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ON THE COVER



Bill and Maggie Gray have fun hunting for bargains to beautify their home.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

CONTENTS

November 2014 • Volume 9, Issue 11



8 Charitable Child

A fourth-grader devotes her free time to volunteerism.

14 Beauty on a Budget

At Home With Bill and Maggie Gray.

26 Planning the Perfect Party

Holiday entertaining begins with simple ideas and ends with a memorable occasion.



32 BusinessNOW

34 Around TownNOW

44 CookingNOW

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Editor's Note

Without walls ...

As Thanksgiving approaches, plans for the perfect meal begin in kitchens across America. Travel itineraries, accommodations and menus are set, as friends and relatives prepare to gather in thanks. But there are those with no special arrangements on a day about special arrangements. Some enjoy the opportunity to be alone and reflect on their blessings, while others may long for a table to gather around.

Coincidentally, this month marks the 25th anniversary of the opening of Germany's Berlin Wall. Symbolizing the Cold War's end, the act marked the demise of 28 years of separation between East and West. Berliners from both sides celebrated together in the streets and symbolically chipped away at the wall itself.

Thanksgiving brings an opportunity to open your table to someone you've missed or someone who may otherwise miss this special meal. Why not let down our walls this month, too?

Angel

Angel Morris
North Ellis Co. NOW Editor
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Charitable



Jada Mitchell carefully packs a box of food for delivery to one of several Red Oak shut-ins who look forward to the arrival of Meals on Wheels each week. She handles the items with care, knowing how important the foods are to their recipients. Arriving at the first drop-off location, Jada anticipates the reaction she is about to receive. "I will knock on the door and call out 'Meals on Wheels!'" Then whoever answers the door is always excited to see me, and sometimes they give me great big hugs," Jada said.

While Meals on Wheels is her favorite charity, Jada participates in a multitude of other volunteer efforts. From collecting coats for the homeless to creating cards to send to servicemen and women, Jada's free time is far from frivolous. And although she meets a number of people who share her enthusiasm for volunteerism throughout these endeavors,

Jada herself is somewhat unique. It's not every day the person giving up her free time for charity work is only 9 years old. "I remember doing charity work with my youth group since I was about 4 years old. We were assigned monthly service projects, and my interest just kind of started there," recalled Jada, who is in fourth grade this year.

The youth group to which Jada refers is an extension of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, which sponsors three divisions of volunteers: Pearlettes are girls ages 4 to 8; Amicettes, ages 9 to 13; and Archonettes, ages 14 to 18. Founded January 16, 1920, at Howard University in Washington, D.C., the sorority expanded to include youth groups in an effort to build future leaders. Its youth groups are open to girls willing to service the community.

Participants like Jada have monthly meetings and workshops where they "learn the importance of an education and how to improve their study habits, etiquette, social and communication skills, teamwork and many other valuable lessons," according to group bylaws. This has proven true for Jada, who doesn't know life without volunteerism.

"We have collected items for food banks, and socks for nursing homes. I like making posters that explain what I'm collecting and putting the posters in places like where I take

Child

— By Angel Morris



dance,” Jada said. “My best poster for the canned food drive said, ‘CAN you help out?’ I drew pictures of what we needed on it.”

Her posters give a glimpse of Jada’s initiative, which has led her to excel in other areas such as dance and sports. “I like to make up my own dance routines around the house. I play basketball and soccer. Sports are awesome.” In 2013, she set her sights on earning enough volunteerism points to be named Zeta Phi Beta’s Pearlette of the Year. At the same time, she entered a poetry competition through the sorority, which she went on to win, as well.

“My mom picked the poem ‘Mother to Son’ by Langston Hughes for me, and I practiced it over and over in front of the mirror until I could say it without looking at the words on paper,” Jada explained. “Then we went to Houston where I dressed in a wig and a purple sweater and held a cane, so I would look like an older mom. In the end, I was the winner!”



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Of course, Jada relies on the adults in her life to help her pursue her interests. As an instructional coach for Dallas Independent School District, Jada's mom, LaShocka, is no stranger to inspiring young people. "If children are able to help people in need, it gives them an appreciation for what they have and for what it means simply to put a smile on someone's face," LaShocka said. "I see that Jada is thankful. She has gratitude. These experiences just make her an even more compassionate person."



“Bringing food to people who don’t have what we have and hearing the thanks in their voice – well, it’s just a lot of fun!”



A Zeta Phi Beta member herself, LaShocka said her daughter keeps her on her own volunteer toes. “She’s my accountability partner. If we haven’t done any community service in a while, she will ask, ‘What are we going to help with this week?’ She reminds me we can’t let everyday things get in the way of being there for others.”

When not volunteering, Jada dreams of being a paleontologist, because she loves imagining the lives of the creatures that created fossils. “You get to dig in the dirt, but you have to be very careful,” she explained, armed with knowledge from a lesson received at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose.

Until the day she can dig in the dirt full time, Jada is content to continue her favorite subject in school, math (“Because my mom is a math genius!”), and strive to earn a little extra cash by demonstrating an improved vocabulary.

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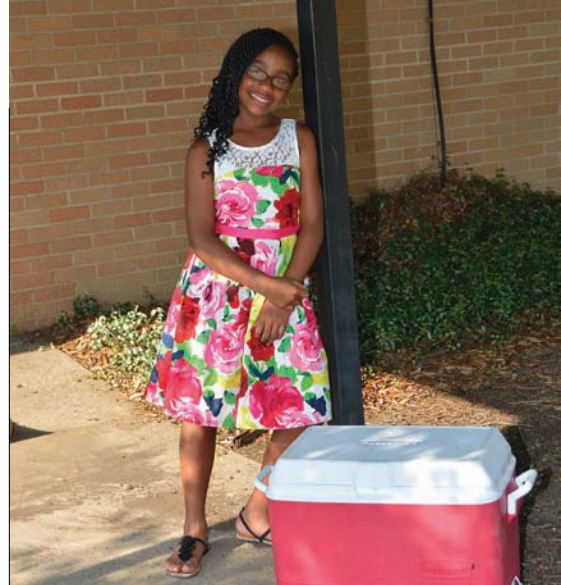
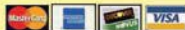


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"My mom encourages me to use 'million-dollar' words. If I use unique words then sometimes she gives me a dollar!"

Not surprisingly, Jada often turns around and gives that dollar away. "She will ask to give her money to people on street corners or to spend it on something to give to people she delivers meals to," LaShocka said.

"I bought bracelets at Dollar General to give to my Meals on Wheels people on Fourth of July!" Jada added.

Jada likes to make sure those in need are especially remembered at holidays, often recruiting friends, cousins and classmates to design cards to send to military members or those in nursing homes. "We've done Christmas cards and Mother's Day cards, too," she said. "It helps people just to know someone cares even a little."

Jada notes many people care enough about her to help with her missions. "My grandparents always donate to whatever group I'm working with. My mom and little brother come with me to the events, and my dad calls me his versatile child, because I'm into so many different things," Jada said. "All of them caring about me and the things I care about makes me feel good. My sister, who is 16, will even still play with me!"

Explaining she always plans to volunteer because she's "not the type of person who quits," Jada estimates she has participated in about 50 charitable events, including sorting Christmas toys for Mission Arlington and working a Half Price Books collection for children who do not have books. "Meals on Wheels is still my favorite though," Jada admits. "Bringing food to people who don't have what we have and hearing the thanks in their voice — well, it's just a lot of fun!" **NOW**

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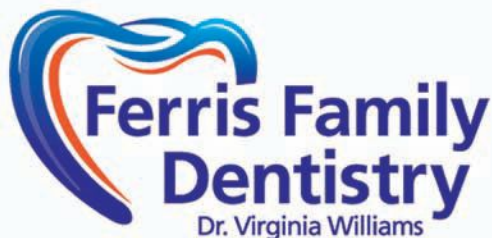
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A photograph of a backyard featuring a swimming pool with a waterfall, a brick wall, and a small shed with a Texas flag and a 'Happy' sign.

BEAUTY ON A BUDGET

AT HOME WITH BILL AND MAGGIE GRAY

— By Callie Revell

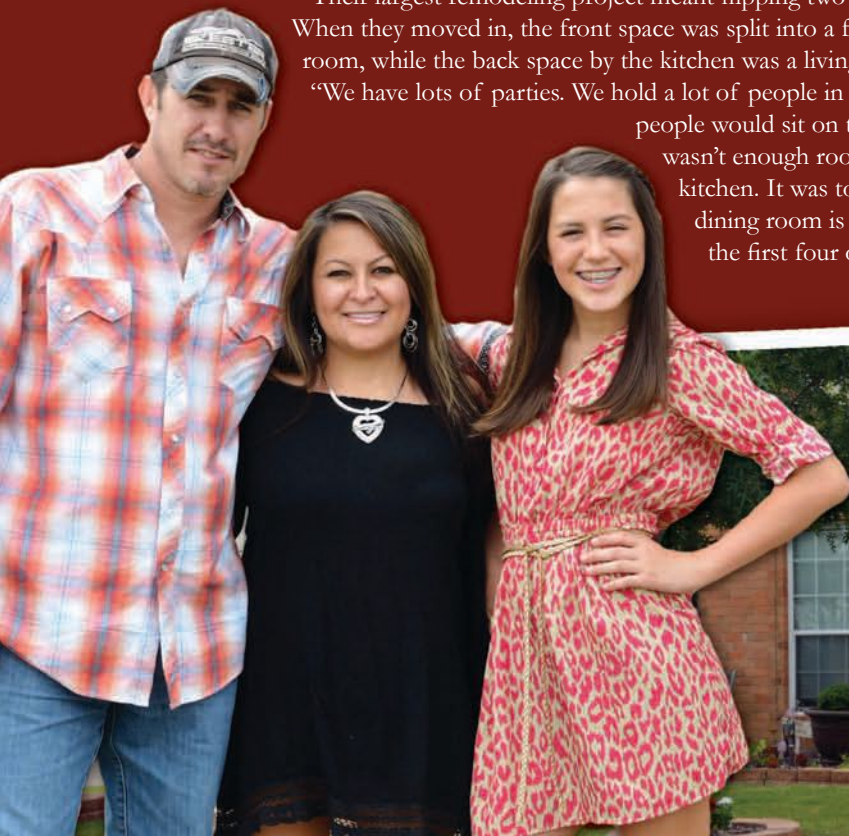
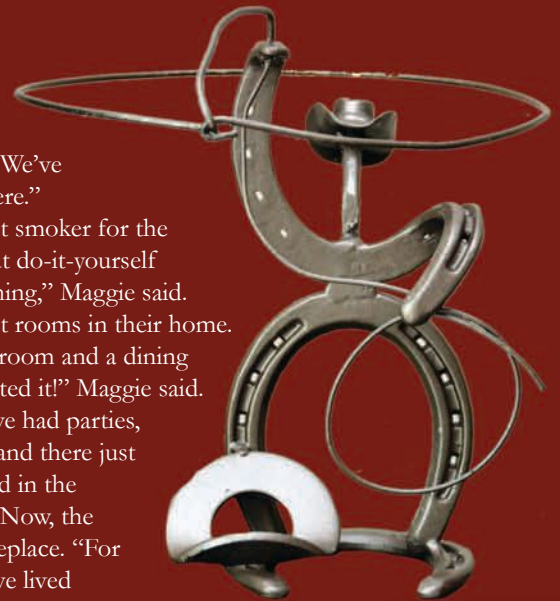
Bill and Maggie Gray live in a completely personalized home in the Quail Run Neighborhood of Red Oak. Maggie works for Ferris ISD as a benefit administrator, and Bill is a maintenance fabricator and welder. They have been married for 13 years, and during that time they moved to Red Oak. They built their home in 2001, but the work on their house hasn't stopped since the day they moved in.

Bill has done most of the remodeling projects for the house himself, including laying down hardwood floors, changing light fixtures and installing a backsplash in the kitchen. "He never sits still," Maggie said. "He always has a project." Both Bill and Maggie are very creative, and they are always coming up with new ideas for the house. "We've made a lot of changes since we've moved in," Maggie said. "It's never-ending around here."

Bill uses his welding skills to make lamps, art pieces, picture frames and even a 6-foot smoker for the backyard. He and Maggie are well-known in their neighborhood as knowledgeable about do-it-yourself projects. "We're the house everyone comes to for tools or when they need to fix something," Maggie said.

Their largest remodeling project meant flipping two of the biggest rooms in their home. When they moved in, the front space was split into a formal sitting room and a dining room, while the back space by the kitchen was a living room. "I hated it!" Maggie said.

"We have lots of parties. We hold a lot of people in here. When we had parties, people would sit on the fireplace, and there just wasn't enough room. It was loud in the kitchen. It was too compact." Now, the dining room is by the old fireplace. "For the first four or five years we lived





here, it was just wasted space,” Maggie said. “We definitely utilize it now as our living room.”

Bill and Maggie’s hands-on attitude is especially useful when they practice their favorite pastime: garage sale hunting. “Eighty percent of the furniture in our home is from a garage sale,” Maggie said. “It’s a lot of fun.” Much of their furniture is coordinated, even though it came from different sales. The Grays have found tables, couches, decorations and most of their kitchen appliances from secondhand sources. Bill looks for lamps to take apart and weld into new pieces. Maggie’s favorite garage sale find is an antique record cabinet that sits in their dining room. “It’s an old stereo, 8-track and record player,” Maggie said. “I bought it for \$50. It’s an original RCA. I use it every Thanksgiving and every Christmas, and I always play Elvis’ Christmas album during holiday dinners.” To Maggie, one of the greatest things about garage



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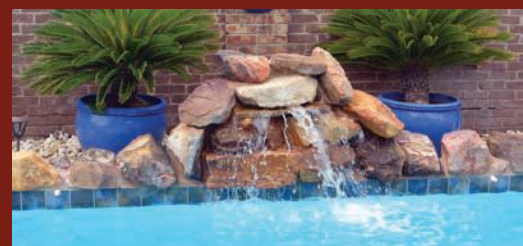
sale hunting isn't the finds but the relationships. "We've met so many neat people," she said.

Bill and Maggie even used their garage sale skills when building their luxurious backyard oasis. When they first moved in, their backyard didn't even have grass. It was a slow process to transform it into their dream retreat. "I had a friend come out and pour a concrete slab because, originally, I was going to do a gable roof and a patio out back, but it sat like that for five or six years," Bill said. "Finally, we went ahead and put a pool in, a new roof and patio." Bill constructed most of the backyard elements from materials he found, was given or bought at a reduced

price. "Whatever I can buy cheap or find, I do something with," Bill added.

Their shed, which acts as a pool house and changing room, has sentimental meaning to Bill and Maggie. "The Crystal Chandelier used to be a bar off of I-35, and it was where we had one of our first dates," Maggie explained. "When they tore it down, Bill decided to go by there and pick up some pieces." Bill then used the pieces to build the pool house. Maggie keeps water toys, as well as swimsuits of all sizes inside, in case guests come unprepared.

"Especially in the fall when it's not too hot or too cool, the backyard is our favorite place," Maggie said. Their pool





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features a waterfall and can be set up to play water volleyball. Under the patio roof, the Grays have built a fire pit and a full bar, including a 10-speaker stereo system and a big screen TV. "The full bar is built out of pieces people gave Bill," Maggie said, pointing out the cabinets, refrigerator and sink. "It was pretty much free, and we found the rest at garage sales, including the barstools." They love having friends over for parties in their backyard. "Our backyard definitely fits our lifestyle because we like to entertain, and it's very lively," Maggie said.

The Grays' biggest annual project centers on Halloween and autumn, which is Maggie's favorite time of the year to cook and decorate. Last month, they went over the top for Halloween, as they do every year. Famous in their neighborhood for having great candy and scary decorations, the holiday fear factor was all due to Bill's imagination and know-how. Wires and switches formed a complicated system of gags. "We had a platform with air cylinders under it that popped up when people walked by," Bill explained, showing how he controlled it all from a vantage point in the garage to scare people. "It's always so funny to see people run up the road scared to death!"

"Our house is one of those houses everyone loves coming to every fall," Maggie said. She has festive pumpkins and gourds on her dining room table, and cute scarecrows and seasonal candles adorn the brick fireplace. A stack of firewood sits



nearby hinting at cold weather to come. Maggie loves having friends and family over to enjoy the seasonal baked goods she prepares, including her famous homemade cupcakes. "Fall is definitely my favorite time of year," Maggie said. The temperate weather of autumn also makes it a great time to go to garage sales and work on home projects.

Bill and Maggie make a great team, and their combined talents have turned their home into a place where they can relax and enjoy their hobbies and interests, where their children have grown up happily. "The only challenges we've faced with the house are the ones we've brought upon ourselves by remodeling. We've changed a lot — or I should say, I ask for changes, and he does the work!" Maggie joked. "We do so much together." **NOW**

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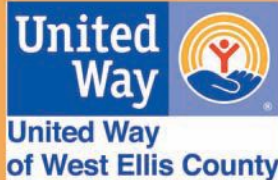
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Planning the Perfect Party

— By Amber D. Browne

The hustle and bustle of preparing for the holiday season can be quite all-consuming. Adding a dinner party or overnight guests to the equation can increase the stress. Whether you're taking on the challenge of hosting friends for dinner or family in the guest room, having a plan in place is the key to a fun-filled occasion.

When planning a holiday get-together, first decide who is on the guest list. You could choose to invite a few of your closest friends or a group of 20 or more. Or family

could stay for the extended holiday. In either scenario, plan the date and set a time for the holiday dinner.

Incorporating a theme is a key component to any event. The holiday itself can be used in planning for decorations, music and games, but if it's a dinner for friends, choosing a fun theme may be a good choice. Pinterest or event-planning blogs feature a variety of theme options.

Keep the following in mind if you choose to host a holiday dinner:

1. What is your budget?
2. Will it be a sit-down or buffet-style dinner?
3. What type of decor will you use?
4. Is the dinner adults-only or will children also attend?
5. What type of music and entertainment will be incorporated?



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The budget should include funds for food, beverages, decor and entertainment. If you plan to hire a caterer, a printer for invitations or even a cleaning crew, include those costs in the budget as well. If you don't want to host the event at your home, a local restaurant or rental facility may be the perfect place to gather. Include any rental fees in the budget. Setting aside additional funds for last-minute costs is also a good idea.



Food & Beverage:

Planning the menu ahead of time is a priority. Cookbooks, the Internet or cherished family recipes offer delicious choices for holiday meals. If you are planning a themed meal, stick with recipes that fit the motif.

If you don't want to spend time prepping and cooking the food, hiring a caterer is an option. Many caterers provide dinnerware, serving dishes and utensils, flatware and related items. On-site caterers can help with cleanup, too. For easier cleanup or a more casual event, purchase disposable dinnerware and flatware, and make trash cans readily available to guests.

When hosting a party, you may decide to serve alcoholic beverages. You can stock the bar yourself or advise guests to bring their own alcoholic beverages. Hiring a licensed bartender to serve



drinks during the event is another option. Don't forget to provide nonalcoholic beverages and have extra ice on hand. For guests who may overindulge, have a taxi service phone number available.

Venue, Decor & Entertainment:

Preparing your home for guests can be an undertaking, but a clean home creates a relaxed atmosphere. Stock the bathrooms with toilet paper, soap and clean or disposable hand towels. Offer guests a safe place to leave coats and purses. Lighting the fireplace or candles throughout the home creates a cozy ambience, but don't forget to extinguish the flames after the party!

Fresh flowers can brighten any table. You may choose to purchase arrangements from a local flower shop or buy seasonal flowers to create your own arrangement. Cranberries are popular this time of year and can be incorporated into the arrangement. Add one to two bags of fresh cranberries to a clear vase. Fill the vase about three-quarters full with water. "Using a sharp knife, carefully cut the ends off the fresh flowers at a 45-degree angle. Add cut flowers to vase, arranging as needed," explains a how-to page at OceanSpray.com.



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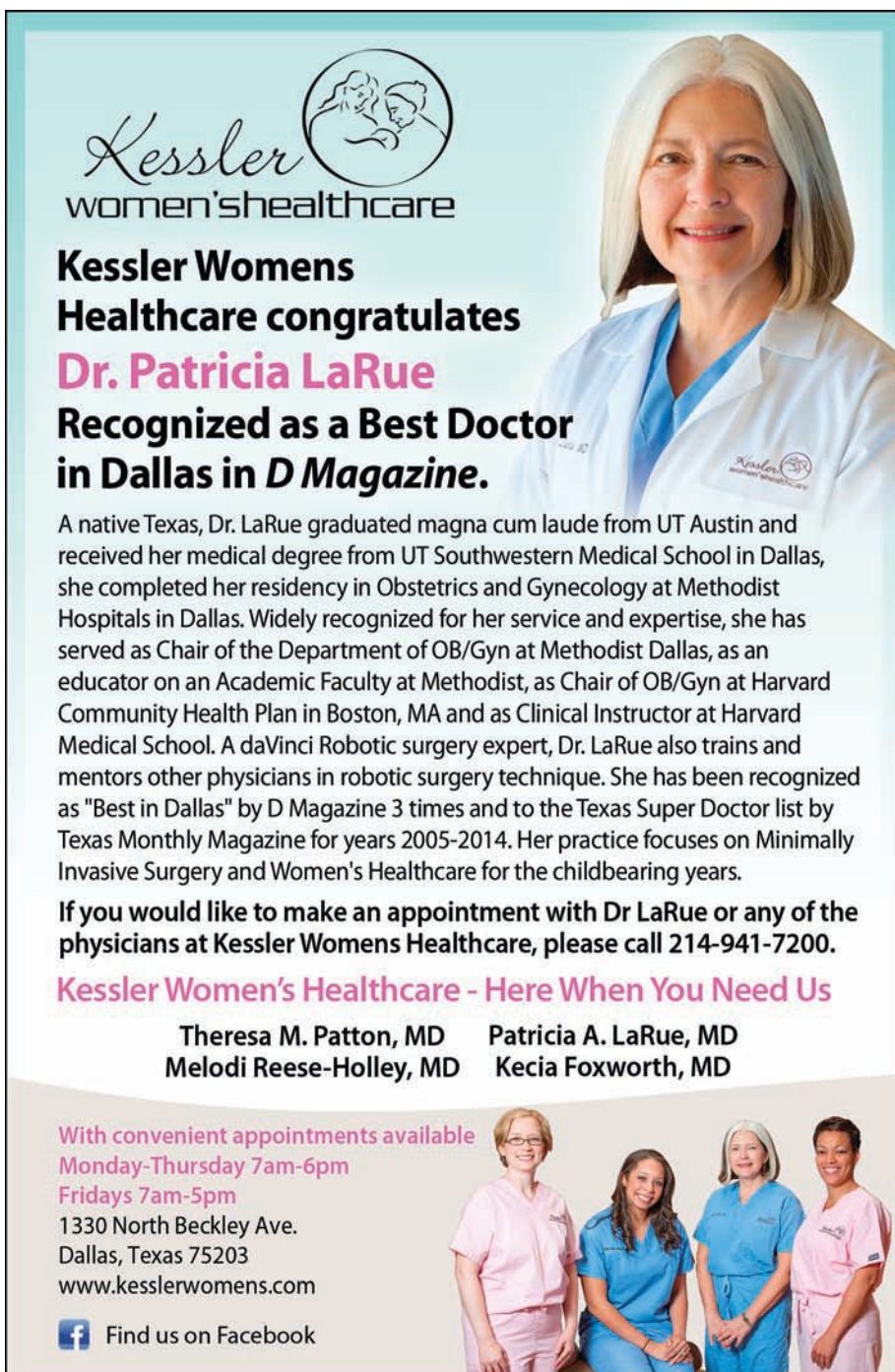
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If children and teenagers are invited, set a separate table for them. Using real dinnerware will create a more formal atmosphere and adding amusing trinkets to the table will keep the younger crowd entertained. Place holiday crackers, which hold small toys, at each table setting as a fun addition.

For entertainment, themed music can play during the event. You can incorporate games, too. For a guessing game, you can purchase a nice container and add individually wrapped candies. Make sure to count the candies first! Display the candy container alongside a jar, paper and pens for guests. Guests can write down how many candies they think are in the container and place their guesses in the jar. The one closest to the actual number wins the candy-filled container!

Overnight Holiday Guests:

Find out beforehand what types of snacks and drinks your guests prefer, and stock the cupboard and refrigerator. When planning the meals, get your guests' input. Be sure to find out if they have any food allergies. Many overnight guests may want to help out in the kitchen and chip in on food.

An inviting guest room is a necessity. You want your guests to feel at home when they visit. Provide clean, comfortable bedding, a night light and a couple of bottles of water on the night stand. The guest bathroom should include everyday grooming items, including soap, shampoo, conditioner and cotton swabs. Include plenty of fresh towels, extra toilet paper and air freshener.

Keeping your guests entertained during their stay can be a challenge. Why not plan a shopping trip with your female guests and send the men off to play golf? Whatever you choose, don't stress! Your guests will be happy to spend quality time with you.

Hosting parties and overnight guests can take a lot of time before, during and after, so ask for help. Many hosts and hostesses often find themselves too busy to enjoy their hard work. Don't let that happen to you. Take time to sit back, chat with your guests and enjoy yourself! **NOW**



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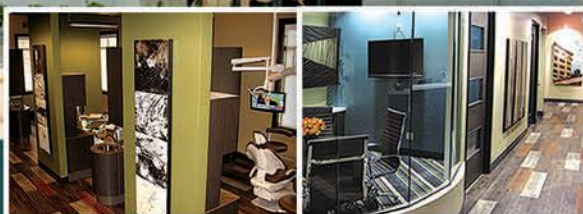
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Ellis County roots add to Landmark Equipment's success in the area.

A *Landmark* Business

This year, Mark Lyle's construction equipment company marks its 25th anniversary in Ellis County.

— By Angel Morris

As the owner and president of Landmark Equipment, Mike Lyle brings a lifetime of Ellis County experience to his customers. Growing up in Waxahachie and living for many years in Red Oak means Mike is very familiar with the communities his business has served for 25 years. "I moved here in 1970 with my family when I was 12. My father, Jim Lyle, owned an International Harvester dealership, Lyle Truck & Tractor, in Waxahachie from 1970 to 1985," Mike noted.

In high school, Mike began working for his father's business, until his dad sold the company in 1985. Then Mike moved to the Dallas area and started managing a store for the Case brand. "In 1989, I took over the Ben Griffin Tractor dealership, which had been in downtown Dallas since 1945 and renamed it Dallas Ford

New Holland. In 1991, I moved back to Ellis County and lived in Red Oak for 12 years with my wife, Marla," Mike said.

Mike moved the dealership to its current location on Loop 12 in Irving in 1994 and opened a second dealership in McKinney in 1998, renaming the business Landmark Equipment. He opened a third store in 2001 in Fort Worth.

In 2002, Mike and Marla moved from Red Oak to Waxahachie to rear their two children and then opened the Waxahachie location in 2005. This is the Lyle family's 25th anniversary as a retail dealer of construction equipment.

Mike's children, Blake and Lauren, now attend the same high school from which he graduated in 1975. "I really enjoy having a family business in the area where I grew up. My younger

brother, Gary, joined the business in 1994 and serves as vice president and store manager of the Waxahachie location, and my wife works part time in Waxahachie and is the human resources manager for the company,” Mike explained. “Working with family and all the customers I get to meet and build friendships with has been the very best part of this business.”

Landmark Equipment started out representing the New Holland Ag and Construction brand in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and over the years added the Takeuchi and Sany construction equipment lines, Mahindra tractor lines, and Bad Boy, Cub Cadet, Hustler and STIHL lawn care equipment.

“We are a full sales, parts and service dealer, and we also have an equipment rental operation where we rent construction and agricultural equipment, along with light towers, generators, scissor lifts, trenchers and other small equipment,” Mike said.

“I really enjoy having a *family business* in the area where I grew up.”

With the help of Waxahachie salesman Ralph Koch, who has been with Landmark Equipment for almost 10 years, Mike is committed to meeting the needs of their multifaceted community. Placing his four locations around Dallas-Fort Worth was a strategic move to better serve customers’ needs.

“The Metroplex is a very large, diverse area. One city merges with another and farms and ranches line the highways in all directions,” Mike noted. “Each of our stores at Landmark Equipment is set up to meet equipment needs for our customers, whether it’s business contractors and municipalities or individual homeowners and farmers.” **NOW**

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Local Boy Scouts participate in the Heritage Day Parade.



Girls' Animal Lovers Society (GALS) is a group for girls ages 7 and up who meet to interact with a variety of animals at Ellis County's Paws for Reflection Ranch.



Heather Howton, a freshman member of the Red Oak High School Hawkettes, is all smiles from the football sidelines.



Indian Trail Master Naturalists members, who meet monthly in Red Oak, visit with patrons of a recent Ellis County Farmers Market.



Lions Club members volunteer at Red Oak Founder's Day activities.



Red Oak ISD and the City of Red Oak volunteers participate in a mock disaster scenario at Red Oak Junior High School to test the emergency preparedness of the community.



Red Oak Police Officer Dustin Bragg and K9 Rambo work the streets after earning National Narcotic Detector Dog Association certification.



Abigail Faulksen is honored by Mayor Richard Dormier as winner of the Ovilla Heritage Day T-shirt Art Contest.



The cast of Waxahachie Community Theatre's Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (including Red Oak's Brian Caudell) gives way to this month's production of The Music Man.



Red Oak Junior High theater teacher, Katrina Keener, works the dunk tank (in 60 degree weather) during Red Oak Founder's Day.

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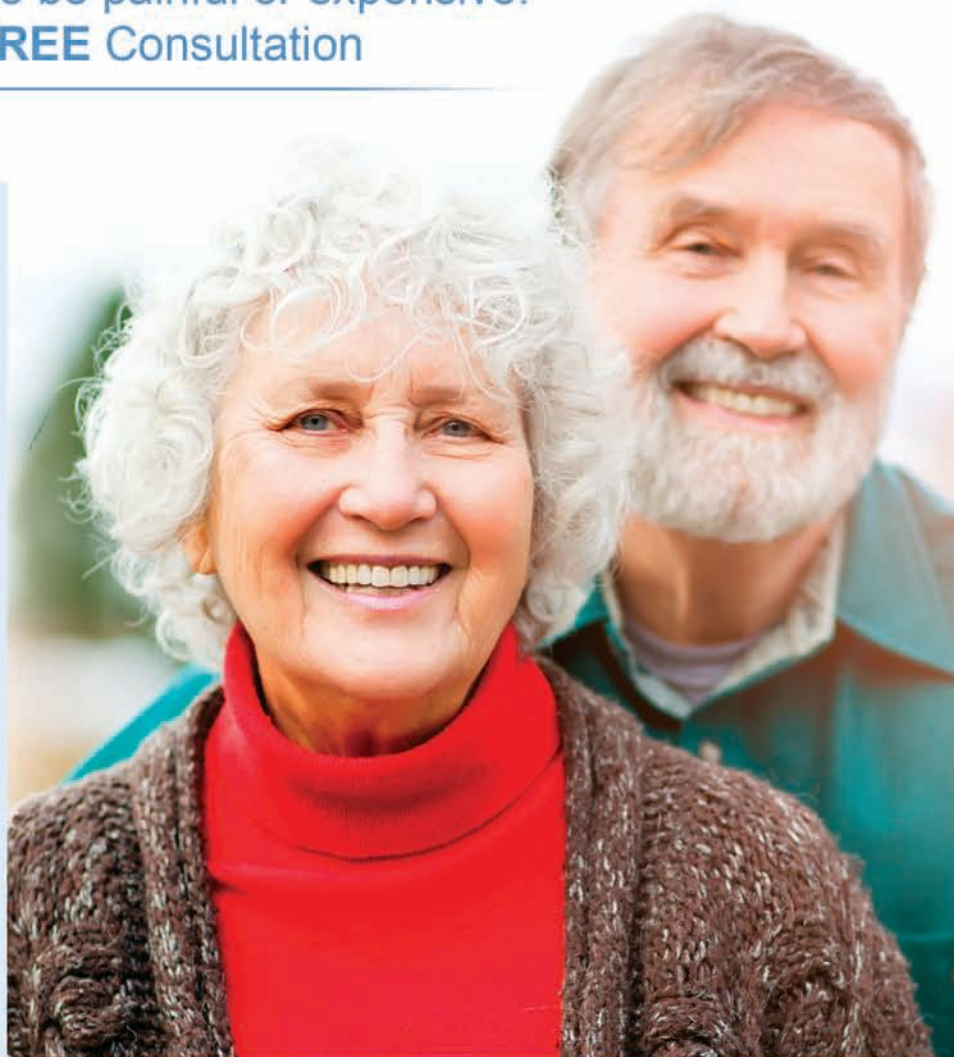


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An Indulgent Brew

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Umm, the smell of hot coffee brewing is the best wake-up call. It is even better than the smell of sizzling bacon, because with coffee you get a little extra something. Caffeine is a central nervous system stimulant, which means it can change the way you feel and behave. That little zap to your system makes you feel more awake, focused and alert. Studies now show caffeine's benefits go beyond increased energy to providing some protection from diseases such as type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's and dementia.

But as with anything affecting your brain and your heart, there is always the possibility of too much of a good thing. With caffeine, overindulgence is easy. Since the FDA identifies it as a drug and a food additive, the products in which you can find it are endless. Caffeine is in prescription and over-the-counter medications, such as headache tablets and diet pills. You can find it in certain teas, energy snacks, soft drinks and candy — particularly those with chocolate. You can also find caffeine in some ice creams and yogurts. If you need to lower your daily intake of caffeine, it is necessary to read labels to be sure how much you are taking.

Generally, caffeine does not cause difficulty if consumed in safe amounts. A moderate amount of 100-200 mg. caffeine, which is roughly two cups of coffee a day, is considered to be reasonable.

Regular sized soft drinks, such as Coke and Pepsi, contain approximately 35-55 mg. The total of what is safe for individuals may depend upon body type, size and health. Taking over 600 mg. of caffeine a day can be detrimental to your health. The amount of caffeine children consume should be greatly limited. A safe amount for adolescents is considered to be no more than 100 mg. per day. Pregnant women should check with their doctor before consuming caffeine.

Symptoms of consuming too much caffeine are increased heartbeat, feeling jittery, nervousness, increased blood pressure and headaches. Those with heart irregularities may want to check with a physician to determine a safe level of caffeine to consume. Drinking caffeinated drinks too close to bedtime can cause insomnia. Caffeine is a diuretic as well as a stimulant. A diuretic increases the output of urine — meaning you lose more fluids. That is why caffeinated drinks should not be used to quench your thirst.

There is a lot of good along with some risk in caffeine. Pay attention to your intake before you enjoy! **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.



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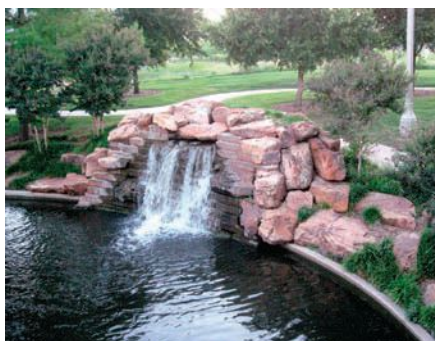
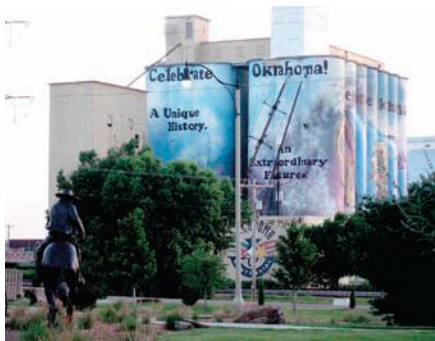
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OK, Here We Come!

— By Becky Walker



Fresh air, room to breathe, optimism, the smell of the earth after a rain — these are a few of the things Oscar Hammerstein II immortalized in song for the musical *Oklahoma!* These characteristics really seem to capture the heart and spirit of our neighbors to the north. There is a spirit similar to our own — and in spite of our Texas/OU rivalry, we have a lot in common.

Both states were settled by tough-as-nails pioneers with a never-give-up attitude. They needed such “grit” to tame a new land and make it their home. Like Texans, Oklahomans love their land, their history and like to have just a little “elbow room.” You can get a sense of all three aspects with a trip to Oklahoma City.

As the largest city in the state, Oklahoma City is full of diversity, blending its old-fashioned, Western roots with a hip, urban scene. The Bricktown Entertainment District is a must-see. Originally the city’s warehouse district and the site where four railroad companies focused their freight operations, Bricktown is rich in history and was the key to Oklahoma City’s early economic growth. Following the Great Depression and World War II, the area fell into decline until investors with a vision revitalized the area in the early 1980s.

Today, Bricktown is a thriving retail and entertainment district, filled with restaurants and nightclubs, like Mickey Mantle’s Steakhouse and Toby Keith’s; shops; a ball park; a movie theater;

and an awesome canal. At one end of the canal is the beautiful Devon Energy Centennial Mosaic Mural. The mural, which took more than a year to complete, was constructed by Oklahoma City Community College students, volunteers and artists in honor of the city’s 100th birthday and features official state symbols.

Also located along the Bricktown Canal, is the Oklahoma Land Run Monument. While already impressive, this sculpture is not yet complete. Honoring those who participated in the Oklahoma Land Run when the Indian Territory was opened to settlers, it will take about 12 years to get all 45 pieces made and installed. When it is finished, it will be one of the largest sculptures of its kind in the world.

Of course, a trip to Oklahoma City would not be complete without paying respect at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. The Outdoor Symbolic Memorial spans the downtown city block where the Oklahoma City Bombing took place on April 19, 1995. With a field of lighted chairs, a beautiful reflecting pool and the sturdy Survivor Tree, the memorial reflects Oklahomans’ spirit of hope, love of the land and wide open places, respect for their history and their love of peace.

Oklahoma City is located approximately three-and-a-half hours north of Dallas off I-35. If you are ready to take a trip, you will find this is one city that is OK! **NOW**



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November 1, 2

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November 2

Daylight Savings Time ends! Set clocks back one hour.

November 3, 10, 17, 24

Hot Yoga Community Class: 5:45-6:45 p.m., Dynamic Yoga for Love Studio, 558 Bluebird Ln., Red Oak. Beginner to advanced levels welcome; modifications offered for various body types and ages. Donations accepted. Visit yoga4love.net for details.

November 4

Election Day: 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., area municipal buildings. Photo ID is required in Texas. Check city websites for polling locations in your area.

November 6

Life Line Screening: 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Red Oak Library Evelyn Pitt's Room, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Mobile health screenings

designed by doctors and administered by trained professionals to help detect hidden health issues before they become a problem. Visit www.lifelinescreening.com to schedule a local appointment.

November 8

Red Oak Opry: 7:00 p.m., Lone Star Cowboy Church, 1011 E. Ovilla Rd. Live country and Gospel music featuring several different singers backed up by the six-piece Opry Band. Adult tickets \$10 at door. Visit redoakopry.com for more details.

November 11

342 Morning Networker: 7:30 a.m., Denny's Restaurant, 408 N. I35 Service Rd., Red Oak. Breakfast and business owner networking. Business owners from all communities welcome. RSVP to (214) 244-2329.

Self-Defense Class: 9:00-10:00 a.m., City Hall, 301 Locust Dr., Oak Leaf. Visit www.oakleafatexas.org to learn more.

November 15

Ferris Trade Day: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., historic downtown square pavilion, 100 Town Plaza, Ferris. Vendors welcome. Call (972) 544 2012 for more details.

November 17

Book Club: 7:00-8:30 p.m., Red Oak Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Email sandyg@aircanopy.net for this month's book selection.

November 19

Chamber Luncheon: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Networking opportunity for businesses. Members with reservations \$12; members without reservations \$15; non-members \$20. Contact chamberassist@redoakareachamber.org to learn more.

November 22

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m. Old Bristol Schoolhouse, Union Hill Road at Church Street. Call (972) 846-2211 for more details.

November 27

Thanksgiving: City offices closed. Check city websites for full holiday closure dates and times.

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



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In the Kitchen With Ellen Hardin

— By Angel Morris

Hailing from Germany, Ellen Hardin's cooking is greatly influenced by her culture. Moving to the states, she began to cook for herself in college. "I lived in North Carolina and learned to cook Southern favorites, but my baking is still German-style," she said.

Preparing holiday cookies as a child is a favorite memory. "There would be three generations in the kitchen. Our great-grandfather in charge of the oven, my grandmother handling dough preparation, and us girls in charge of licking spoons and placing cookies on cooling racks," Ellen said. "My sister and I continue to bake some of Grandmother's recipes, and family in Germany has adopted some of my recipes from the states. It's nice how traditions can change and expand." **NOW**

Oma's Makronen

These are fragile cookies!

- 4 egg whites**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 2 cups nuts (hazelnuts, pecans or coconut suggested), finely chopped**

- 1.** Use a silicone baking mat or buttered and floured cookie sheet.
- 2.** Preheat oven to 325 F.
- 3.** Beat egg whites until they start to foam. Add sugar little by little. Continue beating egg whites until stiff.
- 4.** Fold nuts into egg whites.
- 5.** Drop by teaspoonfuls onto cookie sheet. Bake 20-25 minutes.

Green Bean Sauté

- 1 1/2 lbs. fresh green beans**
- 1 medium onion, chopped**

- 1 large garlic clove, mashed**
- 1/4 cup dry white wine**
- 6 slices bacon, fried crispy, crumbled**

- 1.** Wash and trim green beans.
- 2.** Steam green beans until just tender with still a bit of crunch. Remove from pan; rinse under cold water to retain color.
- 3.** Sauté onion for 3 minutes. Add garlic and sauté 1 minute. Add green beans and heat through. Add wine; braise for 1-2 minutes until beans have desired consistency. Add bacon crumbles.

Elegant Beef Tenderloin

Ellen's German family's favorite recipe from the states.

- 1 5-lb. beef tenderloin, trimmed**
- 1 1/4 tsp. garlic salt**
- 1 cup burgundy wine**
- 1/4 cup soy sauce**
- 3/4 cup butter**

- 1 tsp. lemon pepper seasoning**
- Grapes (optional)**
- Celery leaves (optional)**
- Lemon zest (optional)**

- 1.** Place tenderloin on slightly greased, shallow roasting pan; sprinkle with garlic salt. Bake at 425 F for 10 minutes.
- 2.** Combine wine, soy sauce, butter and lemon pepper seasoning in a small saucepan. Cook until mixture is thoroughly heated.
- 3.** Pour over tenderloin; bake an additional 30-40 minutes, or until thermometer registers 140 F (rare) 150 F (medium rare) or 160 F (well done), basting occasionally with pan drippings. If desired, garnish beef with grapes, celery leaves and lemon zest.

Pumpkin Roll

- 3 eggs**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 2/3 cup pumpkin, mashed and cooked**
- 1 tsp. lemon juice**
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour**
- 1 tsp. baking powder**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice**
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg**
- 1 cup pecans, chopped**
- 1/2 cup plus 2 Tbsp. powdered sugar (divided use)**
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened**
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine, softened**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- Garnishes: sweetened whipped cream and chopped pecans, to taste**

- 1.** Grease and flour a 15x10x1-inch jellyroll pan (or line pan with parchment paper); set aside.
- 2.** Beat eggs in a large bowl at high speed with an electric mixer until thick; gradually add sugar and beat 5 more minutes. Stir in pumpkin and lemon juice.
- 3.** Combine next 6 ingredients; gradually stir into pumpkin mixture. Spread batter evenly in prepared pan; sprinkle with pecans, gently pressing into batter. Bake at 375 F 12-15 minutes.
- 4.** Sift 2 Tbsp. powdered sugar in 15x10-inch rectangle on a cloth towel. When cake is done, immediately loosen sides of pan and turn cake out onto sugared towel. Starting at narrow end, roll up cake and towel together. Let cake cool on wire rack, seam side down.
- 5.** Beat cream cheese and butter in a large bowl at high speed with electric mixer. Gradually add remaining powdered sugar and vanilla, beating until blended.
- 6.** Unroll cake. Spread with cream cheese mixture and carefully reroll. Place cake on plate, seam side down. Garnish with whipped cream/pecans if desired.

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