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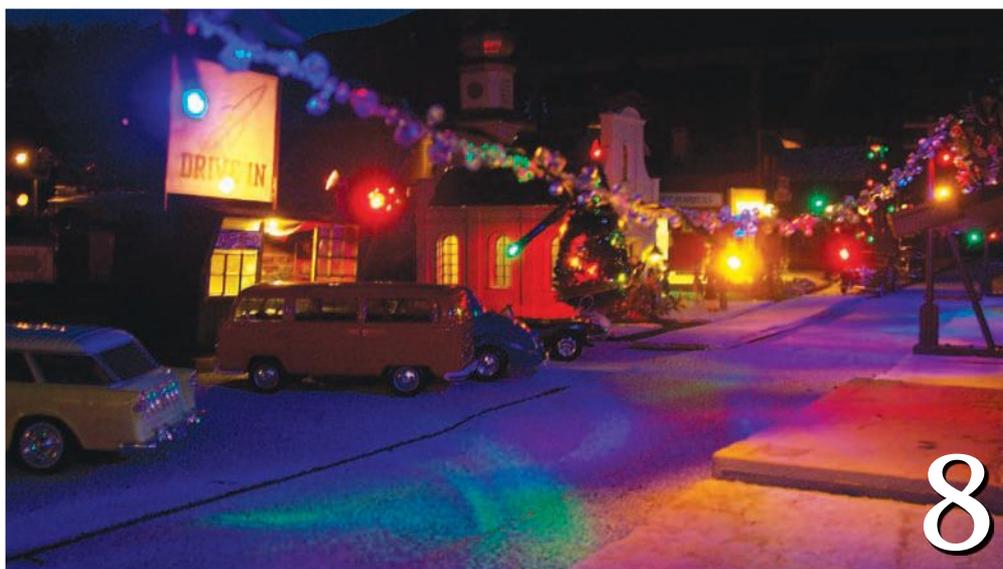


*Garden railroaders Will and Mary  
Smith dress up their tiny town  
for Christmas.*

*Photo by SRC Photography.*

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (817) 477-0990 or visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).



## Editor's Note

*Hello, Friends!*

With so very much going on this time of year, it's hard to find time for television watching. But around these parts, even folks who don't usually watch shows like *The Voice* are tuning in. Burleson's 16-year-old beauty, Reagan James, has graced the program's NBC studios in Los Angeles since round one in late September. At that time, pundits said we were bound to watch her compete long into the seventh season.

Lo and behold, her breathy style has magnetized the nation. Her local fans, who support her when she performs on stage at Dalton's Corner and Old Texas Brewing Company, just might have envisioned this season for Reagan. As she and her family have much to celebrate, we all lift a toast to them.

Cheers to a joyful December!

### Melissa

Melissa Rawlins  
BurlesonNOW Editor  
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(817) 629-3888

P.S. The publisher and staff at NOW Magazines wish you and your family a very merry Christmas and a happy holiday season.

*Merry Christmas*

Our family would like to take this opportunity to wish our many customers, friends and neighbors season's greetings. Wishing you a happy heart, home and many new reasons for us all to be thankful. Thanks to everyone for the trust and confidence you have shown us over the years. May Peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through!

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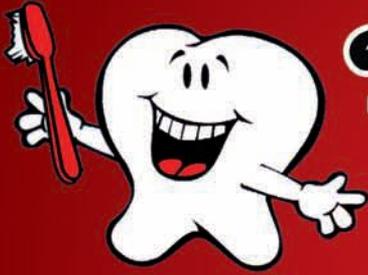
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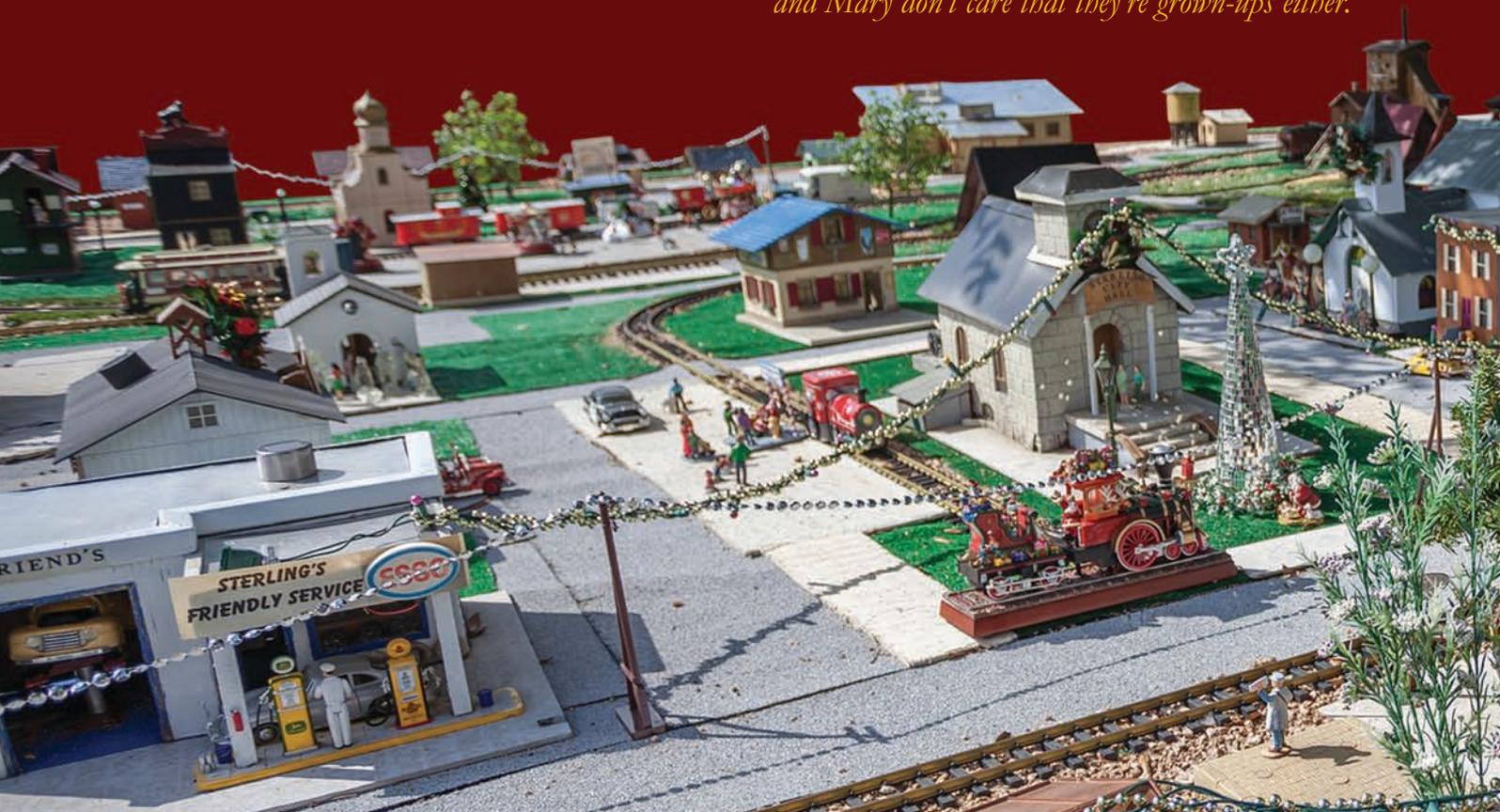
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# TOY TOWN

— By Melissa Rawlins

**“WHAT WE DO IS  
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*Will and Mary Smith love to play, whether with trains or words or both. This couple's hobby — railroading — allows them to bounce their ideas off others who visit and enjoy their trains. They play with trains together, just as they do with words. With Will's help, Mary has written a children's book, focused on her love of family and animals, called *The Magic on Sterling Lane*. With Mary's help, Will has published poetry, as well as a compilation of stories about his family's life in western Tennessee during the Depression era, through the war years and into the '60s. He called it *We Didn't Know We Were Poor Until Somebody Told Us*. Turns out, Will and Mary don't care that they're grown-ups either.*



# ME

The widowers met in a grief group in 2007 and married each other in 2008 with the intention of enjoying the rest of their lives together. They've created their own backyard playground and are threatening to create a fake yellow caution sign saying: *Grandparents Playing*. They will probably install it under their 30-foot oak tree near the hugest train set ever to grace Sterling Lane, a quiet place in Crowley where the Smiths moved in 2010.

Members of the North Texas Garden Railroad Club, the Smiths' five G-gauge tracks meander through their 24x54-foot town of Sterling, Texas. Laid out on a table Will designed to be 2 feet above the ground, this miniature community



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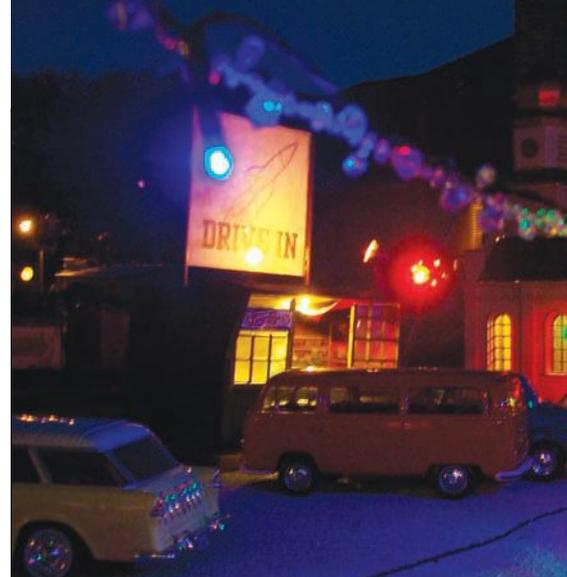
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is set in the mid '50s, yet it was actually birthed in 2010, when the Smiths went to their first train show in Fort Worth. They brought home their first train set, a G-gauge named Tweetsie, and laid it on the grass behind their home. Their games had only just begun.

Mary recalls it was half the size it is now, but they realized it was on top of



the septic tank. When they moved it, they had dreams of weaving the trains into their flowerbeds so plants could become part of the railroad scene. Finding they were not that energetic, the Smiths developed a railroad incorporating one real tree and only the necessary bits of artificial greenery.

"I'm the type of club member we call rivet counters," said Will, who retired from a lifetime career in operations at Burleson Northern Santa Fe Railroad. "I



want to see a Texaco tank car with the same number series I remember Texaco tank cars having.”

Before Sterling’s third and final edition, the Smiths realized they needed to elevate it. “The excuse I use is: I put it up higher so the kids could see it better,” Will said. “But it’s hard for old chubby people to bend over anymore.” More often than not, he sits, scoots or crawls on the table to perform maintenance. When necessary, he carefully steps from 4x4 brace to 4x4 brace. The platform, built around the oak tree and its irrigation system, allows water to drip through the table and down to the tree roots. “It’s doing exactly what I wanted it to do, because the little town’s topography has undulations that change over time, as the table wood warps.”

The goal of Sterling, Texas, is to create an illusion that sparks elusive memories into full-blown reality — at least momentarily. Electric lights can be switched on at night, so you can watch the welding going on in the auto mechanic’s shop. Giant street lamps illuminate the saw mill and railroad terminal building, and tiny bulbs provide signals for the air traffic controllers. Once Will and Mary go to bed, it looks like the whole town’s asleep, except for the employees at Standard Oil’s ESSO station and the hotel, both lit by solar nightlights.

At Christmas, little bitty lights decorate the town in a life-like manner. There is a nativity scene in Court Square, the county fair grounds have a couple of seasonal carnival rides, and each church is lit with Christmas lights. “I use very small, twinkly, colored LEDs,” Will said, “that fool the mind into seeing something that is not really there.”

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This summer, the Smiths shopped for carpet that looks exactly like grass. Three-inch-tall people in the town, purchased from various vendors, come painted or unpainted. Will precision-paints all his soldiers. The buildings sometimes come prefabricated, sometimes not. Will customized kit garages to make a Home Depot and a Piggly Wiggly grocery store. "I stick-built the ESSO station, the mine and the saw mill," Will said. "I got the church from a lady throwing away her birdhouse."

"If we see a bunch of trash on the side of the road, we're not above stopping to see if there's anything useful in it," Mary said.

"I'm just one step above being a hoarder," Will remarked.

He still has the Santa suit he purchased several years ago, when he was president of the PTA at Worth Heights Elementary School. Another time, he indulged the Bartlett, Tennessee, police department and dressed as Santa Claus for their community Christmas party. He may or may not get talked into wearing the suit again.

"We have open houses for the neighborhood, Christmas parties, and our standard thing is to ask for two hours of our guests' time so we can tour them through the town," Mary said. Throughout the year, their goal is to host fundraisers for churches or groups like Susan G. Komen and the ALS

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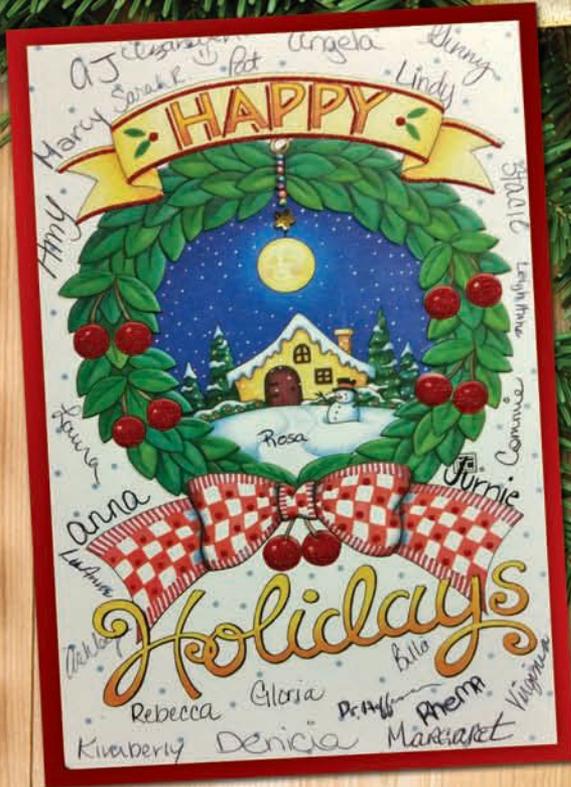
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Association, in memory of their son-in-law who passed from Lou Gehrig's Disease. "We don't benefit from it in any way, except by seeing the people."

Sterling, Texas, gives Mary and Will an excuse to talk to other people. "Children are my favorite," Will said. "A lot of times, they've never seen a steam engine or an airplane hangar."

"For the older folks, I want to elicit a memory they might have about their hometown. When they talk to me, it gives me an idea of things I can add." For example, there's a hay field prompted by a comment from Will's brother. There's the Geezwherawe River, named after explorer Sir Ivan Skidwig's favorite question, "Geez, where are we?" And behind Sterling's helicopter base is a melon patch inspired by U.S. Army vet, Tom Lydle, a helicopter pilot in Korea and Vietnam, who recollected of stealing watermelons from behind his officers club.

"What we do is a true labor of love. I love myself. Jesus said I was supposed to," Will said. "Mary and I always said, 'If I owned the railroad, I would do it this way.' Well, now we own the railroad, and we can do what we want to do." One thing they want to do is introduce men and women to garden railroading, and encourage kids of all ages to think of it as a hobby they can do. When it's toy time at the Smiths, all they want is Sterling, Texas. **NOW**

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# Making Dreams Come True

— By Erin McEndree

*This is the season when people think about others more than any other time of the year. Cards are hung on angel trees for little ones and seniors in need. Dinners are planned and served to those who may otherwise go without. Celebrations and concerts honoring the birth of the Savior are numerous. Donations to charitable organizations increase significantly. Adults and children alike long for their dreams to come true during this festive month. Rhyan Anderson helps dreams come true by infusing himself into many organizations and events in the community of Burleson. He also wears many hats to enhance the community all year.*

To connect more intimately with the community, Rhyan is deeply involved in the Rotary Club. “I love helping people,” Rhyan said. He not only assists in planning Rotary events, he also rolls up his sleeves. Rhyan volunteers on the Day of Caring when business men and women donate their time and resources to help families in need. He helps deliver dictionaries donated by the Rotary Club to every third-grade student in Burleson. Rhyan expands his helpful nature toward students by being a member of the Campus Improvement Committee at Irene Clinkscale Elementary School, where his wife, Kelsey, is a third-grade teacher. He also assists setting out flags in the community several times a year.

Another passion Rhyan maintains is singing. “I come from singers,” Rhyan admitted. “My granddad sang at his congregation in Kansas.” During his high school years in the Burleson ISD, Rhyan was involved

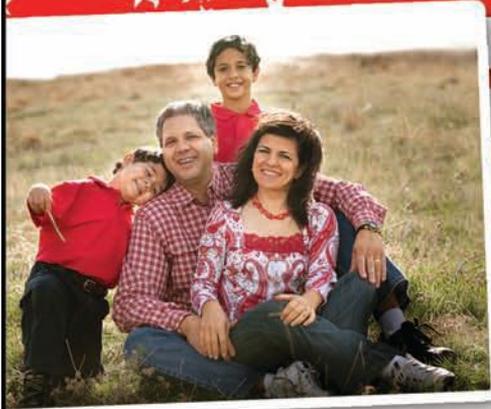


"I have the ability to make people's dreams a reality."

in show choir. He is amused that he grew up with Kelly Clarkson, the first season's winner of *American Idol* in 2002, and played opposite her in the musical *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. Rhyan won several high honors and made it to the area choir competition his senior year, but never competed because of a basketball injury. "Right before the competition, I got my teeth knocked through my upper lip," Rhyan explained. He also sang in a group called Soulful Sound that included his dad, Phil. They sang periodically for 10 years. "I took

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voice lessons from Raymond Bazemore, a professor at Texas Christian University. While attending Southwestern College in Kansas, I continued classical training with James Schuppener to expand my bass and

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tenor range," Rhyan said. "I learned how to project without a microphone by using breathing techniques." The choir traveled to places like Singapore, Germany, Malaysia and Austria to perform.

Rhyan keeps his vocal cords busy locally throughout the year by singing with Healing Heart, a Christian vocal ensemble with a mission to bring both spiritual and physical healing through music. The Brazos Chamber Orchestra (BCO) is a 50-piece orchestra composed of professional musicians from around the Metroplex. They play an eclectic blend of classical, big band, patriotic, movie tunes and pop. "It is always something you can tap your toe to and sing along with," Rhyan said. Both groups combine for an annual free Christmas concert performed in Cleburne, Burleson and Granbury in December. This year, the director, David Anavitarte, has entitled the Christmas concert *All Is Well*. Rhyan has been singing with the group for three years. He sits on the board of the BCO, where he is

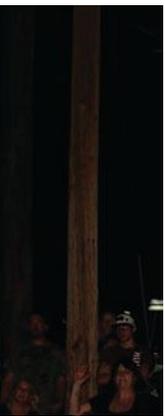


involved in fundraising, advertising and promoting.

Staying in the background to keep events and organizations running smoothly is Rhyan's preference, but one

year at the annual Rotary Club conference, called President Elect Training Seminar (PETS), something happened to the compact disc containing the national anthem. "I told a guy I could sing it," Rhyan said. "The guy looked at me sarcastically like, sure dude, but later he asked me if I could really sing. I ended up singing the national anthem, 'God Bless America' and 'Let There Be Peace' a cappella at dinner. I enjoyed my

time there so much, I plan to go back and sing at PETS for many years to come." This experience thrust Rhyan into the spotlight, instead of his normal role behind the scene as a ranger donning a



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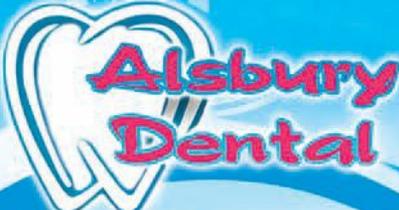


cowboy hat and guiding people where they need to go, setting up rooms and preparing events.

Guiding people financially and helping them prepare for future events is what Rhyan does every day as vice president of First Financial Bank. He has wanted to be a banker since he was a little kid. Rhyan reminisced about playing Monopoly, where he developed a love for making deals. During college, Rhyan received academic, sports and choral scholarships. He focused on a business degree with a minor in music. "I have the ability to make people's dreams a reality," Rhyan said. "I love being a community banker and assisting people with business or commercial needs or just helping people through a rough spot."

When Rhyan is not working or volunteering, he is a doting father of two boys, Tyler and Dylan. He teaches them gun safety in skeet shooting and humility through golfing. He also coaches the boys' basketball teams in Upward Basketball. "Around November, Kelsey jokingly says, 'I'll see you in the new year,'" Rhyan laughed. Involvement in the Rotary Club and BCO keeps his calendar full for several months.

Presently, Rhyan is helping organize the Christmas Parade scheduled for December 6, hosted by the Burselson Rotary Club. The morning starts off with Santa's Breakfast in Winter Wonderland. Kids can take pictures and make crafts and tell Santa their Christmas wishes, while the elves cook pancakes and



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sausage. Later in the evening, the streets in Old Town will be bustling with dancers, singers and entertainers. This year's theme is Parade of Lights. Walking nativities will be followed by horses decked in tinsel, kids dressed as reindeer, marching bands and Santa, of course. Participants and onlookers are kept safe during the parade by the Citizens on Patrol, who assist the Burleson police. Rhyhan is also a member of this group.

The Santa float, hosted by the Rotary Club, is the pinnacle of the parade. "Rotary members start planning in November by sending out registration forms, inviting high school marching bands and preparing the float with Santa's sleigh," Rhyhan explained. "The parade is a tradition and a good community event." After the parade, the climax of the evening is lighting the tree. Ten thousand lights are set aglow by Santa and his helpers.

December's responsibilities seem to snowball for Rhyhan during the Christmas season, but he has found the "sweet spot" of life by combining his talent for singing and his passions for helping others. Somehow, he makes it all work because he loves the firm handshake of a successful transaction and seeing the sparkle in a kid's eye when they see Santa in the parade. Rhyhan gives adults and children hope that their dreams will come true — a great gift to give during Christmas. **NOW**



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# CREATIVE

# Grace

— By Lisa Bell

*Landon and Krystal Dees began life together as high school sweethearts. Almost 12 years and three children later, they still enjoy time together communicating and building things. They share a knack for envisioning furniture and wall decorations, and then through a process of trial and error, they take the mental image from a concept to reality. What they do through actual building they also accomplish in church ministry.*



## At Home With Landon and Krystal Dees

As an associate/youth pastor at Graceview Baptist Church, Landon and his family often open their home to various groups. Their house in the country provides the perfect place for visitors. More importantly, the 2-acre plot gives them plenty of room for their children to run and play.

Landon and Krystal bought the older home less than two years ago. Built in the 1980s, the home contains large rooms throughout. In the kitchen, the abundance of countertops and cabinets was a main draw when they first saw the house. A breakfast bar divides the kitchen from the living room, yet creates a very open feel. The dining room is also located beside the living room.

Their 10-year-old daughter, Kinsley, claims the living room as her favorite part of the house. "It's big and comfortable, and you can see into the kitchen and dining room while watching TV," she said. While Kinsley prefers indoor living, she loves the wildlife surrounding their home. Squirrels and a variety of birds make appearances daily, but she likes the roadrunners best. "They're small, but very fast," Kinsley said.

Two-year-old Lincoln agreed. "Very fast," he repeated.

Kennedy, at 7 years old, loves being outdoors jumping on the trampoline or driving her Power Wheels truck. Because of an instilled value of work and responsibility, she doesn't hesitate to load tree branches in the small bed before taking them to the back of the property. Often she and Lincoln ride around the two acres.

The yard itself extends the home. The family spends a great deal of time in the backyard, cooking out and perhaps watching sports on a mounted television. Near the fence, a cute coop will eventually house chickens





again. Complete with a fire pit, grill and outdoor serving bar, Landon and Krystal can easily host youth events and other groups from their church.

Inside, the couple prefers simple furnishings and decorations. Krystal likes antiques, so their home includes many finds from resale shops. Family photographs decorate walls, along with artwork created by the children or objects Landon and Krystal have built together. Beliefs and values grace the entire home.



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portrays the essence of their faith. Krystal used old picket fence pieces, painted them shades of brown and teal, and added a verse from the Bible found in Ephesians 2:8, *For by grace you have been saved ...*

In the main bathroom, the color theme is continued in teal and brown, reminiscent of earth and sea. Two large jars of seashells sit on the countertop. "We've gone to the beach since I was a baby," Krystal said. "Most of these shells were collected by me or my grandma and grandpa." Because her grandma is

In the dining room, the word *family*, carved from wood, sits on top of an antique hutch. A collection of crosses hangs on one wall. "It's a representation of what we believe — what the cross means to us as a family," Landon said. From unique gifts to simple beauty, the crosses hold a great deal of significance for the family. One large cross, a gift to the family, is made from license plates. Another came from a coastal island and is made from coconut bark. Some of the crosses they just liked and purchased. As Christians, the crosses represent life for them, a reminder of their belief in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

In the hallway off the living room, a special hanging also



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no longer living, the small addition to the room holds special meaning for her. A picture of the Virgin Islands reminds them of a favorite place to visit. Landon admitted liking this bathroom, because it brings back memories of St. John.

Lincoln's room, filled with cars, horses and a play workbench, keeps him occupied. The room is a perfect place for a little boy to feel comfortable, with lots of space for him when he isn't outdoors.

Kinsley and Kennedy share a room. The wall above their bed features the words: *Different is beautiful, so be yourself* surrounded by family pictures and two crosses. The girls created the jewel-covered crosses. Another wall holds several paintings the girls have made. Krystal built a wide, wooden frame around a whiteboard in their room, allowing them space for creating temporary works of art. A small antique desk provides a spot to complete homework.

The master bedroom hosts a headboard and two nightstands the couple built from crates. On the headboard, *Dees, Established 2003* celebrates the beginning of their marriage. The nightstands complement the headboard with a simple design, topped with tiles. Krystal refinished several other pieces of furniture in the large room.

As Christmas approaches, the family

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decorates with lights and a big tree. Most important to them, they add multiple nativity sets, both inside and out. Landon and Krystal love giving presents, but they also want to keep a focus on Jesus Christ as the true meaning of the holiday. A favorite part of the season for the family includes participation in the living nativity. The event, hosted by their church, features live animals and a re-enactment of Jesus' birth. Kinsley's eyes dance as she describes the living nativity. While the live animals are fun, the memories of celebrating and being with family and friends brings a smile to her face.



Because their church is about community, the family often hosts others, especially during the holidays. With all the nativity sets around, they often find missing wise men in the east part of the house, or Baby Jesus might end up in the shower soap dish. The game has become a tradition with some of the men at church, a good-natured time of fun memories.

Landon strives to teach his children and the youth of Graceview what they believe and why. Their home, inviting and welcoming, represents the family well. Throughout the house, reminders of their faith enhance his lessons.

The family celebrates creativity and proudly displays the results of their endeavors. Through trial and error, Landon and Krystal learned to build things. Working together helps them spend time as a couple and family, but also requires communication with each other. The sprinklings of creativity make for a beautiful house. "But what makes it a home is us working together," Landon said. Because they work together often, the house has become a home of creative grace. **NOW**

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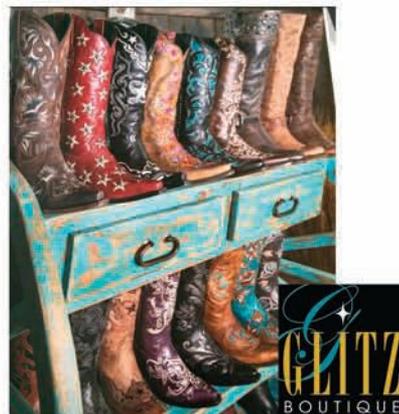


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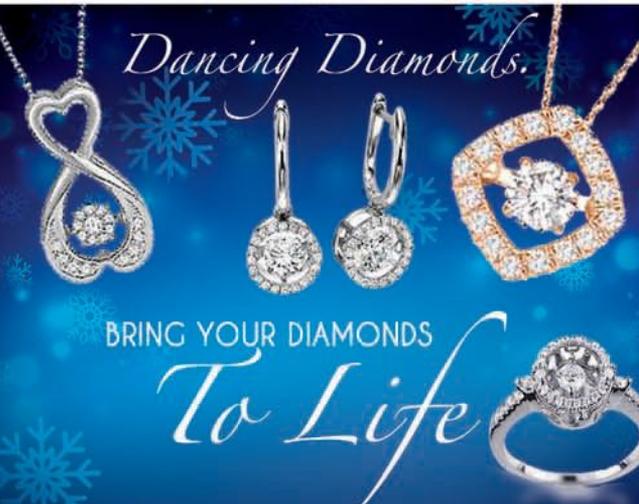
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A quick look at the gift items and discounts available locally.

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# PLUNGE

## Into Success

— By Erin McEndree

*an incentive to reach higher in both swimming and academics by getting to know them beyond the classroom.*

*Teachers, remembered for a lifetime, take time to invest in their students in more ways than one. Paula Peckham teaches geometry and coaches swimming at Burlleson High School. She also shares her obsession for reading by helping her students find a book that is right for them. Paula gives students*

Paula grew up in Burlleson and graduated from BHS. She has always loved to be in the water. “I swam whenever I could. There was not a swim team in high school, so I became a lifeguard,” Paula explained. When she was asked to be the swim coach five years ago for BHS, she was shocked. “I made sure they knew I had never coached or been on a swim team



or reserved a bus or registered a swim team for a meet,” Paula laughed. “It was a big learning curve. The summer before school started, I had to renew my lifeguard certification and get a bus driver’s license.” Paula remembers all the paperwork. She was feeling the stress, and her geometry students could see it on her face. “About five weeks into school, one of my students made me laugh. A different student said, “That’s the first time I have seen you smile,”” Paula said. After a rough start, Paula could finally relax, enjoy swimming and dedicate herself to getting to know the students.

Students who want to be on the swim team have to be dedicated. The swim team practices at the Burleson Recreation Center, also known as the BRiCk. Junior varsity practices at 5:15 a.m. and varsity practices at 6:15 a.m. “Kids were not always so dedicated. The first year I was

**“There was not a swim team in high school, so I became a lifeguard.”**

coach, swim was not on the schedule,” Paula explained. “Kids liked the social aspect. It was more like a club.” After swim became an athletic class, students had consequences for being tardy and consistently absent. “The dedicated students became tight like a family. They realized everybody there was working so hard for what they were doing, and they encouraged each other.”

Centennial High School swimmers and an after-school select team, Sigma, practice at the BRiCk, as well. Her first year, Paula was the coach for both high schools. “Even though BHS competes against CHS now,” Paula said, “I believe unity is important, and Centennial’s Coach Martin and I promote

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togetherness in many ways.

“The atmosphere on the swim team is different because practices are not at the school,” Paula said. “We also deal with the public having access to the BRiCk. We’ve had to cancel practice because of poop in the pool. I don’t think other sports have to deal with situations like that.” There are six lanes outside and five lanes inside the BRiCk. The outside lanes are not heated, so they cannot be used year-round. Currently, even 11 lanes have not been enough to handle both high school teams and the 42 kids



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who participate. "It is a good problem to have," Paula said. "At BHS, we make students aware of the swim team at an Electives Fair held in December. We have current swimmers come speak to get them interested." Paula would love for the swim program to grow into a team of 32 boys and 32 girls. She feels that is the perfect number, so each event will have the maximum number of representatives from BHS.

Practices are tricky and have to be well-coordinated. Just like all the swimmers have to share lanes, all the





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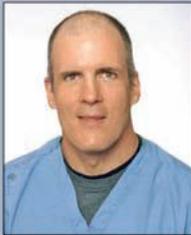
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swimmers have to share Paula, too. She is one person trying to train new swimmers with good technique and style, while fine-tuning seasoned swimmers in distance, sprints and strokes. Many aspects of swimming must be perfected to get the maximum speed in the water. Body position, breathing techniques, turns, balance, stroke mechanics, flow and rhythm are some of the techniques addressed during training. "It is hard for me to monitor all five lanes and help with weight training in the dry land area," Paula said. "I'm thankful for Cameron Cates, a student teacher, who was a



competitive swimmer in high school. He volunteers his time to help, but he will be leaving at the end of December."

Just after the holidays, the annual Polar Bear Plunge is held in January. A local TV station is invited to film anyone who wants to take the challenge of plunging into the frigid waters at the BRiCK, for a donation. A parent from Canada in the booster club, Cora Lee Flug, came up with the idea because of the extreme sports craze. "I am blessed to have great parents on the booster club who plan events. All the different events we do as a team take so much time, and the booster parents allow me to focus on swimming," Paula said. She would love to start offering scholarships and hopes the fundraiser gets bigger every year. After the Polar Bear Plunge, January kicks off seriousness around the water. Intense workouts prepare swimmers for regional.

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Each person works on endurance and tries to achieve better times each day in their individual events.

Paula not only trains swimmers in the pool, she trains students in the classroom. She teaches geometry and admits it is perfect for her Type A personality. Paula also shares her passion for reading with her students.

"I read an article about the high number of kids who have never read, bought or owned a book. I was astonished, so I came up with an idea while in the shower," Paula laughed. "I have my best ideas when the water massages my brain." Paula surveys her students with four simple questions to

## MANY ASPECTS OF SWIMMING MUST BE PERFECTED TO GET THE MAXIMUM SPEED IN THE WATER.

determine if they like to read and what genre they enjoy in books or movies. Paula reviews all the answers and then starts searching Half Price Books, the Goodwill Store, library sales and Amazon to find the right books with each student's interest in mind.

"I write a personal note in each book and wrap it up in butcher paper," Paula said. "I place it on their desk, and they love it." With a follow-up survey at the end of the year, Paula finds most students liked reading what she selected for them. "I think this is because I found what they are interested in and took the time to write to them specifically."

As a teacher, Paula is remembered beyond the classroom, and one of her former students, now a teacher herself, is sharing books with her students, based on Paula's idea. Paula inspires all her students to achieve their best in the pool and in the classroom. She continually helps students reach high in everything they try. **NOW**

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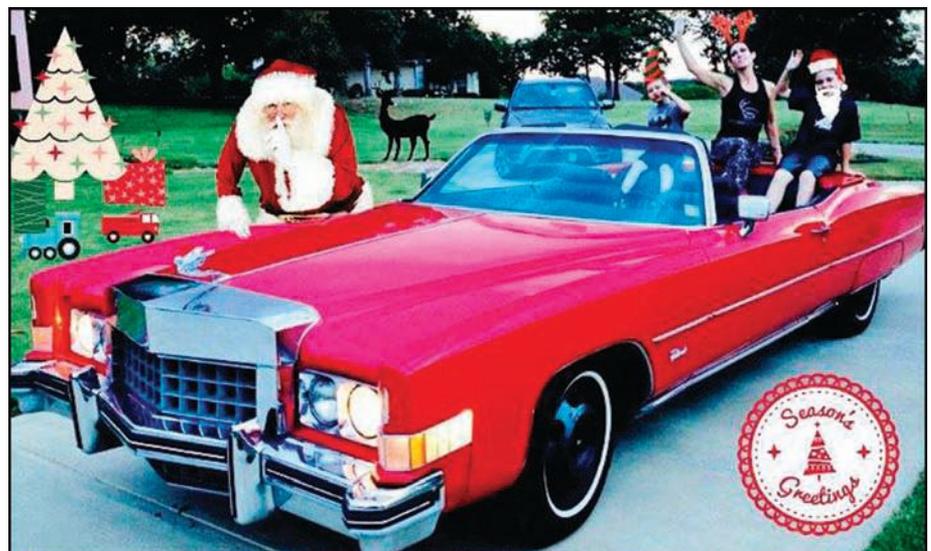
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# Let the **FUN** **BEGIN**

— By Sandra Strong

*Are you finding it difficult to get in the holiday spirit? Fret no more. Getting in the spirit will be much easier as you work on crafts that will brighten your home with seasonal merriment, as well as bring smiles to the faces of family and friends, young and old alike.*

## **Milk Jug Snowmen**

Mark the beginning of the holiday season by creating a night light that decorates a room with visual warmth while helping children learn basic shapes.

### **Difficulty Level: Easy**

- 1 gallon jug
- 1 1/2-gallon jug
- Scissors
- 2 sheets black foam, felt or construction paper (your choice)
- 1 sheet orange foam, felt or construction paper (your choice)
- 5 sheets tissue paper (divided use)
- 2 strands 20-count indoor/outdoor white lights with white cording

- Cool melt hot glue
- 3 black pipe cleaners (or color of your choice)
- 2 large black pompoms (or color of your choice)
- 1 medium-size Santa hat (design and color of your choice)

- ① Rinse jugs out thoroughly. Set aside, allowing them to dry completely inside and out.
- ② Cut 4 ovals from black material to serve as eyes. Cut 5 circles from black material to serve as the mouth for the gallon snowman. Cut five small squares from black material to serve as the mouth for the half-gallon snowman.
- ③ Cut 2 skinny triangles from orange material to serve as the noses for both snowmen.
- ④ Cut 3 small slits in each jug under the handle toward the bottom of the jug to



Step 4

create a hinged opening large enough to insert the tissue paper and lights. Carefully stuff the tissue paper (3 sheets for gallon and 2 sheets for half-gallon) and lights through these holes, making sure to mingle the lights with the tissue paper. Push the opening closed. Be sure the cord portion of the lights remains outside the jug openings.

⑤ Glue eyes, mouths and noses on jugs. Bend noses accordion-style to give them a 3-D effect. Braid and bend pipe cleaners in an arc. Glue to the sides of the half-gallon jug. Glue pompoms over the ends of the pipe cleaners to complete the ear muffs. Pull Santa hat over the top of the gallon jug. Dot with glue to hold the hat in place. (You can also use a cap your child has outgrown.)

⑥ Plug in and enjoy what you and your little ones have created.

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## Frosty the Snow Pot

Create a Frosty that doesn't melt as he warms your home and the hearts of all those who visit during the holiday season.

Difficulty Level: Easy to Medium  
 Three variations pictured.

- 1 large clay pot
- 1 medium clay pot
- Small paintbrush
- White acrylic paint
- Black acrylic paint
- Scissors
- 1 piece orange felt
- Needle
- Orange embroidery floss
- 1 cotton ball
- Cheek color (rouge)
- Kleenex
- Cool melt hot glue
- 2 large black buttons
- 7 small black buttons
- Holiday ribbon
- 1 sprig from holly berry artificial flower pick

- 1 Paint large pot white. Paint small pot black. Allow to dry completely.
- 2 Cut two carrot shapes from orange felt. Hand-stitch the two pieces together to make nose. Stuff nose with cotton ball to give the carrot a 3-D appearance.
- 3 For rosy cheeks, smudge cheek color on the cheek areas using a Kleenex or your index finger.
- 4 Glue large buttons in place for eyes. Glue small buttons in place for smile. Glue nose in place, allowing it to stick out.
- 5 Tie holiday ribbon around the base of



the small pot. Glue holly berry sprig to the ribbon to complete Frosty's holiday top hat.

6 Glue around the inside edge of the small pot. Stack the smaller pot on top of the larger pot. Allow glue to dry completely before moving.

7 You can also "top Frosty off" with ear muffs made from pompoms and pipe cleaners or a stocking cap of your choice. Eyes and mouths can be painted on or cut from black foam. Let your imagination be your guide.

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Difficulty Level: Medium to Hard

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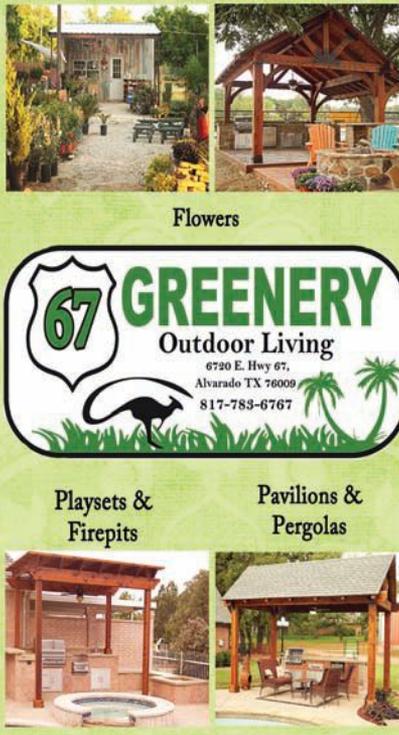
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- 1 To create the swag, hand stitch the Santa hats together along the white trim only, one hat at a time until you have the desired width. Hand stitch the tops closed to complete the front of the swag.
- 2 To create the rod pocket, cut the



white felt in a strip the same width, from left to right, as the sewn hats. Make sure to cut it long enough, from top to bottom, to accommodate the rod being used. (If the rod is 1-inch, be sure to cut the rod pocket at least 1 1/2-inches in length.) Hand stitch rod pocket to the backside of hat curtain making sure not to sew all the way through to the front side.

- 3 Cut green felt in the shape of holly leaves, cutting 10 to duplicate the example shown.



- 4 Attach each leaf by sewing one green sequin and one bead to the swag. Sew in place red sequins and remaining beads in clumps of 3 to represent holly berries.

- 5 You can complete the holiday swag by decorating the white portion with embellishments of your choice. This swag was personalized using embroidery floss, sequins and felt, but feel free to let your holiday imagination take over. **NOW**

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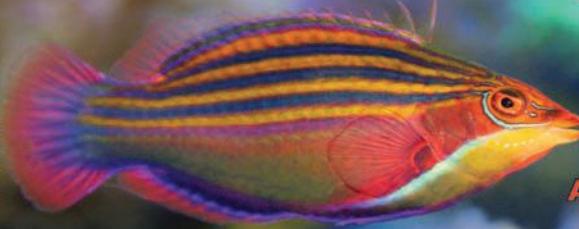
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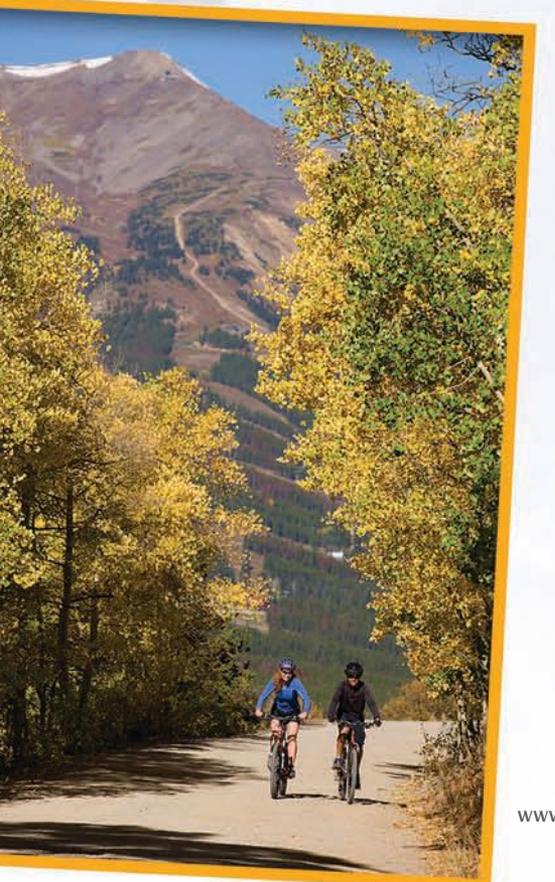


*Breckenridge is a warm and friendly place, whether you are sitting in a bar, lunching in a coffee shop, riding the chairlifts or checking out the town — total strangers make friends it seems they've known for years. With gold at stake, the early residents and visitors of Breckenridge likely weren't quite that open. After all, this historic town was founded by a small group of gold-seekers, each in search of their own big strike.*





The pioneers of the '60s came in the form of skiers with deep Norwegian roots. In 1961 Trygve Berge and Sigurd Rockne founded what is now Breckenridge Ski Resort. As in the days of Berge and Rockne, the outdoors beckons many who arrive in Breckenridge today. The town sits between the Continental Divide and the peaks of



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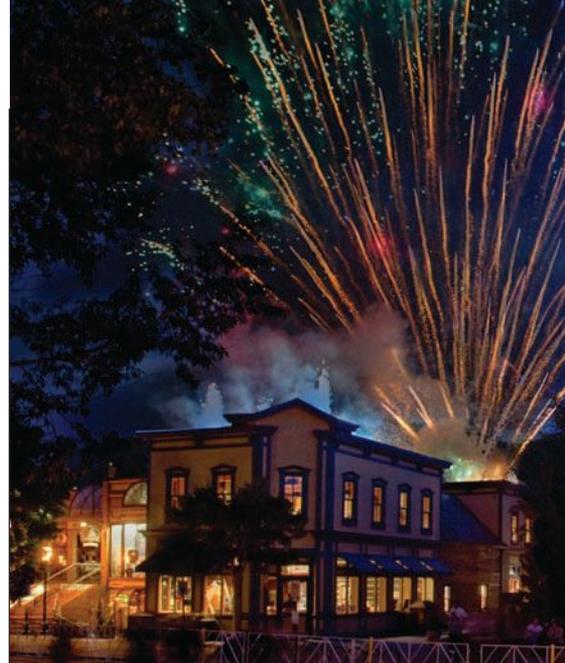
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by beginners and those who seek out the most advanced terrain. Breckenridge's 300 annual inches of snow also hit the backcountry. While there's no preferred method of travel, there's also no shortage of options.

At Good Times Adventures, snowmobile guides walk guests through all the key parts of the machine before taking off through the Swan River backcountry to reach the Continental Divide. Over at the kennel, teams of huskies wait their turn to pull, and anxious guests wait their turn to mush.



Dogsledding is a popular activity, especially here, where everyone (who chooses) takes turns at the helm.

For those who prefer activities under their own power, Breckenridge's two Nordic Centers offer snowshoe, plus groomed trails for classic and skate-style Nordic skiing. Those with the proper equipment (and a sense of adventure) head to Breckenridge's trail network

for afternoon outings, overnight hut trips and everything in between.

When the snow gives way to dry, 70-degree summer temperatures, wildflowers bloom. Purple lupine, wild roses, bluebells and a variety of Rocky Mountain wildflowers dot the mountainsides. Rivers and streams rush with cold, clear water that invites boating. Kayaks, whitewater rafts and fishing rigs top trailers and cars throughout town.

Jackson Streit, owner of Mountain Angler, explained that Breckenridge is central to some of the Centennial State's best fishing. Several rivers — each with sections of Gold Medal Waters — flow within an easy drive from downtown, and high alpine lakes sit nestled among surrounding peaks. Afternoons bring beginner anglers practicing casts in the Blue River. Cyclists speed by on the paved path that parallels the river and links Breckenridge with surrounding towns.

Open Space planner and the guiding hand behind Breckenridge's award-winning



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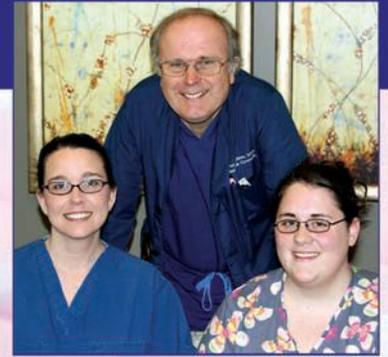
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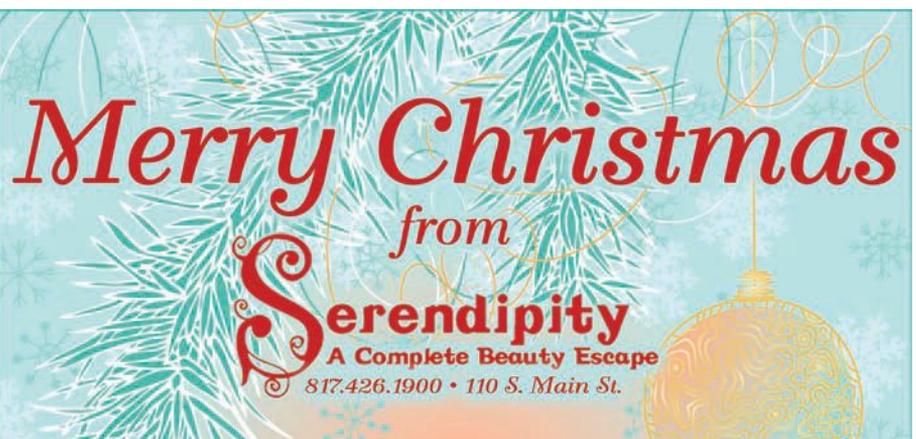
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cycling network, Scott Reid explained the town's hiking and biking trails: "It's similar to a bicycle wheel, with the hub as downtown and miles of trails, the spokes, extending into the backcountry. Downtown access points lead to town, county and Forest Service trails. There's no need for a car."

Many of these popular hiking and biking routes were once used by miners in search of gold. Flumes have been converted into flowing singletrack (narrow biking trails), and along it are glimpses of the town's gold-seeking beginnings. Pioneer cabins can be seen on trails — Tom's Baby, Minnie Mine — whose names have roots in the characters of the past. Several restored dredge boats, remnants of a mining method uncommon in the Rocky Mountains, stand abandoned in the backcountry.

The Breckenridge Heritage Alliance, a nonprofit committed to protecting, sharing, and celebrating the unique stories of Breckenridge, has placed interpretive signage both at backcountry sites, such as the dredges and throughout town. Historic walking tours cover the highlights, and museums give an in-depth look at the gold seekers who established the town and created a community with pioneering spirit.

Around Main Street, visitors will meet Breckenridge's modern pioneers: bourbon distillers creating world-renowned craft spirits, a passionate community building an award-winning arts district, and retailers serving up a shopping experience that includes both local and global merchandise. More than 70 independently-owned restaurants and bars serve up all manner of cuisine, not to mention nightlife that consistently ranks highly in top ski and snowboard guides.

The storefronts, once housing mostly gear shops and burger stops, now boast a diverse lineup of funky boutiques and modern menus, all served up in the Victorian spaces that line the downtown streets. The diversity adds up to plenty of options in town, plus a backyard that brings adventurers out to play. Wondering where to head next? Just ask the locals in the coffee shop. **NOW**

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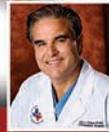


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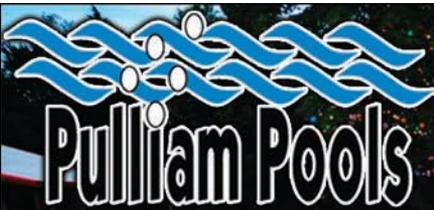
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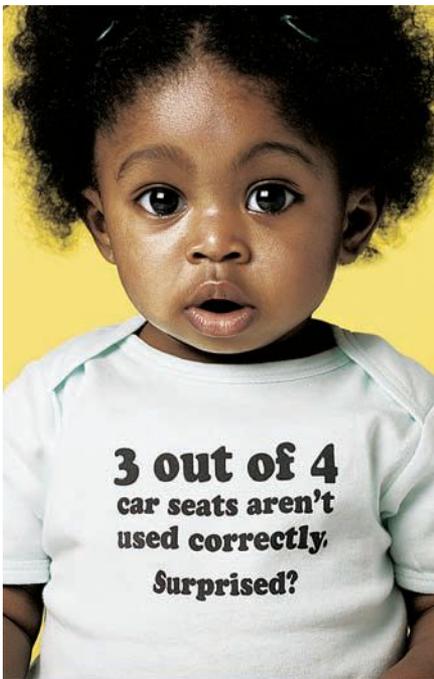


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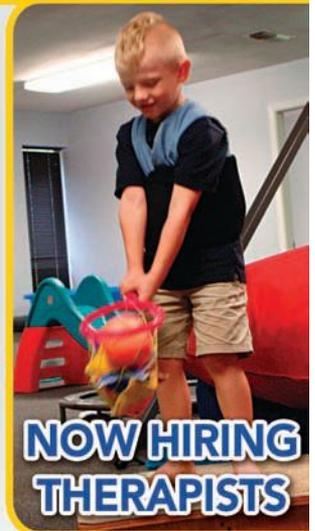
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# Carefree Celebrations

*Hotel Burleson's version of hospitality is simply good, friendly service. — By Melissa Rawlins*

The casually elegant Hotel Burleson is an ideal venue for all types of events. From relaxed family reunions to formal occasions, such as: weddings and receptions, 25th or 50th anniversaries or quinceañeras, Hotel Burleson is here to help you celebrate. The hotel's banquet space seats up to 150 people, leaving room for dancing, a DJ and food. The staff will set up tables and chairs for you, and the hotel offers a package including: tablecloths, chair covers, choice of sashes, choice of center pieces, arches, large floral arrangements and a minister, if needed. Guests are welcome to hire the caterer or DJ of their choice, and they may bring alcohol to their events.

"We offer discounts for events held Sunday through Thursday. We can provide a group block of rooms, whether

customers are holding an event here or not," said Kathy Bonfiglio, general manager, who has been with Hotel Burleson for three years. Kathy's forte is producing formal events, which have pleased many customers. "Prior to this position, I ran two historic mansions in Kentucky, where I was the general manager, as well as the event coordinator," she said.

Ken Masters, manager of operations, has more than 15 years of experience in the industry. He hired Kathy for her 20 years of experience and gracious customer service, and the duo has grown business at Hotel Burleson while renovating what was originally a Howard Johnson. They combined a calming, relaxing Western color scheme with old-world touches. Part of their redesign includes a small cafe providing

## Business **NOW**

customers a bite to eat in a lounge-like atmosphere, without having to leave the hotel. “We have been working on this transformation for almost two years now and hope to have it completed by late summer of 2015,” Kathy said.

Recently, the independently owned and operated Hotel Burleson formed an alliance with Magnuson Hotels. “We chose the Magnuson because it is a quality brand people will recognize, and it is the world’s largest group of independent properties,” Kathy explained.

Offering the same amenities as more expensive hotels in the Ft. Worth area, but at a much better value, Hotel Burleson greatly benefits business travelers, as well as people who live locally but need rooms for family coming in from out of town. Since it is a clean, quiet property, Hotel Burleson tends to get a lot of weekly guests who stay for a long time. Long-term guests, who have been at Hotel Burleson up to three years, value the added security of knowing someone is always working and available in an emergency. “Our version of hospitality,” Ken said, “is simply good, friendly service.”

Ken’s redesign in the lobby created seating areas on either side of the fireplace, one a little more private than the other, lit by soaring arched windows in the daytime and classy chandeliers by night. Wedding parties often send their photographer up to the mezzanine to take aerial portraits of guests. During the holidays, Ken and Kathy decorate an extravagant, 20-foot Christmas tree in the lobby and welcome the public to pose here for nonprofessional family pictures. Due to the busy holiday event schedule, however, any such family photos should be taken between 3:00 p.m. on Sundays and 10:00 p.m. on Thursdays.

When you decide to host formal occasions outside of your home, think of Hotel Burleson, conveniently located off I-35 and FM 1187 directly behind the new Baylor Health emergency room. Kathy and her team can help you host your guests with a touch of elegance — and, of course, they always have guest rooms ready. **NOW**

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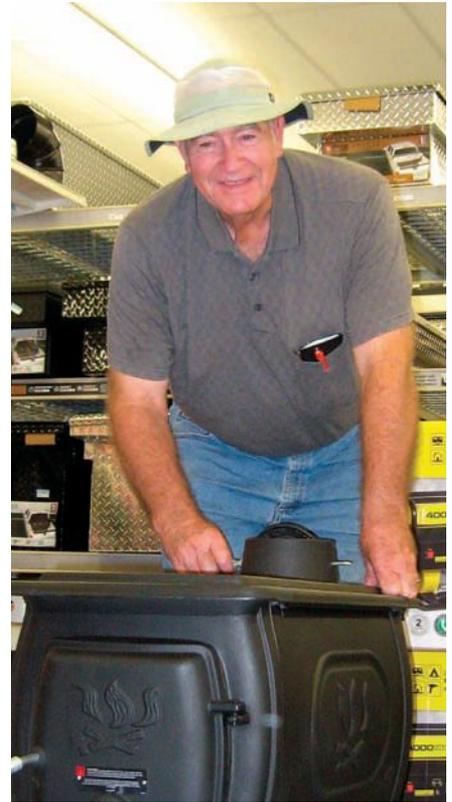
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*A ref and an Italian dish of spaghetti with a side of Prego sauce make their appearance at the Mountain Valley Child Development Center.*



*Bobby Woolard and Mari Ramirez show off their wedding rings to Kelly Wiggins while she waits for her jewelry to be cleaned.*



*Roger Young of Crowley buys a heater for his barn in East Texas, so when he gets off his bulldozer this winter he can go warm up.*



*Cheyenne Aylesworth and Miranda Smith join the Burleson Lions Club float in the BHS homecoming parade.*



*Renee Gutierrez takes Gabriella, 5, Isabella, 13, and Bentley, 10, on a Target shopping spree.*



*Katelyn Ronspiez, Christie Farnham and Kara Miller prepare to pierce Averie Farnham's ears.*



*Clarinetist Zoe Isenberg hams it up with tuba players, Carter Rudolph and Emanuel Galindo, before the BHS Band starts marching.*



*Tere Arnett, escrow officer at Capital Title, greets Senator Brian Birdwell at a Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce quarterly luncheon.*



*Charter Members Bebe Johnson and N.Jo Allen enjoy their new home at Heritage Place Assisted Living and Memory Care.*

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# If Rates Rise, What Should You Do With Bonds?

Interest rates are at historic lows. But they will rise eventually. If you invest in fixed-income vehicles, such as bonds, what might higher rates mean for you?

As is almost always the case in the investment world, there's no simple answer. First, it's important to distinguish between short-term and long-term interest rates. The Federal Reserve is determined to keep short-term rates low until unemployment improves, but, in the meantime, longer-term rates may well rise.

Depending on your situation, a rise in long-term rates can present both opportunity and concern. The opportunity: Rising rates can mean greater income if you invest in newly issued bonds. The concern: If you already own longer-term bonds, and rates rise, the value of your bonds will fall. That's because other investors won't want to pay full price for your bonds when they can get new ones at higher rates.

Even if the value of your long-term bonds falls, isn't it worthwhile to hold on to them? After all, as long as your bond doesn't default — and if the bond is considered "investment grade," a default is unlikely — you will get a steady source of income, and you'll receive the full value of your bond back at maturity. Aren't these valuable benefits?

They are indeed — but they may be more relevant for short-term bonds. Longer-term bonds — those of 10-year duration or



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*Merry Christmas*

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longer — are more subject to inflation risk than shorter-term bonds. Of course, we've experienced low inflation for a number of years, but, over time, even mild inflation can add up. When this happens, and you own a long-term bond whose rate doesn't change, you could face a potential loss of purchasing power. One of the reasons that long-term bonds pay higher interest rates than short-term bonds is because the issuers of longer-term instruments are rewarding you for taking on this additional inflation risk.

Consequently, simply holding on to long-term bonds — especially very long-term ones, such as those that mature in 30 years — may not be the best strategy. If you review your fixed-income holdings and find that they skew strongly toward longer-term bonds, you may want to consider reducing your exposure in this area. If you did sell some of these bonds, you could use the proceeds to help build a "bond ladder" — which may be one of the best ways to invest in bonds.

To create this ladder, you need to invest in bonds of varying maturities. When market rates are low, you'll still have your longer-term bonds earning higher interest rates, thereby paying you more income. And when market rates rise, you can reinvest your maturing short-term bonds at the higher rates. You must evaluate whether the bonds held within the bond ladder are consistent with your investment objectives, risk tolerance and financial circumstances.

If you own bonds, you do need to be aware of where interest rates are — and where they may be headed. Nonetheless, as we have seen, you don't have to be at the mercy of rate movements. By keeping yourself informed and choosing the right strategies, you can benefit from owning bonds and other fixed-income vehicles in all interest-rate environments.

Before investing in bonds, you should understand the risks involved, including credit risk and market risk. Bond investments are subject to interest-rate risk such that when interest rates rise, the prices of bonds can decrease, and the investor can lose principal value if the investment is sold prior to maturity. **NOW**

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Lynn H. Bates is an Edward Jones representative based in Burleson.*

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### December 2

Holiday Open House: 5:00-6:30 p.m., Crowley Chamber of Commerce, 201 N. Hampton Rd. Refreshments will be provided. Contact (817) 297-4211.

Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes: 6:00-8:00 p.m., Texas Health Huguley Fitness Center, 11801 S. Freeway. Free. (817) 556-6370.

### December 4

Birds of a Feather: 6:00-8:00 p.m., Antonio's, 344 SW Wilshire Blvd., Burleson. Women surviving cancer of any kind. (817) 759-7077.

### December 5

Crowley Tree Lighting: 5:30-8:00 p.m., Crowley City Hall. Bring the family for children's activities, Santa and tree lighting. (817) 297-2201, ext. 4300.

Celebrity Cutting: 7:00 p.m., Will Rogers Coliseum, 3401 W. Lancaster Ave., Fort Worth. (817) 882-4100.

### December 6

Breakfast With Santa: 7:00-11:00 a.m., Burleson Recreation Center (BRiCk), 550 NW Summercrest Blvd. Call (817) 426-9104.

Burleson Christmas Tree Lighting and Fireworks Show: 5:00-8:00 p.m., Old Town, 317 W. Ellison St. Starts with Burleson Rotary Club Christmas Parade. Call the BRiCk, (817) 426-9104.

A Redneck Christmas: Joshua Parade of Lights and Tree Lighting: 6:00-7:30 p.m., starting at Staples Elementary School, ending at the Joshua City Park. Contact Kim Henderson, (817) 253-7233.

### December 11

Crowley Chamber Christmas Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church. \$23. RSVP to (817) 297-4211.

Couch & Russell Holiday Casino Night: 6:00-9:30 p.m., Mimosa Hall, 10405 Shannon Valley Dr., Crowley. Free admission to a night of hors d'oeuvres, dinner, adult beverages and casino play benefiting Chisholm Trail 100 Club. RSVP to Tami King, (817) 295-2236.

### December 16

Christmas Open House: 3:00-6:30 p.m., Tris FitzGibbon Edward Jones, 1351 Wilshire Blvd, Ste 102. Please bring your donation

of clothing, toys and dry goods benefitting Harvest House of Burleson. (817) 447-5520.

Mayor's Youth Council: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Burleson City Hall. Determining and solving issues related to youth. Contact City of Burleson Management Intern, Elisabeth White, (817) 426-9687, or visit [www.burlesontx.com](http://www.burlesontx.com).

### December 18

All is Well Christmas Concert: 7:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 590 NE McAllister Rd. Free! Healing Heart Chorus and Brazos Chamber Orchestra perform Christmas Cantata and other favorites. (817) 645-8067.

### December 19, 20, 21

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## Tips to Safely Deck the Halls

It's time to take out the tinsel, holly and twinkle lights to celebrate the holiday season! Many times we have to pull out the ladder to decorate those hard-to-reach areas and high places, but it's also important to keep safety top of mind. Injuries caused by falls are a common cause of trips to the emergency room during the holidays.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates there were 15,000 injuries involving holiday decorating seen in emergency departments nationwide during November and December 2012. Injuries can include head injuries, lacerations and broken legs, arms and ribs. This is not how you want to start off your holiday!

Before you hang your strands of twinkle lights for the season (or when you take them down after the New Year), consider these tips for safely decking your halls:

- **Be careful stepping around your attic while getting down decorations.** Injuries can happen even before the holiday hanging commences! Be sure to step on beams (ceiling joists), so you don't fall through the attic floor.
- **Don't attempt to hang decorations by yourself.** Make sure someone is with you to hold the ladder steady at the bottom and to call for help in case of an emergency. Only allow one person on the ladder at a time and pay attention to any warning labels.
- **Don't drink and hang decorations.** In general, drink responsibly during the holidays (and all year round), but especially don't partake in

holiday cheer and then climb a ladder to decorate. Gravity and alcohol don't mix.

- **Never get on the roof to hang decorations.** If you think you have to get on the roof to get lights where you want them, call a professional to do it for you.
- **Don't do any reaching.** People tend to lean over instead of stopping to move the ladder over a few inches. Don't overextend yourself trying to reach for that corner or peak on top of your garage. And if your ladder isn't tall enough, go grab a different one.
- **Don't hang high decorations if you have a medical condition.** If you have heart disease or if you're on a blood thinner medication, falling from a tall height could pose even greater risks for you.
- **If the weather outside is frightful, leave it for another day.** Wind, ice and rain can make hanging lights and decorations more dangerous.
- **When you're finished with the ladder, be sure to put it away immediately.** You don't want curious little ones climbing and playing on it.

Happy decorating, and have a healthy and safe holiday! **NOW**

*Dr. Heather Beard*

*Medical Director of Emergency Services*

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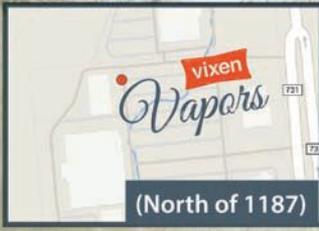
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## In the Kitchen With Phil Gibson

— *By Melissa Rawlins*

“I’m not sure how healthy desserts are,” Phil Gibson said, “they’re just good at putting a cherry on top of the meal.” And so here, he shares his recipes for Banana Bread and Banana Pudding, plus other staples he prepares every Christmas for the firemen who serve our community. Phil started cooking around age 12 at his dad’s cafe, where Southern foods were the draw. His father is still his favorite cook, and Southern-style is still Phil’s forte. He and his wife, Peggy, have reared three daughters in Burluson. Phil cooks mostly for his family and special occasions at Living Water Church. Our first responders especially enjoy eating his holiday brisket, turkey and dressing — plus all the cherries Phil’s so good at putting atop his meals. **NOW**

### Banana Nut Bread

- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups ripe bananas, mashed
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3 1/2 cups flour, sifted
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup nuts, chopped
- 1 cup raisins (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 F
2. Cream butter and sugar. Add vanilla and lemon juice.
3. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well with each addition.
4. Add mashed bananas.

5. Sift salt, flour, soda and baking powder. Add alternately with sour cream to batter.
6. Fold in nuts and raisins. Pour into 2 greased and floured loaf pans. Bake 50-55 minutes.

### Banana Pudding

- 1 5.1-oz. box instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 3.4-oz. instant banana cream pudding mix
- 4 cups milk
- 2 14-oz. cans sweetened condensed milk
- 8 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 1/2 8-oz. tubs Cool Whip
- 30-40 vanilla wafers
- 3-4 bananas, sliced

1. Mix first 5 ingredients together; add 1 tub Cool Whip and let stand.

2. Crumble half the wafers on bottom of bowl, top with half the pudding and the bananas.
3. Pour in remaining pudding mixture and top with remaining Cool Whip. Use additional wafers around top of pudding.

### Country Potato Salad

- 5 lbs. potatoes
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 1 cup Miracle Whip
- 1/2 cup yellow mustard
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1 1/4 tsp. salt
- 8 boiled eggs, chopped

1. Peel potatoes. Cut in medium-sized pieces. Boil until cooked through. Drain.
2. Add onions while potatoes are still hot. Mash together. Let stand 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Mix in next 5 ingredients; stir well. Gently mix in eggs.

### Fireman’s Brisket

- 2 Tbsp. each: black pepper, salt, tenderizer, paprika, garlic powder, brown sugar, white sugar
- 1 12-15 lb. brisket
- 1 cup Worcestershire sauce
- 1 10-oz. bottle Heinz 57 sauce
- 1 10-oz. bottle Kraft Barbecue Sauce

1. Preheat oven to 275 F
2. Mix dry ingredients together. Trim all but 1/4- to 1/2-inch fat from brisket. Puncture brisket with long fork on both sides. Pour Worcestershire sauce over both sides. Sprinkle dry ingredients on both sides.
3. Place brisket in large, covered roaster pan, fat side up. Cook for 10-12 hours. Drain extra liquids 3 hours into cooking time. Leave 2 to 3 inches of liquid on bottom of pan.
4. Mix Heinz 57 and barbecue sauce together. Pour 1 cup over brisket 1 hour before removing from oven. Save remaining sauce to serve with brisket.
5. Remove from pan and let brisket cool about 2 hours before carving. Don’t tell anyone you cooked it in the oven!

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

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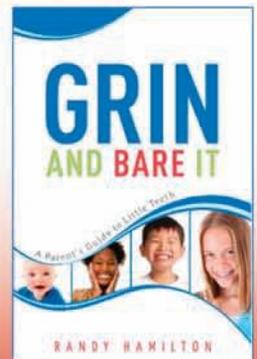


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