

The Community Magazine Serving Red Oak and the Surrounding Area

# Red Oak NOW

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November 2010

Overcoming  
**Rocky  
Terrain**

Face to  
**Facebook**

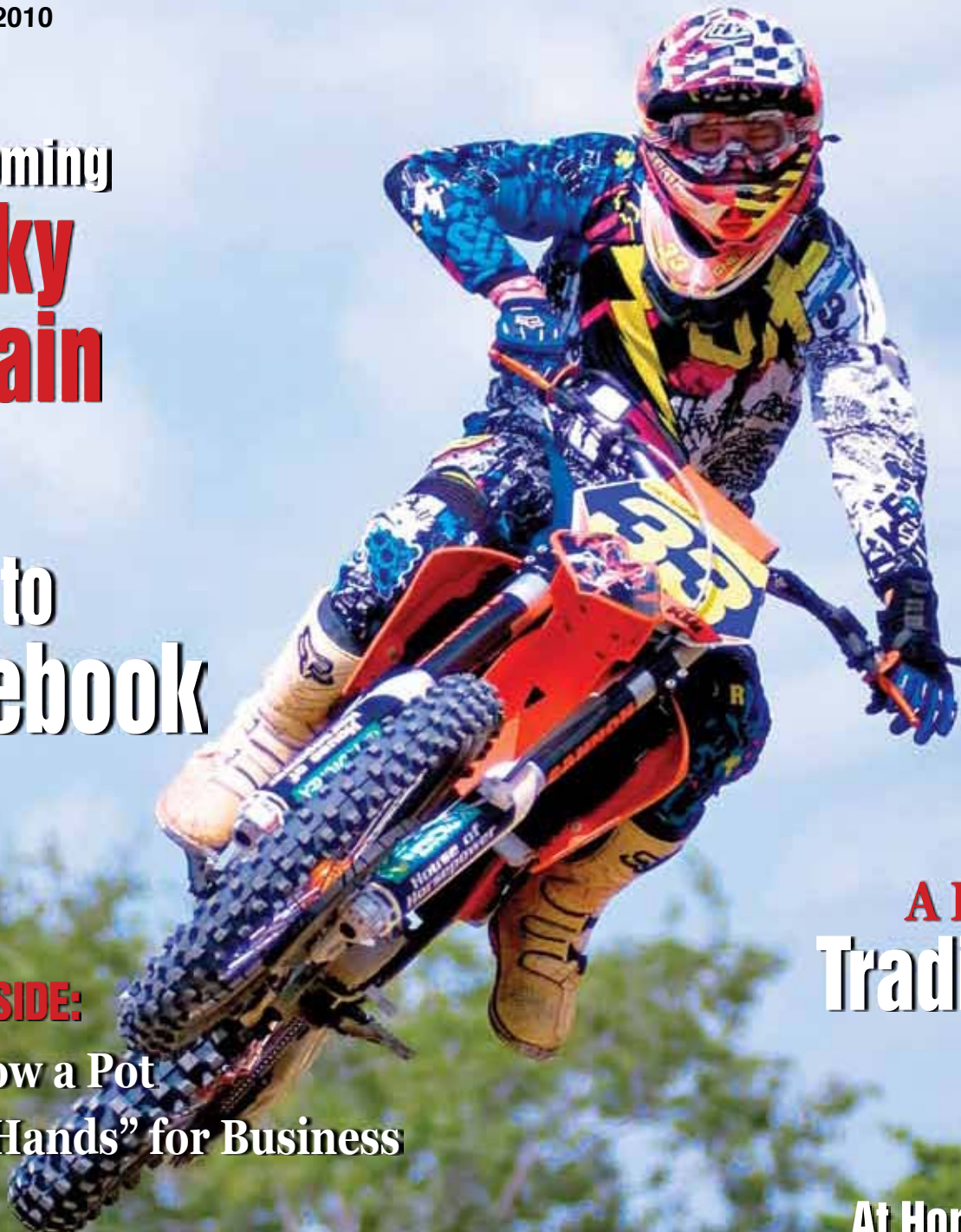
**ALSO INSIDE:**

To Throw a Pot

“Good Hands” for Business

**A Family  
Tradition**

At Home With  
Ezzard and Raynah  
**Young**







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Superintendent's Employee of  
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Photo by Amy Ramirez.



## Editor's Note

*Hello, Red Oak Folks!*

Although I play holiday CDs in my car before Halloween, November 1 officially marks the season for me. This month my husband finds wintry decorations acceptable and carols are no longer banished to our minivan.

I will admit, I am one of those "only 355 shopping days" kinds of people. I like to have gifts purchased before Thanksgiving and wrapped by December 1. This trait suits me well as *Red OakNOW* editor — I actually wrote this letter to you in September.

Now that my compulsive tendencies are in the open, I feel much better. For reading, my early Christmas gift to you is this month's issue of stories about folks with their own beloved obsessions — from Facebooking to off-road racing. Help me get the jump on next year's inspiring stories by sending suggestions to [angel.morris@nowmagazines.com](mailto:angel.morris@nowmagazines.com). Because the best-read stories are in *Red OakNOW*!

Angel Morris  
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# FACE TO FACEBOOK

— By Angel Morris



*Pam Crouse is the face behind Facebook — at least when it comes to Red Oak “friends.” While she has only lived here seven years, Pam is one of the city’s biggest fans. So when the idea of starting a residents’ Facebook page struck, there was no looking back.*

“We have great things going on and needed somewhere to bring it all together. Facebook is one of the largest social networks, and many of us use it as a way to keep in touch with people and events,” Pam said. “I hesitated making it public for a while. I knew I had to be 100-percent determined before I hit that Publish button. I had an *I think I can* moment and talked myself into it.”

First published December 5, 2009, the Red Oak, Texas ... Home of the Hawks page has grown to more than 2,000 friends. “I had no idea what it would bloom into; I expected maybe 150 people. I don’t take all the credit; it takes all of us to make this page work,” Pam said. “I try to tell the fans often that without them there would be no page at all. Without interaction, it simply would not have become what it is.”

Before word spread, Pam admits posts were light. “I would go days at a time and never see replies. It seems like overnight it changed,” Pam said. “I have to thank Nathan Alvarez for helping in the beginning. He kept posting to try and get the audience going.”

Long before plunging into Facebook, Pam lived and worked in Lancaster. In search of a good school district for her children, she moved to Red Oak in 2003. “I remained working as a hair stylist in Lancaster, until I heard of a monitor opening at Red Oak



Elementary. I wasn’t sure I’d like the job, but ‘like’ turned into ‘love’ after the smiles and hugs I received daily from kids,” Pam recalled. “They called me ‘Mrs. Pam,’ and to this day I get excited when I hear an old student call me from across a store or park. I loved it so much that they inspired me to go back to school and pursue a teaching career.”

Pam attended Lake Highlands in Dallas “many moons ago” and is now completing her Bachelor of Arts and Science online. “I’ve made the President’s or Dean’s List each term and have never been so proud of myself. My kids get sick of hearing what a great student I am, but I’ll tell anyone who listens,” Pam said.

Since returning to school, Pam has also thrown herself into her children’s activities. Her son, Colton, is a Red Oak High School freshman, while daughter, Gracie, is in sixth grade. Pam focused on meeting residents and embracing the community. “I wanted to get involved; I wanted to be involved. I am a huge talker, and I love meeting new people. My daughter always laughs about us knowing someone everywhere we go ... and, if we





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don't, I will meet them before we leave. I just love the people here."

Pam also loves the city's varied walks of life. "We have so many different people, different lifestyles, backgrounds, educations, tall, short, skinny, fat — where I fit in — we literally have it all. And the best thing about Red Oak's diversity is how well we all get along."



**"I love to help publicize  
all things Red Oak, and  
I'm one of the most open  
people you will know."**

But as the moderator of a social networking site, Pam has learned not everyone shares the same opinions. From the school district dress code to city events, fans can get intense. "I once had a fan tell me they were going to call the police because I was wrong about Red Oak's first name of Possum Trot. I kept thinking, *Wow, I can see the headline now: Woman arrested for misnaming Possum Trot,*" Pam joked. "She left the page and blocked me after she found out I wasn't wrong. We've had some interesting debates at times, but they're usually always very informative and, in the end, no one goes home crying. Even in heated debates, we always end on good notes."

Another Facebook high note is Pam's Citizen of the Month and Business Spotlight. "I take nominations or think of people that have inspired my life in




Red Oak and honor them with a write up of what they have done for the city. Each Monday, I select a local small business and feature them, along with a free offer or savings for our fans," Pam explained. "I've received great donations from other citizens, such as gift certificates and plaques."

Pam spends about eight hours a week posting topics for discussion and general Red Oak news on the site. "I Google a lot to find information for others; I grab every flyer I can find, posting any information that may come in handy," Pam said. "I also search any and all Web sites on Red Oak and try to pass on helpful information."

An admitted "Facebook addict," working online is second nature to Pam. "Is there life off the Web? I love my computer! I spend a lot of time on it and probably should look into a 12-step program," Pam laughed. Even so, Pam finds time for other hobbies. "I love to cook. I will break out a puzzle now and then. My biggest hobby has been my children, though. I try to spend time with them before they grow into the my-mom-is-so-not-cool stage of their life."

Pam enjoyed sharing some particular Red Oak events with her kids. "The 11 inches of snow this year are a fond memory for sure. I was born in Missouri and tell Texans all the time, 'You guys have never seen real snow.' Well, after this year, people from Red Oak know what real snow is! It was one of the prettiest snowfalls I'd ever seen," Pam said. "I also love Red Oak's parades; we have the best! I have a deep passion for Red Oak and mine and my children's future here and love to help the citizens here with whatever they need."

To that end, Pam invites small businesses, schools, restaurants, "anyone in Red Oak" to submit information. "I love to help publicize all things Red Oak, and I'm one of the most open people you will know. Never be afraid to ask me anything!" Pam said. "I am a complete nut about this page. I love the progression of Red Oak and am happy to be part of its bright future."

Pam asks nothing in return for her Facebook efforts, but a kind word never hurts. Her favorite post of all time? "Anytime someone says, 'Thanks,' I am proud." 

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# Happy to be Here

— By Janice C. Johnson



## At Home With | Ezzard and Raynah Young

*It just goes to show, you should never judge a book by its cover. Ezzard Young, a tall, powerfully built man with a booming voice, looks every inch the correctional officer that he is. But his wife, Raynah, lovely, elegant, soft-spoken and at least 12 inches shorter, does the exact same job as Ezzard. In fact, the two met on duty with the Dallas County Sheriff's Department, where both still work as detention service officers.*

The Youngs moved to Red Oak in 2007, choosing a brand-new, two-story home. Its second floor has bedrooms for each of their three sons: Jackson, 8; Michael, 7; and Isaac, 6. The boys chose their own decorating themes for their rooms, which Ezzard and Raynah will let them change to suit their interests as they grow up. Rounding out the upstairs are a bathroom and central game room/living area.

The couple's professional duties involve care and custody for county inmates and suspects. Ezzard said, "Seeing the inmates really has an impact on how I see the outside world versus the inside world." Working first-hand with people whose lives



have gotten off track has strengthened his and Raynah's desire to give their children the best possible start in life. From their own career options to education choices for their sons, Raynah and Ezzard gear their decisions toward providing a strong foundation for the three youngsters.

Ezzard had long dreamed of moving to a brick home in a nice suburb, imagining his family with friendly neighbors and space to spread out. "I never had my own room as a young kid," he said. "When I was growing up, I had to bunch in with two other boys."

"Ezzard wanted to move to Red Oak," Raynah said, "but I was a little hesitant because I didn't know anything about the area." An inquiry to a builder about homes in Glenn Heights, however, led the couple to discover a sister development in Red Oak. They visited the site, finding it to be exactly what they were looking for. "I'm glad we did," Raynah went on. "This was the



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first house in Red Oak that we looked at. It was a pretty smooth transition overall.”

A small room off the entryway serves as an office where Raynah handles the family paperwork. She furnished the room with a feminine touch but often finds evidence that energetic little boys have been using the desk and computer.

Across the entry, the dining room features clean, simple, yet elegant decor, with a deep-brown accent wall that matches the drapes and the upholstered dining chairs. “This is my favorite room,” shared Raynah, who borrowed some decorating ideas from the model homes they viewed.

More dining space is available in the large, open kitchen. A breakfast nook, looking out into the backyard, holds a large, square table. Light wood cabinetry sets off the contemporary black appliances. But the focal point among these neutral colors is the living room, where burnt-orange sofas harmonize with chocolate brown and earth tone accents. A fireplace, entertainment center, table games and plenty of seating give the room a warm, friendly feel.

Ezzard and Raynah’s master bedroom



offers a spacious, quiet retreat with its own sitting area. Ezzard relishes the double vanities in the master bath which, he said, are “wonderful when both of us are getting ready for work.”

The home and yard provide ample space for everyone in the family to pursue their hobbies and interests. Ezzard, a fitness buff who likes to work out, is pleased to have room for his Bowflex® machine. He also plays baseball, football and basketball with his sons. Music is important to him as well, and Ezzard recently began learning to play both drums and bass.

Raynah may have inspired his love for music; she plays both saxophone and clarinet. Between her commitments to career, home and family, music is the



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only hobby she has time or energy for. "I would like to teach the boys to play, though," she said.

In the past, all three sons have played various sports. For now, though, they all keep busy with school, homework and playing outside with other children. They especially like basketball. Ezzard laughed, recalling one day shortly after they moved into the house. "Our neighbor has three boys, and every kid from the neighborhood comes over there and plays basketball," he said. "Our boys saw them, and Jackson automatically said, 'I have friends!' I guess we might as well get used to it; as the boys get older, they'll be having their friends over here all the time." Raynah smiled and Ezzard positively beamed, looking forward to the pandemonium that is sure to come.

One activity that the whole family shares is their involvement in Point of Light Church in Cedar Hill. The pastor, Julius Harris, is a mentor to Ezzard. The



Youngs' work schedules do not allow them to attend church very regularly but,

Ezzard said, "We like to go when we can. We receive great messages from the pastor and his wife."

The couple's joy does not come only from their delightful surroundings. They view their new home and community as a blessing and feel profoundly thankful. Ezzard, who seems to bubble with happiness about everything, is most thankful for his wife and sons. "I appreciate everything Raynah



has done, and I love that our boys have their own space," he said.

Raynah agreed, thankful in turn for her husband. "My family is really important to me. I'm always telling people, every time I make a mortgage payment, that it's worth it because I know my boys



are happy." She smiled and went on to explain the insight she has gained. "When the boys draw their pictures, they always make the sun really bright, and the trees are big and green. That makes me know they are happy. It's great for me; that's all I needed."

Ezzard gives credit to both their lovely home and to the people of Red Oak, whom he described as wonderful and friendly, for the family's attachment to the community. In fact, he is so happy to be here, he almost seems reluctant to go anywhere else. "We have always traveled to relatives' houses for Thanksgiving," he mused, "but I want to start a tradition of having our Thanksgiving here at our own home."

Would Ezzard say his dream has been fulfilled? "Yes," he said, "it took a while, but it is fulfilled."

Raynah gave a contented sigh. "This was our first move," she said. "And hopefully it will be the last!" **NOV**

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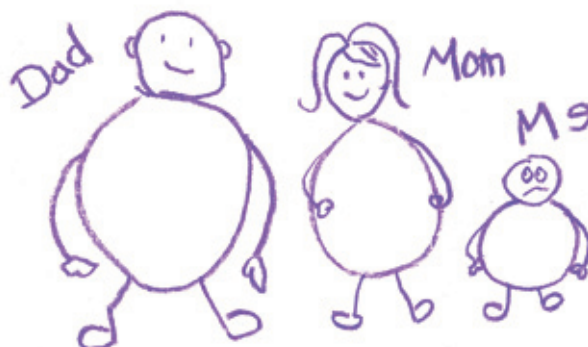
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# To Throw a Pot

— By *Angel Morris*

Ruth Mauldin's life is like clay she has molded into just what she wants it to be ... with a little help from her husband, who prompted her to find something she loved to do and do it.

"Due to health problems, I resigned as office manager at a mental health clinic and quickly realized there was only so much housework and remodeling projects I could do. I was bored," Ruth recalled. "My husband asked, 'Isn't there something you have always wanted to do?' I said — much to my surprise — 'I want to learn to throw pottery.' He found a school, signed me up for six two-hour lessons, and I was hooked."

Those lessons turned to four years of classes in the art at Cedar Valley College. "It was a terrific environment, but there were limitations. So, two years

ago I started working at home. I have experimented with glazes, bought a new electronic kiln and in the last year have found my own emerging style." Over time, Ruth has become more confident in her creations.

"My pottery success rate is much higher. Like anything, you get better with practice, but in the beginning I had a lot of disasters. Although I'm by no means a master craftsman, my work is nice enough to show and sell," Ruth said. A show at a local church last month also included Ruth's fused glass jewelry. "I love the glass, and last year — besides just pendants — I made tree ornaments as Christmas gifts. I have a friend I've known for almost 50 years; we and our daughters all made ornaments, and it was so much fun to work together and share ideas and then have our friends rave about the uniqueness of our gifts."

Enthusiasm over her work has taught Ruth that "everything doesn't have to be perfect to be good." After three mini strokes, numbness in Ruth's right hand could limit her work but has not. "Just being able to throw a round bowl or vase stills amazes me." While therapeutic for Ruth, the process of throwing pottery is complex.

Step one is "wedging" clay — like kneading bread dough — to prepare it and help eliminate air bubbles, which

would destroy the piece in the first firing (bisque). "Then I am ready to throw with my electric wheel. I do not do preliminary sketches. And I don't plan, other than deciding to throw a bowl, vase or mug, which dictates how much clay I use. For me, pottery is organic."

The clay is centered on the wheel, by applying pressure with both hands, then opened and pulled in an upward motion. Pulling is repeated until the desired height is obtained. Then the bowl is removed and allowed to dry to a leather-hard stage. "Next, the piece is returned to the wheel where the foot, or bottom of the vessel, is trimmed. After trimming, handles and other embellishments are added, and the piece is left to dry thoroughly," Ruth explained.

The piece is then ready for the first of two kiln firings — to temperatures of 1,888 and 2,232 degrees Fahrenheit, respectively. Upon kiln cooling, the piece is removed and prepared for glazing. "I normally use two or three glazes in combination on all my work."

After cooling a second time (about 24 hours later), the piece is finished. "I use only food-safe glazes, and the pieces can be used in the oven (up to 400 degrees) or microwave and run in the dishwasher," Ruth noted. She has created quite a collection, working about three hours per week throwing pottery and



firing glass every few months.

Through her hobby, Ruth said she has gained an appreciation for the quality of other potters' and her own work. "I love raku pottery, and my favorite piece is a horsehair vase," she said. Friend Sandy Pochobradsky — who paints, sews and works with stained glass — also inspires Ruth. "She is an amazing talent and a great friend."

Officially retired from a 25-year stint at ACCO USA, Ruth said she has plenty keeping her busy today. "I am concentrating on being a wife, mother and grandmother. I have a great marriage



— this year we will celebrate 43 years. I have two wonderful children and five grandchildren, all of whom are smart and caring individuals."

The Mauldins moved to Red Oak in 2002, where they appreciate the country atmosphere and being close to big cities, such as Fort Worth, where Ruth grew up. "I was majorette and drum majorette in high school there," Ruth recalled. Ruth also calls herself a soccer fanatic and noted that watching the Fourth of July parade and seeing fireworks from their own front yard are favorite memories in Red Oak.

It seems the city has turned out to be perfect for the budding artist in Ruth, who said reaction to her work has been "really good." "I've sold some of my pottery and pendants and had terrific feedback," she said. To that end, she encourages other would-be artists not to be afraid to try something new. "Find something you love and work at it — nothing worth doing is easy, but the rewards are great." **NOW**

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# Overcoming Rocky Terrain

— By Sydni Thomas



While most teenage boys spend their time chasing girls, Cheyenne Harmon is trying to set new records in the Texas Off-Road Nationals, a regional motocross and off-road racing organization. In October of 2009, at the age of 13, Cheyenne raced in the pro class for the first time. Also at the age of 13, Cheyenne made Texas Off-Road Nationals history by becoming the youngest pro off-road rider.

The average rider enters pro races at age 17, but when Cheyenne began winning all of the races in his age class, the decision was made to push him up to the pro class. Every weekend Cheyenne participates in a race, whether it is a cross country or motocross course. Cross country, his main event, is a course across various terrains that lasts about 80 minutes. The bikes travel at speeds from 20 to 80 miles per hour through the course while trying to avoid trees and staying within specific boundaries.

Every year, Cheyenne has to get at least three new bikes for practice and races. He has been able to pick up sponsors that help cover equipment and racing costs. This year, he signed with RPM Cycle in Farmers Branch.

Cheyenne's sponsors also include Fox Racing, House of Horsepower, Motorex and Yum Shoes, a sponsor of famous rappers Soulja Boy and Sean Kingston. "Each race costs money to enter, and the cost of gear and equipment starts to add up," Cheyenne's mom, Cara Harmon, said. "If he didn't have sponsors it would make racing this many races impossible."

Once Cheyenne's riding became more serious, his family decided to homeschool him, so that he was able to dedicate more time to training. In the mornings he wakes up for a 12-mile bicycle ride followed by weight lifting and, occasionally, a run. In the afternoon once a week, Cheyenne heads to the local BMX park where he trains on a bicycle for balance and cardio with his friends. Actual training on the motorcycle happens about once a week. "A lot of bad habits can be learned by riding every day," Cheyenne said. "Getting lazy and having bad form can ruin you. I focus on physical fitness, because it's just as important. Some people think you can just get on a bike and ride, but without the physical

training, your body won't be able to handle the bike."

Terry Harmon, Cheyenne's father, is the only trainer he has ever had. Terry raced bikes up until 2007, when he had a wreck. Since then his focus has been on supporting Cheyenne and helping him achieve his goals. "There is no way I'd have been able to accomplish these things if my dad wasn't the one coaching me," Cheyenne said. "He's been with me from the beginning and knows so much. I'm thankful for what he has done for me."

The entire family is involved in Cheyenne's motocross events. His father is not just his coach but also his mechanic. Before every race, he does a tune up on the bikes to make sure they will run the entire 80-minute course. Cara helps run promotional events at each race. She also works



for *Holeshot Magazine*, a magazine for motocross and off-road enthusiasts. Even his little sister, Jordan, is at every race. At age 7, she participates in a race at least once a year. "We make these races a family event," Terry said. "Cheyenne



was born into a very competitive family. Racing is in our blood. I did it; his mother raced cars; and now it's his turn."

Terry and Cara entered Cheyenne in his first races before he even reached kindergarten. At 4 years old, Cheyenne began his racing career with quarter-midget race cars and BMX. He started motocross and cross country racing at the age of 5. "Cheyenne has been able to achieve great things due to the level



of maturity and dedication he has had since early on," Terry said. "He sets goals and does what needs to be done to achieve them."

Once Cheyenne turns 18, he will have the opportunity to be sponsored by factory teams and ride full time. If he gets picked up on a team, he will travel all over the world for races. "We are spending our time racing as many races as we can right now," Terry said. "He's not even reached his full potential yet. We're grooming him so that when he reaches 18, he can enter the AMA Pro and be a success."

With the full support of his family, Cheyenne hopes to turn his talents into a career. Through the struggles he has sometimes faced finding money for races and the sacrifices his family has made, Cheyenne has found hope for his future. Many of his favorite riders have had to overcome the same obstacles, and he knows that with hard work he'll be able to do the same. "I've been blessed by God to be able to do something I love," Cheyenne said, also mentioning his involvement with The Oaks Fellowship. "And one day, if I'm able to do it as a career, it won't be for the money. I love the sport and what it's done for me and my family." **NOW**

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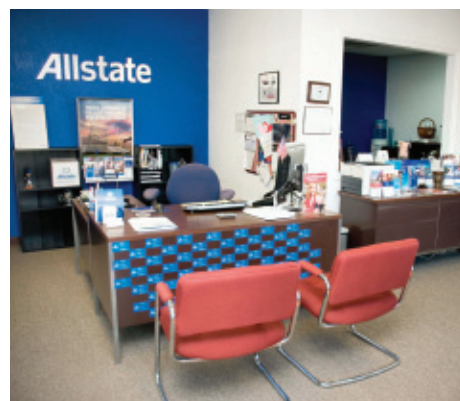
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## “Good Hands” for Business

*Allstate's Nickie Weyrauch covers locals from all angles. — By Angel Morris*

As a personal financial representative, Nickie Weyrauch is building her business in the community in which she lives. A resident of Oak Leaf for three years with her husband and three children, she knows many local families.

“My knowledge and understanding of the people in this community help me provide my customers with an outstanding level of service. I look forward to helping families like yours protect the things that are important — your family, home, car and more,” Nickie said. “I’m also here to help you prepare a strategy to achieve your financial goals.”

Through Allstate, Nickie is part of a company that has been serving its customers for more than 70 years. “I can offer quality insurance that’s affordable

and provide easy access for you to contact me in person, over the phone, online — wherever and whenever you need. Both Allstate and I know how important service is for a long-lasting relationship,” she said.

As a small business owner, Nickie understands the importance of building a solid foundation for the future and developing long-lasting customer relationships. “That’s why I’m committed to offering you the same level of service I’d expect from my own business dealings. When you leave my office, I hope you’ll feel confident, informed, assured and satisfied in your choices — the way you *should* feel.”

With a Bachelor of Business Administration from The University of Texas at Arlington, Nickie began

### **From left:**

Allstate Agent Nickie Weyrauch; Allstate Producer Jason Hill; Nickie’s hometown insurance agency.

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her insurance career seven years ago. Along with traditional insurance policies on cars, homes and businesses, Nickie can also help customers achieve their financial goals. "Whether you're saving for your child's education or planning for retirement, I can help you with a broad selection of insurance and financial products, including mutual funds, IRAs, variable and fixed annuities, 529 College Savings Plans and variable life insurance."

Using Allstate's trademark Good Hands Coverage Checkup, Nickie can provide one-stop insurance shopping. "This means you can take care of a wide variety of your insurance and financial needs in one place. If you're thinking of retirement, savings or protecting your family and assets, I would be happy to assist you in finding solutions to help meet your needs," she said. "Together, we can do a comprehensive review of your specific insurance and financial needs — at no cost to you."

With the Good Hands Coverage Checkup, Nickie helps determine what coverage customers may need and what discounts they deserve. "Are you saving all you can? We'll find out and get you the best possible coverage at the best possible rate," Nickie said.

Today Nickie sits on the Red Oak Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors as vice president, is involved in the Red Oak Independent School District Baseball and Softball Booster Club, and is proud to help residents of her community with their insurance needs. She said that while she is a "girly-girl who loves hugs and all things pink," she is also a serious businesswoman who takes to heart the Allstate slogan: Insurance is a profession. Not a hobby. That's our stand.

"We send out annual customer loyalty surveys and are involved in Facebook and Twitter so that we can constantly touch base with our customers," Nickie said. "We want to know that if an accident happens to you, your family will be able to get back up and stand on its own feet. We use the many things we have learned from family, friends and customers to better protect each and every person that we possibly can." **NOW**

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Suzy Keane's education roots run deep.

# A Family Tradition

— By *Angel Morris*

Teaching is in Suzy Keane's blood. In fact, Suzy and half a dozen relatives are educators. "I loved playing school when my sisters and I were small. I insisted on being the teacher — maybe I enjoy being in charge. I had some wonderful teachers while growing up. They set a shining example for me to follow," Suzy said. "I do think it's unique that so many people in my family are teachers, but we all enjoy this rewarding profession!"

Suzy's husband, John, teaches in Red Oak, her oldest son in Waco and her daughter in College Station. Her fourth child is at A&M majoring in history to be a professor; a niece and daughter-in-law also teach. The education bloodline began with Suzy's mother, who was a teacher and administrator.

"My mother is my biggest inspiration. She worked in education for 40 years and always said, 'If you're doing it for the kids, you're doing it right!' She comes to my classroom to help me get ready for school each year and still has the best ideas," Suzy said.

Graduating from Texas A&M University in 1980, Suzy taught in Dallas Independent School District (DISD) for 19 years. Eleven years ago, she began at Eastridge Elementary. "We've been here 14 years. With four children and being teachers, we needed to get the biggest bang for our buck," Suzy said of moving to Red Oak. "We needed more space, and we came here to find our perfect home."

Having children and teaching full time has been a challenge for Suzy, who calls marriage and family her biggest successes. "I wish there were 48 hours in the day! I do have the world's best husband though, and he has always done everything possible to make our life run smoothly," Suzy said. "My children are all out of the house now so things should be less busy, but that's not the case."

Suzy facilitates kindergarten fourth grade gifted and talented classes at Eastridge. "I say facilitate because I gather the materials, introduce the lessons and the children really guide the learning by working together to discover the concepts to be learned," Suzy explained. "I strive to instill in the children a desire to discover what they can learn. I work as a guide, sometimes steering them in the right direction, if needed."

While working with some of the brightest students, Suzy still helps them overcome academic and social challenges at times. "I try to make students feel valuable, loved and smart. Sometimes, it might just be a hug or a smile. I want them to know I am there for them if they need me," Suzy said. "There are also some extracurricular activities that I help with so children have time to shine beyond academics."

Suzy's motto — Never give up! You can do whatever you put your mind to! — transfers to the classroom. "It is my job to help

**"I try to make students feel valuable, loved and smart. I want them to know I am there for them if they need me."**



the students find their strengths and capitalize on them while helping them work hard on the weaker areas to strengthen them. I realize every student is different and special in his or her own way," Suzy said. "I have learned to be less of a cookie-cutter teacher expecting the same things from each student. Every day brings new knowledge to a teacher as far as ways to work with



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children to get the best output.”

Suzy's talent in reaching students earned her Teacher of the Year in 2003-04. In 2007-08 she was District-wide Teacher of the Year. “I was honored to receive these awards; this was definitely a professional success,” Suzy said, recalling her husband had already been Teacher of the Year twice. “So I was feeling a little jealous,” she joked. John was a Teacher of the Year in DISD in 1999-2000, and District-wide Teacher of the Year in 2002-03 for his work at Red Oak Intermediate. Their son was District-wide Elementary Teacher of the Year in Waco for 2008-09.



Aside from these honors, Suzy said watching her children participate at Red Oak High School produced her favorite memories. “My memories of them on drum line or playing soccer, volleyball, cross country and tennis are things I will always cherish.” Suzy is now creating new memories with her latest hobby. “I’ve recently started taking swing dance lessons with my husband, and we recommend it highly. It is a blast!” She adds dance to involvements that include American Cancer Society Relay for Life, St. Joseph Church Altar Society board member and Eucharistic minister, Delta Kappa Gamma (Teacher Service Organization), Eastridge Chess Club and HEARTS Club sponsor and Habitat for Humanity board member.

Suzy also enjoys working with “the most amazing group of terrifically dedicated teachers in the world. The teachers at Eastridge are the most caring, hard working and creative teachers I’ve known,” she said. Other than bloodline, Suzy believes most are in education for one reason. “Teachers do what they do because we want to help children grow up to be the best people they can possibly be, reaching their greatest potential.” **NOW**




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# In The Kitchen With Regina Graham

— By Adam Walker

Regina Graham is a stay-at-home mom of two boys and also teaches piano lessons. The North Carolina native relocated to Texas in September 2008. She started cooking during college for a musical group for whom she played. "We were a small, close-knit group and enjoyed cooking for each other," Regina explained. "We took turns creating elaborate dishes since we couldn't afford to eat out. We would

take our favorite meals and substitute different ingredients for something a little more decadent, more flavorful. Add a spice, herb or something off-the-wall. What we came up with most of the time was genius."

This started Regina's practice of "home cooking with gourmet flair." She enjoys trying cuisine from around the world, but still finds her inspiration in North Carolina. **NOW**



## PULLED PORK BARBECUE

**4 lbs. pork butt or shoulder roast**

### BRINE:

**2 cups boiling water**  
**1 1/2 cups kosher salt**  
**1 gallon cold water**

### DRY RUB:

**1/2 cup brown sugar, packed**  
**1/4 cup salt**  
**1/4 cup chili powder**  
**3 Tbsp. paprika**  
**3 Tbsp. white pepper**  
**2 Tbsp. black pepper**  
**2 Tbsp. cumin**

### SAUCE:

**2 cups apple cider vinegar**  
**1/4 cup hot pepper sauce (Texas Pete or Frank's Red Hot)**  
**1/4 cup crushed red pepper flakes**  
**1/2 cup brown sugar, packed**  
**4 oz. tomato paste**  
**2 Tbsp. soy sauce**  
**1 Tbsp. cayenne pepper**

One day before:

1. To brine, place pork in cooler, bucket or large stock pan lined with a roasting bag.
2. Heat water to boiling, dissolving salt; pour over pork. Add approximately 1 gallon cold water or enough to submerge pork.
3. Cover and let sit for 12 hours to 1 day.

Day of:

1. Preheat oven to 250 F.
2. Drain pork, pat dry.
3. Mix ingredients for rub. Rub pork.
4. Place in roasting bag. Roast for 5-6 hours.
5. Drain most of the drippings from the meat. Remove fat if desired.
6. Shred or chop meat and remove any bones.

For sauce:

1. In saucepan, combine all ingredients over medium-high heat. Allow to come to boil and reduce for about 10 minutes.
  2. Pour sauce over meat, mixing while pouring. Only adding sauce to taste. Serve additional sauce on side.
- NOTE: The traditional way to eat a pulled-pork sandwich is with a side of coleslaw.*

## COLESLAW

**1 cup mayonnaise**  
**1/2 cup buttermilk**  
**2 Tbsp. white vinegar**  
**1 Tbsp. lemon juice**  
**1/2 cup white sugar**  
**1 Tbsp. salt**  
**1/4 tsp. black pepper**  
**1 head green cabbage, chopped fine**  
**1 carrot, shredded**

1. Combine mayonnaise, buttermilk, vinegar, juice, sugar, salt and pepper. Add cabbage and mix well. Fold in carrots carefully. Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving.

## BOURBON CHICKEN SWEET POTATO AND RICE CASSEROLE

**1 Tbsp. canola oil**  
**4 chicken breasts or turkey (can also use ground)**  
**1/2 cup bourbon**  
**1 tsp. salt**  
**2 cups chicken stock**  
**2 Tbsp. brown sugar**  
**2 lbs. sweet potatoes, cooked and mashed**  
**1/2 cup fresh parsley**  
**2 Tbsp. dry sage**  
**2 cups brown rice, cooked**  
**4 oz. goat cheese**  
**1/2 cup golden raisins**  
**1/2 cup fresh figs, diced**  
**3 oz. walnuts, toasted, chopped**  
**Zest of one lemon for garnish**

1. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat; cook

- chicken until browned on each side. Remove pan from heat; add bourbon to deglaze pan. Cook until bourbon is reduced, 2-3 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 425 F.
3. In bowl, add salt, stock and sugar to mashed sweet potatoes; mix thoroughly.
4. In 9 x 13-inch casserole dish, add parsley and sage to rice, spreading evenly. Spread sweet potatoes over rice, in dollops. Top with chicken. Add crumbled goat cheese, raisins, figs and walnuts.
5. Bake for 20 minutes or until heated through and cheese is browning. Garnish with lemon zest.

## RESTAURANT-STYLE TUSCAN SOUP

**1 lb. ground sweet Italian sausage**  
**1 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**  
**1/2 lb. bacon**  
**1 large white onion, diced**  
**2 cloves garlic, minced**  
**5 cubes chicken bouillon**  
**10 cups water**  
**1 lb. sliced russet potatoes (approx. 3)**  
**1 cup heavy cream**  
**1/4 bunch kale**

1. Sauté Italian sausage and red pepper flakes in large pot. Drain excess fat and place meat in a small bowl; refrigerate.
2. In same pot, sauté bacon, onions and garlic for about 15 minutes over medium-low heat or until the onions are soft.
3. Mix together the chicken bouillon and water. Add to the onions, bacon and garlic. Cook until boiling.
4. Add potatoes and cook until soft, about 30 minutes.
5. Add heavy cream and cook until thoroughly heated.
6. Stir in sausage. Add kale just before serving. Serve with warm garlic bread or breadsticks.

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our Web site at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).



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NOVEMBER 18

# GREAT American Smokeout



November is a month we set time aside to be with family and friends for Thanksgiving. This month is also a time to give thanks for our lungs. November 18, 2010 is the Great American Smokeout. This is the 35th year that the American Cancer Society has marked a specific day to encourage smokers to take that first step in quitting the nicotine habit. Quitting smoking is not an easy thing to do, but it is very possible!

Go to [www.cancerorg/Healthy/StayAwayfromTobacco/index](http://www.cancerorg/Healthy/StayAwayfromTobacco/index) for tips and answers to your questions.

We, at the offices of Dr. Stephen Trammell, are most thankful for our patients. We invite anyone, who may have questions on ways to stop smoking, to make an appointment with our offices. Our practitioners will discuss the many options available and what they feel is best for you to be successful.



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# LIFE INSURANCE: PLAN TODAY FOR THE UNEXPECTED TOMORROW

— By *Andrea Walton*

Life insurance is a practical way to protect your family's financial hopes and dreams, yet millions of Americans have no life insurance coverage! In fact, only 53 percent of adult Americans have life insurance protection. Less than half of those are individual policies, while others depend upon group insurance, leaving them underinsured as well as vulnerable to being uninsured if they lose their job.

When you purchase a life insurance policy, your primary thought is usually security for your family and beneficiaries. Knowing that there will be funds available for your final expenses, the mortgage and income replacement after you are gone can be a great comfort to your spouse or loved ones.

The death of a family member can be devastating to survivors both emotionally and financially. Life insurance can provide cash to help with:

- Immediate needs, including funeral expenses, unpaid medical bills and taxes.
- Income replacement — to allow your family the chance to continue living the life to which they are accustomed.
- Long-term needs, including the costs associated with maintaining your home, including child care, home maintenance and extended care for a disabled child or elderly parent.
- Life insurance is not for people who die; it's for the people who live. According to a study by LIMRA, 45 percent of widows and 37 percent of widowers said their spouse had been inadequately insured. Most households hit by a premature death



saw a minimum 15 percent drop in income.

- When you buy life insurance, you buy a promise of protection in the event of an untimely death.

By planning for the inevitable now, your loved ones can be cared for in the future. **NOW**

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





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# AN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

— By Becky Walker

The great outdoors! Something about autumn simply beckons nature lovers. Perhaps it is the cooler temperatures, coming as a pleasant relief to the extreme heat of Texas summers that draws people to pack up their camping gear and head for the country. Or maybe it is the nostalgia of sitting around a campfire and reliving childhood pleasures like roasting hot dogs and marshmallows and listening to someone play the guitar. If the idea of a weekend retreat or vacation in the wilderness appeals to you, you might want to consider Cleburne State Park. Sitting on 528 wooded acres, the park is rustic and beautiful, boasting cedar, oak, elm, mesquite, redbud, cottonwood, sycamore, ash and sumac trees. With so many varieties of trees, what better place to take your children to hunt for leaves to add to their collections or use as part of their school projects?

Spring-fed Cedar Lake provides many opportunities for fun and relaxation: swimming, fishing and boating. Fishermen will find crappie, bass, catfish, blue gill and red ear sunfish in the cool waters. The boating speed limit is five miles per hour and personal watercraft such as jet skis are not allowed, but paddleboats are available for rent. Or if photography is more to your liking, the scenery will provide ample opportunity

for being a shutter bug. The area is full of wildlife, including: white-tailed deer, turkey, duck, armadillo, squirrel, skunk, bobcat, coyote and beaver, to name a few species. A hike on one of the trails just might land you a once-in-a-lifetime photograph! If you prefer a more athletic activity, be sure to bring your mountain bike. The park offers five-and-a-half miles of mountain bike trails with varying levels of difficulty.

Cabins, RV hookups and tent campsites are available. Picnic tables, grills and fire rings are located at each campsite as well. A large up-to-date playground offers hours of fun for the children. And there is an amphitheater perfect for group sing-a-longs.

Cleburne State Park is located 10 miles southwest of Cleburne, Texas. From Hwy. 67, turn left onto Park Road 21 and go six miles. The park sits on land that was once a favorite hunting ground for American Indians. Cowboys used it as a camp site while driving cattle along the Chisholm Trail. As you enjoy the peaceful beauty of the area, allow your imagination to take you back to the days when the Indians hunted in the woods and the cowboys played *their* guitars by the campfire. **NOW**

*Editor's Note: For more information, visit [www.stateparks.com/Cleburne.html](http://www.stateparks.com/Cleburne.html).*





## First and Third Mondays

Glenn Heights City Council meetings: 7:30 p.m., city council chambers, 1938 Hampton Rd., Glenn Heights. Call (972) 223-1690 or write [citysecretary@glennheights.com](mailto:citysecretary@glennheights.com).

## Second Monday

Red Oak City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Contact City Secretary Cynthia Olguin at (972) 617-3638 or [colguin@redoaktx.org](mailto:colguin@redoaktx.org).

## Second and Fourth Mondays

Ovilla City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., City Hall, 105 S. Cockrell Hill Rd. Contact City Secretary Pamela Higgins at (972) 617-2489 or [phiggins@cityofovilla.org](mailto:phiggins@cityofovilla.org).

## Third Monday

Red Oak ISD School Board meeting: 7:00 p.m., Red Oak Elementary cafeteria, 200 Valley Ridge Drive. Call (972) 617-2941 or visit <http://www.redoakisd.org/>.

## Fourth Monday

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Avenue in Waxahachie.

## First Tuesday

PrimeTimers Senior Group meeting: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Oaks Fellowship, 777 S. I-35 East in Red Oak. Open to all seniors. Fun, food and fellowship. RSVP to (214) 376-8208.

## Second Tuesday

Oak Leaf City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., Oak Leaf Municipal Center, 301 Locust Dr. Call (972) 617-2660 or visit <http://www.oakleafatexas.org/city-council> for details.

## First and Third Tuesdays

Red Oak Lions Club meetings: 7:00 p.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. For more information, call (214) 864-8014.

## Tuesdays and Thursdays

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings: 7:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-9100.

## Every Wednesday

Family Story Time: 10:00-11:00 a.m., Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. All ages welcome. Call (469) 218-1230 or visit [www.redoakpubliclibrary.org](http://www.redoakpubliclibrary.org).

## Wednesdays and Thursdays

Red Oak Senior Citizens Club meetings: 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 207 West Red Oak Rd. Games, exercise and activities. Call (972) 576-2777 for details.

## Every Thursday

GriefShare Recovery Support Group: 7:00 p.m. The Oaks Fellowship in Red Oak, room E-104. Anyone who has lost a loved one is welcome. Call (214) 376-8208.

## First and Third Thursdays

Glenn Heights Lions Club meetings: 7:00 p.m., Bienvenidos Restaurant, 920 N. I-35 E., Lancaster. Red Oak Seniors' Luncheon: Pre-register Tuesday prior to the event you wish to attend. No cost to senior residents; \$5 for senior non-residents. All citizens 55 and over are welcome. Call Misty at (972) 576-3414.

## Saturdays

Improv Comedy Night: 8:00 p.m., After Hours Improve Theater, 100 N. College Street, Waxahachie. Local clubs are invited to utilize AHI Charity Nights to raise funds for their organization. Call (972) 937-9839 or visit [www.AfterHoursImprov.com](http://www.AfterHoursImprov.com).

## Second Saturday

Lone Star Cowboy Church Motorcycle Group Ride: 1011 E. Ovilla Rd. (972) 576-0900.

## November 1, 15 and 29

New Morning Networker: 7:30 a.m.-8:45 a.m., Access Storage, 561 E. Ovilla Road. Call Tom Rogers at (972) 571-9299 for more information on this Chamber of Commerce business and networking event.

## November 2

What Parents Need To Know Seminar: 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., Red Oak High School Performing Arts Center, 122 State Highway 342. Call (972) 617-2941 for details.

## November 5

Memory Walk Café: 10:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Red Oak Health & Rehab, 101 Reese Road. Purchase lunch and 100 percent of your tab helps the fight to end Alzheimer's. Enjoy hot dogs, chili dogs, nacho bar and more for \$1-\$2.

Light Up the Night: 6:00-10:00 a.m. charity day sale at Belk of Waxahachie, 1540 Hwy. 77 N. Fundraiser benefiting First United Methodist Church of Red Oak. Tickets to enter the event are \$5 and are available through the church. Call Dani (972) 217-5005 or (972) 839-8946 for more details.

## November 5-7

Heart of Texas Craft Show: 3:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. November 5, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. November 6, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. November 7. Waxahachie Civic Center, 1950 N. Interstate Highway 35 E., Waxahachie. Benefiting the Ellis County SPCA, which will have its adoption trailer on site during the show Saturday and Sunday.

## November 6

Minute to Win It: 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Red Oak Elementary, 200 Valley Ridge Drive, Red Oak. The school hosts its own version of the popular Minute to Win It game.

## November 11-12

Phoenix Repertory Players present *Sleeping Beauty*: 7:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Parkway, Red Oak. Featuring fairies

and royalty, ogres and unexpected twists and turns, this new rendition of the classic fairytale is the funny, slightly frightening fall production of Phoenix Repertory Players, a local nonprofit youth theatre troupe. Admission is free, but donations are accepted. For more information, visit <http://sites.google.com/site/phoenixrepertoryplayers/> or contact [phoenixrepertory@gmail.com](mailto:phoenixrepertory@gmail.com) or managing director Rebecca Perry at (214) 763-6752.

## November 13

Holiday Craft Fair: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Knights of Columbus Hall, 325 Broadhead Rd., Waxahachie. Relay For Life - Twice Blessed Team hosts its first craft fair benefiting The American Cancer Society. E-mail Tracy Cantu at [babycantu72@aol.com](mailto:babycantu72@aol.com) for details.

## November 17

Red Oak Area Chamber Luncheon: Noon, Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Parkway. Cost is \$12 with reservations or \$15 at the door. Contact Shelley Oglesby at [admin@redoakareachamber.org](mailto:admin@redoakareachamber.org).

## November 18

Career Night: 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Red Oak Junior High, 200 Live Oak St., Red Oak. ROJH PTA hosts local professionals sharing career information with students. Students are encouraged to attend with their parents and local businesses may participate at no cost. Contact person Lori Rose, ROJH PTA Vice President, at (214) 742-9499, ext. 102.

## November 22-26

Red Oak ISD Thanksgiving Holiday: November 22 is a teacher in-service day, no classes for students; November 23-26 schools are closed.

## November 25-26

Most city offices are closed for the Thanksgiving holiday. Trash collection resumes on the next regularly scheduled pick up date.

## December 2-4

Red Oak Festival of Trees: First United Methodist Church of Red Oak, 600 W. Red Oak Rd. Dozens of creatively decorated Christmas trees, wreaths, stockings, gift baskets, centerpieces and other festive holiday decorations on display. Pictures with Santa, entertainment, children's activities and a holiday bake shop are featured and all holiday items will be sold by silent auction at event's end. Free admission. Hosted by Red Oak ISD Education Foundation, Red Oak Lions Club and FUMC. For more information, call (972) 617-4320.

## December 4-5

Model Railroad Open House: 1:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m., at the home of Bob and Freda Brand, 2509 Lake Ridge Road, Glenn Heights. Young and old alike are invited to view the couple's two-layer, mountainous train layout over 40 years in the making. Call (972) 230-8101 for details.





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For a physician referral or for more information about sleep services at Baylor Waxahachie, call **1.800.4BAYLOR** or visit us online at [BaylorHealth.com](http://BaylorHealth.com).

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