

# WaxahachieNOW

M A G A Z I N E

NOVEMBER 2025

## Earning Redemption

Local Veterans get a  
second chance through the  
Veterans' Treatment Court

2025 Holiday  
Shopping Guide

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Pecan pie ...

It's awfully controversial for such a humble dessert. I love pumpkin, sweet potato and chocolate pies. I make a mean two-layer pumpkin cheesecake pie and a chocolate ribbon pie that causes threats of bodily harm if I say I'm not making it. But Mom always made pecan pies for Thanksgiving, and so they're probably my favorite. Some people don't like nuts in their pies. If you have a nut allergy, you get a pass. Otherwise, you're just wrong. Pecan pies are da bomb. (Yes, I lived in that decade.)

But the controversy doesn't stop there. How do you even say *pecan*? Everyone knows it's supposed to be puh-KAHN. And yet, Yankees will twang out pih-CAN. *Sigh*. And then there are the folks who think they're eating pea cans. I mean, there's no metal in there. And if labels, or heaven forbid mushy pea residue, end up in your pies ... no wonder you don't like them!

All silliness aside, I hope you find all your favorites on the table, and that you all get along with everyone gathered around this year. There's a lot to be thankful for, even if you have to think a while to remember.

Happy Thanksgiving!

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November 2025  
Volume 22, Issue 11

## ON THE COVER



Brent Dorrough helps his fellow veterans get their lives back on track.

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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 (972) 937-8447 or visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).



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# EARNING REDEMPTION

— By Adam Walker

*Retired Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant Brent Dorrough spent his life in service to his country. Retirement didn't fit well with who he is, so he found a new way to serve the veteran community, and the community at large. "I retired from the Marine Corps in 2022, and I took a job with a logistics company. It was a great job, with great pay. But what I was doing didn't really matter. It wasn't personally satisfying. Then I was fully retired for seven months. I was driving myself crazy. I was volunteering for a lot of stuff — Cub Scout leadership roles, my HOA. I decided if I was going to be this busy, I should get paid. I saw some job postings with the county, so I came in to interview for one of them. That's when I found out about the posting for the Veterans' Treatment Court position. I interviewed with Judge Wallace. I liked what I heard. He said, 'It's way more work than the job you came for, and it pays \$40,000 less.' I said, 'Challenge accepted.' The Texas Veterans Commission funds our program. The county doesn't lose a dime, but they get to serve the veteran community in a more robust, positive way. This court now serves Ellis, Johnson, Navarro, Hill and Henderson counties."*

The Veterans' Treatment Court takes the cases that are non-violent crimes, like DUI and other Class A or B misdemeanors. Crimes involving assault or harm to another person are ineligible. The veterans' courts are only available to veterans who have diagnosed PTSD, sexual assault trauma or traumatic brain injury arising from their service. "Originally, in 2009, it was only available to combat vets. Now, since 2016, it's open to all those with an honorable discharge who have trauma arising from their service. No bad conduct or dishonorable discharges qualify."



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In fact, it's very difficult to qualify for this second chance. "About 70 percent of veterans who submit their request to the DA's office are disapproved, because they don't qualify in one way or another. Those who do qualify have to plead guilty to their offense, and then what we put them through is far more intense than a regular court. They have to go through probation, like anyone else. But they have to enter a treatment program for their underlying problems. Often there is a lot of substance abuse, in addition to PTSD and other traumas. They don't get a vote. They either do what the court says, or they're out of the program. They have to check in with the judge twice a month for at least one year. If they have met all the program requirements, at the end of that year, they graduate, and their record is expunged. If they've been working hard, but haven't met all the requirements, their time in the program may be extended. People may think these vets are getting off easy, but it's way harder. But at the end, their charge is expunged, and they've fixed the underlying problem that led to their charges. They get to work on the problems that got them in trouble and come out as better human beings. However, if they get any subsequent charges, the judge will evict them."

Brent knows that adjusting to civilian life is not easy for some veterans. "Most of them got in trouble to begin with, because they were coping incorrectly with PTSD, SA or TBI. Part of the intake is a mental health assessment. We get them aligned with treatment services. We want to diagnose all their problems, so we can treat them holistically. They have to be honest about their medical history. The youngest vet in the program now is 25, the oldest



# "THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM IS TO HEAL VETERANS AND HAVE THEM NEVER REOFFEND. OUR SUCCESS RATE IS IN THE HIGH 90TH PERCENTILE."

73. One thing that has surprised me is the number of female veterans in the program. Females account for approximately 8 percent of the military. But 20 percent of the graduates from this program, so far, have been female veterans. Normally, a veteran is referred to the program by their attorney, but we had one whose grandma called us."

The future for this program is full of challenge and promise. "This court is funded by a grant from the Texas Veterans Commission. It spends \$40 million, statewide, on veterans' courts, and all of it is from the lottery. Keep buying those lottery tickets! We just got our grant expanded, so we were able to add two new people to this office. Our goal was to serve 15 veterans last year. We surpassed that with 17. With the new grant, we have to serve 45. We'll have no problem finding that many who qualify. We need to do better at advertising the fact that we're here. Most veterans still don't know this is an option. Now that we have more office staff, I can go to more veterans' events and job fairs to get the word out. Because of our population growth, Ellis County has a mandate to establish three more specialty courts: one for mental health issues, one for commercial sexual exploitation and one for drug issues. Since we're the first specialty court in Ellis County, we will serve as a model for the others for how to set their programs up," Brent informed.

"The goal of the program is to heal veterans and have them never reoffend. Our success rate is in the high 90th percentile. Veterans get quality treatment for their issues. Taxes aren't paying for it. And the DA decides who is or isn't eligible. I don't see a downside to this. If you're curious to know if your case fits the criteria, contact us. Not everyone is eligible, but we love helping vets." **NOW**



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— By Virginia Riddle and Sandra Johnson

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A1A Moving is a full-service, customer-oriented, one-stop packing and moving service provider. "We work to build rapport and a positive relationship with each customer and strive for a high level of performance," Frank Weaver,



owner of A1A Moving, said. "We are a hometown business, and the majority of our customers are from this area."

Frank, an Ennis native son, is a proud graduate of Texas A&M University. In 2004, Frank opened A1A Moving as a subcontractor to larger companies. "A1A Moving is authorized to operate anywhere in Texas, as well as make interstate moves. We handle residential and commercial relocations. Every move is different, so we completely customize that move according to a customer's needs," Frank explained.

The customized service can include full packing services and special handling of family heirlooms, valuable art collections, antiques or very fragile pieces. "For instance, all crew members are trained to look for antiques and give them special attention when packing and loading," Frank shared. "We handle a great many jobs in the Dallas art and design district for artists and decorators who change out furnishings repeatedly until they get the mix they want. In all

we do, the crew realizes that even happy moves are stressful to the customer, so we try to lessen the stress."

With A1A Moving, the customer's belongings are the only load on the truck, and the customer decides the schedule of pickup and delivery of those belongings. "We have worked jobs in inclement weather, but we will pull off the road if it gets too hazardous to drive safely," Frank said. "We provide free quotes that will not increase, unless the customer changes a variable." Most customers who wish for a full-service move are businesses and homeowners.

**"WE WORK TO BUILD RAPPORT AND A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH CUSTOMER AND STRIVE FOR A HIGH LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE."**

"A1A Moving can handle whatever our customers may need," Frank added, stating that movers are a luxury, since individuals can always pack and move themselves. "Our crews are experienced, and they love what they do."

Not all moves are stress-free. The crew handles emergency moves that might be necessitated by abusive relationships, floods, roof damage, hoarders or eviction of the owner. "We also offer temporary storage for customers who need a few weeks or so before they can locate and/or occupy a new residence," Frank said.

The moving industry offers many challenges. However, Frank and his crew at A1A Moving handle every situation professionally. "We know we are dealing with an intimate part of a customer's life," Frank shared. "We want them to be able to breathe a sigh of relief and be completely satisfied at the end of the day." **NOW**

Photos by Ava Cardenas, Pure Social Company

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# 2025 Holiday Shopping Guide

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



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



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## Zoomed In: Johnnie Doty

By Adam Walker

Johnnie Doty loves dancing. She's been attending the weekly senior dances at the Optimist Club for 15 years. "I used to live in Hubbard and drove here for the dances," she said. "I did that for about 10 years. Then I moved to Waxahachie about five years ago. I've always enjoyed dancing. I used to dance the polka, but I can't now. Now, I stick to line dancing, waltz and two-step. I'd like to say I'm an expert, but I do it just for fun."

Johnnie helps by selling raffle tickets and checking people in. "I just help out wherever I'm needed," she reported. But other organizers revealed that Johnnie has run the whole show, from setup to teardown, on nights that they couldn't be there.



*Sawl Bailon sells his art made of silverware.*



*Keith McGaskey, Jr. gets in a workout at GoFit.*



*Fritz Realty Group holds a ribbon cutting in Downtown Waxahachie.*

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Brown Sugar Base Dough Cookie Variations

# CookingNOW IN THE KITCHEN WITH DANNA RIVERO

— By Adam Walker



Danna Rivero grew up in the Texas Baptist Home for Children. "Those people took good care of us," she said. "Caring for other people has been my career. As a nurse of 30 years turned baker, starting Nightingale Bakes has been such a rewarding way for me to continue caring for people in a different, but still meaningful, way. I love to get in the kitchen, turn off the world and bake."

"In December, I'm going to Vermont, to the King Arthur Flour's Baking School. I'm going have three days of cookie classes. I enjoy traveling with my fiancé. When we went to San Francisco at the Fourth of July, I fit in six different bakeries in one morning!" **NOW**

## Brown Sugar Base Dough

**2 sticks butter, softened**  
**1 1/2 cups packed light brown sugar**  
**1/4 cup granulated white sugar**  
**1 large egg, plus 1 large yolk**  
**2 tsp. vanilla**  
**2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour**  
**1/2 tsp. baking soda**  
**1/2 tsp. baking powder**  
**1/2 tsp. fine salt**  
**1 to 1 1/2 cups toasted pecans**  
**2-3 Tbsp. pure maple syrup**

**1.** In a large bowl, beat the butter, brown sugar and white sugar together until creamy

and smooth. Crack in the whole egg; then add the extra yolk. Stir until everything looks blended; mix in the vanilla.

- 2.** In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. This spreads everything evenly, so you don't get pockets of soda.
- 3.** Slowly add the dry mixture to the butter mixture. Stir until no streaks of flour remain; do not overmix.
- 4.** Add the pecans and maple syrup. Fold the dough together until the syrup is fully mixed in. The dough will feel a little softer — chill it well (at least 1 hour) before baking.
- 5.** Scoop the dough into balls about 2 Tbsp. each. Place the balls back in the bowl;

cover and put in the refrigerator for 30-60 minutes. This keeps the cookies thick and chewy.

- 6.** Bake at 350 F for 10-12 minutes, until the edges are golden while the centers still look slightly soft.
- 7.** Let the cookies sit on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then move to a rack or plate to finish cooling. Top with maple glaze drizzle (see below).

**Variation 1:** In step 4, substitute 1 cup chopped dried apple, 1/3 cup oatmeal and cinnamon to taste.

**Variation 2:** In step 2, add 2-3 tsp. pumpkin pie spice. In step 4, substitute 1 to 1 1/2 cups pumpkin purée (blotted with paper towels to reduce moisture) and 1 to 1 1/2 cups pumpkin spice baking chips or white chocolate baking chips.

**Variation 3:** In step 4, substitute 1 tsp. instant espresso dissolved in 1 tsp. hot water. Let it cool, then mix into dough with 1 to 1 1/2 cups chocolate chunks.

**Variation 4:** In step 4, substitute 1 to 1 1/2 cups chopped hazelnuts and 1 to 1 1/2 cups dark chocolate chunks

**Variation 5:** In step 4, substitute 1 1/2 cups oats and 1 1/2 cups mixed raisins, cranberries, pecans and walnuts.

## Maple Glaze

**1 cup powdered sugar, sifted**  
**Pinch salt**  
**2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup**  
**1-2 Tbsp. milk or cream (adjust to desired consistency)**  
**1/4 tsp. vanilla extract (optional)**

- Whisk the powdered sugar and salt together.
- Add the syrup, 1 Tbsp. milk or cream and vanilla; whisk until smooth. Add more milk or cream, drop by drop until the glaze flows in ribbons.
- Drizzle, dip or spread on cooled cookies. Let set for at least 30 minutes at room temperature to firm up.



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# THE BUILDING WITH 3,528 STORIES

— By Virginia Riddle



*His childhood idol was a fellow Texan, Audie Murphy. A child of sharecroppers, Roy Benavidez became a Green Beret during the Vietnam era. Wounded, he survived to be deployed again, and in 1968, almost single-handedly, rescued a reconnaissance team, earning the same medal as his childhood hero — the Medal of Honor.*

A serene lake in Arlington, Texas, provides a place for visitors to the National Medal of Honor Museum, which opened in March 2025, to reflect. Visitors rise to an elevated exhibit deck, supported by five concrete columns representing the U.S. Armed Forces and the over 40 million men and women who have served throughout the country's history. However, the brief overview film, *The Courage Within*, shown on a 360-degree screen, and the exhibits and interactives are dedicated to the 3,528 men and women who have received the Medal of Honor.

Texas was chosen for the museum's location due to its central location in the United States; the DFW airport; the museum's addition to the Arlington Entertainment District, host to many visitors; and Texas' sense of patriotism. The National

Medal of Honor Foundation, guided by the Medal's core values of courage, sacrifice, commitment, integrity, citizenship and patriotism, funds and operates the museum and its Griffin Institute as well as the National Medal of Honor Monument in Washington, D.C.

Signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in 1861, the Medal of Honor has a long history of representing extraordinary courage and character, both of which are represented in full story, high-definition screens in the *Moments of Action* exhibit. A Huey helicopter lets visitors learn how machines have helped in military actions in the *From Rails to Rotors* exhibit. Enter *Dustoff* for a virtual reality ride aboard a Huey or have a conversation with a Recipient through an AI-facilitated interactive, *Conversations: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives*. Cases, which stand throughout the deck, feature artifacts from different Recipients' service days and tell their stories.

At the entrance level, visitors can enter the Griffin Institute to do research or develop leadership skills, visit the café for a lakeside lunch or purchase books and other items from the gift shop. Guided tours are available, and Smartify allows guests to learn about the medal in several languages.

Some Recipients have played interesting roles in service to our country and had their medals removed and restored during different periods in history. Dr. Mary Walker, a woman Army surgeon during the Civil War, was the first woman Recipient in

1864. Her medal was revoked because she was never officially commissioned into the Army and was later restored in 1977. In 1872, William Frederick Cody, better known later as "Buffalo Bill," also earned a Medal of Honor. Like Dr. Walker, Buffalo Bill Cody's medal was deemed "unwarranted" in 1916 but was restored in 1989.

The most decorated U.S. soldier in WWII, Audie Murphy, a sharecropper's son, was born in Hunt County, Texas, in 1925. As a child, he helped feed his 11 siblings by hunting small animals. Initially rejected by the Navy and Marine Corps for being underage and underweight, Murphy eventually was accepted by the Army after falsifying his age. During his action in the European Theater, he was recognized with 33 awards and citations including three Purple Hearts, the Distinguished Service Cross and the Medal of Honor. Murphy published his autobiography, *To Hell and Back*, in 1949. A bestseller, the book became a movie in which Murphy played himself. He went on to appear in 44 movies during his career and became a successful songwriter. He was also a victim of insomnia and nightmares which would later be known as PTSD. Murphy died in a plane crash in 1971 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

U.S. Army Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez, returned home from Vietnam, recovered from his injuries and served until his retirement in 1976. The rest of his life was spent in public speaking and mentoring children to find their purpose in service to their country. He died in 1998 and is buried in Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas.

Every story in the National Medal of Honor Museum is of service above and beyond the call of duty. What enabled these ordinary people to do the extraordinary? Hopefully, visitors of all ages will come away inspired to "awaken the extraordinary within." **NOW**

Photos courtesy of the National Medal of Honor Foundation - Corey Gaffer Photography.

Sources:

1. DeLong, Kent. War Heroes. Praeger Publishers, Westport, Connecticut. 1993.
2. <https://www.mohmuseum.org>.
3. Brochure. National Medal of Honor Museum.

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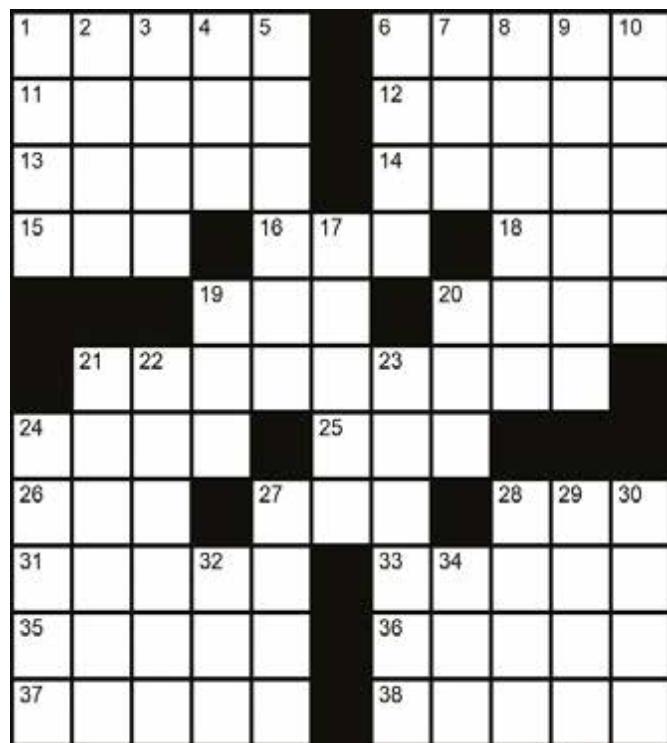
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## Across

1 Obama's youngest  
 6 One Note ---  
 11 Florida Keys, e.g.  
 12 Check for fit  
 13 Detroit gridders  
 14 Oak-to-be  
 15 Testing place  
 16 Kind of port  
 18 Kissing in public, perhaps, briefly  
 19 Hesitator's syllable  
 20 Claim against property  
 21 San Francisco sight  
 24 Duration  
 25 Wee boy  
 26 "It's pretty, but is it --- ?" (Kipling)  
 27 Government agency controlling one-eighth of the country  
 28 Army detectives  
 31 Supple  
 33 Incongruity  
 35 Muzzle  
 36 "Bronco Billy" co-star Sondra ---  
 37 They might be smashed as Tom gets drunk  
 38 Persuades

## Down

1 Ledge  
 2 Home to billions  
 3 Grubby guy  
 4 Cackleberry maker  
 5 Suppose Sue mixes it with Sam  
 6 Brief attempt  
 7 Curve  
 8 Short-sightedness  
 9 Place for a patrol  
 10 UN head before Ki-moon  
 17 Nose  
 19 "Ode on a Grecian ---" (Keats)  
 20 Type of TV screen  
 21 Burst of speed  
 22 Military display  
 23 Some Sri Lankans  
 24 Chip dip  
 27 Takes a chance  
 28 Narcotic shrub  
 29 Deep black  
 30 Treats with tinctures  
 32 Sing wordlessly  
 34 Rank

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3	5				6			
9		1	8	2				
4	2	9			5			
						1		
2			3	4			9	
7						6		
		9			4			

Medium

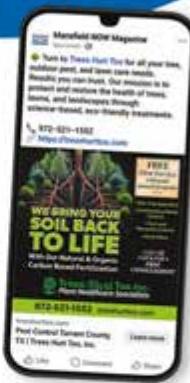
7	8	3			1
3		2		6	
			6		7
		4		3	
9			5	2	4
		1		9	8
3					2
7	2	8			5
		5			6

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# Happy THANKSGIVING

Some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press.  
Check with individual organizations or your city or Chamber websites to verify dates and times.

## NOVEMBER

Through 12/8

### **Ellis County Toys for Tots Toy Drive:**

Support families and children in need throughout Ellis County this Christmas season. Toys will be collected at various locations. For more information visit <https://ennis-tx.toysfortots.org>.

11/1, 11/8  
and 11/15

### **Scarborough's Hollow Fall Fantasy Festival:**

Visitors can enjoy live entertainment, artisan shoppes, interactive activities for all ages, seasonal attractions and a touch of spooky delight. 2:00-10:00 p.m., 2511 FM 66. For ticket information, visit <https://www.srfestival.com/>.

11/7-11/8

**ECLSR Holiday Market:**  
Get your Christmas shopping done early this year all while supporting the 4H & FFA Youth of Ellis County. **Friday:** 5:00-9:00 p.m.; **Saturday:** 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Ellis County Youth Expo, 2300 W. Hwy. 287 Bypass. Get tickets at <https://www.ecyexpo.com/p> tickets.

11/8

### **Ellis County Veterans Celebration:**

Join in celebration of our military veterans. Live band, singers, tributes and a military style flyover. 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane.

### **Red Oak High School**

#### **Christmas Market:**

Vendors and silent auction benefiting the Specialized Learning VIP Dance. 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., ROHS Cafeteria, 220 S. 342, Red Oak.

11/10

### **The 250th U.S. Marine Corps Birthday Ball:**

The Marine Corps Birthday is one of the biggest social events of the year for Marines all over the world. 5:00-11:55 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane. Purchase tickets at <https://ellismcl.org/birthday-ball>.

11/14-11/15

### **Festival of Trees:**

Habitat for Humanity of Ellis County's goal is to eliminate poverty housing in Ellis County. This fundraiser involves people using their creative skills to decorate a tree, wreath or other Christmas item which they donate to be auctioned. **Friday:** 5:00-9:00 p.m.; **Saturday:** 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin St. For details visit <https://www.ellishabitat.org/festival.htm>.

11/15

### **Hachie Uncorked:**

An afternoon of flavor, creativity and live entertainment. Sample a variety of local wines with tastings included in admission. Plein air artists, live music and other vendors. Noon-5:00 p.m., Downtown Waxahachie. Get tickets at <https://www.simpletix.com/e/hachie-uncorked-wine-art-music-tickets-236593>.

11/15-11/16

### **Paint Historic**

#### **Waxahachie Exhibition:**

Original paintings created during the annual Plein Air Paint Out on display at the Women's Building, 407 W. Jefferson St. Hosted by the Ellis County Art Association. This is an annual event, and it is open for all patrons of the arts. For information, email Kathy Colvin, publicity chairman, at [Kcolvin2c@aol.com](mailto:Kcolvin2c@aol.com).

11/22

### **Old Fashioned Craft Show:**

Find unique Christmas gifts while supporting the Student in Need Fund for WISD. **Admission:** \$3. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Coleman Jr. High, 1000 N. Hwy. 77.

### **Boston Brass:**

Presented by the Waxahachie Symphony Association. 7:30-9:00 p.m., Nelson

University, Hagee Center, 499 E. University Ave. For ticket information, visit <https://www.waxahachiesymphony.org>.

11/29

### **Small Business Saturday:**

Kick off the holiday season by shopping and dining locally. Downtown Waxahachie.

12/1

### **Beauville:**

Navarro College presents their annual holiday event. 6:00-7:30 p.m., 1900 John Arden Dr.

### **Christmas at Nelson:**

Nelson University presents their annual holiday event. 6:00 p.m., 1200 Sycamore St.

### **First Mondays**

#### **Senior (50+) Dance:**

Enjoy live country and western music and dancing. 6:30-9:00 p.m. Dance instruction 5:45 p.m., Optimist Youth Center, 219 N. Patrick.

#### **Write On!:**

Get that novel written. Free. 3:00-5:00 p.m., Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to adam.walker@nowmagazines.com.*

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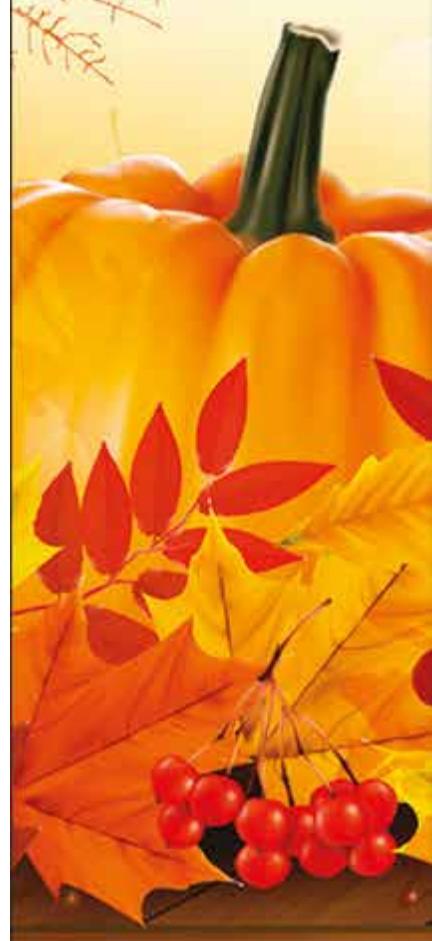


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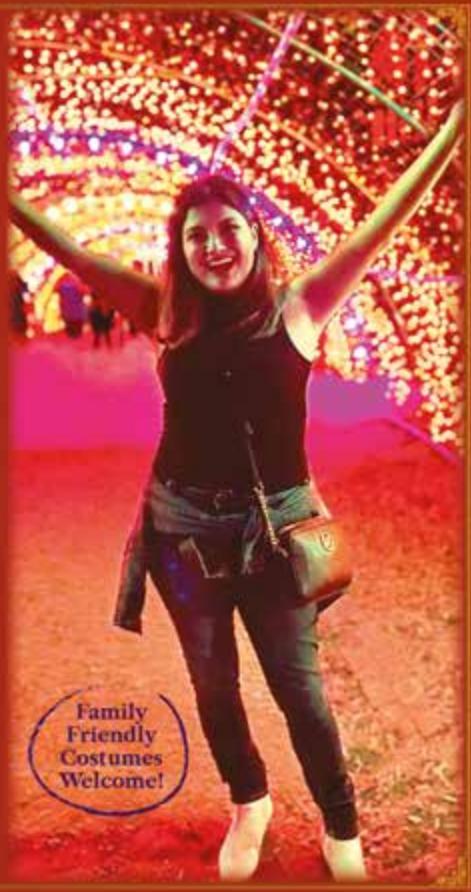
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