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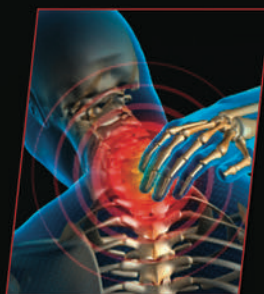
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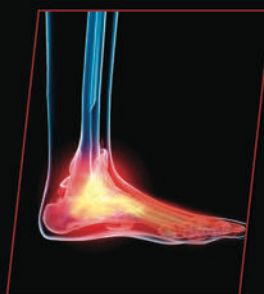
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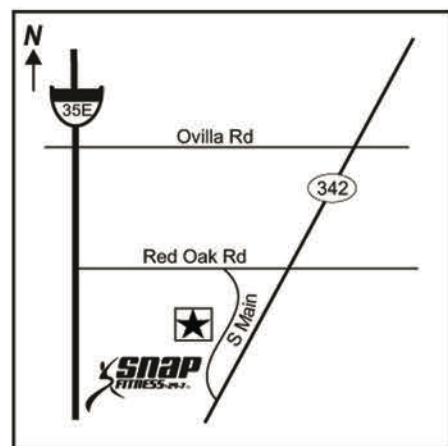
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Managing Editor, Becky Walker

North Ellis Co. Editor, Abby Rich

Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong

Editorial Assistant, Rachel Smith

Writers, Jill Martinez

Rick Mauch . Betty Tryon

Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla

Artists, Kristin Bato . Morgan Christensen

Martha Macias . Brande Morgan

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rose

Photography Coordinator, Amy Ramirez

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Editor's Note

New Year, Fresh Start ...

I can't believe the holidays are over, and we're finally in the new year. With lots of change regarding national politics and particularly in my family's life, I've had to tell myself to be positive with the newness of everything. We recently sold our historic home and moved into a newer neighborhood in Ovilla. So, I'm also closer to our *North Ellis Co.NOW* readers in Red Oak, Ferris and Ovilla.

It's funny, when I was younger I always pictured myself, as well as my family, living in a larger city like Dallas. If someone would have told me I'd be living in a small town, I never would have believed them. Don't get me wrong, now that I have a family and a job close to home, I've honed in on what's important to me, like a safe, friendly neighborhood and a local church to call home. I'm very grateful. Though we haven't met any of our neighbors as of yet, I'm hopeful that will change with the new year.

And please send story leads on your exceptional neighbors my way!

Abby

Abby Rich

North Ellis Co.NOW Editor

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HUNGERING

Though not a Texas native, Diane Lankford has put down roots in her community of Ferris, Texas, and she is investing in the people she shares it with. After being an educator for over 20 years, Diane retired and asked her husband for a barbecue pit, so she could dabble more into this hobby. Diane began cooking for her family, friends and neighbors. People enjoyed it so much that she began catering and bottling her own barbecue sauce. What Diane wasn't expecting was that her hobby would turn into public service. "I



“ IF I CAN CHANGE ONE KID’S LIFE AND THEY, IN TURN, CHANGE ONE MORE PERSON’S LIFE, THEN I’VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL. ”

TO HELP

— By Jill Martinez

was a single mom while raising my three kids. All of them are successful now, and I am so grateful to God,” Diane stated. “That’s why I do what I do.”

Diane has a generous heart and uses her resources to bless others. She has been cooking full Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for the Ferris Police Department for several years. “These men and women work on holidays to serve us. The least I can do is give them a hot meal in return,” Diane shared. In addition, she selects seven local families and delivers meals to them on these holidays, as well. One year, she fed an entire nursing home and gave each resident a gift bag.

This is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to this woman’s benevolence. When Diane discovered that some children in Ferris were not eating regularly, she instinctively stepped in and did something about it. She started a summer program in 2015 at the Ferris Scout House and the Ferris Public Library. That summer she fed 76 children a hot meal each day for a month out of her own pocket. “When I first got them, I didn’t think I’d ever get them full,” she expressed. She eventually found a sponsor who provided food for the rest of the summer.









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She thoroughly enjoyed watching the children eat to their heart's content.

Once Diane got rolling, she couldn't stop the flow of generosity. The summer program blossomed into an after-school program that she operates with the help of Maricella Reyes and Shirley Jackson. For a couple of hours each day after school, Monday through Thursday, she pours into approximately 50 Ferris children who fall into at-risk and low-socioeconomic categories.



In addition to a hot meal, Diane provides a variety of experiences for the children to enjoy. She has board games, puzzles and toys the kids can play with after finishing their homework. There is even a computer they can use to complete assignments for school if need be. "We don't have internet yet. That will come later. Right now, I have to decide between providing internet and feeding kids. I choose to feed them," she stated.

Each Wednesday, Diane hosts a roundtable meeting where the kids can support each other by sharing their trials and successes. "I teach the children to care for each other like we are one big family," Diane said.

Diane has been the vice president of the Ferris Area Business Association for 10 years. Her reputation in the community has helped to garner support for her nonprofit work. Diane knows she can't go it alone. She has reached out to other institutions in the community and has received favorable responses.

Ferris ISD Superintendent James Hartman has helped by providing staff at three local schools so the after-school program could expand. Diane's husband, Frank, delivers hot meals to approximately 200 students per day at Ingram Elementary, McDonald Elementary and Ferris Intermediate.

Since Diane knows what a powerful force of change education can be, she instituted an incentive program. "If the children get all A's on their report cards, I give them a bag of treats. At the end of the first six-week grading period this school year, five students hit the goal," Diane said with pride.

The teachers in Ferris ISD have seen such a positive change in the kids' behavior since Diane's programs began. When the kids behave well in school and get a good report, they come and tell her about it. "They know I'm here to listen and tell them how proud I am of them. That drives them to do well," she remarked.

Councilwoman Carol Wright drops in to see Diane regularly and asks what she can do to help. There are plans underway to have some computers donated to the program. Ferris citizens also help in various ways. "Some people make donations when they hear about what I do here. Other people help, like Margie Goggans did, by enlisting support from local businesses," Diane added. Backpacks and dental supplies are just two examples of donations given by other businesses to support the children.

The Ferris Police Department often comes to talk with the kids, as well. They want to invest into the lives of the children to help ensure they stay on a straight and narrow path. Ferris High School Football Coach Brandon Layne sends his players to hang out with the after-school program participants, too. As older athletes, the students serve as role models to the kids in the program. And the kids eat it up when these athletes sit down to play a game or talk with them

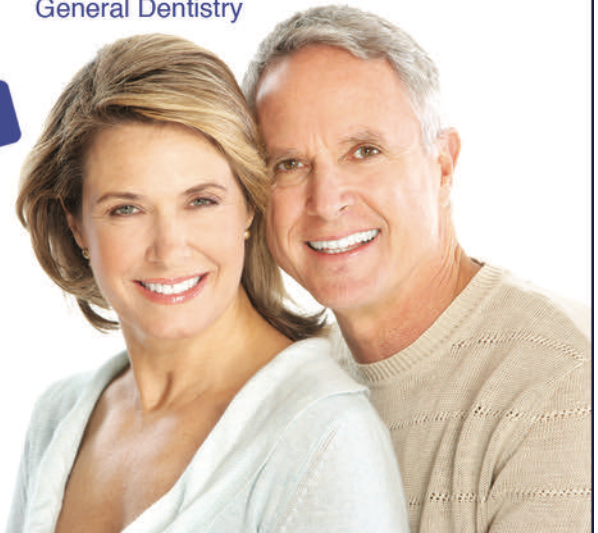
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about working hard in school, so they can be successful.

Evidence abounds to support the idea that kids who are involved in sports and other community groups tend to stay out of trouble and do better in school. This is exactly what Diane wants for "my kids," as she often calls them. Diane's nephew, Lamaricus Aldridge, is a player for the San Antonio Spurs. She hopes to be able to have him come and host a basketball camp for the children next summer.

One would think that feeding and supporting the children in their educational pursuits would be enough, but Diane doesn't stop there. In November, she sponsored a coat drive. "We needed to make sure the kids were warm this winter. We took donations for new coats, sizes 6x to 18," she reported.

Also in the month of November, she hosted a fundraiser to support her nonprofit organization called the Seed of Abraham Community Service Center. Parents, business owners, local citizens and city employees were all welcomed. "I spend \$2,500-\$3,000 per month feeding the kids. We have been approved for government support for the feeding program, but we haven't received funds yet. Even when we do get the funds, it won't cover it all," Diane informed.

"If I can change one kid's life and they, in turn, change one more person's life, then I've been successful," Diane said. She has been a driving force in serving her community, and her efforts have brought the village of Ferris together to raise the children who need them. **NOW**




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A TEXAS TRADITION

— By Jill Martinez



AT HOME WITH DAN AND DIANE SIMMONS

Dan and Diane Simmons' paths were intertwined for many years, so getting married and merging their lives together seemed natural. They are down-home Texas people, and their home in the Ovilla Parc subdivision clearly reflects that.

The Simmons built their home in April 2007. "When we moved in, there were maybe 15 homes on this street," Dan said. The growth in their area has been exponential since then. They decided to build in the Ovilla area because it put them close to Diane's family. It also allowed for reconnections with high school friends, and it gave their children access to the Midlothian school district.

The exterior of their home is a combination of brown brick and white stone. Board and batten shutters accent the windows, giving the residence a rustic touch. Diane, a degreed interior designer, favored the cowboy motif for the interior of the home. "We are Texas people," Diane said with a smile. She used natural materials such as wood, metal and leather in various shades of brown throughout the home.

From the ceiling to the floor, the entry is simply elegant. A beautiful, bronze chandelier adorns the ceiling, while 6-inch, textured ceramic tiles cover the floor. An armoire is on standby to receive coats from residents and guests alike.



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The common areas are visible at once due to the utilization of an open floor plan. In the living room, oversized brown leather chairs and a couch backed with a cowhide print invite family and friends to relax and chat or take in a sporting event on TV. "Dan loves sports, mainly baseball. He was a catcher in the minor leagues for a while," Diane lovingly shared.

A unique wooden end table with a built-in lamp and metal work in the shape of Texas accommodates loungers. Behind the seating area, a buffet table shows off numerous family photos, while an arched cutout in the wall behind it opens the view to the hallway. The other side of the room features a wood-burning fireplace

embedded in a stone-covered wall. Above the wooden mantel hangs a framed picture of a herd of longhorns, and below it a metal fireplace screen with a large Texas star completes this beautiful focal point.


The kitchen boasts stainless-steel appliances and cream-colored granite countertops, which harmonize with the deep brown cabinetry. The attractive tile-trimmed Tuscan hood perches over the gas range. A large island provides extra counter space and an extra seating area in addition to housing the sink.

The family dines at the bar-height table nearby, giving them the chance to catch up on each day's events. Several windows dressed with lush valances give a delightful



view of the backyard. Plenty of natural light pours into the room, filling it with a warmth every bit as tangible as the love shared among those who reside within.

This roomy abode includes four bedrooms and three bathrooms. The bedrooms have scraped hardwood floors, while the hallways and bathrooms have large tile coverings.




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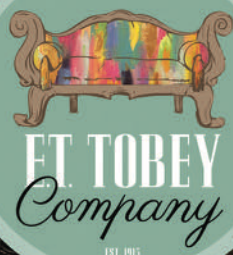
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Each of the children has a room decorated to reflect their personalities. Cameron's bedroom set is composed of a queen-size bed, a night table and a desk, all of which have a natural wooden finish and Texas stars. His bed sports a camouflage comforter set indicative of his love of the outdoors. "He works hard and enjoys hunting and fishing whenever he can," Dan said. In fact, he aspires to start his own company creating fishing lures one day. During his junior and senior years in Midlothian ISD, Cameron played hockey. His jersey is displayed in a large shadowbox on the wall in his room.

Payton, a recent high school graduate, began attending Texas Tech University in the fall of 2016. "She took most of her personal items with her to college, so I was able to redecorate this room after her departure," Diane noted. Payton will still occupy this room during her visits, so Diane kept Payton's classy Audrey Hepburn style in mind during the redesign process. The furniture in this room features a black finish. The bed's paneled headboard resembles window shutters and stands tall, creating a focal point in the room. A coordinating armoire, both beautiful and functional, stands in the corner ready to serve.

The youngest daughter, Lulu, is currently a senior in Midlothian where she plays soccer, a sport in which she has participated since her childhood. Her pale white bedroom suite contrasts with the vibrantly colored quilted bedding, revealing her playful character. "Lulu plans to attend Texas A&M University after she graduates," Diane added.

Dan and Diane's master suite is a luxurious retreat. Their king-size bed, encased in a wood and leather frame, is topped with a plush leopard print





comforter set. The black satin blocks of fabric embedded in the design immediately capture the eye. Accent pillows trimmed in golden cords and tassels create a sense of opulence, as do the marble-topped bedside chests. Across the room a second fireplace surrounded by tile and elaborate white molding delivers extra warmth to the room in the winter months. A lovely seating area is nestled in the corner of the room. Bow windows and vaulted ceilings provide a cozy place for the couple to share quiet moments together.

The en suite bathroom is pure luxury. Dual vanities are topped with ceramic tile laid in a diamond pattern. A jetted garden tub is snuggled in the corner. "That is one of my favorite features, and I get a lot of use out of it," Diane said. The final feature is a spacious walk-in shower lined with ceramic tile.

The backyard is a paradise for the family and their friends all year long. "Almost every weekend, we've got people over here. We love to hang out here," Diane said. A towering stone fireplace makes the yard a terrific rendezvous location even in the winter. The Texas-shaped pool serves as an oasis in the summer, keeping everyone cool. There is plenty of seating under the patio or in the sun to accommodate any number of guests. Nestled in the back of the yard is a gazebo, which houses the outdoor kitchen and even more seating. This is Dan's wonderland. His 14-foot barbecue trailer parked nearby is put to good use. "I love to barbecue. I have a team that travels around competing. We've won several awards," he shared. Everyone who tastes Dan's barbecue is amazed by the mouthwatering flavors. Whether through good food or kind company, the Simmons' home is truly charming, and guests can expect a large dose of Texas hospitality. **NOW**



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The Red Oak varsity track team is a small program surrounded by giants, such as DeSoto and Duncanville. However, Johnny Johnson has plans to make his team one of the giants, too. In his second season as head coach, Johnny is optimistic as the team heads into the spring season. Loaded with youth, talent and, now, experience from last season in one of the state's toughest districts, he believes the Hawks are ready to join the elite programs. "The biggest advantage we have is we're young," Johnny said. "I started at the junior high, and the bulk of those kids are now with me here on varsity. They know my style, and we work very well together."



RED OAK

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Johnny is in his 10th season with the Red Oak ISD. He spent eight years as the junior high coach and two as a varsity assistant (still retaining his junior high duties) before becoming the varsity head coach.

It's clear the athletes like his style. The number of participants is increasing. In fact, he said so many athletes are wanting to participate that he may have as many as two junior varsity teams along with varsity this season. "Our numbers are high. We're knocking on 40 boys alone, along with about 25 girls," he said. "That's a lot."

Among those young athletes looking to help Johnny take the program to the next level is Cameron Steward. The junior qualified for the Class 5A Region II Meet in the discus last season, along with advancing from district to area in the shot put. "Coach Johnson never lets us slack," Cameron said. "Even if we just finished weights, he'll come by and say, 'What are you doing sitting down?' It's just his way of reminding us that if we want to get to a certain place, we have to be willing to always do more."

Cameron also said the number of varsity participants means more than simply filling a roster. There are qualifications that go into being a member of the varsity team, and if an athlete doesn't live up to those



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qualifications, they don't make varsity, plain and simple. "We have a lot of young talent, and they know the bar is very high," Cameron said. "But if they're not showing a varsity work ethic, they won't be a part of it."

The fact that so many athletes are showing that ethic has Johnny excited. He makes it clear, though, that it's about quality, not quantity. "We'll go with smaller numbers if we have to if the work ethic doesn't match," he said. "You have to be ready to run varsity track or it can be very damaging psychologically. If you get on the track thinking you're something, but the track tells you you're something else, you are in trouble. And you can't hide something like that in track, where you are out there alone."

It's not as though the Red Oak program has been completely hidden through its history. They've had athletes advance to state in distance running and throwing events in recent years, including Cameron's brother, Kevin Steward, three consecutive years.

Kevin won state in both the discus and shot put in 2015, along with a silver medal in the shot put and bronze in the discus last season. He is now competing at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches.

Cameron said it was a special moment when the two advanced to regional competition together — and against each other — last season. It was one of many inspirational moments he has had with his brother.

Cameron is the latest in a line of family successes. Before Kevin there was his cousin, Michael Carter Jr., who owns the school record of 62.3 feet in the shot





put. His father, Michael Carter Sr., owns the national record in the shot put, 77.0 feet in 1979 for Dallas' Jefferson High School. "Every day I go into the weight room and look at it and think, *That's going to be my record,*" Cameron said of Michael Jr.'s mark, adding that he also has his sights set on the school discus record of 192.3 feet by Corwyn Pace.

That's the attitude that Johnny said will move his team up, calling Cameron the cornerstone of the varsity program. And he is counting on sophomore Shayla Clark to do the same for the girls. Like Cameron, she has been a part of Johnny's program and coaching style since seventh grade. "She can run anything, 100-meter, 200, 400, all the relays, and she also runs cross-country," Johnny said. "She is multitasking."

Not only is Red Oak in the shadows of Duncanville and DeSoto, two highly touted Class 6A track programs, the Hawks' own district is perhaps the toughest in the state — and one of the hardest in the entire nation. District 10-5A, which is best known for its overall speed, includes perennial power Lancaster, along with toughies Mansfield



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Lake Ridge, Mansfield Legacy, Mansfield Summit and Mansfield Timberview, as well as Midlothian and Waxahachie. "I make sure our runners know what we're up against. There's no hiding it," Johnny said. "Then we can set goals going up against some of the best in the state."

Johnny is enhancing the schedule to better prepare the team for district. His scheduling plans include meets against Dallas ISD teams and perhaps the prestigious Dallas Jesuit Meet. "Last season, we went to a meet in Wilmer Hutchins. They'd never heard of us, but we had a good showing. That provided tons of confidence for our kids, and we can only get better this season by doing the same," he said.

Cameron learned by falling short of the postseason as a freshman, using that experience to come back last season stronger than ever. He's counting on his teammates to do the same this season. "You keep that feeling in the back of your mind all season to motivate you, but once you get to district, you put it out of your mind," he said.

Cameron understands his role as a team leader is to push the younger athletes daily. He said he also realizes he must continue to do the same for himself as an example. "You can't be a hypocrite. They are watching," he said. "If I don't push myself to always get better, they will notice, and it will all fall apart."

As Johnny strives to take the Hawks to an elite level, there is one thing he wants soon. He believes it will work wonders in the program's climb to a steady and successful future. "I want to have success in this district before we leave," he said, referring to the fact that University Interscholastic League realigns every two years, and the next is in 2018. "If we can succeed in this district, we can be good anywhere." **NOW**

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Meeting Real Estate Demands

City Real Estate's Red Oak office offers clients a one-stop shop for all their real estate needs. — By Abby Rich

With office locations in Ennis, Red Oak and Waxahachie, City Real Estate's owner, Wayne Norcross, has over 28 years' experience in the real estate industry. With its first office in Ennis, City Real Estate's newest location in Red Oak is ideal. "The Red Oak area is growing, and it is only going to continue to grow," Wayne explained. "We want to get the word out that City Real Estate offers a one-stop shop for our clients' real estate needs. And because the market, in terms of business and real estate, is doing so great and the demographics point toward tremendous, consistent growth, we knew we had to open offices here."

Wayne grew up in Forresteron, and his wife, Marlene, in Ennis. Together, their roots run deep in Ellis County and the

surrounding area. With much success in Austin real estate, Wayne decided to move back to his home area with his family and begin City Real Estate back in the familiar, friendly community where he grew up.

At its Red Oak location, City Real Estate has offices that are openly connected with Cooper Insures and Guild Mortgage Company. "Whether buying or selling their home, when clients also need a lender or insurance coverage, it's convenient for them to have everyone under the same roof," Wayne said.

Wayne's son, Chase Norcross, is a loan officer with Guild Mortgage, so the offices really evoke a family atmosphere. The staff often have Friday lunches and potlucks together. And with

everyone in constant communication with one another, in the same office space, it helps make the client's experience smooth during the buying and selling process, according to Wayne.

With 30 agents in its combined offices, City Real Estate is also opening an office in Corsicana this January. "As a one-stop shop, the office will offer clients convenience similar to the Red Oak office," Wayne stated. "Guild Mortgage will have a presence, as well as our referrals that will go to Cooper Insures."

"Wayne Norcross of City Real Estate is truly a pleasure to work with in the day to day operations," said Arthur Pierot of Guild Mortgage. "His vast knowledge of real estate transactions is unsurpassed, and he has assembled an awesome group of real estate professionals to serve Ellis and surrounding counties with their home buying needs. This is a tremendous time of growth for the area, so it's very exciting to be a part of the ever-changing landscape that I call home."

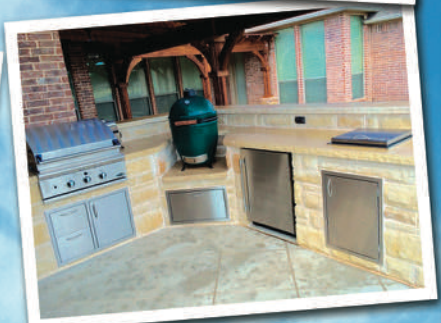
The full-service real estate company has recently implemented a drone service for its clients. With the clever name of Shadrach, the drone can take aerial photos of surrounding rural properties and areas at no cost to the client. Test runs and a few pre-launch crashes have all been worked out, according to Wayne. "We'll be the only one offering drone service in the county, and the quality is great," Wayne stated.

Each year, the company gives back through charitable contributions to students of Ellis County through the City Real Estate Scholarship Program. Three \$1,500 scholarships are given to qualifying high school seniors chosen after submitting essays on various topics regarding character and community. City Real Estate also began a grassroots project called Home of The Brave, which builds homes for veterans. Wayne has more plans to give back to the Red Oak area, as service to others is one of his passions.

Wayne's accomplishments and awards in the industry include the title of past president of the Board of Realtors, and he has received Realtor of the Year in addition to the Chairman's Award through Ellis Hill Association of Realtors. **NOW**

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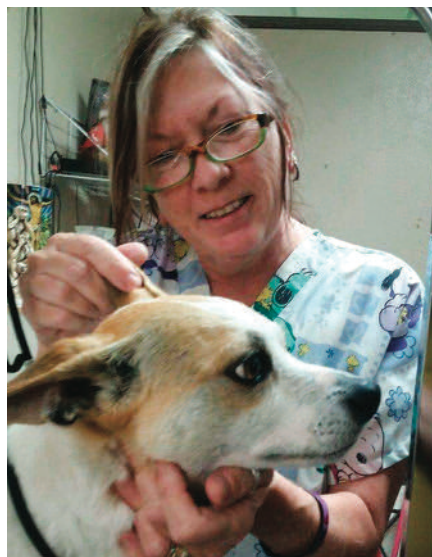
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— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Diana, Princess of Wales, celebrated for her loveliness, had a facial skin condition expertly hidden from the world. Rosacea didn't care if she was royalty. That diagnosis made her one of many with rosacea. This skin condition typically occurs in people over the age of 30, and fair skinned individuals are most susceptible.

Small blood vessels under the skin swell and cause your cheeks, forehead, chin and nose to have a reddened or flushed appearance. It can resemble an acne breakout, allergic reaction or other skin conditions. The redness may come and go. Over time the color deepens and becomes persistent with spider web-like veins appearing in the face. If rosacea isn't treated, symptoms will worsen with pimples and bumps appearing on the flushed skin. Another rare complication is called rhinophyma in which the skin thickens and causes the nose to appear larger with a bulbous effect reminiscent of the comedian, W.C. Fields.

Another complication from rosacea is ocular rosacea where the eyelids become inflamed and irritated. Styes may develop, and the eyes may feel gritty and look bloodshot.

The cause of rosacea has not been established but there are contributing factors that may precipitate or aggravate the condition. Familiar history can be a factor if a close relative has the condition. Possible abnormalities in the blood vessels in the face could cause the flushing in the skin. Females are more prone to this disorder, but males typically have the worst cases.

Triggers of rosacea can be anything that causes the blood vessels to increase flow to the surface of the skin. Hot drinks and caffeinated drinks, such as tea, coffee or caffeinated soft drinks may be culprits. Sunlight, spicy foods, exercise and even some medications can be triggers. Alcohol does not cause rosacea but can aggravate the condition.

At this time, there is no cure for rosacea, but there are avenues for relief. Treatment focuses on lessening the signs and symptoms. Medications used may be oral or topical in nature with the aim of reducing the inflammation and redness in the skin to bring symptoms under control. Laser treatment to shrink the blood vessels in the facial area may be used. Someone with the skin thickening from rosacea may seek help from a plastic surgeon. Those with this condition have to be diligent with personal care in applying sunscreen for protection and to prevent flare-ups, dressing appropriately for cold or windy weather and taking care to use gentle skin care products. Because of the varying degrees of symptoms and severity of this disease, let your physician guide your treatment plan for best results. **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 3

Ferris Crime Watch meeting: 7:00-8:00 p.m., Ferris Public Library. This meeting is open to the public. The meeting focuses on crime in and around Ferris, as well as crime prevention and reporting tips. For more information, call (214) 801-0159.

Ferris Area Business Association/
FABA meeting: Come support Ferris businesses by attending the monthly FABA meeting. Dinner will be provided. Email ferrisareabusinessassociation@gmail.com for more details.

January 9

Red Oak City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., City Council Chambers, 200 Lakeview Pkwy.

January 14

Prayer Shawl Circle: 10:00 a.m.-noon, First United Methodist Church of Red Oak, 60 Daubitz Dr. Circle of Hope and Healing ministry. For more information, call Beth Norris at (214) 392-0732.

January 17

CareVan Immunization Clinic: 5:00-7:00 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville. Clinic will provide free vaccines for children with immunization records.

January 21

Pet Adoption Event: 9:00-11:00 a.m., Walmart Garden Center, 400 Hwy. 67 Frontage Rd., Midlothian. Animal shelter pets available for adoption are in attendance.

Stars and S'mores: 6:00-8:00 p.m., Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center, 1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill. Join us for s'mores around the campfire, stargazing and guided night hikes into the canyon to check on the community's nocturnal residents.

January 22

Martin Luther King, Jr., Community Peace March and Celebration: 3:00 p.m., Cedar Hill High School Performing Arts Center, 1 Longhorn Blvd. This is a free community event in honor of Dr. King and his legacy to bring our diverse community together. The Grammy award-winning acapella group Sweet Honey in the Rock will perform. The peace march will begin in the CHHS parking lot at 3:00 p.m. The celebration and tribute will follow at 4:00 p.m. inside the Performing Arts Center.

Ongoing:

Second Mondays

Ellis County Veterans Networking Group

meeting: 6:30 p.m., Ryan's Steak House, Hwy. 287 Bypass and 77, Waxahachie. Join the group for dinner and listen to the guest speaker. For more information, call (214) 763-0378.

Third Mondays

Red Oak Book Club: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Red Oak City Hall/Library. For more information, email redoakbookclub@gmail.com.

Fourth Mondays

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

Blue Star Mothers of America, 7:00 p.m., Ovilla Community Center, 1404 Oak Creek Rd., Ovilla. For more information, call (972) 679-9425 or visit www.bluestarmothers.org.

Living with Diabetes: 6:00 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Public Library in Cedar Hill. Learn life skills suggested in living with diabetes.

Mondays and Wednesdays

Mommy & Me: **Mondays:** 11:30 a.m.-noon, Red Oak Library. Music and instrumental play for toddlers and their parents; **Wednesdays,** 10:00-10:45 a.m., crafts/story time for children and their parents. Call the library at (469) 218-1230 for more information on all library events.

Tuesdays

Writing for Enjoyment Group meeting: 12:30-1:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church of Red Oak, 60 Daubitz Dr. For more information, call (469) 383-5365 or email joanpomero@att.net.

Second Tuesdays

342 Networker: 7:30 a.m., Denny's, I-35E Service Rd., Red Oak. This is a Red Oak Chamber of Commerce networking opportunity.

Fourth Tuesdays

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

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Story Time: 11:00 a.m., Ferris Public Library. Pre-school children and their caregivers are invited for stories. For more information, call (972) 544-3699.

ESL Classes: 6:00-8:30 p.m., ATCO, Ferris. For more information, call Yolanda Garcia at (972) 992-9527.

Wednesdays

The Oaks DivorceCare classes: 7:00-8:30 p.m., The Oaks Fellowship Church in Red Oak.

Classes are held in the Educational Building in Room 203. Classes are co-ed and all are welcome.

Third Wednesdays

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club. Cost is \$13. Vouchers for mothers requiring childcare are available. This is a very positive, uplifting and refreshing time for women and includes a delicious lunch and featured guest speaker each month. For reservations, women can call Kay Dunn at (972) 937-2807.

Wednesdays and Thursdays

The Red Oak Senior Citizens Group: 8:30 a.m.-noon, Lions Club Building, 207 W. Red Oak Rd., Red Oak. For more information, call (214) 502-9747.

Thursdays

Grief Share meeting: 7:00 p.m., The Oaks Fellowship in Red Oak, Room E-104. This is a recovery group for those who have lost loved ones. For more information, call (214) 376-8208.

SYNERGY: 11:30 a.m., Randy's Bar-B-Que, 271 S. Hwy. 342, Red Oak. This is a Red Oak Chamber of Commerce networking opportunity.

Third Thursdays

Matthew 7:7 Riders Motorcycle Ministry. For the next meeting and ride, visit www.facebook.com/Matthew77RidersMotorcycleMinistry or contact Mark Rose at (972) 748-4076.

Ellis County Amateur Radio Club: 7:30 p.m., Ellis County Sheriff's Office Training Center (County Farm), 2272 FM 878, Waxahachie. Talk-in on the 145.410 machines. All are welcome. For more information, visit www.wd5ddh.org or contact Sharon Wrobel, Secretary and Public Information Officer, at (972) 978-8256.

Third Saturdays

Ferris Trades Day: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., 101 S. Main St., Ferris. For more information, call Tina Miller at (817) 992-9204.

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



In the Kitchen With Sammie Wickliffe

— By Rachel Smith

The Great Depression was a major struggle for many families, but it brought Sammie Wickliffe and her family closer together. “I learned how to cook from my sister, who is 20 years older than me,” she said. “We didn’t have much, but we still learned how to enjoy each other’s company with simple, yet delicious, food around our table.”

Whether in Dalton, close to the northeastern border of Texas, or Palmer, here in Ellis County, Sammie has always called Texas her home. At only 16, her marriage started her cooking legacy. She’s now the director of the Ferris Senior Center where home cooking is always present. Family traditions have always been important to Sammie. “Christmas has the greatest traditions,” she beamed. “It’s the best time of the year to cook.” **NOW**

Garlic Pecans

3/4 lb. butter
2 Tbsp. garlic salt
2 Tbsp. pecans

1. Boil butter and garlic salt; let set all day to keep it seasoned.
2. Reheat; add pecans. Mix together.
3. Pour mixture into a colander until fully drained.
4. Spread onto a cookie sheet; cook at 200-225 F for 30 minutes, stirring only once.

Pimentos and Cheese

Made by Sammie’s sister and enjoyed during the Depression.

1 10-oz. can condensed milk (divided use)
1 lb. American cheese
1 4-oz. jar pimentos, chopped

1. Place 1/2-oz. of milk in a saucepan.
2. Break the cheese into small pieces; add to milk. Heat up mixture; add remaining milk as

needed for a creamy consistency.

3. Add pimentos to cheese mixture; combine and enjoy!

Bologna and Macaroni

Enjoyed during the Depression.

1/2 onion, chopped
1/2 lb. bologna, chopped
1 pkg. macaroni or spaghetti, cooked
2 8-oz. cans tomato sauce (more, if needed)

1. Cook onions and bologna together until brown.
2. Add macaroni or spaghetti and tomato sauce; simmer for 10 minutes before serving.

Baked Ham

A family Christmas favorite.

3 cups water
1 10- to 12-lb. ham
5 cans Budweiser beer
1 cup chutney

1. Pour 3 cups water into a roaster. Place ham on shallow rack.
2. Pour beer slowly over the ham, one can at a time, until all beer cans have been used over the course of 20 minutes.
3. Bake ham at 350 F for 30 minutes per lb. (So, for 12 lbs., cook the ham for 6 hours.)
4. In the last 20 minutes, spread chutney on top, and let cook uncovered.

Quick Jell-O Salad

Enjoyed by the senior citizens.

1 small pkg. cottage cheese
1 small carton Cool Whip
1 20-oz. can crushed pineapple, drained (or fruit of your choice)
1 small pkg. lemon Jell-O (or your preferred fruit flavor)

1. Place cottage cheese, Cool Whip and pineapple into a bowl.
2. Sprinkle Jell-O over the top; mix together with a spoon. (You may want to substitute the Jell-O flavor to match your fruit choice, for example: orange Jell-O paired with mandarin oranges.)

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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Photos courtesy of Red Oak ISD



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