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M A G A Z I N E

JULY 2011

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING

Glenn Heights' environmental program is ranked among the top 10 in Texas.

Also Inside

Dollars and Sense

In the Kitchen

With Joane Muhammad

Serving Up
Some Fun

Emptying
the Nest

AT HOME WITH
JON & NANCY HOOPER

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Mrs. Bonnie Johnston was admitted to Pleasant Manor on February 2nd, following knee replacement surgery. She was referred by a local physician for short-term rehabilitation. She had been living in her own home prior to her hospitalization, but the pain in her knees made it difficult for her to complete tasks. The pain made walking and simple tasks difficult. Once she was admitted to the skilled unit at Pleasant Manor, she began a carefully tailored physical therapy plan to rehabilitate the function of her right knee and regain range of motion so she could walk freely with no pain. She also received occupational therapy, which assisted with compensatory strategies to complete dressing tasks and return to her activities of daily living. Mrs. Johnston was a hard worker and made significant gains during her stay. After only three weeks of fast-track rehab, Mrs. Johnston returned home to be with her loving husband. Pictured is Mrs. Johnston giving the thumbs up along with the Charlotte Pless, her physical therapist, and Crystal Collier, administrator. Mrs. Johnston stated, "Thank you all for the wonderful stay. The therapy department did a great job, and I am grateful to be home again."

Una Haynes was referred to Pleasant Manor Rehab following a right hip arthroplasty performed by a local orthopedist. Prior to her admission here, Mrs. Haynes lived at home with her husband, and she performed all her own homemaking tasks independently using a rolling walker. She participated in physical and occupational therapy five days a week up to three hours each day. Mrs. Haynes was extremely motivated and compliant with her intense training in rehab. With her family support and her frequent visits from her husband and her little dog, she was eager to return home. After only two weeks of fast-track rehabilitation, Mrs. Haynes returned home using a rolling walker and demonstrated increased range of motion in her right knee, the ability to walk up to 300 feet before requiring rest break and improved activity tolerance and muscle strengthening to prevent falls. Mrs. Haynes is joined by the therapy staff in her farewell picture.



Ms. Patty Foreman was referred to Pleasant Manor Health and Rehab after hospitalization in March 2011. She participated in physical and occupational therapy five days a week. Prior to admission, she lived at Sterling House Assisted Living in Waxahachie. Ms. Foreman depended on a wheelchair for her mobility and was able to dress and care for herself independently. Her goal while at Pleasant Manor was to restore as much function as possible to allow her to return back to assisted living. Ms. Foreman overcame several challenges during her stay, such as medication management and several health complexities, which enabled her progress with her rehab. After 30 days of intense rehab, Ms. Foreman was able to return to Sterling House and is independent with all activities of daily living and utilizes a rolling walker for her mobility versus a wheelchair. She demonstrated significant gains in all functional areas allowing her to return to the community. With the love and support of her sister, Sharon Wilf, Ms. Foreman was motivated and determined to reach her goals. Best wishes to you Patty!

Mr. Agapito Trevino was referred to Pleasant Manor on February 11th following a total left knee replacement performed by a local orthopedist. Prior to his stay at Pleasant Manor he lived at home with his wife and family using a rolling walker to get around. The chronic knee pain he suffered, prior to his surgery, made tasks difficult to complete. After twenty days of intense rehab, physical and occupational therapy, he returned home with his wife and family. Mr. Trevino was a very hard worker and participated in rehab five days a week, twice a day, for a total of three hours each day. He made significant progress with his range of motion with his left knee and improved his strength by one grade. On the day of discharge, Mr. Trevino walked out the front door using a single point cane walking independently up to 300 feet and was able to safely go up and down steps, curbs and ramps. Mr. Trevino stated, "Thank you all for the great rehabilitation. I know exactly where I will be coming when they do my right knee. Save me a room!"



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Publisher, Connie Poirier

General Manager, Rick Hensley

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor, Becky Walker

Red Oak Editor, Angel Morris

Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong

Editorial Assistant, Beverly Shay

Writers, Sydni Thomas . Zachary R. Urquhart

Andrea Walton

Editors/Proofreaders, Teresa Maddison

Pat Anthony . Pamela Parisi

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla

Artists, Julie Carpenter . Martha Macias

Allee Brand . Cherie Chapman

Marshall Hinsley . Arlene Honza

Brande Morgan

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rose

Photographers, Amy Ramirez

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On The Cover



The Hoopers' Oak Leaf home is in a constant state of change.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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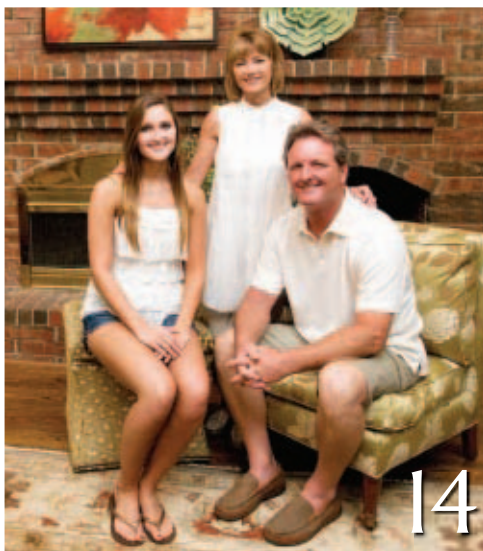


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Editor's Note

We're all-American this month, Red Oak!

No city is better named to host a Fourth of July celebration than Red Oak, where residents are invited to bask in the glow of fireworks during the city's annual Red Oak, White and Blue celebration July 2.

Beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Red Oak Municipal Center's Pearson Park, the event offers food, games, vendors and activities marking all things patriotic, including the local Girl Scout's balloon release honoring veterans. Fishing, bounce houses, pony rides and hayrides enliven the event that culminates in fireworks at nightfall, starting around 9:15 p.m. (The rain-out date is July 3.)

Join young and old in remembering exactly what makes the U.S. great — freedom, family and friends — as you load up the kids, don your favorite American gear and celebrate with your neighbors on a night that's perfectly Red Oak, White and Blue!



Angel

Angel Morris
Red OakNOW Editor
angel.morris@nowmagazines.com

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It's a Beautiful Thing!

— By Angel Morris

The little city of Glenn Heights is proving itself big when it comes to environmental and community improvement. Keep Texas Beautiful recently announced Glenn Heights as one of just 10 winners of the 2011 Governor's Community Achievement Award (GCAA), a program created by the partnership of Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

Connie Hearne, city staff support for Keep Glenn Heights Beautiful (KGHB) shared, "It's one of the most celebrated annual environmental and community improvement awards in Texas! And it means our group has one of the best grassroots environmental programs in the state."

Winners share \$2 million in landscape funds from TxDOT, with Glenn Heights receiving \$160,000 for a city landscaping project. "When I found out we'd won the GCAA, I was so excited I screamed like a teenager at a rock concert!" KGHB Vice Chairman Dawn Freeman said.

The award annually endows Texas communities with a share of landscaping prize money to be used in the construction of a beautification project within the winning community. Projects are completed on selected state rights-of-way and conform both to the winning city's aesthetic expectations and stringent standards of safety, design and maintenance laid out by TxDOT.

"KGHB moved from a provisional affiliate to KTB affiliate in 2009, just a couple years ago. That's a great indication of how dedicated the board members are, especially Connie Hearne, our city staff person," Dawn said. "I'm thrilled beyond words that we won, and I can't wait to see what wonderful things are going to happen in and for Glenn Heights because of it."

Glenn Heights tackled many challenges during 2010, which resulted in residential recycling implementation, trash pickup reduced to one day per week, the first household hazardous waste event and a three-year code enforcement initiative being implemented and funded. Efforts were also made toward reducing illegal dumping, neighborhood cleanups and more education provided to the public and youth about the importance of their environment.

"Our greatest contribution to the city is the education of our young people at the schools and helping our seniors who are unable to help themselves," KGHB Chairman Carl

Whitehead said. Specifically, the group has done this through presentations on air quality, recycling, composting and water conservation. Other projects have included: rehabilitating the wetlands at Heritage Community Park, including the addition of new birdhouses provided by the Boy Scouts Troop 1880; and the Don't Mess With Texas Trash-off, cleaning roadsides with help from volunteers, such as the Girl Scouts, Lions Club and local churches.

"I hope any Glenn Heights residents who read this will want to come out and help. I hope they'll look at the improvements that have been and are happening in Glenn Heights and be willing to volunteer a few hours for the events we have," Dawn said.

To that end, KGHB members agreed the group's biggest need is increased volunteerism. "We try very hard to get everyone involved and caring about our city and future. We are always looking for opportunities to spread 'green' knowledge," KGHB member Cynthia Smith, said.

Obviously, the more people get involved, the more KGHB can accomplish. "I think people would be surprised at how much fun it is to get out, meet new people and work with them toward a common goal," Dawn said. "I also think some people just don't know how to get involved or what they can do to



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Standing L to R: Angelia Garcia,
Thomas Calhoun, Cyndy Smith.
Sitting L to R: Connie Hearne and
Dawn Freeman.

help, or they think they will have to make monumental life changes to do any good. That's not true! There are so many little things everyone can do that will add up to a big, positive benefit."

Just a few of the "little" efforts made by KGHB include: donation of trees for Arbor Day, flowers for flower beds in front of city hall and the city park and park benches that are ADA compliant for Heritage Community Park.

Young and old benefit from the group's efforts, and KGHB Secretary Angelia Garcia noted that adults need to follow local children's lead when it comes to improving the city. "The children we speak to are always happy to participate in our events. Now we need more participation from the adults in the community," she said.

With a mission of educating and engaging its residents to take responsibility for their environment, KGHB continues to seek ways to spread its message. "That's why we go to the schools to teach the students about air and water quality, conservation, recycling and other things. The kids really enjoy it, and so do we," Dawn said. "We encourage the students to go home and teach their parents. As a parent, I can tell you that when your kids think something is important, they will drive you crazy with it — but that's a good thing!"

On the group's agenda are more presentations at local homeowner's associations, churches and the like. KGHB is in the process of starting a Yard of the Month program to recognize those doing an exceptional job of beautifying their lawns. Evening

workshops — following the success of a rainwater harvesting workshop this spring — may also be on the horizon.

“I’d like to have seminars on organic gardening, composting, using native plants in landscaping, raised-bed vegetable gardens ... the list could go on and on! I’d also like Glenn Heights’ citizens to let us know what they are interested in learning about conservation and environmental issues,” Dawn said. “If you want to know more about something, there are probably a lot of other people who want to learn it, too, and we can find someone qualified to come teach us.”

Not surprisingly, many KGHB members enjoy working outdoors, and some also serve on the city’s parks and recreation committee. “My grandmother, who passed in 1997, inspires me when it comes to gardening. I became involved



with KGHB to fulfill that passion and give back to the community at the same time,” Cynthia said. “I love to see my children share this passion and for them to involve their friends, too.”

The other nine Texas cities earning the GCAA this year were Moulton, Whitesboro, Whitehouse, Dickinson, Cleburne, Temple, Pearland, Killeen and Plano. Glenn Heights officially received its award during the Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) annual conference in June in Austin. KGHB is an affiliate of KTB and came in second place last year for the GCAA.

“I’m very honored to be involved with this group of thoughtful, conscientious and civic-minded people whose mantra is ‘What else can we do?’” Dawn said. “I encourage others to help the group however they can. After all, everybody wants to live in a clean, beautiful city.” **NOW**

Those interested in learning more about KGHB can call (972) 223-1690 or write chearne@glennheights.com.

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Serving Up Some Fun

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

Last fall, for the very first time ever, the Red Oak High School (ROHS) tennis team made it to the regional tournament. That milestone season has been followed by a rebuilding year featuring a team full of young, developing players. Equally important to the team's rebuilding is increasing the entire community's interest in the sport of tennis.

Every journey begins with a goal, and for Dainta Calhoun and the high school coaching staff, that goal is two-fold: to build a school of tennis champions and to make tennis more prevalent in the town. "I want to play tennis for the rest of my life. It's a game that you *can* play all your life, and I want to make it more popular here," Coach Calhoun said. The Red Oak coaching staff knows that, though hard work is ahead, promoting tennis in the town undoubtedly goes hand in hand with growing the school district's program.

Three years ago, Coach Calhoun came on board as the Red Oak Junior High School (ROJHS) tennis coach. Though the high

school has had a tennis team in place for decades, the program needed to start recruiting players at a younger age. In three short years, the junior high has seen tremendous growth in its tennis program, according to Coach Calhoun. In the junior high program, as with the high school, nobody gets cut; any student who wants to play can. "You never know when someone will join," she explained, "and then end up being a great tennis player."

Since Coach Calhoun joined the program, the junior high team has grown to around 70 kids — an impressive number for the sport. Now that they have the numbers, the staff is



working on improving skills as well as enhancing facilities. In a project designed to assist in the rebuilding of the program, ROISD is in the process of turning the old high school into the new junior high. For Coach Calhoun and the tennis program, the renovation can't come soon enough. Currently, the junior high team practices in a gym, with lines taped onto the hardwood floor. The move to better facilities will only enhance team achievement and enthusiasm.

Translating a growing junior high program into one that flourishes at the high school level is the next hurdle. "In high school, there's more stuff, more distractions, more things to be a part of," Coach Calhoun, who became head coach at ROHS last year while maintaining her junior high coaching role, said. Still, the tennis team numbers are increasing steadily at the high school level. The success last year showed the effectiveness of Red Oak's new approach. "I want kids to get better scholarships," Coach Calhoun said. "They should be at that level."



Numbers alone will not build a successful program. The Red Oak team relies on commitment, dedication and improvement in order to turn the program into a successful one. To mold a seventh-grader into a successful tennis player, the first step is to "make sure the kid loves, or at least likes, the sport," Coach Calhoun said. Because tennis is a sport people can play lifelong, Coach Calhoun wants to ensure that she stresses enjoyment of the game as much as anything, especially for kids at the junior high level. Even though she tries to teach the kids the fundamentals of tennis, she focuses on fun to get kids excited in the beginning. "I'm confident in my ability to coach, but the kids have to commit," she stated. Tennis neophytes are unlikely

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Coach Judith Ray.

to stick with it if they do not enjoy what they're doing, so the team relies on kids enjoying tennis as they learn.

Now that tennis is more established in the schools, Coach Calhoun has her sights set on making tennis more prominent throughout the town, to people of all ages. She hopes that the growing school program will entice adults to join in the fun. If kids are interested in playing tennis, then their parents will be as well. And if parents are playing



tennis, then their younger children will be exposed to the sport sooner. To that end, several programs geared toward involving the whole community are being utilized. For the third straight year, Red Oak will feature Tuesday Night Tennis. Throughout the summer, anyone interested can head to the high school courts for a weekly tournament. Coach Calhoun hopes the easy access and lure of friendly competition will entice Red Oak residents of all ages.

In addition to the mini-tournaments, Red Oak started league tennis in March.

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The first round of league play ended in May, but Coach Calhoun anticipates a new league starting in the middle of the summer. As with Tuesday Night Tennis, there is no cost for league play — other than a new can of tennis balls — so there is no reason for people of any skill level to shy away. The plan is simple: have people of all ages from Red Oak play tennis. The program will grow in the community, as well as the high school, if more people enjoy the sport. Moreover, if people want to play but cannot make it for the official league play, the high school courts are open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis several times each week. Wednesday and Friday evenings between 6:00-10:00 p.m. and all day during the weekends, anyone is welcome to use the ROHS courts.

Coach Calhoun has also started several programs geared specifically to the young



Coach Dainta Calhoun.

future stars of Red Oak tennis. Summer camps took place throughout the month of June, and every other month Red Oak will offer Super Saturday Tennis. In August, October and December, students in kindergarten through sixth grade can join Coach Calhoun and the team to learn the basics and play tennis — maybe for the first time. Coach Calhoun, along with the rest of the tennis staff, is doing everything possible to grow the tennis program in the schools and the town. She knows by cultivating the right environment, Red Oak can become a tennis community, and have a high school program its competition will fear. **NOW**

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A colorful illustration for a children's event. It features a purple hippo, a pink and blue parrot, and a yellow sun in the background. The text 'BIG JUNGLE ADVENTURE' is written in large, bold, red letters with a yellow outline.



Emptying the Nest

— By Sydni Thomas



At Home With Jon
and Nancy Hooper

The final stage of emptying the nest has begun at the Hooper house in Oak Leaf. Senior luaus, graduation ceremonies and farewell casino parties are over. As Jon and Nancy send their daughters, Maddie and Lindsey, off for the fall semester, it will be the first time since they moved in that just the two of them will live there.

After the birth of their first daughter, Maddie, the couple began looking at properties to buy. Nancy dreamed of buying a new home, but after a spontaneous drive, Jon found their





future home and rushed home to tell Nancy about it. Hesitant at first, Nancy was eventually convinced that the four-bedroom, four-bathroom home on two acres would be a great place to rear children.

In 1993, when they moved in, Jon and Nancy had only planned to change the carpet and do a little painting. For the past 18 years, there has never been a time when a project around the house and property has not been underway. Their first project was laying hardwood floors throughout the home and painting the wood paneling white. With the help of a few friends, Nancy was able to bring



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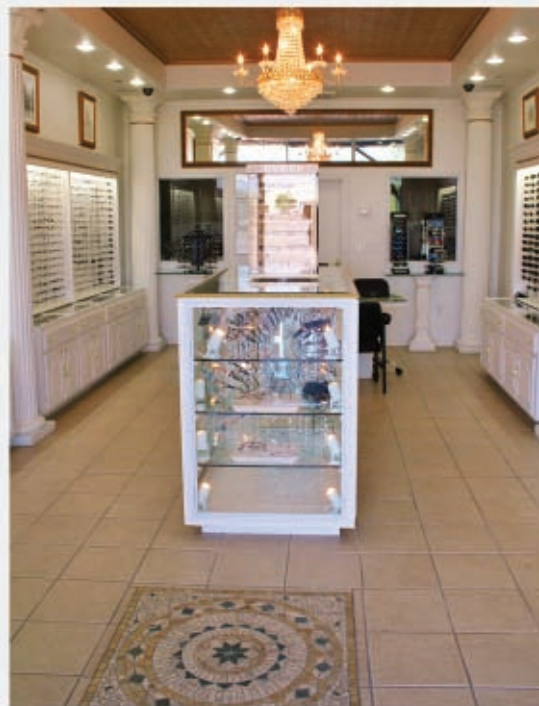
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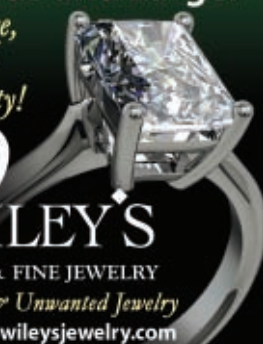
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the home out of the 1970s, and she updates it regularly to keep it modern. Their latest project is giving the house a new coat of paint and putting in new landscaping. "This house is Nancy," Jon admitted. "When I walk into it, I see her. Everything about it is her style and personality. We've changed just about everything about the house at some point since moving in."

The kitchen was the first large project they undertook. Since they were going to gut the entire kitchen, they decided to change the layout, too. All new appliances were installed, and so was an island with a built-in wine rack. "We thought the best time to do the kitchen would be as soon as the kids got out of school one summer, and it would be complete by the time school started again in a couple



of months," Nancy recalled. "What was I thinking? Luckily, we had a sink in our utility room, so we at least had running water close by and used the refrigerator in the garage to keep the milk cold."

One of the reasons they chose Oak Leaf was because of its proximity to Lancaster where the family gathers for Sunday dinner at Nancy's mom's home. "Many years ago, when someone thought the pineapple in my sweet and sour pork dish was a potato, I gave up on cooking," Nancy said. "I can, however, make an awesome chocolate chip cookie, with the help of Tollhouse."

The ultimate test of Jon and Nancy's relationship was not

working together every day since 1983, nor was it the summer they survived on cereal. The real test occurred when the couple decided to remodel their master bathroom a second time. During the first go around, they worked to remove the 1970s aesthetic, which included a gold swan tub faucet, four layers of drapes on the bay window, carpet and heavily crystal-draped chandeliers. On the second go around, they gutted the bedroom and the bathroom and started over. "I wanted my bedroom to give me the feel of serenity no matter what time of the day I walked into it," Nancy said. "I will



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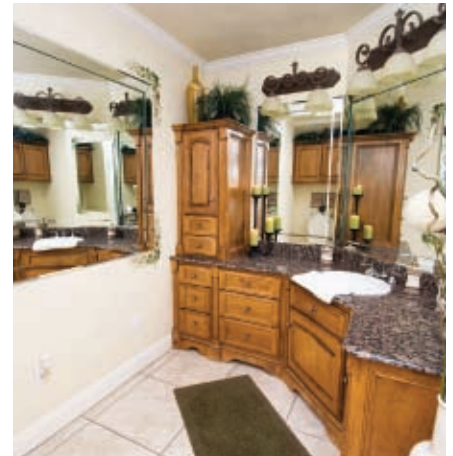
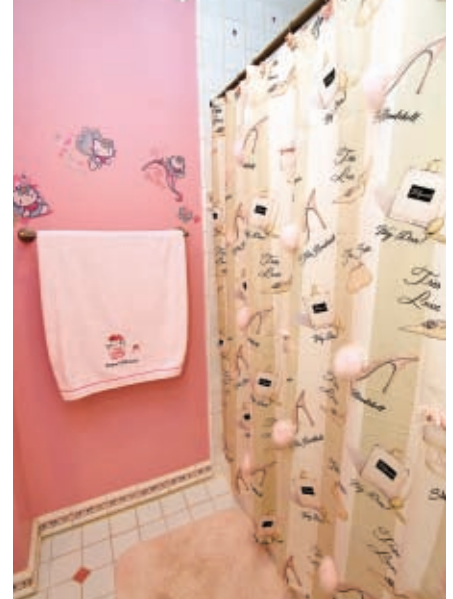
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have to say several years later, it still gives me that feeling. The bedroom and master bath are not as grand as you see in houses built today, but it's still my haven."

"The best part of this bathroom is that we each have one," Jon said. "She has hers; I have mine, and it makes a big difference. We meet in the middle by our closet."

Jon and Nancy met at work in 1983, but it was not love at first sight. As a commercial examiner and attorney, Jon had to communicate with Nancy, an escrow officer, in order to close deals on commercial properties. It took years of friendship before he was able to sweep her off her feet. They've worked together at other title companies since then, and both are at Republic Title of Texas now. "I will say that the only way we have survived all of these home renovations and working together is because Jon and I are totally different," Nancy said. "We are the ultimate 'opposites attract' couple, and what each of us bring[s] to this relationship makes us better individuals."

Both of their daughters graduated from Red Oak High School (ROHS).

Maddie graduated in 2009 and now attends Texas Tech University where she is studying to become an elementary school teacher. As a child she used to play school, and Jon and Nancy were her students. Lindsey graduated this year and will be attending Jon's alma mater, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She dreams of becoming a nurse and working in a neonatal unit. While at ROHS, both girls were very active in their classes and participated on the swim team. A lot of class parties have been hosted at the Hooper residence. As the girls grew up, Jon and Nancy made changes to the home that would make it a fun place for kids. They enclosed the back porch and turned it into a TV room that overlooks the swimming pool they added. "We wanted a place where kids could come and have a great time," Jon said. "All of the land on the side of the house has been used for a parking lot a time or two."

"I love it when the girls have friends over," Nancy said. "We have had many family gatherings here, pool parties, birthday parties, sleepovers and a lot of other events at our home. Some of our best times in this house are when we have a house full of kids just having a great time."

As fall approaches, Nancy relaxes at the thought of not having to prepare



for any more school fundraising events. Trips to visit the girls are already being planned before they have even left for the semester. Jon and Nancy might even go to Europe, if there's time, but they will always return to their Oak Leaf home. At least, until the girls finish college. In the meantime, Nancy might even go through the 20 years of leftover party supplies that she has been promising to sort. Regardless, there will always be a project to keep Jon on his toes and, Nancy said, to keep her excited: "It's important to me to be inspired every day!" **NOW**

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Office Manager Marilyn Knapp with Financial Advisor Michael C. Ewing at his Red Oak Edward Jones office.



Dollars and Sense

Michael Ewing takes the guesswork out of planning for the future.

— By Angel Morris

Michael Ewing knows timing is everything when it comes to financial advising. He believes perfect timing led him to Red Oak, where he helps locals prepare for their financial future.

In May 2009, Michael graduated from The University of Texas at Dallas. He proposed to his future bride on May 20 that year, and started with Edward Jones in Addison, Texas, May 26. “I was rewarded the office in Red Oak in February 2010. The timing was perfect. I officially moved to Red Oak May 1, and married on May 28,” Michael recalled.

Michael has grown to love the community where he lives and works. “Red Oak reminds me of the small town in Georgia I grew up in. I was born and raised in Fairburn, Georgia, before moving to Dallas 10 years ago. I love the relaxed feel to Red

Oak. Everyone is friendly and actually cares about one another,” Michael said.

The family-friendly atmosphere blends well with Michael’s goals as an Edward Jones financial advisor. “My favorite part of the job is the people. I love getting to know my clients on a personal level, meeting their kids and grandkids, seeing them in Brookshire’s while shopping for groceries and asking them how their son or daughter did at the soccer game,” he said. “I love to help young couples start to save and help provide retirees a seamless transition as they receive their last paycheck and their first Social Security check.”

Edward Jones’ slogan, “Making Sense of Investing,” is one Michael takes to heart. “Many things make Edward Jones unique:

our face-to-face approach, our focus on individual investors and our investment philosophy. We like to look at your individual needs before anything else. We help our clients prepare for retirement, live in retirement, pay for education, prepare for the unexpected and with estate considerations.”

A Red Oak Chamber board member, Michael was elected ambassador chair in January. As a result, he is seen around town championing the community and its potential growth. “Which is further proof,” Michael said, “of my determination to be an advisor who is always available to customers.”

Michael notes that the market and economy in 2008 were a “game changer

“I’m glad that Red Oak chose me.”

across the entire financial services industry. But that is exactly why I’m in business. I am here to inform my clients of the news that is relevant to them and how it may or may not affect them,” he said.

To that end, those phoning Michael’s office are greeted by his voice or that of friendly Office Manager Marilyn Knapp. Recordings and automated menus are not Michael’s style, he said. What is his style, however, is chatting with clients over a “cup of Joe.” “I worked for Starbucks throughout college and am addicted to coffee now, to say the least. There is always a hot pot of coffee at my office!” he said.

Michael and his wife, Allison, who is working toward her physical therapy doctorate at Texas Woman’s University, just purchased a home in the city as they continue to enjoy the Red Oak lifestyle. “I’m glad that Red Oak chose me,” Michael said. “And I look forward to everything the city has to offer as well as whatever I can offer Red Oak and those looking to invest for the future.” **NOW**



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Lynnsey Stanford receives congratulations for multiple end-of-year awards from Eastridge Elementary teacher Kim Rogers.



Mason Zacharias receives the Mel Prince Award for compassion toward special needs students at Wooden Elementary.



Mrs. Erickson's Red Oak Elementary first-graders mark field day in June.



Red Oak Elementary kindergarten graduate Elexis Aday receives a surprise carriage ride on the last day of school.



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Getting Rid of That Itch

— By Nancy Fenton

Let's take a break from our specialty gardens series and look at all that glossy, three-leafed foliage coming up in our yards. *Toxicodendron radicans*, commonly known as poison ivy can strike fear into the heart of some of the stoutest gardeners. This year seems to be a really good one for poison ivy; at least it is in our yard. It's sprouting in ground covers and at the base of trees where I haven't seen it before. Master Gardeners tell me the birds are bringing it in through their droppings, but no matter how "natural" it is, I want it gone!

My first line of attack is to mow it as short as possible with the mower (being properly outfitted in long pants and sneakers with socks). I use the theory that the plant must have the leaf area to make the food it needs to survive. By cutting it at the roots or as close as I can get, I can effectively starve it out. Please note: It is not a good idea to use weed eaters for this step since they send the cuttings flying. (It would be my luck to catch a stray leaf in the face!)

For the poison ivy growing among the plants I want to keep, I take a different plan. I use what I call the plastic bag approach. Using regular storage plastic bags with ties (any size will do), I stuff the leading part of the vine into the bag,

give it a very hardy spray of Roundup and tie it off. A small square of paper toweling in the bag helps keep the poison in the bag as you tie it. The bag protects the surrounding plants, concentrates the systemic poison on the vine and increases the heat Roundup needs to work. I leave the bag tied on for several months and watch the poison ivy shrivel up and die all the way to the ground!

Be aware poison ivy can pop up almost anywhere the berries can roll or the birds can fly. Special care should be taken when collecting and bagging clippings. Any sap can start an allergenic reaction (i.e. the "big itches"). Smoke or ash in the air from burning poison ivy can also start a severe reaction. Be careful; glove up; and get rid of your unwanted ground cover!

For more information on the plants that cause the "itches," call the Master Gardeners at the AgriLife Extension office at (972) 925-5175 or ask a Master Gardener at their booth at the Waxahachie Farmers' Market. **NOW**


Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.



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Survey: Couples Rarely Talk About Life Insurance

— By *Andrea Walton*



A recent survey shows many people understand the need for life insurance is important but acknowledge the conversation with their spouse might be uncomfortable. Seventy-four percent of couples say they rarely or never discuss the topic. This is particularly true in households with one wage earner. With women increasingly filling the role of primary breadwinner, financial and emotional stressors weigh heavily on their decision to discuss life insurance at home, and research finds that among couples unlikely to discuss the topic, women are even more likely to remain silent.

The state of the economy influenced the responders. The survey found that more than half of Americans are now focused solely on protecting what they have versus working to achieve their financial goals. Having the income to cover basic household needs (mortgage, rent, utilities and food) must come first. An earlier study from the research firm LIMRA found that nearly one-third of U.S. households currently have no life insurance, the highest level in more than 40 years.

For couples who struggle with discussing finances and life insurance, here are a few suggestions:

- **Make a Plan.** It can be empowering for couples to agree on goals and steps toward achieving a more secure future. For couples experiencing severe economic setbacks, it can be reassuring to have a strategy in place to get back on their feet financially and to prepare for the unexpected.
- **Start Small.** Often couples may feel the gap is too great between what they have to work with financially today versus what they would like to have in the future. But starting with small steps — such as getting educated about life insurance basics — can set the stage for follow-up steps later.
- **Consult an expert.** Bringing in a knowledgeable outside perspective can make the process of discussing life insurance easier and less stressful. These experts have experience guiding the conversation and answering questions. This can help avoid misunderstandings and unneeded stress. **NOW**

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

July 1-28

Summer Reading Club continues: Red Oak Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Reading club culminates in a Back in Time movie night and grand prizes at 6:30 p.m., July 28. Call (469) 218-1230 or visit www.redoakpubliclibrary.org to learn of weekly events.

July 2 (July 3 rain-out date)

Red Oak, White and Blue - Fourth of July Celebration: 6:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center's Pearson Park, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Food, games, fishing, bounce houses, pony rides and hayrides. Fireworks begin at 9:15 p.m. Visit www.redoaktx.org.

July 9-10 and 23-24

Ellis County SPCA (ECSPCA) Dog Adoptions: Noon-4:00 p.m., PetSmart, 1451 N. Hwy. 77, Waxahachie. ECSPCA hosts volunteer training July 9 from noon-1:00 p.m. for its other activities. Visit www.elliscountyspca.org.

July 10-14

Vacation Bible School: Times vary. First United Methodist Church, 600 Daubitz Dr. Call (972) 617-9100 or visit www.redoakmethodistchurch.org.

July 11-18

Red Oak High School Athletic Summer Camps: Times vary for basketball and football camps for designated grades. Visit redoakisd.org for start times and locales.

July 15, 16

Waxahachie Lions Club Annual Mini Grand Prix: historic downtown Waxahachie. Contact race director Tim Bass at (972) 804-2237 to enter a car or for more details.

July 22-24

Summer Balloon Classic & AirFest at Mid-Way Regional Airport, between Midlothian and Waxahachie off Hwy. 287. Friday: 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.; Saturday: 6:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.; Sunday: 6:00 a.m.-noon. Balloon flights at 6:45 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Saturday Balloon Glow at 8:00 p.m. Mid-Way to Skies Air Show on Saturday: 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Free admission. \$10 parking per vehicle. Exhibits, vendors, food, aircraft flights available, kids' area, live music. Visit www.summerballoonclassic.com or call (469) 371-9218.

July 28-30

Waxahachie Community Theatre presents *Aesop's Fables*, McCafferty Hall at Southwestern Assemblies of God University, 1200 Sycamore. Tickets on sale July 11. Visit

www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com for show times and ticket prices.

July 27

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

July 30

Blood drive: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church Red Oak, 600 Daubitz Dr. Receive a pint of ice cream and chance to win movie tickets. Life Line Screenings also available during the event. Call (972) 617-9100 to find out about preregistering to donate or be screened.

August 6

Red Oak ISD Back-to-School Fair: 8:00 a.m.-noon, Red Oak Intermediate School, 401 E. Ovilla Road, Glenn Heights. Uniform exchange/sale, free dental/vision screenings, immunizations and haircuts. Uniform donations accepted during designated times at Red Oak Intermediate, Aug. 3-4. Vouchers awarded for use at sale. Call (214) 476-7972 or (972) 617-5895.

Introduction to Tennis: 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Red Oak High School courts, 122 N. SH 342. For kindergarten through sixth-graders. \$10 per visit. E-mail Dainta.Calhoun@redoakisd.org or call (469) 337-8738 for more information.

Ongoing:

First and Third Mondays

Glenn Heights City Council meetings: 7:30 p.m., city council chambers, 1938 Hampton Rd., Glenn Heights. Call (972) 223-1690 or e-mail citysecretary@glennheights.com.

Second Mondays

Red Oak City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Contact City Secretary Cynthia Olguin at (972) 617-3638 or colguin@redoaktx.org.

Second and Fourth Mondays

Ovilla City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., City Hall, 105 S. Cockrell Hill Rd. Contact City Secretary Pamela Higgins at (972) 617-2489 or phiggins@cityofovilla.org.

Third Mondays

Red Oak ISD School Board meeting: 7:00 p.m., Red Oak Elementary cafeteria, 200 Valley Ridge Dr. Call (972) 617-2941 or visit <http://www.redoakisd.org/>.

Fourth Mondays

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

First Tuesdays

PrimeTimers Senior Group meeting: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Oaks Fellowship, 777 S. I-35 East, Red Oak. Open to all seniors. Fun, food and fellowship. RSVP (214) 376-8208.

First and Third Tuesdays

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

Second Tuesdays

Oak Leaf City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., Oak Leaf Municipal Center, 301 Locust Dr. Call (972) 617-2660 or visit <http://www.oakleaftexas.org/city-council> for details.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Alcoholics Anonymous meeting: 7:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 Red Oak Rd. For more information, call (972) 617-9100.

Third Wednesdays

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East (Exit 401B). Cost is \$13, inclusive. Nursery vouchers available for young children. Reservations preferred, but walk-ins welcome. Contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or windchime423@yahoo.com.

Wednesdays and Thursdays

Red Oak Senior Citizens Club meetings: 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 207 West Red Oak Rd. Games, exercise and activities. Call (972) 576-2777.

Thursdays

GriefShare recovery support group for those who have lost a loved one: 7:00 p.m. The Oaks Fellowship in Red Oak, room E-104. (214) 376-8208.

First and Third Thursdays

Glenn Heights Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m., Bienvenidos Restaurant, 920 N. I-35 E., Lancaster.

Second Saturdays

Lone Star Cowboy Church motorcycle group ride: 1011 E. Ovilla Rd., (972) 576-0900.

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



In The Kitchen With Joane Muhammad

— *By Angel Morris*

Joane Muhammad enjoys both baking and cooking for her daughter, neighbors, family and friends. "It's peaceful to me," the Nashville Tennessee native, who now resides in Red Oak, said. Initially taught to cook by her sister, Joane considers cooking a "trial and error" process. "It takes a lot of practice. The more you practice the better you will become," she said.

Persistence pays off in Joane's kitchen, where she has perfected recipes from some of her favorite eateries. "When I go to a restaurant and I like something, I will go home and practice making it until it tastes like it did at the restaurant." Joane particularly likes baking cakes and also enjoys creating sweet grass baskets and other crafts. **NOW**

Buttermilk Pound Cake

- 2 sticks butter, softened**
- 2 1/2 cups sugar**
- 6 eggs, room temperature**
- 3 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1/2 cup buttermilk**

- 1.** Cream butter and sugar together in a bowl.
- 2.** Add eggs, one at a time.
- 3.** Add flour to wet mixture, alternating with milk.
- 4.** Pour mixture into a greased tube pan and bake at 325 F for 1 1/2 hrs.

Chicken and Dumplings

- 3-4 lbs. bone-in chicken breasts, rinsed**
- 4 qts. water**
- 3-4 cubes chicken bouillon**
- 4 cups self-rising flour**
- 1 cup shortening**
- 1 1/2 cups milk**
- Salt and pepper, to taste (optional)**

- 1.** In a large stock pot, boil chicken breasts along with chicken bouillon until fully cooked.
- 2.** When chicken is done, remove from pot and debone. Return chicken to the broth.
- 3.** In a large bowl, add flour. Cut in the shortening with a fork until it looks grainy like corn meal.
- 4.** Add milk and stir, until mixed.
- 5.** Pour mixture onto a floured surface.
- 6.** Roll dough about 1/2-inch thick and cut into 2-inch strips.
- 7.** Bring chicken and broth to a boil and drop strips into the pot.
- 8.** Stir occasionally to make sure strips do not stick. Continue until all dough is in the pot.
- 9.** Let simmer for 5 to 10 more minutes until dumplings are cooked. Add salt and pepper, if needed.

Fruit Dip

- 2 jars marshmallow cream**
- 2 pkgs. cream cheese (softened)**

- 1.** Mix marshmallow cream and cream cheese until smooth and creamy. Serve with your favorite fruit.

Egg Rolls

- 2 bags chopped cabbage (coleslaw)**
- 2 lbs. ground beef or ground turkey (or meat of your choice)**
- 1 medium onion, chopped**
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce**
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder**
- 1 tsp. seasoning salt**
- 1 pkg. egg roll wrappers**
- Small cup water**
- Oil for deep frying**

- 1.** In a large pot, boil cabbage until tender. Drain and set aside to cool.
- 2.** In same pan, cook meat and onions, until done.
- 3.** After mixture has cooled, combine cabbage, meat, soy sauce and spices together.
- 4.** To make egg rolls, take one egg roll wrapper and place 1-2 Tbsp. of meat and cabbage mix on wrapper; roll up. Dip your finger in the water and run along the edge of the wrapper to seal it. Repeat until all ingredients as used.
- 5.** Deep-fry egg rolls until golden brown. Serve with your choice of sauce.

Chicken and Spinach Alfredo Lasagna

- 3-4 lbs. chicken breast**
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 2 tsp. Mrs. Dash Table Blend Seasoning**
- 12 lasagna noodles, cooked**
- 2 bags frozen spinach, sautéed (or 2 cans spinach, drained)**
- 2 cups shredded carrots, steamed**
- 2 1/2 to 3 jars Alfredo sauce**
- 2 pkgs. mozzarella cheese**
- Parmesan cheese (optional)**

- 1.** Rinse chicken; cut in small pieces and sauté in pan with olive oil and Mrs. Dash Table Blend.
- 2.** In a 9 x 12-inch pan, lay 3 lasagna noodles. Add a layer of spinach on noodles, followed by chicken and then carrots. Add Alfredo sauce and cheese.
- 3.** Repeat this process 2 more times. The top layer should be noodles followed by sauce and cheese to top.
- 4.** Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, if desired. Bake in oven at 350 F for 45 minutes or until bubbly and light brown.

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972-217-1118

shawn@bearcreekbeverage.com

1350 East Bear Creek Road
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