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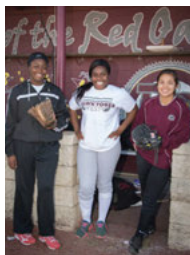
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Editor's Note

Hello, North Ellis County!

The ancient Grecian philosopher Heraclitus said, "The only thing that is constant is change." In the last six months of my life, that statement has proven to be very true. After 16 years of teaching secondary English in Texas, South Korea and China, I decided to take a break and pursue other dreams. I began writing for NOW Magazines in August and recently transitioned into this position as editor of *North Ellis Co.NOW*. I'm very excited to begin this journey. All of this change has caused me to reflect on the opportunities life brings. Starting something new can cause feelings of anxiety and insecurity, but it also brings excitement and learning experiences that cause us to stretch and grow. It's not a matter of *if* you will face changes. It's a matter of *when*. In those times, take courage and take the plunge headfirst into all the adventures that await you.

Have a wonderful month!

Jill

Jill Martinez

North Ellis Co.NOW Editor

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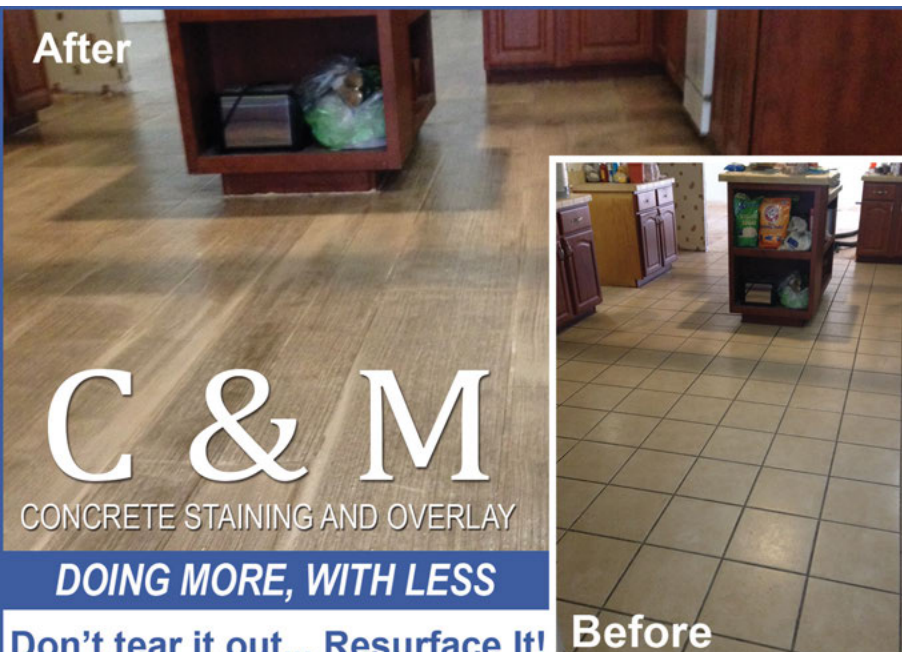
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If it seems like Andrea Fanning is living her dream, she is. Along with a beautiful family, that includes a newborn son, her first head coaching job is at her high school alma mater, which is hoping her return also revives their postseason dreams. Andrea is the new head softball coach at Red Oak High School, where she enjoyed much success as a player and from where she graduated in 1996. She won a state championship in volleyball in 1995, and she helped launch the school's first softball program in 1994, participating in three straight playoff berths before she moved on.

And while the Lady Hawks have been in the playoffs 16 times since the program began, they have been in something of a drought the past couple of seasons and missed the postseason. Enter Andrea, who is excited to have the chance to return the program to success. "It's so nice to be a part of the program I helped start," Andrea said. "I can't wait for us to take the field in the spring."



Lady Hawks



Rival

— By Rick Mauch

Andrea was already in the Red Oak ISD as an assistant volleyball and track coach. She will retain her duties with the volleyball program, another sport very dear to her heart as she played it in college at Texas Wesleyan University. “The two programs that had the biggest influence in my life — how cool is it that I’m coaching in both?” she asked.

Along with Andrea, assistant coach Megan Kidd is new. She comes to the program from Brenham, where she graduated from high school. Megan coached at A&M Consolidated and Bellville, also a perennial playoff team. And Megan’s specialty is pitching, a position that is critical to softball success. The Lady Hawks have plenty of talent in that area, Andrea noted, starting with sophomore Taniece Tyson. “We’re really hungry,” Taniece said. “I’m excited about getting out there and pitching and letting my defense work behind me. The new coaches have given us confidence. We have coaches who really want to win.”

Other pitchers include freshman Lindsey Barrientez, who is a utility player, and senior Hailee Hosfield. There’s also a set of twins that includes a pitcher, Maegan Fullerton, and her sister who is a catcher, Mackenzie Fullerton. Also, the returning starting catcher from last season is sophomore





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Lacy Weaver. "We've got several kids who can put some pace on the ball, put it in the strike zone, make the other hitters put it in play," Andrea said. "And we should be in good shape at catcher."

Andrea, who has also coached club volleyball for the prestigious Texas Advantage program, has worked with and played for some very successful and influential coaches. This includes legendary volleyball coach Arthur Stanfield, who led Red Oak to three state titles; former Texas Wesleyan volleyball coach Rick Johansen; former Lamar High volleyball coach Kate Wood; and Lamar softball coach Ken Livingston. It was from Ken that Andrea learned something very special that will come in handy as she tries to rebuild the Red Oak program. "To see Coach Livingston's patience and the way it paid off, and for that team to finally make the playoffs, it was something," she said. "We lost in the first round, but you'd have thought we won state!"

That was 2007. Andrea said it was the highlight of working with a group of girls that were challenged in the sport. "I learned a lot from Kate Wood on how kids should be handled. Hold them accountable, and they'll rise to it," she said.

Those same lessons are now being passed on to her players. And they are listening and learning, according to junior utility player Alex Rodriguez. "She knows so much, and we've learned so much

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from these coaches in such a short time,” Alex said.

Andrea spent 13 seasons as an assistant in volleyball and softball at Lamar. All the time, however, she lived in Red Oak. It has always been home. “I grew up here. When Coach Hope Porter [the head volleyball and track coach] called and told me there was an opening, I took the chance to come home,” Andrea said. “There is nothing more special than having your first head coaching job be at the school from where you graduated.”

Andrea inherits a young team with only five seniors. Of those, she said, three will likely start. The team also had three freshmen — now sophomores — on the varsity team last season, along with several who bounced back and forth between junior varsity and varsity. “But they’re not young experience-wise,” she said. “They’ve been in some tough competition.”

That includes battling for a spot on varsity this season. All through fall practices and scrimmages, there were no JV and varsity players. They were all just softball players. “Everybody gets their shot,” Alex said. “It makes us more competitive with each other, and then we’ll be more competitive during the season. It also makes us tighter with each other.”

Booster club member Sheila Ragland said there is also a renewed sense of unity among the girls. That was evident from the first time they gathered in the fall.

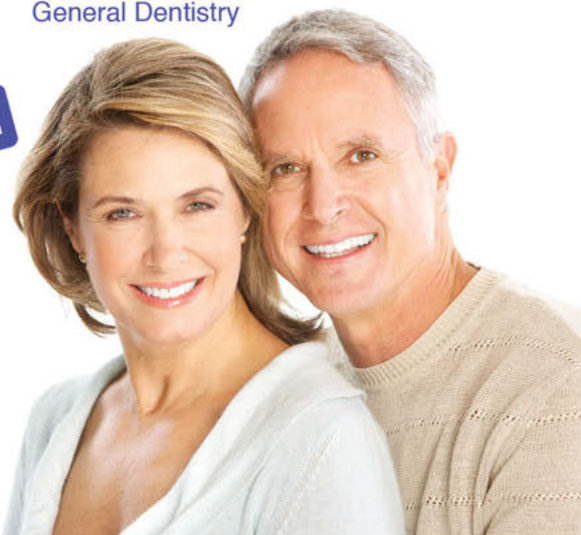
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"At the beginning of this year, from our first meeting up until now, you can see and sense a unity," she said. "They are a team, but more than that: They are like a family. For example, our first football game of the season, and every game after that, the girls were encouraged to go eat, go to the game and sit as a team. This was a huge success. It brought the girls closer together and fast. They have come together for several town events as well as their own fundraising events."

This includes booths and floats at the Founder's Day Parade, Homecoming Parade and a car wash with a bake sale as well as T-shirts. The leftover baked goods were taken to the city fire station and substation for the firefighters. They also served Thanksgiving dinner to the residents at the Red Oak Health & Rehabilitation Center.

Andrea's family includes her husband, Shay, a former assistant coach at Lamar and once a football standout at Arlington High. He is now in the construction business in Mansfield. Their children include 2-month-old son, Aidan; 20-month-old son, Sean; and 8-year-old daughter, Sarah, who is already playing softball.

Andrea's parents still live in Red Oak. Her older sister and brother still live here as well, and her nephew plays varsity baseball and football for the Hawks. Her younger sister is just down the road in Midlothian. "Everything I need in life is right close by," she said. "Life is good."

And it will be even better with the addition of one more thing, senior centerfielder Rickia Smith. A return to the postseason would top off her career as a Lady Hawk. "I'm thankful for the new coaches. They're determined to get us somewhere," Rickia said. "They want us to have fun, and fun is getting to the playoffs." **NOW**

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A Collection OF Memories

— By Rick Mauch



AT HOME WITH VIRGINIA JANUARY

Virginia January has seen a lot in her life. Odds are if she saw it and liked it, she is now collecting it. Virginia, who owns the Ivy Cottage in Ferris, has lived in the small North Texas town for eight years since moving from Duncanville, where she lived for three decades. Her shop is filled with antiques and memorabilia from all walks of life, and her home is equally full. "You know, it's ironic, but my mother didn't like anything old," Virginia said with a chuckle. "But a couple of my daughters love antiques, and my grandson is crazy about them, too."





Somewhere along the way through life, though, Virginia developed a habit of collecting items. A tour of her 2,000-square-foot, two-bedroom residence is sort of like going through a museum combined with all the comforts of a happy home. Virginia's collections begin in the living room with a rare kaleidoscope, but not the kind one can buy in a vintage toy store for \$5. This one is a work of art with leaf-like sketches adorning the outside in ceramic, tile and marble — a design as intricate as the one seen when looking through the glass.

There's a miniature version of the same style across the room. In another room is a rare wooden kaleidoscope, the first one she had ever come across. "I have about nine of them. I get them at estate sales usually," Virginia said. "Like pretty much everything I have, I just like them, so I collect them."

Around the corner in the guest bedroom is her Shirley Temple collection. One entire cabinet and wall is devoted to pictures and dolls of the legendary childhood actress. There's even an old videotape of the movie, *The Little Princess*.

Virginia tells the story of her favorite Shirley Temple doll. When she bought it, the doll was missing its legs. Then, one day, while talking to a fellow Ferris citizen, lo and behold, she found them.

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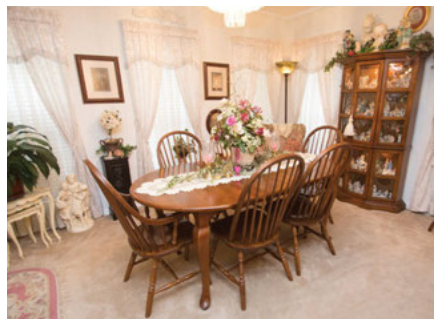
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"She had the legs, panties and shoes to that very doll," Virginia said. "Right here in town. Can you believe that?"

Her prized part of the collection, though, is a framed handprint of Shirley's. Virginia's children bought it for her. "That is so special. I have great children," she said, suddenly remembering something special from her own childhood. "My momma used to curl my hair like Shirley Temple," Virginia recalled, holding up a photo of herself as a child.

Virginia has four children — two boys and two girls. Daughters Patsy and Paula both teach school in Athens. Son Charles is a welder in Waco, and son Jim



Bob is retired from the Mesquite Fire Department. She has 11 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. "It's about to be seven," she said with a grin.

Among her grandchildren, Virginia said, are a couple who are famous in their chosen professions. Grandson Lawson Plemons is a successful professional rodeo competitor, and grandson Jesse Plemons is an actor who has had starring roles in a variety of TV shows, including *Friday Night Lights*, *Breaking Bad* and *Fargo*.

Jesse is the one who loves antiques. Any time he is in town, he brings her something special. "He's always bringing me something 'antiquey,'" she said with a smile. "And he's never missed a

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Christmas. He called this past year and said, 'Granny, what are you doing?' She got to see him be interviewed on *Late Night with Seth Meyers*. "I'm so proud of all of my grandchildren. I love them so much, and I am so blessed to have such a nice family."

The small hallway is filled with family memories. On one wall hang black-and-white photos of her mother and father, along with pictures of her grandparents. On the other wall, in color, are a host of photos devoted to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The lounging room includes a shelf filled with small figurines. They range from a little girl playing an accordion to a little boy holding a puppy dog. "Most of these were Momma's. She loved these kinds of little dolls," Virginia said. "Of course, they weren't old when she had them, but they are now. The shelf they are displayed on fell and six of them broke. They are hard to replace. Made me so sad."

In the corner of the room is an antique rocking horse, complete with wooden rails. She's had it nearly four decades. "I bought it when I first moved to Duncanville, and it was old then," she said.

A cabinet in her bedroom has a plethora of miniature clocks. There's a replica of London's Tower of Big Ben. Another tiny clock is about an inch in size. "They are also hard to find, like a lot of things I have, but that just

makes it even more fun to collect," Virginia admitted.

The collection tour continues into the master bathroom, which is a gallery of rare and antique perfume bottles, many of which are miniature. A couple even have atomizers on them. One is no bigger than a nickel. "Most still have perfume in them," Virginia said. "This one's Evening In Paris. It was very popular."

Another cabinet has a collection of tiny antique shoes. Most are no bigger than a person's thumb, and some are as tiny as a fingernail. "I just love things that are cute," she added.

The kitchen features her collection of syrup pitchers. Again, she got started on this collection thanks to her mother and points to one, in particular, which might otherwise be seen on the table in some quaint country cafe. "Momma kept that one on the table all the time," Virginia remembered.



There's also the rooster collection that includes a variety of items in the kitchen, along with a statue just outside the back door. Her Pearl beer can collection goes back so far that several had to be opened with a can opener.

Another reason Virginia loves living in Ferris is the safety that comes with knowing all of her neighbors — and Virginia makes friends quickly as she participates in a variety of community groups. There's also the friendly police department just down the street. "They are so sweet, always stopping by to check on me," she said. "One night I left the trunk open on my car. They came by and put it down and left me a note."

So, it would seem one of her prized collections is memories. Like all the others, she's going to gather as many as she can to share with the world. "I don't want to put things in a box," she said. "If you can't share them, what's the use of having them?" **NOW**



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A 255-pound, 8-foot-long blue marlin hangs on the wall in Doug Hunt's office. He caught it in 1984 on a deep-sea fishing trip with his cousin and father in Mazatlán, Mexico. "We worked for two hours. My arms were so tired," he recalled.

However, many might say the work it took to bring in such a prize is nothing compared to the work Doug does in a variety of communities, including his hometown of Ovilla. It could also be said that, as beautiful as that fish is, the work Doug accomplishes brings beauty and joy to many more. "Isn't that what you're supposed to do?" Doug said humbly. "If you're going to be in a community, you're supposed to help out."

And Doug, 62, does just that in so many ways. As the owner, along with his 63-year-old brother, David, of Access Self Storage, wherever they have a store they have a strong community relationship. They have stores in Red Oak, Lancaster, Garland, East Dallas, Pleasant Grove and Oak Cliff. Another is set to open soon in Midlothian and the company is preparing to start building in DeSoto.



nity

— By Rick Mauch

Doug is Ovilla's Place 4 council member. He was named Man of the Year by the city of DeSoto in 2016. He's also won the city of Lancaster's Golden Gaither Award for being involved in the community for more than a decade. "I enjoy doing community work," he said. "Just being able to contribute and make the community a better place is important to me."

This is a trait Doug learned from his father, the late Bill Hunt, who passed away in 2012. Bill was in real estate for many years before getting into the self-storage industry. Doug, a 1973 graduate of Dallas' W.T. White High School and Baylor University in 1976, and his brother followed their father into business. Doug and his wife, Donna, have two adult children, Jason and Jennifer. Jason also works in the family business.

Doug has twice helped the communities of Red Oak and Lancaster when they were hit by devastating tornadoes. They provided two months of free storage for the victims. "We just helped give them a chance to get their lives back together," he said.

"My dad always taught me that we, as good men, should always help and share our blessings with our fellow man and community. I can tell you that Doug Hunt's dad must have taught him the same thing because he does it with fervor and zeal," said David Griffin of Red Oak Masonic Lodge No. 461.

In fact, the lodge recently awarded Doug with its highest honor, the Community Builder Award. It goes to

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Something dear to Doug's heart is the work done to raise money for Shriners Burns Hospital in Galveston. He and his fellow members of the Texas Self Storage Association (TSSA) raised \$186,000 this past year. That donation put them over \$1 million total given to the hospital that treats children suffering from burns and skin conditions. "Last year when we made our donation, I realized reaching a million dollars this year was attainable," Doug said. "There is a great sense of satisfaction. The year before we raised a little over \$140,000, so we knew we had to overachieve to reach a million. You just have to ask enough people, and I'm not afraid to ask."

Doug said the idea to help the Shriners Hospital came from a fellow member from Houston about 18 years ago. They've been making donations ever since, including holding an auction at their annual convention. "The great thing about that organization (Shriners) is they don't charge the families a dime," he said. "And what they do for kids is amazing."

Doug said he and his fellow members of the TSSA have even attracted a couple of TV stars to participate in their conventions. Dan and Laura Dotson of the popular show, *Storage Wars*, have been special guests the past couple of years. "That's been a big highlight," Doug said. "And they seemed to have a really good time. We also have had Walt and Cheryl Cade of *Storage Wars: Texas*."



"I enjoy doing community work. Just being able to contribute and make the community a better place is important to me."

Doug was on the board of directors for the TSSA for nine years and is a former president. He is currently the chairman of the charity fundraising committee. In addition, Doug also helps with local fundraisers. The list includes events for Lancaster and Red Oak Education Foundations. He also helps the Ovilla Service League raise money for first responders in the community. Again, he does this by doing something he loves and does well — cold calling folks. "I don't mind asking for money, and I give as much as I get," he said.

"Whatever event or activity we are working on, we know that Doug Hunt will be an active participant," said Laura Terhune, executive director of the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce. "When I needed inspiration for increasing the revenues for our gala, he offered suggestions that ensured we achieved our goal."

Doug has been on the Ovilla City Council since 2009. Among his duties is leading the committee for the annual




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Ovilla Heritage Day outdoor festival in September. "It kind of lost the attention of people, but we turned it around, got better entertainment and more vendors," he said. "The city used to spend over \$3,000 per year, and this year we had over \$11,000 we made that we will put into the parks budget."

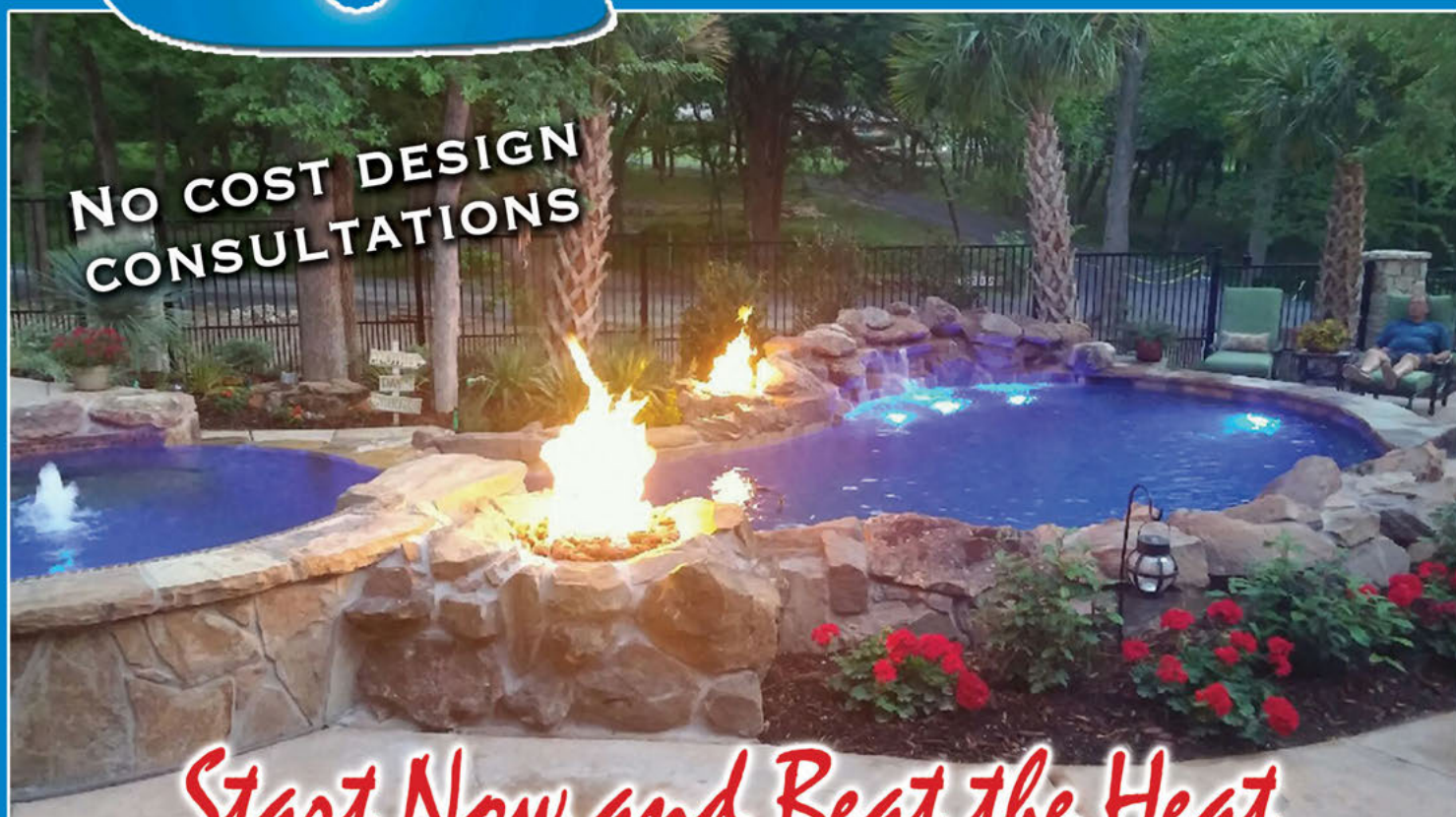
The annual event now includes a petting zoo, pony rides, the Red Oak Opry performing and around 80 vendors. There is also a parade that had around 70 entries this past year. "As we began planning our new DeSoto Living! Festival, the first person I met with was Doug because I know he coordinates a successful festival in Ovilla," Laura said. "He was incredibly helpful and shared so many great ideas and resources with us. A lot of people won't share their trade secrets, but Doug is always looking for ways to help."

And don't expect it to end any time soon. Though he loves going to gun target practice with Donna, he doesn't spend much time on hobbies. "We have a sailboat we never take out on the lake," he said with a grin. "And I haven't gone deep-sea fishing since I caught that."

Quite simply, Doug is too busy helping others. And he plans to stay that way. "Nope, I'm not going anywhere. I'll do this until the day I die, I suppose," he said. "I'd be bored otherwise." **NOW**

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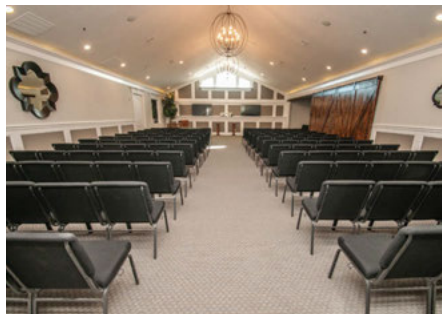


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Not Your Typical Funeral Home

Gregg Driggers and his family-owned funeral home comfort and meet the needs of clients during tough times. — By Abby Rich

Traditional meets contemporary at Driggers & Decker Funeral Home in Red Oak. This is not the typical funeral home of yesteryear, but a light and bright space, with a home-like feel and ambience, so clients in their most vulnerable time of a loved one's death can be as comfortable as possible. The full-service facility, which recently opened, is the only funeral home in the rapidly growing city of Red Oak.

Gregg Driggers and daughter, Ashleigh Decker, licensed funeral directors, and her husband, Gary Decker, who does preneed sales, work together as a family to make sure everyone is taken care of and top-service assistance is provided to their clients. The family-owned business focuses on the personal aspect of what a funeral should be.

Gregg has been licensed for 25 years in the funeral home industry. Ashleigh has been licensed for five years. "What makes us great is my dad is from the older, more traditional side, and I'm from the more modern school of funeral directing. We can offer both traditional as well as more of the celebration-of-life type funerals," Ashleigh explained.

After working for large funeral corporations for many years, Gregg envisioned owning his own establishment, and he knew that he could do it better. "Let our family take care of yours' is our motto," Gregg stated. "I wouldn't treat anyone different than if my client was my mother sitting across the table."

"I oversaw the design and build of the cemetery for the city of Grand Prairie, project managing the whole way through. I then

Business **NOW**

spent 12 years with them to manage care of the property,” Gregg explained. “After that I knew it was time to venture out on my own. I wanted to come back to where my roots were in Red Oak.” His great-grandparents and grandparents are from the Red Oak area, and Gregg lived in Red Oak in the early to mid-’90s, along with his daughter who went to Wooden Elementary.

“So, I asked my wife, daughter and son in-law if they’d want to start a family funeral service business, and everything fell into place.” He found the ideal property on a large lot, with room to grow, and enlisted the help of designer and builder Chris Acker to build the funeral home.

The family-owned business focuses on the personal aspect of what a funeral should be.

The result of Gregg, Judi and Ashleigh’s vision is a 7,500-square-foot, state-of-the-art building that resembles a comfortable home with fresh, modern details and up-to-date furniture. There are lots of windows that allow light to come in throughout the entire building, and the atmosphere with beautiful woodwork evokes a contemporary design. There is chapel seating for about 200 and two visitation rooms that can be opened into one for a larger viewing.

The full, traditional funeral home extends personalized services for clients’ specific needs. “We can do any type of arrangement you need,” Gregg said. Some of their options include funeral or burial services, cremation and veteran services, as well as pre-arrangements. “We will eventually have after-care plans for families to get the help they need to go through the various stages of grief, pointing them to the right place for help regarding the loss of their loved ones. We also have plans to build a beautiful garden with a sitting area on the grounds of the building.”

Part of the Red Oak Chamber of Commerce, Driggers & Decker was the main sponsor of last fall’s annual Founders Day. They will continue to be involved in the city of Red Oak, and have future plans to give back to the community they love, according to Gregg. **NOW**

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Ferris Intermediate students Sebastian O'conas, Ryliegh Casteel, Addison Brison, Willow Raper and Briana Romero board the party bus to take a limo to lunch.



ROHS Alumni Karla Shields and Alan Oakley, ROISD Interim Superintendent, share a little lunchtime conversation with Shields fourth-grader, Jake Trice.



Kaden Bradshaw and Johnathan Cervantes show off their STEM Lab project during a showcase at Ferris Intermediate School.



Karyzma Allen receives an award for the Ferris Intermediate HERO.



Michael Holmes and son, Ezekiel, enjoy cuddles in The Joint waiting area.



Serving as Elementary Principal for a Day, Hattie Etter gets the job done at Ovilla Christian School.



A.J. Potts, Betti Torres and Erika Mejia serve customers at the CNB Red Oak branch.



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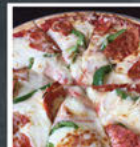
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Leaky Nose

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Oh no, it's happening again! When you least expect it, your nose starts to drip blood for everyone to see. It can be rather disconcerting, but the good news is nosebleeds are fairly common and mostly just a nuisance. Occasionally, medical intervention is necessary. The lining of your nose contains many blood vessels located close to the surface. They are fragile and easily damaged.

Children and older adults are most susceptible to nosebleeds, or epistaxis. However, when conditions are optimal for this condition, anyone can be vulnerable. During the winter when warm, dry air is more prevalent and central heating units are on, the nasal membranes can dry out, leaving the nose susceptible to nosebleeds. Picking of the nose can lead to not only bleeding but the introduction of bacteria to the area. Allergies, sinusitis and upper respiratory infections can cause nosebleeds. Foreign objects in the nose, along with certain physical conditions, such as a deviated septum or nasal polyps, may precipitate nosebleeds, as can anticoagulants and nasal sprays.

You should see a physician if a nosebleed is difficult to stop with compression or if it interferes with your breathing due to a foreign object in the nose, for children younger than age 2, following any head trauma or loss of an excessive amount of blood. As an added precaution, if the bleeding is exceptional, do

not drive yourself to the emergency room. If none of the above applies, you should be able to treat your nosebleed at home. Pinch the soft part of your nose closed, and hold it for at least 10 minutes. Check to see if bleeding has stopped and, if not, repeat. If the bleeding continues longer than 30 minutes, you should contact medical help for further advice. Lean forward slightly as you do this to avoid swallowing blood, because it can irritate your stomach. Sometimes, if you place a cold compress over your nose it can slow down the bleeding.

If you have a tendency to have nosebleeds and spend a majority of your time in a dry environment, it would be prudent to invest in a humidifier. A saline nasal spray can also be helpful. With children who have frequent nosebleeds, make sure their nails are trimmed and try to limit nose picking. Some allergy medications can dry out nasal passages. Consult with your doctor before making a change in your medication. If nosebleeds are frequent, even though minor, please seek the advice of your physician. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.

March 4

Ellis County Expo & Spring Market: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, \$5 admission.

March 13

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

March 14, 16

Spring Break Fun: 2:00 p.m., Red Oak Library. Students in grades K-6 can enjoy crafts, game activities and movies.

March 25

Midlothian Marketplace: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. Shop and dine with local merchants. Adults \$5; Seniors and kids 12 and under are free.

March 27

ROISD Parent Enrichment Class-Anger Management: 6:30-8:00 p.m., 101 Live Oak, Red Oak. Students and parents are encouraged to attend together. Call Donna Knight at (972) 617-4658 or email donna.knight@redoakisd.org to reserve a spot.

May 12

Golf Tournament 2017: 7:00 a.m. sign in, Country View Golf Course, Lancaster. Register as an individual or four-person team by **April 30** to avoid late fees. For more information, call Shelley Martinez at (972) 617-0906.

Ongoing:

Second Mondays

Ellis County Veterans Networking Group meeting: 6:00 p.m., Ryan's Steak House Waxahachie. Join the group for dinner and listen to the guest speaker. To RSVP or for more information, call (214) 763-0378 or email vetsnetgrp@att.net.

Third Mondays

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

Fourth Mondays

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

Blue Star Mothers of America: 7:00 p.m., St. Paul Episcopal Church, 624 Ovilla Rd.,

Waxahachie. For more information, call (972) 679-9425 or visit www.bluestarmothers.org.

Tuesdays

Writing for Enjoyment Group meeting: 12:30-1:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church of Red Oak, 600 Daubitz Dr. For more information, call (469) 383-5365 or email joanpomero@att.net.

First and Third Tuesdays

Red Oak Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. For more information, call (214) 864-8014.

Glenn Heights City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., in the council chambers, 1938 S. Hampton Rd.

Second Tuesdays

Ellis County Master Gardeners meeting: 9:00 a.m., First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie. Visit www.ecmga.com or call (972) 825-5175 for details.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

North Ellis Co. Outreach assistance: 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m., 205 S. Main St., Ferris. Assistance is for Red Oak and Ferris residents. For more information, call Denise Butler at (972) 617-7261.

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

Wednesdays

Toddler Story Time: 10:00-10:45 a.m., crafts/story time for children 18 mo.-4 yrs. and their parents. Call the library at (469) 218-1230 for more information on all library events.

Third Wednesdays

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, \$13 includes lunch and a featured guest speaker. Vouchers for mothers requiring childcare are available. For reservations, call Barb Jacobs at (214) 463-5064.

Wednesdays and Thursdays

The Red Oak Senior Citizens Group: 8:30 a.m.-noon, Lions Club Building, 207 W. Red Oak Rd., Red Oak. RSVP by **Wednesday** for \$2 lunch on **Thursday**. Call (214) 502-9747.

Thursdays

SYNERGY: 11:30 a.m., Sparacello's Deli, 600 Methodist St., Suite 3120, Red Oak. This is a Red Oak Chamber of Commerce networking opportunity.

Yoga 4 Love Studio Cabin Chill Yoga 101: 7:00-8:00 p.m., 116 Water St., Ovilla. This is a gentle-heat Vinyasa flow class for beginners. Post-natal and all levels are welcome. Sign up online. For more information on other classes, visit www.yoga4love.com.

Third Thursdays

Ellis County Amateur Radio Club: 7:30 p.m., Ellis County Sheriff's Office Training Center (County Farm), 2272 FM 878, Waxahachie. For more information, visit www.wd5ddh.org or contact Sharon Wrobel at (972) 978-8256.

Ferris Lions Club meeting: 6:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 101 Redbud Rd.

Second Saturdays

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

Third Saturdays

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

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

Self Defense Class: 9:00-11:00 a.m., 301 Locust Dr., Oak Leaf. Must call (972) 617-2660 to RSVP. Wear loose fitting clothing.

Third Sundays

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

Fourth Sundays

Prayer Shawl Circle: 10:00 a.m.-noon, First United Methodist Church of Red Oak, 600 Daubitz Dr. Circle of Hope and Healing ministry. For more information, call Beth Norris at (214) 392-0732.

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



In the Kitchen With Hilary Landrum

— By Rachel Smith

Hilary Landrum's years in public education trained her to prepare beforehand and serve others, both exemplary qualities in cooking. One of her fondest memories growing up entailed time with her grandmother making an oatmeal cake every year for her birthday. "The crisp of the coconut combined with the chewy cake was amazing," she explained. "There's nothing better in my book!"

Her first cooking experiences early in her marriage involved mostly Hamburger Helper. After gaining some confidence in the kitchen, she branched out to a much greater variety of food. "I remember eating salmon for the first time in a restaurant," she said. "And I suddenly thought, *Hey! I could make this at home!* So, after some research and experimentation, the baked salmon became our family's specialty." **NOW**

Oatmeal Cake

Makes 24 servings.

Cake:

- 1 1/2 cups boiling water**
- 1 cup old-fashioned oatmeal**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- 1/2 cup shortening**
- 1 tsp. cinnamon**
- 1 cup white sugar**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 1 1/2 cups flour**

Icing:

- 9 tsp. butter, softened**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- 1 7-oz. can flaked coconut**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**

1/2 cup evaporated milk

1/2 cup pecans, chopped

- 1. For cake:** Pour boiling water over oatmeal; set aside to cool. Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and flour a 9x13-inch cake pan.
- 2.** Combine the remaining cake ingredients in a bowl; mix well. Stir in soaked oatmeal and any water that hasn't been absorbed. Pour into prepared pan and bake 40 minutes.
- 3. For icing:** Melt butter and sugar in a medium saucepan. Add remaining ingredients; stir. Pour icing over hot cake and place under broiler for about 3 minutes, until icing starts to brown slightly.

Baked Salmon and Asparagus

- 1 lb. Atlantic salmon filets**
- Olive oil, as instructed (divided use)**

Ground black pepper and sea salt, to taste

Oregano, to taste

10-12 stalks of fresh asparagus

1 lemon, juiced

Salt and lemon pepper, to taste

Parmesan cheese, enough to lightly top asparagus

- 1.** Preheat oven to 450 F. Line a cookie sheet with aluminum foil. Place salmon on foil, lightly brushing with olive oil. Sprinkle black pepper and sea salt evenly over the surface of fish; generously top salmon with oregano. Cook in oven 20-22 minutes.
- 2.** While salmon is baking, gently wash asparagus. Cut 1 inch off the bottom of each stalk. In a large Ziploc bag, add enough olive oil to cover the bottom; place stalks inside; add lemon juice, salt and lemon pepper.
- 3.** After removing salmon from oven, adjust cooking temperature to 400 F. Place asparagus on cookie sheet; bake 5-7 minutes. Lightly top asparagus with Parmesan cheese after serving.

King Ranch Chicken

- 4 cups chopped cooked chicken**
- 1 large onion, chopped**
- 1 large green bell pepper, chopped**
- 1 10.75-oz. can cream of chicken soup**
- 1 10.75-oz. can cream of mushroom soup**
- 1 10-oz. can diced tomatoes and green chilies**
- 1 garlic clove, minced**
- 1 tsp. chili powder**
- 12 6-inch corn tortillas**
- 2 cups (8 oz.) cheddar cheese, shredded (divided use)**

- 1.** Stir together first 8 ingredients. Tear tortillas into 1-inch pieces and place in a lightly greased 6-qt. slow cooker or Crock-Pot. Lay pieces down to cover the bottom of the Crock-Pot. Top with 1/3 of chicken mixture and 2/3 cup cheese. Repeat layering twice; cover.
- 2.** Cook on low heat for 3.5 hours until bubbly and edges are brown. Uncover; cook on low 30 minutes.

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

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