent to craft the perfect strands, she also adds in her heart and her time.

On average, each piece takes approximately 30 minutes to create, and Michele feels she could not make her jewelry without the support of her friends and family. "My husband, Greg, is very supportive," she smiled. Greg accompanies her to jewelry and craft shows and has been known to clean the house while she is creating masterpieces in her shop. "My mom and Greg's mom both give me subtle hints for gifts, which is great because I know they'll like the jewelry I make and give them," she laughed.

Regardless of how many baubles are in one's jewelry box, Michele encouraged those who would like to start their New Year with a new look to delve into accessorizing! "If you've never worn turquoise before, go for something simple and then layer it," she suggested. "Layered pieces don't always have to be all one color, so mix it up!" This is perfect advice for those who want to start their New Year in style. **ARTS NOW**



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Sports
NOW

For the Love of the Game

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

This season, Red Oak High School's varsity football squad experienced a renewed sense of pride. This not only revitalized the entire school and athletics department, but could be felt throughout the town. Many have wondered what re-energized the team, helping them to reach major play-off accomplishments for the first time since 1984.

According to star quarterback Kevin Pruett, the change was encouraged by the coaches and was then embraced by the players. "This season our motto was to 'leave a trail' because we wanted to show the younger kids there is winning on a Red Oak football team," he declared. Throughout the season, Kevin and his team have kept positive attitudes and level heads. During Kevin's final season, the coaches encouraged the team and led them into a new era.

"In the past, I don't think anyone on the team believed we could win," Kevin said. "After the first game of the season, we all started working together and becoming successful together as a team." This showed the players the importance of first believing and then achieving. "You could tell that once we believed and then did what we were supposed to, we became more confident. Then, when we started winning, the town really started believing in us," Kevin added.

Nothing felt better to Kevin and his teammates than to experience this wave of community support. "The town and fans have really been behind us this year," he shared. "It is really nice to see how much support they have shown." The love and support shown by his friends and family have also helped Kevin to excel on the field and in life. Kevin's family believes his positive outlook is what will propel him



"I am really proud of what we have achieved."

into a very bright and successful future.

"Kevin has been playing since he was 4 years old," his mom, Belinda, said. "He is our youngest, and his two older brothers, who went to Red Oak High School, are who encouraged him to go into football. We are all very proud of everything Kevin does, and we try to support him in every way we can."

Kevin is thankful for his family's support. "My family really helped out with the team," he noted. "They encouraged us, and it was fun because my brothers really get into it when they

come to my games." Kevin's parents enjoyed sharing this year's recent success and team spirit. "We enjoyed getting up at the games, running around and hollering with them [the players]. We would always get really excited," Belinda grinned.

Kevin's brother, Don, is also very proud of him. The brothers sometimes show their support in the form of playful teasing. "My brother,



Don, always says that his high school team was better than ours," Kevin laughed. Kevin is humble about the team's success and believes it was truly a combined effort. "I am really proud of what we have achieved," he reflected.

Kevin has achieved success off the field as well. An A/B

Sports NOW

student who wants to continue to play football in college, he believes in using his talents to help others follow their dreams. "Kevin has always liked school," Belinda shared. "It's good to keep kids in sports, because it keeps them active and keeps the parents involved. It's also a good way to show the kids you believe in them."

Kevin wants to continue to follow his football dreams after high school. "I plan on going to college," he shared. "I recently attended a few camps, but I want to go to Tarleton State in Stephenville." His ultimate dream is to play professionally. "It would be a long road, but it is what I want to do," he admitted.

Until then, Kevin will keep up his grades, continue to be involved in the sport and continue to help others. "Every Friday during the season, the team would visit local schools and read to the kids," Kevin said. "I like seeing the excitement the kids have when they see us. It's a really good experience." He also enjoys getting out and helping the local youth achieve their own football dreams. "I have a friend at the junior high who was a quarterback for their squad. I like to throw the ball with him and give him tips."

For the past two summers, Kevin lent a hand at the local summer football camps, and he plans to do the same this summer as well. "I go to the peewee and junior high games that are held at the high school during the summer," he said. "I go up there to help coach them."

Through his coaching, Kevin shares many of his experiences and the lessons he has learned from his years in the sport. "I encourage the kids to go for their dreams," he revealed. "I also tell them there will always be people behind them who will show their support every step of the way." It is that love and support of the city which has greatly resonated throughout Red Oak's most successful varsity football team. **NOW**

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Business NOW

Keeping His Resolution

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Located on Red Oak Road is the “hardest core training facility in Ellis County,” known as MJ Fitness. When you ask the facility’s owner, Jason English, how he came up with the gym’s “hardcore” statement, you will find that it has everything to do with the fundamental ideals of true commitment and dedication.

Currently in their 13th year of operation, MJ Fitness is the result of Jason’s core beliefs and love of body building. This 20-year body building veteran and former U.S. Army Airborne Ranger has learned the importance of keeping fit, being healthy and sharing what he has learned with others. He shared why he enjoys this sport and physical fitness in general. “I have participated in every type of athletics and like body building the best,” he said.



There is a tremendous amount of dedication required for body building, but Jason often tells his customers they do not have to be “body builders” when they decide to start working out. Instead, he encourages them to begin creating a fitness program which works

best for them based on their own personal needs, capabilities and lifestyles.

“The dedication needed sometimes scares people into not trying,” Jason admitted. “But everyone who works out is a body builder because they are essentially building their bodies. You

don’t necessarily have to compete to be fit, but being in shape should be a necessary aspect in prolonging your life. Plus, everything works better from the

inside out when you are physically active.”

Given his history in body building, training and competition, Jason is a certified master fitness trainer through the International Sports Science Association. He has also studied kinesiology and certain aspects of physical fitness and rehabilitation — all of which aid him in assisting his clients and helping them to reach their goals.

“Many clients have an emphasis on sports training,” Jason shared. “Although I am a competitive body builder, 90 percent of my clientele are not, and they are simply trying to tone up, live longer and look good. From men and women to teens and the elderly, we train and have members of all ages. My oldest client is 72, and he is in fantastic shape.” Jason is also training a 14-year-old national level female hockey player.

MJ Fitness not only provides personal training services, but also features many membership options. From daily passes to two year contracts, members have access to the gym seven days a week,



Business NOW



“They are simply trying to tone up, live longer and look good.”

and are also able to take advantage of Jason's late night hours Monday through Friday until 10 p.m. This is especially helpful for those who have decided to get a “jumpstart” on meeting their New Year's resolution of getting fit. To further assist in meeting these goals, Jason offers his clients helpful insights and healthy living tips.

“In the 20 years I have been in this industry, I've experienced every diet known to man,” he acknowledged. “What has worked best for me and my clientele in the form of losing weight is to use portion control. Eat what you want, as healthy as you can and eat smaller quantities.” He also suggests increasing water intake to help flush out impurities and eating smaller, more frequent meals to increase the body's metabolism.

For more insights, tips, training and questions, call MJ Fitness at (972) 617-2106. They are conveniently located at 421 Hwy. 342 in Red Oak. **NOW**

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Education **NOW**

Pamper **YOURSELF**

— By Ashley Carlino

One of the things that makes youth so magical is the endless array of possibilities that lay ahead. From travel to friends and countless career opportunities, the prospects are exhilarating. The only limitations are those that are hidden within the imagination.

Being a student at Red Oak High School opens many doors for exploration. One option of study can be found in the cosmetology department. Now entering its fourth year, the program has grown and challenged itself in many new ways. Instructor Susan Gatling has directed the program since its inception. "This class is a stepping stone for students to advance in life," she said. "Students can become self-supporting; go to college." Susan encourages her students to pursue a business degree in addition to the cosmetology license. "That way, if they ever want to run a salon, they will know how to do it," she added.

Susan developed an interest in cosmetology as a teenager. "I started by cutting the basketball players' hair in the locker room before the game," she remembered. It was not long thereafter that she enrolled in cosmetology school. In September 1978, Susan began her ever-changing and evolving career in



Students enrolled in Red Oak High School's cosmetology program receive training in the full range of salon duties.

cosmetology. As a young woman, she was actually quite adventurous. "I would work with platform artists," she explained. "I flew anywhere for the experience." She has worked in many different arenas, but came to Red Oak three years ago after leaving a school in McKinney, Texas.

Cosmetology is the study of hair, skin and nails. The licensing program offered by the school consists of education in all three realms. Students must clock a total of 1,500 hours for the basic Texas cosmetology program. Five hundred of these hours are presented as a gift upon high school graduation. These hours are strategically itemized to ensure that each student experiences the full range of duties and responsibilities that best emulate a true salon experience. For example, a certain number of hours are required for cuts, color, basic salon maintenance and much more.

"Another thing that people don't realize is that there is more to it than just beauty," Susan continued. "They study anatomy, as well. A lot of math

is involved [in this industry]." Currently, there is discussion among staff about creating a partnership with one of the chemistry classes. "We would like them to use natural products to make a facial mask or some type of cosmetic," she added. There may even be an original perfume concocted in the near future with the help of the science teachers.

"Every year, we add something different," Susan explained. The staff evaluates where the students are developmentally, then they collaborate to generate something new that peaks their interest. The program is attractive enough to have drawn 44 students this year. Only 42 were accepted, due to available class size. There are currently 18 juniors and 24 seniors enrolled. These students actually service clients. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, they open at 7 a.m. to serve customers. Even the principal of the school gets a haircut here from time to time.

Some students may wonder what the starting pay is for a cosmetologist in the state of Texas. According to Susan,

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Education **NOW**

licensed cosmetologists can expect to earn anywhere from \$16,000 to \$21,000 during their first year in a salon. She encourages them, however, to always continue their education. As styles are constantly changing, it is vital to keep abreast of the newest color and technique. Until they graduate from the program, Susan makes sure her students have a good time. "It's fun. When they arrive in the morning, they learn theory, and then have skill time for three hours," she said. "For the juniors, it's all new; for the seniors, it's a lot of review with salon work." They also keep skill sheets. Jobs change weekly, so each student gets to experience all the different facets of the business.

Beauty tips are commonplace in the cosmetology department. Susan was more than happy to share several of her favorites. "After all the parties and events, it's your turn to be January's star of the month," she said. "I suggest you keep the glamour going by matching red/berry lips with short red nails. Keep the eyes on a neutral tone. Add some big luscious curls to your hair and opaque hose with peep toe shoes and you will be ready for a night on the town. There is something about red that makes heads turn, and they tend to put a mysterious sparkle in your eyes, because it's all about you!"

Susan said hair extensions are also fast ways to add some pizzazz to your New Year "do." "From pinks to blondes, and back to brunette, you can add two or 20 for you personal star look," Susan added. "Remember to keep your skin moist and your inner beauty pampered. Before you know it, that special Valentine will be coming your way." When looking for convenience and the most up-to-date styles and techniques, remember the student staff members at the ROHS cosmetology department. The students at the Red Salon are waiting to help you with all your pampering needs. **NOW**

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Around Town NOW



Anita White and her granddaughter, Sagan, top left, enjoyed a day of shopping in Ovilla. A young girl, top center, had fun petting the animals at a local petting zoo. Eastridge Elementary Good News Club, top right, sang during the ROISD Education Foundation Festival of Trees. Ovilla residents, middle left, gathered to decorate the Ovilla Park Christmas tree. Molly DeWees, middle center, smiles for the camera. A mother and child, directly above, waited patiently for the parade to begin. Nicole Hoggatt, bottom left, had a wonderful time helping her students raise funds. The local Future Farmers of America, bottom right, held a very successful bake sale.

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Look Who's Cooking

— By Melinda Hines

IN THE KITCHEN WITH MARIE CARTER

Marie Carter's dishes are as sweet as her disposition. Marie will be 73 this month, and she began cooking with her grandmother when she was just 7. "My grandmother taught me how to make corn bread, and I used to love to watch her make tea cakes," she said. Marie has taught her granddaughter to cook as well. "She started cooking when she was 2. She would stand in the chair next to me and help. Now she cooks better dishes than I do," Marie said.

Marie cooks daily — everything from greens and vegetables to fried chicken and dumplings. She especially enjoys cooking sweets for Olson, her husband of 53 years. "My husband loves cakes and pies, so I try to make a dessert every day," she said. **NOW**

BLACK-EYED PEAS

1 large smoked ham hock (boil until tender in 3 cups water)
1 16-oz. pkg. frozen peas
1 - 2 tsp. salt
1 onion, chopped
1 tsp. sugar

Combine all ingredients and boil on stove until tender.

PINTO BEANS

1 cup dried pinto beans
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1/2 cup bell pepper, chopped

1/2 celery, chopped
1 clove garlic
1 pkg. Hillshire Farms smoked sausages (chopped in small pieces)
1/2 tsp. Lowry's seasoning salt

Combine all ingredients in a pot. Add enough water to cover ingredients and place a lid on the pot. Cook slowly on low temperature on stove until juice thickens and beans are tender (2 hours or more).

PINEAPPLE CUSTARD

1/2 stick butter, softened
1 cup sugar

1 Tbsp. flour
3 eggs
1 12-oz. can Carnation sweetened milk
1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple

Cream butter, sugar and flour. Add eggs and combine well. Add milk and pineapple and mix well. Pour into an uncooked piecrust and bake at 350 F for about 45 minutes to 1 hour, until done.

CABBAGE SLAW

1 head white cabbage, grated
3 whole carrots, grated
1/2 cup raisins
1 - 2 apples, peeled and diced



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Who's Cooking **NOW**

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QUICK BUTTERMILK POUND CAKE

3 sticks butter, room temperature
3 cups sugar
3 cups flour
5 eggs
1 cup buttermilk, room temperature
2 tsp. lemon flavoring
1 tsp. vanilla flavoring

Cream butter and sugar. Add flour slowly; add eggs, one at a time. Add buttermilk slowly to mixture and then the flavorings, mix until same consistency as ice cream. Pour into Bundt pan and bake at 350 F for 1 hour.

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Finance
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Just a Few *More* Reasons to Save

— By Andrea Walton

Like most people, I have resolved to save more money this year in order to support a comfortable retirement. And even though my retirement seems well into the future, there is some instant gratification.

By opening an Individual Retirement Arrangement (IRA) before April 15, I may be able to take advantage of some potential tax benefits on my 2007 return.

For the 2007 tax year, individuals can make annual contributions to a traditional or Roth IRA of up to \$4,000 or 100 percent of earned income, whichever is less. Married couples filing jointly can contribute up to \$8,000 (\$4,000 per IRA) provided either spouse has earned income of at least that amount. As an added benefit, individuals age 50 or older are eligible to take advantage of a “catch-up” provision and contribute an additional \$1,000 to an IRA. Over the next several years, the maximum annual contribution amount will increase. You can set up an IRA with a minimal initial contribution.

By continuing to add to that on a monthly basis or when your finances allow, the account has the potential to grow on a tax-deferred basis and become a great resource to help save for the future.

By taking full advantage of the increased annual contribution limits each year, your account value could grow even more and help provide the comfortable retirement you desire.

Your financial advisor can help you assess your financial situation and determine which type of IRA and/or funding vehicle may best meet your needs, based on factors such as your time horizon, risk tolerance and other financial goals.

An IRA can become a crucial part of your personal retirement savings program. The sooner you begin, the more time you have to take advantage of the benefits an IRA provides. The time to establish an IRA has never been better. **NOW**

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

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Come learn about teaching tools like the "Money Savvy Pig" savings bank and coloring and activity book designed to help children learn how to set goals and make wise money choices.

For free admission, call or visit today. Hurry — seating is limited.



Renée Chase
Financial Advisor

307 E Ovilla Road, Ste 200
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Walking Into the New Year

— By Sandra McIntosh

As defined in the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, a resolution is a noun that simply means a firm decision. With a new year fully underway, many individuals will be making resolutions that pertain to more sound financial planning, putting family first or getting their lives organized from the home to the office. Many others will be deciding the most efficient way in which to shed those unwanted pounds they put on during the holidays. One sure way to begin the journey to a healthier, happier and thinner you is by walking.

There are several levels of walking that range from a fast, regimented schedule to just being conscious of your surroundings. "How much does it help to take the stairs, rather than ride the escalator or elevator?" asked Wendy Bumgardner, author of "Your Guide to Walking." Explaining further, Wendy said a 140-pound person will burn about four more calories per minute by taking the

stairs compared to standing or riding. Over the course of one year, the person may only lose half a pound, but climbing stairs will have challenged more muscles than standing still or walking on a level surface.¹

Are you one of those night owls who counts sheep instead of getting a restful night's sleep? Well, guess what? Walking can turn a restless night into a night filled with restful, rejuvenating sleep. Millions of Americans, as stated on the iVillage Total Health Web site, suffer from poor sleep. Being active throughout the day is a key way to bring about a sleep that makes walking worth the extra effort.² The rewards which come from a good night's sleep include: clearer thoughts, more energy, a positive mindset, healthy weight maintenance, muscle strength, stress relief, the ability to

make better decisions and a much stronger immune system.³

Being active during the day helps relieve stress and tension, reducing the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

By walking, you not only help relieve insomnia, but you improve your overall well-being. Walking helps you sleep, so you do not feel as sluggish with exercise being the least of your concerns. With that in mind, why not break the cycle of negativity that would cause you to break this year's resolution?

Keep the right balance between sleep and exercise, and walk your way into the New Year! **NOW**

Sources:

1. Bumgardner, Wendy. "Your Guide to Walking." www.walking.about.com.
2. iVillage Total Health. www.yourtotalhealth.ivillage.com.
3. "Forget Counting Sheep, Walk Your Way to Better Sleep." AARP. aarp.org/health/fitness/walking.
4. Ibid.



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January 2007

Community Calendar

Third Mondays

Oaks Church leadership forum: 7:30 a.m. at the Waxahachie Civic Center (214) 376-8208.

First and Third Tuesdays

Training Academy for Dental Assistants' free sessions begin at: 5:30 p.m. (972) 842-2999.

Red Oak Public Library pre-school story time: 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Red Oak Library (469) 218-1230 or visit redoakpubliclibrary.org.

Red Oak Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m. at 207 West Red Oak Road (972) 617-3577.

Second Tuesday

Wagon Wheel Saddle Club meeting at 7:30 p.m. (972) 223-8118.
www.freewebs.com/wagonwheelsaddleclub.

Second and Fourth Mondays

Texas Ladies Networking meets from 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Ryan's restaurant in Waxahachie. (214) 587-1221.

Every Monday

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

Second Thursday

American Cancer Society Support group meets at 7:00 p.m. First United Methodist Church. 600 West Red Oak Rd.

First Saturday

Seeker's Crossroads offering a free Reiki Circle and "energy based" therapy session. 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. 2509 West Ovilla Road. (682) 597-1771.

January 5 and 19

Jeremy's Golf Center Ladies League Clinic. Call (972) 351-9223 or visit <http://jeremysgolfcenter.com>.

February 1, 2 and 3

Chili cook-off to be held at the Ellis County

Expo Center in Waxahachie, benefiting the Chidrens Advocacy Center and Gingerbread House. Contact: (972) 646-5159 or (972) 938-0075.

February 3

Jeremy's Golf Center Super Bowl Bash (972) 351-9223 <http://jeremysgolfcenter.com>.

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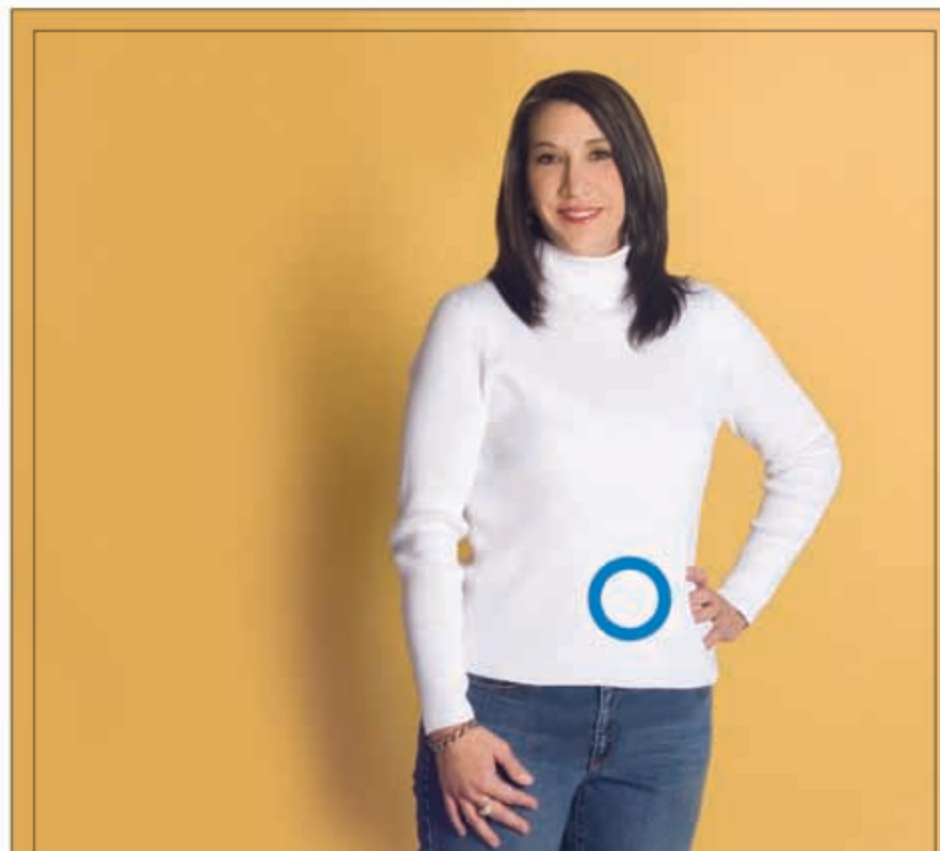
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Individual results may vary.

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