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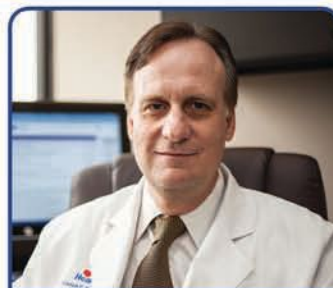
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**Robert E. Ficula, D.O.**

Dr. Robert E. Ficula attended Barry University of Miami Shores, Florida, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree graduating *summa cum laude*. Dr. Ficula is a graduate of Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his internship and residency in internal medicine and his cardiology training fellowship at Plaza Medical Center of Fort Worth and then joined HeartPlace in 2011. He is board certified in cardiovascular disease and internal medicine. Dr. Ficula and his family live in Waxahachie and he is excited to serve the cardiac needs of the community.

Dr. Joseph Bellomo attended the University of California, where he received his undergraduate degree. He received his Doctorate in Medicine from the New York University School of Medicine. He completed his internship and residency in internal medicine and his fellowship in cardiology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Dr. Bellomo is Board Certified in internal medicine and cardiovascular disease. He joined HeartPlace in 1995 and is looking forward to serving the community of Red Oak and the surrounding area.



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## ON THE COVER



CJ Noland exemplifies the heart of a student athlete.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).





## Editor's Note

*Happy New Year!*

NOW Magazines is marking the New Year with changes — one of which has been my transition into the new role as your North Ellis County community editor. I believe promoting a sense of community is important, and one way of accomplishing this is by helping our residents become more actively engaged in the places they choose to live, work and play. Ferris, Red Oak, Ovilla, Glenn Heights and Oak Leaf are the cities in our community, and our residents

have stories brimming with hope, humor, inspiration and courage. My goal is to share their stories with you and your family.

So as this New Year begins to unfold, please feel free to email me your ideas and suggestions for stories and events you would like to see featured in *North Ellis Co.NOW*. I am looking forward to hearing from you!

Wishing you a bright, peaceful and prosperous year!

*Dianne*

Dianne Reaux  
North Ellis Co.NOW Editor  
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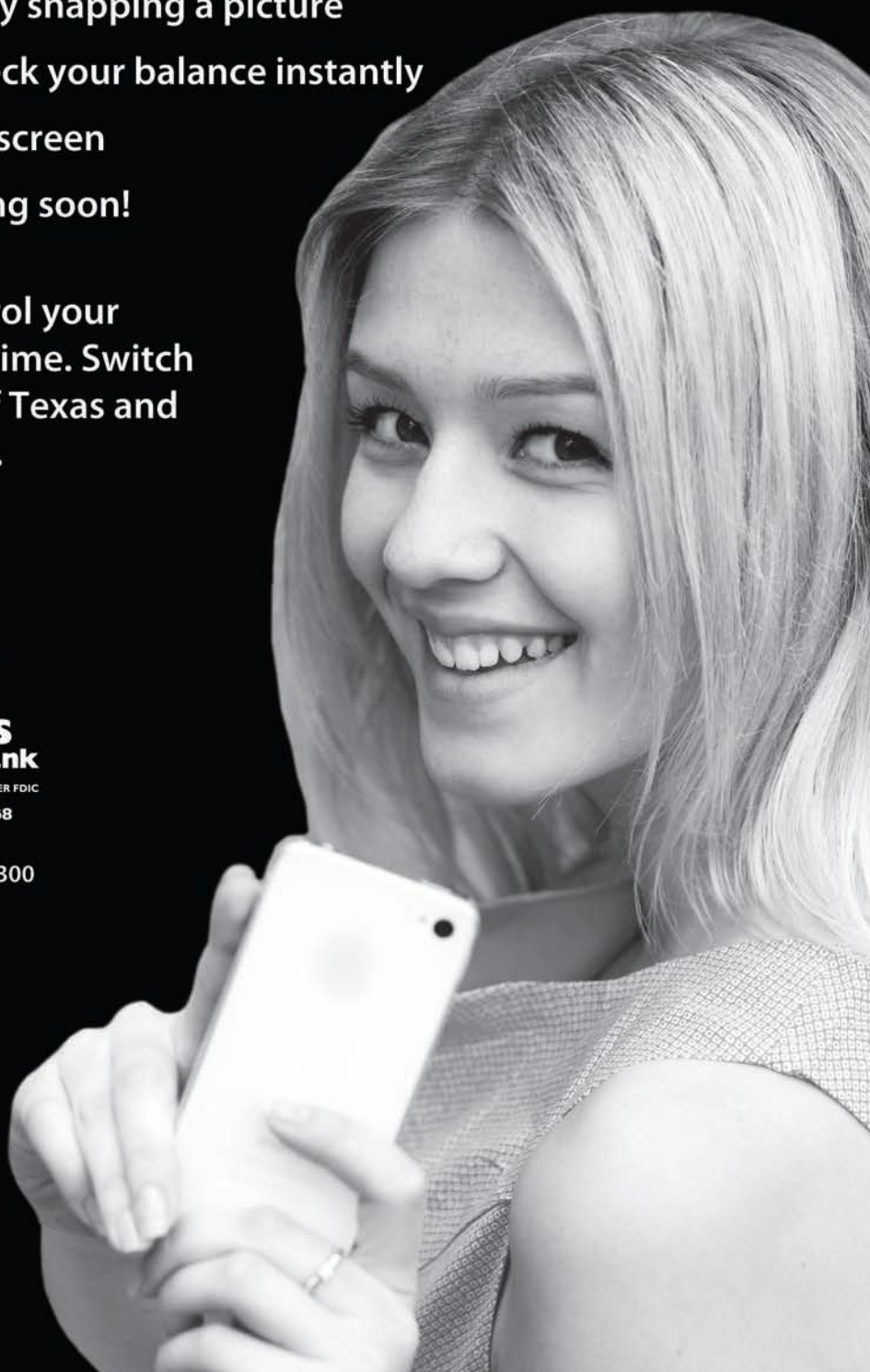
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# A HEART



# G FOR THE GAME

— By Callie Revell

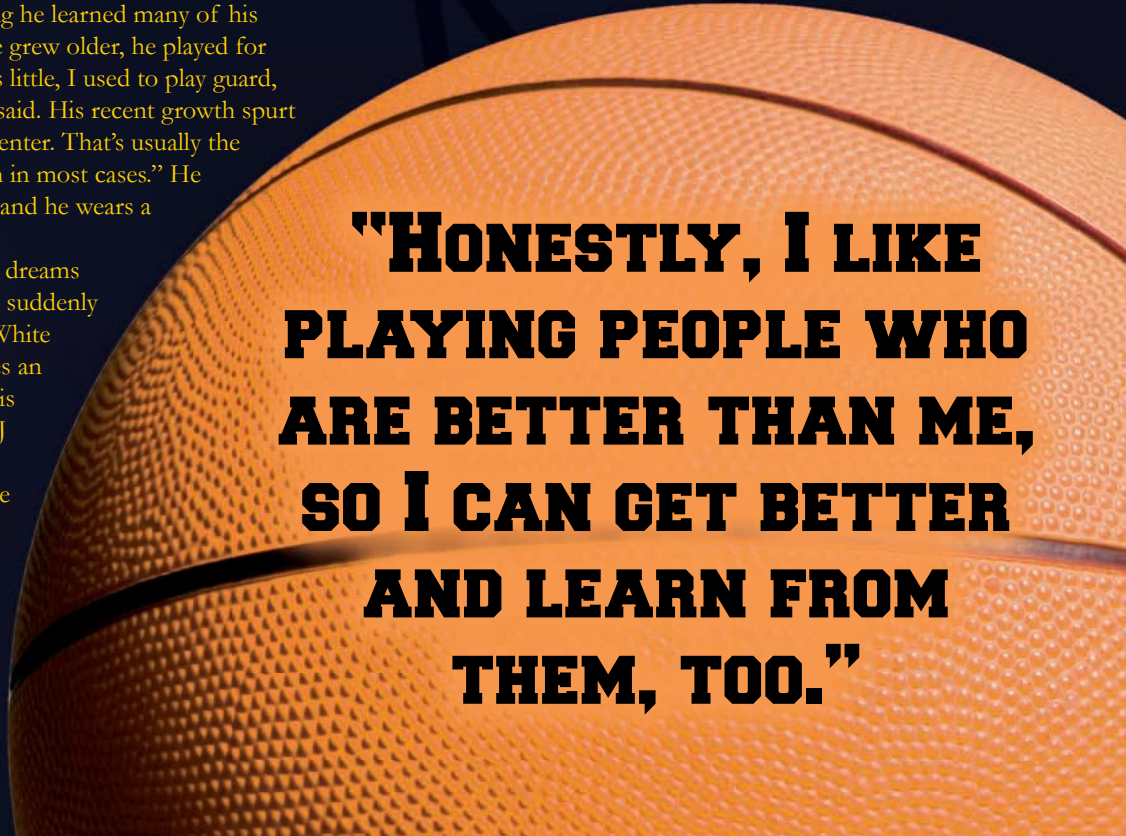
*Colbe “CJ” Noland is 12 years old, and his favorite subject at Red Oak Intermediate School is math. In his free time, he enjoys his Playstation 3 or going outside to play sports. Games are one of his main focuses in life, yet one game rises above all others. “The excitement of basketball is the best,” CJ said. “I just love the sport.”*

His older sisters, Brittany and Sydnii, also played basketball. His father, Belvis, played basketball for Kansas State University and also played overseas. “My sisters and my dad always had a love for the sport,” CJ said, adding he learned many of his early skills by imitating them. As he grew older, he played for Red Oak’s city league. “When I was little, I used to play guard, which was for shorter players,” CJ said. His recent growth spurt changed everything. “Now, I play center. That’s usually the tallest guy on the court, which I am in most cases.” He currently stands at 5 feet, 8 inches, and he wears a size 13-and-a-half shoe.

Several years ago, CJ’s basketball dreams were almost cut short when he was suddenly diagnosed with Wolff–Parkinson–White syndrome, a heart defect that causes an abnormally rapid heart rate. WPW is especially devastating to athletes. CJ was first diagnosed at age 8. “I was having heart problems at recess,” he said. “When I went to the doctor, they said I had WPW. I felt very sad, because I didn’t want to stop playing sports.” Since they noticed the symptoms early, doctors predicted a full recovery would

be possible with immediate surgery. “The surgery went really well, and I didn’t have any more problems,” CJ said. Although he could’ve taken a break from sports, he knew he wanted to get back to the court as soon as possible. “I didn’t want to be behind,” CJ said. “It took a long time, but I did catch back up.”

His long road to recovery meant slowly rebuilding his strength. “The hardest part was being scared I wasn’t going to make it,” CJ said, “but I trusted in God, and it worked out.” He wasn’t without support. Besides his family, many other people in his life helped him recover. “Most of my teachers came to see me in the hospital,” CJ said. “They were glad I was OK.” He also remembers his teammates, who dedicated a game to him by wearing his number and signing a ball for him.



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CJ's mother, Nicole Noland, remembers his tenacity when faced with a life-threatening illness. The more she learned about WPW, the more worried she became. "I'd heard about it on the news," Nicole remembered. "Different high school players would just fall down on the field, and they wouldn't make it." Thankfully, CJ made a full recovery. "If he wasn't the type of kid he is, it would've been much more difficult,"



Nicole explained. "At the beginning, he couldn't walk to the mailbox and back without feeling tired. He worked really hard to get back where he is. He had to double his efforts, even when others were encouraging him to take it easy. He's just not that way."

Even before becoming sick, CJ always had a passion for encouraging others. As a young child, he would set aside some of his birthday money to buy gifts for

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patients at Children's Medical Center. Eventually, he became a patient there. Since then, he makes an effort to support others who are sick. "I was in the same position they are now," CJ said. "I don't want them to feel like I was feeling, like they're not going to make it. I want to give back." He also keeps an eye on his teammates and friends. "I try to watch out for other people and make sure they aren't pushing themselves too hard," CJ said. He gives this advice for those who are sick: "Don't be too scared," he said. "Believe in God and stick to it."

Despite his health problems, CJ has risen to the top of the pack in basketball. "I was really good in first grade, so I played with the third-graders." CJ was soon named to a select team, which allowed him to play more competitively. "Select is a basketball league that's higher ranked than city leagues, and they play all over the country," CJ explained. "Honestly, I like playing people who are better than me, so I can get better and learn from them, too."

CJ has won several awards while playing competitive basketball, as well as being named to the Nick Saban All-Saban Team each year he's attended University of Alabama's football camp. In June, CJ competed in the 14-year-old division as an 11-year-old, and still received honors. CJ has always had an interest in football,



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as well. "It's just fun," CJ said. "There's more contact."

Nicole couldn't be more proud of her son. "He's a good kid. He cares about others. He has a huge heart," she said. "Every teacher and coach he's had has said the same thing, so I have to believe it." Although Belvis loves basketball, he will support his son no matter which sport he chooses to play. "His dad said of the kids, 'I just want to make sure they play what they want to play.' So, we're not sure if he'll choose basketball or football, but we're still very supportive of him," Nicole stated. "I've accepted that he might be a pretty good athlete, but he's very humble, so I just step back, watch and monitor."

According to CJ's basketball coach, Lesley Booker, CJ has incredible potential in basketball. "The sky's the limit," Lesley said. "I know he's interested in football, as well, but if he decided to play basketball, he could definitely get a scholarship." Lesley has been CJ's coach for three years and has seen dedication and growth from him in that time, even after recovering from WPW. "Since he came back to basketball after sitting out a year, he has definitely improved," Lesley said. "He's probably one of the top 20 kids in the country." Lesley admires CJ's intelligence, his skill level and his willingness to play hard. "He's a great player and also a great student," Lesley added. "We're proud to have him."

CJ has big goals for himself, mostly involving sports. "I definitely want to be a professional athlete," he said. "If I ever get an injury or anything like that, I would want to be in sports medicine." **NOW**





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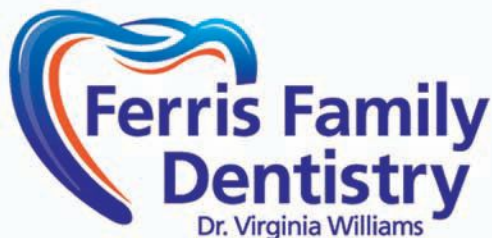
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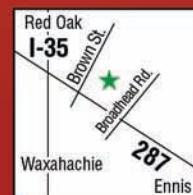
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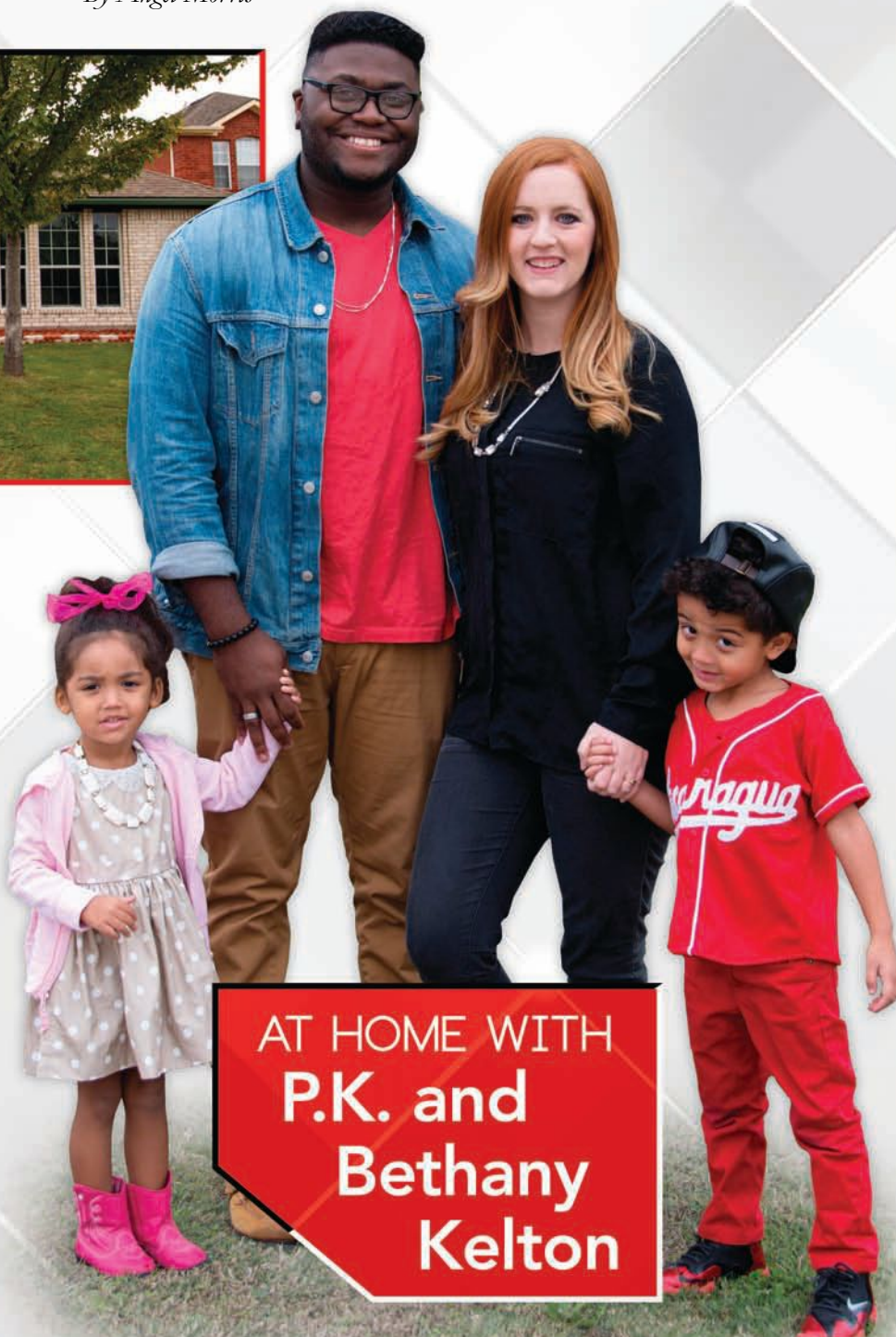
— By Angel Morris



*Philip “P.K.” and Bethany Kelton settled in Red Oak about two years ago for a couple of important reasons: family and frugality. “Originally, we were looking more up north but decided to come south toward both of our parents. We thought living by family would be a huge help with our kids,” P.K. noted. “The biggest deciding factor was the prices of houses, where you could get better quality at more affordable costs.”*

Raised in the South Dallas/Duncanville area, the couple met in elementary school. “We actually held hands on a field trip in fifth grade. We didn’t talk much after that until both of us were attending college at the same time. And we got married in July 2010,” P.K. recalled.

Two years later, the Keltons made Red Oak their home, but not without caution. “Being an



AT HOME WITH  
**P.K. and  
Bethany  
Kelton**







interracial couple, we often don't know how people will look at us, and we were pretty surprised that a small town has been the most friendly place we have ever lived," P.K. said.

The community also surprised the Keltons with its acceptance of their son, Matthias. "Our son was diagnosed at age 2 on the autism spectrum. While he is very high functioning now, when we first moved here, he had some very hard times. We hardly ever got stared at for his behavior. Instead, people would encourage us!" Bethany said.

Excited by their new home and community, the Keltons set out to make Matthias' room and his younger sister Micah's room really fun. "Matthias' room is very therapy-friendly. We have a special therapy closet, and he does all of his home therapy in his room. So we kept that in mind when picking furniture," Bethany explained. "Our daughter's room is very girly! She recently got a toddler bed from a sweet friend. I chalk-painted to make it match her room. The Lord has really blessed us with people who have handed things down to us so we can save any money possible for Matthias' therapy."

With just two years in the home and busy lives working and rearing their young children, ages 4 and 2, the Keltons are far from being finished with the house. "We try to do little things at a time to make it more budget-friendly, so we still have a lot to work on. I would say our home is a bit rustic/shabby chic," Bethany said. "I am hoping to soon have our kitchen at least slightly finished. As of right now, it is half-painted, because I tend to start something and change my mind quickly!"

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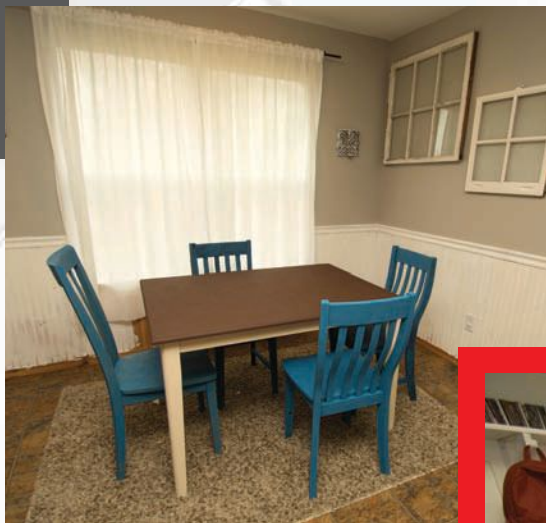
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greeted by its green (but soon-to-be-painted-neutral) trim and P.K.'s landscaping. "He enjoys having a nice-looking yard, so he mows a lot and is always looking for things to add to the yard!" Bethany said. "Eventually, he will probably want to expand the yard to make it larger."

Once inside, a small entryway is kept uncluttered and opens into Bethany's favorite space, the living room. "It has a

lot of stuff we worked hard to get and paint to make our own," she said. "I think we have done a pretty good job at making the house look very fun for what we have to invest in it right now."

With the help of many hand-me-down items, the Keltons have created a well-loved, comfortable space. "Our entertainment stand is actually

my grandmother's old dresser. It is my favorite piece. I repaired it and made it match our home more," Bethany noted, remembering her grandmother who passed away. "Many of the items we have once belonged to friends and family, but we have made them pieces that suit us."

Always mindful of their budget, the Keltons believe material things do not make a house a home. "The important thing is for people to come in our home



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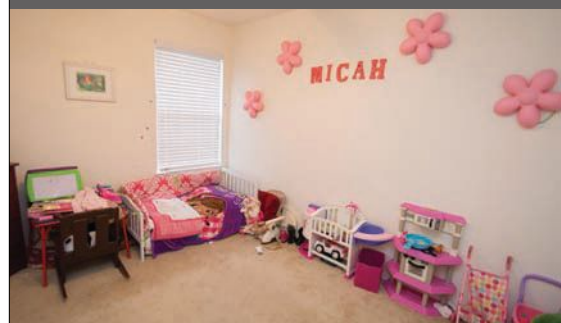
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and feel like they can relax and enjoy themselves. We also want our children to love and be proud of the home where they reside," P.K. said. "Sometimes it's hard to make hand-me-downs feel like your own, but we try not to be materialistic, so we can put as much toward Matthias' therapy as we can."

The Keltons, who are involved in their church and a church home group, credit God's grace with providing the home and their belongings. "We know our home and life is only where it is because the Lord has provided us with all of it and has really guided us through hard times and wonderful times," P.K. said.

In addition to favoring his home office/man cave, P.K. loves fashion and music. He is currently working on a music project under the mentorship of Christian





rapper, Alex Faith. In his free time, he would like to remodel the bathroom he and Bethany share, but both appreciate their master bedroom. "Recently, some wonderful friends gave us a huge bed. It is probably my favorite thing about the whole bedroom!" Bethany said.

Continual home touch-ups, jobs and life with the kids keep the Keltons busy. To keep up with the pace, they workout to maintain their health and physical fitness. While they continue working to make their house the home they dream of, the Keltons feel blessed to be exactly where they are today.

"Our favorite thing about the home is that it's ours!" Bethany said. "And, of course, that Red Oak has been so wonderful for our family. Its people are beyond friendly!" **NOW**

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# HEALTH FOR FITNESS

— By Melissa Rawlins

*We all know the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The flip side is: The manner in which we treat others depends upon how we treat ourselves. Are we compassionate to our own selves? Do we understand our fitness to do the work at hand depends on our level of health? Being fit requires you strive for great health.*

In this world we live in, there are too many outside sources of stress and contamination to think we can stay healthy without exerting proactive effort to prevent health issues. The choices we make turn us into the person we are. From food and entertainment to work and romance, we should be mindful to promote purity. Just as a vehicle needs a clean engine to prevent heavy exhaust fumes, our bodies need good food, regular exercise and peaceful relationships to prevent future breakdowns. Maintaining a well-functioning mind and body are not two separate agendas. Start this year off with a trip to your family doctor or chiropractor. Ask for an annual physical and





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confer with them on areas where you can improve. Then, whether you find yourself in your home or out on the town, you can balance mental and physical goals for great health.

Think about your dining experiences. At home, you have absolute control over what's in your refrigerator and what ends up on your plate or in your glass. Installing water filters will help ensure you are drinking fresh, pure water. Shopping for groceries certainly takes time, but every moment spent reading labels is well worth it to ensure you're purchasing nutritional additions to your body chemistry.

Wine bars, draught houses and coffeehouses are great places to meet a friend while sipping stimulating drinks that are beneficial, in moderation, as sources of vitamins and anti-oxidants. Enjoying mutually beneficial friendships



is just as vital to our health as well-balanced meals. A variety of restaurants promote whole-food menus along with more traditional selections. Many of these meeting places also present a calm environment, and studies show quiet music soothes the nerves. This is the best way to digest a good meal.





Certainly, there are times you need to prompt your adrenal glands to pump up the volume, and that occurs during workouts. If you need a private coach, personal trainers will travel to your home or office on your schedule. If you need a coach and don't mind sweating publicly, a myriad of solutions are available. Local boot camps run year-round, and these male and female coaches love to teach you how to love yourself!

If you join a local gym or fitness center, you'll feel like a kid in a candy store with all the exercise choices offered. If you are not into high-energy kick-boxing or Zumba, nor meditative yoga or tai chi, consider combining your exercise session with fun. The YMCA, many senior centers and even nightclubs offer dancing to tunes that are less jarring to the system, like ballroom, swing or country western.

Hobbies best enjoyed in the daytime, like boating, fishing, raising livestock or gardening, can keep the mind and body fresh. By tending a garden, you'll bond with your family while providing affordable, healthy vegetable side dishes for your table. Local feed stores and gardening supply centers have all the supplies necessary, and your county's agricultural extension agent can provide guidance on how to get started.

Sounds like work? You're blessed if you have work that makes you really happy. Keep in mind, any hobby giving you joy still requires work — but think of it as soul-feeding work. When you feel satisfied, to the point of brimming over, then sharing your knowledge with others is a great way to maintain your mental health. Throughout your communities are charitable organizations in need of your volunteer services.

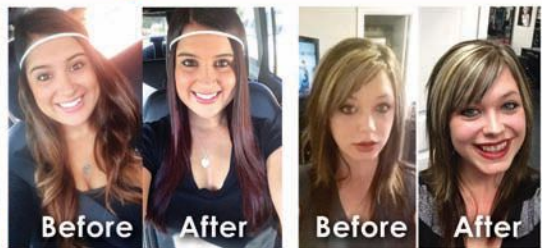
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Doctors are available to guide you in discovering what is necessary to stop the stress on your mind and body and begin the healing. Seek advice from experts in nutrition. Diabetes, for example, is not necessarily always a permanent condition. A focused, disciplined, balanced diet supports your body's ability to heal itself. With courage, determination and continued direction from your health care practitioner, help is available.

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# A Place of Beauty

*The Hair Studio is a family business giving the gift of glamour.*

— By Angel Morris

The Hair Studio credits a faithful customer base for its continued success, especially after a driver ran into their previous building and shut them down for eight months. “We had been in business since 2000, when in 2009 a truck crashed directly into our salon,” said owner Marivett Alvarado. “We survived because of God blessing us with loyal clientele and choosing our new location in 2010.”

Marivett and her husband, Gabriel, left Dallas County to reside in Red Oak so they could be closer to their family business. Good schools and a friendly community were perks for the couple as they reared three daughters, Kassandra, Lauren and Vanessa.

Like their growing family, The Hair Studio family increased from a single stylist, Ashley Metcalf, to four stylists: Barbra Amt, Deleesy Gomez, Rae McGinnis, Sara Hudson and Charlie Paschal, a hair apprentice. Their services have expanded to include colors and highlights, extensions, smoothing and deep conditioning treatments, perms, Brazilian blowouts and updos. Thanks to Gabriel, a licensed barber and massage therapist, The Hair Studio also offers the best in spa treatments, from massages and facials to manicures and waxing. They even provide barber services for male clients and specials on Tuesdays through Thursdays. “We like to give people a special reason to stop by



during the week, and what better way than special pricing on treatments to make them look and feel beautiful?" Marivett said. "We encourage people to call us and find out what the special of the day is!"

Touching people's lives in such a way is what inspired Marivett to leave the world of corporate finance to attend cosmetology school. "I had always done hair for friends and relatives, but I worked as a financial counselor then as a mortgage officer," Marivett recalled. "Gabriel worked in spas such as the Gaylord, the Crescent and Ritz Carlton Dallas. He encouraged me to go back to school, so I did!"

To keep up with the latest in beauty trends, The Hair Studio employees regularly attend trade shows and events. "Our team is always putting clients first, and that starts with being educated about the goods and services in the industry today," Marivett said.

Stylists also offer gift certificates perfect for holidays and special events. The Hair Studio also provides complimentary certificates to various charities, supporting local police and firefighters, churches and schools where

**"Our team is  
always putting  
clients first."**

two of their daughters still attend. Their oldest attends Navarro Community College and is training as a massage therapist to pay her way through school.

"This is a family business, and our girls can be found working here at different times in different ways. They appreciate our passion to make people feel good. We wish peace and God's blessings to all," Marivett said. "I have had careers that paid more, but this job is about truly touching someone's life — by pampering our customers, we help them leave feeling better than when they came in. It's a joy to give someone a little glamour." **NOW**



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*Chris and Erin Broadway enjoy a sunny afternoon in the park with their young son, Evan.*



*Members of Girl Scout Troop No. 5469 enjoy helping Santa's elf during the annual Ferris Christmas Not on the Square festivities.*



*Mikalya Grace is all smiles as she celebrates her second birthday with her parents, Craig Jones and Paige Carter.*



*Ovilla Christian School wins first place in State 3A One-Act Play competition.*



*Footballers switch roles and cheer for their fans in the Founder's Day Parade.*



*Karen Anderson, executive director of the Red Oak ISD Education Foundation, admires beautiful ornaments on a Christmas tree featured at Red Oak's Festival of Trees.*



*Leah Caperton strikes a pose sitting patiently as her stylist, Soraya Barron, finishes trimming her hair at Main Street Salon.*



*Harry Lantz and his granddaughter, Ellie Davis, are proud of the Gingerbread House they crafted together during Red Oak's Festival of Trees.*



*Renee Roysdon and Lorene Ramer enjoy an afternoon lunch at the Metro Bar and Grill in Ferris.*



*Staff and friends of Snap Fitness-Ferris and Ferris Family Dentistry are in costume for the Ferris Area Business Association parade.*



*The Red Oak 8U Diamonds are proud of their 2nd place finish in the Cedar Hill Girls Softball Fall Tournament.*



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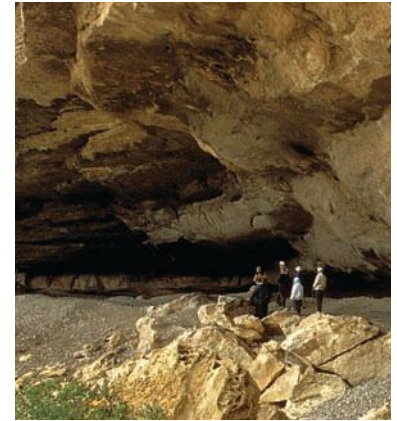
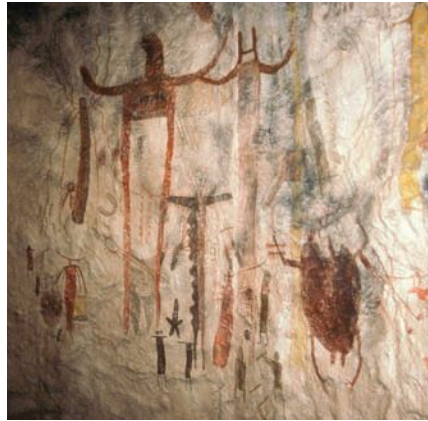
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## Ancient Southern Rock Seminole Canyon State Park — Worth the Trip

Literally thousands of years before it was designated a state park and historic site by the citizenry of Texas, the rugged limestone hills, flowing waters of the Rio Grande and Pecos Rivers and wildlife-laden thorn scrub outside of present day Del Rio were a popular gathering place. In fact, this region remains one of the few places where factual documentation of prehistoric settlement is preserved, providing evidence testifying to their lives. Ancient peoples created mural-like paintings on the arching rock walls of this near desert-like canyon country, producing some of North America's most renowned examples of Native American pictographs and preserving one of the continent's oldest cave dwellings.

The first human settlers here date back at least 12,000 years to the Pleistocene ice age, when prehistoric mankind hunted large game with stone-tipped spears across a lush landscape. But rapid climate change made for a new environment and a culture that likely struggled to scratch out survival. By approximately 5,000 B.C., the landscape resembled much of what can be seen today.

These inhabitants settled in the dry, lofty caverns, and despite their subsistence-level struggles, managed to paint remarkable pictographs that can be found in the park's Fate Bell Shelter, as well as other rock shelters throughout the Lower Pecos River region. These paintings have a distinct style that can only be found in portions of the Rio Grande, Pecos and Devils River areas, all located in Southwest Texas. More than 200 pictograph sites are known to exist and range from smaller, single

paintings to caves with panels of art hundreds of feet long. Although numerous figures or motifs are repeated in various locations, the exact meaning of these paintings is unknown.

Seminole Canyon first opened to the public as a state park in 1980, and is named in honor of the U.S. Army's Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts, garrisoned at Fort Clark, who protected the West Texas frontier from marauding Apache and Comanche bands between 1872 and 1914. These scouts were known for exceptional cunning and toughness, and it was deemed a befitting tribute to have a park bearing their namesake.

Seminole Canyon State Park is 2,172 acres with miles of hike and bike trails and 46 campsites, including 23 sites with water and electricity hookups compatible for RVs. The park also has restrooms with showers, a visitor center and state park store. Because of the sensitive nature of the park's rock art history, hikes into areas with rock art are only accessible through guided interpretive hikes with park staff and volunteers. Seminole Canyon State Park is worth the trip when you and your family need a respite from modern life. **NOW**

*Editor's Note: For more information, contact Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site staff at (432) 292-4464 or visit [www.texasstateparks.org](http://www.texasstateparks.org).*

*Bryan Frazier  
Public Affairs, Promotions and Marketing — Texas State Parks*



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to escape ...

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## Red Hot Shingles

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Many of us have seen the commercials of people sharing their stories of pain from screaming blisters on their body caused by shingles. If you have ever had chickenpox, the varicella-zoster virus that causes chickenpox, remains in you and may later cause shingles. After the infection of chickenpox goes away, the virus goes dormant or asleep in your body. Later in life, it can reawaken and manifest itself as shingles.

Approximately 1 million cases of shingles occur in America every year. The majority of people affected are elderly. However, if a child has had chickenpox, it is possible for him or her to get shingles. The reason the virus reactivates in some people is not clear. Some conditions causing this are a weakened immune system from cancer or HIV. Chemotherapy, steroids and/or radiation can all increase the risk of reactivating the virus and producing shingles.

While it isn't a life-threatening condition, shingles can be very painful. The usual pattern is a band or strip of inflamed skin covered with fluid-filled blisters that usually appears on one side of the body. Several days before the blisters appear, you may experience itching, burning, numbness and tingling. Pain is frequently listed as the first symptom felt. Other symptoms of fever, headache, chills and an upset stomach may be present also. Shingles may persist for weeks.

Shingles cannot be spread from person to person. However, the varicella-zoster virus from a person with an active case of shingles can be

transmitted by direct contact to a person who has never had chickenpox or been vaccinated for chickenpox. The resulting infection would be chickenpox, not shingles.

If you have an active case of shingles, try to keep the rash covered. Avoid touching the area and stay away from people with weakened immune systems and pregnant women until you are no longer contagious.

Diagnosis is made by patient history and visual examination. Your physician may choose to take a sample of the fluid for laboratory examination. While there is no cure for shingles, antiviral medications can decrease the severity of the symptoms and help avoid complications. It is important to take the antiviral drugs as soon as symptoms manifest themselves. Numbing topical agents to the rash may provide temporary symptomatic relief. In some cases prescription medication may be necessary for the pain.

Needless suffering can be avoided through vaccinations. Children should be vaccinated against chickenpox. If you are older and have had chickenpox, a vaccine is available to lessen your chances of getting shingles. Check with your doctor for information regarding vaccinations. **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.*



### January 1

Commitment Day 5K: race day registration begins at 7:30 a.m.; race begins at 10:00 a.m., Life Time Fitness, 1551 E. Debbie Ln. \$20 for 13 and over; free for kids under 13 with adult. The Commitment Day is a nationwide, family-friendly New Year's Day 5K Run/Walk. For more information, email [JElmore2@lifetimefitness.com](mailto:JElmore2@lifetimefitness.com).

### January 3

Elvis Birthday Celebration with David Allen and The Fever Band: 8:00-11:00 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main St. \$21-\$28 per ticket. David Allen, the award-winning Elvis tribute artist, will be playing with The Fever Band to celebrate Elvis' birthday. For more information about this event, please visit [www.farrbest.com](http://www.farrbest.com).

### January 10

After Hours Improv Performance: 1:00 p.m., WHS Fine Arts Center. Jon Wolfe in Concert: 9:00 p.m., Rockett Café and Club, 5790 FM 813.

### January 17

Martin Luther King Day Parade: 10:00 a.m., beginning at Dallas City Hall and ending at the MLK Community Center, 2922 MLK Blvd. For more information, call (214) 670-8418 or visit [www.dallascityhall.com](http://www.dallascityhall.com).

### January 19

Martin Luther King Day: ROISD, Ferris ISD and Life School ISD staff and student holiday.

### January 24

Hachie Health Hike: 10:00 a.m.-noon, downtown Waxahachie. Hike begins at the Waxahachie Farmer's Market located at 410 S. Rogers St.

### January 28

Indian Trail Master Naturalist Chapter business meeting: 6:00 p.m.; lecture 7:00 p.m., Red Oak Library. Meeting will include a lecture entitled "Who Are Master Naturalists and What Do They Do?" For more information, contact the Red Oak Library at (469) 218-1230.

### January 29

Annual FirstLook Fundraising Banquet: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 N. Grand Ave. Reservations are required. For reservations or more information, visit [www.txlifeinvestors.org](http://www.txlifeinvestors.org) or call (972) 938-7900.

### February 12

Fourth Annual Daddy Daughter Dance:

6:00-9:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln. Tickets are \$15 per person and they go on sale **January 5**. Tickets must be purchased in advance. This year's theme is *Frozen*. For more information, call (469) 309-4041.

### March 7

Deeper Journeys with Nichole Nordeman, Lisa Harper and Tammy Trent: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., The Avenue Church, 210 YMCA Dr. Tickets are \$35. To purchase tickets, visit [theavenuechurch.com/events](http://theavenuechurch.com/events). For more information, call (972) 937-5301.

### Ongoing:

#### Mondays

Celebrate Recovery: 7:00-9:00 p.m., The Avenue Church, 1761 Hwy 77, Waxahachie. For more information, call (972) 972-937-5301.

#### Third Mondays

Red Oak Book Club: 7:00-8:30 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Building, 200 Lakeview Pkwy, Red Oak. Admission is free and open to all adults in and around the city of Red Oak. Call 469-218-1230 for additional details.

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin. For more information, visit [www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org](http://www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org).

#### Fourth Mondays

Bluebonnet Chapter 13 of Blue Star Mothers of America meeting: 7:00 p.m., Ovilla Community Center, 1404 Red Oak Creek Rd. This is a veteran service organization whose mission is to support sons, daughters and other family members currently serving in our nations Armed Forces. For more information, contact Cheree at (972) 679-9425 or visit [www.bluestarmothers.org](http://www.bluestarmothers.org).

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meetings: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Ave.

#### Tuesdays

Ferris Public Library Afterschool Games for Children: 3:00-3:30 p.m., children ages 7-10; 4:30-5:30 p.m., children ages 11-17, Ferris Public Library, 310 E. 10th St. Children will enjoy Wii and several other board games. For more information, call (972) 544-3696.

Waxahachie Toastmasters meeting:

6:30 p.m., Lyceum at Sims Library. For more information, call (469) 245-8681.

#### First and Third Tuesdays

Glenn Heights City Council meetings: 7:00 p.m., Council Chambers, 1938 S. Hampton Rd., Glenn Heights.

#### Second Tuesdays

Ellis County Master Gardeners meeting: 9:00 a.m., First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie. If you would like more information about the program, contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in Ellis County at (972) 825-5175 or email [ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:ellis-tx@tamu.edu).

#### Third Tuesdays

Veterans Networking Group meetings: 6:00-8:00 p.m., Ryan's Steak House, Hwy 287 Bypass and 77. Call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378 for more information.

#### Second and Third Tuesdays

Desoto Job Seekers Ministry meeting: 4:45-6:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 310 Roaring Springs Dr., DeSoto. For registration information, contact the Reverend Kevin Strempeke at [office@fumcdesoto.org](mailto:office@fumcdesoto.org) or call (972) 223-6118.

#### Fourth Tuesdays

Ellis County Technology (ECT) meetings: 6:30 p.m., LaQuinta. For more information, call Wendy Merritt at (469) 256-8989.

#### Thursdays

Divorce Care meeting: 7:00 p.m., The Oaks Fellowship Church, 777 S. I-35, Red Oak. Call (214) 376-8208 for more information.

#### First Thursdays

Red Oak Local Authors Group meeting: 7:00 p.m., Red Oak Public Library.

#### Fridays

Business Networking International (BNI) meetings: 8:00-9:30 a.m., LaQuinta, 311 Stadium Dr. For more information, call (469) 222-9160.

#### Third Saturdays

Inside Flea Market: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Ferris. The market is hosted by Country Corner Treasures. Vendors are welcome. For more details, call (817) 992-9204.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [dianne.reaux@nowmagazines.com](mailto:dianne.reaux@nowmagazines.com).*





## In the Kitchen With Sharon James

— *By Angel Morris*

Cooking evokes childhood memories of time spent with family for Sharon James. “Somebody was always visiting, and we would sit around the table enjoying good food and good company. There were hours spent in the kitchen preserving fruits and vegetables from the gardens with my grandmother, mother and brother.”

Today, Sharon primarily cooks for her husband and daughter, as well as for work team meetings and her family’s homeschool co-op. She has enjoyed trying new recipes for a cooking class she led for teens, too. Along with cooking homegrown vegetables and fried fish, Sharon most enjoys baking. “You can always make a friend if you show up with a fresh loaf of bread, a cake or pie, or simply a cupcake,” she said. **NOW**

### Chicken and Rice

- 3 strips of bacon**
- 1 box long grain and wild rice mix**
- 1/4 cup regular rice**
- 1 cup mushrooms**
- 1 can cream of chicken soup**
- 1 can chicken broth**
- 6 chicken breasts**
- 1 pkg. dry onion soup mix**

- 1.** Lay bacon in bottom of pan. Sprinkle with rice and seasoning packet included in the wild rice mix. Add mushrooms.
- 2.** Mix soup and broth. Pour over rice/mushrooms. Lay chicken on top and sprinkle with 2-3 Tbsp. dry soup mix.
- 3.** Cover with foil and bake for 1 1/2 hours at 325 F. Remove foil last few minutes and let brown.

### Sour Cream Cake

*This cake was always in the center of Sharon’s grandparent’s table on the cake plate she now has in her own kitchen!*

- 1 box yellow cake mix**
- 1/2 cup sugar**
- 1 cup sour cream**
- 3/4 cup oil**
- 5 eggs**
- 2 Tbsp. cinnamon**
- 3 Tbsp. brown sugar**

- 1.** Mix first 5 ingredients well.
- 2.** Pour 1/2 batter into a well-greased and floured Bundt pan. Mix cinnamon and brown sugar. Spread over batter.
- 3.** Add remaining batter. Bake at 350 F for 45-55 minutes.

### BBQ Brisket

- 1 10-12 lb. brisket**
- 1 cup brewed coffee**

*BBQ Sauce:*

- 2 cups ketchup**
- 2 Tbsp. mustard**
- 4 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce**
- 3 Tbsp. brown sugar**
- 2 Tbsp. liquid smoke**
- 1 Coke or Dr Pepper**

- 1.** Wrap brisket along with coffee in foil. Place in a pan. Cook 8-10 hours at 250 F. Remove cooked brisket, trim off fat, slice.
- 2.** For BBQ sauce: Whisk all ingredients together. Simmer 45 minutes.
- 3.** Cover brisket with sauce and bake 1 hour more.

### Cherries Jubilee

*Sharon’s childhood birthday cake!*

*Pie Crust:*

- 1 1/2 cups flour**
- 1 1/2 sticks butter**
- 1 cup nuts**

*Filling:*

- 8 oz. cream cheese**
- 1 lb. powdered sugar**
- 1 12-oz. container Cool Whip**
- 1 14-oz. can cherry pie filling**

- 1.** For pie crust: Blend together flour, butter and nuts and press into a 9-inch square pan. Bake at 350 F for 20 minutes.
- 2.** For filling: Blend cream cheese with powdered sugar. Stir in Cool Whip. Pour over cooled crust.
- 3.** Top with cherry pie filling. Chill until ready to serve.

### Banana Nut Bread

- 3 large bananas, mashed**
- 3 sticks butter, melted**
- 3 eggs**
- 3 cups flour**
- 3 cups sugar**
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking soda**
- 1 cup chopped pecans**

- 1.** Mix first 6 ingredients well; stir in pecans. Pour into two large, well-greased loaf pans.
- 2.** Bake uncovered at 350 F for 25 minutes; cover with foil and cook an additional 25 minutes, or until done in center.

**To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).**



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