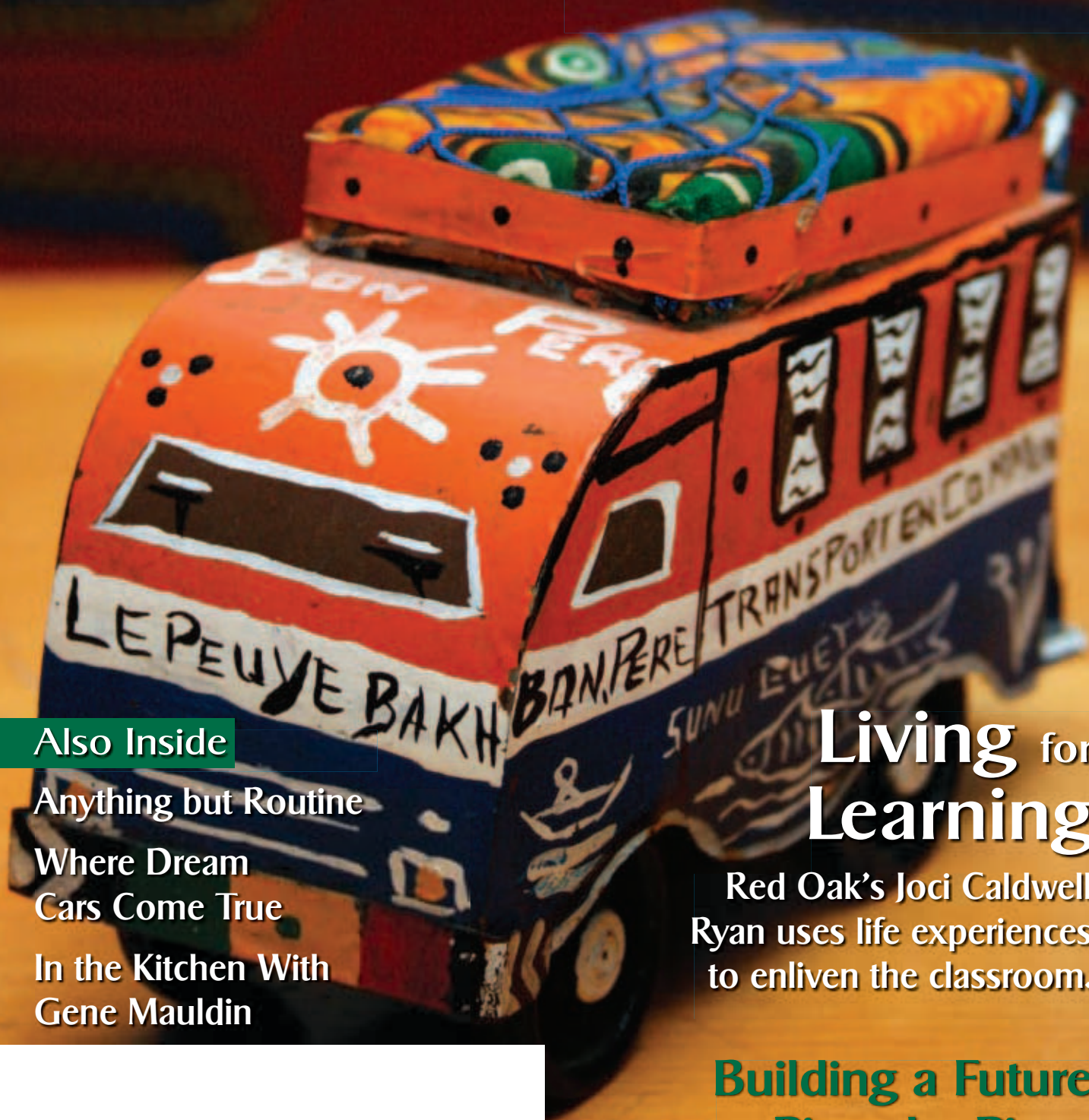


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Living for Learning

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Ryan uses life experiences
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Red Oak Junior High School	March 8, 2011	Open House	6:30pm-8:00pm
Shields Elementary School	March 8, 2011	Open House	6:00pm-7:30pm
Eastridge Elementary School	March 8, 2011	Open House	6:00pm-7:30pm
Red Oak Elementary School	March 8, 2011	Open House	6:00pm-6:45pm-PreK, K,1,PPCD 7:00pm-7:45pm-2,3,4, TLC 1&2
Wooden Elementary School	March 8, 2011	Open House	6:00pm-7:30pm
Red Oak High School	March 10, 2011	Open House	6:30pm-8:00pm



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On The Cover



Artifacts from her travels bring one local educator's college classrooms to life.

Photo by Natalie Busch.

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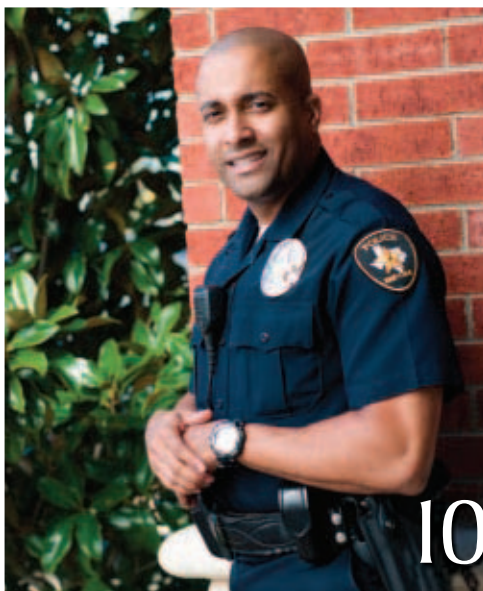
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Editor's Note

Top of the morning to you!

Green is my favorite color — making March one of my favorite months of the year. St. Patrick's Day and the first day of spring are all about going green!

This will be a month of reflection, as a friend would have celebrated her birthday had she not passed from cancer earlier this year. There is solace in watching the circle of life continue as the world turns green, flowers bloom and we take to the outdoors again.

Some of our best friends are our pets, and they welcome spring, too! The city of Red Oak encourages pet owners to take advantage of its Pet Vaccination Clinic March 12 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. at the Public Works Department, 411 W. Red Oak Rd., where Countryside Vet Clinic will offer deals on dog and cat vaccinations.

So grab your friends — furry or otherwise — and head outdoors this month to ring in the green!



Angel

Angel Morris
Red OakNOW Editor
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Living for Learning

— By Angel Morris

The realization she was more interested in the living than the dead led Joci Caldwell Ryan to change her career path. “In graduate school I planned to work in applied anthropology. During my second year in grad school, I was assigned to be a teaching assistant and had my own section to teach. It was scary and challenging, but I loved it,” Joci said.



This Red Oak resident earned a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology from the University of Georgia in 1976 and, after time off doing contract archaeology, returned to UGA for graduate school in anthropology. “I realized then I didn’t really want to be an archaeologist; I was more interested in living people,” Joci said. She transferred to Southern Methodist University (SMU) and got a Master of Arts in 1982.

“It was difficult to finish my doctorate in medical anthropology with demands of

work and children, but I graduated in 1996. I returned for a master’s in public health in 2010, and that’s my last formal degree!” Joci promised. “I’m a perennial student. I plan to take language courses just for fun.”

When not taking courses, Joci is teaching them. She has been a lecturer at SMU since 1996. She also worked at The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) off and on since 1986, taught at Mountain View College for 20 semesters and spent five years as adjunct professor at Texas Christian University.

At SMU, Joci teaches courses on topics such as human sexuality and gender studies and occasionally teaches in the anthropology department. At UTA, her courses are on food and culture, family and kinship, cultural anthropology, medical anthropology and more.

"I try to present information in a variety of ways so students can 'get it,' no matter their learning style. I try to combine the best of old school teaching and the benefits of educational technology," she said.

Joci notes a major difference in students 15 years ago and those today. "They were born into the digital age and are very techno-savvy. Students I teach



"I hope students appreciate the power of learning and develop a love of learning."

have high expectations, and I see some of my colleagues struggling to keep up with them. They have spent much of their lives with electronic devices and computers and are well-prepared in some ways but disadvantaged in others," Joci said. "I also see a lot more students balancing work and school, and they may be pretty stressed. One thing that hasn't really changed, though, is that teaching is a relationship with students, and that's one of the best parts anyway."

To that end, Joci tries to create an atmosphere of respect and trust in her classroom. "If I give back a test with a poor grade, I usually write a note telling them to come see me, and then together we try to figure out what's going on. Our society has become so obsessed with grades that the purpose of education — learning — is sometimes obscured."

More than good grades, Joci has specific goals for students: "I hope students appreciate the power of learning and develop a love of learning. Second, we are all bombarded with so much information now that developing critical

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Joci’s approach to learning was born of a unique childhood. “My parents were both archaeologists, and I learned the value of travel early on. I missed fifth grade because my dad received a Fulbright scholarship to teach at the University of Tehran in the 1960s,” Joci recalled. “My parents thought it would be nice for me to learn another language. So, they put me in a local school, and I had to start in first grade because I didn’t



speak Farsi! I did graduate to third grade before the year was over. Unfortunately, I never learned the names of state capitals and some other things that used to be taught in fifth grade.”

Joci did, however, learn that travel is an education in itself. She spent a year in Benin, Africa, for dissertation research on the political economy of food. “I’ve only been back for short visits since, but all have been extremely valuable as I learn and teach African studies,” Joci said. “I’ve been to Africa twice with students, and it’s a privilege to see them learning. A couple of years ago, I went to Senegal and South Africa with the SMU basketball team, and that’s a trip I’ll never forget.”

These experiences allow Joci to engage students more effectively. “Seeing the positives and negatives of globalization up close, for example, helps me make a dry economics lesson a little less dull. Visiting Goree Island, in Senegal, where enslaved Africans were held before being shipped across the Atlantic Ocean, or seeing Nelson Mandela’s family home, in

Soweto, South Africa, allows me to make it more personal for students, too,” Joci said.

Like most anthropologists, Joci is fascinated by cultures around the globe. “Many of the subjects I teach are complex, global issues. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed. I’m confronted with the ugly reality of poverty and its impact on people, but also inspired by what people do to overcome adversity and to make changes for the better,” Joci said. “I encourage my students to become advocates for causes that inspire them, because action is an antidote for despair. Even small acts can have a big impact if enough people do them.”

One act Joci may consider small that had far-reaching effects was serving as a foster parent. She and husband, Richard, reared two biological children and fostered two others, one of whom was her youngest brother. “I’m ridiculously proud of my children, and I’m so grateful for the experience of being a mom. I’m pleased to see all of our children are self-reliant and hard workers,” she said.

Joci’s passion toward her work — and play — was perhaps inspiration of those traits. “I don’t have much free time since I have two jobs, but I love to do yard work or outside projects. I mow other people’s yards in the summer because I love working outside. I guess it reminds

“I’m one of the luckiest people I know because my work is also my recreation.”

me of my childhood; we spent part of every summer living on my dad’s digs, usually in tents,” Joci reflected.

Joci has also made time for 10 years of Sunday school teaching at DeSoto’s St. Anne Episcopal Church and serves on the advisory board of the Refugee Services of Texas. Ultimately, Joci enjoys whatever she does for the same reason: the opportunity to learn and help others do the same.

“I’m one of the luckiest people I know because my work is also my recreation. I see people who work to make money and hate every minute of it,” Joci said. “I think that most of the really excellent teachers I’ve known were good because teaching was their passion, not just a job. It’s a privilege to be able to make a difference in another person’s life.” **NOW**



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Anything but Routine

— By Janice C. Johnson

Few people throw themselves more fully into their job than Red Oak's Nando Pedrero. He finds that police work perfectly suits his intense, restless temperament. A U.S. Navy veteran, he found himself dreading the idea of an office routine as his military service was drawing to a close in the 1990s. "I didn't want to spend my days sitting in a chair between four walls, so I immediately pursued a career as a peace officer," he said. Nando's pursuit continues to this day. In fact, you would have a hard time catching him doing anything other than either working or preparing for work.

The most obvious example is his commitment to physical fitness. While most officers recognize the importance of staying fit, Nando has done extensive research and created workout strategies specially geared toward his job. "There's more to being a cop than just learning

how to do police work — it's also being prepared physically," he said. He cited strength and endurance as the most important goals of working out. While most kinds of exercise are healthy, Nando sticks with training that supports specific tasks.

Take running, for instance. Nando does not worry about his pace over a several-mile course. "You're not going to jog behind a suspect," he pointed out. "If you're chasing a suspect for miles on foot, you started in the wrong place. What you need is explosive acceleration — so how about working on sprints?" He finds that 50- to 100-yard sprints give him the acceleration and endurance he needs on the job.

Likewise, suspects almost never simply run down a road. To train for the



inevitable chase over fences and other obstacles, Nando practices "box jumps." For these, he starts in a squatting position and then springs straight up to land on top of an 18- to 24-inch-high box.

Weight training is another area in which Nando takes his own unique approach. "Maybe you can lie on a bench and press 500 pounds, but how does that 500 pounds translate to this job? When I catch a suspect, am I gonna bench-press him?" he said. He would hate to lose a fight or even end up winded. "I'd rather last in a fight and be able to handcuff someone than be huffing and puffing, barely able to do anything after." Here Nando's 15 years of boxing experience come into play, as he uses training techniques specific to the sport both to gain strength and keep his reflexes and agility sharp.

"Being a cop is a mindset. So is being physically fit as a cop," Nando said. He

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warned against lapsing into the attitude that riding around in a car all day means an officer does not need to be in shape. Police work is notoriously unpredictable. "You have to live by the 'what-ifs.' People depend on us to be their first line of defense," he said. He feels he must stay in top shape because he never knows when he will have to call on his strength.

Nando has learned through his studies that the human body adapts to a new activity or exercise within six weeks. In other words, a single often-repeated exercise will stop challenging the body and will lose its effectiveness after that time. To counter this, Nando said, "Why not change your routine every day, and keep your body guessing?" That is exactly what he does. He may go to his gym for strength training three days a week. On other days he works on cardiovascular training at home, hammering out sets of jump rope, pushups and box jumps in rapid succession.

Fitness depends on more than just exercise, and Nando's eating habits are as focused as his workout regimen. His diet begins with protein, and he seemingly buys enough eggs and chicken breasts each week to feed an army. He pays special attention to timing his meals and exercise. For example, he does cardiovascular training in the morning, when his stomach is empty, and eats carbohydrates to replenish his energy stores after a workout. Between his lean diet and near-constant strength training, Nando finds his metabolism is unusually high. He compared himself to a furnace — always burning fuel — and said, "I have a hard time gaining weight."

Nando's pursuit of strength is nothing new, as he has been a fitness buff since age 13. "My dad was into martial arts and physical fitness, and I picked it up from him," he said. But even before that, "I was never a couch potato."

Surely Nando does something besides work and exercise. Yes, but his "hobby" is still centered on police work: He is currently in graduate school and expects to earn a master's degree in criminal justice by the end of the year. He takes his courses online to accommodate his work schedule.

Even on vacation, Nando stays physically active. "Colorado is my No. 1 vacation spot because of the level of adventure and activities outdoors. You

can stop along the road anywhere and find trails to hike,” he marveled. He did learn that exercise is much different in thin mountain air compared to Red Oak’s 600-foot elevation. Once he hiked down a mountainside to a lake at around 14,000 feet and was surprised when he could not easily run back uphill to the trailhead.

Whether it is fine-tuning a workout or weighing out a day’s supply of meat, everything Nando does is tailored toward his personal goals. He has researched many different nutrition and fitness programs and simply ignores those that do not apply. “I needed to find what works for a person like me,” he said. The bulky muscles that bodybuilders strive to attain, for instance, would actually



hamper him in his police work.

Of course, the best plan is useless unless carried out, which Nando does with characteristic determination. “Sometimes my workouts leave me gasping for air, but I’m willing to push myself. When I’m working days and need to be in at 6:00 a.m., I go to the gym at 3:00 a.m.” But that extreme is not really necessary. “When my son was young and we’d be watching television, I would jump up during breaks and do 10 sets of 75 pushups, one set per commercial,” he said. “It just depends on what you’re looking for.” Now his son, in turn, comes to him for fitness advice.

Nando is quick to point out there is no one ideal fitness program for everyone. He is always glad to encourage and share knowledge with anyone who asks. But what if he were in charge of fitness for the police department? He laughed ... “People here would hate me.” **NOW**

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Building a Future *Piece by Piece*

— By Sydni Thomas

AT HOME WITH Jacobe and Deanna Daniels

Jacobe and Deanna Daniels planned and saved for years before building their 4,200-square-foot Oak Leaf home five years ago. As their family grew and faced new challenges, their home became a safe and fun environment for each member.

The home was built to be energy-efficient and help keep monthly costs low. Occasionally the family would splurge on a new piece of furniture, but for the most part, the Daniels stuck to their budget, completing projects without spending excess money. “We are a frugal family,” Deanna said. “Our couches are hand-me-downs and the coffee table and lamp came from my sister. Nobody had media chairs to pass down, so we did invest in those.”

“Some of the few pieces of furniture we’ve purchased are the kitchen and dining room tables,” Jacobe said.

Jacobe and Deanna designed each part of their home. They contracted out the labor, with the exception of the painting. The foundation was poured in October, and the family had moved in by March. Deanna was in charge of making all of the interior aesthetic decisions and saved money by doing some of the painting herself. A friend helped her add visual interest to the walls of the downstairs powder room by adding texture with a stencil. “When you build, sometimes you have to make time-wise choices,” Deanna said.

“I would build again now, but that’s not what I said right after we finished,” Jacobe admitted.

The Daniels chose their 3.8-acre property because there was plenty of room for the children to roam and a pond in the backyard. Living in the country has been a different experience



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for the family. "We have had some interesting animals show up in our yard," Deanna said. "Recently, I saw a wolf."

"It was not a wolf," Jacobe playfully argued. "It had to be a dog or a coyote. We have had a bunch of pigs in our yard, and I'm always pulling possums out of the garage."

Before moving to Oak Leaf, the family lived in Cedar Hill and then Red Oak. They saved up funds during those years and kept their eyes open for a good piece of property. "We lived next to my parents for 10 years in Red Oak," Jacobe said. "After we moved, they ended up moving to Midlothian and built a house."

"It took some adjusting when we

moved away," Deanna said. "There wasn't somebody next door that I could go ask to borrow orange juice from."

Jacob and Deanna grew up in Duncanville. They have known each other since high school, where they became high school sweethearts. Now they have two sons: Andrew, 16, and Ryan, 7.

Andrew has played baseball since he was 5 years old. Last year, he played on the Red Oak junior varsity team. In the spring, he keeps the family busy with all of his games and practices. When he's not busy with baseball, Andrew is at home playing his Xbox or hanging out with all his friends. The walls of his

room are painted light blue with a brown stripe going around the room creating the perfect cave for a gamer. To make it even darker, Andrew's ceiling fan does not produce a normal light, but is a black light. "We regretted putting that ceiling fan in the day we installed it," Jacobe said.

"When I go to wake him up for school, it doesn't work," Deanna said. "It's so dark in here. You can't see anything!"

Deanna chose a barnyard theme for Ryan's room when they first built. It has not changed much, and the brands she painted on the wall are still there. Ryan loves his room and is proud to point out his mom's work. When Ryan is not



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“God has blessed us with a house that we don’t have to leave that often for entertainment.”



March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month!

The month of March has been designated National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Dr. Hackett encourages you to take the time to learn about a disease which poses a risk to all Americans. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.

Colorectal cancer is preventable with screening. Screening includes a physical examination, a stool evaluation for hidden blood, and a colonoscopy or an x-ray study. The tests are easy to do and may save your life!

If you are 45-50 years old or above, talk to your doctor or a colorectal surgeon about getting your colon and rectal cancer screening done. Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions!



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hanging out in his room, he is playing his Wii in the children's retreat, an open area that Jacobe and Deanna added so that the boys could have a place just for them where they could keep their gaming consoles and hang out with friends. He is working on beating Super Mario Brothers and already has more than 80 star coins in the game. At the age of 4, Ryan was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. He attends Red Oak Elementary and is involved in the TLC2 class. "At about 18 months I knew something was a little different with Ryan," Deanna said. "At 3 1/2, we started to question it more. A year later, I took him to Red Oak Independent School District (ROISD), and they did an evaluation on him. They determined that it was Asperger's syndrome and enrolled him in their program. We have high hopes for him."

"I didn't see it at first," Jacobe said. "We've had tough times, but he's a fun kid. He does really well academically and tests well above his grade level."

When Ryan was younger, it was hard for the family to go out to movies so they made their own theater. In the original plans, the Daniels built a 1,100-square-foot bonus room upstairs. As they saved money, they finished it out piece by piece. Now the room is complete with a guest bedroom, bathroom, pool table, arcade, drink station and media room. Movies are

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projected on a large screen, and guests sit in leather media recliners. "We haven't gotten to hang out here as much as we would want to," Jacobe said.

"You build something like this and then you hardly get to use it," Deanna said. "Andrew uses it a lot. He'll have Xbox parties. It's a lot of fun having 20 kids over. It's good to know where they're at."



Jacobe works in his father's business, A & L Sheet Metal in Irving, as a project manager. They fabricate and install sheet metal ductwork. Besides the unseen ductwork, pieces of metal work Jacobe created can be seen throughout the home. He made the hood over the stove and the light covers in the media room. He personalized them by putting their address on them. "I actually saw some of these lights in a magazine not too long ago for \$250," Deanna said. "It barely cost us anything to make them."

It took the Daniels a while to take the plunge and build their home, but they have no regrets. They saved until they could build it their way, and now they have a kid-friendly home that is always busy. Whether they are hosting a Super Bowl party for Andrew's friends or hosting a fellowship for members from their church, The Oaks, the Daniels' home is always a welcoming sight to visitors. "We try to use our house as much as possible for good things," Deanna said. "God has blessed us with a house that we don't have to leave that often for entertainment." **NOW**

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Clockwise from top:

Erik, Tabatha, Ava and Riley Chovanetz.

Where Dream Cars Come True

At MasterCraft Bodyworks, no car repair wish is too large or too small. — By Angel Morris

MasterCraft Bodyworks owner Erik Chovanetz's love for all things motorized began with his dad, Raymond, who opened a small shop in Ovilla in 1975. Thirty-six years later, Erik continues his father's commitment to quality craftsmanship.

"As clientele grew, so did his automotive reputation. Providing quality work at a reasonable rate, Dad was pleased to expand to two buildings in Ovilla," Erik said. Fixing things from an early age alongside his dad instilled a love for cars in Erik, who currently oversees the family's paint and body shop, complete with an assembly area.

"Our company was established to provide efficient, expert solutions to individuals regarding cars. Our primary services include rust work, custom bodywork, paint, fiberglass work and specialty services to cater to the unique needs of our clients on muscle, classic, exotic, antique, race cars and choppers," Erik said, proudly listing off all his crew can do. MasterCraft also performs custom paint and color matching, upholstery, graphics, panel fabrication, coach building, chop tops and suicide doors.

With vehicle restoration, MasterCraft will develop a project outline including cost estimate and timeline. Customers can

Business **NOW**

even receive assistance in selection of investment vehicles. "Our staff can serve a wide range of individuals and are experts in the car business," Erik said.

The MasterCraft crew is capable of repairing, replacing or fabricating both the parts and complete bodies. "Besides the best customer service possible, our goals are to reconstruct authentic details of customers' original cars and to preserve automotive history through our work," Erik said.

Auto repair at MasterCraft is viewed as art and history combined. "We love to combine authentic details with an artistic flair," Erik's wife, Tabatha, said. In fact, the company's slogan developed in response to customers' unique requests. "We wanted them to see their wildest dreams come true, and we began answering them with, 'If you can dream it, we can build it,'" Erik said.

The wilder the ideas get, the more Erik loves his job. "We keep up with the current trends, learn by doing and achieve by perfecting," he said. "Every year we just try to get better and better at what we do. We always want to take our business to the next level!"

For Erik, part of reaching that next level is supporting the community his business serves. MasterCraft contributes to the local car clubs, specifically Midlothian Classic Wheels, and supports the football team and cheerleaders in the area.

As additional customer perks, MasterCraft welcomes not just classic cars but late-model cars, as well, and accepts insurance claims. "We will even give customers a ride home when they drop their vehicle by," Erik said.

Ultimately, Erik's goal is to offer customers the personalized service developed by his father yesterday combined with today's automotive techniques. "When the car is done and the customer is happy, that's when we are satisfied with our work. Seeing the car at completion and the customer's response is the best part of the job," Erik said, encouraging folks to think of MasterCraft Bodyworks for their auto body needs. "You will love our big body shop mentality, right here in the small town of Ovilla!" **NOW**



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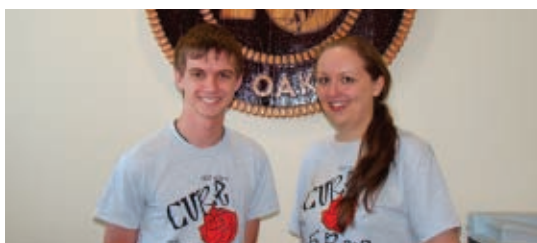
ROHS choir students recently participated in the Region Solo and Ensemble competition. Pictured are students who earned ratings of 1, which allows them to continue on to the State Solo and Ensemble competition in Austin that will be held in May.



Red Oak High students Kenny Hicks and Peyton Brock use letter cubes to study spelling with Marco Marquez during Wooden Elementary's Students Helping Students homework assistance program.



Following field training with Dallas PD, Red Oak officers display the two new motorcycles added to the force.



Chris McClure and Katelyn McWilliams are finalists in the 2011 National Merit Scholarship Program.



The city of Red Oak names Charles Brewer Director of the Year.



Kim Savedra serves customers with a smile at McDonald's.



Deiquan Hood helps Sarah Jackson with her groceries.



Code Enforcement Officer Bill Jordan, center, was recently honored as the city's Employee of the Year. City Manager Tim Keltly, left, and Mayor Alan Hugley, right, bestow the honor.



Second-graders Cheyenne Smith, Misty McGuinn and Aaron Davis pose with performers during a field trip to the Red Oak High School Performing Arts Center.



Fun in the Shade

— By *Nancy Fenton*

This month, our theme is how to get something to grow in the shade. There are lots of shade-loving plants, but they need to be especially hardy to take our heat and erratic rains. Prepare the soil with compost and expanded shale if needed, and you will be ready to start. Sometimes it is hard to find blooming plants that do well in the shade. Columbine is one of the best, and if it likes it where you put it, it will reseed itself and make lots to share! Blue and yellow (gold) varieties are available. Lily of the valley usually blooms early in the year also. Hosta will tolerate alkaline soils and comes in many interesting leaf colors ranging from wavy silver and green to very light green with dark edges. They bloom, too, with lavender or white flowers on a long stem.

It is difficult to get really bright blooms in the darkest shade, but bright bulbs provide lively color before all the leaves come out to shade your area. Pansies in the cooler months and

impatiens in the warmer ones can do well in the lighter shade areas. In the darkest areas, go for caladiums in white, red or yellow hues. Against a background of hardy ferns like the Wood Fern, Japanese Fern or Royal Fern, the contrast can be wonderful. My favorite background “filler” is the Inland Sea Oat plant. It looks a lot like a regular oat plant as it grows, but takes very little water and loves deep shade. But be aware that it spreads rapidly, once you get it going.

Next month we will look at a fern garden that will not require a giant water bill. For other questions, please call the Ellis County Master Gardeners at Texas AgriLife Extension, (972) 825-5175 or visit with us at the 2011 GARDEN EXPO to be held at the Waxahachie Civic Center, Saturday, March 26. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

Seven Strategies for Saving — By Andrea Walton

Are you doing your best to save for your future? It can be very challenging to begin a savings program. After necessities such as food, clothing and housing, there can be little left to put aside for future goals. Unfortunately, failing to save could mean the difference between enjoying a comfortable retirement and giving up some basic needs. Often it is a matter of making the decision to begin saving now in order to buy a new home or car later. The goals you set are important to you. Making changes to prepare for those goals can make a difference.

Here are seven strategies that you can use today:

1. Don't splurge with your tax refund. Instead of spending your refund, use it wisely by paying down debt, funding an individual retirement account or saving it for future financial goals.

2. Take full advantage of your employer's retirement contributions. Your employer may match a percentage of the contributions you make to your retirement savings plan. It's a good idea to do what it takes to get the matching limit. It's free money that can really help your bottom line during retirement.

3. Start small and stay steady. The first word is the most important — start. You should begin as early as possible to get the most out of your savings plan.

4. Pay yourself first. Think of your savings or investments as a bill

you must pay on a regular basis, much the same as a car or mortgage payment. Be disciplined and make the payments according to a set schedule. For better results, establish an automatic monthly deduction from your paycheck or checking account to fund an investment or savings account.

5. Create separate pots of savings for upcoming life stages.

Retirement may be an important goal for which to begin saving, but other goals or events need as much or more preparation. Don't short-change other goals while concentrating on one thing. Whether it's a home, car or child's education, it is important to give appropriate attention to each.

6. If you have children, find the right education plan. You have a number of choices when it comes to saving for a child's education. Finding the one that makes sense for your situation takes planning and information. This takes us to the seventh and, quite possibly, the most important point.

7. Work with someone you know and trust. Everyone's needs and goals are unique. Just as you go through many changes during your lifetime, your financial goals may change. You should work with a professional who not only knows about various plans and strategies, but knows you and will stay with you through the long haul. Most people feel the best guidance they receive comes from a financial professional they know and trust.

In the end, it all boils down to making a plan, getting started and staying the course. When you make the decision to finally start, contact a financial professional who knows you and understands your needs. **NOW**

Andrea Walton is a State Farm agent based in Red Oak.

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If you would like a free review of your IRA or any of your other investments to see if they are appropriate for your long-term goals, please call or stop by today.



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March 3, 17

Senior Citizens Luncheon: Noon, Red Oak Senior Center/Lions Club, 207 W. Red Oak Rd., Red Oak. Residents 55 and older enjoy free lunch. Pre-registration required by the Tuesday before the lunch. Contact Mary Sneed at (972) 576-2777.

March 5

Women of Faith Speaker Patsy Clairmont: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., The Avenue Church, 1761 N. Hwy. 77, Waxahachie. A \$25 fee covers entry and boxed lunch, with \$5 extra for childcare. Call (972) 937-5301 or register at www.theavenuechurch.com/events.

March 7

Caring About Grief meetings (every first Monday of the month through May 2): 6:30-8:00 p.m., Acorn Academy, 101 Live Oak Street, Red Oak. Meeting open to those dealing with any type of grief, from death to divorce. Free dinner at 6:30 p.m.; meetings start at 7:00 p.m. Contact Donna Knight at (972) 617-5895 or e-mail donna.knight@redoakisd.org.

Citizens Police Academy (CPA) Registration Deadline: Red Oak Police Department will conduct its second Citizens Police Academy starting March 26, from 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Red Oak Police Station, 547 N. Methodist Street, Red Oak. Admission to CPA is open to any Red Oak or Ellis County resident 21 or over. All applicants are required to pass a background check. CPA educates residents about the structure and activities of their police department. Two additional classes will be held April 30 and May 28. Contact Officer Nathan Bickerstaff or Lt. Boyd Brock at (972) 617-7632 or e-mail nbickerstaff@redoaktx.org or download application at www.redoaktx.org. The course is free and limited to 20 participants.

March 9

Special story time with the Red Oak Fire Department: 10:00-11:00 a.m., Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Parkway. This program is part of the ongoing weekly story/craft hour geared toward young children. Call (469) 218-1230 or visit www.redoakpubliclibrary.org to learn about additional library activities.

March 12

Ellis County SPCA Volunteer Orientation: Noon, Ellis County SPCA, 2570 FM 878, Waxahachie. Event to welcome new volunteers and keep all volunteers better

connected to the organization. E-mail spcaevents@gmail.com.

March 14-18

Spring Break: Red Oak Independent School District, all grades.

March 22

Parent of the Year Awards: 6:00-7:00 p.m., Red Oak High School Performing Arts Center, 122 State Highway 342, Red Oak. Winners from each ROISD campus are named, based on student essay nominations.

March 23

Red Oak Chamber of Commerce Luncheon: Noon, Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy., Red Oak. Cost: \$12, with reservation, or \$15, at the door. Contact Shelley Oglesby at admin@redoakareachamber.org.

March 24 and 31

Truancy/Anger Management/Parent Relations Class: Course addresses needs of Red Oak students and informs parents in the areas of anger management, family communication, attendance laws and preparation for life after high school — whether that be in the military, college, the workplace or in specialized certification/technical training. Cost: \$50. Contact Student/Family Services Coordinator Donna Knight at (972) 617-5895 or donna.knight@redoakisd.org for times and location.

March 26

The Ellis County Master Gardeners 11th Annual Lawn & Garden Expo: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 1950 N. Hwy. 35 E., Waxahachie. Visit www.ecmga.com or call (972) 825-5175 for more details.

Meals On Wheels Fabulous Forties Fling: 6:00-11:00 p.m., Texas Motorplex, 7500 West Highway 287 (between Ennis and Waxahachie). Red Oak Meals On Wheels volunteers and those interested in supporting this organization, which provides food for the homebound, may call Lisa Hicks at (817) 558-2840 for more details.

March 31

Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest: Local ninth- through 12th-grade students in public, private or homeschool courses may enter the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of

Foreign Wars art competition. Prizes range from \$500-\$10,000. Visit <https://members.ladiesauxvfw.org/eweb/images/Patriotic%20Art%2009-10.pdf> for complete details or call Youth Activities Chairman Celeste Jackson at (972) 896-9162 or e-mail celeste.j7@gmail.com. All local entries must be submitted to Ms. Jackson by March 31 deadline.

April 1-2

Heart of Texas Craft Show: April 1, 2:00-8:00 p.m. and April 2, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 1950 N. Interstate Highway 35 E., Waxahachie. Indoor craft show donating a portion of admissions to the Ellis County SPCA. Call (972) 935-0756.

May 7

Food Fest: 5:00-7:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy., Red Oak. The city of Red Oak and North Ellis County Outreach present delicious local food vendors, cooking demonstrations, live music, a children's play area, art exhibits and an auction benefiting the outreach center. Admission is free. Adults taste all food for \$5; seniors and children, ages 5-12, \$3; children 4 and under admitted free. Contact Lauren Findley at (469) 218-1202 or lfindley@redoaktx.org for more details.

May 20-21

Relay For Life of Central Ellis County: 7:00 p.m., May 20, to 7:00 a.m., May 21, Waxahachie Sports Complex, 1101 Broadhead Rd., Waxahachie. Join Red Oak participants, including school teams, teachers, residents and business sponsors in a fight for the cure of cancer. Contact Jennifer Buckhannon (214) 458-1911 for more details.

Ongoing:

Mondays

All new Mommy and Me!: 11:30 a.m.-noon, Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Family story time for families with babies and toddler-aged children. Experience interactive nursery rhymes, songs, brief readings and big-screen classics. Free. Call (469) 218-1230 or visit www.redoakpubliclibrary.org.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to angel.morris@nowmagazines.com.



In The Kitchen With Gene Mauldin

— By *Angel Morris*

A “do-it-yourselfer” by nature, Gene Mauldin enjoys cooking in-between projects like rebuilding his pool deck and remodeling bathrooms. After a day at the office — a commercial carpet maintenance company where he is operations manager — Gene said cooking is his escape. “For me, cooking is a way to relax. I enjoy it and the results are usually pretty good.”

Gene started cooking “just plain good food” with his mother, then was introduced to grilling by his father-in-law. “Grilling over a wood fire is my favorite. Although I love the convenience of a gas grill, you just can’t beat a smoker for brisket and ribs,” Gene said.

In the Mauldin family, cooking is a way to express love. “Both my daughter and son are really good cooks, so when we’re together we’re usually in the kitchen. They are always calling for recipes and sharing new recipes. It’s something we do — we cook!” **NOW**

BBQ Rub

- 1 Tbsp. black pepper**
- 4 Tbsp. Lawry’s Seasoned Salt**
- 1 tsp. paprika**
- 2 tsp. garlic powder**
- 1 tsp. ground cumin**
- 3/4 cup brown sugar**

- 1.** In a bowl, combine all ingredients.
- 2.** Store in an airtight container.

Barbecue Ribs or Brisket

- 2 racks of baby back ribs or 1 8-lb brisket (packer style)**
- BBQ Rub (recipe above)**

- 1.** Thaw meat in refrigerator. Once thawed, liberally apply rub and refrigerate overnight.
- 2.** Do not trim fat from meat because when smoking, fat ensures meat is as tender as possible.
- 3.** In a well-seasoned smoker with a separate

firebox, cook meat over indirect heat. (I have a smoker made from an old metal barrel that a friend gave me.) Start with a large bag of charcoal and, once it begins turning grey, add wood. I prefer a combination of hickory and mesquite wood. Don’t use chips.

- 4.** Add meat and smoke 8-10 hours for brisket and about three hours for ribs. It is important to maintain grill at a temperature of 250 F, so be prepared to add more wood throughout the cooking cycle.

Taco Soup

- 1 1/2 lbs. hamburger meat**
- 1 10-oz. can green enchilada sauce**
- 1 small onion, chopped**
- 1 4-oz. can green chilies**
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning**
- 1 10-oz. can Ro*Tel tomatoes, diced**
- 1 4-oz. can tomato sauce**
- 4 cups cooked pinto beans or 2 cans**
- 1 can stewed tomatoes**
- 1 pkg. Ranch dressing seasoning (optional)**

- 1 small onion, diced and sautéed in butter**
- Crackers, corn chips or corn bread**

- 1.** Brown hamburger meat.
- 2.** Add green enchilada sauce and onion.
- 3.** When meat has browned, add remaining ingredients and simmer 45 minutes.
- 4.** Serve with crackers, corn chips or corn bread.

Kraut Salad

- 2 14 1/2-oz. cans sauerkraut**
- 1 cup celery, diced**
- 1 cup green pepper, diced**
- 1 cup onion, diced**
- 1 small jar pimento (optional)**
- 1 can Mitchell’s White Sweet Shoe Peg corn (or any whole kernel white sweet corn)**
- 1 can Le Sueur peas, drained**
- 1/2 cup water**
- 1 1/4 cups sugar**
- 2/3 cup white vinegar**
- 1 cup vegetable oil**

- 1.** Combine first seven ingredients; mix well and set aside.
- 2.** In a saucepan, combine water, sugar, vinegar and oil; heat until sugar is dissolved.
- 3.** Pour over kraut and vegetable mixture; mix well and chill thoroughly.

Cole Slaw

- 8 cups finely chopped cabbage (about one head)**
- 1/4 cup shredded carrot**
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise**
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar**
- 1/4 cup milk**
- 1/4 cup buttermilk**
- 2 1/2 Tbsp. lemon juice**
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. white vinegar**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 1/8 tsp. pepper**
- 2 Tbsp. minced onion**

- 1.** In a large bowl combine cabbage and carrot; set aside.
- 2.** Combine mayonnaise, sugar, milk, buttermilk, lemon juice, vinegar, salt and pepper; mix well.
- 3.** Pour wet ingredients over cabbage and carrots and onions, mix well then cover and refrigerate about two hours before serving.

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

Coastal Getaway

— By *Becky Walker*

For landlocked North Texans, the Gulf Coast is a favorite vacation destination. This is true any time of year, but the frigid temperatures we experienced during February might really make a trip south sound like a great idea for many. Corpus Christi is definitely one destination to consider when thinking about a coastal getaway.

Corpus Christi offers fun of all varieties. The seawall is 1.75 miles long and graced by multiple *Miradores Del Mar* — gazebos that overlook Corpus Christi Bay. The wall itself is made like stairs leading into the bay. Joggers, cyclists and inline skaters all find the wall an excellent place to get in a good workout.

The Port of Corpus Christi is the fifth deepest in the United States, and the marina, known as the T-Heads, is a bustling place, with restaurants, private yachts, sailboats and rentals available.

Crossing the ship channel via Harbor Bridge, you will find the U.S.S. Lexington, a World War II-era aircraft carrier, which has been retired to the bay. The ship is now a museum, which displays the various models of aircraft flown from its flight deck during its many decades of service.

Standing on the flight deck, you can look out over the bay or back toward the shore, where you will see the Texas State Aquarium, which features a variety of presentations and exhibits, including dive shows and animal feedings. Several restaurants offering fresh seafood are also nearby. If the beach is more to your liking, North Padre Island, the world's longest barrier island, is located just south of Corpus Christi.

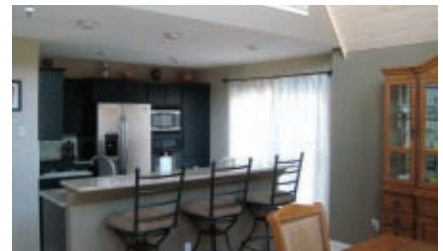
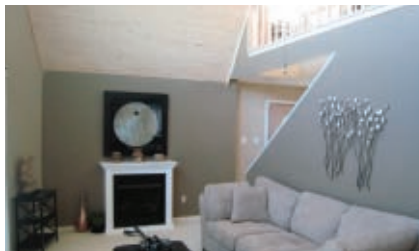
If you are thinking about a spring break trip, you will want to book your hotel reservations early! **NOW**



A view from the seawall.



Anchored in Corpus Christi Bay, the U.S.S. Lexington is now a museum.



Lake Whitney Retreat

Enjoy breathtaking lake and canyon views from every window in this beautifully updated home on 1/2-acre lot. Very secluded and private area surrounded by corps land in the Canyons subdivision on the Bosque County side of Lake Whitney. Walk or drive down to the lake.

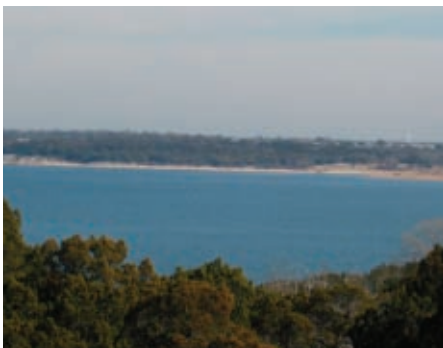
This home has 2 living areas, 2 bedrooms and 2 full baths in the main house with an additional bedroom and bath above detached 3-car garage. Completely updated in 2010 with polished travertine and marble tile, granite counter tops, designer carpet, stainless appliances, including a Viking professional 6-burner gas cook top, tankless hot water heater, whole house (bottled water quality) water filtration system, Jacuzzi 8-jet tub with heater and much more. Very energy efficient. Community boat ramp. Partially furnished.

Purchase: \$299,500 or Lease: \$1400/month

Additional 1/2 acre lot available with possible owner financing.

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All of us at Baylor Waxahachie are extremely proud of our highly-rated service to the community. And we look forward to the opportunity to satisfy you.

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