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Red Oak NOW

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M A G A Z I N E

August 2009

**No
Ordinary
Garden**

**Fun and
Funky**

Born to Ski

**A Passion
for Teaching**

At Home With

**Bobby and
Jean Goodloe**





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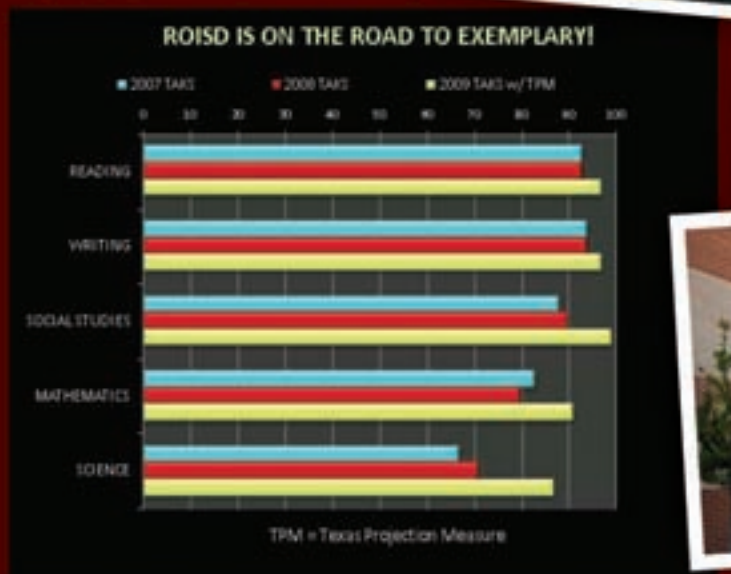
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Editor's Note

Dear Neighbors,

Welcome to this August issue and our focus on summer fun! From waterskiing and community arts programs to enjoying a local prayer garden, there is much to experience within our community!

This month, we are very excited to feature a few local artists, some of whose canvases are of the automotive variety. Join me in meeting a few youngsters who have mastered the performing and gardening arts. Lastly, sit back and enjoy meeting a family whose property, ancestry and home are steeped in rich local heritage and history!

Here is to celebrating a very enriching summer!

Diana Merrill Claussen
Red OakNOW Editor



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No Ordinary Garden

— By Danielle Parker



First United Methodist Church in Red Oak has been in its location for more than 22 years, and in this time has become a place where believers have gathered to worship, Boys and Girls Scout troops have met and those seeking peace and comfort could find it. Yet as visitors and members approached the church, they were welcomed by a dismal-looking 32 x 37-foot garden. That was until a 16-year-old pursuing his Eagle Scout badge decided to do something about it. “The church wanted this to be a nice place because it’s the first thing you see as you drive up,” Jordan Brown said. “The trustees asked me if I had any ideas for Eagle Scout Award, and I replied, ‘What do you need the most?’”

Jordan, who has been a Scout since first grade, understood what renovating the garden would mean not only to the church, but also the community, and he took on the venture. “The church sponsors the Cub and Boy Scout programs, so this was a way to give back to the church,” Jordan’s mother, Sue Brown, said. “We wanted an area

where people could come and gather to have Sunday school classes or Scout meetings.”

So Jordan sat down with his Scout leaders and began planning a prayer garden. “He had no background in gardening or landscaping, so we had a brainstorming committee sit down and develop a plan,” Terry Brown, Jordan’s father said. “He sat down with one of his Scout leaders and they designed the layout together. He learned all about landscape design and step-by-step figured out what plants and materials were needed.” Plans were flowing smoothly until Jordan encountered a big obstacle. “I planned this out more than a year ago. I had called a local nursery, and they gave me an estimate of about \$3,500. That number scared me off a bit.”

Such a substantial amount seemed intimidating and discouraged Jordan from continuing the project any further, until he was reminded of his commitment. “I had put it on the back burner for six months, but I remembered that I had made a promise

to the church and felt I needed to live up to that,” he explained. “One of my leaders gave me the advice that if I take a big goal and break it into smaller goals, it becomes more doable.”

Sold out to finishing what he started, Jordan rolled up his sleeves and began fundraising to make his blueprint a reality. “The most challenging part was the fundraising, because \$3,500 is a lot of money,” Jordan said. “But we sold fertilizer, which we had done already, but our troop allowed all the funds to go to the project. Between selling more than 100 bags of fertilizer and donations, we were able to raise the funds.”

With a goal of completing the project before Easter, Jordan had his work cut out for him. “The garden was in pretty sad shape. It had been resurrected three times, but never maintained,” Terry said. “As we began cleaning it up, we discovered layer after layer of landscaping that had been poorly maintained. It had an unbelievable amount of plants put in haphazardly. We even found two sprinkler systems.”



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It was a huge commitment for Jordan, but eventually he had plenty of helping hands offering their green thumbs and elbow grease. "I would go every day after school and work on the garden," Jordan said. "We had a lot of late nights, but as we got started, a lot of members wanted to be a part of what we were doing. We got tons of help from the church and local troops, and it really became a big group effort."

As Master Gardeners, stonemasons and craftspeople all volunteered to be a part of the garden, Jordan began to see his prayers answered and burdens lifted. "We had planned on repairing and installing sprinklers on our own, but one of the Cub Scouts' parents donated a new sprinkler system," Terry said. "The nursery also gave us a really good deal on all of the plants and donated one of the trees, which enabled the budget to work out. When there was a need, people stepped up. It was one miracle after another. We would have paid about \$10,000 had all this been contracted."

The miraculous donations and community effort outweighed the bad weather and stubborn ground, and within three weeks the garden was completed, just in time for Easter. "It took a lot of time and was a long road, but it is something that will be there for years," Terry said. "Unlike previous years, it now has good soil throughout, and plants and perennials that will stay green even throughout the winter."

The new garden also features a paved area with benches, and has become a favorite spot for those who attend the church. "It's neat to see people enjoy using it," Jordan said.



"Before it was just a space, but it feels good to hear that people go there and have their morning coffee or lunch or go there to pray. That's what we were aiming for. It's neat to see this is a usable space."

Unlike past endeavors to keep the space well-preserved, this time around the garden is sure to be kept in good condition. "Along with this commitment, the garden has to be maintained," Jordan said. "So there will be an appointed groundskeeper, which is a six-month position established within our troop. Our troop, having been at this church for 30 years, made this a real important effort. This will be a longstanding improvement for the community."

The reward reaped for all the hard work Jordan sowed is the Eagle Scout Award, an achievement made only by about three percent of Scouts nationwide. "This is the highest honor in Boy Scouting," Terry said. "It takes a long time to achieve, so it takes a lot of discipline and character. He has been real active since he started in first grade. He has been taught character of service to the community and life skills. So this is a great accomplishment. This project was, in a way, a culmination of all these years in Scouting."

For Jordan, it is more than just receiving an award. This 16-year-old is content knowing his sweat went to bless the church and anyone else who is drawn to the prayer garden. "It feels good to look at something, take it and run with it," he said. "To see the finished project is humbling; it feels good. I would do it all over again, without a doubt." **NOW**



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At Home With Bobby and Jean Goodloe

— By Diana Merrill
Claussen

Lifelong Home

Back in the day, when the hospital in Waxahachie was called “the sanitarium” and Red Oak had a Ham’s Hardware store, the Goodloe family built a home. The house was completed in 1910. “My grandparents built this house; I was born and raised in it,” Bobby Goodloe said. “I’ve lived in this house all my life.”

Bobby said the white bungalow home with white, iron trellises, “has been remodeled several times throughout the years and originally had 11 rooms. We’ve since added on utility, game and sewing rooms, along with a second bath and a garage.” The home’s history can be seen as you enter through the residence door and are welcomed into the den. On the walls are several photos, drawings and paintings of the original house, barn and silos from the early days when the family owned a 350-acre cotton and cattle ranch.

The family’s barn, which housed their cattle and equipment, is still located on the property by the cotton silos. “The barn was built in 1939 by Irving Stanford,” Bobby said. The Stanfords along with the Goodloes are considered to be among the few Red Oak founding families. While his father provided a custom hay-baling service, Bobby worked the family farm. “I would cut, rake and bale hay for 25 cents a bale,” he said. “I also started driving a tractor at a very young age — I think I was 6 years old,” he said.

Bobby remembers how the barn not only housed the tractor, animals and family’s harvests, but also provided much local

entertainment. “There’s been many barn dances held in the upper hayloft of the barn,” Bobby said. “Back then, [in the ’50s], there weren’t a lot of places where people could gather that were big enough,” so they would get together for square dancing at the “old Goodloe barn.” Both good and sad

memories of life on the farm are still fresh in Bobby’s mind.

Bobby and Jean shared how their own family started. Jean was reared in Sterrett. “We met at church,” Bobby said. Later, the couple started dating in high school. “I married my high school sweetheart in this house in 1957,” Bobby added. As a matter of fact, Jean’s uncle married the couple. “We recently celebrated our 52nd wedding anniversary,” Bobby smiled.

“When I was in college, both of my parents passed,” he said. “That’s when I came back home and started farming. I came back to work the farm, and then Jean and I got married,” Bobby said while smiling at Jean. Bobby and Jean became the third generation to move into and live in this home.



The Goodloe home narrates the legends and history of this historic, fifth-generation Red Oak family. Exploring the many rooms of the telltale abode reveals remnants of each of those generations. Many of those treasured pieces are in the den, where there are many photos, antiques and handmade pictures adorning the room’s walls and mantle. Bette Pratt painted a picture of the original house and Harriet Grandstaff

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painted a picture of the original barn. Descendents from both families live in Red Oak today. One prominent wall displays the vast photo collection of the couple's three children and seven grandchildren. The room is also home to an antique sliding rocker. "When my daughter was sick with whooping cough she had to sleep sitting up," Jean remembered. "So I slept with her sitting up in the chair for a month."

They also have a vintage photo of Red Oak's original high school. "Back then, the city had a very small school district," Bobby said. The high school was two-story with a basement and was built of brick." The school later



burned down in 1962. A picture of the school as it stood before the fire is featured in one of the Goodloes' historic collages and collections.

In the kitchen is a handmade, lace wall hanging trade marking the Goodloe name. The kitchen also features a few original appliances, but the family dining room is where everyone gathers. Accented with a wall-length bay picture window, this room holds several Goodloe family treasures. Beside the table is an antique buffet server. "It belonged to Bobby's grandmother, and on our hutch is a silver tea and coffee server given to us



by his parents," Jean added.

Journeying from the immense dining room into the living area, Bobby explained the importance of this significant room. "We were married right here in front of this mantle," he exclaimed. The room also holds other

memories, many of which cause one to imagine what life was like for the original Goodloes. Bobby pointed out the historical importance of what

looked to be the oldest organ ever.

"This is an antique (foot) pump organ," he said. The organ has mini shelves on each side to hold kerosene lamps, "since they didn't have electricity when the

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organ was made," Bobby explained. "The organ has been here since I've been here, and it was even played for our wedding," Bobby said. "That organ still works today," he added.

The story of the Goodloe house speaks volumes. One family member who cannot speak is the family feline, Baby. "We found him behind the shop," Bobby

said. Baby is a little skittish of strangers but can usually be found wandering from room to room. On occasion, Baby might even venture into the room the Goodloes call the "middle bedroom." The bedroom holds a variety of memories for Bobby and Jean. An original coal-burning fireplace, (one of four) is there along with a family doll collection and hanging quilts made by Jean's grandmother.

Much has happened in the Goodloe residence; many memories are still alive in one of the city's first homes. The Goodloes have lived under the canopy of tightly knit trees which encompass the property for over 70 years. "A few of the cottonwoods are over a century old," Bobby said. He and the family like to gather by the old barbecue pit built by Bobby's dad. The pit area is not only accented



by the century-old trees, there are also many flowers, shrubs and gardens to

relax by. The pit area's brick path even has quite a history. "These bricks all came from the old Ferris brickyard and old stores which had been torn down," Bobby said. A few of the bricks also came from the city's original railroad track.

The tattered bricks are only part of the tale of the property. If you sit back under the canopy of trees and close your eyes, you just might be able to smell the faint scent of hay

mixed with the sounds of a square dance band from long, long ago. **NOW**



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Fun and Funky

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Inspiration comes from experiences and usually presents itself in many different ways. Kristine Byars' background and other personal influences impact her art. "When I was little, my grandparents had a farm," Kristine said. "My grandmother was an art teacher at a little Catholic school, and when we would visit her, she would let me and my sisters use her nice pastel paints. Those paints were way better than crayons," she laughed.

During her school days, Kristine usually found herself drawing or painting. "When I was in high school, I had a teacher who pushed me into getting art scholarships," she said. During college, Kristine went to work for an ad agency as a graphic artist. She held that position through college and for many years afterward. Busy with her career, she didn't have time to paint, until four years ago. "I lost my job as a graphic artist due to the agency restructuring," she said. When her husband, Steve, suggested she get back into painting, Kristine took his advice.

Kristine's inspiration for her pieces comes from life events and animals. Her creations are mainly equestrian and western themes, featuring horses, cowboys/girls, steers and rodeo and eventing scenes. Kristine's life mimics her art. "I love all animals, no matter what they are," she said. "I volunteer at Black Beauty ranch in East Texas. The ranch is a refuge for



any unwanted and abused animals and is home to elephants, chimps, burros, horses and even camels. I like grooming the donkeys and horses when I volunteer at the ranch."

Kristine has been known to rescue animals herself for the sake of providing them with a good home. "I have one horse, one dog and one cat, which is considerably less than what I had when I first met my husband," she smiled. The way Kristine channeled her love of animals into a professional passion began by a chance meeting. "I used to be a member of the Bluffview Garden Club," she said. "One day, a few of the members saw my work and they asked me to paint their pets. My painting started as commission work, painting peoples horses, longhorns, cats and dogs. You'd be surprised how many people want you to paint their longhorns."

Kristine's works are not just pictures of animals; they include perspectives from a natural standpoint or even the subject's own point of view. One such piece is of a horseback rider getting thrown off his steed. It is as if the scene was painted from where he sat in the saddle. All the viewer sees is the rider's feet flying in the air while his horse is in mid-buck. This causes the viewer to actually feel as if they are the unlucky rider who has just been bucked off. Although getting thrown off a horse is never a good thing, Kristine paints it as if it could actually be a fun or even funny experience.

Her emphasis on fun can also be seen in the witty titles of her creations. The cowboy flying through the air piece is called *Parting Ways*.

Kristine mainly paints for her personal enjoyment and even has her own special lines dedicated to different



animal species, scenes, landscapes and people. One of her favorite and most recognized collections is a tribute to El Dia de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead), featuring happy skeletons celebrating this cultural holiday. The skeletons are dressed and one piece shows the after-dead subjects dancing at a fiesta while another shows a "cat lady," complete with pearls and party hat, dancing with her skeletal kitties. Although one may think this line would be more macabre than merry, Kristine has a certain way of weaving fun into any scene.

One local appreciator of Kristine's works is Red Oak resident Shellye Smith. "Shellye has purchased three of my pieces, and she really likes the Dia de los Muertos line. She actually cleaned me out," Kristine laughed. "Every one of Kristine's paintings are so happy and beautiful," Shellye said. "The colors she uses are so alive."

The use of her vivid colors and artistic angles are just a few of the reasons art admirers love Kristine's work. Using oil paints allows her to create special emphasis on the subjects' colorings, expressions and physical contours. These facets all combine to produce gaze-grIPPING masterpieces with captivating color blends and contrasts.

Besides her use of colors, angles and perspectives, Kristine's art offers so much more. "I try to paint things that are happy and make you feel good to look at without it being sappy," she said. "Lately, I've been having a lot of fun painting, especially when working on my cheesy/retro cowboys and cowgirls."

Kristine's talent is appreciated by many throughout the state and even the country. She has been featured in many exhibits across Texas, appeared in major magazines and on local TV networks. Her work is on display at Lone Star Park in Arlington and many other galleries and homes throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth area. **ARTS NOW**



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Born to Ski

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

For many people, there is nothing like the open road when it comes to just getting away and relaxing. However, all the Bugg and Bridgford families of Red Oak need to do is jump into the nearest motor boat for high-speed, family fun.

The Bugg and Bridgford families live in a community called Pecan Cove. While the residents at Pecan Cove love their homes, they truly enjoy spending time on the community's 10-acre lake. "Our family is passionate about waterskiing, so it's nice to leave your house [and] get into your boat," Blaine Bridgford said. In the case of both families, climbing aboard their community-owned 2009 Malibu Response LXi with its 350 hp Indmar Monsoon engine usually involves much more than a simple spin around the lake. Both the Bugg and Bridgford parents became involved in waterskiing over 20 years ago.

"Blaine started tournament waterskiing in the '80s, and he is still involved," his wife, Belynda, said. Both families are passing along their skiing backgrounds to their children. "Our son, Ryan, started skiing when he was 2 years old. Ryan is now 11, skis almost daily, and has skied in seven tournaments," she added. Many of the tournaments have taken place at Pecan Cove, with the residents and their children all participating in some form or another.

One of the most popular types of skiing for these water sport enthusiasts is slalom (skiing with one ski). Even the younger children like Ryan can be seen making slalom passes



around buoys and obstacles on the lake. One of young Ryan's mentors is Tom Bugg, who spent most of his competitive ski life slalom skiing, jumping, barefoot skiing and performing ski tricks. "I used to trick ski and perform toe-wake maneuvers [360 degree turns barefoot],"

Tom said. Many of the skiers at Pecan Cove are national level skiers. "The big difference between the professionals and us is that the professionals get paid," Belynda said.

Instead of going pro, these local skiers decided they would rather compete for fun and share the sport with others. "A lot of people, including myself, find waterskiing pretty addictive," Blaine said. This is why the Pecan Cove skiers love to give ski clinics and hold tournaments such as the annual North Texas Slalom Championship, which was held back in June. This Class C competition usually features 25-40 competitors. "Many of them have even won in regional and national events," Tom said.

Tom assists in many capacities when it comes to the community's various events. For a tournament, he may be seen making preparations, greeting competitors or giving ski tips and many other duties. During the fierce competitions, however, he usually goes by the title of "Ski Judge." "I was a senior judge at regional competitions [all across the country] for many years, so I get to be the chief judge for our event

here,” Tom said, explaining that in order to become a judge, he essentially had to go to judge school. Judges are not all that is needed to hold an official and reputable ski tournament. “You also need drivers, scorers and safety personnel,” Tom said. Blaine is an assistant judge and Belynda attends safety clinics to be certified as the on-site safety supervisor. The lake is re-certified every three years, and the Bridgfords and Buggs are members of the USA Water Ski Association.

Another event these locals host is one geared toward the disabled. Through their nonprofit organization called Metroplex Adaptive Water Sports, the residents at Pecan Cove put on adaptive water ski programs. “We developed and run a program which provides the opportunity for persons with physical challenges to learn to water ski,” Blaine said. The organization hosts two adaptive clinics/events every year.

These ski families are glad to help others learn about their sport. “We have taught a lot of people to ski,” Blaine said. “Occasionally we’ve even had pros come to the lake to give day clinics.” They also have to have professionally equipped vessels. “Our boat has many special accommodations,” Blaine continued. “There are speed controls where you enter the skier’s weight and their preferred mph, and then there is an auto timing mechanism that dials all of the info in.” These new timing systems are Global Positioning System (GPS) based, so once you enter the information, you just hold on and go!

These ski warriors love the daily opportunity to get out on the lake and spend time together. Whether skiing, wakeboarding or just jumping into the lake for a swim, they all agree that getting together in the water is good, wholesome fun for people of all ages. “Skiing is such a family-oriented sport, and it’s also a positive environment,” Belynda said. **NOW**



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Erik, Raymond, Sue and Aaron Chovanetz's motto is: If you can dream it, we can build it.

Mastercraft Body Works

Automotive Dreamin'

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

The Chovanetz family has been involved in our community for over 30 years. They have also been creating internationally renowned works of art — automotive style — for all of their patrons. This family business specializes in repairing, crafting and customizing vehicles. They cater to a wide variety of customers and all of their automotive dreams and needs.

Started by Raymond and Sue Chovanetz, Mastercraft Body Works began in 1975. "I was 5 years old when they started the business in Ovilla," son Erik Chovanetz said. "My dad first started building his automotive reputation in the '70s." Raymond's attention to detail and high-quality work soon earned him customers from as far away as Canada and even Europe. "Dad was well-known for good, quality work at a reasonable rate.

"In the '80s, my dad and Bob Norwood started a joint venture building

custom Ferraris," Erik said. "Those cars are what put us on the map."

Erik and his brother, Aaron, have since carried on the family tradition by continuing to provide body rebuilds, repair, custom work and many other services to their clients.

"Our dad always told us his ceiling was our floor," Erik said. "He brought the business to a certain point, passed the torch to us, and we took it from there. Being a second-generation business is a big part of who we are today; that not only makes us a strong business, but very reputable." Raymond and Sue are very proud their sons are carrying on the family legacy.

Since the founding of Mastercraft, the Chovanetz family has done just about every type of work imaginable. From collision work to creating their exotic car masterpieces, no job is too big or too small for the family at this local, established and highly respected



automotive business. "We have worked on the rarest of cars, hot rods, helicopters, RVs, planes and buses, along with regular cars, motorcycles and pickups," Erik said.

Some of Mastercraft's finished products have been valued up into the million dollar range. "We can do as much as you want or as little as you want — we do everything," Erik said. Besides paint and body, Mastercraft does interior work, chassis and engine upgrades and builds, as well. The range of work Mastercraft offers is as broad as their experience and clientele. Much of their expertise was learned from Raymond, the patriarch of both the family and the business.

"My father is known for his aluminum body work," Erik said. "Then my brother, Aaron, picked up this skill and is now known for being one of the best aluminum fabricators in the world," Erik said. From aluminum to fiberglass

Business NOW

to wood and steel, the Mastercraft family can not only work on any type of vehicle, they can transform it!

Whether in need of minor collision work or thinking about sprucing up your custom ride, the Chovanetz men do it all ... together. As a matter of fact, Erik's wife, Tabatha, works in the shop's office. "I enjoy working with my wife," Erik said. Their son, Rylee, even wants to carry on the family business when he is older. "For now though, he likes to draw cars," Erik said.

Whether drawing or discussing the needs of their patrons, the Chovanetz family's work ethic and customer



dedication is known throughout the county and literally the world. Mastercraft's motto is: If you can dream it, we can build it. "When you deal with the art of building people's dreams, you don't take it lightly," Erik said.

Mastercraft Body Works is located at 3602 Ovilla Road in Ovilla. Call (972) 617-0507 or visit: <http://www.mcautocreations.com>. They are open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. **NOW**

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— By Kate A. McClendon

Many people cannot imagine doing the same job for 19 years, but such is not the case for Deborah Wooley. Though she has been in cities all over Texas, her passions for teaching and special education have not wavered. Deborah was born in San Antonio, but grew up all over Texas and in Georgia. Her father was a private physician, who also worked for the Veterans Affairs hospital and moved wherever they needed him.

Deborah originally studied deaf education at Stephen F. Austin University before deciding to study special education. “I was initially going to do deaf education; I thought it would be neat to learn sign language,” she said, “but the fingers just moved too fast for me. I had a lot of hours toward special education, so I just switched to that.”

She always liked children and thought she would be good at helping the elementary-age students, so Deborah pursued a career as a teacher, a decision that has paid off. In 1990, Deborah married her husband, Chad, and they lived in Red Oak for one year. During that first year of marriage, Deborah began her teaching career at Red Oak Elementary.

When they moved from Red Oak because of Chad’s job as a history professor, Deborah continued to teach. They moved from Nacogdoches to Tyler to McAllen. She has spent 12 years as a resource teacher, six years in a self-contained, special education setting and one year in a regular classroom. “I’ve been wanting to come back [to Red Oak] ever since,”

she said. Chad accepted a job as a history professor, which brought them back to Ellis County. He is now teaching history at the Trinity River campus of the Tarrant County Community Colleges.

“It took us 15 years, but we finally moved back in 2004. His family is here, and I really liked it,” Deborah said. Deborah likes the small-town feel of Red Oak, even though it is close to a big town. “Anything I need is within an hour or half an hour away,” she said.

Deborah also loves the schools in Red Oak. Her two children, Samantha and Emma, attend or will soon attend Red Oak schools, and Deborah is a resource teacher at H.A. Wooden Elementary. “Resource is a special education program where we pull students out of their regular classroom setting,” Deborah said. “The students usually have some sort of learning disability or autism. They’re usually a couple of grade levels behind, so we check them and see their shortfalls and fill in the gap.”

She said some students need to have things taught much slower to be able to fully understand it. “We’re not on a schedule. Teachers may have three weeks for an objective, and if students don’t get it, they have to move on. It’s a nice thing,” she said. “We’re not rushed, so we have time to work with them until they master it.”

Often, the students are already frustrated with school and

Education **NOW**

are having a hard time. Usually, they have not had a lot of success, but they see their friends understanding and learning. "I usually see their self-esteem come up, which is a good part of my job," Deborah said. "And I get to see their successes."

Deborah loves H.A. Wooden Elementary. "It's a great school with a good family feel," she said. "The staff really works together well. I worked in a lot of districts in Texas, and Red Oak is the best. Everyone really supports each other and is there for one another. If there are any personal issues, everyone really helps out. Our older daughter went there, and our younger daughter will, too. It's just a great school."

In addition to preparing the students for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test and for secondary grades, Deborah's main goal is simply to love and help the children grow. "I love just seeing the kids feel successful, and everything they gain," she said. "It makes them feel good and it makes me feel good. I love giving high fives and pats on the back when they get something. It makes them feel proud and it makes me feel proud. It's great to see their eyes light up."

"I prefer the young kids; they're great," she said. "I want to give them a good foundation before we send them up to the secondary grades." Although she is helping the students, she finds their success motivates her in return. "They really just need the help, and I can give it to them," Deborah said. "It's win-win."

During her time off this summer, Deborah and her family did a lot of swimming and traveling to visit family in Texas and Louisiana. She has been resting up and getting ready to get back to the classroom in the fall. "I'm just a run-of-the-mill mom, wife and teacher," she said. "I just really enjoy teaching. I think some people are called to it, and it's my passion." **NOW**

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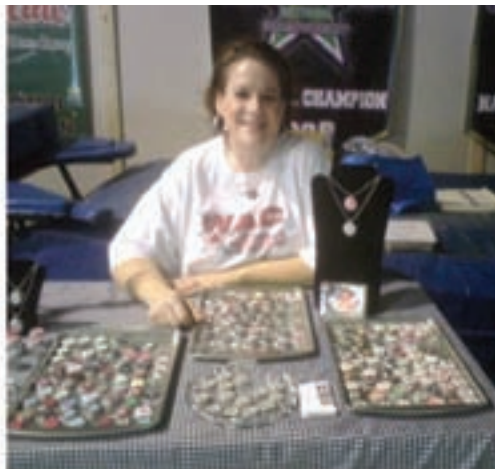
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• Paul and his parrot, top left, made new friends at the Red Oak White and Blue event. • Stephanie Welch, top center, proudly displayed her handmade jewelry. • Rylee Chovanetz, top right, celebrated his birthday with friends. • Pastor and Elder Devine, bottom left, enjoyed a day ministering out in the community. • Teens, second row center, played beach volleyball at Red Oak City Park. • Pam Furr, bottom right, visited a newborn filly in Glenn Heights.

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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

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2 lbs. Velveeta (the biggest block)
8 oz. cream cheese
2 cups shredded cheese (any kind)
8 oz. sour cream
2 10-oz. cans Ro-Tel
1 14-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
1/2 to 1 cup milk
Cook ground beef; drain grease. Add remaining ingredients except the milk. Let everything melt completely. Only use milk if the dip is too thick. You do not want it really runny, but you do not want it really thick, either. This is great for parties! Eat with your favorite tortilla chips!

ZUPPA TOSCANA (ITALIAN POTATO SOUP)

3 lbs. Italian sausage (Owens is the best.)
3 quarts heavy whipping cream
6 16-oz. cans chicken broth
5 lbs. potatoes, sliced very thin - unpeeled
1 bunch kale, washed and pinched off the stalk (H-E-B has it.)
crushed red pepper (the kind you eat on pizza)
1 cup mozzarella, shredded
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, shredded
garlic bread, toasted
You will need a huge soup pot! Cook sausage; add cream and chicken broth. Next, add potatoes and kale.

Stir together thoroughly; sprinkle the red pepper on top. I sprinkle a thin layer on the top of the soup. Do not use too much or it will be too hot! Cook until the potatoes are done. If you slice them really thin, this will not take that long. Sprinkle the top of each serving with the cheese and eat with the toasted garlic bread!

TAMMY'S MEAT LOAF

1 lb. ground beef
2 eggs
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 12-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 small can mushrooms
3 to 4 handfuls oatmeal
garlic powder and Nature's Seasons® Seasoning
Blend, to taste
Mix beef, eggs, 1/2 can of cream of mushroom soup, 1/2 can diced tomatoes, mushrooms, oatmeal and seasonings. Put mixture in a loaf pan. Mix the rest of the soup and tomatoes together and spread on top of meat loaf. Bake on 350 F for about 45 minutes.

CRYSTAL POUND CAKE

1 cup Crisco
3 cups sugar
5 eggs
1 Tbsp. vanilla
3 cups flour
1/2 tsp. baking soda

1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup buttermilk
Cream Crisco; gradually add sugar, eggs and vanilla. In separate bowl, mix flour, soda and salt. Alternately add buttermilk and flour mixture to Crisco mixture, beginning and ending with the flour mixture. Bake at 350 F in a Bundt pan for about an hour or until completely done! We eat it with strawberries and Cool Whip!

BLUEBERRY SALAD

1 large box black cherry Jell-O
2 cups hot water
1 can blueberries, undrained
1 can crushed pineapple, undrained
1/2 cup pecans, chopped

TOPPING:

8 oz. cream cheese
1/2 pint sour cream
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup pecans, chopped
Mix Jell-O and hot water until completely dissolved; add blueberries, pineapple and pecans. Place in a 9 x 13-inch glass pan; cover. Put in refrigerator for at least 4 hours or until completely set. When done, mix the topping ingredients together, except the pecans; spread on the top of the Jell-O. Sprinkle the pecans on top!



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Get Educated About Investing

— By Renée Chase

If you have children at home, you're no doubt aware that it's the traditional back-to-school time. But even if your days of parent-teacher conferences are in the past, or even in the future, you can still find a place in your life for education — and you might want to start by educating yourself about investing.

To get the most out of your investment education, ask yourself these questions:

- **What are my goals?** Your financial goals should drive your investment decisions. You probably have short-term goals, such as making a down payment on a home or paying for a vacation, and long-term goals, such as saving for your children's college education or building resources for your retirement. Once you've identified your goals, you can create an investment strategy to help achieve them.

- **What is my risk tolerance?** Self-awareness is important in every aspect of life — including your approach to investing. As you create your investment portfolio, you need to understand your own views on risk. Would you consider yourself an aggressive investor — that is, someone who can accept a relatively higher degree of investment risk in exchange for potentially higher returns? Or are you a more conservative investor — someone who is willing to take lower returns in exchange for lower potential risk? Or perhaps you're a moderate investor, less risk-averse than some but less aggressive than others. However you'd characterize yourself, it's essential that you factor in your risk tolerance when choosing investments.

Otherwise, you'll likely end up causing yourself needless worry over your investment portfolio's performance.

- **When should I make changes to my investments?**

Once you've built an investment portfolio, you shouldn't leave it on "autopilot." Over time, you most likely will need to add new investments or sell others. However, try to avoid selling quality investments just because their share price has dropped — they may still have good long-term prospects. In general, you should sell an investment under certain circumstances. For example, if your goals have changed, you may find the need to sell some investments and purchase others. You may decide to sell an investment if it's no longer what it was when you purchased it. For example, maybe you've invested in a company whose products are less competitive than they once were, or perhaps the company belongs to an industry now in decline. And finally, if your portfolio has become "overweighted" with certain types of investments, you may decide to sell some of them to bring your holdings back into balance, based on your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon.

- **Whom should I consult for help?** You can do a lot to educate yourself about investing — but when it comes to making the right choices for your future, you may need help. A professional financial advisor who is familiar with your family situation, short- and long-term goals and investment preferences can help you build and maintain a portfolio that can help meet your needs.

The investment world can be complex, so the more knowledge you have on your side, the better off you'll be. Take the time to learn as much as you can about investing. It's an education that can pay off in the long run. **NOW**

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August 2009

Community Calendar

All Month

Ellis County SPCA is in need of pet food donations and drivers to deliver pet food for the pets of Meals On Wheels clients. Call (972) 935-0756.

Tickets now on sale for Barkin' Bow Wow Luau, benefiting the Ellis County SPCA: Hawaiian Falls Waterpark, Mansfield. Come out on Sept. 27 and play in the water with your dog. Rubber Ducky Race, food, prizes and low-cost microchipping. Advance tickets: \$15. Tickets purchased on event day: \$20. Each ticket includes admission for one person and up to two dogs. For ticket, event and sponsorship/vendor information, call (972) 935-0756. www.elliscountyspca.org.

Every Monday

Celebrate Recovery meeting: First Baptist Church, 103 West Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-3591. www.redoakcelebraterecovery.com.

Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin. Call Cheryl Bell at (972) 723-0341.

First Tuesday

PrimeTimers Senior Group meeting: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Oaks Fellowship, 777 S. I-35 E. Fun, food and fellowship. Call to attend. (214) 376-8208.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

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

Every Wednesday

Family Story Time: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. All ages welcome. (469) 218-1230. www.redoakpubliclibrary.org.

Wednesdays and Thursdays

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

First and Third Thursday

Senior luncheon. Free for residents, \$5 for non-residents. Pre-register the Tuesday before the event. For information and to register, call Jennifer at (972) 576-3414.

Third Thursday

American Business Women's Association meeting. www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

First Friday

Worship Jam: 6:30 p.m., Bubba Que BBQ's front porch.

First Saturday

Red Oak Fire Rescue CPR classes: 9:00 a.m. Call early to register. (469) 218-7713.

Second Saturday

Lonestar Cowboy Church Motorcycle group ride: 1011 E. Ovilla Rd. (972) 576-0900.

August 4

Carter BloodCare Blood Drive: 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers located 1938 S. Hampton Rd. Contact Terri Miller at (972) 223-3478, ext. 258 or policeadmin@glennheights.com for details.

August 8

Bikers Against Child Abuse fundraiser, benefiting the Presbyterian Children's Home in Waxahachie. For more information, e-mail Ron at Ron.reaves@att.net.

August 15

Classic Car Cruise-in: 6:00-10:00 p.m., Uptown Village at Cedar Hill. No entry fee. Door prizes. \$250 gift card drawing in November.

August 19

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, Waxahachie. For reservations, call Kay at (972) 937-2807.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.



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