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March 2008

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Editor's Note

Welcome, Spring!

Although the spring season does not officially start until the end of the month, I thought we would welcome it a little early and share some exciting ideas on what to do once the weather is warm and wonderful. In this issue, join us as we encourage everyone to get outdoors and have fun. On our journey, we will be meeting some very exciting youngsters and adults who are sure to remind us there is much to enjoy in life, no matter what your age.

First we will be meeting Kelsey Chase, who recently graduated from high school with honors, and now serves our city while attending college full time. Next, is Trevor Eitel, who suggests we join him for a ride on horseback. During our ride, let's stop to admire the beautiful gardens of local Master Gardener Jean Wammack. Then we can enjoy the "egg art" of local artist Peggy Owens and the work of local mom and art advocate, Sheri Smoot. Once we complete our journey, be sure to get outside and admire all the beautiful blooms while trying something fun and new.

Happy Spring,
 Diana Merrill Claussen
 Red OakNOW Editor



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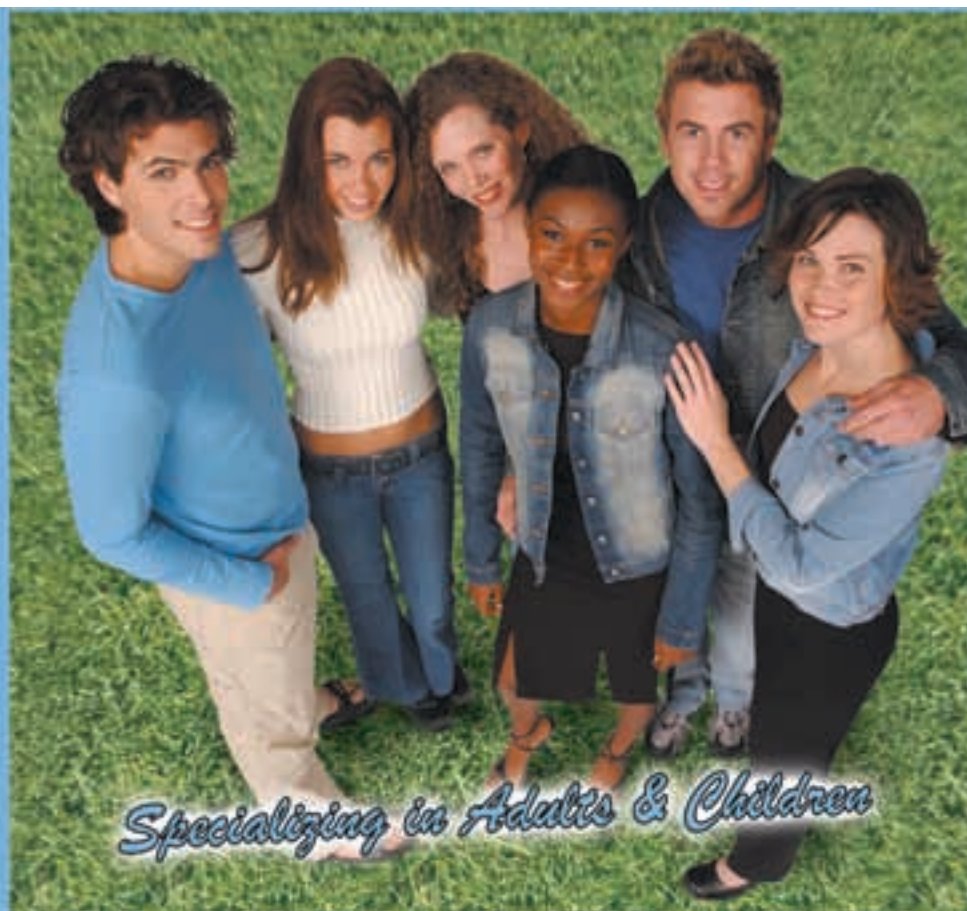
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Springing Into Her Future

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Being a young person can be quite a struggle, especially when it comes to life's adversities. Young people often face the dilemma of not being taken seriously by others. One local young lady, Kelsey Chase, was taught to believe anything is possible with hard work and the right attitude.

Born and reared in Texas, along with five brothers, Kelsey learned from a very early age to fight for her rights. She was encouraged by her family to get back up whenever her brothers, or life, pushed her down. "I was raised playing football and woofle ball," Kelsey said. "When I got knocked down, my mom let me pick myself up." Kelsey was also very motivated to succeed at an early age. "I learned to play the piano by watching my mother and brother when I was in second grade," she shared.

Because she was the only girl in the family, Kelsey's mother, Renee, supported and encouraged her to be strong, especially when facing adversities. Her mom also helped Kelsey to be the well-rounded and successful 18-year-old she is today. Her brothers have given her good insight into the world as well, and she credits them as a main catalyst to her character and strength.

"A lot of girls do not have much of a male influence, and because of that, many times they feel inferior or are not sure how to handle stuff with men," she stated. "Being raised around my brothers has helped me to feel pretty comfortable around all kinds of people." Kelsey also shared how her upbringing provided her with the skills required to work through life's difficulties with optimism and positivity.

"When I was in seventh grade, I did well on an advanced placement test," Kelsey said. "At the time though, I hated math and there were a lot of nights where I could not understand it, closed my book and said, 'I'm done.'" Kelsey



never allowed her feelings, however, to interfere with her will to succeed; she would always re-open the dreaded book and try to understand its content. "I just kept looking at my math work until one day it all finally clicked," Kelsey shared. Shortly after, she found herself taking college algebra as a ninth-grader. "Now I not only like working with numbers,

but really love math," she continued. "Doing my studies always came naturally, but that's the way my family works; we're very concerned about education."

While attending Waxahachie High School, she played on the softball team and held a full-time position at a local Braum's. Conquering obstacles, such as math and time management, Kelsey decided to plan for future success. "When I was 16,

I invested \$700 and now have my retirement and money market accounts and monthly budget planned," Kelsey shared. Needless to say, she was already a very mature and forward-thinking young lady.



Kelsey
and her
mom,
Renee.

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The encouragement and motivation to do her best repeatedly instilled in Kelsey throughout childhood, are factors she believes help her to succeed in the many facets of her life. "My mom always supported us and wanted the best for us," she expressed, crediting her mom as a positive guide and role model. "So I have always been determined to do the best I can. That's all she's ever asked of us, so that is what I am doing." In her senior year at Waxahachie,

"Be yourself and do what you can do. If you fall, you fall, and that's part of life. You can't get down and stay down. There are plenty of things I haven't done perfectly, but I'm still here."

Kelsey graduated with honor cords in math, science, community service and National Honors Society. Her grade point average ranked her 22nd out of 450 students. She also received the principal's scholarship, helping her to attend Navarro college full time. "My mom always gave me the ability to be more mature and more responsible for myself. This has helped me in many ways. She never treated me like a child; she just allowed me to grow up. Thankfully, I had the good judgment to stay out of trouble and it worked," she said.

Although many in her age group are only just now thinking about their future, Kelsey already has a plan. Those who see her sticking to it could not be prouder.

In August 2007, the Red Oak Area Chamber of Commerce hired Kelsey as their administrative assistant on a full-time basis while she continued her studies. Within weeks, Kelsey found she would be taking on an even bigger role. "Through my position I sit on committees, prepare the accounts receivables, payables, billings and other financials," she explained. She also attends ribbon cuttings for newly opened local businesses and maintains the chamber's Web site.

Looking back at her first job at

Braum's and seeing where she is today, Kelsey feels humbled. "Not until now did I ever think I would be having these experiences. It's unreal and I love it. I went from cooking burgers to working at the Chamber, and I was really nervous," she acknowledged while reflecting on her inaugural days at her new job. "When I first started we called someone in to help me learn QuickBooks. The executive committee, Ben Goodwin, Jerry Watson and the Prosperity Bank girls have all helped me, too. My mom has also been really helpful, but that's just because she's my mom," she added.

Having to learn everything at the Chamber in such a short time encouraged Kelsey to grab the reins she was given and ride into the future to be the successful woman she is today. Kelsey has gone above and beyond to prove she can not only do the job, but achieve her goals for the future as well. "To be successful, you have to be very optimistic and thankful for what you do have," Kelsey shared. "Be yourself and do what you can do. If you fall, you fall, and that's part of life. You can't get down and stay down. There are plenty of things I haven't done perfectly, but I'm still here."

Presently a full-time student at Navarro, Kelsey plans to transfer her credits to UTA or UNT. "I realized that even though you get busy, you have to stick with school and your goals," she shared. "It's good to continue in school because a lot of businesses will not accept you as a person. You can prove yourself in the real world, but it doesn't matter unless you have that piece of paper to back it up. School is too important for me to drop," Kelsey confirmed.

She has decided to pursue a bachelor's in business, with an emphasis on finance. "My plan is to graduate and then start my own business," she said. She also plans on staying in Texas. "Most of my family is here in the DFW area and I would never move because I would miss them too much. I'm a very family oriented person." When it comes to other future plans, such as marriage, "there's no need to rush such things," she added with a smile. **NOW**

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Keeping It Fresh,

— By Sandra McIntosh

Red Wammack could have gone right or left on Interstate 35 when he came upon the “fork in the road” that led him directly to a dance class and Jean, his wife of 24 years. “I could have gone to Fort Worth or Dallas,” he said, with a grin. “I decided, ‘What the heck,’ and turned my car toward Dallas.” He and Jean met during a square dancing class. Did they need the dance lessons? Probably not, as they had both been square dancing for years, yet they both attended the class that particular night for several reasons. “I’d been dancing since 1952. Red had also been dancing for a long time,” Jean reminisced. “The square dancing classes were a great way to meet new people.” Red added that class instructors are always on the lookout for individuals who know how to square dance. “It makes the instructor’s job easier,” he said.

Following the evening of dancing, Red and Jean went down the road to

Denny’s with the rest of the group to continue getting to know one another. The two quickly discovered how small the world really is. Jean’s aunt was someone Red knew quite well, and they soon realized they had even more

widowed for a little over two years when we met.”

Recalling their initial meeting back in the fall of 1982, Red remembers Jean as “a cute little lady. And she still is today,” he quickly interjected. Jean

recalls being quite impressed with Red as well. “It was love at first sight for me,” she said, as memories bring a smile to her face. Red just laughed, adding, “It should have been love at first sight for me, too!”

After a two-year courtship, Red and Jean married on March 4, 1984, blending their two

families together as one. Red and Jean each have two children from their first marriages. Today, those four children have blessed the Wammacks



At Home With
Red and Jean Wammack

in common. “We both had been married before,” Jean said. “His wife and my husband passed away from cancer at about the same time. We’d both been



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with eight grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. Needless to say, the three-bedroom, three-bath home located directly in front of the Red Oak Golf Course, which is owned by Red and operated by his son, is a reflection of the commitment the couple have for one another. The



photographs found throughout the home speak volumes of the love they have for their family. "That photo means a lot to me," Red said, pointing to the framed print hanging above the television in the den. "That's my son, Cliff and his son, Chad." The print is a silhouette showing a boy looking up

to a father who is sitting high up on his horse. It may be a photograph to visitors, but it is a priceless work of art to Red.

The traditional style home was built in 1966. It includes the rooms aforementioned, as well as formal living and dining areas, a kitchen with a



breakfast nook looking out to the backyard gardens and a big, oversized den where Red and Jean spend most of their time together. "I built the home within my means," Red said, referring to its overall size. After settling in, Jean was able to add some of her own personal touches with her collection of

bluebirds and the unique Lord's Acre acquisitions she has amassed over the years, as well as several striking needlework pieces sewn by her sister, who also seems to have a love for brightly colored birds. Jean's passion for birds can be heard as the kitchen clock "tweets" in the noon hour. "The clock gives off different bird calls on the hour, every hour," Jean pointed out. "Throughout the years, Red and I have given many of these clocks as gifts. People just seem to love them."

Visitors soon learn Jean not only collects bluebirds, she is also passionate about their livelihood as well. As a Master Gardener, one of her many goals is to continue to see new fledglings take flight from the nesting boxes placed strategically around the golf



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course. "It all started years ago when I was out golfing," Jean explained. "A bluebird flew across the tee on the 17th hole. Red's next project was the construction and placement of nesting boxes." At one time, the Wammacks had 57 boxes on the course. Over the years, they have seen hundreds of eastern bluebirds born right here in Red Oak. Red reinstalls nesting boxes in late January and early February for the martins that seem to return year after year. "I like the martins," he shared, "because they talk back."

Jean enjoys spending time away from her indoor work room, which she playfully refers to as her indoor barn, to also work outdoors. Her standing cypress comes back annually because it



seeds itself, growing to a height of nearly five feet as red blooms travel up each stalk. "The hummingbirds and butterflies are drawn to the cypress blooms," Jean said. The perennials she has planted over the years, when intermingled with the wild bluebonnets, are a sight to behold when they are in full bloom.

Vitex [Chaste] trees are also a constant at the Wammack estate. "They are similar to a lilac tree," Jean said, further explaining that Vitex trees bloom like lilac trees, but do not have much of a scent. Sometimes during migrating season, the Vitex trees resemble a 'Monarch butterfly bush,' with the beautiful butterflies resting on the branches. "Monarchs are everywhere during fall migration," Jean added.



"Sometimes there will be a butterfly on every bloom. It really is something to see." She and Red always try to plant with the birds and butterflies in mind.

The couple love to travel when they can find the time to get away from the business and their outdoor responsibilities, but are proud to report they have made every high school graduation thus far. "We only have two more to go," Red said, referring to grandchildren yet to graduate. "We don't plan on missing them either." Red and Jean both agree that shared interests and giving each other space is the secret to their longevity as husband and wife. "Oh, and he lets me do whatever I want," Jean interjected, followed by a cackle from Red. **NOW**

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ARTS NOW

Ornamental Art

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

For the Easter holiday, many have the long-standing tradition of dyeing eggs. For Christmas, some families make their own cards and homemade eggshell ornaments. Ovilla resident Peggy Owens has the talent to use egg art for any occasion or celebration.

Creating egg art using Japanese *washi* paper is something Peggy first learned about while living in the Far East. “When my husband, George, was stationed in Japan, we went to visit some acquaintances in Okinawa,” she shared. “At our friends’ home they had a big bowl filled with *washi* eggs.” From that moment on, Peggy became very intrigued with this ancient Japanese art form, especially after her friend shared that she had decorated the eggs herself.

Peggy then became inspired to

tea boxes and everyday items with the paper. The Japanese are very practical people,” she added. The durable paper is made from mulberry tree bark, and the paper designs are craftily unique and eye-catching.

Whenever Peggy or George went shopping in Japan, buying *washi* paper, accessories or embellishments was always on their list. However, it was not until the Owens moved back to the U.S. that they realized this “lost art” was more popular here than in the Orient. “You no longer see this art in Japan or the stores there,” Peggy said. “You can, however, see the eggs at military gift shops and craft fairs all across the States.” Peggy made sure to bring enough supplies back to the U.S. to last a lifetime.

When she started creating *washi*



the perfect paper. Knowing if the egg will be for home display by itself, in a group or as a diorama, or if it is a special occasion gift or for a holiday display will assist her in the paper and egg choice. The types of eggs Peggy can use are numerous. She has been known to work with chicken, goose,



research this technique and later enrolled in a *washi* class while in Japan, where she learned the history and skill of creating this colorful, classy and amazing form of art. “In Japan, the people use *washi* paper to decorate with or make just about anything useful or practical,” Peggy said. “The people there even like to cover picture frames,



eggs, Peggy used a little tool that would poke a very small hole into each end of the egg. George would then assist her by “blowing it out” to remove the yolk. “Now we buy them already blown out,” George said. Next, Peggy chooses a piece of paper that reflects her project. Once she knows the egg’s purpose she can determine



emu, duck and ostrich eggs.

“I then fit the paper to the size of the egg, and fold it in half,” Peggy revealed. “Next, I make ‘picket fence’ cuts down most of the folded seam and trim each section so it is pointed at the end. Then, I apply Japanese starch down the length of the paper seam. After that, you fold the seam/paper

ARTS NOW

into a circle around the egg."

Once the paper is applied, Peggy uses a spoon to smooth it onto the egg. After the glue is dried, she applies up to 10 coats of Egg Sheen gloss to give the egg its glassy affect. Some *washi* papers come with their own sheen and fine glitter exterior. Coming up with her own special techniques, Peggy sometimes uses finely ground glass to give the paper an extra sparkle.

Creating her *washi* eggs for a little over a decade has taught Peggy how to improve her craft. Her skill is apparent when comparing her *washi* eggs to those recently shown in a home-decorating catalog; Peggy's design is flawless. Her paper seams cannot be noticed upon thorough egg inspection. The designs and glossiness of her eggs give them a delicate porcelain or glass-like appearance. "There are not that many people who can do their eggs like Peggy can with no seams," George beamed. "I kept practicing for many years," Peggy added.

After the glossing, the real fun begins. Peggy chooses different accessories to embellish her pieces. From Swarovski crystals to rhinestone, pearl or gold ribbons, Peggy can use just about any type of adornment in her creations. For the diorama eggs she uses manicure scissors to cut out an opening in which to display her figurines. "It's a delicate process," Peggy acknowledged.

Once the artwork is complete, Peggy's eggs can be transformed into just about anything. From musical eggs to ornaments, Peggy's creations can be displayed on wooden or stone bases, intricate golden stands, in baskets or even under a glass display dome.

Peggy enjoys all aspects of creating her *washi* eggs and has taught this technique to many. She has also shown and sold her eggs throughout the country. Peggy's amazing creations not only leave a lasting memory, but a sense of enchantment and awe of this ancient and refined art. **NOW**



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Sports
NOW

Growing up in the Saddle

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

The history of today's sporting events has a long and interesting evolution. Some competitions have evolved from leisurely activities, while others are derived from back-breaking work — more specifically, work done on ranches. Cowboys would use their steer-roping skills to tag and brand their livestock, or bronc riding to tame their unbroken steeds. Ergo, the rodeo was born.

Today, there are many different types of equestrian competition, such as fox-hunting on horseback, competitive showing and arena courses in jumping and endurance. Athletic competition has not stopped there, however, as shown by one local teen who is a third-generation horseback competitor. His name is Trevor Eitel and at 6'3", this 16-year-old sophomore at Red Oak High School is proud to carry on his family's equestrian tradition.

Trevor's family has trained horses and competed in shows, speed events, bull riding, roping and horseback "playdays" since the '50s. This family history was inspired by Trevor's grandparents, who helped create the Wagon Wheel Saddle Club, located in DeSoto, in 1956. This 10-acre club was known as a place where families could gather and compete in such events as barrel racing, poles and even horseback baseball.

Trevor credits his grandpa Gene, or "P-Paw," for getting him involved in the family tradition of competing on horseback. "I didn't start getting into it until I was about 6-years-old," Trevor said. "My first horse was a little Shetland pony named Paint." Although Trevor's grandfather, mother, aunts and uncles have always been involved in the horse world, his mom, Rachel, initially had a few reservations when Trevor started learning about horses. "I was very protective when Trevor started riding," she shared. "I had had a few horse-related accidents." Rachel knew, however, that under her dad, Gene's, instruction, Trevor would be OK.

Since Trevor started riding and competing on his first Shetland, his skills have vastly improved and grown over the years, as have his horses. Now that he is older, he competes on his two favorite quarter horse mares, Jeeps and Patches.



Most of the events in which he participates require both rider and horse to be fast and completely in sync. Trevor's grandmother, Rita, explained, "Most of the competitions are 90 percent rider and about 10 percent horse."

Trevor not only uses his sharpened horseback skills, but he also competes with all of his heart and might. "I won at the National Finals in Bowie in 2004," Trevor shared. "He's also won eight saddles and a few buckles," Gene added.

Competing at an event, however, is not all this horse-loving, family oriented youngster does. He is the Wagon Wheel Saddle Club's announcer and makes special music CDs to play to the audiences during club events. He also enjoys creating videos for his family, while editing and mixing in soundtracks. "Trevor announces at all of the horseback playdays," Rita said. "He writes the club's newsletter and manages our Web site. And he's a big Maverick's fan!" Trevor volunteers for much of the riding club's operation, event planning and grounds-keeping responsibilities in order to help his P-Paw.

His family members are both proud of and inspired by Trevor and his continuous desire to help his family, the club and the equestrian sports he loves so much. "He is constantly

Sports NOW

boosting people's morale at the shows," Rachel said. "When he's out there, he is really motivated." Helping to maintain the club and participating in events are things he loves to do. "My goal is to bring more people to the club," Trevor declared. "I'd like to revitalize the club through sponsors and advertisers; I'm always trying to find new ways to bring people out to the grounds."

One creative way he has tried is to advertise through his school. "I really enjoy my speech class, so I have mentioned the club and my competitions in a few of my speeches," Trevor said, hoping to encourage more teens and families to become involved in the club and sport. "It would be fun to get teens involved in more rodeo events," Rachel agreed. "My dad had me and my siblings on a horse every Saturday night because it kept us out of trouble. It also made me appreciate being around my family. I would like to see more young people run their horse instead of running the streets. Horse playdays are so family oriented because you can just let your kids run or ride around outside, have fun and socialize."

P-Paw Gene is thankful for Trevor's help and support, and proud his grandson wants to carry on the saddle club. "I would like for him to keep up the tradition," he said. Gene also places great importance on education and at times has been known to give a few cash rewards for good grade reports. "I have all As and Bs at school, and a 98 percent in my chemistry class," Trevor beamed.

On top of getting good grades, competing at events and being the club's assistant arena director and public relations manager, Trevor is known to his family as a very responsible and tender-hearted young man. "Besides being a hard-worker and constantly helping, you can always count on Trevor," Aunt Veronica said. "Plus he always tells us he loves us," his mom added. **NOW**



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Business NOW

It All Adds Up

— By Dia Catalani

How does one decide which bank best suits their personal or business needs? Would you first consider the convenience of location, the hours you can access a real person for assistance or the types of finance products that are offered? While it is true that many banks offer the same types of services, there is a definitive line that can be drawn between everyday customer service and personalized care — and for many people, that difference is what makes Prosperity Bank their obvious choice.

Jo Ann Brewer is president of the Red Oak Prosperity Bank, and she offers 28 years of finance experience and knowledge that parlays into excellent service for the bank's individual and commercial clientele. "In fact, all of our employees have extensive banking experience. We ensure that each one is cross-trained, so that when a customer has a

question, our staff has enough knowledge of our products. That way, they can answer basic questions before introducing the customer to an individual who specializes in whatever it is that particular customer needs," Jo Ann said. "We appreciate the fact that our customers are busy people, so we value their time, too. No one is ever asked to wait long periods of time simply to have a question answered."

Professionalism is true throughout the El Campo, Texas-based Prosperity Bank family, which holds \$6.3 billion in assets and has acquisitions planned. Currently, the corporation operates 123 full-service banking centers, with 26 of those centers within the Fort Worth and Dallas areas. No matter what your needs may be, Prosperity Bank can help you, or your company, manage

your short- and long-term goals.

Commercial account holders are offered products such as: online, real-time banking; sweep accounts that link and enable quick fund transfers; and secure merchant accounting services. Personal account holders find Prosperity Bank's tiers of checking and savings accounts to be valuable tools. The non-banking perks available through their royal checking accounts are worth looking into.

In the midst of an industry continually striving for new business and retaining current clients, Prosperity Bank maintains an edge of its own. "We have the same types of products as larger banks do. We have a well-rounded selection of services available, and Prosperity Bank makes banking very convenient and easy," Jo Ann said of the bank's products, which also include retail investment



Red Oak Prosperity Bank president Jo Ann Brewer takes great pride in the professionalism of the bank's staff.



Business NOW

and mortgage services. "Our loans are also done locally. However large we are in the sense of convenience and up-to-date technology, our main focus is still customer service and being community minded."




Ellis county people do recognize Prosperity Bank for its commitment to community, possibly most evident through the civic generosity shown by the staff throughout the year. In Red Oak, you will find everyone from the lobby manager to the tellers and the corporate-level officers volunteering their time to support local causes, such as: the Red Oak Education Foundation, Chamber of Commerce events and activities, programs for senior residents, fundraisers and annual charitable golf tournaments. "We have a really good team here — all [are] local residents who have a really good sense of community purpose and everyone does their part," Jo Ann stated. "We always have a really good turnout, too, and it's because everyone knows that to be successful here and in our community, teamwork is vital."

If you are ready to experience the difference between everyday banking and Prosperity Bank's dedication to service, visit the staff of the Red Oak center, located just north of Ovilla Road on the northbound Interstate 35 service road. To read a complete listing of products and services, log on to www.prosperitybanktx.com, or call your local representative at (972) 617-7377. **NOW**

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Education **NOW**

Reviving Art

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Think about how happy a child is when he or she brings home a drawing to be placed on the refrigerator. Now remember how you felt when you were the child who created that masterpiece so proudly displayed. Art can bring great happiness, yet when school districts are faced with making budget cuts, art programs are often the first to go. By cutting back the arts from our schools, many people feel we have reduced a vital tool which encourages children to grow and flourish. For local mother Sheri Smoot, continuing art education in the schools was not only imperative, but also a crucial aspect in enhancing children's development.

The Red Oak PTA decided to supplement the school's art curriculum with their own program called the Art Cart. Their program encouraged this mother of three to get involved in revitalizing the arts within Shields Elementary. "Instead of getting upset or complaining about the cuts in the arts programs, there is something parents can do to help," Sheri said. "I first started volunteering at Bray Elementary with Ginger Reid, who had a similar program. Bray was the first school in the state to have a parent-run art program which has since been implemented in many schools across the state."

Sheri now brings her experience to Shields, the only school in our area that carries this supplemental program.

She hopes the Art Cart program, along with other school and city run arts programs, will continue to grow and flourish within our community. Until then, Sheri, the PTA and her volunteers are glad to bring lively colors of fun to each student so they may experience the joy of expression through art and the pride in creating something with their own hands.

"Kids have to read and write and do math, but they also need to use the side of their brain that allows for self-expression and creativity," she said. "Art at times involves both science and geometry, using shapes and angles, and then ties many of these skills together with everything else in life. Art not only supplements a child's development, it enriches it." Sheri also shared many other imperative elements children derive and learn from art. "I have read that art builds self-esteem, teaches kids critical thinking and life skills while boosting their achievement and development," Sheri shared.

Through the program, the kids not only learn about art and its rich history,

they are also given an opportunity to practice self-expression and enrich their creativity. This opportunity starts with lesson plans Sheri conceives with her friend Laura Coleman.

These plans have been implemented from kindergarten through the fourth grade. "Last year our kindergarteners made color wheels and mixed paints to learn about primary colors. Our first- and second-graders learned about shapes and forms and then created still life pictures of grapes and pumpkins just by using circles," Sheri said.

Many of the other Art Cart classes have created sketches, turned two-dimensional shapes into three-dimensional shaded triangles and pyramids and created pinch pots with clay. "Most recently, we had the kids study Norman Rockwell and Van Gogh while they created their self-portraits. In March, they will study illustrators and create their own paintings and mosaics," Sheri said. In April, the Art Cart volunteers will be visiting the school with supplies to share the history and art of origami.



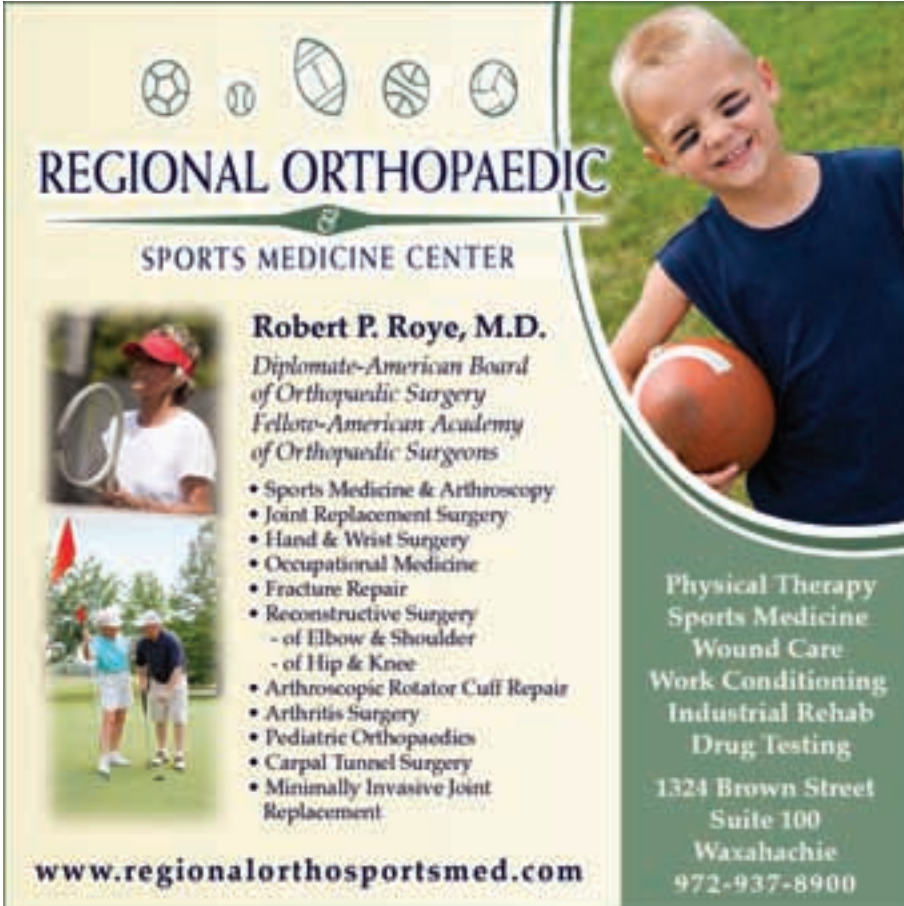
Shields Elementary Art Cart Program volunteers enjoy sharing the importance of art appreciation with their students.

Education NOW

Sheri's most memorable experience thus far with the program was teaching the children about Michael Angelo: his history and his creation of the paintings within the Sistine Chapel. "When we taught about Michael Angelo, we shared how hard it was for him and how long it took for him to paint the murals within the church. Next we had the children put on smocks and goggles while we taped newspaper under their desktops. Then the kids painted upside down on their newspaper "canvases" while lying under their desks," she recalled.

"Kids are so hard on themselves sometimes regarding school and life, so we tell them with art they can't do anything wrong," Sheri said. "They enjoy being creative in their own way. That is what we as parents need to do: support our kids in finding their interests and in creating things in which they can express themselves. This not only encourages them to be themselves, it helps them to have the tools to pursue their own interests."

She also shared how important art is not only to kids but also to communities as well. Art is for all ages, and for Sheri, educating others regarding its importance is something we can all do to carry on our history and bring the community together. Whether through performing, musical or visual means, art has also been proven to be successful with rehabilitating people of all ages, and building community pride. Some cities even encourage groups to enhance their communities through sculpture, theater, dance and even creating fantastic murals on city buildings. Sheri is quick to point out none of this would have been possible without the help and funding from the PTA, local parents and many individuals, family and corporate volunteers and sponsors. The program is also always in need of more help, funding and supply donations. On Saturday, March 8, the Shields Elementary PTA will be holding a fundraising carnival at the school. **NOW**



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Around Town

NOW



Leanne Brindle, top left, read Christmas stories during Wooden Elementary's Polar Express Reading Extravaganza. Local horse riders, top middle, met recently at the Double R Ranch for a dressage clinic. Gene Spurgin, top right, enjoyed a sunny day on his front porch. Second grade students from Brea Aitken's class at Red Oak Elementary, second row middle, made gingerbread houses and gingerbread people. Mark Davis and his son, Mark Jr., second row left, spent some quality "father and son" time together. Michelle Gonzalez and her girls, third row middle left, had a fun time at the local carwash. Fifth graders from the Red Oak Basketball Association, third row middle right, played a great game. Scott and Brian Hancock, second row right, enjoyed a weekend of gorgeous Texas weather. A ribbon cutting, bottom right, was held at Andrea Walton State Farm.



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Look Who's Cooking

— By Stephanie Brewer

IN THE KITCHEN WITH KIM CAMPBELL

Kim's love of cooking began as a teenage girl cooking with her mom. "My mom and I had so much fun in the summer making things from the garden and preparing dinners," she said. One of Kim's memories is a summer home economics class. "For an exam, my teacher came to my house for lunch, and I prepared the meal by myself," she recalled. "I fixed my favorite aunt's casserole recipe and my Monday Casserole turned out just fine."

Kim gleaned inspiration from a childhood neighbor who made her a cookbook of her own recipes she still uses today. While Kim enjoys the creativity of cooking, she said with a smile, "For me to prepare a dish, it has to be easy to make."

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

CHOCOLATE COVERED PEANUTS

1 24-oz. pkg. almond bark chocolate
12 oz. semisweet chocolate chips
16 oz. dry-roasted peanuts

Put the almond bark chocolate and chocolate chips in microwavable bowl. Melt for 1 minute on high in microwave. Stir. Continue to melt in microwave until completely melted. Once the chocolates are melted, pour in the dry-roasted peanuts. Stir until completely mixed. Spoon out onto wax or parchment paper into small patties. Let cool. Place in air-tight container. Yields approximately 36 patties.

STRAWBERRY BREAD

3 cups flour
2 tsp. cinnamon
2 cups sugar
1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. salt
1 1/4 cup chopped pecans (optional)
1 1/4 cup cooking oil
4 eggs
1 20-oz. pkg. frozen sliced strawberries (do not drain)

Mix dry ingredients together. Mix remaining ingredients; add to dry ingredients. Stir carefully. Grease loaf pans. Turn batter into two regular sized loaf pans or six miniature loaf pans. Bake the regular size loaf pans at 350 F for 1 hour and 15 minutes or the miniature loaf pans at 350 F for 45 minutes. Cool in pans for 10 minutes. Turn out onto cooling racks. Can be frozen for future use.

CHICKEN PARMESAN

1 Tbsp. dried bread crumbs
1/4 tsp. dried Italian seasoning
1 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese

1/4 tsp. dried parsley
1/8 tsp. garlic powder
dash of salt
1 boneless chicken breast
1 Tbsp. zesty Italian dressing

Combine first six ingredients. Set aside. Coat chicken breast with Italian dressing. Dredge chicken breast in bread crumb mixture. Place in greased baking dish. Sprinkle remaining crumbs evenly over top of chicken breast. Cover and bake at 350 F for 40 to 45 minutes, or until tender and completely cooked. If extra browning is desired, remove cover during last 5 minutes of baking.

MONDAY CASSEROLE

1 1/2 lb. ground beef, browned
1 10 3/4-oz. can mushroom soup
1/4 cup stuffed olives
1/4 cup green bell peppers, chopped
1/2-3/4 cup milk



REWARD for "Maggie"

She is a black, medium-sized, mixed breed dog, weighing approximately 35 pounds. She went missing from our yard in the FM 2377 & Carol Lane area of Pecan Hill (Red Oak) on Saturday, February 2nd. She is DEAF & MICROCHIPPED.

There is a REWARD for her safe return.

Contact information is

972-576-3394 or 214-724-5587

Who's Cooking NOW

BROCCOLI-RICE CASSEROLE

1 cup Minute Rice
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup chopped celery
2 10-oz. pkgs. chopped broccoli
1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
1 soup can water
8 oz. Cheese Whiz

Cook rice. Sauté onion and celery, then add broccoli until completely cooked. Add remaining ingredients and place in casserole dish. Bake at 350 F for 15 minutes or until completely heated.

MEATLOAF

2 eggs, lightly beaten
3/4 cup ketchup
1/2 cup water or milk
1 1/2 cups dry bread crumbs
1/2 envelope dry onion soup mix
2 lbs. ground beef
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/4 cup ketchup

Mix first eight ingredients together in bowl. Pack into 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan. Smooth ketchup over top. Bake uncovered at 350 F for 1 to 1 1/4 hours. Serves 6 to 8. To make a cheesy meatloaf, add 1 cup of shredded cheddar cheese to meat mixture or put cheese in a layer in center of meat loaf.

SUMMER JELL-O MOLD

chopped strawberries, fresh or frozen (enough to cover bottom of Tupperware Jell-O mold)
1 3-oz. pkg. strawberry Jell-O
1 angel food cake
whipped topping (optional)

Cover bottom of Jell-O mold with chosen fruit. Pour 1 cup of Jell-O mixture into Jell-O mold. Press cake into Tupperware Jell-O mold to soak up Jell-O. Pour remaining Jell-O over top of cake. Seal the Jell-O mold and put into the refrigerator. (Freezer if needed quickly.) Serve when mold has set. Can be served with whipped topping.

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Asset Protection is not Just for the Rich

— By John D. Hale, Attorney at Law

When we think about asset protection, it is usually in the context of a Paramount distortion, starring a team of Hollywood attorneys and off-shoring assets in the Cayman Islands. Like most things Hollywood, the truth has been nipped and tucked.

Perhaps the greatest financial misconception of our time is that asset protection is just for the rich. The truth is asset protection is for anyone who has something to lose. Quite simply, it represents the most important objective of responsible financial planning.

In today's society, liabilities can arise from anywhere. Proper asset protection planning is the orderly organizing and structuring of your assets and affairs in advance of a liability, risk, judgment or creditor's claim to protect the family's financial well-being. Asset protection is not a means of defrauding creditors or evading taxes.

The first step in preparing an asset protection plan is to determine what assets, if any, are exempt from potential creditors. Texas has some very favorable state law exemptions. Among these exemptions are four primary categories — the homestead exemption, personal property exemption, life insurance and annuities and retirement benefits.

Amazingly, the homestead exemption in Texas is unlimited. A home worth several million dollars enjoys the same

exemption from creditors as a home worth only a few thousand dollars. There are two types of homesteads, urban and rural. The urban homestead is limited to 10 acres. The rural homestead covers up to 200 acres per family.

The second category of exempt asset is the personal property exemption. A family can exempt up to \$60,000 of personal property from the reach of creditors, which may include home furnishings, vehicles, heirlooms and the like.

The third category of exempt assets covers life insurance and annuities. The Texas Insurance Code exempts life insurance and annuities, including the cash value, from the reach of creditors. Stocks, bonds, mutual funds and

CDs do not enjoy the asset protection benefits found in life insurance and annuities.



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The last category of exempt assets is retirement benefit plans. Assets not otherwise exempt from creditors, such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds and CDs, are protected within these qualified retirement plans.

Once both exempt and nonexempt assets have been identified, planning techniques available for nonexempt assets, or exposed assets, must be developed. Such planning techniques range from the very simple to the highly complex. All of the techniques, including the most simple, assume that a potential liability — the creditor — does not already exist. Planning after a liability exists is extremely complex and dangerous.

Simple planning techniques include converting nonexempt assets into exempt assets, establishing a gifting program for heirs and partitioning community property into separate property. Although simple, these techniques can be quite powerful. The main drawback to the simple techniques, however, is the potential loss of control after the technique is employed.

The more complex planning techniques include establishing spendthrift trusts, limited partnerships and limited liability companies. These planning tools are used most often to protect owners of real estate investments and family owned businesses.

Asset protection planning is for everyone. Oftentimes, the planning tools employed cost clients little to implement. For all clients, it is the best investment you will make. Do not let the unforeseen eclipse your financial aspirations. **NOW**

The information provided in this article does not constitute legal advice, nor should it be construed as an offer to form an attorney-client relationship.

John D. Hale is an attorney based in Red Oak.

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Health **NOW**

Early Detection is Best Prevention

— By Sandra McIntosh

A person's best prevention for colorectal cancer is early detection and immediate treatment. Individuals who undergo regular screening for colon cancer greatly reduce the risk of having a colorectal cancer. These available screenings include fecal occult blood tests, sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy and polyp removal.

Fecal occult blood testing should be done every year with a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years. Double-contrast barium enemas are recommended every five to 10 years. A colonoscopy still remains the most sensitive test for detecting colon polyps and tumors, and is recommended every 10 years. Once polyps have been found, they should be removed and from that point on, the patient should begin to undergo colonoscopies on a more frequent basis. Other things a person can do to prevent, as well as lower their risk, include the following:

- Quit smoking. Extensive research has proven that smoking is clearly linked with a higher risk of colon cancer.

- Take an aspirin on a daily basis. Because of the potential side effects associated with aspirin, this daily dose is not recommended for everyone. Consulting your physician would be the first plan of action.

- Take a safe dose (1 mg.) of folic acid on a daily basis.

- Take part in physical activity on a daily basis.

- Make fruits and vegetables a part of your daily food intake.

The United States Agency for Health Care Policy and Research also recommends that people older than 50 who have an average risk for colorectal cancers undergo screening for colon cancer. They also recommend that individuals aged 40 and older who have a family history of colorectal cancer undergo screening.

Symptoms of cancer of the colon and rectum can be exhibited in several different ways. People sometimes overlook some of the symptoms of colon cancer, attributing them to other causes. Many attribute all rectal bleeding to hemorrhoids, but it can be a symptom of cancer. Other overlooked symptoms include: an iron deficiency

that causes fatigue and pale skin; abdominal pain and distension; unexplained, persistent nausea or vomiting; unexplained weight loss; change in bowel movements; and rectal pain. Recent studies show that the average length of symptoms, from beginning to end, is 14 weeks, but there is no association between the length of symptoms and the size of tumor.

Another way you can fight colorectal cancer is by getting actively involved in walking for a cure like Dr. Gordy Klatt did in the mid-1980s. As a colorectal surgeon, Dr. Klatt had a strong desire to grow the income of his local American Cancer Society office. He put his plan into action by holding the first American Cancer Relay For Life event in Tacoma, Washington. The event has grown into an annual gathering of cancer survivors, as well as family and friends, who have lit the fire for an entire nation. To find out more about the Relay For Life event in your immediate area, please visit their Web site at www.relayforlife.org. **NOW**

Sources:

1. Sanofi Aventis. colorectalcancerinfo.com.

2. eMedicineHealth.

www.emedicinehealth.com/colon_cancer.



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March 2008

Community Calendar

Every Monday

Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered recovery ministry, meets at First Baptist Church of Red Oak, located at 103 West Red Oak Road. (972) 617-3591.
www.redoakcelebraterecovery.com.

Second and Fourth Mondays

Texas Ladies Networking meets from 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Ryan's Grill in Waxahachie. (214) 587-1221.

Third Mondays

Oaks Church leadership forum: 7:30 a.m. at the Waxahachie Civic Center. (214) 376-8208.

First and Third Tuesdays

Training Academy for Dental Assistants' free sessions begin at 5:30 p.m. (972) 842-2999.

Preschool story time: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. at the Red Oak Library. (469) 218-1230 or visit www.redoakpubliclibrary.org.

Red Oak Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m. at 207 West Red Oak Road. (972) 617-3577.

Second Tuesday

Wagon Wheel Saddle Club meeting at 7:30 p.m. (972) 223-8118. www.freewebs.com/wagonwheelsaddleclub.

Second Thursday

American Cancer Society Support group meets at 7:00 p.m. First United Methodist Church, 600 West Red Oak Rd.

Last Thursday

DeSoto Art League meeting. www.desotoartleague.com.

March 1

Carter Blood Drive: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Waxahachie Civic Center. (972) 937-2390.

March 7 and 8

Savor, a Dallas food and wine event. Arts District Theater, 2104 Flora Street, Dallas. (214) 522-8499.
www.savordallas.com.

March 9

The Glenn Heights Police and Fire Departments invite you to join their Annual Easter Egg Hunt for children through fifth grade, 10:00 a.m., at the Glenn Heights Community Park, located at 400 East Bear Creek. Event includes Easter candy, eggs and some giveaway Easter baskets for our young citizens. The children are welcome to try on bunker gear, hear some sirens and see the lights of red and blue! There will be plenty of opportunities for photographs as well. If you have further questions or would like to be a sponsor, you may call (972) 223-2107, ext. 254.

March 12

Healthy Lifestyles Discussion at Ovilla Wellness Center, 302 E. Ovilla Rd. in Glenn Heights. During this free event, learn about health, what impacts it and how to get control of it. Learn tips and techniques to improve aspects of your life to maximize your health. Bring questions and friends. Space is

limited, so call (972) 567-3949 to reserve your spot.

March 17

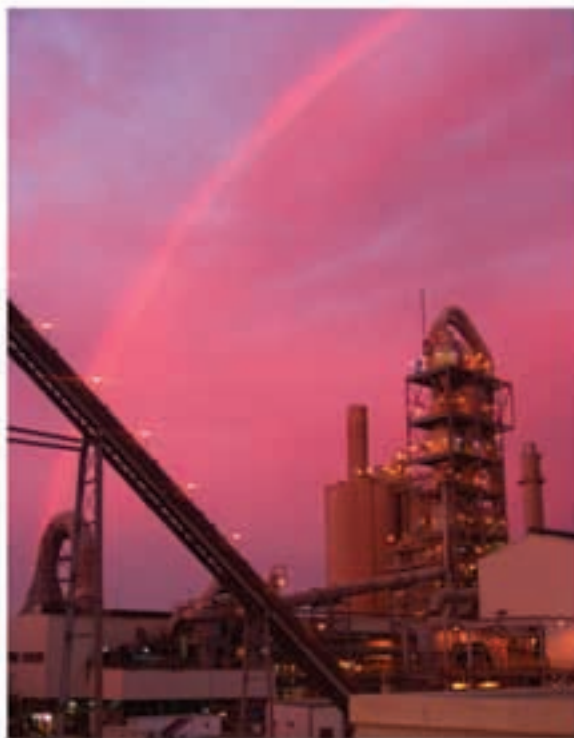
St. Patrick's Day Parade. 1313 S. Lamar Street, Dallas. (214) 565-1295.

March 29

Master Gardeners of Ellis County will host the annual Ellis County Lawn and Garden Expo at the Waxahachie Civic Center located at 1950 N. I-35 E from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. This comprehensive educational extravaganza will include over 100 lawn and garden-related exhibitor booths, keynote speakers, gardening workshops for children from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and a variety of adult workshops. Gaye Hammond will introduce children to the joys of growing roses at 1:00 p.m. At 2:00 p.m., Neil Sperry will speak on growing green, followed by the art of landscape planting that will flower all summer by Dotty Woodson at 3:30 p.m. The Master Gardener plant sale will feature butterfly-attracting plants, natives, heirloom tomatoes and hard to find plants. For sponsorship and exhibitor information, please send an e-mail to expo.ecmga@yahoo.com or call James at (972) 814-0699.

To have your events posted on the community calendar, e-mail us at:
dclaussen@sbcglobal.net.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.



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The Imaging Center at Red Oak offers sophisticated imaging services in a convenient environment – right in your neighborhood. Tell your physician about the Baylor Imaging and Diagnostics Center at Red Oak. Then call 972-617-7731 to schedule a screening mammogram today.

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