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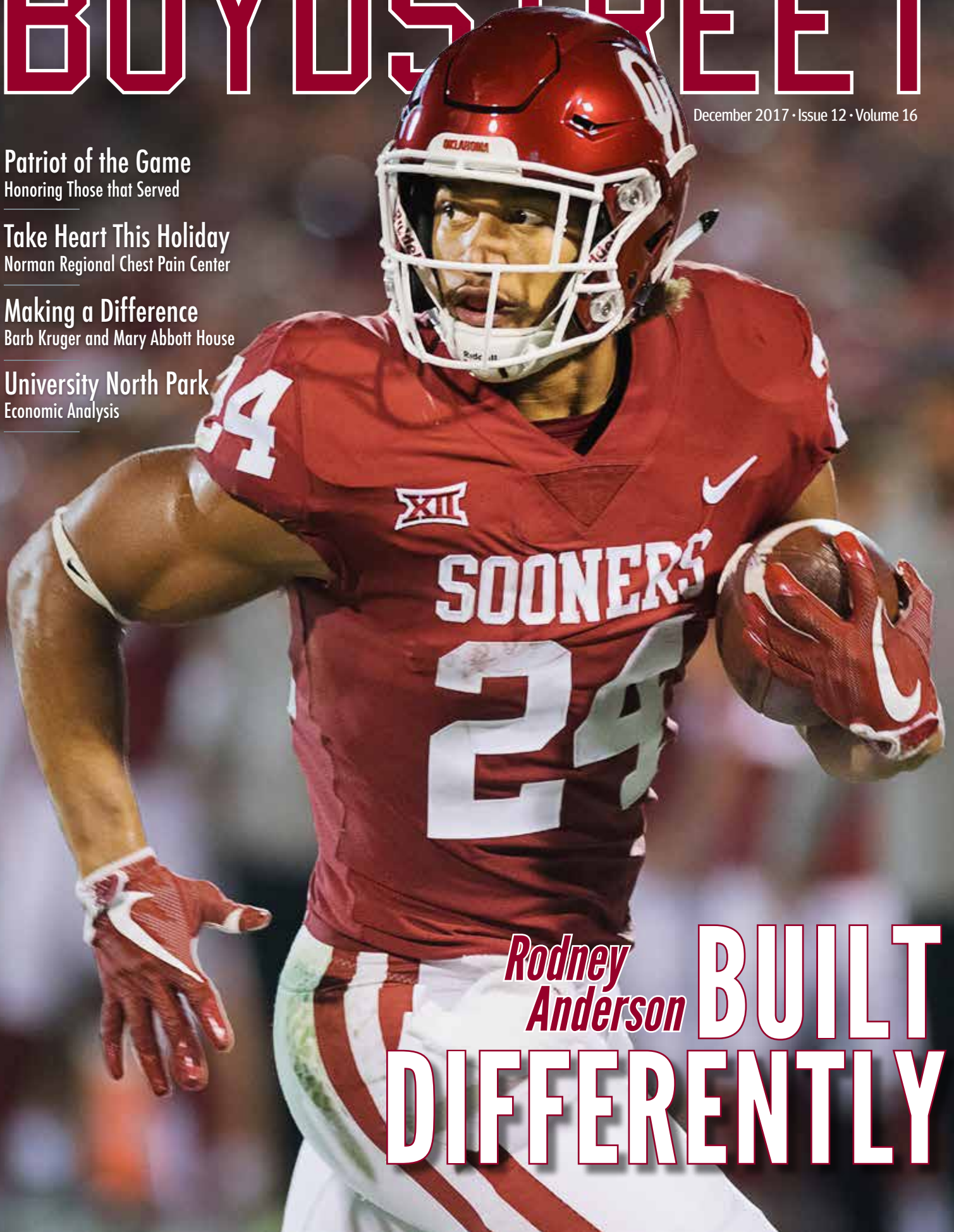
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**BOYDSTREET
MAGAZINE**



Features

22 Making a Difference
by Morgan Day

Self-described professional volunteer Barb Kruger makes impact at Mary Abbott Children's House.

25 Normanite in the Spotlight:
Newt Mitchell
by Catherine Poslusny

Being a camp counselor, volunteering and a jewelry business are just part of Newt Mitchell's life.

30 A Tradition to Honor
by Lindsay Cuomo

OU, Patriot Ford roll out the red carpet to honor veterans.

44 Making Cents
by Chip Minty

Norman weighs dollars and cents of University North Park proposal.

81 Take Heart This Holiday
by Lindsay Cuomo

National accreditation means better outcomes for heart patients in Norman.

94 A French Connection
by Sarah Rogers

La Madeleine restaurant opens in Norman.

8 VisitNorman.com Calendar
by Stefanie Brickman

10 Good Night Norman
by Alexis Trammell

14 Supporting Classrooms
by Alexis Trammell

18 Digital Discoveries
by Sharla Bardin

35 Holidays on the Corner
by Chip Minty

38 Giving Values
by Chip Minty

46 A United Norman
by Alexander Mutz

54 Orange, Black & Gold
by Tyler McComas

**59 Norman & North Winter Sports
Previews**
by Tyler McComas & Josh Helmer

66 Holidays at Southwind Hills
by Paige Uhr

71 Terra at University North Park
by Chelsey Kraft

63 Opolis Invades Norman
by Sarah Rogers

**75 The Real Deal On The 2018 Tax
Changes**
by Shannon Hudzinski

79 Enough with the Bubbles
by Kathy Hallren

84 Growing the Game
by Lindsay Cuomo

88 What's in a Name: Edwards Park
by Jeff Provine



4 IN DECEMBER

4 things to do in Norman in December

Go to VisitNorman.com for more!



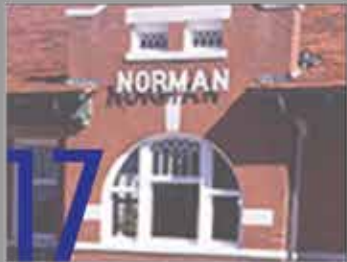
2ND FRIDAY ART WALK
Downtown Main Street @ 6 p.m.
2nd Friday Art Walk is a monthly celebration of art taking place in Downtown Norman's Walker Arts District, presented by the Norman Arts Council. In December, it will be a two-night holiday art walk.



MAIN STREET CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PARADE
Downtown Norman @ 5 p.m.
For the first time in memory, the Christmas Parade will take place at night. "Christmas in Lights" will travel through Downtown Norman on Main Street.



A CHRISTMAS STORY MUSICAL
Sooner Theatre
The Sooner Theatre will stage "A Christmas Story Musical" Dec. 8-10 and 15-17 for the holidays. There are 7 p.m. performances on Fridays and Saturdays and afternoon matinees at 2:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.



WINTER WIND & JAZZ IN JUNE: KYLE REID & THE LOW SWINGIN' CHARIOTS
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Good Night Norman

Children's Book Supports Norman Students, Teachers & Culture

Debbie Laffoon, Jennifer Austin & Natalie Fowler with Natalie's children Ezra and Winnie



This winter, the Norman Public School Foundation will sell copies of its new book, *Good Night Norman*, which is a colorful children's book featuring the unique places and events that make Norman a special place to live, work and play.

All proceeds from the sale of the book support Norman school teachers and students through the NPS Foundation's Grant-To-Teachers program, which helps supplies materials, resources and technology for use in the classroom.

"Norman is such a great place to receive your education and to get involved," said Jenny Dakil, executive director of the foundation and co-author of *Good Night Norman*. "We appreciate how the Norman community supports the foundation to encourage and thank our teachers for their commitment to education."

Good Night Norman was written for the foundation by two former teachers: Dakil and Audra Perry Plummer, co-director of the Oklahoma Writing Project at the University of Oklahoma.

"We wanted to highlight different places in our community that make it feel like home and that represent Norman and all of the great things happening in our community," Dakil said.

Good Night Norman was illustrated by art teachers from the Norman School District. They include Laurretta Coker, Leslie Dallam, Stacey Dinger, Tracy Gibson, Dan Harris, Sheila Hunter, Bonnie Knippenberg, Katy Nickell, Matt Reed, Audra Urquhart and Carla Waugh.

Artwork from the book is on display at the Norman school administration building and books will be available for purchase beginning this December at the foundation office at 131 S Flood Ave. They also will be sold at Cayman's Clothiers and Occasions Fine Stationery and Gifts, both at 2001 W Main St. in Carriage Plaza.

The NPS Foundation's Grant-To-Teachers program grants are awarded to every Norman public school site, pre-k through high school, helping teachers enhance the educational experience for students in Norman.

To date, the NPS Foundation has awarded more than \$1 million for the Grant-To-Teachers program.

"We want to reassure our teachers that we are here to support them and appreciate all that they are doing," Dakil said.— **BSM**



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Supporting Classrooms

NPS Foundation Doubles its Dollar Amount in Grants for Norman Teachers

With the state in a budget crisis and Oklahoma public schools experiencing the brunt of the damage, the Norman Public Schools and the entire Norman community are doing the best they can to reduce the impact of budget cuts.

The Norman Public Schools Foundation is doubling the dollar amount to be awarded in grants to Norman teachers this year.

"Typically, we give out \$100,000 in school grants per year," said Jenny Dakil, executive director with the foundation. "But this year, it's \$200,000. We are really proud of this progress and the hard work that teachers put into giving Norman such a strong school system."

Dakil said that twice the grants, mean twice the impact.

From math to science to arts, grants help teachers pay for the curricula they use in their classrooms. The money can go toward anything from telescopes and microscopes to history programs and book clubs, even classroom technology.

The grants help teachers meet the diverse needs of all of the students in the district Dakil said.

To date, the NPS Foundation has awarded more than \$1 million through more than 2,500 grants as part of the Grant-To-Teachers program.

With the state budgets falling, the Norman school district has done the best

it can to adjust to budget cuts as much as possible, Dakil said. As a result, the Norman community is stepping up to support teachers with contributions.

The foundation has supported hundreds of innovative teachers in every school in the district. From elementary to the high school level, classroom grants have impacted thousands of Norman students during their academic careers.

"We want to reassure our teachers through the Grants-to-Teachers that we are here to support them and appreciate all that they are doing," Dakil said. "We want our teachers to know that the Norman community wants to support them and to improve their existing situation." – **BSM**



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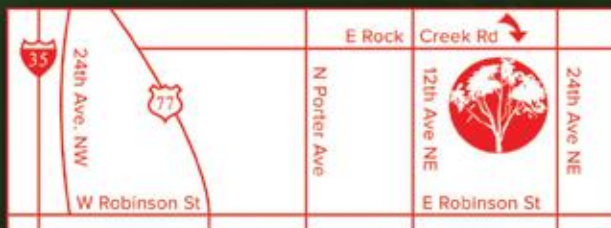
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Digital Discoveries

The Norman school district has created a torrent of learning opportunities with a new technology initiative, rolled out this fall for thousands of students across the city, officials say.

"It's just opened up this floodgate to the possibilities of what we can do now," says Martha Pangburn, librarian at Norman High School.

Students share their excitement about the laptops and are eager to use the tools they have at their fingertips.

This fall, Norman Public Schools provided MacBook laptops for all students in 6th through 12th grades. It was part of the district's iTech instructional technology initiative, designed to help teachers enhance instruction and offer real-world applications.

Funding for the initiative came from a 2014 bond issue passed by Norman voters. Educators say they are excited about how students are using the laptops and the creativity they are showing through the applications and tools available on the MacBook.

"It's awesome," says Amber Ferguson, a student at Longfellow Middle School.

The 14-year-old says one of the projects she's done has been to record herself playing the flute for an assignment in band. She also wants to find an application that will allow her to design clothes since she hopes to be a fashion designer one day.

Ryan Leland, also a student at Longfellow, says she's a fan of Google Classroom. The online classroom's tools allow teachers to post assignments, announcements and questions for students. Meanwhile, students can see the assignments and related class materials as they complete and turn in work.

"If you're out of town, it's super easy to get your homework so you don't fall behind in class," the 11-year-old said.

Other students, like those in high school, have used their laptops to create infographics, video projects and audio projects to accompany what they are learning in class, said Chris Kalinski, iTech coach at Norman North High School.

Kalinski is responsible for helping with laptop integration at Norman North, and he assists with technical issues.

"Engagement in the classroom is elevated because of the technology," Kalinski says.

For example, he's seeing students tap into their creative sides when it comes to merging what they are learning in class with the tools available on their laptops, such as creating videos or recording podcasts.

Kalinski says one of the aspects that excites him about the iTech initiative is that it gives all secondary students access to technology and can help prepare them for the future, with computer skills, creative abilities and strategies to solve problems.

"I think it sets them up for real-world type scenarios," he said. "They're going to come with a set of skills that they may not have had before."

At Norman High School, Pangburn said it's exciting to finally see students with their laptops.

The district has gone through years of planning and preparation to get to the point where the technology initiative could be implemented.

She said the laptops have helped enhance student engagement, and students now have a variety of tools to demonstrate what they're learning in class.

For example, instead of writing a paragraph about a subject, students can now create a video to explain the topic.

Now that they have laptops, she said students will get more use out of the library's digital resources, such as e-books, online reference books and databases.

"Accessibility has increased exponentially," she says. "My sense is that they feel proud that their community would entrust them with this technology. It does make them feel important, that their learning is valued."

The investment in technology for the students is creating unique opportunities to equip students for college and other career paths.

"We're giving them real-world skills and experiences that will be so beneficial for them when they leave us," Pangburn said. — BSM

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Making a Difference

Self-described Professional Volunteer Barb Kruger Makes Impact at Mary Abbott Children's House

Every day inside the Mary Abbott Children's House, children share their stories of sexual abuse or severe physical trauma with the child advocacy center's trained staff. The children may be embarrassed and are often afraid to divulge details of what's happened to them, and yet many want more than anything to be a "normal" kid in a "normal" home.

It may sound heartbreaking, but to those who spend their days within the center, the Abbott House isn't a sad place. In fact, it's full of smiles, encouragement and hope.

"This is the first step to healing for them," said Barb Kruger, an Abbott House volunteer who's in her fourth year serving as a board member.

Kruger is humble when she talks about the time she puts in at the Mary Abbott Children's House. She's not one to tally the hours, but she's always there when needed.

Chilton Purcell, the house's executive director, said she can rely on Kruger to come through, no matter what's asked of her or how tight a time crunch. Because of that willingness to help, she's been crucial to the center's success.

"She's kind and passionate and smart and savvy," Purcell said. "She has a great way of developing a strategy for any situation we're in, whether it's trying to figure out ho. She's just really great at looking at things strategically and always with the focus of the children we serve at the heart of it."

Kruger is married to Lon Kruger, men's basketball head coach at the University of Oklahoma, and helped organize the Annual Basketball Coaches' Luncheon, which took place Nov. 1. The luncheon is the Abbott House's primary fundraising event, with proceeds going toward general operating expenses. Kruger

serves as the luncheon's committee president with Heather O'Connell acting as committee chair. Keynote speakers include the head coaches of the men's and women's basketball teams, Lon Kruger and Sherri Coale.

Philanthropy comes naturally to Kruger. In fact, in every city she moves to, the self-described "professional volunteer" supports a new cause — usually one centered around children.

Now in her eighth state, Kruger recounted her previous experiences, which include an organization in Atlanta that provided a home for medically fragile babies whose health conditions prohibited them from living with their parents, and the Cunningham Children's.

When it came to decide what she'd devote herself to in Norman, the decision was an easy one. Coale had urged Kruger to tour the Abbott House, described by the basketball coach as a "well-kept secret." After a tour of the center, Kruger knew it was a fit.

"There was a passion here," she said. "I was introduced to some of the other board members and the chemistry was great."

Canvassed in a calming light blue, the multi-story house with wrap-around porch sits at the corner of East Symmes Street and South Crawford Avenue, its appearance giving the feeling of a welcoming family home.

It may be a well-kept secret, but the Abbott House has an impact that spans Cleveland, McClain and Garvin counties, and it even serves outside of its primary jurisdiction, assisting 19 Oklahoma counties with forensic interviews, medical assessments, advocacy and education in the last year. It's one of nearly 750 independent children's advocacy centers across the country accredited by the National Children's Alliance.



Funded by federal grants, private foundation grants and individual donors, the children's advocacy center works closely with law enforcement officers, the district attorney's office, child protective services, mental health care professionals and medical professionals to maintain a victim-centered, child-friendly atmosphere during investigations of alleged child abuse.

"No other place does what we do," Purcell said. "If we were to not exist, these kids would have nowhere else to go. We're treating the entire case of the child to make sure nothing falls through the cracks."

In 2017 alone, the center served 659 children, conducted 354 forensic interviews and administered 190 medical exams.

One reason the Abbott House is so critical for abused children is that children must only tell their story once, instead of several times, which could re-traumatize them over and over again.

To learn more about the Mary Abbot Children's House and potential volunteer opportunities, visit abbott-house.org. — BSM



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Newt Mitchell is pictured with his daughter Cloie, dog Decker and wife Gina.

December can get a little crazy, especially when it comes to finding the perfect gifts for our loved ones. Norman business owner Newt Mitchell has a simple tip for holiday shoppers – take some time to explore the wide variety of products and services that Norman’s local businesses have to offer.

“You’ll be glad you did,” he said.

Mitchell – who runs Mitchell’s Jewelry with his wife, Gina – grew up in Norman and couldn’t imagine operating a business anywhere else. The inventory of his store at 2201 W Main St. has changed with the times, but his passion for the Norman community is still as strong as ever.

From the day he started, Mitchell has taken great care to listen to his customers.

When he took over Norman Coin Shop in 1981, the shop occupied a small area in the front of a bingo supply store in downtown Norman. As his business grew, he gradually took over more and more space in the building, so he could continue providing the jewelry selection his customers were asking for.

More than 35 years later, the store is in a different location, with a different name, but it’s still being run by the same man with the same unwavering eagerness to learn from his customers and give them a great shopping experience.

Mitchell now offers repair services, appraisals and custom work to go along with a wide selection of jewelry. As a member of the Independent Jewelers Organization, he can take his staff to special markets and con-

tinuing education classes to ensure they stay up-to-date on all of the latest collections.

“Each piece of jewelry represents a moment in time, or a special occasion,” said Gina Mitchell. “We want to create that special occasion.”

This month, he is focused on giving holiday shoppers a memorable and stress-free shopping experience. The store’s schedule is jam-packed with fun promotions and events for the entire family.

“That’s always been Newt’s forte, figuring out ways to make shopping fun,” Gina Mitchell said.

With food trucks outside of the store every Saturday this month, a visit from Santa and a holiday open house, customers have every excuse to stop by and check out the store for them-

selves. And, for the first time ever, he's having one of his special Antwerp diamond events in December.

Mitchell gets most of his diamonds directly from Antwerp, Belgium, the largest diamond district in the world, with a centuries-old tradition of gem cutting and polishing. This allows him to keep costs low and hand-pick specific diamonds for his customers.

"We cut the middleman out, so we know we're getting customers the best price," said Mitchell, "but most importantly, we're getting the most spectacular diamond for them for the money."

Antwerp representatives will be in Norman Dec. 8 - 11, and Mitchell is holding a special promotion around their visit. Everyone who orders a diamond while the representatives are in town will be entered into a drawing. The winner will get their diamond for free.

Mitchell hopes the store's holiday events will not only attract people to his business, but also to the rest of the

shops on West Main Street. He has participated in several promotions that highlight businesses in the West Main Business District. One promotion was the Mix on Main event in October, which featured food trucks, vendors and musicians for a family-friendly fun-filled night.

Mitchell also is involved in the Norman Business Association, Chamber of Commerce and Sooner Rotary.

His holiday event planning doesn't stop with his jewelry store. Mitchell has been working on a Secret Santa program for Royal Family Kids, an organization he has been part of for many years. The Royal Family Kids Camp provides a week of positive memories for foster children age 6 to 12.

"It's really rewarding to see the people in our community step up to make this happen," said Mitchell.

He has been the Norman camp's fundraising chair for 11 years, and a camp counselor for five years. The camp is



Royal Family Kids' main event, but the program offers mentoring and special events for the children throughout the year.

Anyone that talks to Mitchell can tell how much he loves Norman, and the great importance he places in giving back to the community. He and his wife have a busy, exciting month planned, and they can't wait to be a part of the holiday season for the Norman community. – **BSM**

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A Tradition to Honor

OU, Patriot Ford Roll Out the Red Carpet to Honor Veterans

The pomp and circumstance of a University of Oklahoma home football game is steeped in tradition. From the first notes of the university chant to the last bang of the RUF/NEKS' shotguns, the decades have woven together a sense of school spirit, shaping a unique tapestry of experience.

And, yet, Sooner fans have made room for a relatively new tradition.

In 2013, OU honored its first veteran at a football game and since then, the program has expanded to other sports including men's and women's basketball.

Whether on the field or the court, Sooner fans faithfully take a pause from the action to recognize the service and sacrifice of our military, standing together to honor the Patriot of the Game.

"85,000 people stop what they are doing to stand and honor our military on a grand stage. It is a unifying event and speaks to how patriotic Oklahomans are," said Kevin Cantrell, dealer, principle and general manager of Patriot Ford, which sponsors the program.

"My father and I have a great deal of respect for those that choose to serve, and we feel it's the least we can do," he said.

Throughout the year, 22 men and women who served in the U.S. armed forces receive recognition, and, with so many

deserving candidates, the selection process is never easy, Cantrell said.

"There isn't one submission that hasn't been deserving of the honor."

Before Sooner fans get the chance to cheer, the university and dealership staff roll out the red carpet for these veterans.

"They get to go onto the field the day before the game for pictures. Coaches take the time to say hello and say their appreciations. They receive a signed ball, tickets to the game, an OU golf shirt and a tour of the dealership if they have time," Cantrell said.

But, it's more than just the staff that has embraced this new tradition.

"Toby Keith is almost always standing in the end zone to thank them and spend time with them," Cantrell said. "While you might think it would be the other way, Toby views it as he is the fortunate one to meet them."

Joining the ranks of dozens of others before them, this year, Sooner fans honored a grandfather, grandson duo during the game against Iowa State.

Tech. Sgt. Robert Bickerstaff, born in Brocton, New York and turning 99 years old this December, served during World War II and trained in 1942 at Camp Gruber, in eastern Oklahoma.

During his training, he met his bride, Vivian Bridges, and returned at the

close of the war to Enid, where he is still active in his church choir and the local garden club. Bickerstaff took the field with his grandson, Lt. Col. Luke Ylitalo, a Sooner alumni and Marine Corps veteran.

The first female Patriot of the Game recognized at a football was honored during the Tulane game in September.

U.S. Air Force Maj.Gen. Rita Aragon was the first woman in Oklahoma to command a unit, to command a base and ultimately to command the entire Oklahoma Air National Guard, all after enlisting at the age of 30.

Aragon was a school teacher and administrator in Oklahoma City Public Schools, prior to her military career. She is also a member of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame.

To nominate a deserving veteran, visit www.patriotford.com/hero. — BSM



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Santa Clause and the Grinch will be equally popular this holiday season on Campus Corner, said Erin Patton, executive director of the Campus Corner Merchants' Association.

One or the other will be on hand on the four Saturdays leading up to Christmas, she said. But, most of the time, Santa won't be sitting on a rocker hoisting children onto his knee, and the Grinch will not be plotting his next assault on the Christmas spirit.

Instead, they will be cruising the sidewalks with a bounty on their heads.

It's all part of Holidays on the Corner. Patrons are invited to comb the streets and sidewalks of Campus Corner, searching for Santa or the Grinch, Patton said. Those who are successful, stand to receive some additional holiday spirit from Campus Corner merchants.

Each patron who bags a photo with one of the fugitives could win some Campus Corner Bucks and become eligible to win a gift card from a Campus Corner business, she said.

Details are available on the Campus Corner Facebook page.

"It's something different," Patton said. "I always wanted to do something like this. I got feedback from the merchants that they wanted to expand the holiday cheer and have more than one afternoon."



So, she created Holidays on the Corner, which starts Dec. 2 with Santa Clause stationed at RCB Bank, at 333 W Boyd St. There will be crafts for the kids along with candy and hot chocolate for everyone, Patton said.

Fun and games begin on Dec. 9, when the Grinch shows up to hand out Campus Corner Bucks to those who can find him. Santa comes back to the Corner on Dec. 16 to try his hand at cat and mouse and the Grinch rounds out the month with his second appearance on Dec. 23.

All four Saturday events will be held from 2 to 4 p.m.

Patton said the Campus Corner merchants are excited about the Christmas season and would love to see big crowds come out to support local businesses and to carry on long-time traditions of Christmas shopping on the Corner.

She said there is a variety of clothing stores, offering outfits for babies, teens, men and women. Most of the restaurants sell gift cards, which are great stocking stuffers, she added.

The underlying theme of this year's Holidays on the Corner program comes down to a single phrase, Patton said.

"Don't be a Grinch. Shop local!" – **BSM**

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Giving Values

Norman Rotarian Impacts World Through Life of Giving

If there were such a thing as an expert giver, Ron Burton would have the certificate. He would probably even have an office, with a staff and a big sign hanging outside, spelling out his personal belief.

“Everyone’s responsibility is to help other people as much as they can.”

He defines those words with a lifetime of service spanning nearly five decades and 64 countries. Whether he was raising millions of dollars for the University of Oklahoma or traveling the world, fighting Polio with Rotary International, Burton approaches giving with the spirit he attributes to his Oklahoma roots.

The 71-year-old Norman resident is a native of Duncan and a University of Oklahoma graduate. Even though he earned a law degree from OU, he never really practiced law. Instead, he pursued his passion for giving and helping other people give.

His first step into the big-league world of giving was in 1970, when he put his OU accounting degree to work and took a job at the University of Oklahoma Foundation. Four years later, he finished law school and eventually worked his way through the ranks to become the OU Foundation’s second president.

Lending a steady hand of leadership through OU administrations ranging



Ron Burton, foreground right, helps a team of Rotarians prepare packets at Feed My Starving Children food pantry in the Chicago area while serving as Rotary international president in 2013.

from Banowsky to Boren, Burton built the foundation into an enormous financial resource for the university.

When he arrived, the foundation’s endowment was worth about \$6 million, Burton said. By the time he retired from there in 2007, it had grown to about \$880 million. While Burton is proud of those accomplishments, it was not enough.

Sometimes, when you’re trying to help other people as much as you can, you must impose upon yourself, volunteer your time and be the boots on the ground.

That’s why Burton turned his energy over to Rotary International, where he found plenty of opportunity for volunteerism and boots-on-the-ground involvement.

A member of the Norman Rotary Club since 1977, Burton has always sought ways to volunteer. He first served as chair of the Norman club’s endowment committee and later as a district governor.

In 1988, he became involved in Rotary International, based in Evanston, Ill, where he assisted with growing the Rotary Foundation’s endowment from \$2 million to where it stands today at \$1.1 billion.

Burton has served in almost every leadership post available at Rotary

International. He has been a member of Rotary International’s Board of Directors, and in recent years, he has served as president of the organization. Now serving as chairman-elect of the Rotary Foundation’s Board of Trustees, he will take over as chairman of the board in 2018, serving through June of 2019.

Burton said he has a list of goals to accomplish during his term as chairman, starting with the task of eradicating the Polio virus.

He said Rotary International began its fight against Polio in 1979. Since then, the organization has partnered with the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to raise more than \$4 billion. The money has been used to immunize 1.3 billion children worldwide.

As a result, the number of polio cases around the world has dropped from 350,000 in 1988 to only 14 reported cases worldwide in 2017. So, Burton hopes 2018 will be the year when zero cases will be reported.

He also hopes to expand global and local grants to community projects and to launch a campaign, urging Rotarians to leave personal legacies by establishing individual endowments with the Rotary Foundation.



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Rotary International's goal is to grow its foundation endowment from today's \$1.1 billion to \$2.025 billion by 2025, Burton said. It is his objective to get that campaign underway next year.

Through the years, Burton has contributed a quarter million dollars and has volunteered thousands of hours of time to Rotary International. He traveled around the world to participate in community projects sponsored by local Rotary clubs.

While a Rotarian, Burton said he has been to 64 countries to do everything from planting trees to administering Polio vaccinations. He has dedicated emergency rooms and operating rooms at local hospitals. He has worked in food banks, blood banks and has participated in walks and bicycle rides to raise money for local programs sponsored by Rotary.

He said he has even dedicated bathrooms in India. That may not seem like a big deal, Burton said, but in India, there is a shortage of bathrooms, leading to unsanitary conditions and disease, so local Rotary clubs raise money to build them.

Through Rotary, he and his wife, Jetta, sponsor orphans in India, providing school supplies and other essentials. They are simple items like pencils and erasers, things some children in this country take for granted, but in India, they are gifts that children treasure.



Once his term as trustee chairman ends in 2019, Burton said he plans to step away from leadership at Rotary International and resume regular participation in the Norman Rotary club. But that doesn't mean he's finished.

Long past the age of retirement, Burton appears to have the energy of a 40-year-old, saying he draws from the energy of people around him and from the blessings he gets from helping others.

"If you can help somebody who really needs it, then you're the one that benefits the most," he said. "To see the smiles on their faces, it's the kind of thing that brings tears to your eyes."

"It doesn't matter what religion you are or what your politics are," Burton said. "You help people, it doesn't matter."

Those are the values Burton said he has carried with him his entire life. They came from growing up and attending church in Duncan, as well as from living more than 50 years in Norman.

"There are good people here and good values," he said. "I hope my life exhibits that and that those values came through."

"I remember the Parable of the Talents," he said. "I think I have invested wisely, and I hope I've paid back." – **BSM**

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Norman Weighs Dollars and Cents of University North Park Proposal

University of Oklahoma Economist Robert Dauffenbach estimates city and county governments could generate nearly \$20 million in additional property tax and sales tax revenue annually through a proposed residential and entertainment development in west Norman.

The University North Park development would include a multi-use arena, new restaurants, entertainment venues and hundreds of housing units north of Rock Creek Road and on both sides of 24th Avenue NW.

The proposal was formally unveiled in September by the University of Oklahoma Foundation, and it is now in the hands of the Norman City Council, which will be studying it through much of 2018.

The plan includes a 10,000-seat arena, which would become the new home of the University of Oklahoma men's and women's basketball teams. The arena could also serve as a venue for other collegiate athletic events as well as concerts and other entertainment. Under the proposal, there would also be an expo center, a new hotel and 150,000 square feet of space for new restaurants and entertainment venues.

The entertainment portion of the district would comprise only about one-quarter of the development area, however. The rest would be occupied

by 1,600 housing units ranging from senior residential units, multi-family complexes and single-family homes.

The plan faces opposition from members of the community who object to new growth and added competition to existing businesses. Some question the use of public funds to help cover costs for the development.

However, Dauffenbach and Norman Mayor Lynne Miller both see the development as an opportunity for Norman to reclaim a competitive edge that has been slipping away to other communities in recent years.

Moore, Oklahoma City, Edmond and other communities that invite new commercial and retail development are drawing new dollars, new jobs and more sales taxes to their communities. Meanwhile, Norman's sales tax revenues have faltered in recent years, challenging the city's ability to fund services such as police and fire protection.

Miller said the proposed housing developments would attract new residents to the city, while the arena and entertainment district would draw visitors from Moore, Oklahoma City and other communities.

"It would have an overall positive impact on the city," Miller said. "I personally like the idea of an entertainment district."

Generally, new arenas succeed in other cities, but that's not always the case, she said. The council is currently studying that question as it considers the overall proposal.

Dauffenbach said his analysis considered revenues generated by the initial University North Park development, located between Rock Creek Road and Robinson Street. Some of his conclusions are based on those figures.

He said he favors the plan because it turns unused land into a source of revenue to benefit the city, the county and the schools. He compares University North Park to development that the City of Moore has been supporting over the past 15 years along the Interstate 35 corridor. Today, those retail businesses and restaurants draw people from inside and outside of Moore, generating millions in new sales tax revenues.

The initial University North Park development began in the mid-2000s, assisted by a Tax Increment Finance district (TIF), which earmarked sales tax revenues to pay for development costs. The Norman City Council approved the TIF in 2006, and it could stay in force until 2031.

Miller said development in University North Park south is largely complete, so the TIF could be discontinued early. If that happens, the

city would see its sales tax collections increase by about \$5 million annually. However, the new University North Park proposal may require the TIF to remain in place to help pay for the additional development costs.

Regardless of where council members stand on new development in Norman, the TIF may represent the central question underlying the entire proposal.

So, the council will have to decide on what the future might look like for Norman's finances, Miller said.

Will they end the TIF sometime soon, and enrich the general fund with an additional \$5 million? Or, will they keep the TIF active for another decade or so, as a long-term investment toward potentially greater financial gains in the future?

Ward 5 City Councilwoman Sereta Wilson said she would favor ending the TIF and injecting the money into the city's general fund.

Wilson questions some of the conclusions in Dauffenbach's study, and wonders how much of the sales tax

revenue from the area would actually be new. Instead, it may be money that would have been spent in Norman anyway, Wilson said.

"It seems like it could actually hurt other businesses," she said.

She also questions the viability of the housing plan, wondering if there would be demand for homes so close to an entertainment district.

Overall, Wilson said she likes the University North Park plan, but she is not certain the development should be built through assistance from the existing TIF district.

While the Norman City Council could determine the plan's ultimate fate, the development's impact on tax revenues extends further than the city's general fund.

Miller said most of the revenue would come in the form of property taxes from the 1,600 housing units. That money would benefit the county and Norman Public Schools.

Dauffenbach's study suggests development would raise an estimated

\$10 million annually in new property taxes, and that would be beneficial to schools, said Norman School Superintendent Nick Migliorino.

He said the district is behind anything that results in the growth of ad valorem tax revenues or student enrollment, and the University North Park proposal would benefit both of those areas.

Also, Migliorino said that no revenues are currently being generated from the undeveloped land north of Rock Creek Road because it's owned by the University of Oklahoma Foundation, which is not required to pay property taxes. So, if a development can get that property on the tax rolls, that's positive for the district.

"Anything above nothing is positive for the schools," he said.

Aside from the financial benefit, the new arena would enrich quality of life for students, the superintendent said. It would provide an additional facility for major events, such as high school graduations, All City Music Concerts and the annual Cross-Town Clash in basketball. — BSM



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A United Norman

The United Way of Norman's annual fundraising drive is no mad dash and it is certainly not a sprint. It is among the community's most critical events, and after decades of refinement, it has become a seven-month journey with several fun and exciting stops along the way.

Just like previous years, this year's drive began in June with the Pacesetter Kick-off Breakfast, where companies kick off their campaigns early and set a winning pace that will set a positive tone for the rest of the journey.

"These pacesetters are community leaders that represent about half of the fundraising for the campaign," said Daren Wilson, president and CEO of the United Way of Norman. "Their contributions motivate the rest of the community to help out."

In late August, the campaign spread to the rest of Norman with the announcement of results from the pacesetter fund drive during the annual Crosstown

Clash football game between Norman North and Norman High schools at Oklahoma Memorial Stadium.

The agency thanked pacesetter businesses for setting the standard in the first half of its campaign and officially kicked off the next stage of the campaign involving the rest of the community.

At the event, the United Way announced its goal, which was to serve 49,000 people in need.

Though raising money is a very important part of the United Way's campaigns, the agency also gives community members an opportunity to do some hands-on volunteer work.

On Sept. 22, the agency held a "Day of Caring" event, when nearly 600 volunteers worked with various community projects around the city.

Perhaps the most well-known of their annual events, the United Way hosted "Celebrity Sing" at Riverwind Casino on Nov. 3. This year's production showcased local talent.

Produced by Jennifer Baker from Sooner Theater, patrons enjoyed a complimentary dinner while they watched some of the best talent that Norman had to offer. By the end of the night, the United Way had reached an impressive 78 percent of its goal.

Individuals and businesses can contribute all the way through the end of the year, Wilson said.

"Your gifts really add up," he said.

In January, the United Way will hold a celebration at the Oklahoma Memorial Union on the University of Oklahoma campus to honor donors and volunteers and to announce the total amount raised during the 2017 campaign.

The United Way's vision is simple but profound: a community working together to make life better for everyone.

To learn more about how to support the United Way, and for information on the specific projects of the organization, visit www.unitedwaynorman.org. — **BSM**

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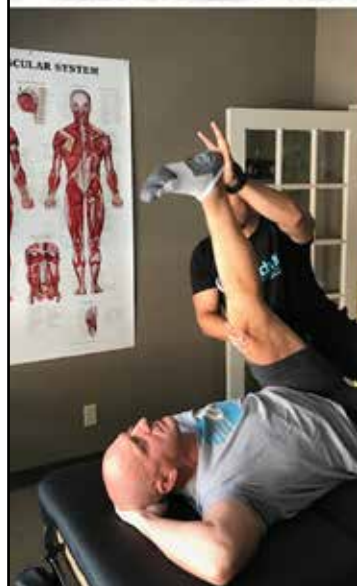
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Rodney Anderson

BUILT DIFFERENTLY

One of the images the Oklahoma Sooners football team paints of those who wear the Crimson and Cream is that of a student athlete who is “built different.” Filled with this idea of OU DNA, the fact that a Sooner is “built different” has become a personality trait and rallying cry engrained within the program.

You will find it hard though to find many who are “built differently” more than the Sooner standout running back and Katy, Texas product Rodney Anderson. From his speed, versatility, and power on the field to his humble, low key and team oriented approach off the field, Rodney Anderson is a success story that has been different from the first day he stepped on campus.

THE ARRIVAL

Anderson made a name for himself as a standout running back in high school. Anderson rushed for 5,493 yards and averaged nine yards per carry. He was ranked as the second

best running back in the country by 247sports and was named the offensive player of the year by the Houston Touchdown Club. Obviously, some of the top colleges came calling. Anderson had offers from Auburn, Baylor, Texas A&M and many more. Anderson eventually chose Oklahoma, going so far as to enroll early.

“I feel like it was better fit for me offensively with the new coach coming in and coach (Cale) Gundy,” Anderson said on signing day in 2015. “Plus, I saw all the success all the great backs had, and I just wanted to be a part of it.”

That “new” coach was Lincoln Riley, who at the time had just been hired as the offensive coordinator. Many felt as if the skill set Anderson possessed was a perfect fit in the Riley offense. Anderson would essentially be the last recruit that Gundy signed as the running back coach. When Jay Boulware took over, he made it clear to Anderson that he was always his choice.

“I remember coach bringing him in, he had a couple of backs he was looking at,” coach Boulware said. “Everyone knew we had Joe (Mixon) and Samaje (Perine). It was hard to tell people hey, come here, you’re going to play. I always tell Rodney that I always voted for him. Coach had asked the entire offensive staff what we think and who we thought would be the best and Rodney got the nod.”

THE SETBACK

As an early enrollee, Anderson had an opportunity to get a jump start on the rest of the 2015 class. But finding carries in a crowded Sooner backfield was not only difficult but virtually impossible. With Perine, Mixon, and, at the time, Alex Ross, the Sooner backfield was stacked.

Anderson did what he could to stay involved. He picked up his first career carry in the opener against Akron and quickly established himself as a special team contributor. But disaster struck for Anderson when he

suffered a season ending injury to his leg while making a tackle during special teams duty against Tennessee.

Anderson battled back from the broken leg and appeared to be healthy heading into camp in 2016. But another setback occurred. Anderson suffered a neck injury that would end up costing him his entire 2016 season. A career that had started with so much promise and potential had been submarined by a series of challenging and brutal injuries. But as he has throughout his entire career, Anderson never gave up.

THE REEMERGENCE

"He's a person that has the respect of everyone in our program," Head coach Lincoln Riley said of Anderson. "They see the work he put in when he was crushed by those injuries. I don't think it surprised anyone that he has jumped back from it and has had the success he has had and the way he has approached it."

But despite the faith of his coaches and teammates, Anderson was once against playing the waiting game when the 2017 season kicked off. Anderson could not find his way on the field. But as a humble and team-oriented player, he did not allow himself to get down.

"You just have to be ready when your number is called," Anderson said. "The running back room is a great time, it's really competitive. We make each other better."

Anderson had found himself in a support role through the first six games of this season, rushing for only 25.7 yards per game, amassing a total of only 154 yards on 22 carries. While fellow backs Sermon and Adams flourished, Anderson was left waiting.

"He wasn't timid, just rusty," Riley said of the slow start. "He had missed so much time and even spring ball. We were conservative with him, which we thought was the right thing."

"We just wanted to wait until his body was ready," Jay Boulware said of the patience in bringing along Anderson. "After all he had been through, we didn't want to go out and get him



hurt. We brought him along slowly. I think its paid huge dividends. His timing and our timing both kind of met at the same time."

Anderson made his first impact with a touchdown run against Texas and emerged in what many have called Championship November with 845 all-purpose yards over a 4-game stretch and averaging 6.8 yards per carry.

THE MOMENT

The moment that announced the arrival of Anderson came late against Kansas State. As part of his breakout performance in Manhattan, Anderson scored the game winning touchdown with seven seconds left on the clock as he turned the corner from 22 yards out. Anderson finished with 147 yards on 19 carries, surpassing the 100-yard mark for the first time in his career, and was rewarded with a game ball.

"It was special to share that moment with my teammates and the coaches and my entire team," Anderson said of the game ball. "I was just happy to share that moment with my team."

What many may have missed in that game winning moment was where Anderson was actually running to. As he turned the corner with the end zone in view and a celebration waiting, all he saw was mom. Anderson's mom was seated in the end zone and he knew that was where he was headed.

"To see him come from two season-ending injuries and then to have the game of his life right here, it's just so rewarding, as a mom, to see his handwork pay off," Rodney's mother, Jobie Anderson said of the moment. "He persevered through so much. I just can't believe it."

THE FUTURE

Good luck trying to get Rodney Anderson to talk about himself. He did not even realize he had become an internet sensation after a video of him jumping out of a pool went viral. It took a teammate and his mother passing it along to him. For Anderson, it is all about the grind of preparing and being a good teammate, even when he wasn't the focus of the offensive gameplan.

"Through everything he has stayed patient, that's the kind of team guy he is," Boulware said of Anderson. "He is one of those guys that works extremely hard. While other kids were getting some carries and accolades, Rodney got back in the film room and was in my office every day, to the point where I got tired of him. But I told him this is how you do it."

With everything that Rodney Anderson has overcome and pushed through, he may be the perfect example of what it truly means to be "built different". — **BSM**

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In sports, it's fun to root for good stories. The Norman High girls' cross country team is proof that fairy tale endings do come true in sports. From the opening practice of the season, a state championship was their ultimate focus. Day by day, race by race, it all built towards the ultimate prize they were so desperately striving for.

Head coach Scott Monnard knew his team had what it takes to win. Not only

did they have the talent, but his team had the work ethic of a champion. After back-to-back runner-up finishes at the state meet, the goal was simple: win it all. And, that is exactly what they did.

"I'm so happy for our kids," said Monnard. "To have come up short so many times the previous years, and then for them to finally come together to achieve their goal was very gratifying to see unfold."

Despite this being the first state championship for the Tiger Cross Country program since 1981, success has been the norm for the Tigers under Monnard.

With all that Monnard, his staff and the athletes gave to this season, the 2017 Norman High Cross Country team will go down as one of the more enjoyable stories of the year in NPS athletics. –

BSM

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NHS Winter Sports Preview

Whether on the mat or on the court, the upcoming winter promises to be a good one for the Norman High Tigers.

Rodney Dindy's boys' team will feature an up-tempo style of play, resulting in another entertaining season. Returning contributors such as Jacob Ogle and Shane Didiuk will give the Tigers length, both in the paint and on the perimeter. Ogle and Didiuk have logged significant minutes for Norman High and will look to be key offensive contributors again this season.

The Tigers will also lean on T.C. Ellis and Bryce Mooreland to provide points, as they'll likely be the leaders of the backcourt. Both can be deadly from behind the three-point line.

The high-scoring Tigers' boys will eagerly be watching what Turner Mattingly and her girls' team can do, as they look to build on last season's success. Mattingly's fearless play is worth the price of admission. Her aggressive nature on both ends of the floor has routinely been a sparkplug for Michael Neal's Tigers.

Skye Watts and Christina Shadid return as the other key figures, both showing an ability to score. With Mattingly, Watts and Shadid, NHS possesses guard play that will be tough to match for any opponent.

On the mat, Norman High returns a solid core. The Tigers were able to claim a district title a year ago, for just the second time in program history. After a season that culminated with a Dual State appearance, head coach Corey Wilson is hoping his squad can carry their success into his second year at the helm. Momentum is high, and Wilson is hopeful this is just the start of the rise of his program. – **BSM**



NNHS Winter Sports Preview

Norman North is gearing for another exciting winter sports season.

Despite the departure of standout basketball player Trae Young and his average 42.6 points per game, head coach Bryan Merritt is excited about the boys' basketball team's potential in the 2017-18 season.

"A lot of people think without Trae we're really going to fall off the map, but they just don't know about our other guys," Merritt said. "They're good players. I think we'll keep winning. I know that we're going to be competitive and a really fun team to watch."

Key contributors include guards Juwan White, Jalen Crutchfield, Brandis Fender, Drake Stoops and forward Shemar Smith.

The Norman North girls' basketball team enters the 2017-18 season with a diverse lineup. Coming off a 16-10 season, the Timberwolves return senior guard Lindsey Waters, junior guard Jacie Evans, junior post Emma Base and sophomore post Jessica Evans as starters.

"It's a good balance of newcomers and kids that have been there, so I'm really excited about our group," said head coach Rory Hamilton.

On the mat, North wrestling has a mix of newcomers and several key returnees as well. Senior Jesse Wetherington was a state qualifier in the 195-pound weight class, and junior JT Stambeck was one place away from going to the state tournament in each of his first two seasons. Despite the inexperience of some of his starters, head coach Jimmy Filippo said they are entering competitions with confidence.

"We're going to have kids in the lineup that have never started. They're going to be kind of green," Filippo said. "I just want them to get better as the year progresses."

Head swimming coach Kent Nicholson is excited about this season's potential. Last season, the boys' team finished second and the girls' finished fourth in the team standings at the state meet.

"What I'm looking for are three competitive relays from both teams," Nicholson said. "If I get that, then they'll score well team-wise at state."

Seniors Even Wagner, Nate McMillen and Alex Stamatina will anchor a deep boys' team, while senior Morgan Okroi headlines the girls' team. – **BSM**



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PROSPERITY POINTS FOR AVOIDING HOLIDAY STRESS



As much as we look forward to the holidays, let's face it—sometimes they can be stressful. Before you get caught up in all the events, create a strategy so you can have a good time.

- Give only the gifts you can afford. The people you love will enjoy something homemade or a “gift certificate” for a future event together. Spending lots of money on someone doesn't mean you love them more.

- Eat and drink sensibly. Rich foods, alcohol, and less sleep are a recipe for stress. If you have an event occurring later in the day, eat a salad

for lunch, not a burger. Then, go on a brisk walk the next day.

- Start shopping early. Last-minute shopping keeps you from comparing prices and leads you to throw money at gifts just to get finished.

- Be a friend to someone less fortunate. The holidays can be lonely. By volunteering to ring the bell, serve the meal, or buy the Secret Santa gifts, you make someone else's day, and you will make your day, as well.

- Celebrate your faith or heritage. The holidays are a great chance to reconnect with your house of worship.

By planning ahead and taking care of yourself, the holidays can be a fun time filled with laughter, wonder, and love. These are the best gifts of all, and they will make you prosperous.

Be Prosperous!

Peggy

The Fine Print: This article is educational, not investment advice. Investing is risky, and you can lose money. Talk to your financial team about any strategies before you implement them.

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Opolis Invades Campus Corner



There's a new addition to Campus Corner and it is bringing color, style and a little history with it.

The Opolis Clothing company sells vintage t-shirts, sweatshirts and hoodies that highlight the pride and history of The University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University and Oklahoma City Thunder in its designs.

When Zach Holland and Evan English, the owners and founders of The Opolis Clothing, were coming up empty in their hunt for vintage OU apparel, they got creative.

Norman natives, Holland and English were unsuccessful in their search for shirts that encompassed the unique history of their hometown and the Sooner state, so they decided to design their own shirts to tell the story and that had a vintage feel.

In 2005, they designed their first shirt. Friends quickly took notice and before they knew it, Holland and English had groups asking for custom shirt designs.

Meanwhile, locally owned shops in Norman and Oklahoma City began asking to sell their designs. In no time, this one-design t-shirt company turned into The Opolis.

The business features a full warehouse, in-house screen printing, online sales and two storefronts.

To make things easy, all of the t-shirts are the same price, \$32. Hoodies are \$64 and crewneck sweatshirts are \$52. Opolis Clothing Company focuses on OU, OSU, OKC Thunder and Oklahoma inspired designs, which are constantly being updated.

With the newest addition to Opolis Clothing Company, the storefront on Campus Corner, Holland and English are hoping that customers will not only find a shirt they love, but also to come in and feel like they can hang out.

On home football game-days, Holland and English host a tailgate party in their store parking lot for customers to enjoy shopping and being with other fans before kick-off.

Patrons that stop by the new store will likely notice the basketball court floor, handmade furniture and unique Oklahoma accents designed to make shoppers feel at home.

For more information about Opolis Clothing Company, visit www.opolisclimbing.com. – **BSM**

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HOLIDAYS AT *Southwind Hills*

For what appears to be a quiet retreat in the woods, Southwind Hills Estates can sometime be a hive of activity where office parties and company get-togethers go during the holidays to get away from it all.

Located at 468 SW 24th Ave, in Goldsby, Southwind's rustic architecture and serene landscape combine to create an elegant and unique setting that is only 10 minutes south of Norman.

While the picturesque scenery is inviting, festive décor this time of year makes everything even appealing.

"We have a beautiful display of white lights lining our driveway, hanging throughout the groves of trees, covering the walkway to the barn and lining the barn itself," said Elaine Tabor, director of events and head coordinator.

"Christmas trees and white and gold décor fill the barn, too."

It is no surprise that companies such as Hal Smith Restaurant Group and Seth Wadley Auto Group have booked corporate events at Southwind Hills. The venue hosts a variety of private events in the winter months, including year-end celebrations, corporate holiday parties and athletic banquets.

"November through January is definitely a busy time for non-wedding events, which we find so fun," Tabor said.

Clients receive top notch service when they book their holiday events with Southwind Hills, Tabor said. An event plan-



ner works with clients to sketch out floor plans, develop an appropriate timeline and coordinate and correspond with vendors. Access to tables, linens and decorations in-house streamline the planning process, too.

While catering for appetizers and dinner is required through the venue, the executive chef can create a custom menu for any special occasion. Clients and guests can bring in desserts, but the venue offers a fun host of options, too — gourmet espresso and hot chocolate bar, s'mores and a cookie bar and a cobbler and ice cream bar.

Many host holiday events on Fridays or Sundays but, for a more cost-effective route, clients have the option to choose a weekday, as well. Aside from the barn, smaller parties can choose to utilize the chapel and the separate reception venue for a more intimate feel. Their selection of venues can accommodate groups as small as 50 people.

Tabor said aside from a spectacular, breathtaking venue, Southwind Hill's service is what sets it apart from the competition.

"Our clients can enjoy the event as much as their guests. It's really helpful for them to find one place that can combine these amenities and allow them to create a really fun and memorable event for their guests."

For more information or to book a holiday event, visit www.southwindhills.com. — **BSM**

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Terra at University North Park



As Norman's University North Park area continues to expand, so do the elements that contribute to the Work, Play, Live plan. One of the newest additions is Terra at University North Park Apartments, slated to welcome residents in January 2018.

Located at 2751 24th Ave Northwest, Terra is part of the expanding, all-encompassing area that is composed of retail, restaurants, entertainment, park space, a grocery store and now a new luxury living community.

"It really has just about everything that you need within a couple mile radius," said property manager Shakiyla Donaldson.

A main focus of Terra is convenience for residents, whether that is in location, amenities or the floor plans of the units. Terra offers 16 different floor plans to help residents find the right layout for them with studio and one, two and three-bedroom options.

She said the apartments were designed with a variety of potential residents in mind. They include young professionals, commuters to the Oklahoma City downtown area and people who are looking to downsize from a large home but still want to enjoy a luxurious lifestyle.

Aesthetically, Donaldson explained that Terra is about "modern luxury," incorporating a modern "big city" look with the mid-rise style of the building. The complex features interior courtyards and a parking garage as well as hardwood style flooring in every common area and gourmet kitchens in units. The building also has designer lighting and modern fixtures throughout.

"It's kind of like we took a community that you would expect to find in a downtown area and brought it to one of the fastest growing areas of Norman," she said.

The list of extensive amenities includes a virtual fitness room, which Donaldson said will be like having a personal trainer come to visit whenever it is convenient.

The community also features a 24-hour clubhouse that has more than 16,000 square feet of space and a resort-style pool. It also has an outdoor theater in the main courtyard, fire pits, grills and outdoor games like a bocce ball court and a life-size chess board.

"We want our residents to fall in love with everything about Terra, including the layout of their unit," she said.

"Terra is going to offer a lifestyle that will exceed the expectations that you have of an apartment complex. We are not just providing an apartment, even though our amazing units themselves are more than a good enough reason to want to live with us, we are also bringing convenience, entertainment and fitness to your door step."

With the first move-in day just around the corner, she said those involved are excited to welcome residents to the community.

"You have no idea the amount of anticipation that has been building around finally being able to share our community," Donaldson said. "It seems like it has taken so long to get to this point, but at the same time it has all happened so quickly. Being able to watch the progress from week to week is something truly amazing. The final product is going to be beautiful, and I know that our residents and community are going to love it as much as we do."

Terra schedules hard-hat tours on Saturdays, allowing potential residents to tour the clubhouse, main courtyard and completed units. Visit www.terrannorman.com or call 835-3422 for more information. – **BSM**



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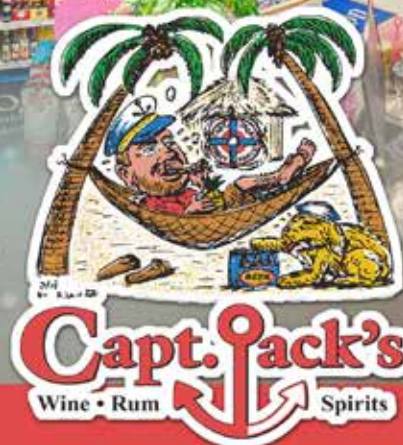
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The Real Deal On The 2018 Tax Changes



With tax season looming, the current administration is hard at work implementing changes to an already complicated tax code. The administration believes the upcoming changes will work to strengthen the middle class, reinvigorate business and increase employment rates.

Unfortunately, though, most of the upcoming tax changes will do little, if anything, for the state of the economy.

Below, you'll find a detailed list of major tax code changes for 2018, as well as a quick look beneath the surface detailing why some of them may not be as beneficial as they seem at first glance.

HIGHER CONTRIBUTION LIMITS FOR RETIREMENT SAVINGS

Most retirement plans – think 401k, 403b and more – currently have a limit of \$18,000 on employee contributions. The new code will increase that limit to \$18,500. This change is fairly simple and beneficial for the individual – if not for the economy.

DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION CHANGES

Individual retirement accounts (IRAs) have contribution limits that are relative to income level, some of which will now be subject to change. The phase-out ranges for contributions to IRAs and Roth IRAs will increase for many people.

While these increased deductions sound wonderful at first, a deeper look shows that they may not be all that beneficial. The changes to the retirement plans are great – so long as one has the increased income to contribute to their plans. Otherwise, they won't make much of a difference. This change will also have little effect on the overall economy.

INCREASED CREDITS AND DEDUCTIONS

Those who are married and filing jointly will have a standard deduction of \$13,000, a \$300 raise from \$12,700. Single taxpayers and those who are married and file separately will see their standard deduction rise to \$6,500. For heads of households, the deduction will be \$9,550.

In addition to these changes, there will also be increased deductions and credits for children, as well as a new tax credit for non-child dependents.

The increased tax deductions and credits can be helpful to some people, but won't help struggling parents much. A one-income family supporting itself on a minimum wage salary doesn't have that much of a tax burden to begin with. These changes may help the middle class, but they won't help the many others who can really use a break.

ELIMINATION OF ESTATE TAX AND TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHY

This change may be good news for the 1%, but it is obviously not helpful for the distribution of income throughout the remaining 99%. A capitalist economy flourishes from the bottom up, and putting more money in the hands of the spenders is what essen-

tially helps the economy thrive. Doing the exact opposite won't affect much growth.

REDUCED TAXES ON REPATRIATED FUNDS

In an effort to bring work from American companies back to our shores, the administration has promised to reduce taxes for companies who make this move. Sounds rosy, but in reality, it's hopelessly futile. Most American companies that have plants and warehouses overseas do so because the cost of labor is a whole lot cheaper abroad.

For example, an average U.S. auto worker earns close to \$30 an hour, compared with a worker in Mexico earning just over \$5 an hour for the same work. To offset the cost of paying American workers to replace workers overseas, a tax cut would have to be enormous and fairly impossible to implement.

Simplified tax bracket system

The current tax brackets will be consolidated to create a simpler system. For example, the 39.6% tax rate will now affect individuals with an income exceeding \$426,700. Top rate will now kick in for married taxpayers who file jointly at \$480,050.

These, and similar changes, promise to make tax time less of a headache. It remains doubtful, though, that these changes will affect the economy in a positive way.

TAX RATE CHANGES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

This change is being implemented with the rationale that, by giving small businesses a minor tax break, they will be able to hire more workers, and thus decrease the unemployment rate.

The problem with this reasoning, though, is that small businesses don't hire workers when they have less expenses; they hire workers when their business is growing at a rate in which their current staff cannot meet their clients' demands. Therefore, while many small businesses may appreciate the tax cut, it is unlikely that this change will affect unemployment rates.

CORPORATE TAX RATE CUTS

Similar to the change in tax rates for small businesses, the theory here is that these changes will stimulate economic growth and employment. But, as argued above, firms generally don't increase their hiring rate because of decreases in their tax burden. To make it worse, lowering the tax rate for the bigger companies has the potential to consolidate their power, essentially doing more harm than good for the economy.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Perhaps the most dramatic change that the new tax code will generate is reduced government spending. All of these cuts need to be paid for, though. When they're sponsored by Uncle Sam tightening his belt that means there will be a lot less of government money injected into the economy – and that's never good news.



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Enough with the Bubbles

Oh, the holidays! Parties, guests and football abound. Let's celebrate the holidays with a red blend. Red blends go back to France, where the famous Bordeaux wines were crafted. The French, sure the English could not handle the word Bordeaux, marketed the wine in Britain as Claret.

Bordeaux wines are primarily a blend of Cabernet and Merlot. Chateau Neuf de Pape is another famous French blend. Other popular red blends are the Spanish Rioja and Italian Valpolicella. California joined the table with Meritage blends, using primarily Cabernet and Merlot and adding GSM-Grenache, Sirah and Mourvedré.

While all the European and traditional California blends tend to be dry, there is a growing group of softer red blends. Several of the big name brands now feature offerings designated as soft or "crush," indicating a fruit-forward style. Some are even downright sweet.

It is important to remember that most wines are designed to be purchased and consumed in a relatively close time. In the case of an expensive Bordeaux wine, the years spent laid down in a cellar lead to the tannins softening, resulting in a much more complex and flavorful wine.



Whether you like sweet, dry or something in between, there is a red blend for you. On the sweet end, a New Age Red is a great place to start. If you prefer a traditional style, try A Proper Claret or The Prisoner. For those looking for somewhere in between, I suggest Saved or Phantom.

Enjoy and be safe.

Kathy

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Dr. Kyle Toal, cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon with Norman Heart & Vascular Associates

There are many factors that contribute to heart health, including buzz words like cholesterol, inflammation, blood pressure, weight and stress.

But, studies have shown that the holiday season might need to be added to that list. The American Heart Association reports that heart attack deaths are in fact highest during the months of December and January.

“Studies show that the number of heart attacks increases by more than 30 percent during the winter months and the rate of cardiac death increases by 5 percent around the holidays,” said Dr. Kyle Toal, cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon with Norman Heart & Vascular Associates.

The reason points to several factors. The holidays tend to be a season of indulgence and extremes, Toal said. The additions to our to-do lists keep us up late, missing out on valuable sleep, and festivities often lead to overeating, excessive alcohol consumption and, for some, additional financial and emotional stresses. All of that can be hard on the heart, especially for those already at risk for a cardiac event.

“Also, patients are less likely to seek medical care during the holidays, attributing their symptoms to other factors or not wanting to disrupt family

events,” said Toal. “It is important to take this seriously. The holidays are a time to ask people how they are doing and really mean it.”

Despite that foreboding information, there is good news for Normanites. The Norman Regional Chest Pain Center was recently reaccredited by the American College of Cardiology (ACC). Norman Regional was the first hospital in the Oklahoma City metro area to achieve this level of national recognition.

“This is more than just a badge,” Toal said. “In a nutshell, it is about our process and best practices. It drives what we do and the methods use for the best outcomes. We are doing our best to help cardiac patients survive. What is so exciting is that this is interdisciplinary, all in the name of a patient.”

Hospitals receiving the accreditation must take part in a multi-faceted clinical process. Improving on the hospital’s previous accreditations, Norman Regional has renewed its focus on coronary intervention, resuscitation, streamlining processes and educating the community. The overall goal is to increase survival rates.

“Most of the time, heart attacks happen outside of the hospital and timing is critical,” said Sara McMillan, coordinator for the Chest Pain Program. “By meeting these additional requirements,

Take Heart This Holiday

National Accreditation Means Better Outcomes for Heart Patients in Norman

we have been able to update and improve our processes for our out-of-hospital cardiac arrest patients.”

The staff at Norman Regional knows when they invest in community education, they are arming people to be able to save someone’s life. The first critical step is making sure those people understand the signs of a heart attack.

“Look for excessive sweating, trouble breathing, chest pain that can go down either arm or indigestion that gets worse,” said Toal. “And, don’t delay seeking care.”

“You don’t have to be a nurse to save someone,” Toal said. “Usually it’s a family member that brings a patient in.”

Prevention is also an important component.

“Our society has developed a wonderful system for treating diseases, but we aren’t very good at prevention,” Toal said. “Do what you can to be healthy. Choose to be healthy.”

While that is simple to say, temptations abound this time of year. Toal suggests looking for support.

“In a family, if one person does something, others will take part too,” explained Toal. “I always tell families that the treatment for heart attack patients is a family matter.” — **BSM**

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Growing the Game



Renovations now complete at Jimmie Austin Golf Club at the University of Oklahoma.

For the last five years, golfers at Jimmie Austin Golf Club at the University of Oklahoma have had to work around some kind of construction, whether to the course or to the club house amenities. Officials are excited to announce that renovations that impacted the course are now complete.

“The course is open and ready for the community to enjoy,” invited Rodney Young, general manager of the golf club. “Some have said it’s the best in the state now.”

While the process may have presented some inconveniences over the years, it is now time for the community to reap the benefits. In addition to the newly renovated course, a new golf instruction center, the Michael A. Cawley Center for Golf Instruction, offers weather-proof options to improve your golf game.

“Our golf academy now offers a golf simulator and Foresight monitor that let’s golfers work on their swing without concern for the weather,” Young said. “We also have two indoor hitting bays that allow you to hit into a

net or out onto the driving range.”

The Golf Shop is preparing to move to a new location within the club and that means Normanites can take advantage of some great deals at a very convenient shopping time of the year.

“We are moving our shop into a new space in January and we need to make room for the move,” said Young. “The golf shop will be running great specials on merchandise including clothing through Christmas.”

The club’s connection to the university means that their shop is stocked with top brands and everything Sooner.

“We have the best selection of OU golf merchandise,” Young said. “We have items you won’t find anywhere else, including a lot of exclusive OU merchandise.”

Now that their focus has shifted from construction, Young is excited to grow their junior golf program. Planning is underway for a new dedicated junior golf tee and a program to help youth access the game.

“It is easy to play other sports, but we want to make golf easier for kids to enjoy,” Young explained. “We are

breaking ground now to build a practice tee exclusively for junior golfers.”

Officials are also working on a cost-friendly way to get kids started.

“We hope to be able to get kids started for very little financial investment,” said Young. “We expect this program will pay dividends for our community and the game of golf.”

Details are still being finalized, but Young hopes to give kids who sign up for the junior golf program a free club and offer special access to the tee for very low cost.

“We want to help kids get better at the game of golf. We are very excited about this investment.”

The renovations aren’t just for golfers to enjoy, however. Many of the upgrades including the newly renovated Everest Indoor/Outdoor Pavilion can be reserved for special events, holiday parties and weddings.

“We have a new event lawn that offers a beautiful view of the course,” Young said. “We have had several weddings on the lawn already.”

For more information on facilities and shop hours, visit www.theougolfclub.com. – **BSM**



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What's in a Name? Edwards Park



Legacy Trail Park is a long strip of Norman's history that parallels the railroad, just west of downtown. It's a nice place for a stroll from Duffy to Acres streets, but there are hidden gems along the way for those who look a little closer.

As the trail crosses Main Street, the smiling statue of James Garner is often the first sight, but just behind it is a humble historical marker that explains how the spot began as "Edwards Park," named for Lewis Jefferson Edwards.

It is thanks to "LJ" Edwards that Norman is the beautiful city it is today.

Edwards was born in Connersville, Indiana in 1852. His great-granddaughter, Patti Green-Blishak, says that he grew up precocious and was infamous for running away to join the circus.

"He'd eventually come back home, settle down for a bit. Then something would happen, and he would be running away to join the circus again." She says that his wanderlust grew as he did, and he traveled to Europe, bringing back numerous trinkets and treasures.

"I still have things in my basement from his Europe trip," she said.

Green-Blishak lives in a white house to the south of the longtime home where her great-grandfather finally set down roots. That house still stands at 206 S University Blvd.

Edwards married his longtime, Indiana sweetheart Mary Hand in 1877, and together they moved west to what would eventually become Oklahoma Territory.

Green-Blishak said they first settled south of Norman in Goldsby in the 1880s, but a year after the Land Run of 1889, Edwards brought his family to Norman, settling on the outskirts of town, which eventually became Acres Street.

From the beginning, Edwards was a crusader for Norman. A prominent civic leader in early-day Norman, Edwards served as presidents of the Norman Chamber of Commerce, director of the First National Bank and president of the Norman School Board.

He was also a strong promoter of the University of Oklahoma as it was first being established outside of town. It is said the first-ever OU faculty meeting was hosted at the Edwards home in 1892.

The family soon moved once again to the house on University Boulevard.

"He was a mover and shaker in town," said designer and builder Brent Swift, who purchased the house from the Edwards family in 2006. It came along with room after room of historical documents and relics packed away in travel trunks. The find spurred him and his coworkers to learn more about Edwards, who was even said to be "the first citizen in Norman to fly over the town in an airplane."

"His mind was constantly working, looking for ways to improve everything around him," Green-Blishak says. "He coined a phrase, 'You can't have roosters and roses'."

Green-Blishak said Edwards used the saying as a motto and embodiment of his drive for city beautification, which he worked toward as chairman of city parks from 1912 to 1924.

His first action was to clean up the Santa Fe Railway right-of-way in downtown Norman. The empty space had once served as Norman's first town meeting site with elections taking place in the back of wagons.

Over time, it had deteriorated into an overgrown eyesore for first-time visitors to see as they arrived in Norman.

Edwards worked with the railroad company for permissions and the city for landscaping funds. He made a welcome sign for visitors, proclaiming the slogan he chose for Norman, "The University City."

The park downtown was by no means his only handiwork. He touched every corner of Norman, especially the large Norman city park that ultimately became known as Andrews Park. It had been in existence since the original town plat in 1889, but by 1922 it also had degenerated into neglect, according to newspaper accounts.

Edwards planned an enormous remodel, cutting scrub trees and redesigning the layout along scientific



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The Stephenson Cancer Center annually ranks among the top three cancer centers in the nation for patients participating in National Cancer Institute-sponsored clinical trials, and it is one of 30 designated lead cancer centers in the Institute's National Clinical Trials Network.

plans. He worked with university landscapers, the chamber of commerce and local Rotary and Lions clubs to turn the park into what The Norman Transcript called, "a modern Garden of Eden, where friends can meet friends without being embarrassed, and where children will delight to romp and play."

Due to declining health, Edwards retired two years after the large park project was complete. He died in 1926.

Today, his legacy is strong throughout Norman. Residents can see it in the community's civic spirit as well as in the parks he helped establish.

According to Green-Blishak, the concrete benches that stand in Legacy Trail Park are made from the same design Edwards created when attempting to find cost-effective seating for Norman's earliest park patrons.

Edwards always suffered from boyish wanderlust, but he never lost his love for Norman.

In a speech he gave at a Norman Chamber of Commerce event, he said, "I have traveled far and near seeking a permanent location, but I have always returned to Norman, the best town in the world." – **BSM**

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A French Connection

After two years in the making, a little taste of France opened its doors last month at 1954 24th Ave NW, in Norman.

La Madeleine offers classic French country cuisine, including the restaurant chain's popular tomato basil soup, caesar salad, sandwiches, pastas, pastries and much more.

Deepen Patel, franchise owner of the Oklahoma locations, says he is glad to finally be in Norman.

"I always wanted to be in Norman. I love college towns and I am a big fan of OU," said Patel.

Patel's association with La Madeleine did not simply start as a franchise owner, but as a college student in Dallas. He would go to La Madeleine frequently to eat, study and meet friends or colleagues.

La Madeleine soon became his go-to spot. It is only fitting that Patel is now bringing La Madeleine to other cities, specifically college towns, so residents and students can find the same comfort he did.

The French cuisine that La Madeleine offers are storied recipes from the original owner, Patrick Esquerre, his family and La Madeleine associates from over the years. The tomato basil soup, caesar salad and strawberries romanoff are a few of the restaurant's most cherished recipes.

Aside from soups and salads, La Madeleine offers quiches, sandwiches and pastas for a

heartier option. Deserts are also a popular feature of the menu. They have a variety of cakes, pies and, of course, pastries.

La Madeleine's identity not only lies in their culinary delights, but also in the service and atmosphere that the restaurant offers. Patel said he not only wants Norman residents to fall in love with the food at La Madeleine, but also the ambiance and friendly service of their associates.

"With the opening of La Madeleine in Norman, we are sharing our love of French food and hospitality with the community, and we hope to become a favorite spot for our neighbors to enjoy fantastic food with friends and family in a relaxed atmosphere," said Patel.

La Madeleine serves breakfast, lunch, dinner and dessert every day of the week. They also have free wifi and a private meeting room for business meetings or celebrations.

For patrons who are in a hurry, the restaurant offers a sampler plate with a few items from the menu that can be served right away. But, for those with a little time, the associates encourage spending an hour or two relaxing, working or studying.

The restaurant is open every day from 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. For more information about La Madeleine visit www.lamadeleine.com. — **BSM**



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