



Sara Davis and Zachary Taylor had just enough sunshine to take wedding photos- despite Hurricane Ike steadily making his way toward Buffalo. See story on page 4A.

## Leon County Cooks: Debra Richardson

By Sherry Matney

Picture in your mind the famous Martha Stuart with a cowgirl hat and you've got a pretty good depiction of this week's cook, Debra Richardson. A Master Gardener, Richardson not only loves to cook healthy foods, she loves to grow them in her garden. She cans and freezes much of the food she produces and dehydrates and crushes herbs for cooking. She makes pepper sauce from peppers she has grown and puts them up in recycled beer bottles. In her back yard is a beautiful lemon tree from the "1840 Old Fashioned" variety, which is as healthy looking and prolific as many in the warmer climates.

A tour of Richardson's yard is a delight, even in the dead of winter. Her fall garden is still producing Brussels sprouts, cabbage, beets and turnips. There are raised beds for some of her produce and pots filled with soil for others. Two large pots have baby carrots growing in them. Debra is in the process of building a root cellar below her house, to store the root crops she plans

to grow this year. Willing to share her secret, Richardson says get mushroom dirt from the mushroom farm in Madisonville and you too will be a great gardener.

Bird houses and bird feeders are everywhere around her house and porch and the yard is filled with birds. Debra rescued a lost female cockatiel which flew out of the wild. So the bird wouldn't be lonely she bought a male to keep her company. The feathered couple has produced three beautiful offspring. Richardson has also rescued many dogs throughout the years and loves to feed the deer which feel at home on her place.

Richardson's family is originally from Little Rock, Arkansas and she visits regularly, mining crystal rocks while she is there. Crystal rocks decorate her home, yard and body. She makes beautiful jewelry from her excavations.

Debra's love for cooking and gardening probably came from her mother who grew up in the Great Depression and learned to grow and cook good, healthy food as a matter of daily living. When asked how she learned to cook, Richardson responded "Mama was a good cook and always provided healthy, home raised meals for her family. I came from a long line of good cooks and gardeners. My grandma taught me to cook and now I am teaching my grandchildren."

Every cook has a specialty and Richardson's is admittedly "pies". She uses her home grown lemons to make deliciously tart Lemon Meringue Pie and won 2nd place for best tasting pie at the Leon County July 4th Celebration in Centerville in 2007. Her schedule didn't allow her to participate in 2008.

Debra grew up in the Houston area, attended school at Galena Park and never expected to be a country girl. But her brother Johnny Richardson moved to Mexia in 1999 and Debra followed soon thereafter. She loves living in Leon County where



Debra Richardson holds one of the beautiful cabbage heads she grew in her garden this fall and winter. Sherry's Shots

she operates a trucking company which she started about two years ago.

Jennifer Culpepper, Debra's beautiful daughter, shares her mom's love for gardening, cooking and decorating. Jennifer has two sons and one daughter who bless Debra's life.

One of the perks of writing this column is getting to test and taste these wonderful recipes. Debra prepared every recipe which follows and invited me to share the meal with her and Jennifer. The meal was absolutely delicious.

### Pot of Pinto Beans

Soak beans in a large pot overnight, add 8 cups of water to every 1 lb of beans, and drain off water, then rinse. Place soaked beans in a large pot, cover them with water and bring to a boil. Add 2 slices of bacon then reduce to medium heat and add 1 tsp cumin per 1 lb of beans. Keep watch over beans and add water when needed. Cook until tender, approximately 3 1/2 hours. Add onion, salt and pepper to taste.

### Wedged Cabbage

Take one large cab-

bage and cut into 4 quarters. Place in large stock pot, add 1 inch of water and bring to boil. Turn down heat to medium high and cover for 10 minutes. Fork should pierce through easily when done. Drain water, add butter, salt and pepper to taste.

### Smothered Potatoes

Cut, peel and scallop 1 lb. red new potatoes and slice one white onion. In a large cast-iron skillet, heat 2 tbsp olive oil. Place potatoes in hot oil, coat evenly and lightly brown. Add onion and cover for approximately 15-20 minutes until desired tenderness. Can also substitute sweet potatoes and red onions if preferred.

### Debra's Buttermilk Cornbread

1 1/2 cups cornmeal  
1/2 cup all purpose flour  
2 tsp baking powder  
1 tsp sugar  
1 tsp salt  
1/2 tsp baking soda  
1/4 cup shortening  
1 1/2 cups buttermilk  
2 eggs  
Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Mix all ingredients; beat vigorously for 30 seconds. Pour into greased cast-iron skillet. Bake until golden brown.

### Debra's Lemon Buttermilk Pie

1 1/2 cups sugar  
1 cup buttermilk  
1 tsp all purpose flour  
2 eggs  
2 egg yolks  
1/2 tsp vanilla extract  
Minced zest, and the juice of one lemon  
Pinch of salt  
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Whisk together all ingredients in a large bowl. Pour into unbaked pie shell. Bake until filling is just set, but still jiggly. Approximately 40-50 minutes. Let cool to room temperature. Store in fridge. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.

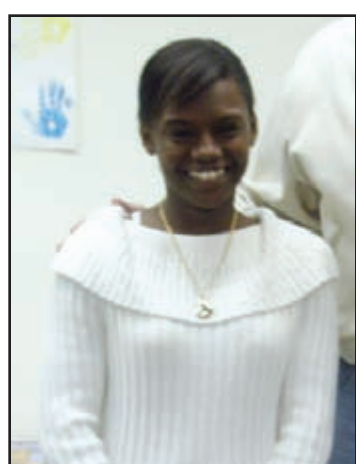
## Oakwood School Board honors three outstanding students

By Sherry Matney

The Oakwood Independent School District Board of Trustees held its regular meeting on January 19, 2009 in the Administrative Boardroom and opened the meeting by honoring three outstanding students. Seven year old Bobbye Freeman was the first to take the floor. Bobbye is in the second grade and enjoys reading and sports. She plans to become a singer, a doctor, or maybe a teacher.

Eric Ballard was next recognized. In the eleventh grade he is known for his courtesy and helpfulness. Eric enjoys sports and plays football, basketball and track for the Panther team.

Adrienneanna Purvis is a senior and has been a high achiever her entire school career. She has been a cheerleader for 3 1/2 years; track for 3 years; Who's Who for 3 years; National Honor Roll, Homecoming Queen candidate; Student Ambassador; cross country track for 1 year, and year book for 1 year. Adrienneanna plans to attend Navarro College then transfer to Sam Houston and become a lawyer.



Adrienneanna Purvis

Following recognition of the students Superintendent Richard Scoggin announced that the Board would adjourn to the school cafeteria for a meal in appreciation for services. The Board was treated to a home cooked meal of chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes, green beans and home made bread. The meal was topped off by home made coconut and chocolate pies made by Joan Bing, a featured Leon County Cook.

Once the Board's appetite was satisfied, the meeting reconvened in the Boardroom. In the Superintendent's report Scoggin advised the Board that total enrollment for the district is 223 with average attendance of 97%. He also

### Johnny

from page 1A

Livestock Commission, where he worked concurrently for 35 years.

Debra graduated from Elgin High School and attended Sam Houston State University. Both of the Williams are looking forward to spending time with their grandchildren.

Johnny and Debra have one son John Shawe, who is married to Courtney. They have two children, Hunter and Emma and live in Lovelady.

Emmy, the Williams' daughter, graduated from Texas A&M and lives in College Station.

Johnny said of his years at the Post Office, "It has been a privilege for both of us to have served the Buffalo area as long as we have. It has been a fun ride." A retirement celebration is planned for Sunday, January 25th from 2-6 at the Buffalo Civic Center to honor Johnny and Debra.



Bobbye Freeman

provided a budget summary which reflects remaining balances in each line item. There is currently 63.8% remaining in the total budget with less than 50% of the school year remaining. Scoggin explained that there is a good chance that the school will make up a good portion of the \$69,000 deficit from last school year.

In further recognition of the Board, Scoggin presented each member with a certificate of appreciation and showed them posters and books prepared by the students

The Board approved minutes from the December meeting, financial statements and amendments and bills. The school received a donation of \$100.00 from the Extension Club to be used to purchase books for the library.



Debra's lemon tree right here in Leon County.

Sherry's Shots



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