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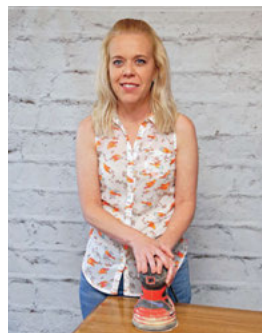
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ON THE COVER

*Katie Smith wants to be
part of the answer to our
throw-away society.*

Photo by
Shane Kirkpatrick.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Jill

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Vacation: a time of respite, a period of recreational activity ...

June is a very popular time of year for people to take vacations. Maybe you will be one of the many who take a trip to Disney World, visit a famous landmark or meet up with far-off relatives this month. It can be lots of fun, even educational, and many families enjoy the bonding that occurs during this season.

Sometimes, people decide to engage in a "staycation" instead. These are fantastic, as well. Sometimes, people engage in less tourism in their own cities than they do in others. A staycation allows people to vacate their usual schedule and find all the benefits their local area has to offer. We are so fortunate to be near the DFW area, which is filled with museums, amusement parks, zoos and more!

If you are one of those people who keeps a jam-packed schedule, you may want to consider taking regular 5-minute vacations. Stepping outside the house or office for a casual stroll, looking at pictures of a location you love or listening to soothing music can have more benefits than you might think. Reducing stress levels, even for just a few minutes at a time, can improve your mood and memory, as well as improve your physical and mental health.

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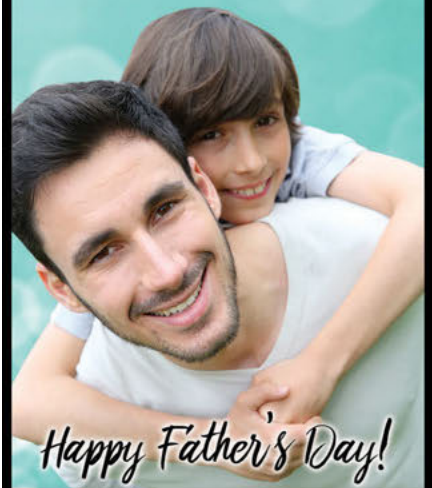
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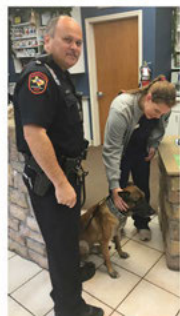
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Driving down byways, we see them: once treasured and serviceable items now tossed as garbage on the side of the road. Katie Smith sees things a little differently. “I spend lots of time ‘sourcing,’” Katie said. “The thrill of the hunt is fun.”

Furniture mostly, but sometimes other formerly useful treasures, receive loving care in Katie’s home garage workshop. “I source at auctions, thrift and antique stores and accept family heirlooms from individuals,” she said. Katie’s business, Alley Kat Kitsch, is a family affair. Her sister, Annie Cox, who conducts online auctions, helps with the sourcing. Katie’s dad; her husband, Jake; and their two sons, Reese (18) and Jude (9), help with the sometimes-heavy lifting. “They are my muscle. Our sons are both diabetic. Being able to be at home, near Jude’s school, and available has been a great help,” Katie explained.

Becoming an artist or craftsperson hadn’t really been on Katie’s list of things to do until 15 years ago when she found a piece of furniture for Reese’s room. “I wanted to paint it, so I had to learn the process, and I found I really liked being creative,” Katie recalled. “When I see a piece, I have to be inspired by it. When that happens, I know immediately what I’m going to do with it. I know if it’s going to be for a female or male and distressed or solid color paint.” She has become adept in painting with chalk, latex, acrylic, craft and enamel paints. “I sometimes stencil or draw intricate designs. When I paint something that small, it’s a big stress reliever,” she added.

Her approach with each piece is different since the piece itself has a distinct flair and history. “It also depends on my attitude and feeling that day,” Katie admitted. “Each piece speaks to me. I want it to be alive again, happy and productive. People throw away so much, and that’s disturbing to me.”

The restoration process begins with Katie cleaning the piece. “There’s often dirt, spider webs and, if the piece was stored in a barn, there can be chicken poop!” she revealed.

Once cleaned, the piece is examined to ascertain what its needs are, including replacing any damaged or missing parts. Katie, sometimes with the help of her husband or father, cuts wood exactly to fit. Then she sands, cleans and attaches the new wood. The painting or staining of the piece is next. “If it’s solidly painted or stained, then I seal it with polyurethane or other poly-based sealer,” Katie said. “If I’ve distressed the piece, I age it with a wax or glaze finish.”



Exploring POSSIBILITIES

— By Virginia Riddle

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Ideas come to Katie's mind, but she also explores Pinterest pictures. "If there aren't instructions, I just wing it and experiment until I've done well with the piece. I prefer things to look clean with clear lines and solid colors of shades of blue, green and gray," she said.

Often, however, individuals who bring items to her have a design in mind and offer photos for Katie to follow. "I don't usually go to the site where the piece will finally reside," she explained. "People usually know what they want." She uses the Internet to communicate with owners of commissioned pieces. "I can send them paint samples from manufacturers for them to select a color in the comfort of their home," Katie added.

While painting is creative, she draws the line at painting a vintage piece that is made from beautiful wood. "So many times, I've gotten a piece and had to go through lots of layers of paint, only to find it has a beautiful, but hidden, wood grain. Different family members had probably painted it to go with changing times and decor over the years," Katie said. "I won't ruin a good vintage piece by painting it."

Katie has been known to repurpose some furnishings. "I've turned a ladderback chair upside down into shelving and an antique sewing machine cabinet into a vanity," she said.



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Challenges abound, such as loading and unloading heavy furniture, encountering critters who have taken up residence in Katie's finds, and having to create some of the aged or missing pieces, including broken glass and mirrors. As in the remodeling of old homes, Katie is sometimes surprised at how much work will have to be done. "I laugh at everything. My sister and I tell each other this is easy, but it has never really been that easy. We can't get too serious about anything," Katie said. "I step out of my comfort zone when doing this, and I encourage others to do the same. Be creative!"



While Katie admitted she's "not an artist who can paint a portrait," she enjoys sewing, making dream catchers and jewelry and buying thrift store framed pictures to create something unique with decoupaged photos added into the original to tell a different story.

A Ferris native, Katie lives in the house where she grew up. Her father and sister live next door on opposite sides of her home. Jake, Katie and their sons like to take family vacations to lakes or beaches while visiting other family members.

"I feel at home with a paint brush in my hand," Katie said. "I want to be part of the answer to our throw-away society — not the problem."

Jake jokes that he can come home from work any day and have a whole new home, since Katie can change the decor anytime. "I enjoy doing this, not because I have to, but because I'm proud I can take a piece that's in shambles and change it once again into a treasured piece in someone's home." **NOW**

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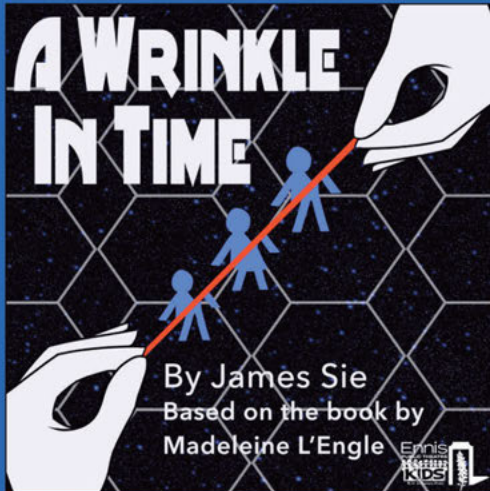
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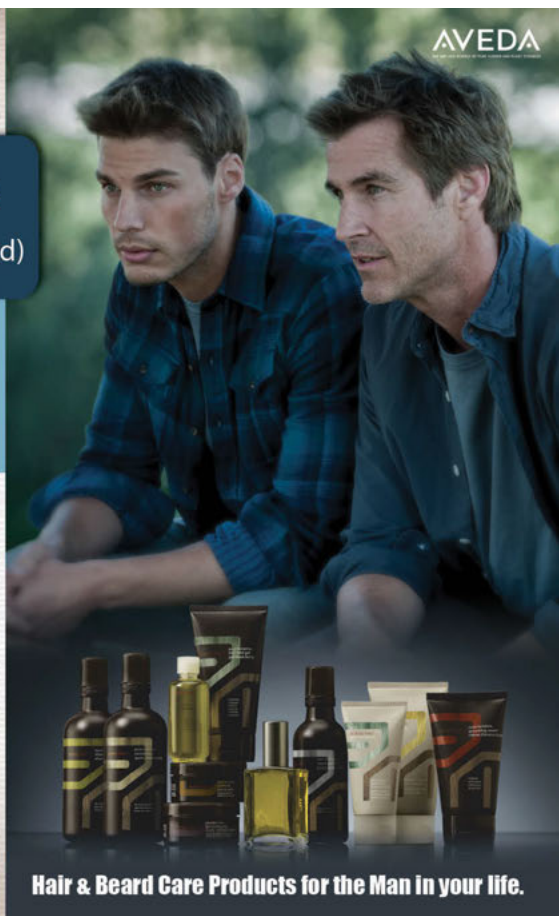
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AT HOME WITH SHERRY DAVIS

THE ART OF COMFORT

— By Rick Manch

Sherry Davis doesn't live in an art gallery. However, a tour of her home is certainly a cultural experience. Her love of art stems from as far back as she can remember. "I've just always had a passion for it. And whenever I buy a piece, I'm also interested in the artist." One example of this is found in Blue Monday, a piece displayed in her master bedroom. "I love that picture," Sherry admitted, "but more than that, I love that it is Annie



Lee's work." The image depicts a lady sitting on the side of a bed getting ready to face another week. "Sometimes, that fits my mood," Sherry said with a laugh.

Throughout the 2,800-square-foot, four-bedroom, three-bath home is art and memorabilia that emphasize Sherry's life, along with the lives of her children, 18-year-old Jaylen and 16-year-old Makayla. Sherry and her children moved to this home six years ago from DeSoto when seeking to shorten their commute to Life School, where her children attended elementary school. Now, they attend Red Oak High School, where they are both in band and are part of the Hawk Scholars program. Makayla enjoys cheerleading, and Jaylen is preparing to attend The University of Texas at Austin in the fall.

Upon entering their home, visitors' eyes are drawn to a rather unique mirror on the dining room wall. It resembles a giant gold record like one might find hanging on the wall of a recording studio, only about four times larger than the size of an actual record. "Most of the stuff is timeless. There are pieces that are really old that I acquired when my kids were toddlers, and that mirror is one of them," Sherry explained.

Under the mirror are two lamps that look like they belong in a hotel, but she found them in a consignment shop. "Until now, I've only seen these types of lamps in hotels," she said, chuckling. It's this kind of unusual placement that gives Sherry joy.

One of the home's most interesting pieces is found in Sherry's home office. The canvas painting features a lady staring into space, as if she is waiting for someone to strike up a conversation. It's perfectly accentuated by the steel gray wall on which it hangs.

The foyer holds another piece of modern art on canvas, only this one is



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more abstract, as it outlines the image of a man. Likewise, its dominant dark color perfectly matches the wall color. “The basic colors of this house are gray and wheat, and this is wheat,” she said.

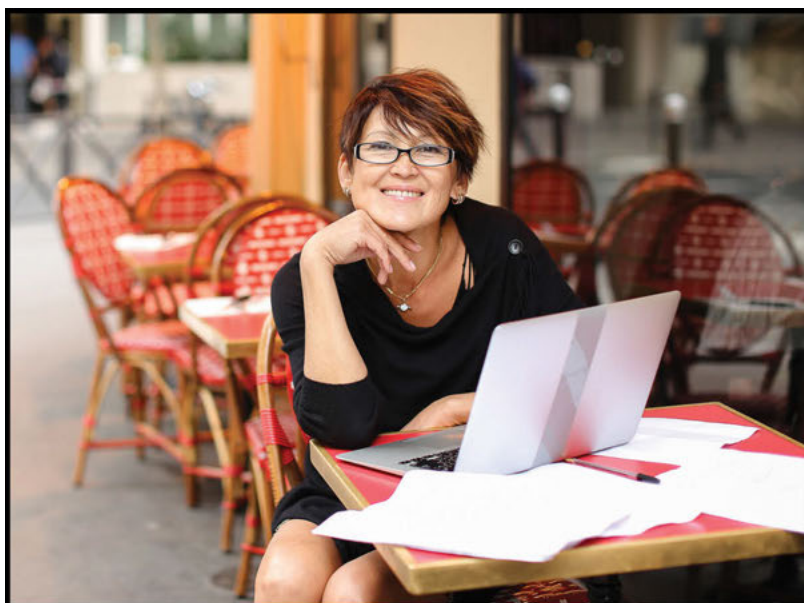
Like many, Sherry grew up with several favorite TV shows, and one of them is depicted in a print hanging in the downstairs hallway. It’s a scene from the TV show, *Good Times*, done in

a pseudo Ernest Watson style. “I loved that show. It was so funny,” she said. “I’ve had that print a really long time.”

Her taste in art extends well beyond the paintings and print variety, however. For example, the guest bedroom has its own unique art — two rectangular pieces of wire art that combine metal, wood and twine. In one of the downstairs hallways are three pieces, sort of bronze in color,

that offer a collage of unique designs when combined. Beyond the kitchen are two more black metal pieces, which Sherry feels will “never go out of style.” “I can put these up anywhere in any house at any time, and they will work just fine,” she stated.

But Sherry’s favorite part of her home is the brown stained concrete floors that are prevalent throughout most of the lower level. She’s not only in love with the looks but the durability. “Whatever wear and tear we put on it, it looks like it’s supposed to be there, especially with Winston,”



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she said, referring to their four-legged family member.

A large cabinet in the living room is made of vintage wood and has classic key locks. Again, not art exactly, but blending right in with its own special meaning. “I don’t think it’s an antique, but it could be,” she said with a slight laugh. “It was given to me by my brother. He moved to a loft, so I said I’d find a place.”

Another print hangs in the living room and features jazz artists, one of Sherry’s favorite styles of music. “I’ve had it forever, and it seems to go with whatever I have,” she added.

There are parts of the home Sherry loves that have nothing to do with art. The spacious kitchen includes more of the concrete flooring she loves. She also enjoys the plentiful cabinet space with 12 upper doors and eight lower doors. “I use them all, too,” she admitted.

A journey upstairs takes one to the movie room, where watching a film is more than enjoyment: it’s an escape that one might have going to an actual movie theater. The walls are highlighted by several pieces of

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movie-related art, such as a piece featuring an old-timey projector and another with a set of director's clap sticks. A miniature popcorn machine that still works resides in one corner.

Like their mom, the children have put their own special, artistic touches on their respective bedrooms. Makayla's room takes one to another country with its Paris theme, complete with a black-and-white painting of the Eiffel Tower and a miniature replica of the legendary landmark. "She can't wait to go to Paris someday," Sherry said. On the wall is her collection of cheerleading bows from over the years, ranging from her days in competitive cheer to her current days on the Red Oak High School varsity squad.

Jaylen's room has a sword motif, highlighted by some hanging on the wall, including one that resembles the one King Arthur pulled from the stone. "I'm not sure why Jaylen is so into swords," Sherry confessed, "but they look pretty cool."

The decorator's eye that makes Sherry's home an artistic showpiece is also applied to her business, Discount Event Rentals, a party rental company. Just like her art collection, it has grown over the years, beginning from her love of hosting parties and events. "I love things that people can look at and enjoy, or things that are going to leave an impression," she said. "So many of the items displayed in my home have left an impression in my life." **NOW**

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and do book signings and speak, and we had many events that took place in February including Love Your Library month,” Treasurer Nancy Childress explained. “We even had Elvis come to one of our events, and people paid to have their picture taken with him. Everyone just loved Elvis!”

Red Oak Friends of the Library helps support many literacy initiatives through the library. There are both summer and winter reading programs, as well as a book club, which encourages people to read more. “We really want to help expand literacy for children,” Julia stated. “We feel having a strong public library is an important part of that mission.”

“Everyone needs to read,” Pricilla added. “We want to ensure everyone has access to a wide selection of books.” The group is exploring new programs to add to help expand literacy within the community.

Red Oak Friends of the Library has experienced great success in supporting the library. “We have been able to buy a monitor for the library window to announce upcoming events. We have purchased a small robot that helps hold kids’ attention during reading time, and we have contributed money to help support reading programs,” Nancy summarized.

The women desire to see their membership grow in order to do even more for the community and the library. Founding member Sandy Galletta explained, “The city of Red Oak is going to continue to grow rapidly, and we hope one day to help contribute to adding more space for our library and maybe even offer an outside reading space.”

The determination and commitment to their cause is evident on the women’s faces. “Our library is a little gem in Red Oak many people don’t know about, and the library staff is the best around,” Sandy explained. “We want people to discover this gem because we believe it will add value to their lives.” **NOW**

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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

KIMBERLY RUMFIELD

— By Lindsay L. Allen

It's hard for Kimberly Rumfield, a Keller Williams Realtor, to separate family and food. From the friendly competition she has with her sister to her greatest childhood memories being gathered around her grandparents' kitchen table, everything always seems to point back to food. "As a kid, I had no interest in cooking, but when I became a mom, I realized my kids couldn't live on fast food. So, I began my adventure of learning to cook," she said.

Kimberly loves to entertain and prefers recipes with fewer than seven ingredients. "When I try something I like, I always ask for the recipe or try to find it online so I can make it," she said. "My favorite recipes, though, come from a cookbook of my great-grandmother's recipes that my uncle made for the grandkids." **NOW**

Baby Pizzas

1 lb. hamburger meat
1 lb. breakfast sausage
2 8-oz. cans tomato sauce
1 6-oz. can tomato paste
Oregano, to taste
Garlic salt or powder, to taste
Vegetable oil
Flour tortillas
Other preferred pizza toppings
Grated cheese blend, to taste

1. Brown the hamburger meat and sausage; set aside.
2. In a saucepan, mix the tomato sauce,

paste, oregano and garlic salt or powder; mix well. Heat thoroughly; set aside.

3. Preheat oven to 350 F.

4. Smooth a tiny amount of oil on one side of a tortilla; place it on a cookie sheet to bake. When the tortilla is lightly browned, remove it from the oven.

5. Start building the pizza with the sauce, meat mixture and other toppings of your choice; bake until the cheese is melted. Repeat steps 4 and 5 for additional pizzas.

Chicken Tortilla Soup

4 cups water
1 14.5-oz. can beef broth

3 14.5-oz. cans chicken broth

1 4-oz. can green chilies

2 15.25-oz. cans corn

2 14.5-oz. cans peeled and diced tomatoes

1/2 tsp. ground cumin

1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper

Salt and pepper, to taste

1 large onion, chopped

1 bell pepper, chopped

1 pkt. chicken taco seasoning

1 rotisserie chicken

Tortilla chips (restaurant style)

Shredded Mexican cheese, to taste

Cilantro, to taste

Sour cream, to taste

1 avocado, diced

1. In a soup pot, combine water, broth, green chilies, corn, tomatoes, spices, onion and bell pepper.

2. In a frying pan/saucepan, follow the directions for the chicken taco seasoning packet and add the shredded rotisserie chicken. Simmer; add it to the soup pot.

3. Cook soup on medium; boil for 45-60 minutes. (The soup can also be slow-cooked all day.)

4. To serve, break up tortilla chips in the

bottom of a bowl. Spoon soup over chips; top with shredded cheese, fresh cilantro, sour cream and avocado.

Spicy Crackers

- 1 cup canola oil
- 1 pkt. ranch dip mix
- 1/4 cup red pepper flakes
- Dash cayenne pepper
- 2 sleeves saltine crackers

1. Mix the oil, dip mix, red pepper flakes and cayenne pepper very well.
2. Place crackers in a plastic, airtight container and pour oil mixture over the crackers.
3. Shake the bowl every 15 minutes until the crackers are well coated.

Mouth-watering Steaks

- Steak, cut of choice
- Minced garlic, to taste
- Fresh ground pepper, to taste
- Dale's Steak Seasoning (liquid)

1. Poke the steak with a fork until it becomes tender.
2. Sprinkle garlic and pepper over the entire steak; slowly pour Dale's Steak Seasoning over steak, letting it soak in.
3. Set at room temperature for 20 minutes; grill to desired preference.

Old-fashioned Pea Salad

- 2 15-oz. cans peas, drained
- 1 Tbsp. Hellman's Mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. Miracle Whip
- 1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
- 2 boiled eggs
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste

1. In a large bowl, combine all the ingredients.
2. Cover and chill until ready to serve.

Baked Potato Dip

- 32 oz. sour cream
- 2 pkgs. bacon bits
- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 pkt. ranch dip mix
- 1 Tbsp. pepper

1. Mix all ingredients and chill until ready to serve with chips or crackers.

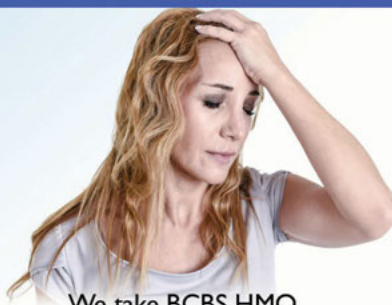
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— By Virginia Riddle

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Home is often described as a place where one feels comfortable and receives care and attention. That's the atmosphere that Dr. Brenda Ross and her staff at Red Oak Chiropractic & Therapy have created for patients. "We identify the source of a patient's pain through skill and modern equipment and, if possible, fix the cause," Dr. Ross explained. "We get to see a lot of miracles happen through chiropractic care."

Dr. Ross practices general chiropractic care, specializing in

family wellness, sports injuries and automobile injuries. The practice offers free consultations to people curious about finding out if chiropractic care can help them. "We tailor treatment to each patient's unique, individual needs," she stated. "The use of opioids to treat pain is overused. I prefer using spinal traction manual therapies and rehab exercises to get results. When people are in pain, they often become introverted. We get to see patients become happier people again when pain free."

Appointments can be made online, and flexible hours to fit a patient's schedule can be arranged by request. "We limit a patient's wait time because we respect people's time," Dr. Ross said. "My staff and I practice the Golden Rule." The practice's upgraded online software is a time saver, allowing patients to do their paperwork at home prior to their appointment.

The practice currently accepts the following insurance: Aetna Group Health, Medicare, Blue Cross Blue Shield and United

Healthcare. "We are not limited to those plans only. We'll contact a patient's insurance for them and explain the benefits, so they know how much will be covered prior to the patient's treatment," Dr. Ross explained. "Health insurance is challenging, but we work hard to make it work." Payments can also be made by cash, major credit or debit cards and check.

Dr. Ross is joined by Dr. Nick Parton, an associate. Charity Jenkins welcomes patients and controls patient flow in the office. Brittany Hlas helps with therapies and Jayme Stanford is a massage therapist. The practice opened in 2007. Dr. Ross began as an associate with Red Oak Chiropractic & Therapy in 2012 and purchased the practice in 2015. "I became a chiropractor to help people. It's such a joy seeing happy people."

"WE GET TO SEE A LOT OF MIRACLES HAPPEN THROUGH CHIROPRACTIC CARE."

A native of New York, Dr. Ross attended Parker University, where she did extra studies in neurology and upper cervical syndromes, and became a chiropractor, graduating in 1996. "Chiropractic care lines up with my life's purpose," Dr. Ross reflected. "I prayed about coming to Texas and making so many changes in my life. I finally listened and followed my inner voice. After making the decision, things just fell into place. It was naturally right."

Married to Ken Ross, the couple enjoys traveling, history and the theater. "We're also novices, showing our bulldogs at dog shows," Dr. Ross said.

The practice is a member of the Red Oak Chamber of Commerce and the American Chiropractic Association. Dr. Ross is a former president and lifetime member of Parker University Alumni and Friends Association. She volunteers through SCORE and is owner of Midlothian's Daily Desk. Dr. Ross concluded, "Community is where my heart is." **NOW**



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TravelNOW Cultural Attraction

— By Andrea Panozzo

For a slice of Americana, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, beckons Texans with family fun, outdoor adventure, live music, shopping, museums and history. Enriched culture, ever-growing culinary and brewery scenes, beautiful art and a variety of sports entertainment are all within visitors' reach. Driving northeast from Fort Worth will take almost 16 hours and about \$150 in fuel. Or, the Eastern Iowa Airport is 9 miles from Cedar Rapids, where cultural immersion is easy, thanks to a community proud of its heritage.

For many years, Czech was commonly spoken in Cedar Rapids, and today, more people of Czech ancestry live in Cedar Rapids than in any other city in the world, except for the Czech capital of Prague. It is a proud aspect of Cedar Rapids culture, and the history is expressed through extraordinary

exhibitions and experiences at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

The museum isn't the only representation of the Czech culture. Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street District was voted Best Cultural Attraction by the *Corridor Business Journal* in 2017 and was a 2016 Great American Main Street Award semi-finalist. It is home not only to incredible artists and world-class museums, but also some of the best dining, shopping and entertainment in the area.

One fantastic shopping area in the district is NewBo City Market, a year-round indoor farmers market. Visitors can taste local cuisine and brews and support local artistry, all while experiencing a unique and fun atmosphere.

One of Cedar Rapids' most famous local artists, Grant

Wood, got his start here. Cedar Rapids Museum of Art holds the largest collection of his works. The classic art piece, *American Gothic*, was painted in his studio home in 1930. His studio is located near downtown Cedar Rapids and is available to visitors on weekends from April through December.

Another historic landmark is the Brucemore Estate, former home to several history makers who played a large role in Cedar Rapids' factory industries, including Quaker Oats. The estate was donated to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1981, and today 43,000 people are drawn to the site every year. Brucemore Estate hosts signature events for the public, like the poolside Tahitian Party, Balloon Glow in the summer, Brucemore Orchestra in the fall and A Modern Salon in the winter. The house and incredible gardens are open for tours throughout the year.

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Photos by Liz Zabel, GO Cedar Rapids.

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Zoomed In: Jami Navarro

By Jill Martinez

Jami Navarro has been teaching elementary art and technology at Ovilla Christian School for four years. She helps students engage with a variety of mediums and techniques. “We are all designed to be creative,” she said. “My goal is to educate students and encourage them to tap in to their creativity.”

In late spring, she co-hosted the school’s Festival of the Arts night. Individual student artwork and class collaborative pieces were on display, some as part of a silent auction, and others were available for donation. On stage, students performed dramatic pieces and musical numbers. “I love this quote by Sydney Gurewitz Clemens: ‘Art has the role in education of helping children become like themselves instead of more like everyone else.’” Jami pours into her students so this can happen.



Senior Chloe Nichols from Ferris High School wins Grand Champion Junior Female with AMR Fancy Frills at the Heart of Texas Spring Show.



Brock and LeAnn Boggs participate in Red Oak Chick-Fil-A’s campout.



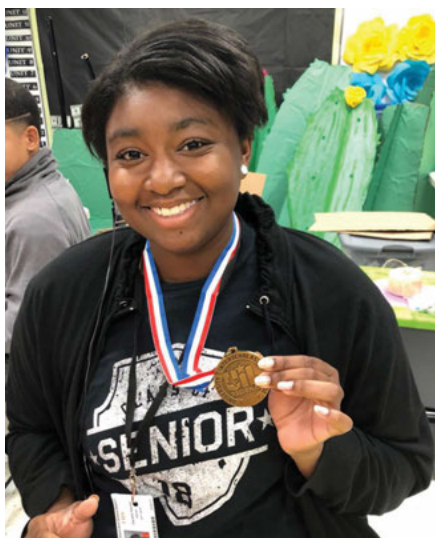
Life School Red Oak GT students Zaria Combs, Roree Marshall and Adyson Birdow receive Humanitarian of the Year awards from Brent Wilson and Ellen Saltzman.



Ovilla City Council members and fire and police personnel join the Red Oak Chamber in welcoming Fig Counseling and Statenside Funding.



Ronnie Russell, Freddy and Susan Rodriguez and Cindy and Mike Jacobs from Red Oak and Ovilla enjoy visiting while at an Ellis County fundraising dinner.



Congratulations to Darielle Haynes, UIL bronze medalist at the regional track meet and the 10th best discus thrower in the state of Texas.



Jesse and Claudia Sanchez host an open house at their new Ferris business, Elite MTS Insurance Agency.



Valerie and Ken Bennett enjoy a day in Red Oak visiting businesses at the North Ellis County Market & Business Showcase.

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Sun. - Thurs.: 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. (Bar until 10 p.m.)

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2618 Oak Lawn Ave.
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214-526-0100

Calendar

2

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport. The event includes classic airplanes and fighters, helicopter rides, CAF vintage airplane rides, flyovers, Midlothian Classic Wheels, Gold Wing Road Riders, live music, children's activities and more. Breakfast tickets are \$6 for adults and children 8 and above. Children under 8 are \$3. Parking is free. For more information, call (972) 923-0080 or visit www.mid-wayregional.com.



2, 3

Gingerbread Trail Home Tour: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Waxahachie. Tour five private homes and recognized historical buildings plus enjoy events downtown on the square and in Getzendaner Park. Adult tickets are \$25; tickets for children ages 5-12 are \$7. Visit www.waxahachiecvb.com for more information.

4 — 8

Twilight Cub Scout Camp: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Ellis County Expo Center, Waxahachie. \$79 for early sign up, \$89 for late sign up. For more information, contact Neil Sims at (817) 271-2054.

9

Red Oak Trash Off: 7:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m., Red Oak Football Stadium, west side parking lot. Must show proof of Red Oak Driver's License or water/sewer bill or ROISD employee ID. For information about accepted items, contact Lori McGlothlin at (469) 218-1202.

Book Signing for *Operation Caregivers/ Life with Dementia* by Alex Allred: 10:00 a.m., Isle of Watercrest Memory Care and Assisted Living. A representative from the Alzheimer's Organization will be on hand to answer questions.

9, 16

Paper to Petal: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Ferris Public Library. Learn how to make paper flowers. This is a class for adults; children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Call (972) 544-3696 for details on the supplies needed for the class.



12

Perot Tech Truck: 2:00-3:00 p.m., Red Oak Public Library. Let your child engage in hands-on STEAM learning experiences for free. Call (469) 218-1230 for details.

26

Red Oak Friends of the Library BUNCO Night: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center. Tickets

available at the Red Oak Library. \$10 each, must purchase ahead of time. Great prizes, silent auction and so much fun. Call (469) 218-1230 for more details.

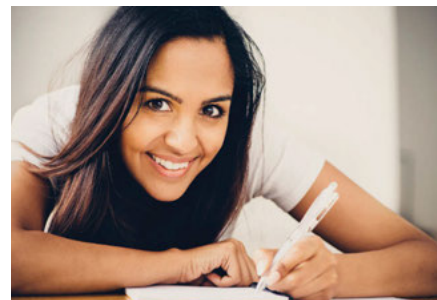
Ongoing:

Third 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.

Tuesdays

Writing for Enjoyment Group meeting: 12:30-1:30 p.m. For location of the meeting and more information, call (469) 383-5365 or email joanpomeroy@att.net.



Lariat Bridge Club: 6:30 p.m., Boy Scout Cabin, 1139 Brown St., Waxahachie. For more information or to confirm the meeting, email Shari at weatherscf@yahoo.com or call (505) 270-4017.

Second Tuesdays

342 Network Group: 7:30 a.m., Denny's, I-35E Service Rd., Red Oak. The group includes business owners who would like to network and is open to all businesses in any county. RSVP to Melton McKown at (214) 244-2829.

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.

Wednesdays and Thursdays
The Red Oak Senior Citizens Group:
8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd., Red Oak. Join for games and activities. Light breakfast provided both days. Lunch provided on Thursdays. \$2 per week membership fee. Call (972) 571-0632 for more information.

Third Thursdays
Ferris Lions Club meeting: 6:30 p.m., Scout House in Mutz Park, 514 S. Mabel St. Call (972) 842-2136 for more information.

Third and Fourth Thursdays
God's Woven Hearts Ministry: 7:00

p.m., Lone Star Cowboy Church, Red Oak. Join in on efforts to gather and create items for homeless veterans and visit the elderly to do crafts and have fellowship. Feel free to bring your talents and attend a meeting. For more information, call Peggy Butler at (214) 417-1173.

Second Saturdays
Red Oak Opry: 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., Lone Star Cowboy Church, 1011 E. Ovilla Rd., Red Oak. Tickets sold at the door. \$12 for adults; \$5 for children. For more information, visit www.redoakopry.com.

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.

Ferris Police Department's Coffee with a Cop: 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.,

145 Donuts, 502 E. 8th St., Ferris. Spend time visiting with your local police officers. Get to know them and express your concerns. For more information, call (972) 544-2233.

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. 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.

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Three Sweeties

— By Rick Mauch

They may be small, but they're getting bigger by the day. And that is sweet news. Twin sisters Ryleigh and Lauryn Casteel, age 10, and their 8-year-old sister, Lamaria Lewis, are the creators of 3 Sweet Treats. Their slogan is, "Who can eat a cupcake and not smile?" The young entrepreneurs got the idea from working with their mother, Suprina Casteel, in the kitchen. They've also watched her be a successful business woman.

"Sometimes when they get a large order, their eyes get big," Suprina said. "Sometimes I try to help, and they tell me it's *their* business." A typical order is about 24 cupcakes or a dozen cookies. However, they have gotten orders for as many as 300 cupcakes and more than 100 cookies for a church event.

Each girl has a clear role to play in the company and a favorite amongst the treats they create. Lauryn is the company's chief executive officer, and she likes the strawberry lemonade cookies, just because. Ryleigh is the chief financial officer and prefers good old-fashioned chocolate cupcakes. Lamaria is the chief operating officer. Her favorite is red velvet cupcakes. "It's a different kind of cupcake, and I like to try new things," she said.

Along with appeasing appetites, the trio works to make life better for homeless people. They donate proceeds from funds raised at activities such as back-to-school and charity events. "On my Christmas letter (to Santa) I would always put, 'Please bring the homeless food, water and shelter,'" Lauryn said. "We see a lot of people living under the bridge."

They've also used money raised to purchase school supplies for needy children. "It felt so great to help them," Lamaria said.

The three bakers stay active in a variety of other ways. They love sports. They are Girl Scouts, and they enjoy learning, as evidenced by their placement on the A-B honor roll in school.

Their business began after they borrowed \$173 in start-up money from their mom. She told them they could pay her back at \$5 a month. "They've already paid me back. They even have employees — classmates who will help at events. They have meetings about what they can improve upon the next time they get together."

They always try to make orders the day before requested, so they can deliver them at their freshest, usually overnight by United States Postal Service. They've shipped to locations as far away as Cleveland, Ohio.

So, what's next? They want their own storefront. "I told them that's going to take big money, but they can do it," Suprina said. "They have big hearts." **NOW**



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Top 25 Students with Star Teachers at Annual Banquet

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