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Editor's Note

Home Is Where the Heart Is ...

When I ask *North Ellis Co.NOW* readers what they like best about the magazine the response is always, "The home stories!" Everyone has their idea of what home means to them, but the one thing we have in common is that "feeling of home" to which nothing else compares. We at NOW, as well as our readers, encourage you to submit your At Home ideas, whether for your own home

or your friends, neighbors, co-workers and family who would love to share their sacred space. The most memorable At Home stories are the ones that touch our hearts. They are your stories of adoption, of proud moms and dads, collectors of interesting items, etc. They are stories about everyday people in the community who, at the end of the day, all strive for a happy, comfortable place to come home to — no matter the size or neighborhood, whether it's old or new, eclectic or more traditional, in the country or in town. Send your ideas my way, so I can share as many as I can with the community!

Looking forward to telling your At Home story!

Abby

Abby Rich

North Ellis Co.NOW Editor

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An Evening Out

— By Virginia Riddle



Enthusiasm buds and bursts into full bloom as families enter the door of Ovilla United Methodist Church's youth building for another monthly Leap of Faith Special Needs Ministry evening. For the parents of special needs children, this is a night of respite, a night out-on-the-town or with friends. For the children, the ministry offers what kids of all ages love most — having fun with friends. "It's everyone's night for an outing. This is a way for us to serve others. It's a joy," Lynn Sawyer, a registered nurse and the ministry coordinator, said.

This unique ministry began five years ago when Diane Leggett offered to head up a church committee. "There was a lot of discussion, meetings and preparation," Alyson

Hopper, a speech pathologist and volunteer, recalled. "Before we could get started, we had to see what we were capable of doing. We went to different churches that offered similar programs and took different best-of-the-best aspects into our ministry."

"Barbara McNeely of the Cowboy Church of Ellis County has been a great resource," Lynn remarked. Dates for Leap of Faith nights are announced in OUMC's church bulletin and on its Facebook page.

Offered during the hours of 5:00-8:00 p.m. on a Saturday in September-February, April and May, the ministry serves families that often have a hard time finding a place in a church. "I was inspired to get involved when a church member talked about her special needs child not having anything to do in church," Alyson said. "We started a special needs Sunday school class and now have this respite night for the families. This has always been a calling, so this ministry is close to my heart."

"Alyson is an awesome volunteer," Lynn said. "Getting started and getting to know the







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parents was challenging, but Diane was a special education teacher, so she had lots of contacts and relationships built. Alyson, through her work, has the same kind of contacts and relationships.”

“There’s a lot of trust that the caregivers give us,” Alyson added.

Registration forms, which include a history, dietary needs and other special needs, as well as cell phone and emergency numbers, are filled out by each child’s caregiver. “Since safety is a factor, we ask that participants be pre-registered through our OUMC Facebook page or by calling OUMC, but we always have some extra volunteers who can take on new, unregistered guests,” Lynn said.

While both Lynn and Alyson are uniquely qualified professionally to meet the children’s special needs, volunteers don’t have to have special training. “We have 42 volunteers, most from our church, but some from the community,” Lynn stated. Volunteers come in all ages, from children to older adults to whole families serving together. “Sometimes, it is the children leading the parents to volunteer,” Lynn said. Volunteers must pass the ministry’s safety process with a background check. “Our volunteers have a willingness to serve others,” Lynn added.

Volunteers can do some tasks that don’t require attendance on the Saturday nights. They can help by dropping craft items off at the church, for instance. During Leap of Faith nights, volunteers help attendees craft items, prepare and serve snacks, piece together puzzles and are present to watch movies, play Wii games or just “hang” with newly made friends.

Rev. Joel Robbins, senior pastor of OUMC, volunteers along with his children. “This respite night is a neat

deal. My kids get to grow and develop through the experience and learn that the world is a different place for many people,” he said. A former Marine, Rev. Robbins now serves as a reserve Army chaplain and has been a caseworker for MHMR. “I have an affinity for this special needs ministry. My dad, who’s also a Methodist minister, started a special needs program in Brownwood, Texas, where he was pastoring. If we are going to be the church of Jesus Christ, we need to reach out to all people. Lynn is a truly amazing person, as is this program.”

“We have all ages of people attending, from 1-year-old babies to adults, and we usually have the whole spectrum of special needs represented — physical, mental and emotional,” Alyson explained.

“Learning what they like and don’t like is challenging. Some attendees are nonverbal, but as time goes on, we get to know what their ‘sweet spots’ are,” Lynn added.

One of the “sweetest” times during Leap of Faith nights will be recreated this month at the Valentine’s Day Party. “We decorate with pink, red and white hearts that attendees take home as favors,” Lynn said. “There’s music and dancing. Everyone looks forward to this annual party and has lots of fun.”

“The dances are always fun,” Alyson agreed. “Santa has brought joy in December, too. Every night is memorable. My kids have all volunteered, too. It’s great seeing the participants enjoy seeing each other and the volunteers. There are challenges with anything that’s worthwhile, but there’s also a general beauty to respite night.”

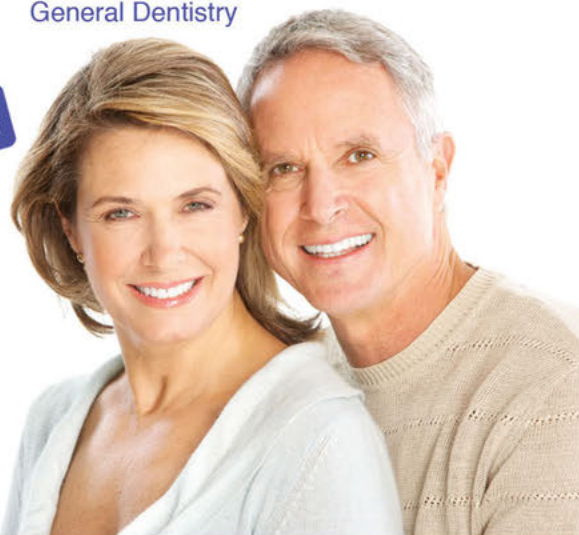
Founded in the 1880s, OUMC’s mission has been Matthew 28 — “Go out and make disciples of Jesus Christ.” Having taken six mission trips last year



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and with 38 ongoing missions, such as Leap of Faith, church members are busy fulfilling that mission statement. "These are incredible people. Thirty-eight percent of this church's members have been previously unchurched. We have purchased 43 acres to build on soon, but the treasured youth building, also known as the Old Sanctuary, will be moved to that site. This respite night is one of the missions that we are designing the new building to accommodate," Rev. Robbins stated.

Lynn and Alyson agree with Rev. Robbins. Lynn, a native of Mississippi, and her family fell in love with Ovilla 26 years ago. "Ovilla is a town where neighbors help neighbors. Both the church and town have a very sweet spirit," she said. Alyson has been a member of OUMC since age 7, but she moved away, only to return with her husband and children.

Seeing families connect and share experiences when they arrive early for Leap of Faith nights is only one blessing to volunteers. "It's just beautiful to get to know the participants, see their creativity, see them making friends and getting to know the volunteers," Lynn expressed. "This is something that God put in my heart to do." **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information, contact OUMC at (972) 617-8840.



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Led by a Child

— By Virginia Riddle



At Home With Derrick & Nicole Massie

Comfortably settled into life in their condo in the Bishop Arts area of Oak Cliff, Derrick and Nicole Massie were still dreaming of becoming parents. Satisfied with their professional careers — Derrick as a clinical tech in the neonatal intensive care unit of Children's Health in Dallas, and Nicole as a senior practice performance manager with United Healthcare — they were close to extended family members living in Dallas and Killeen. Yet the desire to extend their love to a child was strong. It was time to prepare to become adoptive parents. "Having kids was always on my heart," Derrick said.

Their journey through the adoption process began when a mother dropped her baby off at Derrick's hospital's ER under the Texas Safe Haven (or Baby Moses) Law. "I spent three hours with the baby and called Nicole





to see if I could bring the baby home, only to find out that we first needed to take classes to become emergency foster parents in Dallas County. We enrolled, since we wanted to be ready the next time,” Derrick explained. The classes were a six-month process, and the call finally came. An 8-month-old baby in Houston was available for a legal risk adoption placement. “We made several visits and always had the car seat ready,” Derrick recalled. The day finally came when they were allowed to place their future son, Nicholas, in that car seat and bring him to their home. “I kept looking back at him the whole way home, and I’ve just been beaming ever since. I’m so happy to be a steward of a life,” Derrick said.

However, a little boy takes up a lot of space, so a new home with a yard became a priority. “Nicholas’ adoption was finalized in July 2015, after having him for a year, and we moved to our new home in Glenn Heights the following






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November,” Nicole remembered. “There were big changes. We went from 1,100 to 3,100 square feet. The city is a lot of hustle and bustle, and we had a nice, fun life there. But here we have horses, fields and a dairy farm nearby. Being here calms your mind. There’s a time for every season in our lives.”

Watching their home being built from the ground up and being able to customize it with upgrades was exciting and challenging to Derrick and Nicole’s patience at times, but the results have allowed this newly formed family to grow together

comfortably. A soaring, two-storied entry with a celestial window opens to the formal dining area where Derrick and Nicole’s wedding pictures are on display. “We met at our church, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, in the singles’ ministry and will have been married eight years this March,” Nicole said. “We are still very active members there.”

A cozy fireplace anchors the family room dressed in the home’s white, silver, cream and black hues. Windows in this room and the informal dining room provide an ample view of Nicholas when he’s



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playing in the fenced backyard, which includes a covered patio. Comfortable seating surrounds a coffee table, and extra seating is provided at the breakfast bar that divides the kitchen from this open living area. Black and white granite countertops are the perfect accents to the stainless-steel appliances and beautiful cabinetry and pantry.

An office area with a bay window and French doors will give this busy couple a place to work at home with Derrick's new enterprise. A former stand-up comedian, he also writes skits that enhance his church's ministry. "I've always been drawn to the theater and wanted to grow in drama, so I've founded a Christian-based theater organization, Word2Life Productions," he said. The open concept of their home allows for board meetings, as well as family gatherings.

A guest bedroom and bath is wrapped in warm golds and browns. "We planned this bedroom for my parents when visiting from Killeen, Texas, my hometown," Derrick said. "However, my dad passed away, but he did get to see the home while it was being built. Our first Christmas in this home was bittersweet without him. But everyone else was here, and my dad was here in spirit."

The master bedroom and bath is decorated in accompanying golds and browns. Dual walk-in closets provide ample storage. "You can tell which one is Nicole's. Everything is hung up," Derrick quipped.

A centralized staircase rises to Nicholas' little boy's room and another guest bedroom and bath. Nicholas' large play area overlooks the entryway below, and he is safely confined by decorative fencing. A walk-in storage closet is handy for all the toys and other items, and double doors open to a large media room. "It's all wired for every type of media and electronics," Derrick stated.

"We've already had some great gatherings in this home," Derrick recalled. "My birthday when I barbecued for everyone, Nicholas' birthday and our one-year celebration of his adoption come to mind. Nicholas is already swinging a bat in the backyard."

He's now a busy, talkative, social and inquisitive 3-year-old," Nicole added. She cites the foster care experience and adoption as a positive in their lives. "I heard a lady at church talk about her foster care experience and her adoption into a loving family, and I knew we needed this space for more foster kids in our future. It's definitely on our hearts. The night before Nicholas' adoption was finalized, he said, 'Mama,' to me for the first time. It's been remarkable watching him fall in love with us," Nicole revealed. "Nicholas is a big gift that's been given to us."



The couple has discovered both the challenges and joys of parenthood during the past two years. "It's remarkable how I can be so mad and so in love with someone at the same time," Derrick said.

When these busy parents can snatch a few minutes of spare time, they fall back into former hobbies. "I love spending time with family and friends and reading. I host a small Bible group in my home, but I love every minute of being a mom," Nicole said. "Nicholas hugs and snuggles." Derrick still finds time for an occasional golf game.

"I just have a whole bunch of joy being a dad," Derrick said.

"Our faith is important to us. It's how we live our lives, and our home is another gift given by Him. Without God, this edifice would be nothing," Nicole stated.

"We feel blessed," Derrick added.

"Through all our ups and downs, there's nowhere else I'd rather be." **NOW**

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A photograph of four women smiling. From left to right: a blonde woman in a denim jacket, a woman with long brown hair in a purple top, an older woman with short white hair and glasses in a pink jacket, and a woman with long brown hair in a purple top.

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A photograph of a yellow 1939 Packard car.



MAKING AN IMPACT

— By Jill Martinez

THE HEARTS
OF THE
PEOPLE WHO
WORK FOR
DPR ARE BIG,
AND THEIR
VISION FOR A
DRUG-FREE
COMMUNITY IS
EVEN BIGGER.

Maybe you've noticed the billboards along Hwy. 287 in Waxahachie that promote a smoke-free city. These advertisements are just one of many efforts by Drug Prevention Resources, the oldest prevention nonprofit in Texas, to keep Ellis County healthy and strong.

Shari Phillips, the Drug-Free Communities project manager, works tirelessly with a team of dedicated people to help young people and their families remain drug- and alcohol-free. They do this by partnering with city and county personnel, parents, school districts and law enforcement. "We strive to educate the community about the dangers of drug and alcohol addictions. We know that addiction is 100-percent preventable, so that is what we work toward," Shari said.

The IMPACT coalition that Shari oversees was given a \$625,000 grant from the federal government in 2016 to help them expand their efforts over the next five years. Only one other group in the entire state received this funding. "I

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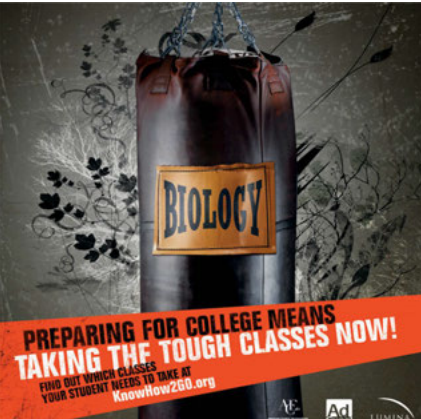
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think it's a testament to our reputation in the community," she said. "We've been working here a long time, and our successful track record speaks for itself."

Shari and her co-workers are based out of an office at Prosperity Bank, but they are in it only when necessary. They much prefer to be out in the community where they can make the biggest impact.

One place where this phenomenal crew takes action is in the local schools. October has been designated as National Drug Prevention Month and is, therefore, one of their busiest times of the year. One of the best-known programs that DPR runs in schools is the Red Ribbon Week campaign. Their team goes into area schools and presents students with information about how to make healthy choices and to stand up to peer pressure. Most importantly, students are challenged to make a pledge that they will remain drug-free. The IMPACT team works with principals, counselors and community liaisons to help students across a broad age group proactively develop healthy habits, which can lead to them being able to say no to drugs.

"The research tells us that kids are exposed to substances at younger ages now. If we wait until they are teenagers to reach out to them, then we're too late," Shari commented. The programs they deliver vary, so each group is presented with age-appropriate information. Jennifer Thompson, the Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalition coordinator, works with kids from a very young age to help them learn what healthy choices are and how to make them.

Not only does DPR collaborate with schools, but they also support parents and guardians through a program called Crazy for my Kids Safe Home Network. This network is made up of people who want to help children avoid harmful substances. Anyone who wants to commit to providing a substance-free environment for kids can register their home at www.CrazyForMyKids.com. The registry is a powerful tool that helps families make confident choices about places they allow their kids to go and who they allow them to hang out with.



DPR also helps to keep the community safe by partnering with law enforcement. They provide training twice a year to help police officers stay on top of the latest trends in narcotics. For these events, the group brings in guest speakers who update K-9 officers and other civil servants on current drugs of abuse and slang names for them, as well as where they can be hidden. Police officers are grateful for the expertise that DPR provides.

Another wonderful program and joint effort with law enforcement is the Prescription Drug Take Back Program. One in four teens has misused prescription medication found in their own home or given to them by a family member or a friend. To help counter this problem, DPR has placed several permanent prescription drug drop boxes across Ellis County. These boxes are typically placed at a police station, but to find exact locations, visit www.DrugPrevResources.org.

In addition, the group works with police departments to sponsor drive-thru drop-offs across the county twice a year. The latest one took place in October 2016. These partners set

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up in prominent, convenient locations, so citizens could easily discard expired or unused medications they had lying around their homes. This program is free, anonymous and available for anyone to use. "People might not realize that by flushing medications down the toilet, those substances can make their way into our water supply. Using these drop boxes is the safest way to dispose of medication and keep it out of the hands of children," Shari stated.

DPR knows that lawmakers play a big role in setting the tone for a healthy city and county, so they are involved in this arena whenever necessary. Their Coalition played a big role in helping to pass an ordinance in 2014, which called for smoke-free businesses and restaurants in Waxahachie. IMPACT Waxahachie offers Smoke Free Ordinance Toolkits to businesses to help them stay aligned with the laws of the city, and, therefore, keep local citizens healthy.

Jennifer Heggland, the IMPACT Waxahachie coordinator, believes strongly in what her organization strives for. "I joined DPR because I believe in education-driven prevention and community and youth empowerment. I am excited to be a part of DPR's efforts to provide a platform for those who are concerned with the effects drugs have on their homes and communities and for those who are committed to increasing the overall well-being and resilience of their communities," Jennifer said.

Partnering with parents, schools, local government, law enforcement and other community stakeholders is how DPR succeeds. This nonprofit recognizes that it sometimes takes a village to raise a child, so they use all available means to share their drug prevention message.

The hearts of the people who work for DPR are big, and their vision for a drug-free community is even bigger. They go where the kids are, and they reach out to the adults who influence their lives. Next time you are at a local festival, look for their booth. They'll probably be there. They often attend back-to-school fairs and fall festivals, among other events. **NOW**

Editor's Note: If you'd like to learn more about this organization, you can visit their website at www.DrugPrevResources.org or their Facebook page.

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Customer service that has kept guests returning for nearly 30 years is top priority for Reba Chandler, owner; Vonda Whaley, salon coordinator, stylist and colorist; and the rest of the team at Impressions Salon.

You'll Never Want to Leave

Impressions Salon Etc. offers guests a relaxing atmosphere and sweet treats to nosh during the whole experience.

— By Abby Rich

When clientele walk through the ornate hardwood and wrought-iron doors of Impressions Salon Etc., they walk into a beautiful space complete with a chandelier dripping in crystals; rich, dark chocolate-colored walls; and comfortable couches and chairs with big, cushy pillows — all accompanied by the sweet smell of Aveda-scented candles. The ambience is not unlike a home accepting guests upon their arrival for a cozy gathering.

Just beyond the reception area is a coffee and snack room with goodies, cakes and cookies, as well as an adjacent room that houses the main hair stations. “Misty is our guest specialist and the first face guests see when they enter. She has a great attitude and has been working at Impressions for about 15 years,” Vonda Whaley,

salon coordinator, stylist and colorist, stated.

“If you care about quality and customer service, you will want to come here,” she continued. “We consider ourselves an upscale salon with a downhome feel. The decor and atmosphere is warm and comforting to our clients. They love it. We also have stylists with varied experience, so new clients can quickly find a match with any one of them.”

One of the community’s only Aveda Concepts salons, they strictly use Aveda products. According to Vonda, the concentration of Aveda products is superb. And, of course, Aveda always has that intoxicating citrus and botanical scent that makes the brand so popular with its loyal clientele.

Some of the salon's specialties are Brazilian blowouts, Balayage and Ombre hair color techniques, as well as Eclipting, which is an innovative color technique that takes facial features into account in order to contour hair color around the face and bring out the client's best features.

"We don't make our clients wait two to three weeks for an appointment," Vonda explained. "We try to only be a week or so out in our calendar. We work hard to keep everyone happy."

The salon's roots are located just down the road in DeSoto, where they had a storefront for more than 20 years. Owner Reba Chandler moved the salon and staff to their current space six years ago. Vonda and her fellow stylists, Gina, Alanna and Sherry, have been working alongside each other almost 30 years.

Vonda ensures she promotes a family atmosphere with all her new hires, and works hard to maintain it so there's less employee turnover. "We really are like family here. Most salons have higher turnover, but not us," she said. "Kimberly, Megan and Stephanie have been with us almost five years each, and Ms. Dean, the massage therapist, has been giving customers much-needed massages for 20 years. We're also always looking for new talent to add to our team."

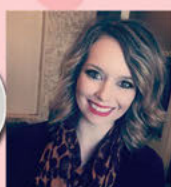
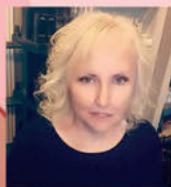
In October, the salon goes all out to host an open-house Halloween-themed party where guests can come and go, grab a bite to eat and take advantage of certain Aveda product specials and holiday offerings. During Christmastime, the staff decorates to the nines and fills the salon with holiday cheer, as they host an additional open house for clients to stock up on their favorite Aveda products. They also have pop-up sales throughout the year. In addition to haircuts, Keratin straighteners and custom color and highlights, Impressions Salon also offers eyelash extensions; permanent cosmetic application; massage therapy in separate, relaxing rooms; facials; and manicures and pedicures.

"When people like a salon as much as they do the stylist, they are willing to see another stylist if need be," Vonda shared. "Our clients are comfortable enough here to know they can find someone to do as good of a job, so they keep coming back." **NOW**

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February 2

6th Annual Daddy Daughter Dance "Be Our Guest": 6:00-9:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Food, fun and dancing. Tickets are \$15 per person and they can be purchased at the Civic Center during regular business hours. Tickets will **NOT** be available the night of the dance.

February 2 — April 12

AARP Tax Assistance: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., **Thursdays** only, Sims Library, 515 Main St. Call (972) 937-2671 for additional information on what documents to bring.

February 10

6th Annual Share the Love Gala: 6:00 p.m. The event benefits CASA of Ellis County. For tickets, location and more information, visit www.sharethelovegala.eventbrite.com.

February 11

Cupid Shuffle 5K & 15K: 7:50 a.m., 15K begins; 8:00 a.m., 5K begins, Getzender Park. Wear your tutu and your Valentine's socks. Come run in the name of love. You can register online at reachcouncil.org/events. For more information, email nisa.hurd@reachcouncil.org.

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.

February 13

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

February 16, 17

ROISD: Student Enrichment Camp.

February 17

Ovilla Service League's Annual Spaghetti Dinner: 6:00-8:00 p.m. Ovilla Road Baptist Church. Enjoy the famous homemade spaghetti and meat sauce, salad, garlic bread and homemade desserts. Silent auction will be held during the dinner. Live auction to follow with guest auctioneer Walt Cade from Storage Wars. 2017 proceeds will be given to the Ovilla Police Department. Tickets are available for sale at Ovilla City Hall or at the door, adults \$12, children age 10 and under \$8.

February 24

Destination Imagination Tournament: Red Oak Middle School.

April 18

North Ellis County Business & Community Expo: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Watch for

upcoming location information. For more details, call (972) 617-0906.

Ongoing:

Fourth Mondays

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

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 joanpomerooy@att.net.

Second Tuesdays

342 Networker Group: 7:30 a.m., Denny's, I-35E Service Rd., Red Oak. The group includes business owners who would like to network, and is open to all businesses in any county. RSVP to Melton McKown at (214) 244-2829.

Ellis County Master Gardeners meeting: 9:00 a.m., First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie.

Fourth Tuesdays

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

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., Sparacello's Deli, 600 Methodist St., Suite 3120, 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.

Second Saturdays

Texas Civil Defense monthly drill: 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 101 Live Oak St., Red Oak. For more information, call LTC Tim O'Connor at (214) 868-0082.

Third Saturdays

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

Texas Concealed Handgun class: 8:30 a.m., 208 S. Central St., Ferris. Fee is \$75. For more information, contact CHL instructor Charles Hatfield at (214) 402-3689.

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



In the Kitchen With Aleeta Saathoff

— By Rachel Smith

Having a devoted mother to teach her, Aleeta Saathoff learned the tricks of home-style cooking early in life. In turn, she has passed down what she learned to friends and family who have a love for cooking. “I taught my daughter how to cook,” she shared. “I also taught others to make gravy because many of them find it difficult to make.”

Having a culinary profession at Ovilla Christian School, Aleeta has seen many days on her feet, while serving others with a happy heart. She gives a fresh perspective to every situation. “One day at work, I accidentally bumped into the counter and dropped about 5 quarts of carrots all over the kitchen floor,” she admitted. “But I never let it stop me from pursuing what I love — cooking.” **NOW**

Chicken Enchilada Wreath

- 2 cups chicken, cooked and chopped into quarter-size pieces**
- 1 cup (4 oz.) shredded cheddar and Monterey Jack cheese blend**
- 1 can green chilies, undrained and chopped**
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise**
- 1/4 tsp. pepper**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 2 plum tomatoes (divided use)**
- 1 lime (divided use)**
- 2 8-oz. pkgs. crescent dough**
- 1 cup salsa**
- 1 cup sour cream**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 375 F. Place chicken in a large mixing bowl. Add cheese, chilies, mayonnaise and seasonings.
- 2.** Seed and chop one tomato; slice lime in half.

Squeeze one-half of lime over tomato; add to chicken.

- 3.** Unroll dough; separate into triangles and place dough sticky side down on a round cooking stone with wide ends overlapping in the center and pointing toward the outside. Evenly scoop chicken mixture into center of each triangle; bring points of triangles up over filling and tuck under wide ends of dough at the center of the wreath. Bake 20-25 minutes until golden brown.
- 4.** To garnish, cut remaining tomato into 8 wedges; cut lime half into 4 pieces. Arrange between openings of wreath. Cut with pizza roller; serve with salsa and sour cream.

A+ Corndogs

- 1 qt. preferred oil for deep frying**
- 1 cup all-purpose flour**
- 2/3 cup yellow cornmeal**
- 1/4 cup white sugar**
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder (divided use)**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 2 Tbsp. bacon drippings**

- 1 egg, beaten**
- 1 1/4 cups buttermilk**
- 16 Ballpark Hot Dogs**
- 16 wooden roasting sticks**

- 1.** Heat oil in deep fryer at 365 F. In a large bowl, stir together flour, cornmeal, sugar, half the baking powder and salt. Stir in melted bacon drippings. Make a well in the center and pour in egg, buttermilk and remaining baking powder. Mix until everything is smooth and well-blended.
- 2.** Pat hot dogs dry with paper towels so batter will stick when dipped. Insert sticks into the ends; dip hot dogs in the batter one at a time, shaking off excess batter.
- 3.** Deep fry a few at a time until preferred brownness. Drain on paper towels or serve on paper plates.

Pork Pie With Sweet Potato Biscuits

Pork Pie:

- 1 1/2 lbs. lean ground pork**
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped**
- 1/2 cup celery, chopped**
- 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour**
- 1 tsp. paprika**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 1/8 tsp. pepper**
- 1 tsp. instant chicken bouillon granules**
- 1 1/4 cups water**
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar**
- 3 tart medium cooking apples, peeled, cored and sliced**

Biscuits:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour**
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 1/4 cup shortening**
- 1/2 cup milk**
- 1 8-oz. can sweet potatoes, drained and mashed**

- 1. For pie:** In a large skillet, cook pork, onion and celery until meat is brown and vegetables are tender; drain. Stir in flour, seasonings and water. Cook and stir until thick and bubbly.
- 2.** In a mixing bowl, sprinkle brown sugar over apples; stir to coat.
- 3.** In a 2-qt. casserole dish, combine apples and meat. Cover and bake at 425 F for 20 minutes.
- 4. For biscuits:** In a medium mixing bowl, stir together first 3 ingredients. Cut in shortening until the mixture is the size of small peas. Add milk and can of sweet potatoes (2/3 cup); stir until combined. Drop into 6 mounds onto hot stew.
- 5.** Bake uncovered an additional 20 minutes until a toothpick inserted into biscuits comes out clean.

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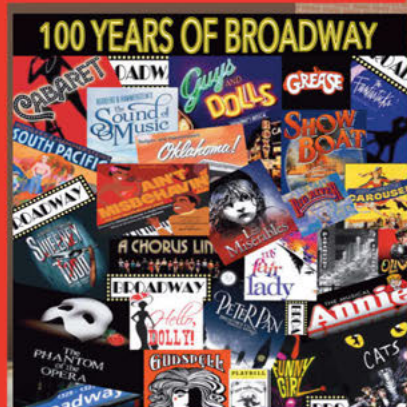
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