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JULY 2015

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Dean and Connie Bratcher

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Publisher, Connie Poirier

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## EDITORIAL

Managing Editor, Becky Walker

North Ellis Co. Editor, Dianne Reaux

Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong

Editorial Assistant, Rachel Smith

Writers, Callie Revell . Sara Edgell

Betty Tryon

Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony

## GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla

Artists, Kristin Bato . Julie Carpenter

Morgan Christensen . Martha Macias

Brande Morgan . Shannon Pfaff . Felipe Ruiz

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rose

Photographer, Amy Ramirez

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## ON THE COVER



*The Rogers family has built a life together centered on serving and mentoring young people.*

*Photo by Amy Ramirez.*

# CONTENTS

July 2015 • Volume 10, Issue 7



## 8 Passionate Sacrifices

Bryan and Kim Rogers have dedicated their lives to helping teenagers.

## 16 Aunt Lou's House

At Home With Dean and Connie Bratcher.

## 22 Revamping the Kid's Room

Bond with your child while helping them personalize their own space.



28 BusinessNOW

30 Around TownNOW

36 CookingNOW

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## Editor's Note

*Hello, North Ellis County Residents!*

Can you believe it's July? I know I say it a lot, but time really does fly! Kids are out of school enjoying the lazy days of summer. And planes, trains and automobiles are ready to roll with people ready to enjoy the blue skies and open roads. After a hectic school year full of homework, STARR tests, and "Hurry up and find your shoes or you're gonna be late!" everyone needs some time to just chill.

We'll also celebrate the Fourth of July, the day our young nation officially declared freedom from British rule. There'll be plenty of picnics and fireworks, but don't forget this compelling phrase, "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." The Declaration of Independence is why we're able to celebrate the many privileges we enjoy as Americans.

Happy Fourth of July!

*Dianne*

Dianne Reaux  
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# PASSIONATE

# Sacrifices

— By Callie Revell

*Nearly 30 years ago, Bryan and Kim Rogers met in church and became high school sweethearts. In 1998, they began their lives together — lives that would exceed all of their expectations. After they both graduated from Texas Tech University, Kim began her career as a teacher, a role she had always wanted. Although Bryan graduated with a degree*

*in mechanical engineering, he began a career divided between teaching and being a youth pastor. With their three kids, Aaron, Abram and Abby along for the ride, they push forward every day by trusting God and each other.*

Bryan and Kim have always had a passion for helping teenagers, and Bryan felt called to become a youth pastor early in their marriage. “He started developing a heart for teenagers, and my parents were youth ministers, so that’s always been sort of second nature to me,” Kim said. Bryan also works as a full-time teacher at Red Oak High School. After 13 years of teaching math and/or science, he now teaches engineering classes and robotics and has helped the high school robotics team compete in international competitions. He coaches softball and cross country, as well.

Kim also works for Red Oak ISD at Eastridge Elementary School. She has 21 years of teaching experience and loves her third grade class. “I don’t really have teachers in my family, but teaching is in my blood,” she said. “Ever since I can remember, I’ve always wanted to be a teacher. I used to line my dolls up and teach them.”

Bryan began his ministry at age 22 and currently serves at Cedar Heights Baptist Church in Cedar Hill. He is now working on his master’s degree in intercultural studies to devote more time to missions. “I noticed that I have a gift for connecting with students and crossing cultures really easily,” he said. “I love studying diversity and cultures.” This gift has helped him reach students of different backgrounds, nationalities and ages. “I’ve dedicated my life to the development of students,” Bryan said. “In ministry, you call that ‘shepherding,’ and in teaching, you might call it ‘mentorship.’”











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Being a full-time teacher and a full-time pastor can be overwhelming. According to Bryan, though, the two roles complement each other well. "There's give and take," he said. "There are times when my ministry requires me to be there and vice versa." Each role is unique in its own way. "It's a totally different mindset," Bryan said. "In school, they have to be there, but in church, they don't. It's a different atmosphere. My classes are very professional, and youth ministry is a little more laid-back." Although both jobs keep Bryan busy, he is thankful for the opportunity to be a positive role model to so many teenagers.

A key factor in Bryan's success is his wife. "I've dragged her all over the world. She's always right there following me along," Bryan said. "We make an incredible team. We don't even have to say anything to each other to know what we need to do."

To Kim, teamwork has been a crucial element in the success of their marriage and their family. "It's not just us being partners, but we've made it important as a family that whatever we do, everyone comes along," Kim said. Through this idea, Aaron and Abram learned about ministry and missions firsthand, and Aaron is currently pursuing a degree in ministry. "Bryan and I are partners," Kim said, "but as a family, we're a team."

Teamwork played a large role in the family's successful adoption of their fifth member, Abby, in August 2013. Originally, adoption was never part of the plan for Kim, who felt the family was complete with their two boys. But, when Bryan brought up the subject, she decided to pray about it. "Literally, that



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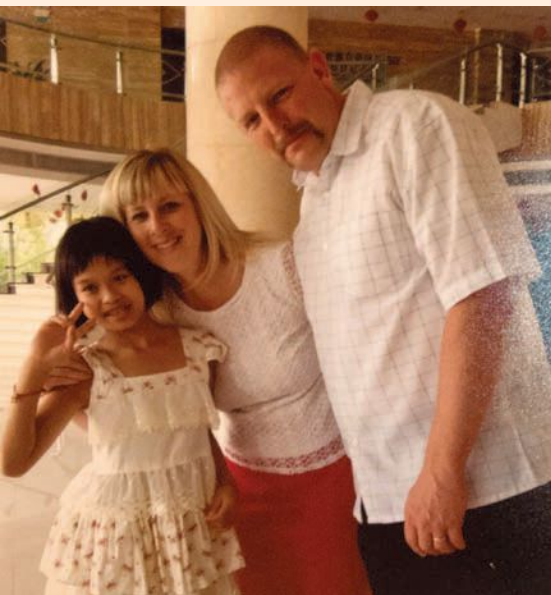
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same day, my heart just opened up, and I knew we had to do this,” she said. Bryan immediately started the paperwork. “He did everything. All I had to do was keep signing papers,” Kim said.

After nine months, they were placed with a 13-year-old girl in China. Bryan and Kim named their new daughter Abby. “When we first got back, it was really rough,” Kim admitted. Abby arrived in the U.S. with 19 cavities, no knowledge of English and only two years of education. She also suffers from epilepsy, and a stroke in the womb made her left side weak. Instead of enrolling Abby in public school as originally



planned, Bryan and Kim placed her in a private school in Glenn Heights. “It has been such an answer to prayer,” Kim said. “She has come a long way. It’s the perfect setting for her.” At first, Bryan and Kim needed assistance from translators and computers to communicate, but Abby’s English has improved immensely over the past year.

On her second night in the U.S., Abby had four seizures in one night and required immediate medical attention. “Now that we look back, that was a blessing in disguise, because they took her to Cook Children’s, and they have an amazing neurology department,” Kim remembered. With the help of a talented neurologist, Abby has not had a seizure for 22 months.

For Bryan, adopting Abby was about giving her a second chance. “It wasn’t about adding to our family — the two boys were enough,” he said. “We had an



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open space in our lives, and we knew a child could fit in it." If she hadn't been adopted, Abby's life would've been extremely difficult. "She had no hope of a future, and the possibilities weren't good with her epilepsy," Bryan said. "The adoption did uproot our lives in a big and major way, but I knew God had taken us in that direction. You have to love everything, even the epilepsy. If it wasn't for that, we would've never met her."

Despite all of Abby's difficulties, she is a bright and positive teenager. "She is amazing," Kim said. "She never seems down or depressed about her difficulties at all. If she can't do something because of her hand, you never see her get upset. She just keeps on going." Abby underwent surgery this spring to improve her ability to walk. "Slowly, we've gotten to work through most of her difficulties," Kim said. "It's clear that God made her for our family."

"She fits our family perfectly," Bryan agreed, describing the relationship she shares with her new brothers. All of the effort it has taken for Bryan and Kim to follow their dreams, create a loving and supportive family and invest in the lives of others has been worth it. "Passion is sacrifice. The two words are synonymous," Bryan said. "If you say you have passion for something but there's no sacrifice, it's not really a passion." **NOW**



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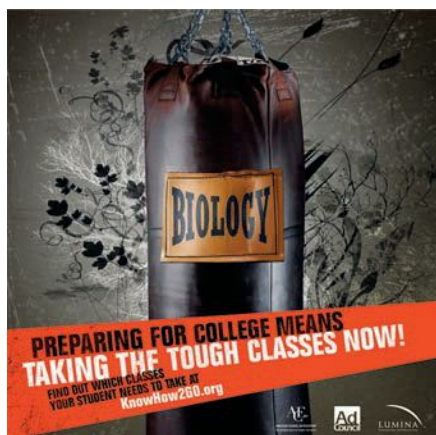
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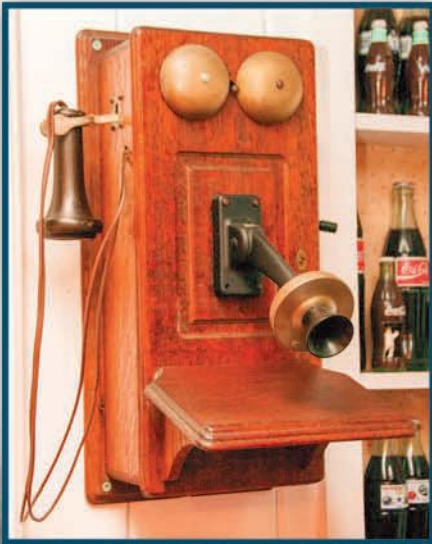
  
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# AUNT LOU'S *House*

— By Dianne Reaux

## AT HOME WITH Dean and Connie Bratcher



*Dean and Connie Bratcher are longtime Ferris residents. Actually, lifetime residents wouldn't be much of a stretch. Connie was born in Ferris, so were her parents, and her grandparents. Dean's mother and grandparents were also from Ferris. The Bratcher home is filled with antiques, memorabilia and family heirlooms, and visiting is like taking a stroll down memory lane.*

Connie and Dean have been married for 11 years. "Our anniversary is on April 4, which was also my parents' wedding anniversary — that way nobody forgets!" she said laughing. Connie has a warm and friendly personality, and enjoys sharing the history of her hometown. "I absolutely *love* Ferris," she stated. "I've always had a passion for my hometown, and I've always said I'll live here for the rest of my life."

Their 1,800-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bathroom home was built in 1914. "As generations passed away, the house was left to my Aunt Lou, and she stayed in it until the early 1990s," she





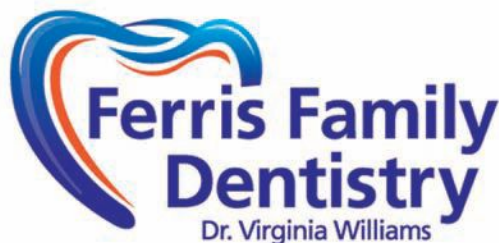


shared. Connie purchased her Aunt Lou's house in 1998, so that she could move back to her hometown and take care of her father, longtime and well-known Ferris resident, R.H. Edwards.

Connie's Aunt Lou played a large part in her love for history. "Growing up, Aunt Lou always kept lots of photos and mementos, and I've kept that love of preserving history alive in my home," she shared. People have given Connie lots of memorabilia, and a lot of items were passed down to her through the family, so historical items, pictures and antiques are present in every room.

The family sitting room is warm and cozy, and features a bricked fireplace. "The original bricks were so old they started falling off," Dean explained. "So I removed the old ones, and re-bricked the fireplace using Ferris bricks." During the 1950s, Ferris was the "Brick Capital of the World," so the Bratchers have bricks dating back to the 1900s, and historical Ferris bricks are just one of their many antique collections.

Just off the sitting room is a bar Connie repurposed, which pays homage



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to Ferris residents. "My children ate off that bar when they were young, but they've grown up, so we didn't use it anymore," she stated. "I had hundreds of black and white photos of Ferris residents that had been given to me, so now, all of the photos cover the bar. Lots of visitors recognize people they've known."

The dining room is also full of antiques. "I have my parents' dining room table, and my grandmother's buffet." The top quarter of the wall is also special. It features several family wedding certificates dating back to 1876.

The Bratchers' kitchen is a visual delight. "Oh, I love my kitchen!"

Connie exclaimed. And it's immediately apparent why the kitchen is her favorite room in the house. "This is my Coca-Cola kitchen," she explained. "I started collecting Coke memorabilia, and I love it so much, I decided to devote my entire kitchen to display all of it."

Local residents know Connie has a passion for all things Coca-Cola, and they'll bring memorabilia to add to her collection. Her favorite piece is the Duke 1991 Basketball Championship Coke bottle.

The vintage 1950s oak, crank style telephone in the kitchen is another gem handed down to Connie through her family. "This telephone is from an era when phones had to be cranked before they could be used," Connie shared.

Stepping from room to room really is like stepping back into time, figuratively

and literally. "These old houses don't have any halls, every room just runs into another one. It's just room after room after room," she shared.

Connie is proud of her "Ladies Room," aptly named, since it features walls adorned with old photos of women who have shaped her life. "I'm just very proud of the photos in my Ladies Room. They are all women who were very dear to me. A lot of the photos were donated to me, so visitors will look at the walls and recognize other people's parents." She also loves the original cast-iron, claw-



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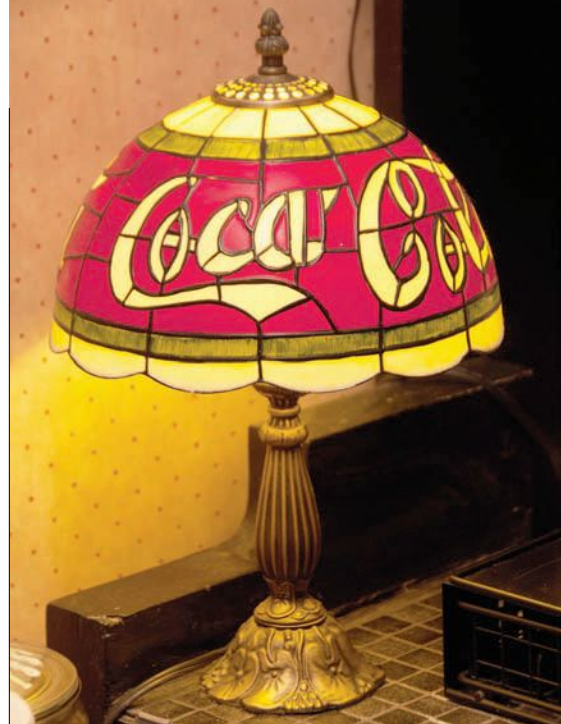
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foot bathtub. "I use it occasionally, but my grandkids love it. So I'll fill it up for them, so they can enjoy it."

Connie and Dean also enjoy entertaining family and friends, and the backyard makes everyone feel right at home, especially in the summertime. A short stroll out the back door leads to the swimming pool, and the patio is accented with Ferris bricks. The patio also features the original Church St. curb sign, which Connie managed to salvage as the streets in her neighborhood were being torn-up and repaved. "For me, that Church St. curb sign is priceless," she said.

Another eclectic touch is Connie and Dean's collection of signs and antique automobile license plates, which decorates the fence surrounding the patio. "Lots of people have given us signs and license plates," Connie stated. "Newer ones don't have the year, but the older plates do, and our collection starts the year I was born, in 1953," she shared proudly.

One of the Bratchers' proudest possessions is their 10th wedding



anniversary gift. "Harvette" is their Harley trike conversion, which was custom designed and features a Corvette rear-end. "We love riding it every chance we get," Connie admitted. They enjoy camping and Harvette travels with them. The fairing on the trike features an artistic rendering of Jase, their young grandson who passed away in 2011. "It's a special way of remembering our little angel," Connie shared.

Connie's passion for her family's history, and love for her hometown helped lead to the creation of the Ferris Historical Society Facebook page. The site now boasts almost 600 members who share a love of the town's history. And the Bratcher home is just one of the jewels in the city of Ferris. "We've made



a few updates to our home, for example, we added central heat and air. We also closed the original canning pantry and turned it into Dean's personal 'Harley' bathroom, full of Harley Davidson memorabilia." But Connie and Dean have remained true to the structural design and integrity of the house.

People will often tell the Bratchers that visiting their home is like visiting a mini-museum. "It does feel like a museum because of all of the photos and antiques we have, but it's a lived-in museum," Connie said. "Dean and I enjoy sharing our love of Ferris, and I hope that my children will do the same." **NOW**



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# Revamping the Kid's Room

— By Sara Edgell

*The decor of a house is a direct reflection of the family that resides within, and the same is true of a child's bedroom. As children grow, their interests, hobbies and tastes change. What they find appealing from ages 4 to 7 will very likely be different from an 8- to 12-year-old and definitely different from a teen. Luckily, remodeling, redesigning and redecorating their personal space to encompass the things they love doesn't have to be an expensive undertaking.*





## Getting Started

Use the experience as an opportunity to work on the project together and bond. The very first thing to do is talk about the things your child would like to see in the space. Discuss current likes and dislikes, favorite colors, interests, hobbies and needs.

A wonderful place to start is with a theme, as this can determine color palette, accessories, bedding and even furniture. For example, if a 12-year-old girl is dreaming of a shabby-chic, vintage cottage bedroom, the colors will likely be soft pastels. The decor will include lots of floral fabrics and refurbished furniture pieces, such as a whitewashed, vintage vanity and nightstand. Repurposed picket fence planks could also be used to build a



headboard and/or shelving units, or they could be used to line the walls, starting at the baseboard and coming half way up the wall.

Assessing the project and what it will entail before developing a plan is important. Make a list of items to be purchased, as well as those that can be repurposed, determine "do it yourself" projects versus those requiring the expertise of professionals and, lastly, decide a budget and stick to it. Then, you are ready to begin.

## Painting

Painting is perhaps the most inexpensive and easiest way to revamp a room. With a little prep and good old-fashioned elbow grease, a space can be completely transformed in a matter of hours. Because color can greatly

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influence mood, and since children are typically drawn to bright, bold colors, compromising on paint selections is crucial.

Take into consideration the size of the room. Lighter shades of blue, teal, purple and green can open up a smaller space, whereas darker, richer tones like plum, magenta, burnt orange and ruby can be overpowering, making the space feel even smaller and cramped. Lighting is another factor to consider. Natural light will show the truest color, whereas incandescent and florescent lighting will cast hues on the color, altering its appearance. Give your child the freedom to pick their paint color, with a bit of compromise considering these factors.

## Personal Touches

Decorative painting techniques are also an option. Many craft stores carry a variety of stencils that could be used to create a slew of personalized wall graphics. You can also make your own stencil using a piece of cardboard, pencil and box cutter. Simply draw the design on the cardboard and carefully cut it out. From the popular chevron pattern to more specific designs like sailboats and anchors, cheetah print or a favorite quote, stencils — whether store-bought or homemade — make the job a breeze.

While stencils are helpful, they will not enable you to create the whimsical ambience only a custom-painted mural can deliver. From magical fairytale forests to vibrant cityscapes, nothing can top the work of a local artist or painter. These individuals are easy to find and can bring your child's vision to life like no one else can do.

## Furniture, Storage and Lighting

Storage and functionality are two areas to consider. Understanding the activities the space will accommodate is key. For example, is a desk needed for homework?

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Will a television and gaming system be kept in the room? Are there lots of toys or books requiring storage? All of these factors must be determined in order to decide the specific types of furniture the room will need.

You may be able to carry over large pieces of furniture, such as a bed or dresser, into the new room or update them with paint to fit the theme your child has chosen. However, in some cases, purchasing new furniture may be necessary. If your child wants a super-cool and highly functional loft bed complete with a shelving unit and desk underneath, or maybe they desire their own hidey-hole built into the window frame, hiring a carpenter is in order. These professionals can build custom pieces of furniture, shelving and closet organization, or even change the layout of a room by removing or building new walls.

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## Accessories

Additional personal touches can be added to the space with specialized accessories. These specialty items can be found anywhere and can be anything. For instance, a 7-year-old boy may want a sports-themed bedroom, complete with a basketball goal and scoreboard, a football field floor and custom-painted stadium wall.

To complement these major room components, posters can be framed and hung on the wall. Sports cards could be used to decoupage the surface of a desk or the back of a shelf. Old baseball bats could be repurposed into a bed frame or curtain rods. Jerseys could easily be transformed into curtain panels or bedding.



The trick is to be creative and allow your child the power of choice when picking accessories for their new space.

In the end, a room redo is all about updating the space to be a true reflection of the child who occupies it. By revamping your child's room to fit their current interests and personality, you are not only acknowledging them as an individual but also providing them with a space all their own. **NOW**



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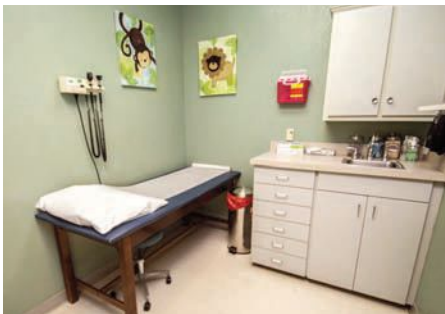


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## Keeping North Ellis County Healthy

*Red Oak Family Clinic expands its team-based approach to health care to meet the area's growing needs. — By Dianne Reaux*

The physicians at Red Oak Family Clinic are committed to one thing: improving the quality of their patients' lives. But Drs. Ferne Cummings and Rebeca Piantini know they can't do it alone. "We're able to help our patients discover for themselves the ways to enhance their well-being, while still being accountable for their health," said Dr. Cummings, a family physician. "We'll help educate them to make good life choices, and we'll work together to be successful."

This partnership-based approach to medicine has helped Drs. Cummings and Piantini build the philosophy of the Red Oak Family Clinic, a Texas Health Physicians Group practice. They work hand-in-hand with each patient to fully understand his or her individual needs and help coordinate a care plan designed to provide the best possible medical outcome. "We believe strongly in

the physician-patient relationship," said Dr. Piantini, a pediatrician. "It's essential for the delivery of high-quality health care in the diagnosis and treatment of disease."

Dr. Cummings, with more than 10 years of experience in the medical profession, began practicing in Red Oak in 2005. Originally from St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands, she's always had a passion for helping others and decided to pursue a career in medicine when her professors noted her strong aptitude for science and math. She graduated from Rice University, attended University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and completed her residency at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

Dr. Piantini grew up in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Her mother, a nurse, was a primary influence in her



decision to enter the medical field.

Growing up, her family was dedicated to making a difference in the lives of others, and they spent time each year in Central America performing mission work.

Dr. Piantini graduated from Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, TX, attended medical school at Loma Linda University and completed her residency in pediatric medicine at Loma Linda University Medical Center in California.

The staff at Red Oak Family Clinic is dedicated to providing comprehensive, quality primary care services for a lifetime — from birth through the senior years. Its primary care physicians are committed to coordinating care and understanding how their patients' various health issues relate to each other.

*“We believe strongly in the physician-patient relationship.”*

As the Red Oak practice's patient population has grown over the last few years, Texas Health Physicians Group acted on the need to provide pediatric care at a larger location and expand its services to conveniently serve more patients.

Plans are in place to add an advanced practitioner to the staff later this year, and to accommodate the growth, there are also plans to expand and update the current location.

“Our goal is to help make a positive impact in the Red Oak community,” Dr. Cummings said. “Whether it's by offering flexible hours to accommodate young working families or adding staff and enlarging our office, we want to foster an environment conducive to a team-based approach to health care.”

“Positive outcomes can best be achieved when patients and their families work together with their providers,” Dr. Piantini said. “I am convinced that there is an elevated sense of cohesiveness when all parties are actively engaged in the health care process.” **NOW**

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*Javier Pozo looks pleased with the stylish cut he's getting from Samantha Tran, owner of Red Oak Salon.*



*Angie Murphy, receptionist for the Ferris ISD, is all smiles as another successful school year comes to a close.*



*Jimmy, Evelyn and Emily get a head start on scouting out school supplies in Wal-Mart.*



*Kid's University student, Brandon Smith, participates in Tuesday Traffic Tip to help promote safety in the Red Oak community.*



*Armando Rodriguez and Ismael Marquez, of Taqueria Tonal Restaurant, have two of the friendliest smiles in Red Oak!*



*Jerry Brock and Janet Roulain volunteer with the Johnson and Ellis County Meals-on-Wheels program.*



*Virginia January, owner of the The Ivy Cottage in Ferris, puts the finishing touches on one of her many decorative floral arrangements.*



*Several North Ellis County law enforcement agencies participated in the Special Olympic Law Enforcement Torch Run held in Arlington, Texas.*



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# The Space Place

— By Angel Morris

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's center for human spaceflight activities has a big name to encompass a big mission — the study of space research and travel. Better known as NASA Space Center, the facility is located in Houston and is the official visitor center of the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.

For children who love all things outer space and adults interested in spaceflight, the Space Center Houston is a day of educational fun. Encompassing 1,620 acres of NASA efforts, the center includes exhibits and activities simulating astronauts' out-of-this-world experiences. Besides navigating miniature remote-controlled space equipment, patrons can land a shuttle and experience first-hand, anti-gravitational moon walking. In the Space Center Theater — the largest screen in Texas — viewers can watch the evolution of astronaut training and equipment, while a second theater simulates the sensation of a blast-off.

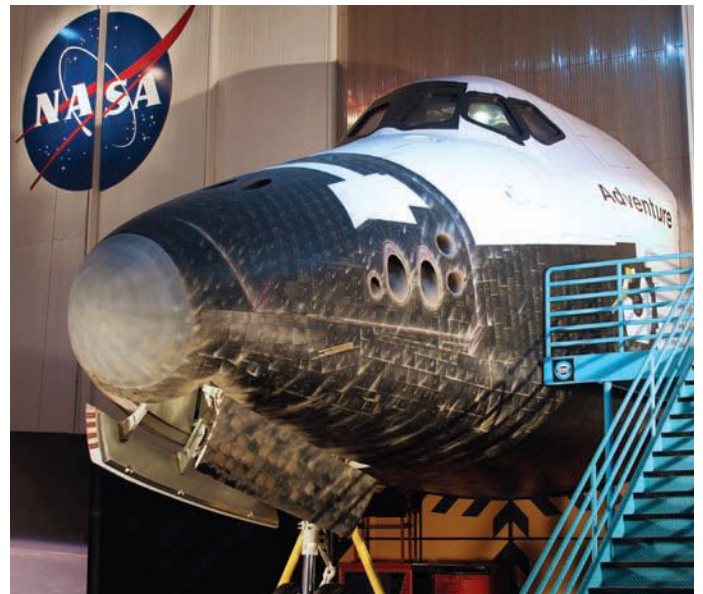
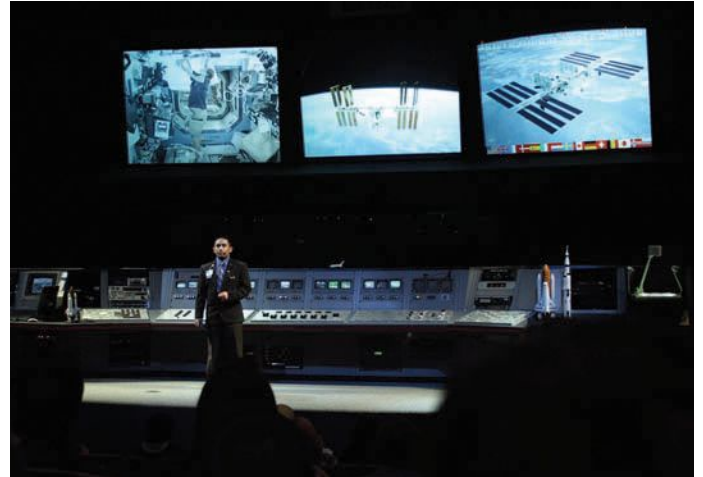
Among other presentations are the Stellar Science Show, *Living in Space*, the Gallery Wall (crew photos of every

astronaut to have flown in space), as well as actual space suits and equipment exhibits. A popular attraction is the NASA Tram Tour, a guided ride around the center featuring recorded voices of astronauts telling their own stories of space exploration. Tour participants visit Historic Mission Control and Building 9, where astronauts train for the next trip to the International Space Station. The tour also includes a stop at the new Saturn V Complex at Rocket Park.

Perhaps most memorable is the tour's pause at the Space Center's Memorial Garden, where trees are planted to honor fallen astronauts, as well as researchers who have dedicated their careers to space exploration. Guests might also be interested in scheduling Lunch With an Astronaut — a casual dining event with a NASA astronaut sharing firsthand stories over a "cosmic" catered lunch. The cost of lunch includes Space Center admission and a personalized lithograph from the guest astronaut.

For ages 5 and up, the 30-minute film *Destination Station: The International Space Station* offers a glimpse of the future of





space research. The film explores the seemingly impossible partnership between the U.S. and Russia in forming a long-term outer space outpost and forecasts where the science of today will lead space exploration tomorrow. And if that topic seems a little weighty for younger viewers, you can recapture their attention in the Angry Birds area, where creatures from the popular app game experience space exploration in a variety of ways!

Space enthusiasts of all ages can wrap up their visit with a trip to the Space Center gift shop, where moon rocks, dried ice cream (like the astronauts eat) and replica space gear is available for purchase. For families visiting the area, Space Center Houston is a must-see attraction offering insight from the real space pioneers who made the dream a reality and perhaps inspiring the new frontiersmen and women of tomorrow. **NOW**







## Urinary Incontinence

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Actresses Kirstie Alley and Whoopi Goldberg, using their comedic talents, have helped to make bladder leakage an acceptable topic for conversation. However, if you have urinary incontinence, it's no laughing matter. Urinary incontinence is the involuntary loss of bladder control. This inability to control the leakage of urine could be as minor as a small amount of leakage of urine escaping with a sneeze or cough to an uncontrollable urge to urinate and not be able to make it to the bathroom in time.

Depending upon the cause, this condition might be temporary or chronic. It can also occur from several sources at the same time. Some of the more common causes are pregnancy, prostate concerns, neurological disorders, age and weight. Hormones from pregnancy can weaken the pelvic floor support and cause the muscles to weaken. As the uterus grows, it will press against the bladder. If the sphincter muscles which hold the urine in are weak, leakage can occur. Treatment from prostate cancer can affect the ability to control urination. With neurological disorders, there can be a disruption of the nerves that control bladder function. Age-related changes could be attributed to a decline in the function of the bladder muscle. It's important to note that age does not cause incontinence but can predispose one to the condition. Extra weight can press down on the bladder, causing urine to leak with a sudden forced movement such as a sneeze, cough or laughter.

Urinary incontinence can also be affected by some drinks and medications, such as caffeinated drinks and diuretics.

If you suffer from urinary incontinence, it is important to keep yourself as clean and dry as possible to avoid rashes, open wounds and infections. Use barrier creams or ointments such as Vaseline, Desitin, cocoa butter or something similar to protect your skin from urine. If incontinence cannot be completely contained by medical or pharmaceutical means, protective gear such as pads or the use of catheters may be used.

Diagnosis and treatment will depend on what type of incontinence you have. Stress incontinence occurs with pressure on the abdomen. Urge incontinence, or overactive bladder, is when there is a strong urge to urinate followed by loss of bladder control. Overflow incontinence is a bladder that doesn't empty properly, resulting in dribbling of urine. If you are unable to get to the toilet because of physical or mental impairment, you have functional incontinence.

Urinary incontinence can be very distressing on one's social and personal life. However, check with your doctor to eliminate any underlying conditions that may precipitate the problem and ease your distress. **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.*



### July 3

18th Annual Crepe Myrtle Festival & Fireworks Show: 5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Sports Complex, 151 Broadhead Rd. FastLane, a tribute to the Eagles, will start at 7:00 p.m. Bring your lawn chairs and barbeque grills to tailgate. Food vendors and children activity vendors will be on site. Fireworks will start at 9:15 p.m.

### July 4

Waxahachie Independence Day Parade: 10:00 a.m., Historic Downtown Waxahachie. Patriotic parade route will be lined with crepe myrtles in full bloom. Parade route starts on College Street near post office and will end at Getzender Park. Call (972) 937-2390 or email Ferne Lyle at [flyle@waxahachiecvb.com](mailto:flyle@waxahachiecvb.com).

Fourth of July Concert: 4:00-10:00 p.m., Meadow Creek Park, 1400 S. Uhl Rd., Desoto. Con Funk Shun and the IvorY Jean Band will perform. Event is free and open to the entire community. Bring your blankets and lawn chairs, and enjoy the evening of live entertainment and fireworks.

Ennis Freedom Festival: 8:00 a.m.-dark, Farmers Market will be open from 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.; Red, White and Bike Parade begins at 10:00 a.m.; BBQ cook-off held throughout the day; all in downtown Ennis. Music by the Pontiax and a fireworks show will be held at the Texas Motorplex at dark. For more details, call (972) 878-4748 or visit [www.visitennis.org](http://www.visitennis.org).

Pettigrew Academy's Free Ice-cream Social: 9:00 a.m.-noon, 806 E. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie. The Settles Nature and Science Center will be open for trades during this time, too. For more information, visit [www.pettigrewacademy.com](http://www.pettigrewacademy.com).

Red, White and Pool: 1:00-5:45 p.m., Crawford Park Pool, 401 Straus Rd., Cedar Hill. Dress in your best red, white and blue and enjoy family friendly games, competitions and a day in the sun. \$2 per person.

### July 9 — 11

Air & Space Camp: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Cook Center, Corsicana. This miniature aircraft camp is open to all kids from ages 9-14. For more information, call (903) 654-4874.

### July 14

Summer Art Academy: 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., ECAA Art Atelier, 113 W. Franklin St., Waxahachie. Classes will introduce and teach children the fine art of drawing and painting. Each child will complete at least three projects. The last day of the academy will feature an exhibition and reception

honoring the children's work, and to meet the instructors. Tuition is \$150 per child, and includes all materials. For more information, call (972) 937-3414.

### July 15

Critterman: 10:00 a.m., Sims Library, Waxahachie. The Critterman returns to showcase furry animals. He will have a hedgehog, ferret, sugar glider and many others this year. This event is for children of all ages.

### July 17, 18

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County Annual Quilt Show; "Quilts! Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow": 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. The show benefits both the guild and Hope Clinic.

### July 18

duncanSWITCH Street Market: 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Main Street, Duncanville. Peruse homemade goodies at a multitude of vendor booths. [facebook.com/duncanswitch](https://www.facebook.com/duncanswitch)

Pet Adoption Event: 9:00-11:00 a.m., Walmart Garden Center Entrance, 400 N. Hwy 67, Midlothian. For more information, call (972) 775-7614. Monthly adoption event for animal shelter pets which are available for adoption. Animals will be present.

### July 24, 25, 26, 31, August 1, 2, 7, 8, 9

Ennis Public Theatre presents *Ruthless! The Musical*: **Fridays** and **Saturdays**, 7:30 p.m.; **Sunday** matinee, 2:30 p.m., 2705-C N. Kaufman St. For more information, call (972) 878-7529 or visit [www.info@ennispublictheatre.com](http://www.info@ennispublictheatre.com).

### July 25

Boomerang Lunchtime Cinema: Books on Film: Noon, Sims Library, Waxahachie. Adults are encouraged to bring your own lunch and join others at the library for a midday movie. Movies shown will represent books that have been made into cinematic features. Call the library at (972) 937-2671 for the title and rating of each month's cinema showing.

Glenn Heights Family Festival: 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Heritage Park. Live music featuring Lenny Williams and the David Whiteman Band, the Veteran's Memorial 5K Walk, Run and Roll, the Firehouse Chili Cook-off and more. Visit [www.glennheightstx.gov](http://www.glennheightstx.gov) for more information.

### Ongoing:

#### First and Third Mondays

Ferris City Council meeting: 6:00 p.m., 215 W. Sixth St.

### Third Mondays

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin, Waxahachie. For more information, visit [www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org](http://www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org).

Red Oak Book Club: 7:00-8:30 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Building, 200 Lakeview Pkwy, Red Oak. Admission is free and open to all adults in and around the city of Red Oak. Call (469) 218-1230 for additional details.

### Fourth Mondays

Bluebonnet Chapter 13 of Blue Star Mothers of America meeting: 7:00 p.m., Ovilla Community Center, 1404 Red Oak Creek Rd. This is a veteran service organization whose mission is to support sons, daughters and other family members currently serving in our nations Armed Forces. For more information, contact Cheree at (972) 679-9425 or visit [www.bluestarmothers.org](http://www.bluestarmothers.org).

### Second Tuesdays

342 Morning Networker: 7:30 -9:00 a.m., Denny's Restaurant, I-35 Service Rd., Red Oak. This networking event is a great opportunity to meet and network with business people throughout the community. Remember to bring plenty of business cards and flyers to promote yourself and your business.

Ellis County Master Gardeners meeting: 9:00 a.m., First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie. For more information about the program, contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in Ellis County at (972) 825-5175 or email [ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:ellis-tx@tamu.edu).

### Fourth Thursdays

Ellis County Museum Brown Bag Speaker Series: 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Ellis County Museum, 201 S. College St., Waxahachie. The series features county residents speaking on local history and other areas of local interest. For more information, call (972) 937-0681.

Parenting Class: Red Oak ISD offers classes covering a wide range of subjects for families in the community. Topics include grief, bullying, anger management, depression and tips for successful parental involvement. For a complete list of classes, dates, times and sign-up information, please contact Donna Knight at [donna.knight@redoakisd.org](mailto:donna.knight@redoakisd.org).

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





## In the Kitchen With Bubba Walker

— By *Dianne Reaux*

“I’ve always enjoyed cooking,” Bubba Walker shared. “One of my earliest memories of cooking is fixing eggs for breakfast.” Bubba lived in Louisiana, worked for Blue Bell Ice Cream and ate lots of Creole food. His inactive lifestyle and unhealthy relationship with food led to a 40-pound weight gain.

“But I learned to prepare healthy meals with lean meats, fresh vegetables, fruits and whole grains. I also became more active.” It took 11 months, but Bubba lost the extra weight. “Being healthy is a lifestyle, and planning and preparing meals helps tremendously. If you burn more calories than you consume, you’ll see results!” Today, he owns two Anytime Fitness franchises and has a passion for living a healthy lifestyle. **NOW**

### Pineapple Green Smoothie

**1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk**  
**1/3 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt**  
**1 cup baby spinach**  
**1 cup frozen banana slices**  
 (about 1 medium banana)  
**1/2 cup frozen pineapple chunks**  
**1 Tbsp. chia seeds**  
**1-2 tsp. pure maple syrup or honey**  
 (optional)

**1.** Add almond milk and yogurt to a blender; add spinach, banana, pineapple, chia seeds and sweetener (if desired).  
**2.** Blend until smooth. Enjoy!

### Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing

**1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil**  
**1/2 cup balsamic vinegar**  
**1/4 cup shallots, chopped**  
**1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**

**1 tsp. Italian seasoning**  
**1/2 tsp. salt**  
**1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper**

**1.** Place oil, vinegar, shallots, mustard, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Or blend in a large glass measuring cup or wide jar with an immersion blender.  
**2.** Drizzle over spinach, lettuce or your own favorite medley of salad greens.

### Almond & Lemon Crusted Fish With Spinach

**Zest and juice of one lemon**  
**1/2 cup sliced almonds,**  
 coarsely chopped  
**1 Tbsp. fresh dill (or 1 tsp. dried),**  
 finely chopped  
**1 Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil**  
 (divided use)  
**1 tsp. kosher salt (divided use)**

**Freshly ground pepper, to taste**  
**1 1/4 lbs. cod (or halibut), cut into**  
**4 portions**  
**4 tsp. Dijon mustard**  
**2 garlic cloves, slivered**  
**1 lb. baby spinach**  
**Lemon wedges for garnish**

**1.** Preheat oven to 400 F. Coat a rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.  
**2.** Combine lemon zest, almonds, dill, 1 Tbsp. oil, 1/2 tsp. salt and pepper in a small bowl.  
**3.** Place fish on the prepared baking sheet and spread each portion with 1 tsp. of mustard. Divide the almond mixture equally among the portions, pressing it onto each piece of fish.  
**4.** Bake fish until opaque in center, about 7 to 9 minutes, depending on thickness.  
**5.** Heat the remaining 2 tsp. of oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add garlic, stir and cook for about 30 seconds, until fragrant, but not brown.  
**6.** Stir in spinach, lemon juice and the remaining 1/2 tsp. of salt; season with pepper.  
**7.** Cook, stirring often until spinach wilts.

### Chicken and Fruit Salad

**1/4 cup reduced-fat sour cream**  
**3 Tbsp. fruit-flavored vinegar**  
**4 tsp. sugar**  
**1 1/2 tsp. poppy seeds**  
**1/4 tsp. salt**  
**Freshly ground pepper, to taste**  
**8 cups mixed salad greens**  
**2 cups cooked chicken breast, sliced**  
**2 cups melon (cantaloupe or**  
 honeydew), chopped  
**1/4 cup walnuts, toasted and chopped**  
**1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled**

**1.** In a large bowl, whisk sour cream, vinegar, sugar, poppy seeds, salt and pepper until smooth.  
**2.** Reserve 1/4 cup of the dressing in a small bowl.  
**3.** Add the mixed greens to the bowl and toss to coat.  
**4.** Divide among 4 plates and top with the chicken, melon, walnuts and feta.  
**5.** Drizzle each portion with 1 Tbsp. of the reserved dressing.

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





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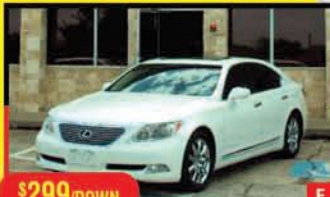
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