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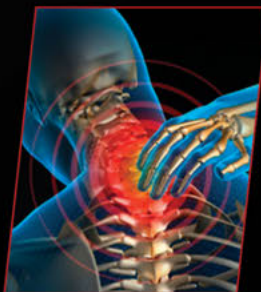
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*Photo by Shane Kirkpatrick.*

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## Editor's Note

*How will you celebrate your mother?*

I am very fortunate to have both a wonderful mother and mother-in-law. Their support has given me the strength to face tough times, and they have been present to celebrate joyous times as well.

I have been a mother for 14 years now. It is one of the greatest honors and responsibilities I'll ever have. I love it when my teenage son thanks me for a home-cooked meal

or when my daughter draws me a lovely picture.

Though we celebrate mothers on one designated day in May, we can reaffirm our love and devotion to them the whole year through. Ask any mom, and she will tell you that it isn't the amount of money spent that matters. It's the warmth behind the little daily actions that matters most.

How will you show the mother figures in your life your love and appreciation?

*Jill*

Jill Martinez

North Ellis Co. NOW Editor

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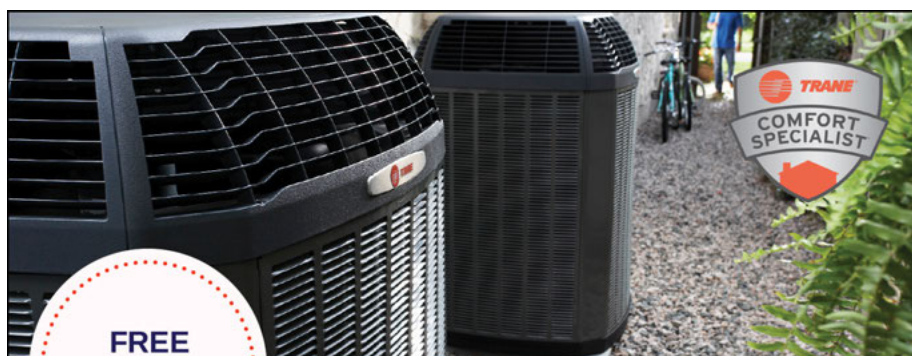


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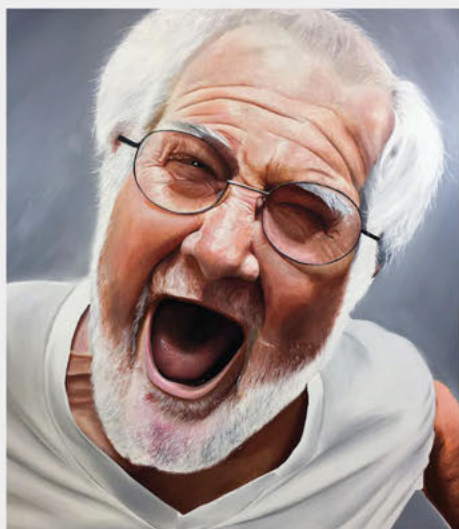
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# Artistic Intelligence

— By Jill Martinez

*Growing up can be a wonderful adventure filled with new experiences, but it can also be difficult when things that come naturally to most people, like speaking and learning in school, become challenges. George Mendez, an up-and-coming, 20-year-old artist from Ferris, has overcome obstacles and has set himself on a path to success.*

George was born in Mexico, but came to the U.S. with his family when he was 4 years old because his speech had been very delayed. His parents wanted to find better doctors to help him. As George began school, he faced another challenge: He was a second language learner. He heard Spanish at home and English at school. These hurdles caused him to feel insecure in his learning environment. He had difficulty pronouncing words and felt terrified when the teachers called on him to read aloud. In what can be a very verbal-linguistic environment, he turned to visuals for comfort. Drawing became his escape.

Mrs. Cheryl Kelly, who was George's art teacher during his seventh and eighth grade years at Ferris Junior High School, gave him the only formal art training he has had to date. "She taught me how to use the grid method when I started drawing portraits. It's a basic method, but was something Leonardo da Vinci used. It changed my work and has helped to make me the artist I am today," George commented. For him, the lines that form the details of his drawing are like vocabulary that helps the image to "speak."



A young man with a serious expression is looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a light-colored, textured knit beanie with a small brown diamond-shaped patch on the front. His face is covered in yellow and orange paint, with some paint also on his hands. He is wearing a dark olive-green jacket. He is holding a small, round, yellow and black object between his fingers, which are also covered in paint. A beaded bracelet is visible on his left wrist.

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Because of some health issues his father faced, George dropped out of school and began doing construction work at 16. “It was instant adulthood. I worked hard because that was what I was raised to do. I worked through the pain, so I didn’t have time to think about things,” George said. It was a roller coaster ride, but he and his family were not alone. There were friends who came alongside them and helped them through.

More recently, George has taken classes at a small academy in Lancaster. He aims to complete his high school studies and earn his diploma. Once he has become a more established artist, he dreams about attending Yale University. “I’m a big fan of Chuck Close, a photorealist, who also attended Yale. I’ve always believed that you have to dream big,” George stated. George is interested in studying the techniques of art more than the history of it, though he recognizes the importance of both.

Part of having big dreams is learning what it takes to make them work. George has discovered how to get his work out into society-at-large after finding that the charcoal sketches he first created would not be sufficient to attract the attention of art galleries. He would need to paint, specifically using oil on canvas.

Not knowing where to begin, he reached out to his former art teacher, Mrs. Kelly. She was more than happy to help George acquire the proper materials he needed to start.

“I am still learning how to paint. I’ve only been doing it for a little over a year. In the beginning, I didn’t know how to mix the colors and struggled to apply the paint, which is looser than the firm pencils I was accustomed to,” George explained. Looking at his work, however,



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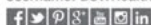


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it is hard to believe there was any struggle at all. The natural talent he possesses is immediately obvious.

Overcoming struggles has become George's motivation. "I want to work hard to become someone. When I was younger, I was often criticized by my peers for the things I couldn't do in school," he recalled. "I want to prove that I can reach my potential." He is often inspired by the great Leonardo da Vinci, a man who achieved great things despite having no formal education.



George now studies painting independently, often using the Internet and social media as his major resources. "I follow several artists on YouTube, Twitter and Instagram," he said. He learns new techniques by reading blogs or watching videos where artists share their processes and the products they used. He has also begun to "read canvases." He will stand inches away to examine the minutest details of brush strokes and the interplay of borders between color fields.

The Internet is also George's marketplace. He uses his social media accounts to share his work with more than 50,000 followers. "It all started with my portrait of Sage the Gemini. I'm a big fan of his music, so I posted it and hashtagged him. He saw it and loved it, and now the work hangs in his home. It has been like a domino effect ever since," George shared.

George has painted portraits and other works for several other Internet sensations, but he is equally excited about contributing to his local community when the opportunity presents itself. He was recently commissioned by the

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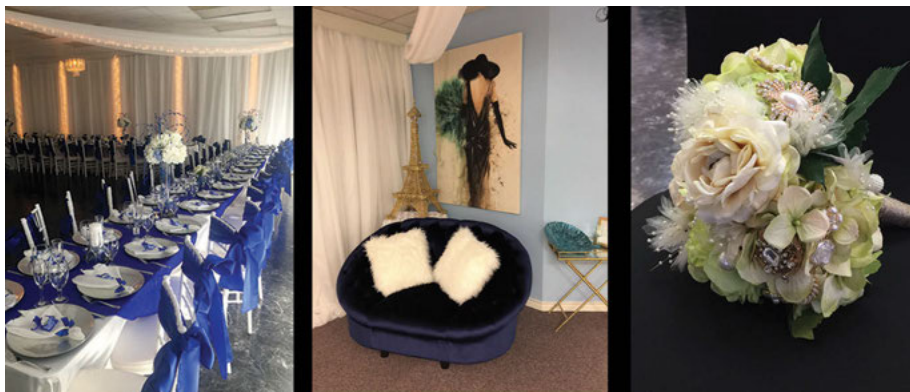
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city of Ferris to paint eight portraits of influential people in the city's history. Upon completion, this series of paintings will hang in the Aubrey Trussel Meeting Room at the Ferris Public Library. George has done paintings or drawings for other locals, and he's happy to work with everyone.

Initially, George used his bedroom at home as a studio, but it was difficult to focus with three younger siblings and the general buzz of the household. When some Ferris citizens discovered that George needed a quieter place to work, they rallied around and helped him set up a studio in some available office space. "I have been very supported by my local community, and I am very grateful for that," George commented.

Inside his studio, some of his completed work hangs on the walls. One of them is a portrait of Salvador Dalí, a famous surrealist painter whom George greatly admires. He has an iPad on a stand to project whatever image he is painting on the canvas. Tall, specialized light stands supply the appropriate amount of direct light he needs while working.

George's parents have always been very proud of his talents, and he credits his mother with passing down her artistic abilities. "My mom is very talented with crafts, always making things. She has always been an inspiration to me. She told me to dream big, so I have," George added.

In Malcolm Gladwell's book, *David and Goliath*, he examines the idea that underdogs often come out on top because their disadvantages become their advantages. George is a living example of what this means. He hasn't quite gone from rags to riches, but he may very well be on his way. **NOW**



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## *At Home With* Arthur Pierot and Therese Winslow-Pierot

*Over the years, Arthur Pierot and Therese Winslow-Pierot have directed their energy into building a great family. From the front yard to the back of the acreage, there is clear evidence that family is the center of all they do.*

Their story began at a car dealership in DeSoto in 1994, where Arthur was working at the time. Therese was looking to buy her first car with her own money. Arthur remembers seeing her in overalls and ball cap when he went out to meet her. It was February, and she was not going to buy until May. She found the exact vehicle she wanted. Arthur told her it would not be there in May. "If it is meant to be, it will be here," she replied.

To their surprise, the vehicle — a red Chevy Cheyenne V6 truck — was still there in May when she was celebrating her birthday. Through the sales transaction, she was unsure if his outgoingness and kindness was part of the buying process or if he was flirting. Flirting it was, and now it's 23 years later.

In the front yard of the Pierot property sits a picturesque lemonade stand from which their daughter has sold refreshing drinks and home-





# ered Life

— By Debbie Durling

grown vegetables from Arthur's garden during the hot summer months. Their modest home provides a safe abode to house the family's closeness and growth. Inside the front door stands a full-length, extra-wide antique mirror from Arthur's grandfather's home. To the left, a family living area waits for memories to be made. A large, flat-screen television rests on the back wall, overlooking two sofas, which line the sides of a coffee table. The second shelf of the coffee table neatly holds a large variety of games that could be pulled out at any moment to provide interactive entertainment. The other side of the room has two chairs and a table against the front wall, leaving space for gaming on the television or any other fun activities that they may decide upon.

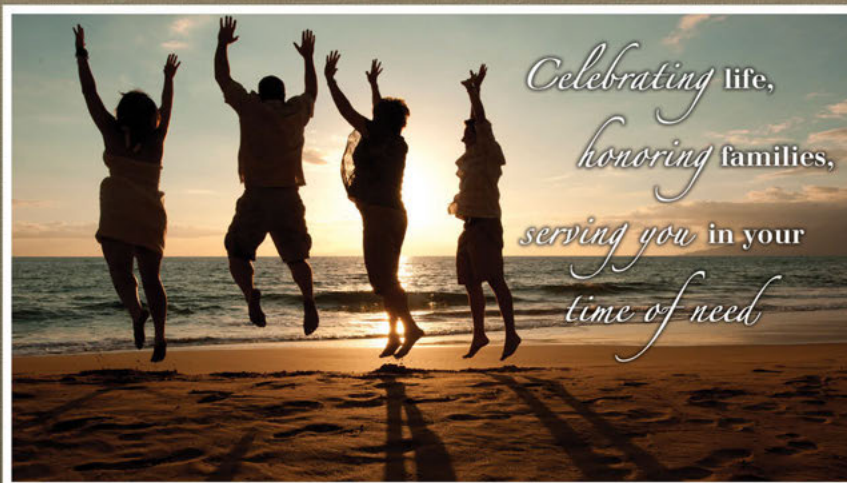
In the corner, a lavish stand-alone globe rests by the wall. Each of the

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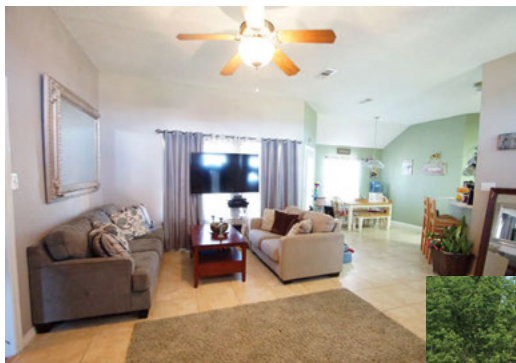
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countries and the oceans are made of a plethora of semi-precious stones. Arthur found it years ago at the Texas State Fair and just had to have it.

Continuing through the living room leads to the guest bath, which sits between the children's rooms. Both rooms are testimony that this family is active. Sports, school trophies and medals are displayed on shelves and on the walls.

An open concept in the living room leads to the dining and kitchen areas. Over the dining table is a sign that reads *Simplify*. It exemplifies the simplistic lifestyle this couple has adopted to be

a family and share moments and memories with their kids. This area plays a big part in simplifying a busy week. On the weekends, Arthur and Therese spend time in their sometimes-crowded kitchen preparing meals for the coming week. They value homemade meals



and want to provide their children with more than fast food, so rather than leave that to chance with a busy schedule, they plan for the busyness by grilling their meat and placing it in the refrigerator, ready for the week. Well-kept pots and pans hang from a rack over the sink that overlooks the dining area. A kitchen

window looks to the backyard where Madelyn spends hours on her trampoline, and their son, Chase, works on his dune buggy. "The dune buggy seems to be in need of repair more than he rides it, but he enjoys working on it," Arthur replied. Medium oak cabinets line three walls of the kitchen with decor peeking over the top. An ample pantry stands in the corner of the room. Beyond the kitchen is the master suite. Just opposite this room is the garage, which serves as Arthur's man cave, along with storage for basketballs, soccer balls and bicycles.

Out the back door is more evidence that these parents go the extra mile to be a family that sticks together. Arthur helped coach Chase when he was in soccer from age 5 to 11 and has coached their daughter, Madelyn's, team since 2011. Therese administrates the teams. The back of the property is dedicated to being a soccer field where Chase's team practiced and now Madelyn's team practices. "We have been a part of the Red Oak Soccer Association since 2007. We've met some great soccer families from there," Therese said.



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Arthur's sports background began as a small boy and continued into his college days, with the majority of his time spent on the football field. "It's funny to see the girls doing football drills for agility and conditioning, but it works," Therese said. Along with Arthur's competitive nature, his main goal is to instill in his players the definition of "team" by working together, playing with their teammates and parents and not giving up.

The family also enjoys fishing and golfing together. Arthur remembers a time when he and Chase were golfing. They were riding in the golf cart and talking to each other. They rounded a corner and when Arthur looked over at Chase, he had disappeared. Glancing back, he realized Chase had tumbled off the cart and was rolling down the hill. Since he wasn't hurt, it has become a memorable moment that lends itself to a chuckle now and then. Fishing together has also made many memories for the family. Madelyn can bait her own hook and kisses the minnows before she puts them on the hook. Deep sea fishing down in Freeport has been a great adventure for this family, as well.

Arthur and Therese are also involved in the community. Recently, Guild Mortgage opened their Red Oak branch, where Arthur is the branch manager. He has enjoyed helping first-time buyers get into home ownership, as well as helping retiring couples find the perfect home for their later years. Therese is a Realtor with City Real Estate in the same offices





and works with homebuyers to find their perfect home, but her primary job is with the Red Oak ISD where she serves as an executive assistant to the business office at the administration building. Arthur is a board member for the Red Oak Chamber of Commerce, where he participates and helps organize the city's events. They also volunteered to help move Shields Elementary back into their newly renovated campus after the December 2015 tornado, as well as the Red Oak Education Foundation. "Our goal is to raise good, productive, happy, healthy young people. We want our two to go out into the population and make a difference," Therese said.

Their lives revolve around this goal. From the house, to the property, to their outreach into the community, Arthur and Therese have blended their separate talents into a family unit that thrives in shared activity together. This is what makes their lovely house a loving home. **NOW**

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The ministry has been long known for its knitted and crocheted prayer shawls that are provided by request to those who are ill, going through difficult situations, recovering from surgery and experiencing grief, as well as to new mothers at baby showers, high school graduates, confirmands and new pastors. "Any shawls left over at the end of the year are donated to Daniel's Den in nearby Waxahachie. They are very gracious to take the shawls and have no problem finding homes for them," Beth explained. "We also have flannel blankets that a member makes for new babies."





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— By Virginia Riddle



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But recently, the ladies of the ministry have been learning and perfecting a new skill — making crocheted mats from plastic shopping bags that are collected in all shapes, colors and sizes. Lynne Grandstaff, a member who is currently serving as the president of the Central Texas Conference of the United Methodist Women, suggested making the mats to Beth, after learning of it at a retreat. The mats, donated to the homeless, provide a clean, dry surface on which to sit or sleep. Bugs don't like the plastic, and even when it gets wet, it dries easily. An attached tie allows a mat to be rolled up and hung over one's shoulder for easy carrying. "There were other church groups already doing this in Palestine and Georgetown, Texas," Lynne said.

Viewing a YouTube video convinced the ladies that the mats were within their abilities. "Following the video, I said, 'We can do that,'" Beth stated. "Of course, it's always easier when someone else is doing it."

"It took time and effort, especially to discover the right proportion on the cutting width and the measurements of the finished product," Lynne recalled. "The feeling is different, especially while trying to get the right tension. We found out that there's also another technique using a loom, but we decided to crochet."

The ministry meets at the church on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month, with the exception of summer months, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Attendance varies between an average of eight to 10, but can swell to as many as 20. Most volunteers are 40-80 years of age, but women of all ages are invited for prayer and fellowship. "We do have ministry members who aren't members of the church," Jo Wilsford, who co-chairs the Prayer Shawl Ministry with Beth, stated. "We have coffee and sometimes cookies or doughnuts, but our hands stay too busy to eat much."

"We also have one man who attends. One of his patients, while he was a nurse, had taught him how to crochet," Beth said. Ministry members are always willing to teach volunteers how to crochet, so knowing how

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is not a requirement. Jo doesn't crochet, but there's something for everyone to do.

The donated plastic bags are sorted, straightened and cleaned. Any that are too damaged to use are recycled. The ends are cut from the cleaned bags, then they are cut in half twice. The resulting "loops" or "tubes" of plastic are tied together, creating a very long "thread" that is rolled into a ball, much like yarn is, and then crocheted with a hook into a mat. Depending on the size of the bags, it can take 550-750 bags and about 20 hours of crocheting to create each mat.

The ministry has plenty of bags, but finding the time to supply such needed items is a challenge for these busy ladies. "I cut and wrap plastic into balls while I'm watching TV," Jo, a retired teacher and administrator with Dallas Independent School District, said. "A rotary cutter makes the process go faster." Choosing where and to whom to distribute the mats is another challenge. "We don't want to just take them in our cars' trunks and hand them out to people on the street," Beth explained. For now, the mats are being donated to Daniel's Den. Soon they will begin making mats for the Dallas Veteran's Administration to use in their homeless veteran's outreach program.

While the ministry members don't get to meet mat recipients, they are blessed with stories told by the prayer shawl recipients. "Their stories are usually about how receiving a shawl and the enclosed card impacted their lives. It's very moving, and just proves the power of prayer over the shawls is very healing," Lynne recalled.

"The shawls are very comforting. People can feel the warmth of friendship around them," Jo added.



Charlene McFee and Carolyn Smith use a loom to accomplish ministerial tasks.

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Fond memories are being made. Prayer shawls and the mats are blessed during the church's service once a month. "The congregation is so impressed with the size of the mats and their usefulness," Lynne said. "We've also conducted a workshop at a conference meeting. Everyone was doing something and had fun while visiting. They promised to take the idea and skill back to their churches."

Beth, a nurse case manager with Amerigroup and a Houston native, has lived in the area since 1981. She's been a member of UMC of Red Oak for over 28 years. "My kids grew up and were baptized and confirmed here. They were in scouts and mothers-day-out here. There's love here, and I love the stained glass windows," Beth said. Founded in 1848, the church is now in its third location.

Jo, a native of West Texas who grew up in Richardson, agreed. "It feels like a family. We take care of and pray for each other. There are lots of opportunities for mission and ministry work."

A former neonatal intensive care registered nurse, Lynne now works in her family-owned hlh&r Scrap Metal recycling business in Waxahachie. She grew up in Oak Cliff, moved to Red Oak in 1973 and started attending UMC of Red Oak in 1990. "We're always looking for new ways to serve our fellow church members and this community," she said.

Joy isn't just experienced by the recipients of the mats and shawls. Lynne said, "Not only are we improving the environment, but we're happy that what we make improves people's lives. They will know that we have thought of them, prayed for them and that they are loved by God." **NOW**

*Editor's Note: For more information, contact UMC of Red Oak at (972) 617-9100.*

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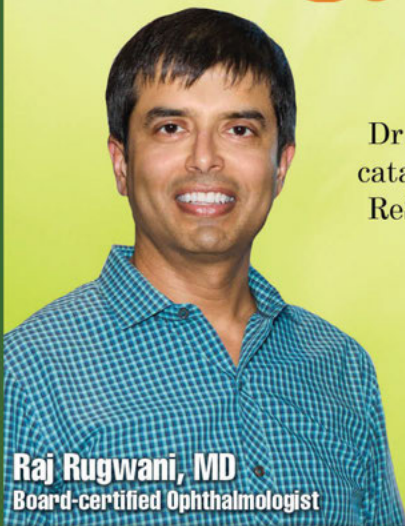
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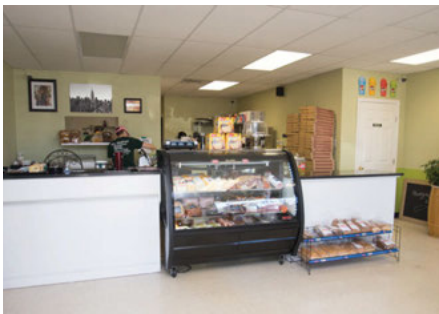
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*Sparacello's creates a place where everyone feels like family. — By Jill Martinez*

Bernie named Sparacello's Deli after his great-grandmother, Francis Sparacello. In 1911, she came from Sicily to the United States through Ellis Island when she was just 11 years old. Years later, Bernie was privileged to live with her. "Those were the best years of my life," he recalled with a smile. "Every day when I walk in this restaurant, it smells like her house." A photo of Bernie with his great-grandmother hangs on the wall just behind the cash register.

Bernie was introduced to the food industry at 15 years of age. He started as a bus boy in his uncle's restaurant in New York and eventually worked his way up to the food line where he sometimes cooked eight or nine dishes at a time. "Even today, I love being busy in the kitchen," Bernie said cheerfully.

Bernie, a New Yorker with an unmistakable accent, ended up settling in Red Oak nearly one year ago to be closer to his sister. He settled down and opened up his deli. Initially, he had three tables. He has continued to experiment and grow his business. Now he has an expanded dining room that seats 56 people.

Bernie quickly learned that summers in Texas are a whole lot different than they are in New York. Texans don't want to eat hot foods in the summer. They tend to enjoy his deli sandwiches instead. "I use Dietz & Watson premium meats and cheeses in my sandwiches," Bernie explained. He sells these items by the pound, so customers can continue to enjoy them at home.

His menu has expanded to include all the things you would expect from a New York style deli: soups, meatballs, cutlets, NY



style pizza, Stromboli, and cannoli. You can even get a tasty salad.

"Food is served fresh here. We make it just for you. I use the best ingredients I can get, even if that means shipping it in from New York," Bernie said. As a result, his deli has earned several 5-star ratings on Yelp and more than 100 five-star reviews on Facebook.

*No one should  
be hungry after a  
Sparacello's meal.  
Portions are large, so  
customers are sure to  
get their money's worth.*

"I want people to come in, sit down, eat a meal and enjoy a great time. There's no rush. This is a great place to be with family. It's like home, and you belong here. Sit, relax, eat and drink coffee for a while." Bernie aims to increase his customer base by serving great food and building relationships with customers.

If you're looking for a great place to take the family or have a date, Sparacello's is the spot. Bernie recommends trying one of the many sandwiches he has named after his family members. If you can't come in, delivery is available within a 10-mile radius for tickets over \$10. Even though Bernie is the owner, he might be your delivery driver. "I'll wash dishes, deliver orders, cook — whatever it takes," he said.

Catering is available also. "I like to sit down and talk with people. Once I know what they are looking for and what their budget is, we make something work."

No one should be hungry after a Sparacello's meal. Portions are large, so customers are sure to get their money's worth. Combine that with friendly servers, fresh food and affordable prices. What could be better? **NOW**

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*Tammy Kusturin serves customers at the Metro Bar and Grill in Ferris.*



*Students and counselors speak with Precision Machining Instructor T. Don Comer during the TSTC Open House.*



*Training Academy 4 U medical students practice giving injections.*



*New fire and EMS personnel are sworn in during the Glenn Heights Fire Day festivities.*



*Ovilla Christian School administrators Ron Clyde, Lezlie Rozier and Donna Garrett join other participants in a Hunger Banquet put on by fifth graders.*



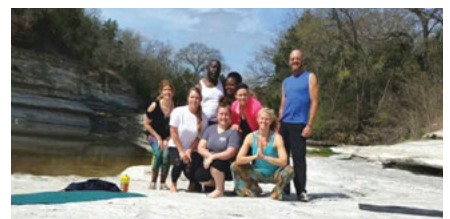
*Robin Fox and Gary Low provide entertainment during Ferris Trades Day.*



*Gran Gran's celebrates their ribbon cutting with local citizens.*



*The Ovilla Police Department hosts their quarterly coffee with community members.*



*Locals enjoy Outdoor Yoga at the Waterfall in Ovilla led by Instructor Lisa Ware (right).*



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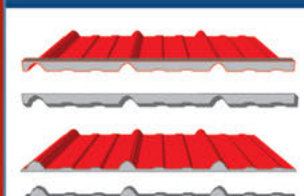


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# An Itchy Situation

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

A couple of days after some serious yardwork, you start to experience intense itching with a rash. Thinking back, you wonder if that bothersome patch of weeds you pulled was poison ivy.

Poison ivy is a plant that contains an oil or resin called urushiol. Poison oak and poison sumac also contain this oil, and all three of these plants together produce more than 300,000 cases every year of allergic contact dermatitis. The resin can be found in every part of the plant: leaves, stems, roots or flowers. The problem comes from direct contact with the oil on the plant. This is not transferred in the air through sneezing and coughing or by touching the fluid from the rash.

Within a few days after contact with the plant's oil, the skin develops an itchy rash. The rash, or hives, will progress to blisters. When the blisters burst, a crust forms over the lesion. You might also detect red streaks and swelling. Swelling in the face, mouth, eyes and/or difficulty breathing could turn into a serious condition. If this is a person's first contact with the oil, it generally takes longer for that first symptom to appear. If this is a repeated contact, then the rash appears within one to two days. Typically, the rash may last a couple of weeks but can last six weeks, if symptoms are severe.

Treatment for poison oak and poison ivy can usually be cared

for at home, if the rash is mild. Rinse the area with cool water for at least 10 to 15 minutes. Allow to air dry. Never use warm water as it causes your pores to open and more toxins could absorb into the skin. If possible, use an oil dissolving soap to clean the area. Do not scratch! If the oil is left on your skin, you can inadvertently spread it by scratching, thereby causing the rash to spread on your skin. Apply calamine lotion or hydrocortisone cream to help with itching. Change your clothes immediately. Wash them separately from other clothing, and don't forget to include any towels you may have used. With any swelling, contact your physician. Swelling in the face or airway requires an immediate trip to the emergency room.

The most effective way to avoid these complications is to stay away from these plants. Whether working in your yard or hiking through a wilderness, wear protective clothing, such as long pants, long sleeves and closed, sturdy shoes. Wear gloves when working on the ground. Learn to identify these leaves in all seasons to avoid contact, and remember a famous saying, "Leaves of three? Let them be!" **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.*



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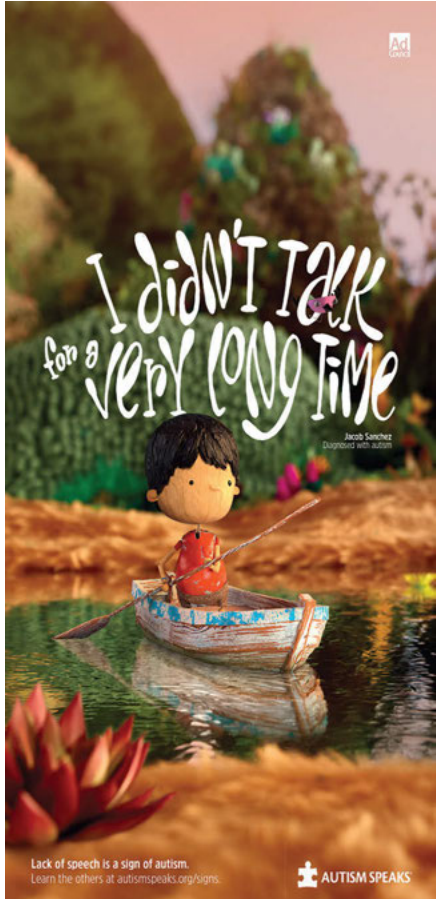
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### May 5, 6

*Willie Wonka, Jr.*: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Red Oak Middle School Cafeteria. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for students, free for children under 3. Concessions available.

### May 6

**Congenital Heart Walk**: Registration: 8:00 a.m. Walk begins: 9:00 a.m., Katherine Rose Memorial Park, Mansfield. Participate in a 5K or a 1-mile fun walk. While there is no registration fee, walkers are encouraged to raise \$125 for the fight against Congenital Heart Disease. For more information, contact Kenda Hooker at (817) 692-9633 or go to [www.congenitalheartwalk.org](http://www.congenitalheartwalk.org).

### May 11

**Red Oak High School Band Spring Concert**: 7:00 p.m., ROHS Performing Arts Center. Free Admission. Silent auction and raffle tickets available. Cookies and punch will be served.

### May 13

**Our Sunflower Friends 3rd Annual Golf Tournament**: 8:00 a.m. shotgun start, Country View Golf Course, 240 W. Beltline Rd., Lancaster. \$125 per player or \$500 per team. Lunch and 4 drink tickets included. 1st

place team wins \$1,000. There will be two opportunities to win \$1,000,000 for a hole-in-one. Other hole-in-one prizes include: \$25K cash, \$10K cash or a car. To register, call Vicki Grady at (469) 226-3080, go to the Our Sunflower Friends Facebook page, or visit [www.tinyurl.com/osfgolf](http://www.tinyurl.com/osfgolf).

**19th Annual Corsicana Airshow**: Gates open at 8:30 a.m.; show begins at 11:00 a.m., Corsicana Municipal Airport, 9000 Navarro Rd., Corsicana. Rides for an extra fee will be available in several war birds. Patrons may walk among the planes until the show gets underway. Food, beverages and souvenirs available. \$10 per person or \$20 per car. Admission is free to U.S. military veterans and active U.S. military personnel and their families. Bring lawn chairs, but no pets or coolers are allowed. For more information, visit [www.coyotesquadron.org](http://www.coyotesquadron.org) or call Dan Summerall at (903) 467-7170.

### May 18

**BUNCO Night**: 6:30 p.m., 200 Lakeview Pkwy., Red Oak. Red Oak Friends of the Library invites you for an evening of fun. Purchase tickets in advance at the Red Oak Library for \$10 (covers entry, a beverage and a snack). Adults only. Prizes will be given.

### May 27

**Honey Tour Bike Ride**: 6:30 a.m., Centennial High School, 201 S. Hurst Rd., Burleson. Enjoy springtime in Johnson County. \$25 per rider when registering before **May 15** in groups of four or more to ride your choice: 7 miles, 20 miles, 30 miles, 46 miles, 67 miles. Funds raised support mission of Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce. \$35 at-the-door entry. Visit [honeytour.athlete360.com](http://honeytour.athlete360.com) for registration and additional ride weekend information or contact BACC, (817) 295-6121.

### June 3

**Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-In**: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport. The event will include classic airplanes and fighters, helicopter rides, fly-overs, Midlothian Classic Wheels, Gold Wing Road Riders, RC model airplanes, live music and children's activities. Breakfast tickets are \$6 for adults and children over the age of 8. Children under 8 are \$3. Parking is free. For more information, call (972) 923-0080 or visit [www.mid-wayregional.com](http://www.mid-wayregional.com).

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

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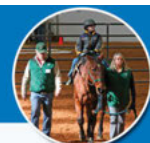
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## In the Kitchen With Natasha Spivey

— *By Rachel Smith*

Natasha Spivey's cooking legacy began at age 10, when her young mind easily absorbed knowledge in the kitchen. She enjoyed time watching her grandmother cook for 11 children and several grandchildren. "One thing that made me appreciate food was visiting my grandmother and sitting on the porch watching cars drive by, while shelling purple hull peas and snap peas," she explained. "I won't ever forget those memories with her and will always cherish them even with my children."

Currently a Red Oak ISD catering coordinator, she still finds time to enjoy cooking and teaching others. Her time flies when teaching eager children to cook. "The excitement on their faces when the recipe comes together is priceless," she admitted. One of her favorite quotes is, "The fresher the ingredients, the better!" **NOW**

### Blue Velvet Cake

*Cake:*

- 1/2 cup shortening**
- 1 2/3 cups granulated sugar**
- 2 eggs, room temperature**
- 1 Tbsp. cocoa powder**
- 2 Tbsp. blue food coloring**
- 4 cups cake flour**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 1 cup buttermilk**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- 1 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**

*Icing:*

- 8 oz. cream cheese**
- 8 oz. mascarpone cheese**
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream**
- 1 8-oz. pkg. confectioner's sugar**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**

- 1. For cake:** Preheat oven at 350 F. Grease and flour a 10-inch cake pan.
- 2.** Beat shortening and granulated sugar with an electric mixer in a large bowl until light and fluffy. The mixture should be noticeably lighter in color; add eggs one at a time, allowing each egg to blend into the shortening mixture before adding the next egg.
- 3.** In a separate bowl, mix cocoa and food coloring; stir into shortening mixture. Combine flour and salt; pour into shortening mixture alternating with buttermilk, mixing until well-blended. Stir in vanilla extract.
- 4.** In a separate bowl, mix vinegar and baking soda. Fold into mixture while fizzing, mixing just enough to evenly combine.
- 5.** Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake 30-35 minutes, until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes.

- 6. For icing:** Cream together the cheeses, heavy whipping cream and confectioner's sugar; add vanilla extract. Beat until light and fluffy; frost cooled cake.

### Chicken Picatta

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves**
- Cayenne pepper, to taste**
- Salt and ground black pepper, to taste**
- All-purpose flour, enough for dredging**
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 1 Tbsp. capers, drained**
- 1/2 cup white wine**
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice**
- 3 Tbsp. cold, unsalted butter, cut into 1/4-inch slices**
- 2 Tbsp. fresh Italian parsley, chopped**

- 1.** Place chicken breasts between 2 layers of plastic wrap; pound to about 1/2-inch thick.
- 2.** Season both sides of breasts with seasonings; dredge lightly in flour, shaking off excess.
- 3.** Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat.
- 4.** Place chicken in pan; reduce heat to medium, cooking until brown, about 5 minutes per side. Remove and plate.
- 5.** Cook capers in reserved oil about 30 seconds, smashing them lightly to release brine.
- 6.** Pour white wine into skillet. Scrape any brown bits from the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon; cook until reduced by half, about 2 minutes.
- 7.** Stir lemon juice and butter into the reduced wine mixture.
- 8.** Cook and stir continuously to form a thick sauce, about 2 minutes. Reduce heat to low and stir parsley into the sauce.
- 9.** Return chicken to pan; cook until heated thoroughly, about 1-2 minutes. Serve with sauce spooned over the top.

**To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).**





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