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November 2007

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Publisher, Connie Poirier
General Manager, Rick Hensley
Managing Editor, Becky Walker
Editorial Coordinator, Sandra McIntosh
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Red Oak Editor, Diana Merrill Claussen
Contributing Writers, Alex Allred • Renee Chase
Nancy Fenton • Melinda Hines
Contributing Editors/Proofreaders, Pamela Parisi
Jamie Ruark • Beverly Shay
Photography, Rod Cordsen • Ivey Photography
Sandra McIntosh • Terri Ozymy

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Editor's Note

Harvest Greetings!

With the many colors of this new season, we hope you enjoy our fall edition of *Red OakNOW*. As you look toward the holidays, we invite you to join the Wilson family who decorate and welcome fall in all of its splendor. If you are hoping to pick up a new hobby, you might want to sit back and spend some time enjoying Mrs. Joe Ann Waldeck's fabulously fun gourd art! After sitting a spell, though, you might find yourself ready for holiday turkeys and hams served and smoked by Mike "Bubba" and Janice Arnoldy of Bubba Que BBQ. After your feast, you might want to ensure a "kicking" fall season with local karate teacher, Joe Nelson.

When all is done, we invite you to settle in, light the fireplace and be amazed by the life and story of Glenn Heights resident, Sal Gonzales. Through his restored '37 Chevy, Sal shares his personal life story. His is a story weaving a colorful tapestry of transformation and hope.

Thank you for inviting *Red OakNOW* into your family during this fall season!

Diana Merrill Claussen
 Red Oak Editor




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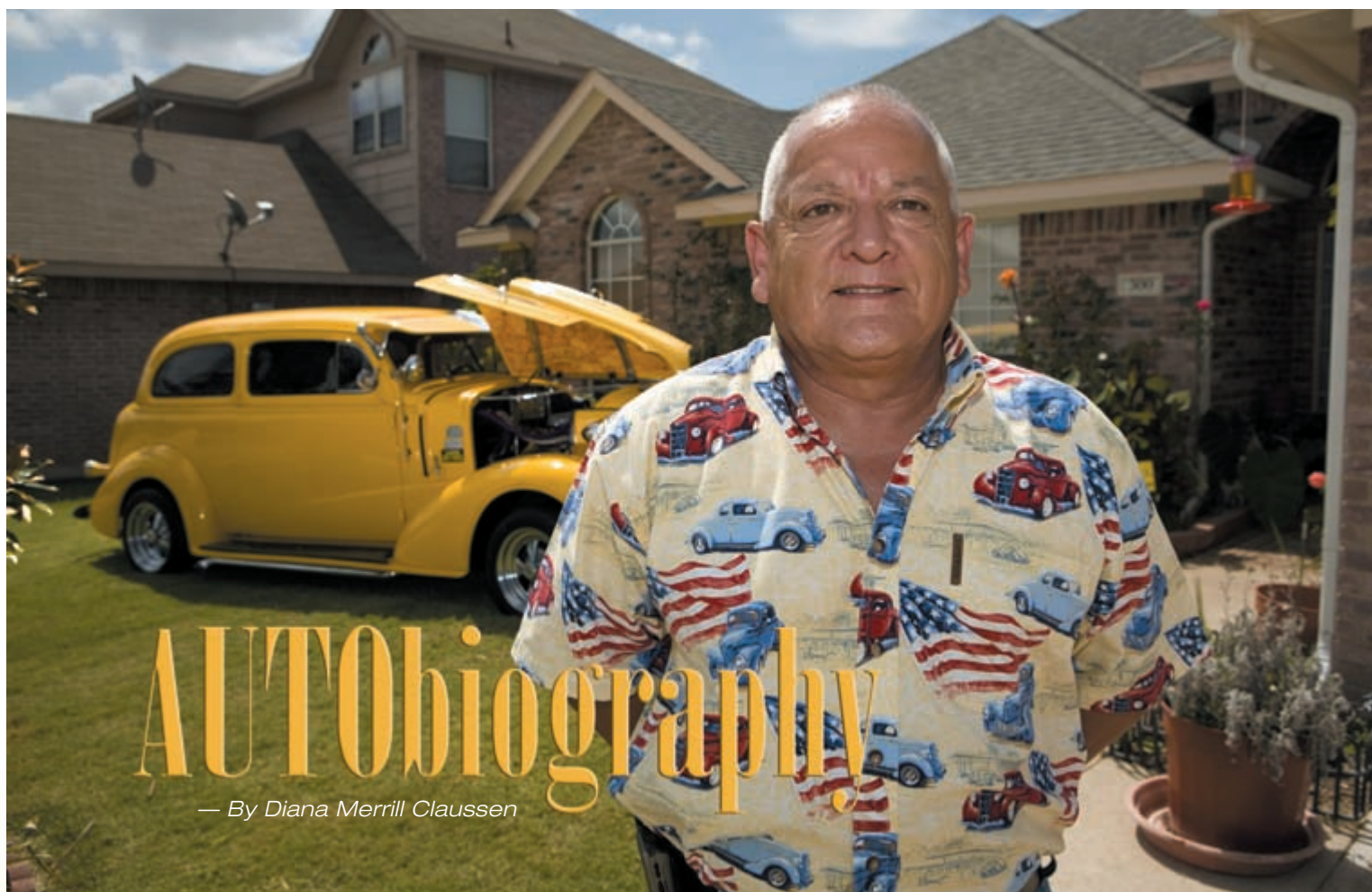
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Local Glenn Heights resident Sal Gonzales has an amazing life story, and while he occasionally shares it with others, he would much rather let his 1937 Chevy do the talking for him. Born the son of migrant workers, Sal would hang out with his brothers on a street corner after a hard day of picking crops and attending school. Of his 11 siblings, he became one of three to receive a high school diploma. After graduating, Sal went into law enforcement and developed a liking for all things Chevy.

"Since I was a kid, I liked to rebuild cars," he reminisced. "I especially love Chevys and Corvettes."

Because his brothers also shared his penchant for rebuilding cars, finding and restoring them became a family affair. "My oldest brother, Sammy, bought a 1937 Chevy in 1977," Sal recalled. "It was his dream to restore it into a street rod."



Unfortunately, before Sammy had the chance to restore the car and see his dream realized, he became ill with kidney failure and made the difficult decision to put the car up for sale. "When Sammy was sick, my younger brother called me and insisted we keep the '37 in the family," Sal said. "So I went and bought it for more than Sammy was asking."

When he brought the car home, Sal's fiancée, Chris, thought the car would be beautiful if it was painted yellow. Once the '37's restoration began, however, Chris was diagnosed with cancer and was eventually unable to continue her battle against the disease. In her honor, Sal painted the car the color she had picked out; he reflects that through his bright, canary yellow '37, her memory is kept alive, and he is able to carry on.

Not long after Chris passed away, Sal was faced with another crushing obstacle — the decline of his own

health. "In 2004, I started having breathing problems and was told my lungs were damaged and I had 87 percent blockage of my airways," Sal said. Most of his lung damage was caused by third-degree burns sustained during a fire rescue. The burns caused him to take an early retirement, and he was also no longer able to work on the '37 or participate in his car clubs.

Good news finally came in 2006 when Sal was able to undergo an innovative lung surgery which has since resulted in a very positive recovery. He feels he has now been given a new lease on life and wants to inspire others through his life story, a story that is now told through the intricate murals and art work on his '37.

The restored, mint-condition canary yellow Chevy can easily be seen from a mile a way, yet its bright and vibrant exterior is not the only thing that leaves those who see the car with a lasting and impacting impression. The '37 not only recounts Sal's life from childhood, but it also pays tribute to those he loves. "Under the hood there is a painted mural of me and three of my brothers,"

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Sal pointed out. "The mural was copied from a picture of us. In the picture, I was seven years old and wasn't wearing any shoes." At that time, Sal's family could not afford to keep their large family in quickly outgrown shoes. "We were very poor, but we didn't know the difference, all we knew was that we were loved by our parents," Sal said. He therefore added a mural of his dad picking cotton which is located on the trunk and a picture of his mom "Rita" under the hood to commemorate his loving family.

There is also an airbrushed likeness of the street sign from the corner where Sal and his buddies used to gather. "That old corner was on Ninth and Rocker where I was raised in Georgetown," Sal commented. "All the guys would hang out and tell lies under that street sign."

The colorful car is a representation of many heartfelt memories, with Sal's biggest dedication located on the old Chevy's back window. "The back window of the '37 is the most beautiful part of all because there is an inscription on it that dedicates the car to Chris' memory," he explained.

Looking back, Sal is thankful for the second chance he has been given, and for his immediate and car club families, because they have stood by him and helped encourage him to carry on through his personal adversities. "My faith, my daughter, Rita, and the guys at the club helped me through my health problems and tough times," Sal said. "The clubs are like family; they helped me feel like Chris was there with me and really helped keep her memory alive. My friends in the car clubs have really big hearts."

His club buddies say the same thing



about Sal. "Whenever we have benefits for others, Sal really jumps in and helps," said Joe Rakoczy, vice president of Midlothian Classic Wheels. "He really enjoys going out and meeting people, and people really like him."

Sal is also a member of the Cedar Hill Cruisers club and takes his '37 to car shows all across the state, winning numerous trophies, plaques and awards. He lovingly dedicates each one in Chris' honor. He even started acquiring so many awards he had to remodel his house to fit them all in it. "I took out one of my bedrooms in my house [and] put in a wood floor to create my trophy room," Sal stated. "I have won about 60 trophies, and every time I walk into the room with a new car show award, I reflect that I won Chris another one."

The picturesque '37 has also been featured on T-shirts and in national hot rod magazines and calendars. Sal enjoys showing his car and telling his story through its artwork. He also takes delight in meeting, spending time with and helping people who are in need, both through the club and on his own. Currently, Sal has been assisting in building some bridges between local law enforcement and the Hispanic community and gives public awareness presentations for Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

He is grateful for the opportunities he has been presented with, using his story and sharing his life lessons to encourage others who are going through hard times. "Through it all, I made the decision I would not be a quitter," Sal stated. "Now, I help those that I can because I know I am not finished yet, and God isn't finished with me either." **NOW**

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Finding the Perfect Balance

— By Sandra McIntosh

Pat and Frances Wilson did not have to move far when relocating to Red Oak over four years ago. “We moved one county over,” Frances said of their move from Navarro County. “Pat was offered a promotion that he couldn’t pass up.”

Several months prior to buying the Mediterranean-style, four-bedroom, two-and-one-half-bath home located in Hunter’s Glen, the family of six lived in an apartment while waiting for their home in Corsicana to be sold. Frances continued to look for an abode close to the Waxahachie HEB, where Pat now serves as the store’s unit director. “It was a career opportunity,” Pat explained, “and we were ready for the move. I had accomplished all I was going to accomplish at the store in Corsicana.” Pat now enjoys the responsibilities the larger Waxahachie store has provided.

Looking back, the search for a new home was daunting at times for Frances, but when she finally “opened her eyes,” she was able to see the house of her dreams. “This home is a perfect fit for the whole family,” she said. “I knew it the moment I saw it listed in a real estate brochure right beside our old



At Home With Pat and Frances Wilson



home. It was right under my nose all the time!" The couple closed on the 2,700-square-foot, gray stucco home nestled back off the road on a corner lot on the same day the six-month lease on their apartment expired. "It was meant to be," they both agreed simultaneously.

Entering the home for the first time, guests may think the theme is one that boasts of the West Indies. Upon further inspection, it is easy to see that Frances' natural eye for decorating has been able to successfully incorporate several styles into the one she enjoys most — her own. "Decorating is my passion," Frances enthused. "You name it, I'll decorate it! I don't stress over decorating. I find it very therapeutic; in fact, it's relaxing to see what I'm able to create." Frances has never limited herself to any one style. "I enjoy buying items I like and incorporating them into what's already in place," she said. That can mean only one thing: Frances enjoys changing things around.

The home's unique floor plan was the brainchild of Gina Balderrama, local architect and owner of Southern Progressive Homes. Stepping across the threshold into the entry hall, and looking straight ahead you see the view through a second pair of large,



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glass doors as they open up to a backyard oasis. The family does not limit time out back to the spring and summer months. "I love to grill year-round and cook for the family," Pat said, referring to the many times he cranks up the oversized stainless steel grill in the dead of winter. "Working in the food industry, I try to take advantage of cooking classes and recipe ideas that are offered through the store."

The backyard tiki bar happened to be right under their noses as well. After settling in, Frances wanted a large pile of debris moved from the corner of the backyard. That debris, as Frances first called it, is now the bar. "Pat built it and I painted it," Frances said, stating that she was able to incorporate her Spanish upbringing by the bright colors she used when painting the stripes. "I got the idea from Ninfa's Restaurant in Waco," she added.



The view to the back can also be seen at a different angle from the kitchen, decorated in deep, rich, dark colors with an elephant and palm tree paper border. The black countertops, dark wood cabinetry and stainless steel appliances only compliment the South American flair that Frances has successfully captured. Aside from one of the two family rooms, the kitchen is probably the most used room in the house, at least during meal times. "Eating together as a family is very important to us," Frances stated. "We are all so busy throughout the day, that coming together for the evening meal ensures a time of laughter. It's our 'fun together' time."

Pat also enjoys using this time to entertain the children, Annalise, Alec, Patrick and Anson, who range in age from 10 to 17 with Annalise being the oldest. The arrangement of the kitchen and breakfast area help make family meals



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effortless. "We don't have the customary dining room table," Frances said with a smile. "It's simple; we all sit around the bar. There's plenty of room for everyone, and it makes serving the food much easier."

Talking of food, entertaining and eating brought thoughts of Thanksgiving to mind. Like most families, the Wilsons celebrate holiday traditions that have been passed down

through the years. Since moving to Red Oak, Pat and Frances have hosted two such events, but they usually travel back home, either to Austin where Pat is from or to Frances' childhood home in Corpus Christi. "My mom makes the best giblet gravy," Frances expressed. "It doesn't matter if we travel or stay home, mom always makes the gravy and her stuffing is incredible." Whereas Frances' mom prefers sticking



to tradition and preparing the entire meal, Pat's mom enjoys changing things up from year to year, opening the door for everyone to bring a dish of their own choosing. The meat choices of turkey and ham, however, remain the same regardless of where the family spends Thanksgiving.

In the Wilson home, holiday traditions are not limited to the meals. As a matter of fact, Frances started

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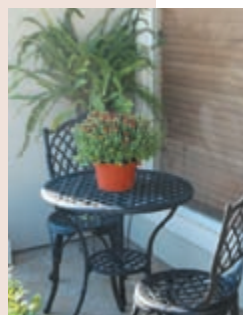
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something years ago that she plans on continuing as long as the children will let her. "I have had traditional holiday photographs taken of the kids each year. I use them as part of my fall decor," she said. "I don't really get attached to things, but the pictures are a constant with any new items I choose to decorate with." She also stated that the children have always gone to HEB to pick out their own pumpkins. "We

paint them and carve them," she said. "I hope they never get too old to enjoy picking their own pumpkin."

No doubt, life is busy at the Wilson house. Pat works long hours at the store; Frances substitute teaches and has gone back to college for her degree, and the children



are heavily involved in athletics. Soon to be married 21 years in January, Pat and Frances have learned to cherish each moment, especially since the early passing of their first child, William Thomas, 18 years ago this past summer. "Life is all about balance," she said. "That perfect balance begins and ends with our family." **NOW**

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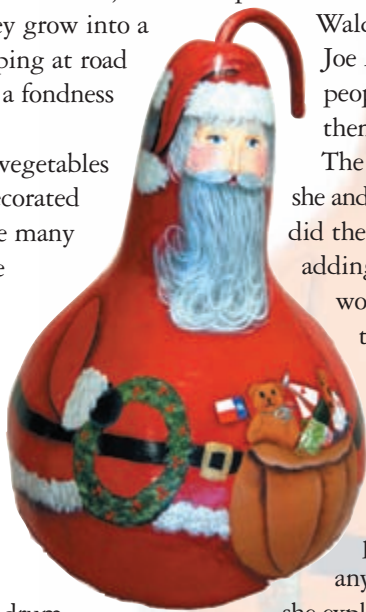
Gorgeous Gourds

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

In early times, man grew gourds for practical and beneficial reasons. Originally, they were dried and then carved out to use as water vessels, storage jars and drinking containers. Today the gourd has many different uses other than its original purpose. Many of us buy them during the holidays for decorations, but for local resident Joe Ann Waldeck, gourds are a form of art.

Ask Joe Ann what her favorite fall time tradition is, and she will gladly reminisce, sharing stories about her favorite type of gourd and her special love of gourds that have grown into unique shapes and sizes. "I like the bushel gourds because they were originally used as storage containers," she said. "I also like the wild gourds because they grow into a round shape. I have often found myself stopping at road sides to pick them. I just have some kind of a fondness for gourds," she smiled.

Her fondness for these uniquely different vegetables is quite evident upon gazing at Joe Ann's decorated gourd collection. On display in her home are many gourds hand-carved by Joe Ann and her late husband, Gene. They are painted and decorated into animals such as giraffes and flamingos, or holiday décor such as witches and Santas. Joe Ann also has a few Gene carved into actual musical instruments. Some are strung with instrument strings and are able to be played, although "they are out of tune now," Joe Ann said. She also has a shikari in her vast collection, another type of gourd instrument which is used as a drum. The shikari drum is created from a round gourd, carved, de-seeded and then wrapped with beads along the edge.



The story of Joe Ann's love of gourds started many years ago. "I had to work at my talents, but my husband, Gene, was naturally talented," she said proudly. "He was very skilled at carving from free hand." His interest in carving did not start until after he retired. However, once he decided to give it a try, he found himself carving things from scale carousel horses to very tall wooden crosses, one of which is on display at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Cedar Hill. "It's nearly 7 feet tall," Joe Ann exclaimed. There is also a 10-foot totem pole Gene carved with a chain saw that can be found in the Waldeck's front yard, standing guard over the home. Joe Ann indicated the carving is a good marker for people who are trying to find her house. "I just tell them to look for the totem pole," she laughed.

The pole was just one of the many projects in which she and Gene were able to work together as a team. "Gene did the carving, and I did the painting," Joe Ann said, adding, "I dreamed up stuff I wanted to paint, and he would make it." After many years of combining

their talents, Joe Ann realized she wanted to create art that stemmed from and portrayed her love of gourds. This led to the Waldecks planting and growing a gourd garden in their backyard. "We raised gourds for several years," she reminisced.

Creating art from gourds with Gene made perfect sense to Joe Ann. "You can nearly do anything to a gourd that you do to a piece of wood," she explained. Joe Ann also recalled how she and her grandson would look for the perfect gourd in their garden. "Finding a good gourd is like hunting for Easter eggs," she

ARTS NOW



asserted. "At times we would go out to the garden just to look for funny gourds."

When Joe Ann looks for just the right gourd for an art project, she first decides what shape she needs for her creation. If she wants to create a Santa, she needs a gourd in the shape of a small pumpkin; if she is in the mood to fashion a giraffe, she attempts to find a gourd with a smaller body and long "neck." Once Joe Ann has finally found the right gourd for the job, she then has to take quite a few other things into account.

"First, they have to be completely ripe on the vine before you pick them," she said. Once she finds the perfect gourd for her project, Joe Ann goes to work scooping out the seeds and inside lining. Back in the days when she and her husband were working together, Gene would take care of the carving and staining. "Sometimes he would even burn colors onto the gourd," she said. When Gene had completed his part, Joe Ann would first embellish her piece with decorative accents and then hand paint each one.

"I really became more and more fascinated with them," she said. It is easy to see how creating her gourd art and displaying it has brought Joe Ann much happiness on many different levels. The gourds not only remind her how much she loves creating her art, but they also remind her of Gene. **NOW**

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Ask any child and they will tell you their favorite activities are to jump and laugh, run and have fun. Look in on one of local karate instructor and Oak Leaf resident Joey Nelson's classes, and you will see children of all ages doing all the things they love to do.

When Joey teaches, his students know they are there to learn self-defense. They may not realize, however, his curriculum also instills a sense of respect, discipline and many other such positive character-building traits. Plus, they also have fun and receive plenty of exercise at the same time.

Joey first started learning martial arts as an 11-year-old. "When I was in elementary in Duncanville, I saw that a local karate school was offering some free lessons," he recalled. "So, I took them and got hooked." Five years later, at the age of 16, he received his black belt. The reasons Joey excelled in karate are heartfelt; they also provide insight into how he relates to his students, no matter their ages.

"Initially, I got into karate because I didn't fit into any other sports, or anything else for that matter," he

admitted. "Martial arts helped me and saved me from getting into trouble. It really gave me confidence which was something I really lacked." The sport helped teach him respect for himself and others.



"The biggest thing karate helped me to do was to gain self-esteem," he said. "I knew when I went to the dojo I would be treated with respect, my opinion would be valued, and they would hold me accountable for my actions." He

now teaches his own students this same value system. He and his wife, Shelley, have three children who have the good fortune of learning the art of karate from their dad as well.

As the students line up into their positions and Joey gives them instructions, he is not only upbeat, but also uses elements of humor for the enjoyment of both the kids and their onlooking parents. The children follow his quickly spoken instructions to a tee, and when the occasional misstep or misplaced punch or kick occurs, he is there to offer guidance and encouragement.

"Joey is great with the kids; the kids love him," Martial Arts Experience karate school owner, Heather Hare, said. "He's really good at keeping their attention by humor or talking fast. I tell Joey all the time he should be an auctioneer." For Joey, martial arts is his career and he feels he owes a debt of gratitude to those who have taken him under their wing. One organization in particular is the Chuck Norris Kick Start program. Joey not only teaches

Sports NOW



locally at the Martial Arts Experience, he is also an instructor for Kick Start which works with inner-city schools teaching karate to at-risk children. This program is held at designated schools as a regular class and counts for a physical education or elective credit.

"In 1996, I answered an ad in the newspaper looking for karate instructors," Joey said, recalling how he became the first Kick Start instructor hired at the Dallas location. "I went through a very heavy screening process and, after that, the Kick Start supervisor decided I was right for the program and hired me." Joey has worked with Kick Start since that time and loves everything about the program and its mission.

"Most of the programs are held at the middle school level," Joey explained. "That's when the kids make most of their decisions if they're going to do right or wrong. Most campuses are

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from the sixth to the eighth grade and we try to keep them in the program all three years."

Many of the students taking part in the Kick Start program come from deeply troubled homes in considerably tough areas. "We only implement the program in schools that have prevalent gang and drug problems," Joey noted. These students look to the program, karate and Joe to help them carry on. "We don't live in a safe society anymore and sometimes knowing about some of the problems the Kick Start kids face in their personal lives just tears at you," Joey expressed. "Martial arts, though, has its own protocols on how to deal with and help people, and it promotes the opposite of violence, which in turn teaches the kids self-control."

Kick Start is so committed to their students they invite them to become members for life. "Many of my former students come back and train with us for free because of the member for life commitment Kick Start makes to them," Joey pointed out. "Some of them have even come back to train with me after they have finished college or served in Iraq." One of his continuing students was the first female football player for the Dallas Independent School District and the first female black belt to win the Dallas Golden Gloves.

Dojo owner Tony Hare declared, "What Joey does with his students and the Kick Start program is great. I've met a lot of the kids he's trained and have seen him change their lives." **NOW**

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Business NOW



Mike and Janice Arnoldy and their friendly staff offer great food and warm hospitality for a pleasant dining experience.

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Sharing Their Feast

Walk into Bubba Que BBQ of Red Oak and you are likely to get a satisfyingly full meal served up with sides of fun and warmheartedness from owners Mike “Bubba” Arnoldy and his wife, Janice.

Hailing from Florida, Janice is a former teacher who worked with emotionally handicapped children. Mike has a long history in the restaurant and cooking industry. He has been a fireman, a manager and owner of restaurants and was the director of operations for a Whataburger franchise here in Texas. Mike was trained by a five-star chef and also learned about cooking from his grandmother. In fact, her potato salad recipe is one of the restaurant’s most requested side dishes.

After leaving Whataburger, the couple decided to open Bubba Que. “At the time, the kids wanted to stay here in the area because they were in school,” Mike explained. “Since I had experience in running restaurants for other people ... [as well as] my own, and because we saw a niche, we decided to offer our style of barbecue to Texas.” Besides their delicious barbecue, other customer

favorites are their \$2.59 breakfasts and their secret recipe baked beans which take over 18 hours to slow cook. The Arnoldys also offer any-occasion catering and, during the upcoming holidays, will be providing their smoked turkey and ham services.

“Everything we do is made from scratch, homemade, and we season it,” Mike said. “Our peanut butter pie has won awards in Florida, and our ‘nanner’ pudding and cobblers are all our own recipes, too. When we cater, we’ll cook anything the customer wants, and during the holidays we prepare fresh pies while the customers bring us their turkeys and hams to cook in the smoker.”

The smoker service is \$15 plus tax, and Mike said they have smoked 1,200 turkeys and 500 hams since they have



Business NOW

been in business. He suggests customers bring a cheap roaster pan when they drop off their meats for the smoking service. Often these meats end up as gifts.

"Customers will have us prepare a meal to give to a family in need," Mike said.

Known for their giving, the Arnolds' kindness is felt by everyone who walks through Bubba Que's doors. What was originally a 12-seat diner located at the

"Everything we do is made from scratch, homemade, and we season it."

Ovilla Exxon, has now become so much more. "We're here because of the people," Janice shared. "Every aspect of Bubba Que is about the people whom we serve."


Mike agreed and added how important it is for them to base their restaurant's purpose more on relationships than on the business itself. "We are different because of our focus and the way we serve our food," Mike agreed. "We make sure each customer's experience is based on simply knowing the person." A customer is usually called by name for their order pick-up. "Sometimes, we'll sing to them, too," Mike smiled. He is becoming well-known for giving his patrons fun nicknames as well. Fostering friendships with their patrons creates a more personal experience.

"We want to encourage families and people to come into Bubba Que and reconnect," Janice said. "This is a place where we want relationships to be grown. Through the restaurant, we have been given a big opportunity to impact people from all walks of life and to extend kindness. That's what we want to do."

To experience the great cooking and warm hospitality of the Arnolds, stop in and see them sometime. They are located at 2500 East Ovilla Road in Red Oak. For catering or to-go orders, the restaurant number is (972) 617-1222. **NOW**

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Education **NOW**

Bring on the Big Dogs

— By Alex Allred

In the 1970s, wild animal experts recommended that the overpopulation of elephants in Eastern Africa be handled by killing the adult male elephants. They reasoned that the male elephants were too large to relocate and, unlike the young mother elephants, they would not be missed. So, the adult males were destroyed.

To everyone's surprise, a rash of violent behavior broke out among the elephants in the Savannah. This violence was directed against the endangered black rhinos as well as against tourists. Officials were baffled. Several rhinos were found dead and many a tourist bus was forced off the road by rampaging young male elephants. Thanks to surveillance cameras and the recordings by frightened tourists, African wildlife officials got to see the disturbing images of elephant gangs in action. Groups of six to eight young males were wreaking havoc upon anything or anyone who crossed their paths, and the violence was escalating. Officials feared the elephants would eventually kill a tourist and were worried about the rhinos.

Animal behavioralists reasoned that the young males were acting out because they had no guidance. They needed a role model. Big Daddy, as he was named, was one of the largest

male elephants in the region. He was tranquilized, shipped to the National Park and awakened to find himself in a place filled with young "thugs." Approximately 30 seconds after Big Daddy had assessed the situation, he came crashing through the brush, charging at the young males and the gang scattered. None had ever seen such a large, loud, angry elephant and, as simple as that, the violence stopped. As the true story states, the gangs broke up and there was peace. Imagine what would happen if we had more "Big Daddies" around!

Although Mark Higginbotham is no elephant, he is a watchdog. To be precise, he is a representative of the Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students), a program of the National Center for Fathering which focuses on prevention of violence in our children's schools. As a watchdog, Mark is able to serve as a positive role model to all children and offer an extra set of eyes and ears to the school security system.

It was never his intention to become a watchdog; Mark merely attended a local PTA meeting to see what was

going on in the community. The next thing he knew, he was signed up in a variety of different committees, including council delegate to the Red Oak PTA. While attending the Texas PTA convention in Austin last year, Mark discovered the Watch D.O.G.S. program and was instantly hooked. "I liked it because it's doable. So many programs are complicated, more theory than reality," Mark said.

The program requires a father figure give just one day each school year to serve as a D.O.G.S. official to greet the children in the morning, watch school entrances and hallways, help with the flow of traffic, talk to children during lunch and even engage in school activities. "We're having a positive influence on our children," he said, recalling an incident in which a young student approached him during the day, wanting to chat with and have lunch with him. "You know, 40 percent of kids in American schools are from a single-mother home," he said. For this dad, the math is simple. Children also need a Big Daddy.

Mark grew up in a loving, two-parent



Mark Higginbotham and Luis Arismendez are proud to put father figures into the lives of Red Oak children.

Education NOW

home, but it was strained by illness. After his father was given just days to live, the Higginbothams uprooted their lives and moved to rural Arizona — a prescribed geographic location for his father's emphysema and bronchitis. "It was difficult with a sick parent," Mark said, referring to his childhood, "but my dad did a lot, as much as he could. He was a great man."

When Mark became a father, it was important that he be as involved and ever-present in his children's lives. Mark made a promise to his wife, Kathy, and their four children. "I have a 13-year commitment," he said, which is when his youngest will graduate from Red Oak High School. "I plan on being a watchdog until she gets through."

"This is about reconnecting dads with their kids," he added, but Mark hopes to impress another value upon his children. "I want them to understand that everyone is important and that when we do things for other people, everyone succeeds."

The animal experts in Africa had been wrong. The male elephants were greatly missed. Mark pointed out that in the same way, a child's father is missed. "For so long," he said, "there's not been dad involvement in the schools and with our children." During the past year, however, he has personally seen a change with the children at East Ridge Elementary. "You could see the kids wanted to do better because we were there," he explained. "They really responded."

This year, Mark hopes to sign up more fathers at Eastridge, as well at two new campuses — Shields Elementary and Red Oak Intermediate. He is hopeful that the program will soon spread throughout the entire district. The goal is to put a dad in each school, into the community and back into the lives of our children. Forget the elephants, and bring on the big dogs! **NOW**



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Around Town NOW



Members of the Red Oak Cowboy Church, top left, were in attendance during the Founders Day Parade. Stone Canyon Ranch partygoers, top right, had tons of fun watching the game between Texas and Oklahoma. The Youngs, middle left, took turns giving hayrides at Stone Canyon Ranch's annual fall party. "Doc" Andrews, bottom right, held up a party in Glenn Heights. Jennifer Hunt, Michelle McNutt and Phyllis Reeves, bottom left, took a lunch break from their CPR classes held at the Red Oak Fire Department.



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Around Town NOW



Children from Red Oak Methodist Church, top left, had a great day constructing their pumpkin patch. Johnnie and Regina Day with horse, Midnite, top right, had a fun day at the farm. Ms. Russell, middle left, assisted Karla Cox at the Keith's Ace Hardware blood drive. The varsity soccer team from Ovilla Christian School, bottom right, prayed following a tough game. Belvis, Brittany and Colbe Noland, bottom left, helped with the Red Oak Basketball Association sign-ups.

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IN THE KITCHEN WITH DEANNIE BLAKE

Deannie picked up her cooking skills from her mother, but has developed her own techniques over the years. “She was a stay-at-home mom who cooked all the time,” Deannie said.

Deannie’s father was in the military, so the family lived in different countries, including China, and although Deannie’s mother, Eleanor, had a teaching degree, she stayed home and was always there to cook dinner. “Mom was a great cook. She has been gone for a little over a year, and I sure do miss her,” Deannie said. Deannie has many favorite recipes and loves to experiment. “I like recipes with a few ingredients and use my family as guinea pigs. They tell me, ‘Definitely make this again,’ or ‘Forget this one,’” she said. **NOV**

ROCKY ROAD CLUSTERS

2 cups or 1 12-oz. pkg. semi-sweet chocolate morsels
1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk (Eagle brand or any other brand)
2 1/2 cups miniature marshmallows
1 cup coarsely chopped nuts
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Combine morsels and condensed milk in a large microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high for 1 minute; stir until smooth. If necessary, microwave for 20 - 30 seconds longer to complete melting. Stir in marshmallows, nuts and vanilla. Drop by heaping tablespoons into mounds on wax paper. Chill until firm. Makes 2 dozen candies.

BANANA PECAN COFFEE CAKE

CAKE:
1 cup sugar
2 sticks margarine, melted
1/4 cup milk
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
2 - 4 bananas, mashed
2 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
TOPPING:

1 stick margarine, melted
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup chopped pecans

CAKE: Preheat oven to 350 F. Oil and flour 9 x 13-inch pan. In a large bowl, mix sugar, 2 sticks margarine, milk, eggs, vanilla, bananas, flour and soda. Pour into prepared pan.
TOPPING: In a small bowl, mix 1 stick margarine, brown sugar and pecans. Pour over top of cake. Bake 30 - 40 minutes. Makes 12 servings.

MANDARIN ORANGE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

1/2 cup (1 stick) margarine
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 11-oz. can mandarin orange segments, drained
1/2 cup shredded coconut
1 pkg. butter recipe yellow cake mix
3/4 cup pecans

Heat oven to 350 F. Heat margarine in 13 x 9-inch pan in oven until melted. Sprinkle with brown sugar. Arrange orange segments over brown sugar, sprinkle with coconut. Prepare cake mix as directed on package. Stir pecans into batter. Pour into pan.

Bake 45 - 55 minutes or until cake springs back when touched in center. Immediately turn upside down onto heatproof serving platter. Leave pan over cake 1 minute. Cool completely.

SALSA CHICKEN SOUP

1 - 2 cups cooked chicken pieces (shredded into small bites)
2 14-oz. cans chicken broth
1 medium zucchini, cut into small pieces or thinly sliced
1 medium yellow squash, cut into small pieces or thinly sliced
1/2 bunch diced green onions
1 8-oz. can tomato sauce
1 10 - 12-oz. can shoepeg corn
1 14-oz. can hominy (optional)
1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes and green chilies
1 tsp. cumin

Boil the chicken and strain the broth to use with the 2 cans of canned chicken broth. Add the chicken and all the rest of the ingredients and cook about 30 - 45 minutes or until the squash is done. After pouring hot soup into a bowl, add shredded cheese and crisp tortilla strips if desired.

Who's Cooking NOW

CHINESE CHICKEN SALAD

1 pkg. chicken flavored Top Ramen noodles
 4 Tbsp. toasted sesame seeds
 1 cup slivered almonds, toasted
 1 head cabbage, thinly sliced
 1/2 cup chopped parsley
 4 green onions, chopped
 3/4 lb. chicken breasts
 ginger to taste
 pepper to taste
 6 Tbsp. rice wine vinegar
 4 Tbsp. sugar
 1 tsp. pepper
 2/3 cup vegetable oil

Break noodles into small pieces and put in a large bowl. Toast sesame seeds and almonds at 350 F for 5 minutes. Add to the noodles. Add cabbage, parsley and onions. Mix. Stir-fry chicken with ginger and pepper to taste. (Or cook in microwave for about 6 minutes.) Mix last 4 ingredients, plus chicken seasoning package from the Ramen noodles. Shake your dressing well, then add to salad and toss well.

PECAN PIE MUFFINS

1 cup chopped pecans
 1 cup brown sugar
 1/2 cup flour
 2 large eggs
 1/2 cup margarine, melted

Combine first 3 ingredients in a large bowl and make a well in the center of the dry ingredients. Beat eggs until foamy and stir in melted margarine. Pour into well and stir wet ingredients into the dry ingredients until moistened. Pour into muffin tins sprayed with cooking spray or use paper muffin liners. Bake in 350 F preheated oven for 20 - 30 minutes. Makes 9 muffins.

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Finance **NOW**

Mutual Funds vs. Stocks - Which are “Better”?

— By Renee Chase

If you have been investing for a while, you have probably been exposed to both stocks and mutual funds. At times, you may have wondered which of these investments is “better.” Does one offer more advantages than the other? If so, are you putting your money in the right place?

There is no one “right” answer for everyone. In truth, both mutual funds and stocks offer distinct benefits. Let’s take a quick look at some of them:

Advantages of mutual funds

- **Diversification**

When you buy a mutual fund, you automatically achieve a degree of diversification, because each individual fund may invest in dozens, or even hundreds, of different securities — stocks, bonds, government securities, money market accounts, etc. This diversification can help lessen the

impact of downturns that affect one particular type of financial asset.

- **Professional management**

Mutual funds are run by professional money managers who possess years of experience in analyzing the markets and selecting the mix of securities needed to achieve a fund’s particular goals — growth, growth and income, income, etc. Of course, there is no guarantee that your fund’s managers will live up to your expectations. Yet, there is no denying the fact that, just by investing in a mutual fund, you are usually putting a great deal of expertise to work on your behalf.

- **Affordability**

It does not take much money to invest in mutual funds. In fact, you can set up a bank authorization to automatically invest as little as \$25 per month in some funds. Thus, it is

easy to invest in a variety of mutual funds which will further diversify your portfolio.

Advantages of stocks

- **Potential for bigger gains**

If you own an individual stock, and it doubles in price, then you have made a 100 percent profit. But if your mutual fund owns that same stock, then the overall value of the fund may only increase slightly, if at all.

However, the price of your single stock could also drop by half. If this same stock were in a mutual fund, the drop would not result in such a drastic decline in the fund’s net asset value.

- **Lower investment costs**

When you buy a mutual fund, you may have to pay a sales charge — also known as a “load” — along with operating expenses, which include management fees, 12b-1 fees and other expenses. Together, these charges can reduce your overall return. But when you buy a stock, you typically have to pay a one-time commission. (The same is true when you sell that stock.) Consequently, more of your money is working for you.

- **Greater control over taxes**

Mutual fund managers constantly buy and sell securities to boost the

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performance of their funds. Although you have no control over these trades, they may have tax consequences for you in the form of capital gains. However, when you buy a stock, you are also the one who will decide when to sell it. Therefore, you will control when you pay taxes on your gains.

As with any type of investment, stocks and mutual funds carry risks, including the potential loss of principal. It is important to understand the risks as well as the potential rewards before you invest. Your investment professional can help you evaluate your situation and determine if mutual funds and stocks are suitable for you. Ultimately, you may find that a combination of both will help you meet your long-term goals. **NOW**

Renee Chase is an Edward Jones representative based in Red Oak.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING



Thanksgiving is time to reflect on the things for which we're truly grateful. At Edward Jones, we're thankful to serve our clients and our community. During this holiday season and every day, we wish you all the very best.



Renée Chase
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Surviving Diabetes Requires More Than Just Managing Blood Sugar

For the nearly 20 million Americans living with Type 2 diabetes, monitoring their blood sugar levels is a critical and daily task. While keeping blood sugar numbers in check is essential for managing the disease, paying attention to cholesterol and blood pressure levels is just as important.

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), about 73,000 diabetics die each year from diabetes-related complications. Topping the list of complications is cardiovascular disease. In fact, the ADA estimates that two out of three diabetics will eventually die from heart disease or stroke. While cardiovascular disease is a serious and common complication of diabetes, only 18 percent of diabetics are aware of this, according to a survey done by the ADA.

So what is the link between cardiovascular disease and diabetes? Jeffrey Astbury, M.D., internal medicine physician on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie said that over time, high blood glucose levels can lead to increased fatty deposits on blood vessel walls, affecting blood flow and increasing the risk of clogging and atherosclerosis (hardening of the blood vessels) ultimately increasing the risk for a heart attack.

"While high blood sugar is indeed dangerous and can cause other complications such as damage to the eyes, kidneys and nerves — unchecked cholesterol and blood pressure levels are even more so," Dr. Astbury said.

"Even if a diabetic is meticulous about controlling their blood sugar, they are still at risk for heart disease."

Dr. Astbury said to help prevent heart disease, diabetics should work with their physician to determine the best treatment plan. He recommended the following guidelines:

- Maintain normal blood glucose levels. "Blood glucose levels vary depending on the time of day, what and how much you have eaten, as well as if you have exercised or not, but a



'normal' blood glucose level is in the low to mid 100s."

- Keep blood pressure under 130/80, using medication if necessary. "High blood pressure puts diabetics at risk for heart attack, stroke, eye problems and kidney disease. Have your blood pressure checked regularly if you are a

diabetic. It can usually be controlled with medication and lifestyle changes."

- Keep cholesterol levels under control, using medication if necessary. "There is no way to tell if your cholesterol levels are high without a blood test. It is recommended that diabetics keep their LDL (bad) cholesterol levels below 100 mg/dl, their HDL (good) levels above 40 mg/dl and their triglyceride levels below 150 mg/dl."

- Maintain a healthy weight. "In most cases, weight loss can lessen the symptoms of Type 2 diabetes and in some cases keep it under control without the use of medication."

- Exercise regularly. "Regular exercise is crucial for Type 2 diabetics and it is never too late to start. Exercise can lower your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels and actually increase your energy level."

- Maintain a heart-healthy diet that is low in fat and salt. "Try to avoid food that is high in fat as this can increase your cholesterol levels and anything high in sodium can increase your blood pressure. Try to eat a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and choose lean meats and low-fat dairy. Most importantly, Type 2 diabetics should avoid sugar."

The most common signs of a heart attack include:

- chest pain or discomfort
- Pain or discomfort in your arms, back, jaw, neck or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating or light-headedness
- Indigestion or nausea

Health NOW

• Fatigue

"If you experience any of these symptoms, take them seriously and call 9-1-1 right a way," Dr. Astbury said. He added that Type 2 diabetes is manageable, especially if it is detected in the early stages before any significant damage has been done. "Common symptoms of Type 2 diabetes include frequent thirst and urination, weakness and fatigue, blurred vision and tingling or loss of feeling in the hands or feet to name a few. If you suspect you may have Type 2 diabetes, talk to your physician about taking a blood glucose test." **NOV**

** 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 Waxabachie or Baylor Health Care System.*

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Great Outdoors **NOW**

Time to Plan Ahead

— By Nancy Fenton

November is here, and we can look forward to some cooler weather for a while. It is time to look at the yard and make some decisions as to what we want it to look like next year. Have you split up those perennials yet? Have you planted those spring blooming bulbs? There is still time to get to it. I like the ones that naturalize, like the narcissi, crocuses and jonquils. I have just enlisted my grandsons' help to put in another 300 bulbs in our natural area across the creek. The boys are a lot closer to the ground than I am!

It is too late to trim back those shrubs and trees, but not too late to plant new ones. Try some that might be new ones to you, like the possum hall holly or vitex which will survive our hot and dry summers.

The *Farmers' Almanac* is predicting another hot, dry summer for northern Texas. With our changing climate at the poles, it could happen. Bed preparation with shale and compost, plus the selection of plants that can tolerate the heat, will help your landscape maintain the look you want. The trees that shade us absorb 2,250,000 tons of CO₂ per tree each year and produce oxygen for us. Think about planting a tree for every member of your family. Just remember to plant it high, mulch it heavily and give it a weekly watering even through the winter.

Christmas is coming, and if you are already thinking about your gardener friends, order magazines like *Birds and Bloom* (birdsandblooms.com) or *Texas Gardener* (texasgardener.com). It takes six weeks or longer for the magazines to get it together, so you need to start working on it this month if you plan on giving them as Christmas presents.

It is also the time to take a look at your tools to see if any of them need repair, replacement or general cleanup. As the shorter days approach, a brief swipe with sandpaper and a little oil will make those tools shine and last for another season! The mower can stand a cleanup, blade sharpening and oil and air filter change before it turns cold. Let's pass up the frustration of a mower that does not want to start next spring by spending a little time with it this month!

Have a great Thanksgiving, and plan ahead for a glorious spring!

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.



November 2007

Community Calendar

First and Third Tuesdays

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

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

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

Second and Fourth Mondays

Texas Ladies Networking meets from 11:45 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Ryan's in Waxahachie. For more information, call (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. For information, call (972) 617-3591. www.RedOakCelebrateRecovery.com.

Second Thursday

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

November 3

The National Team, Celebrate Moms One Day Women's Conference, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at Ferris Avenue Baptist Church, Waxahachie. Visit Celebratemoms.org or call Melissa Howell at (866) 324-2893, ext. 4414 for more information.

November 6

Free financial seminar "Freedom Debt" by Sue Falter with Primerica, 7 p.m. at Midlothian Health Center.

November 9

WGMS annual Veteran's Day Celebration, 10:30 a.m. at Walnut Grove Middle School in Midlothian. All armed forces veterans are encouraged to attend. Lunch will be provided for veterans and their spouses after the event. Contact Walnut Grove Middle School (972) 775-5355 if you plan to attend.

"Hollywood Nights," Ovilla Christian School's 10th Annual Silent Auction from 5:30 - 8 p.m. at the Waxahachie Civic Center. Dinner begins at 6 p.m. Live auction at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$25.00

November 10

Dallas Zoo Nature Exchange program from 9 a.m. – noon at Pettigrew Academy, 806 East Marvin, Waxahachie. Call (972) 923-1633.

November 13

"Look Good Feel Better Program," sponsored by the American Cancer Society from 6:30 - 7:45 p.m. at the Midlothian Wellness Center, (Methodist Imaging Center), 2210 Bryan Place, Midlothian. Free admission. Program for women undergoing cancer treatments. Free workshop on makeup application and skin care. A complimentary make up kit for each participant. Call Vicki Hallum at (972) 775-7410 for information.

November 24

Family Golf Tournament at Jeremy's Golf Center, 2636 Patrick Road. Call (972) 351-9223 or visit www.jeremysgolfcenter.com.

November 26

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meets at 7 p.m. at St. Paul Episcopal Church, Hwy. 287 at Ovilla Road in Waxahachie. Visit CQGuild.org for more information.

To have your events posted on the community calendar, e-mail us at:

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