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M A G A Z I N E

DECEMBER 2016

NOW

Spreading Love

At Home With Dr. Roderick and Juliet Scott

Wear Out, Not Rust Out

Ruby Murray pursues her artistic bent with gusto

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Editor's Note

The holiday hoopla is here!

Let the busiest month of the year commence. It's time to fit in all the craziness of the holiday season. I'll be filling every weekend and some weekdays with Christmas programs, cookie baking, shopping, Angel Tree and CASA gift buying, school parties, piano recitals and, hopefully, I will have time to take in a musical performance, which really gets me in the holiday spirit. There are many ways to enjoy the season, locally and throughout the Metroplex, so take time to go to an event. I love any Christmas musical performance by a chorale or symphony. Attend your local city's tree lighting event. Of course, there are some staples of the season like the trains at NorthPark Center or the annual 12 Days of Christmas at the Dallas Arboretum. Our local Festival of Trees is December 1-3, and the Christmas in Red Oak event is also on December 3. Whatever you do, remember last year you made a pledge to really enjoy the holidays, so let's make the time do it this year.

Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas and Happy Kwanzaa!

Abby

Abby Rich

North Ellis Co. NOW Editor

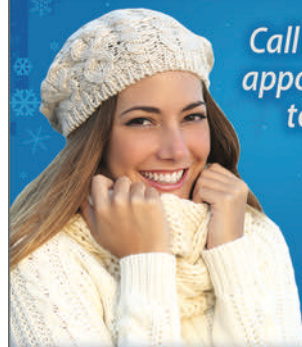
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*“My grandmother
always told me that you should
wear out, not rust out,” Ruby Nutting
Murray said with a smile. She is well into her
retirement years, but she is still discovering her talents
and pursuing her dreams. “I knew when I retired I would
be bored to death, so I got to work on other things,” she said.*

She retired from a successful career as the operations manager of Ripley’s Believe It or Not! in Grand Prairie. She also served as the buyer for the gift shop locally and in San Antonio. She had also designed and drawn up the plans for her own home. After retirement, she got to work on her daughter’s house. She’s always creating and always giving.

After her niece talked her into taking art lessons, she realized she was rekindling an old flame that had been suppressed since her childhood. She remembered that as a child she would finish her schoolwork as quickly as possible, so she could use her spare time to draw. Creating masterful drawings and paintings began to fill the void, and she knew that painting was the way she would spend much of her retirement. In her very first lesson, Linda Wacaster, her instructor then and now, encouraged her to take it easy and not get ahead of herself when she wanted to paint her house at the very first lesson. “I don’t take criticism well, so I ignored her,” Ruby laughed. “I probably drive her crazy since I don’t take her advice sometimes.” The product was a soft, shadowy, realistic version of her home.

W

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— By Debbie Durling

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Only eight years have passed since she attended that first class. However, her art is captivating. She loves to paint horses. Growing up in a very close family makes horses special to her because her dad and brother were always "horse people." She masterfully catches their movement, as if the hair blowing in the wind could be touched or the running horses are galloping off the canvas. She paints them with such detail they resemble a surreal photograph. Every vein, arch of a muscle and dancing hair of the mane delight the eyes and trigger the imagination.

One horse painting honored three friends Ruby met in the Ovilla Service League. They decided to take dance lessons together and formed a dance troupe to raise money for the Ovilla Fire Department. They were called the "Sassy Seniors," and each had a different costume in red, pink, turquoise and purple. In the painting, a horse represents each of the four dancers, accented with the color of each of their costumes. Later, she added two more canvasses with more horses and called it *The Trilogy*. It soon sold and is hanging in a private residence.

She seems to go through phases as she chooses the subjects of her craft rather than randomly painting whatever comes to mind. Barns were a phase. The paintings look as if you could walk across the grass and explore the barn. She is especially fond of the drawings of her dad and granddad's barns, as they are nostalgic and endearing.

Soon she was taking on peacocks





because several stained glass doors in her home feature them. She actually won 1st place in the Ellis County Art Association's contest with one of her peacocks. The colors and hues, as well as her artistic flare, bring out the beauty of such majestic birds.

A few years ago, Ruby lost her best friend, Shirley Carter. They had been friends since the first day of first grade. During the war, while her dad was overseas in the military and her mom had to travel to Dallas to work, Shirley lived with Ruby's family during the week. They dressed alike, which continued through high school and their adult lives. "The day I went to her funeral visitation, I saw that her husband had put her in the last outfit we had bought together," Ruby said with fondness. "I just couldn't wear mine to the funeral, but I mentioned it during my eulogy." In the weeks after the funeral, she painted Shirley, sitting with her back to the viewer, looking out over heaven, waiting for the party to begin when they are reunited one day.

Most recently, her paintings are of Native Americans and animals. Most of these paintings have Southwestern influence, as her husband, John, is from the beautiful town of Santa Fe, New Mexico. He is not only from Santa Fe, but is also the great-great-nephew of the Arch Bishop of Santa Fe, back when the town was just a crossroads. The Arch Bishop came over to America from France and brought his nephew and niece with him. The niece became Mother Superior of the famous Sisters of Loretto Chapel with the amazing staircase, which visitors come from around the world to see. The nephew married the daughter of the last Spanish governor of Santa Fe. These were his great-great-grandparents. Much of the land was owned by the Arch Bishop and

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5:00–6:00 PM Meal provided by Children's Council

6:00–7:00 PM Carols Around the Table –a sing-along with dessert

Sunday, December 11 – Third Sunday of Advent – JOY

8:30 AM Traditional Worship Service

10:50 AM Worship Service – Children's Christmas Pageant

Jesus Means Christmas to Me

Sunday, December 18 – Fourth Sunday of Advent – LOVE

8:30 AM Traditional Worship Service

10:50 AM Praise Service

Saturday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

2:30 PM Senior Adult Communion Service at Red Oak Health & Rehabilitation Center

5:30 PM Family Candlelight Communion Service

8:00 PM Traditional Candlelight Communion Service

Sunday, December 25 – 10:00AM Worship Service (no Sunday School)

Sunday, January 1, 2017 – 10:00AM Worship Service (no Sunday School)

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passed down through the generations. What wasn't sold by various generations now belongs to the Murrays.

It was on a trip to Santa Fe that Ruby discovered another talent. She was shopping with friends and saw a necklace she adored. She talked the shopkeeper into selling only the pendant part of the necklace to her as it was incredibly expensive with all the added beads. He did. However, as she was walking into another shop she saw some less expensive beads that would look great and decided that she could make her own necklace. As soon as she got home, she enrolled in a jewelry making class. Now she makes elaborate and beautiful pieces to accent any outfit. Her talented sense of artistry and design are truly on display in the pieces she crafts. "Rarely does a piece end up as the idea I originally had, but that is what I like about it," she grinned.

Not only has the Southwest influenced her paintings, but traveling to 39 countries has given depth to her creative flair. One of her favorite designs is that of shell flowers. When she and her husband visited the Galapagos Islands, she bought some shells that were drilled with holes for stringing. She decided to wire them into flowers. That led to several different necklace designs created with shells.

Ruby is a very happy lady who is finding new adventures and meaning after retirement. She can give testimony of many blessings from the Lord as she survived difficulties in her early adulthood. But, she is a woman of great faith and one who does not give up. She is determined to pursue her dreams until she "wears out," not "rusts out." **NOW**

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Alex D. - Age 6

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SPREADING LOVE

— By Rick Mauch



At Home With Dr. Roderick and Juliet

Dr. Roderick Scott looked at the picture hanging above the fireplace in his living room depicting New York City before the fall of the World Trade Center Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. With a push of a button both the picture and his face lit up simultaneously. It was clear his mind had raced back to a different time. “That picture makes me think the Twin Towers are still there,” he said. “It takes me back home to a time before that tragedy.”

Love, compassion and happiness is a theme throughout the 4,000-square-foot, two-story, five-bedroom home in Red Oak he shares with his wife, Juliet. It's simply a part of who they are and what they work to bring to the world through their Jamaican and African heritage, which can be seen prominently within the house.

Roderick is a retired academic professor who focuses on his music, mostly reggae music, which is designed for his listeners' pleasure. He also paints and is writing a book about academic performance and self-esteem.

Juliet is a nurse at the Veterans Administration hospital in Dallas. Her job brought them to Red Oak, as she was transferred from New York in 2013. She has family members in the area, and also in Houston. “I looked at this new house that was under construction online and fell in love with it,” she said, “but we almost didn't get it.”





Scott

The house had a pending sale, so the Scotts turned their attention elsewhere. Then, their fortune changed. "We were looking for something else when it popped up as available again," Juliet explained. "We got the house we wanted after all."

Throughout the house are examples of their heritage, such as the various wooden musical instruments surrounding the fireplace in the living room. In another part are some bongo drums and string instruments, along with a variety of wooden vases and other pieces of art highlighting a Jamaican/African theme.

The house is also filled with Roderick's paintings, including one of great personal interest to him that hangs prominently upon entering the foyer, past the front door. It is of a lady sitting on a blanket in a field with a big building across from her. "A lady went to see someone in prison, and while she's waiting she decides to have a picnic," he explained. As with virtually everything in the Scotts' lives, it is another example of finding happiness and comfort in every situation. This laid-back approach has served their family well, through a couple decades of marriage and the raising of four children.

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The oldest child, 19-year-old daughter, Roderica, is at Navarro College studying education. Right behind is 18-year-old son, Alphonso, a recent graduate of Red Oak High School who is also at Navarro, studying to enter the medical field. Florence, 16, is a senior in the



band at Red Oak High School and is also taking courses at Navarro College, and 10-year-old Agnes, is in track and field at Shields Elementary School in the Special Olympics. "She's going to be like her daddy with all these medals," Juliet said.

Roderick was once an athlete and a coach, most notably in track and soccer, with several trophies of his own. As he grew into adulthood, his attention went to education and working to make a better world. He has a bachelor's

degree, two master's degrees, a post graduate degree in school supervision and administration, and a doctorate degree in education administration. Roderick also has license and certification in family counseling, drug and alcohol counseling and youth development and alcoholism counseling. He worked for the New York City Board of Education for years.

And he has his music as evidenced with his in-home studio. Though cluttered, as many studios are, like any good musician he knows exactly where everything goes and how to get a beautiful noise out of the room. "I used to work with a band called the Vibrations, one of the top reggae bands in Brooklyn, playing guitar and doing lead and background vocals," he said. "But now that I have kids, I keep it in the studio mostly, though I do play in church. I do that for free. God gave me a talent, and it's my way to give back.

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I've been playing over 30 years. I used to help friends compose and arrange songs while I was at Long Island and New York universities."

In the home studio is a double-decker electric organ, numerous guitars, some drums and several mixing boards. There are several microphones, of course, and a big-screen computer on which he listens to and coordinates the different parts of songs as he pieces them together. "That's part of what's holding up getting the book published — I love to do this so much," Roderick said with a smile. "Who in this world does not love music?"

And there is plenty more to love in the Scotts' house. The pieces of heritage blend flawlessly with plenty of modern amenities. Above the living room is a giant chandelier that casts a golden glow throughout the room and onto the spiraling staircase that leads upstairs. A couple of miniature versions of the same chandelier hang in the dining room and attached lounge area.

Upstairs, along with the bedrooms, is an escape area for the family and visitors. A door opens to reveal a movie theater, complete with six reclining chairs, numerous bean bag chairs, an overhead projector and a screen that is well over 100 inches in size. There is even a popcorn machine, a miniature version of the kind found in the large movie theaters. And each recliner has drink holders for beverages. "Instead of going to the movies, we just put in a bigger screen," Roderick said. "Everybody loves it."

A balcony overlooks the living room area. Juliet joked that it allows her to keep

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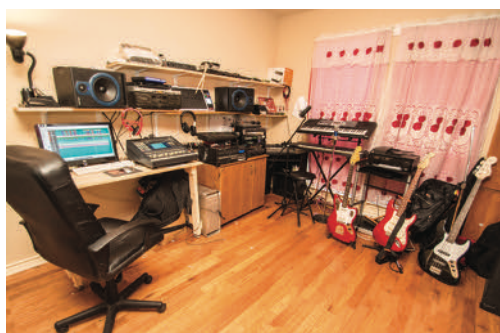
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a closer eye on her children, and that if she starts to come downstairs, they know they are in trouble.

Juliet's favorite hobby would, of course, be another way of caring for people. She loves to cook. "I cook everything," she said. "I love being in the kitchen cooking for people."

A garden across the front of the house features a variety of statues, including angels and Mother Mary. There's also a couple of Doberman statues and some lighthouses, along with some guardian lions. Mixed among them are flowers that include roses and perennials.

When the Christmas season arrives, the front yard takes on a whole new look. The Scotts go all out with decorations, including Santa, a Nativity scene, reindeer and Roderick's favorite — a big, green dinosaur with presents in his mouth. "The kids in the neighborhood love it. They stop by and look and have the best time," he said. "It's good for their mental health."

That's the Scotts: always looking for a way to bring happiness to all. That is what they strive for, not only for themselves, but for anyone with whom they come in contact. **NOW**

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Lola lived a long life but it was not an easy life. She had a lot of trials and tribulations including losing three of her four children as well as her husband. Although she experienced a lot of heartbreak she also experienced a lot of joy. She never lost her faith in God and read through the entire bible 30 times. She's left a big hole in many hearts and we will all miss her.

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MORE THAN A CHIEF

— By Abby Rich

Being in the presence of Chief Eddie Salazar of the Ferris Police Department, you might feel like you've known him for years. His welcoming smile and friendly demeanor would make anyone feel right at home. In a word, he embodies true hospitality.

Originally from the San Antonio area, Eddie lived in Arizona and Hawaii while his father was in the Air Force. He wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, so he enrolled in the Marine Corps his junior year — reporting for duty the day after his high school graduation. “With six kids in my family, I knew it was my best chance to eventually attend college,” he said. He attended college during his years of service, graduating before retirement.

After joining law enforcement in Newberry Co., South Carolina, he climbed the ranks, from patrol to narcotics, continuing through the ranks to patrol captain. He credits his progression through the ranks to his Marine Corps training and discipline.

In 2003, he made his way back to Texas, settling in Ennis where he worked for the Ennis Police Department before becoming an investigator for the Dallas Co. district attorney's office. “It was a tough job, mentally speaking, since I worked a lot of homicides,” Eddie stated. One such notorious cold case he worked on was the horrific Boogeyman of Dallas. Eddie, one of several detectives on the case, helped to put him in prison for life. The infamous case was detailed on *After the First 48* TV series. He also helped prepare cases for



**“IT’S MY PHILOSOPHY TO LET THE
POLICE OFFICERS ARE JUST LIKE**





COMMUNITY KNOW EVERYONE ELSE."

trials, which entailed having to find and then question witnesses, which wasn't an easy job considering most witnesses don't want to be found, according to the chief.

Currently, he's with the Ferris Police Department, and the high level of morale within the department is something he is very proud of. In fact, he feels morale is at an all-time high. "I gage this by the low turnover rate since I've been here. My officers and staff actually enjoy coming into work, and we



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have very few citizen complaints,” Eddie emphasized. Part of the reason is due to his commitment to the Community-Oriented Policing program, or C.O.P., he uses to bridge the gap between law enforcement and the community.

After becoming chief, Eddie immediately set up a family-style breakfast table in the common area of the office. His goal was to make it a kitchen-like atmosphere where everyone could gather around the table and have coffee or breakfast. Every few weeks out of the month, Eddie and his staff have something tasty grilling or smoking on the barbecue to encourage a break for lunch when they're available. He even invites members of the community, no matter who, to stop by and enjoy a burger during these Friday lunches. “It’s really brought a sense of camaraderie to the department,” he said.

With leadership traits he learned from his time in the service, the chief brought similar values into the department by utilizing the 14 leadership traits of the Marines. He requires his fellow officers to honor them as well. “New hires all get a copy of the traits that have worked for me for 30 years, and teamwork is a huge part of it,” he admitted. “The old mantra, *This is how it used to be, or this is how it’s always been done*, doesn’t work for me.”

In addition, Chief Salazar strongly emphasizes the practice of the LEED concept in his department, which entails officers listen and explain with equality and dignity while they’re conducting police business with anyone they encounter. He gives copies to all his new hires. “Listening is key, and gives respect to the person being questioned in the



situation — this also calms the person down,” he explained. “Treat them with dignity, and then the respect for an officer is earned.” He also implemented this tactic as patrol captain in a rather large, rural South Carolina county where he had only three deputies per shift.

He practices hospitality no matter where he is, especially when he’s in uniform. “It’s my philosophy to let the community know police officers are just like everyone else. Giving a little wave, or a smile, or even taking the time to talk to them in a casual environment does amazing things for building trust and respect on both sides.” The same goes for when he’s not in uniform.

On weekends, he and his wife, Kim, like to go antiquing. With an eye for art, he’ll find an old suitcase and then think to turn it into a side table. His wife asks for him to mimic and build specific things she’s found on Pinterest, and he figures out a way to make it happen. “So, in a sense, I have a honey-do list just like every husband,” he laughed. “One that doesn’t stop.” Being the doting husband,


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he also helped his wife get her classroom ready for the school year by building candy and gum ball machines for her kids' reading area.

This is really Chief Salazar's therapy for relieving stress. "Instead of plopping in front of the TV, I love to work on my house and cut the lawn," he confessed. His backyard is a haven, as he jokingly calls it his weekend getaway. In the yard, he built a picnic table with an outdoor entertainment area complete with a homemade cooler he fashioned using an old telephone handset for a handle and pieces of fence. It resembles something likely to be showcased on HGTV. There is also a one-of-a-kind flower box made from an old window.

In his garage, he has treasures he picks up from antiquing, and from friends who bring him pieces they know he'd love to use in his artwork. "On walks with my wife I'll hone in on sticks and old materials, which currently have their own space on an entire wall in my garage," Eddie stated. Some of his prized finds are pieces of old iron, iron traps, an old shoe-shine box and farming tools.



He likes to distress pieces to look vintage or antique, as well as stain wood, so it's natural he redid his kitchen cabinets to have the popular distressed look. And his creations are not likely to be seen in a store, including the bench he made out of an old bedframe. "Creativity is just as important as the work," Eddie stated. In working creatively with his hands, he ends up building pieces for friends and neighbors. However, he never sells any of his work nor asks for payment. Instead, he gives it away, and is happy to do so. It's just in his hospitable nature. **NOW**

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Through grants, State Farm has donated almost \$180,000 to the Red Oak School district within a two-year period.

Always Giving Back

Andrea Walton's State Farm serves the community in both good and trying times.

— By Abby Rich

Andrea Walton has been with State Farm for 23 years now. The office has clients throughout the Metroplex, but most live in Ellis County. With homemade cookies and popcorn in the lobby on Fridays, as well as discount driving parties for students who bring in their report cards, Andrea and the staff at her State Farm office make certain that clients and members of the community feel at home. "It's one of our most important goals, and in return, people in the area are always stopping by to say hello or sometimes to sit a while and even read the newspaper," Andrea said.

In addition to mortgage and car loans, State Farm discusses and prepares a plan for retirement. They don't sell their mortgages, which, according to Andrea, most insurance companies do not practice. Regardless of what service is needed, her advice is to have

a plan and a savings for emergencies. "A little bit of planning goes a long way," she said.

According to Andrea, "State Farm is different — it's not about chasing a big fish or just the numbers. We love serving our community and giving back. We provide a personal service and know our clients' stories and what their values are," she explained.

Giving back to the community in which she serves, Andrea is a past board member of the Red Oak Chamber of Commerce and a current member of the Red Oak ISD Education Foundation. "If you have great schools that reflect innovation and the support of students and teachers, then the result is a great community. The way Red Oak handles it is superior."

One of the ways they have given back is through Red Oak High

School's Driver's Safety Program. Nationally, State Farm awarded 13 schools throughout the country \$100,000 in unrestricted grants, including Red Oak, two years in a row. The money was put back into the teen driver safety fund. Red Oak ISD placed signs all over town, thanking State Farm, which partnered with the education foundation. All in all, through the grants, State Farm donated almost \$180,000 to the school district within a two-year period.

As natural disasters are a part of life and the insurance world, one of the most impactful to the community and Andrea's State Farm office was the day after Christmas, last December, when several tornadoes ripped through the community and caused major damage. After the storm moved through, Andrea and her staff came into the office that Saturday night to take and make calls to clients in the area.

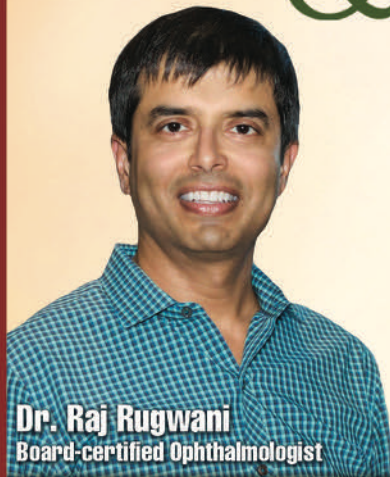
"We love serving our community and giving back. We provide a personal service and know our clients' stories and what their values are."

"Before it was reported, I could tell the path the tornado took by who was calling, based on where they live," Andrea explained. Her team stayed with clients until midnight as they wrote checks and made reservations for displaced clients at nearby hotels. The next morning, Andrea and the rest of the office came into the building at 5:00 a.m. "It was unusual because it was a holiday weekend for everyone. It had also turned a lot colder, whereas just the day before everyone was wearing shorts."

Most importantly, the Ovilla, Glenn Heights and Red Oak areas had no casualties, but more than 200 homes, two churches and an elementary school were damaged or destroyed. "To see the families and children camped out in the Longbranch Elementary gym, which became a shelter only a few days after Christmas, was so disheartening — we had to help as much as we could," Andrea said. "And we will continue to support and be there not just for our clients, but for the community in which we work and live." **NOW**

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Armando Martinez, Manny Tarango, Erica Huerta and Kayla Self take a breather after lunch rush at Palio's Pizza Cafe in Red Oak.



Julie Harris, auction chair, and InterBank staff get ready to bid at the Red Oak Chamber Annual Dinner and Auction.



Victor Garcia of Ferris holds his new baby grandson. Welcome to the world, Ranger Hayes Garcia.



Red Oak High's Homecoming King and Queen, Jalen Sweeny and Ashley Johnson, are excited to represent their school.



Ovilla Fire Chief Brandon Kennedy and his daughters check out the department's newest fire truck.



Project Graduation volunteers Sara Hosfield, Sheila Ragland and Peggy Lewis hold down the fort at the Red Oak Chamber Gala.



Sadie Stacks, Cynthia and Stephen Hamm, and Marty Walker show off their cute costumes at Ferris' Trunk or Treat.



The ROISD Education Foundation promotes the annual Festival of Trees during the Homecoming Parade.



Tyler Poole and Samantha Garcia dress up in political attire for Ferris' Trunk or Treat.

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A Multifaceted Jaw Problem

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Do you ever think about your chewing mechanism? Probably not, because it is as natural and automatic as breathing. However, if something interferes with it, you will think about it a lot! The action that makes all this activity possible begins in the temporomandibular joint. Think of it as a hinge that connects the lower jaw, called the mandible, to the skull. Put your fingers in front of your ears and open your mouth. Now move your jaw up and down and side to side. This is what gives you the ability to chew on whatever you want. Because this joint is so multifaceted and complex, its actions can create challenges if there are problems.

When these problems occur, they are known as temporomandibular joint disorders, or TMD. These disorders are characterized by an aching pain and tenderness in the joint and surrounding area. Or, there may be no discomfort at all. Chewing, talking or opening the mouth widely can cause distress. Along with those symptoms, one might experience persistent headaches, limited function in the jaw, noises of clicking, popping and grating in the area or a feeling that your bite is off. Sometimes, the jaw area can lock or feel as if it's stuck when the mouth is open.

These symptoms are difficult to treat because the cause of TMD has not been established. However, there are factors that can increase your risk or exacerbate the condition. Someone with arthritis may experience the affliction in that joint. Extended periods where the mouth is open wide for a

significant amount of time, such as a long dental procedure, can precipitate the discomfort. Other possible causes are autoimmune diseases, injuries to the area and stress, which may cause grinding of the teeth or jaw clenching.

One of the goals for treatment is to alleviate the pain. Over-the-counter pain medications and, sometimes, prescription medications may be used. Eat soft foods that won't aggravate the condition. Try to consciously rest the jaw area and become aware of grinding or clenching episodes when awake. Bite guards at night may be a good option, if you tend to grind or clench in your sleep. If the muscles in your face feel especially tense, a massage of that area and a warm pack may provide some relief.

For some, the discomfort from TMD is temporary and not very severe. It may come and go as factors that affect it present themselves. For those experiencing significant discomfort that doesn't go away with home treatments, it may be necessary to see a health care professional for help. **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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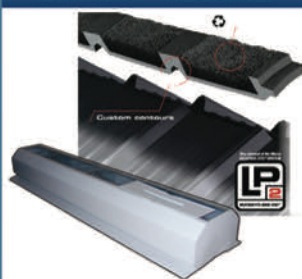
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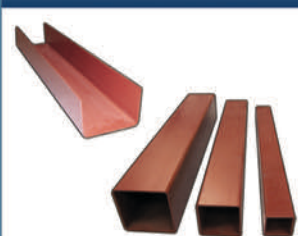


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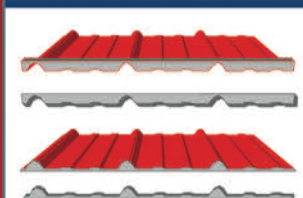


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December 1 — 3

Festival of Trees: **December 1 and 2**, 3:00-8:00 p.m.; **December 3**, 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Old Red Oak Jr. High, 200 Live Oak St. Kick off the holiday season and view dozens of decorated Christmas trees, wreaths, stockings, gift baskets and other items donated by the Red Oak community. Trees will be sold by silent auction at the end of the event, sponsored by the Red Oak ISD Education Foundation.

December 2 — 4

According to Scrooge: **December 2 and 3**, 7:00 p.m.; **December 4**, 9:00 a.m., First Baptist Red Oak Church, 320 E. Ovilla Rd.

December 3

Southern Star Christmas Celebration: 1:00-7:00 p.m., Heritage Park, Back Alley Plaza and the downtown shops of Midlothian, 234 N. 8th St. The Christmas event will have vendors, entertainment, pictures with Santa, a parade and a tree lighting.

House of Hotrods and Classics 13th Annual Toy Drive & Car Show: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 2301 Hwy. 1187, Suite 201, Mansfield. Free admission with new, unwrapped toy. Concessions, vendors, entertainment and facility

tours, plus visit with Santa between Noon-2:00 p.m. For more information, call (817) 466-9942 or visit www.txhouseofhotrods.com.

Ovilla Annual Tree Lighting: 6:00 p.m., Heritage Park. The lighting will be followed by a movie in the park.

December 4

Holiday Home Tour: 1:00-6:00 p.m., selected locations in Mansfield. Mansfield Women's Club hosts this popular event to benefit area charities serving women and children in need. \$25 when tickets are purchased in advance at Tom Thumb Customer Service Desk, The Cellar on Main and Poured on Debbie Lane.

December 7

Christmas in Ovilla: 5:30-8:30 p.m., Ovilla Baptist Church, 3251 Ovilla Rd. This free community-wide event will include live music, hot chocolate, pictures with Santa, snow and more.

December 8

HADDIT Holiday Luncheon for Senior Citizens: 11:00 a.m., Wooden Elementary School, 200 Louise Ritter Blvd., Red Oak. Red Oak ISD Project Success invites senior citizens to be

luncheon guests. If you are unable to attend, but would like a meal delivered to your home, call (972) 617-4607 by **December 4**. They will gladly bring it to you. Please RSVP by **December 4** by calling (972) 617-4607 or sending an email to charmainne.womack@redoakisd.org.

December 10

Christmas on the Square in Ferris: 4:00 p.m., Downtown Ferris. Join the city of Ferris and its churches for an assembly line to Santa. There will be a booth providing free crafts as everyone waits for Santa.

December 11

Ellis County Toy Run: 11:00 a.m., 8th St., downtown Midlothian. Annual Gryphons Motorcycle Club Toy Run and parade of motorcycles. Entry fee into the toy run is \$5 and a new toy for children ages 3-13. There will be door prizes, live auctions, free hot dogs and refreshments while they last.

December 18

Victorian Candlelight Service: 6:00 p.m., First Presbyterian Church of Ferris, 201 S. Church St.

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



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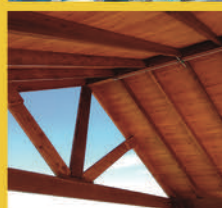
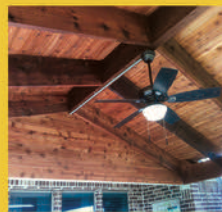
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In the Kitchen With Mark Koehl

— *By Rachel Smith*

Mark Koehl grew up in a small, south-central Texas town called Fayetteville, where Sunday family gatherings were common. Memories of cooking with his family led to his aspiration toward cooking barbecue. “I would help my dad with the barbecue and assist my grandmother with side dishes and desserts. I learned a lot from them,” he shared.

Later, he became part of a barbecue cooking team, competing in state-wide cook-offs. His previous cooking experience helped him start his catering business, KO’s Cook Out. He cherishes his time most when sitting with family and friends next to his custom-made smoker filled with meat for visitors to enjoy. “I love experimenting with food and creating my own dishes,” he said. “Enjoying a new twist on foods makes the work worthwhile.” **NOW**

Breakfast Stack

- 2 tsp. olive oil (divided use)**
- 2 cups diced red potatoes**
- 1 1/2 lbs. smoked brisket, shredded**
- 6 large eggs**
- 6 fajita-size flour tortillas**
- 2 cups cheese, shredded (divided use)**
- 1 cup pico de gallo**
- 1 jalapeño, sliced**

- 1.** In a large skillet, heat 1 tsp. oil. Add potatoes, browning until tender. Set aside.
- 2.** In a skillet or microwave, reheat brisket; set aside.
- 3.** In a skillet, add remaining oil; fry eggs to preferred doneness. Warm tortillas when ready to create your stack. Place tortillas on a plate; in order, layer egg, brisket, cheese, potatoes and

remaining cheese. Garnish with pico de gallo or jalapeño. Fold and eat with a fork.

New Year’s Day Good Luck Hopping John

- 4 strips bacon, diced**
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped**
- 2 cups black-eyed peas, cooked**
- 1/2 cup rice, uncooked**
- 2 cups water**
- 1/4 tsp. dried red pepper, crushed**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper**

- 1.** In a Dutch oven, cook bacon and onion until bacon is crisp and onion is soft.
- 2.** Add black-eyed peas, rice, water and red

pepper. Cover; simmer over low heat about 20-25 minutes, until rice is done. Toss with salt and pepper; serve.

Chocolate Pecan Pie

- 4 1.5-oz. squares unsweetened chocolate**
- 4 Tbsp. butter**
- 1/4 cup milk**
- 2 eggs**
- 2 cups packed brown sugar**
- 1 tsp. vanilla**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 3 Tbsp. flour**
- 3/4 cup pecans, chopped**
- 1 unbaked pie shell**
- 3 oz. semi-sweet morsels**

- 1.** Melt chocolate and butter together; stir into milk. Add eggs, sugar, vanilla salt and flour. Mix until well blended.
- 2.** Spread pecans over bottom of pie shell; sprinkle morsels over pecans. Pour filling inside crust. Place pie tin in bottom of Dutch oven; bake at 375 F for 35-40 minutes. Serve warm or chilled.

Squash Gumbo

- 6 pieces bacon, chopped**
- 1/2 cup onions, chopped**
- 4-5 medium yellow squash, cut into bite-size pieces**
- 1 15.5-oz. can tomatoes, diced**
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**

- 1.** In a large skillet or saucepan, sauté bacon and onions until bacon is crisp and onions are clear.
- 2.** Add squash, tomatoes and Ro-Tel; mix. Cover and cook on low to medium heat for 45 minutes, until squash is tender. Add salt and pepper, to taste; enjoy.

Hamburger Casserole

- 2 lbs. ground meat**
- 1 small onion, finely chopped**
- 1 10.5-oz. can vegetable soup**
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of mushroom soup**
- 1 8-oz. can sour cream**
- 1/2 cup cheese, shredded**
- 1 can flakey biscuits**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 475 F. In a skillet, brown meat and onions; add soups, sour cream and cheese. Cook until mixture is warm.
- 2.** Pour into a casserole dish; top with biscuits. Bake 8-10 minutes until biscuits are golden brown.

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