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Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong

Editorial Assistant, Beverly Shay

Writers, Dianne Reaux . Chelsie Sanders

Betty Tryon

Editors/Proofreaders,

Pat Anthony . Pamela Parisi

## GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla

Artists, Julie Carpenter . Casey Henson

Martha Macias . Felipe Ruiz

Arlene Honza . Brande Morgan

Shannon Pfaff

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rose

Photographer, Opaque Visuals

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## ON THE COVER



Fine arts and fundraising go hand in hand for Sky Holman.

*Photo by Opaque Visuals.*

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).





## Editor's Note

*The "game" of life ...*

I recently had the bright idea that my son would enjoy the old-school board game called Life. As a kid, I loved it, putting pink and blue pegs in a little plastic car to represent myself and an imaginary husband and adding more pegs for pretend children along the way.

What I discovered, after 45 minutes of setting up the game and trying to follow its complex instructions, is that Life is hard. I suppose that shouldn't have come

as a surprise. I just didn't recall it being so difficult when I was 8.

Eventually, we muddled through a round, mostly following the rules but improvising when it made things more fun. After all, it was really about sharing joy, not doing everything perfectly ... a great guideline for the real game of life, too!

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# Creating OP



“Since I was a little kid, I’ve dreamed about being a musician, performing in front of thousands and sharing my passion with the world.”





# OPPORTUNITY

— By Chelsie Sanders

*When you think of a 15-year-old, you don't generally think of him or her starting a nonprofit organization. Some teenagers are focused on stereotypical things, like getting their license or making weekend plans, but 16-year-old Sky Holman has a different outlook. His focus is on music and fine arts. "I think everyone should have the opportunity to pursue their dreams, even if they may not be able to afford it, or if they don't have a very good support system behind them," Sky explained. It was this passion that*

*eventually led to the creation of The Association of Fine Arts: Benefiting Children, a nonprofit charitable organization Sky founded last year.*

Sky's passion for music began at a young age. "I started piano lessons when I was 9 and only took a few lessons, but I got my guitar for my 12th birthday and have played it ever since," he shared. His love for music stretches through all genres. Sky loves to play or listen to '30s show tunes, '60s pop-rock, '80s hair metal, classical orchestrations of symphony music and techno/hip-hop. "I can honestly appreciate and enjoy certain aspects of any genre of music," Sky said.

Currently Sky plays guitar, sings and has taken up the piano

again. "Since I was a little kid, I've dreamed about being a musician, performing in front of thousands and sharing my passion with the world," Sky reminisced. It was that passion that made him realize the need for a fine arts organization in the area that could help other youth follow their dreams, too.

"I started the organization for kids like myself who may not always be able to afford to pursue the things they want," Sky explained. "The arts are a very expensive field, and our sole purpose is to help kids and young adults pursue and develop their natural abilities, while benefiting children and charities."

Sky also views fine arts as an important aspect in child development. "When children are introduced to music at a young age, specifically between the ages of 4 through 16, certain receptor cells inside the brain are stimulated. This stimulation enhances cell growth, resulting in enhanced memory and 'outside the box thinking,'" he shared.

But music isn't the only beneficial fine arts medium. Painting can be as well. Imagine an 8- or 9-year-old whose pet just died. To an outsider, it may seem minor, but that child may have considered the pet his or her best friend. "Now, I know it isn't true with all kids, but I've never been big on talking. I don't hide my emotions very well, but I don't talk about them. I express them through music, writing and drawing," Sky said. "Perhaps giving that child a canvas is giving them a way to express the feelings they wouldn't share in a way that lets them piece everything together right in front of their eyes. That's why I believe fine arts programs are so important. It's amazing to



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give these kids a chance they normally wouldn't have."

The organization is run by Sky and a group of teenagers, with a handful of adults supervising their decisions and actions and acting as mentors. Even though the organization is just a year old, they are already planning for a second annual event with proceeds going to Children's Medical Center in Dallas. Last year at Music Fest, they donated more than \$400 to Children's. Sky and the other members hope to someday branch out to additional worthy recipients. "We would like to work with other charities, offer grants and scholarships, workshops, master classes and a board of artistic advisors for any child who has questions about the industry," Sky explained.

Ellis County Music Fest is an all-day event the organization utilized to raise money for charities last year, and they are getting ready for the Second Annual Ellis County Music Fest, which will be held on April 20. Although the music and performers will remain the main focus, this year's event will encompass other aspects of fine arts, as well as more community-based involvement. Music Fest will offer vendors, dancers, comedians and visual art that will be silently auctioned throughout the day. Concessions will also be available, and since it's a nonprofit association, all money made at the event will go straight to Children's. "My goals for this year's event are pretty straightforward. I want it to be big," Sky shared. "I want there to be more music, more art, silent auctions, raffles, vendors, dancers, concessions and just everything. So far, we have already tripled last year's results, and I can't wait to see what it's like six years from now!"

Sky believes fine arts programs are





important for everyone, not just children. That's why he wants to help children and young adults pursue their dreams and passions for fine arts, no matter what obstacles they may face. Currently pursuing an associate degree in music performance, Sky knows the arts will be part of his life, no matter his future career. "There are so many things I want to do, and no one thing more than the other: I want to continue running the association. I want to be in a band. I want to be a prosthetic makeup designer. I want to record music. I want to write. I want to be an actor. I want to create stories and ideas. I want to make films. I really just want to do it all," Sky said with a smile. "I've been considering starting a production company so that I could encompass everything, but I don't know yet. All I know is that it will be something artistic, no matter what." **NOW**

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# SCOUT'S HONOR

By Dianne Reaux

*April is an exciting time of year for those who love professional basketball, and this season has been no exception. The regular season games have been full of thrilling wins and heartbreaking losses. Many fans are content to watch games in the comfort of their homes, while others prefer the excitement of actually being in arenas with the crowds, the noise and the food. And some fans are lucky enough to watch courtside. Could anything be better than watching players in action up close and personal? Absolutely — working as an NBA scout!*

Red Oak resident Scott Vaughn is just that. He has dual careers: athletic director and coach at The Canterbury Episcopal School in DeSoto and regional advance scout for NBA's

Utah Jazz. People often

assume his job is to look for terrific players.

"When people think of an NBA scout, they typically think of someone who looks at talented high school and college basketball players," Scott explained. "Professional teams are always looking out for players who will meet their needs. If I know of a talented player, I'll inform our organization, and they will start watching them, but that isn't my main focus. I'm an advance scout, and my primary job is to go to the NBA arenas to scout the teams that we are about to play."

Like many youngsters, Scott played basketball while growing up as a NASA brat. "I'm originally from San Jose, California," he shared. "My father worked in the aerospace industry as an executive with Lockheed Martin, and we relocated because of his work. We moved from California to Houston and from Houston to Picayune, Mississippi, cities that have NASA facilities." While living in Mississippi, Scott attended the 5A Picayune High School, where he continued to sharpen his skills on the basketball team.

"After I graduated from Picayune High School, I attended the local junior college for a year and then transferred to Dallas Baptist University [DBU] on a basketball scholarship," Scott said. After graduating with a degree in business administration, he decided to continue



Scott and Kensen Vaughn share a love for basketball.





his studies in DBU's MBA program. "As a graduate student, my former coach invited me to continue working with the basketball program as a graduate assistant, and I loved it.

"Working as an assistant coach is what initially sparked my interest in coaching. It's where I gained my initial recruiting

experience while looking at high school athletes to play for DBU. It was also when I started scouting. If we were going to play a team in the next week or so, I would go to one of their games and bring back a scouting plan."

In 1989, as he began to plan his post-graduate school future, he assumed he would find traditional work in the business field. But an acquaintance was convinced that Scott's love of athletics, coaching background and business degrees made him a perfect match for a career as an athletic director. "He asked if I would consider working for Gospel Lighthouse Christian School, and right after graduation, I started my first job as an athletic director developing their new athletic program."

In 1998, Scott accepted a position as athletic director with Southwestern Assemblies of God University where one of their part-time trainers, Brian Zettler, also worked as a trainer for the Dallas Mavericks. "This trainer eventually joined the Mavericks full time, and after a few years, he was picked up by the Utah Jazz as one of their athletic trainers," Scott said. "In 2007, when the



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regional scout for the Jazz in this area was promoted, my name came up as a possible replacement. Their team was actually in town to play the Mavericks, and they invited me to meet with them. We talked, and they assigned me a few games to scout for them. I've been with the organization ever since."



While it's exciting to be courtside at NBA games, Scott is the first to admit his scouting job is a lot of hard work. "I'm looking at all of the players, watching what they do and how they do it. I'm watching the players, as well as the coaches, because I want to see all of the plays they're calling. After the game, I'll go back and spend hours reviewing a tape of the game, sometimes watching the same play over and over again. And then I'll submit a 15- to 16-page report, which will consist of the players' personnel sheets that detail their strengths and weaknesses and their statistics," Scott explained. "It will also have a call sheet, which is a playbook with diagrams of all the plays that were called during the game. It's a very detailed report, and they'll use it to prepare for that upcoming game. It's very time consuming, and it's a lot of work, but I really enjoy it."

Because of his schedule, Scott really appreciates the time he's able to spend

at home with his family. "I'm definitely a homebody," he admitted. "We enjoy watching movies and playing board games. We're also very active church members, and we love to travel."

Scott and his wife, Lynelle, met at DBU as graduate students and have been married for 22 years. Lynelle has a degree in education and currently works at Life School Red Oak where their youngest son, Kaden, is a third-grader. The DBU tradition in the family continues with their daughter, Skylan. She was a 2012 graduate of Canterbury and is currently a freshman at DBU. They also have two teenagers — Kyler, a sophomore who is homeschooled and a member of Dallas Christian Home Educates, and Kensen, a sophomore at Canterbury who also plays on his father's varsity basketball team.

At Canterbury, Scott and his coaching squad have led teams to five state titles: three in varsity girls volleyball and two in varsity boys basketball, further proving Scott has an eye for successful players and the plays they must execute to win — a trait that boosts his own ability as an NBA scout.

Scott notes his family at First Baptist Church Red Oak and his own family help him toward his real purpose, however — fulfilling God's plans for his life. "I can really sum up my goals with a favorite



passage, Colossians 3:17: 'And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through Him,'" Scott quoted. "I love my jobs, and it's an honor to coach and scout as part of God's plan for me." **NOW**



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*Teri McManus receives the Extended Service Award from TX PTA after being nominated for the honor by the ROISD Council.*



*Onilla's Susan Bailey portrays her celebrity lookalike for Canterbury Episcopal School's Famous Friday homecoming week theme.*



*Red Oak Elementary kindergarten students Miguel Martinez, Eugenia Salazar and Alan Leal show off the glasses they decorated during the 100th Day of School.*



*Shields Elementary kindergarteners are welcomed on the 100th day of school by Hero Zero and sidekick Zerona.*



*ROHS athletes Alec Saucedo, Zakeins Clerk, Jeremiah Gaines, Cameron Bausley and Jared King sign letters of intent for collegiate sports.*



*Rylee Nugent celebrates the 100th Day of School by dressing as a 100-year-old lady.*



*ROISD announces its Texas PTA Life Member recipients.*



*Chief Scott Lindsey promotes Corporal Antonio Perez Sr. from officer, alongside ROISD Superintendent Dr. Scott Niven.*



*Teacher Trisha Prachyl helps Zion Vanison, Emily Lopez, Beaux Huggins, Lane Clay and Caleb Mitchell make counting by 10s fun.*



# In Bloom

**At Home With Almeta Perry Smith**

— By *Angel Morris*

**“Glad to have the space to take my shoes off and feel at home.”**





*Almeta Perry Smith doesn't need April showers to bring flowers, because her home and her livelihood revolve around her own floral skills. It was a winding path to the Ovilla resident's current home and career, however. "I was born and raised in Arkansas and lived there after college," Almeta recalled. "I moved to Texas in 1981, initially to Seagoville, but wanted something with more open space. I'm a country girl at heart and chose Ovilla, because it had a lot of qualities I could relate to."*

In 1993, Almeta found an Ellis County neighborhood in the middle of open fields. "It's as close to being a country girl as you can get without living on a farm," Almeta said. The small-town environment spoke to her, as well. "It's great to live in a community you feel part of. I know my neighbors, and I know owners of a lot



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of businesses here. I can purchase what I need locally but am just 20 minutes from one of the greatest cities in the world, with museums, fine dining and nightlife.”

A love of rural and urban backdrops speaks to Almeta’s career history, as well. While she discovered floral design interning for a funeral home during high school, she chose a less creative path in college and ended up working for AT&T for 33 years. Nearing retirement, her creative side called. “I wanted to pursue my passion, so I took courses to freshen my floral design skills and learn new techniques. When I retired in 2005,

I opened Floral Designs by Meta, full time,” she said. Her designs are created at home where the garage was converted to house a fully functioning floral cooler and tools of her trade.

Almeta’s floral passion spills inside the home, where fresh and silk centerpieces welcome guests. “The overall style of my house is eclectic. It evolved as I chose and added pieces I liked and thought were comfortable. That’s one thing I keep in mind when adding new pieces, because I want guests to feel warm and comfortable,” Almeta said.

The home’s entry is welcoming, painted

butter yellow and showcasing a portrait of a girl in white. “The picture reminded me of what I felt and looked like growing up in Arkansas,” Almeta said.

The living area is filled with comfortable furniture, and two side chairs acquired at auction flank the fireplace. “All of the furniture has pillows and throws, and it just kind of says, ‘Make yourself at home,’” Almeta commented. “I have several pieces acquired at auction that I’m proud of. It has been a joy finding items that reflect who I am.”

The dining room houses a cherry



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wood hutch and solid wood dining table where family gathers most holidays. The hutch contains glasses of all shapes and sizes, including crystal flutes, unique wine glasses, decanters and other treasures.

"I'm known for my deviled eggs, and after my mother's death, I acquired her egg platter. It's blue and white ceramic with salt and pepper shakers shaped like chickens in the same pattern," Almata said. "During holidays, I serve deviled eggs on Mother's platter, so she is always with us."

The home also has three bedrooms — one used as a home office with an inspirational theme. "I wanted it to feel like Hemingway's writing experience in Key West. I've visited Key West and was impressed with the laid-back, tropical feel," Almata shared. "My office contains brown wicker side chairs. The walls are sunny yellow and the file cabinet is bamboo. The walls are covered in photos, commendations and thank you notes. The thing I'm most proud of is a large poster made for me by a kindergarten class that I created their graduation stage, with back draping, flowers and balloons!"

Another of Almata's favorites is her own bedroom, painted rich red and featuring black and white photos in black frames. A reading nook contains a red chair in front of a floor lamp with a black barrel shade. "I'm glad to wake up here. During spring and fall after it cools off, I open the windows and gentle breezes stir the sheer curtains. I like to sit and read or watch TV here. It's truly my sanctuary," Almata shared.

The kitchen, with its upgraded appliances, is the most modern area in





the home, where a window sill always contains remnants of floral work. Throughout the living areas and most of the house, including the bathrooms, there are floral arrangements created over the years, as Almeta had the urge to transform a space. "Flowers can be used to not only add visual effects but an emotional aspect too," she said.

A small patio on the back of the home is an emotional space for Almeta, where she sits to have coffee, meditate and entertain friends. To warm up the older home's interior, Almeta added recessed lighting throughout and a modern light fixture in the kitchen to coordinate with stainless appliances. Bathroom re-dos are on a distant to-do list, but she is generally satisfied with the house she has made a home. "I once thought I wanted a larger home, but I've found I don't have a need for more space. I just love the space that I have," she said.

When she gets the urge to roam, however, Almeta can visit her son, Patrick, who lives locally, or her daughter, Tawana, in New York City. "NYC makes for an adventure, but I'm always glad to get back to small-town living!" Almeta said, because ultimately, she is still the country girl who is most at home among the flowers.

"I'm a simple person who loves God, my children and friends. I value friendship and recognize the people who have impacted my life but are no longer part of it. I see the value of them having passed through it," Almeta said. "Mostly, I'm grateful to have this place where I live and work every day. Glad to have the space to take my shoes off and feel at home." **NOW**

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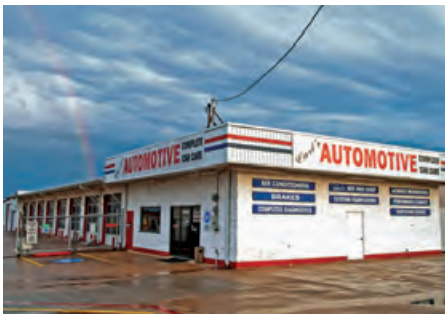
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Kenny Nowak, James Tyska, Lisa Wise, Bill Hamilton, Carl Meredith, Brad Meredith and Pete McGrath take pride in earning the trust of their customers.



# HONEST MECHANICS

*This Red Oak automotive shop builds a reputation — not just cars.*

— By Angel Morris

Carl Meredith wants to take the fear out of having your car repaired. For 24 years, he has practiced “honest mechanics,” earning customers’ trust and building a faithful customer base at Carl’s Automotive. “We run our shop with honesty and integrity. That doesn’t always mean we make a profit, but we can go to sleep at night with a clear conscience,” Lisa Wise, Carl’s sister and account manager for Carl’s Automotive, said.

It all started for Carl as an 8-year-old child in his uncle’s hot rod shop. Ten years later, he was working for a Chevrolet dealership where he became a master technician. In 1989, he opened his own auto repair business in Lancaster, where he operated for five years, expanding to Red Oak when his current location became available in 1994. “Carl wanted

to expand, and over the years in Red Oak he added the machine/fabrication shop, body shop and hot rod shop, where he has restored many cars. The hands-on hot rod shop is his favorite!” Lisa noted.

In business for 19 years in Red Oak, Carl’s offers auto repair and maintenance for all makes and models — foreign or domestic cars. Maintenance services include: lube, oil and filter; tire rotation and balance; cooling, transmission and fuel systems; brake and power steering fluids. Inspection and diagnostic services include: brake inspection, air conditioning diagnostics and starting and charging system checks, as well as pre-purchase vehicle inspections, check engine light diagnostics and no-start engine diagnostics.



Carl's performs all manufacturer-scheduled maintenance services and other repairs, including: belts, hoses, brakes, water pumps, alternators, u-joints, CV axles, ball joints, tire rods, shocks and struts, engine and transmission replacement. Also, tire and wheel servicing, tune-ups and everything from minor to major repairs. And don't forget the machine shop, body shop and hot rod shop. Car aficionados can view a gallery of Carl's restored hot rods online at [carlsautoshop.com](http://carlsautoshop.com) and [carlscustomcars.com](http://carlscustomcars.com). "You can get your family car repaired and serviced or your dream car restored. We do it all," Lisa said.

A Red Oak resident for eight years, Carl has built a reputation for quality work and customer service. He also prides himself on keeping up with ever-changing technology, including the machines, tools and techniques necessary to solve today's cars' problems. Along with sister, Lisa, and son, Bradley, Carl's ASE certified technicians — Bill Hamilton, Miguel Hoyos, Kenny Nowak, Pete McGrath and J.T. Tyska — are trained to stand behind their work.

"We love our customers, and we want them to leave us with a sense of security. Our customers have been coming back to us for years, and we say that with pride," Lisa noted.

Carl's believes giving back to the community is part of doing business, as well. "We support some school and community programs including the Red Oak Police Department, with their National Drug and Safety League, and the Red Oak Fire Department, with the Fire-up Program. We've partnered with the Red Oak Masonic Lodge # 461 to raise money for the Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, too," Lisa said.

Carl's Automotive prides itself on fitting in with Red Oak's neighborly style and invites would-be customers to stop in to see what the shop has to offer. "We think you'll appreciate our business of honest mechanics," Lisa said. "And besides that, our hot rods are just plain cool!" **NOW**

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### April 4

Local Author Group: 6:00-7:30 p.m., 200 Lakeview Pkwy. A discussion and critique group for veteran and novice writers.

### April 5 — 6

Citywide Cleanup: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., 2118 S. Uhl Rd. Containers available for Glenn Heights residents to dispose of household trash and debris. (972) 223-3478.

### April 6

Fire Rescue Community Awareness day: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 547 N. Methodist St. Meet firefighters; learn about fire services. [www.redoakfirerescue.com](http://www.redoakfirerescue.com).

### April 13

Business Extravaganza: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Visit booth displays to learn more about local vendors. (972) 617-0906.

### April 13, 27

Prayer Shawl Ministry: 10:00 a.m., First

United Methodist Church, 600 Daubitz Dr., Beth Norris, (214) 392-0732.

### April 15

Red Oak Book Club: 7:00-8:30 p.m., 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Discussions relate to the book, but one does not have to have read it to participate.

### April 19 — April 21

Bridal Show: Noon-4 p.m., 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Free admission to registered brides or \$5 at the door. Vendors and giveaways. [edoaktxbridalshow.com](http://edoaktxbridalshow.com), (972) 617-2473 or [almetas@metasflowers.com](mailto:almetas@metasflowers.com)

### April 22

Indian Trail Master Naturalist Chapter meeting: 6:00-8:00 p.m., 200 Lakeview Pkwy.

### April 24

Chamber Luncheon: 12:00-1:00 p.m., 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Business networking. Members with reservations \$12; members without reservations \$15; non-members \$20. RSVP: [katherine@redoakareachamber.org](mailto:katherine@redoakareachamber.org).

### April 25

Relay for Life meeting: 6:30 p.m., 200

Lakeview Pkwy. Ellis County Relay for Life fundraising and event preparation. [fawn.martwick@navarrocollege.edu](mailto:fawn.martwick@navarrocollege.edu) or (214) 949-9549.

### April 26

Young at Heart: 6:30-9:00 p.m., Ovilla Road Baptist Church, 3251 Ovilla Rd. Fellowship, dinner and fun for church members aged 55 and over. (972) 617-8544 or [office@orb.org](mailto:office@orb.org).

### April 27

Clean-up Day: 8:00 a.m.-noon., 301 Locust Dr., Oak Leaf. (972) 617-2660.

### May 3

Golf Tournament: 7:00 a.m. sign in, 8:00 a.m. shotgun start, Countryview Golf Course, 240 W. Beltline Rd., Lancaster. Breakfast, lunch, prizes, giveaways. (972) 619-0906 or [admin@redoakareachamber.org](mailto:admin@redoakareachamber.org).

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [angel.morris@nowmagazines.com](mailto:angel.morris@nowmagazines.com).*



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## In The Kitchen With Jane Miller

— *By Angel Morris*

Watching Nana, her grandmother, “cook, bake or preserve everything imaginable” inspired Jane Miller in the kitchen. In Nana’s honor, Jane, her mom, sister and daughter published a 500-page recipe cookbook. “We wanted to ensure our children and all the grandchildren had the family recipes in one cookbook. It is a legacy,” Jane said. “The book is even more special now, because my mother passed away unexpectedly in 2012. She had given her grand- and great-grandchildren copies with personal messages.”

Seeing those recipes passed to future generations makes Jane proud, as does another cooking memory: “I entered a baking contest in junior high and won first place for my prune cake and third for my chocolate pie,” Jane recalled. “I was thrilled!” **NOW**

### Broccoli Salad

*Looks beautiful in a clear trifle bowl.*

- 1/2 cup sliced almonds**
- 4-5 cups broccoli florets/crowns**
- 3/4 to 1 cup red onion, chopped**
- 1 cup Craisins**
- 3/4 cup bacon, cooked and crumbled**  
(or Hormel Real Bacon Bits in a jar)
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup mayonnaise (not Miracle Whip)**
- 2 Tbsp. white vinegar**
- 1/4 cup sugar**

- 1.** Toast almonds by preheating toaster oven to 350 F. Pour almonds into foil-covered pan in single layer and bake 5-8 minutes, shaking pan every 2 minutes.
- 2.** Wash fresh broccoli florets/crowns (not trunks) and cut into 1/2-inch pieces.
- 3.** Mix broccoli, onion, Craisins, almonds and bacon in large bowl.
- 4.** Mix mayonnaise, vinegar and sugar in separate bowl, until well-blended.

- 5.** Pour dressing over salad and mix well. Refrigerate at least one hour.
- 6.** For best flavor, refrigerate at least 24 hours.

### Loaded Baked Potato Chowder

- 3 large baking potatoes (about 2 1/2 lbs.), peeled**
- 3 1/2 cups milk, divided use**
- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened**
- 2 Tbsp. butter**
- 2-3 green onions with tops**
- 4 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, grated**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 1/2 tsp. coarsely ground black pepper**
- Optional toppings: chopped cooked bacon, sour cream or steamed broccoli florets**

- 1.** Slice potatoes in quarters lengthwise and place in a 3-quart microwave safe

cooking dish.

- 2.** Pour 1/2-cup milk over potatoes. Cover dish and microwave on high for 11 minutes.
- 3.** Remove from microwave. Move center potatoes to outside of dish and outer potatoes to center.
- 4.** Cover; microwave on high for 8-11 additional minutes, or until potatoes are easily pierced with a fork. Coarsely mash potatoes.
- 5.** Meanwhile, whisk cream cheese until smooth. Slowly add remaining 3 cups milk, whisking until smooth.
- 6.** Add cream cheese mixture and butter to potatoes. Microwave, covered on high for 3-5 minutes, or until mixture is hot.
- 7.** Slice green onions, including green tops. Add onions, cheese, salt and pepper. Mix until cheese melts. Serve with additional toppings, if desired.

### Beef Tips Over Rice or Noodles

- 2 Tbsp. Crisco shortening**
- 2 lbs. beef tips or stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes**
- 1 can condensed beef stock**
- 1/3 cup red burgundy wine or cranberry juice**
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce**
- 1 clove garlic, minced**
- 1/4 tsp. onion salt**
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch**
- 1/4 cup water**
- 4 cups hot cooked rice or noodles**

- 1.** Melt shortening in a large skillet; brown meat on all sides.
- 2.** Stir in beef stock, wine/juice, soy sauce, garlic and onion salt. Heat to boiling.
- 3.** Reduce heat; cover and simmer 1 hour, or until meat is tender.
- 4.** Blend cornstarch in water; stir gradually into meat mixture.
- 5.** Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and boils.
- 6.** Boil and stir for one additional minute. Serve over cooked rice or noodles.

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