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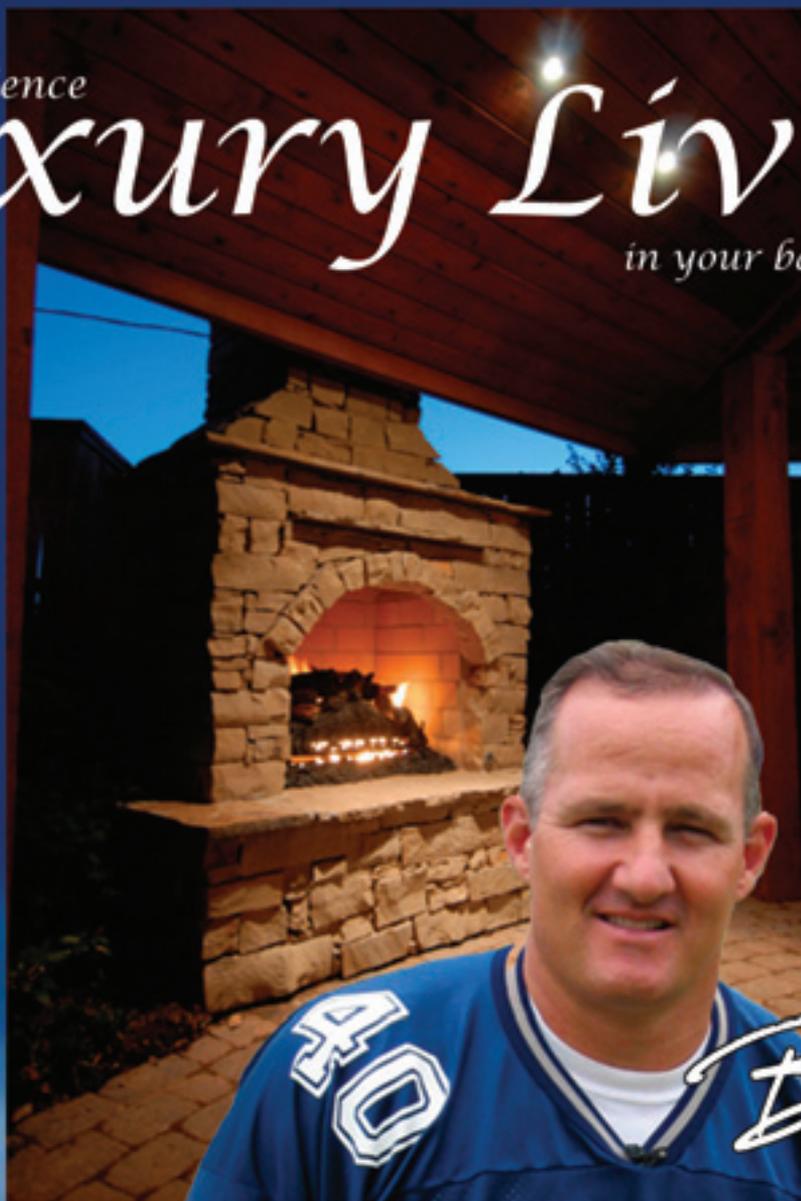
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Publisher, Connie Poirier
General Manager, Rick Hensley
Managing Editor, Becky Walker
Creative Director, Jami Navarro
Art Director, Chris McCalla
Office Manager, Lauren Poirier

Waxahachie Editor, Sandra McIntosh
Contributing Writers, Faith Browning • Nancy Fenton • Adam Rope • Jaime Ruark • Betty Tryon
Photography, Natalie Busch • Rod Cordsen
Ivey Photography • Terri Ozymy
Contributing Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony
Jaime Ruark • Beverly Shay

Advertising Representatives, Carolyn Mixon
Rick Ausmus • Linda Dean • Will Epps • Linda Moffett • Steve Randle • Eddie Yates • Terri Yates
Graphic Designers/Production, Julie Carpenter
Allee Brand • Jana Jennings • Marshall Hinsley
Arlene Honza • Brande Morgan • Pamela Parisi
Jennifer Wylie

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Editor's Note

Merry Christmas!

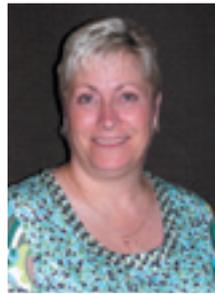
This time of year evokes so much emotion. For me, remembering the ones that have gone on before holds a special place in my memory. I think about my dad's parents as I hang ornaments on the tree. My mom's mother comes to mind when the holiday baking begins.

A very special birth — the birth of Jesus Christ — is also remembered during Bethlehem Revisited, a re-enactment hosted by Central Presbyterian Church. If you have never attended, I encourage you to do so. Be prepared to experience the sweet scent of incense and baked goods, while stepping aside for Joseph and Mary as they make their way through Bethlehem, only to end up at the stable because there was no more room at the inn.

Let the "reason for the season" fill your heart with peace and joy!

Sandra McIntosh
WaxahachieNOW Editor

To find out more about Bethlehem Revisited, please call (972) 937-2390.



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Knowing True Love

— By Sandra McIntosh

Some people are natural born volunteers, while others need to see an example they can mimic. The Buie family — Buster, Jill, Emily, Jessica and Callianne — are both. The importance of setting a positive example started soon after Emily's birth 15 years ago, and has grown threefold as the younger two siblings came along. Born with Down Syndrome, the young couple could have kept Emily at home away from the outside world, which can be cruel to those who are different.

Instead, they decided almost immediately to give her every opportunity possible to live a full, happy and successful life. If they had to help make things happen, that was OK, too. "The Angels League started back in 2001," Buster said, referring to the program designed specifically for special needs children at the local YMCA. "Mark James was the administrator at the time. When he came home with the idea of such a league, it seemed as if Jill had already been thinking the same thing."

The league play started with basketball, tee ball and coach-pitched softball. Emily played basketball that first year, and even though she did not like the close contact, she played for a couple more years. "At home, she has the court and basket all to herself," Jill explained. "Being in a crowd bothers her." Later that same year when she tried softball, it seemed as if she had found her niche in the athletic world. She likes the sport, but she also likes the fact that her dad is the pitcher. Emily played that first year and then took one season off. "Just like any athlete," Buster said, "she needed a break."

Since that first season of play, Emily has experienced everything that has been offered through the Angels League, such as indoor soccer (which lasted for only two practice sessions) swimming and gymnastics. What she was unable to experience at the YMCA, such as bowling and a multitude of track events, has come to pass with the Special Olympics. "She likes to do everything," Jill said, proud of all Emily has

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accomplished thus far. "There's nothing she can't do." "She likes it all," Buster interjected. "She hikes, bikes, fishes and plays every sport that is offered to her." When asked what her favorite sport is, Emily smiled a winning smile and simply said, "Softball is best!" Proof is found in the trophies, medals and ribbons she has accumulated throughout her sports career.

Buster and Jill have been avid volunteers in both of these areas where Emily has found so much success, but the volunteer spirit did not start and end with them. Jessica, now 11, started volunteering years ago. "She started



with Emily in the Angels League," Jill said. "They both learned the sports together. It's typical for the siblings to play alongside their special needs siblings." Playing alongside soon grew into giving back to the league as a volunteer. "Jessica volunteers on a regular basis now," Jill added. "She's even recruited some of her fellow teammates from her league at the YMCA to volunteer, also."

The patient young girl, who helps her older sister get a glass of juice from the refrigerator and journey down memory lane with hundreds of family photos, is the same all the time. Her temperament is selfless. What one sees in public is what one sees when visiting the Buie home. "Emily and I are as close as two sisters can be," Jessica said, noting that her parents have always been her example. "She's had to be all

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sisters rolled into one,” Jill said, as Buster smiled and nodded his head in agreement. “She was the little sister to Emily when she was young. Now, the roles have been reversed and she’s the older sister to both Emily and Callianne.” To see Jessica in action, it is quickly understood that she is in her element.

Life seems easy and laid back for the Buie family now, but in reality it has not always been this way. “It’s normal for Down Syndrome babies to have heart defects,” Jill said. “Emily’s were

“We are so blessed. Emily has brought more joy into this family than we could ever have imagined. We didn’t know what true love was until Emily.”

major.” After several surgeries, which included major heart surgery, Emily was released from the hospital. “Once she came home, she was so strong,” Buster remembered. “Jill and I know how precious Emily is to the whole family.” She continues to be the priceless gift that keeps on giving.

With Christmas just a few short weeks away, the family is looking forward to sharing in all their holiday traditions. One of the first things they did, prior to December 1, was to go down to the parking lot at Blockbuster. “We always go by there and pick out a live Christmas tree,” Buster said. “We bring it home and make a party out of decorating it.” “Emily makes sure Buster doesn’t forget the star,” Jill laughed. “It’s the last thing and Daddy has to be the one to do it.” When the tree was finished, Emily recited the words she is famous for, “Good job, Dad!”

On December 2, Callianne, nicknamed “Smile” by Emily, will no doubt celebrate her fourth birthday with family, friends, ice cream and cake. As the days loom closer to Santa’s visit, the family will spend at least one evening curled up in front of the fireplace

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watching *It's a Wonderful Life*. As members of Central Presbyterian Church, the family will also take their annual journey back in time, as they stroll the streets of Bethlehem Revisited. "Emily has grown to love this outing," Jill shared. "We usually go more than once."

The story Buster and Jill tell of these visits back to Bethlehem are centered around the innocence of a



child — their child. Emily likes to see the camels, but her favorite place is along the fence surrounding the live Nativity. "She will stand there for as long as we let her," Buster said, feeling certain that his daughter comprehends the full meaning of the Savior's birth. When she was little, Buster remembers holding her on his shoulders for as long as he could before going home. It has become a magical time for the whole family.

Christmas Eve, they will return to the church to actively participate in the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. The following morning will find them all giddy with laughter as they share Christmas breakfast with Jill's mom, sisters and their families. As the girls unwrap their gifts, Buster and Jill will sit back and take in the scene around them. They will look at the three most precious gifts of all — their daughters. "We are so blessed," Jill said, referencing Emily's Down Syndrome. "Emily has brought more joy into this family than we could ever have imagined. We didn't know what true love was until Emily." **NOW**

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Her Holiday Heart

— By Jaime Ruark



At Home With
**Gloria Sullivan
and Jim DeWitt**

The three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath, 3,200-square-foot brick home, with landscaped greenery surrounding the winding path to the front door, is as beautiful on the inside as it is on the outside, just like its owner. Gloria Sullivan is a vivacious woman, her bright blue eyes glowing with energy and merriment, and her house, decorated for Christmas in professionally done lights, is a reflection of her warmth.

Gloria was born in Ferris, but has lived in Waxahachie for much of her life, returning in 1971 to work in the family business following a three-year stint in Germany, where her daughter was born. As the corporate accountant and managing partner for the Waxahachie Warehouse Company and Sullivan Properties, Gloria is a woman on the go. However, she makes it a point to spend time with those important in her life: her son and daughter with their families, including the eight grandchildren that light up her life; Jim DeWitt, owner of Trinity Pharmacy and the man in her life; her Sunday school and many friends.

Stone rabbits welcome visitors from the flowerbeds leading to the front door. The animals, a favorite of Gloria's, are found here and there throughout the home that she has lived in for



over five years. “My brother, Hibbert Beck, is a builder in Palmer, and he built the house for me,” she explained. “After it was built, I expanded the sunroom. I kind of have projects going most of the time, whether they’re little or big.”



Also greeting guests during the holiday season is a five-foot tall Santa Claus, his sled usually found parked outside on Gloria’s front lawn. A lover of Christmas, she admitted with a smile, “Some people may think I go overboard with the decorations, but I



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don't mind. I just love the holiday, and I leave many things out year-round."

Jim definitely agrees that Gloria goes all out, but he does not mind at all. His help during the decorating process is most appreciated when it comes to framing the front archway with the magnolias Gloria loves. "I may help with a few things," he laughed, "but all the credit goes to Gloria. She works hard to make Christmas come alive."

The foyer opens up to a front room

that is decorated in red tones and accented by mustard yellows and forest greens, from the curtains to the lavish rug. The gorgeous décor is formal, yet feels comfortable and inviting at the same time. Two elegant glass cases display two of Gloria's many collections. One case houses delicate crystal and a year-round nativity display, which is a sparkling testament to Gloria's love of Christmas and the true reason for the season. The other is filled with sweet little Hummel figurines — a collection

that has been growing since 1968.

In December, these collections may be difficult to notice, as the eye is immediately pulled to the many nativity scenes and the gorgeous tree taking up one corner of the room. "I started collecting Christmas things in Germany when I was first married. I still have many of those first decorations, and I enjoy pulling them out every year," Gloria shared. "I get started right after Thanksgiving, rearranging and pulling things out. I don't do things the same every year. I love decorating, and I love moving things around and changing things, so every year even my trees are different. Nothing ever looks the same."

The sunroom, with its large windows offering a view of the courtyard and pool area that sees a lot of action during the summer months, is home through the year to a massive Norfolk pine. Its reaching branches are moved during the holiday to make room for another Christmas tree. In fact, Gloria puts a tree up in every room of her home,



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even the laundry room, decorating each accordingly. "The tree in the front room I usually do more formally, but as you go through the house, they get more whimsical," she explained. "My grandkids are in and out of the house all Christmas. My granddaughters help me decorate, which is so fun." Family photographs grace the walls in every room. "Everything in my house is very family-oriented. My family is so important to me," she added.



The kitchen is a bright room showcasing more of Gloria's collections also begun in Germany. Blue and white porcelain plates hang on the walls and pewter chocolate molds in the shapes of Santas and trees are used as decorations. "I have a number of cookie jars, dishes and bowls that I bring out for Christmas," she said, pointing out her punch bowl set painted with the 12 days of Christmas. "We have Sunday school parties and family



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parties here, and I like to bake and put out cider.”

The grandchildren’s room is a little boy and girl’s dream, because it is Christmastime year-round there, with a huge framed Santa smiling down from one wall even in July. “The kids are between the ages of 3 and 16, so they



really enjoy this room,” Gloria smiled.

The guest bedroom is draped in another of Gloria’s collections. “I love quilts. I’ve taken several classes and would love to be able to make my own



someday. I use them for everything, from tablecloths to wall hangings,” she noted. A lovely partial quilt even hangs over the guest bathtub. “I bought that to make a shower curtain out of it, but the ceilings in here were just so tall it didn’t look right, so I hung it up behind the tub. I actually had a grandchild in the tub on a ladder

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helping me hang it," she recalled with a laugh. Both the guest bedroom and bath get their own trees as well.

The master bedroom has an antique air, from the old black-and-white family photographs and the shadow box displaying a bruised but beautiful violin, to her decorations during the holiday

season. "I put a slim tree in here and decorate it with doilies [to] give it a Victorian feel," she related. A picture of Gloria when she was a little girl, standing next to Santa's knee, again shows just how much a favorite the holiday has always been. "It's like I came out loving Christmas, as any kid does," she laughed, "but I just never stopped."

Gloria loves antiques, pieces with a story behind them, and the house is filled with finds from antique and estate sales, or things that have been passed on to her from her family. "The cast-iron cook stove in the sun room was my



sister's, and the dresser in the master bedroom was my grandfather's," she revealed. "I love having things to remember them by. It just seems like when I find antiques and bring them home, they just fit."

With sparkling eyes, Gloria expressed why Christmas is her favorite time of year and a feeling she keeps in her heart year-round. "It's about God and family and warmth and friendship. It's the laughter and the fellowship that I love," she said, with her glowing smile. **NOW**

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Made *to be* Cherished

— By Sandra McIntosh

The quilting timeline dates back to the mid-1700s with what is still known as pieced patchwork and chintz appliqué quilting. Published patterns did not become available on general store shelves until 1855. What once was done only by hand with needle and thread has in modern times become a popular item to piece and quilt with the ease of a sewing machine. To say the least, quilting is an art form steeped in rich American history.

Since the mid-to-late-'70s, Denice Lipscomb has grown to love the historical aspect of her craft. She feels as if she may have been born in the wrong century. "Historically, it was primarily a women's art form," Denice said. "During prohibition times, it was one of the only ways women were able to express themselves. The temperance quilts gave women a voice. Each quilt told a story and each quilt spoke volumes."

Denice admits she had no idea what she was doing when she started quilting. Her grandmother may have taught her how to sew, but she had to learn the art of quilting on her own. "I took a piece of cardboard and used it as a pattern," she explained. "I took leftover fabric to use as the quilt top, but I needed a middle and a back." She solved this problem by using an old blanket she had for the middle and a basic bed sheet for the backing.



"That was the first quilt I ever made," she beamed, "and my youngest daughter still has it in her home today."

That first quilt was done completely on a sewing machine — the piecing as well as the actual quilting. From the time she began quilting until the early '90s, Denice said she only completed a couple of quilts. The "quilting bug" did not bite until she completed her first quilt with the use of a store-bought pattern. "Since 1993, I've never looked back," she said, proof positive by the popularity of Common Threads, the quilt shop she and her husband, Kirk, own. "My medium is textiles, while other artists use paint or clay."

Since Denice has mastered the art of "writing a pattern," her collection of antique quilts has come in quite handy. In fact, Denice has been asked to reproduce what is thought to be the wedding quilt of Sam and Margaret

Houston, originally pieced in the 1840s. She will no doubt make one for the Sam Houston Memorial Museum in Huntsville, while also making a second one for her own enjoyment. "Once a pattern is created, it will allow the museum to sell the pattern in their souvenir shop," she said. "They are treating me like royalty."

The process of making a pattern is so very difficult. This particular pattern,

Her grandmother may have taught her how to sew, but she had to learn the art of quilting on her own.

Denice said, will take her no less than six months to create. "I have to take lots of photographs and measurements," she stated. "I will bring the photos and the measurements home to produce the master pattern. Then the pattern will be mass-produced locally for the museum's use."

Kirk will play a huge role in reproducing the Sam Houston quilt, as he does in all the patterns Denice has written over the years. "I'm very analytical when it comes to writing patterns," Denice said. "Kirk takes what I've written and rewrites it in a way that is easily understood." Simply stated, Kirk pens the patterns in layman's terms where even a beginner can understand. "He may not pick up a needle and sew," Denice offered, "but he's a vital part of the pattern reproduction process. I couldn't do it without him."

Most of the quilts that Denice has made have been created from her own imagination or she has made alterations to an existing quilt to make it more to

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her own liking. The “Daughters of Eve” is a two-quilt series where each block represents a woman found within the Bible. Each quilt took 14 months, from start to finish. The “Be Still and Know That I Am God” is also a masterpiece worth mentioning. Most of the Christmas quilts that Denice shared were designed by her, as well. “The ‘Classic Christmas’ quilt has Christmas toile print throughout,” she said. “It’s my favorite.” The fabric found in the “Colonial Williamsburg” was reproduction fabric. The process of



sewing Christmas quilts begins during the summer because it can take several months to complete.

Research shows that quilting is a 4.5 billion dollar a year industry. To think that it is an art form that is dying is a fallacy. Denice’s passion for quilting is something she loves doing for herself, but also one she thoroughly enjoys sharing with others. “I’ve been known to give them away, but only to those who truly appreciate them,” she offered. “It’s important that they are cherished.”

When asked how many quilts she has created since that first one years ago, Debbie said, “Would you ask a painter how many canvases they’ve produced? Oil paintings, although pretty, just hang on a wall to be looked at. Textiles can be hung, wrapped and worn. I will quilt for as long as I’m able.” **NOW**

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Santa in Training

— By Faith Browning



Throughout the years, visions of Santa Claus have always been of a portly, bearded gentleman in a colorful red suit, but with today's outlook of good health, maybe we should begin to visualize Santa in a different form. Due to a thoughtful Father's Day present of a personal trainer, Santa's helper Steve White began his own journey to a healthier way of life, without a second thought of how it might affect the fitting of his tailored suit. Steve stated, "I really believe Santa should be healthy."

Five years ago, Steve's life was turned around when he was diagnosed with type II diabetes. The domino effect of illnesses began his journey to becoming dependent on one medication after another and another for diabetes and high blood pressure. "I just wanted to try not having to take all that medication," he explained. "I knew losing weight would be a start for me to live a better and much healthier life."

Instead of cookies, this Santa was tempted daily with irresistible cupcakes. Steve's wife, Debbie, and her sister, Carol Ann Hewson, started a cupcake/sandwich shop in Waxahachie.

Debbie would innocently bring home a few of the leftover cupcakes for him to enjoy. "That's one of the reasons I gained some weight," he confessed. "I knew I would have to lay off the cupcakes for a while."

After sharing his health and weight concerns with Debbie, one of her Baylor co-workers recommended a personal trainer. "The reason I got the trainer is because we can talk each other out of going somewhere to exercise, but when you have somebody knocking at your door, you are forced to exercise," Debbie explained. "We went to BaylorWorx for a little while, but you start coming up with excuses like: 'I have really had a long day' or 'I'm too tired.' When you know that somebody is coming to your house for an hour, you make the time."

When Debbie spoke with trainer Dr. David Williams, she received a small surprise. "When I called David to set up the appointment he said, 'It is the same price for both of you, so

you will be joining us?' and I thought, *Yeah, we'll see about that.*"

Their personal trainer began coming to their home for an hour twice a week, but now that Steve has made great progress, he comes only once a week. "He comes to our house and brings his weights," Steve explained. "It's not just exercising; it's also weight training." In the comfort of their living room, Steve and Debbie spend most of the hour training with weights. Steve started out

"I really believe Santa should be healthy."

with the smallest (five pound) weights and is currently training with the maximum (30 pound) weights — focusing on all parts of the body.

Together, they have also mastered the balancing act of using a large exercise ball. "Believe me, you will fall off of it at first," Steve admitted, "but, eventually, you get your balance." Working with the ball, they started out on their first day executing one set of 10 crunches. Now they are achieving four sets of 12.

To ensure a complete cardiovascular workout, Steve began a daily routine of walking. He began walking 30 minutes six days a week, but now is up to walking two days for one hour, two days for 45 minutes and a single day for 30 minutes. "After my walks, I come in and do 100 sit-ups," Steve claimed. "I also send my trainer an e-mail to let him know what I have done." When weather permits, Steve walks outdoors, but on rainy days his treadmill gets the workout. "I put a DVD in and do my walking," he explained. "If you have a good movie to watch, it really helps you walk longer. It keeps you from looking at your watch."

Since Father's Day, Steve has lost over 25 pounds. The loss of pounds will require him to use a little extra

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stuffing to fill the Santa suit Debbie's mother, Virginia Cleveland, created for him. He started his Santa career several years back when he and Debbie lived in California. "I thought one year, *You know what I think would be really neat to do as a part-time job*, so I



**The loss of pounds
will require him to use
a little extra stuffing
to fill the Santa
suit Debbie's mother,
Virginia Cleveland,
created for him.**

started out being a mall Santa," he remembered. "The thing that really got me wanting to do it year after year was the joy in the children's eyes and smiles on their faces."

Now you can find Santa Steve bringing smiles to faces at private parties. He enjoys this atmosphere because it is more informal. He plans to lose 13 more pounds, so you might see a slimmer Santa around town, or as Steve said, "Maybe I will just have to use a bigger pillow!" **NOW**

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Candice Jones co-owns Ark Country Store with her father, Reggie Underwood.

Caring For Them All

— By Sandra McIntosh

Many will remember the feed stores of old — the worn, wooden floors, the smell of weed spray and the feeling you got knowing you had just entered a man's world, especially if you happened to be a woman. When Candice Jones partnered with her father, Reggie Underwood, in the Ark Country Store, she knew from experience that she wanted to offer customers something more. "I grew up in Waxahachie. We had horses, and it seemed like me and mom were always the ones going to the local feed store," Candace remembered. "It didn't feel comfortable to either one of us."

Remembering the discomfort she felt as a young girl, Candace meant to make the Ark Country Store, located at 209 S. Highway 77, a comfortable place for the entire family. The offerings, such as purses, jewelry, picture frames and sunglasses, were added to the normal feed store items on purpose. It was all done by design, and for Candace and her father, the idea is proving to be quite successful. "So many times, guys will come in and remember a birthday or anniversary," Candace explained. "It helps the men remember those special occasions, and it keeps the busy ranchers out of the doghouse."



"We have tried to focus on the individuals who enjoy the Western and outdoor cultures," Reggie said. "We wanted to offer a local Nordstrom experience for customers ... with competitive pricing. There's no other store like this one."

Just like Noah's Ark, Candace and Reggie thought of everything when stocking their "boat" for the journey, which began back in September 2007. As active, hands-on members of the Ellis County Cowboy Church, the Ark connotation gives customers an idea of what motivates Candace and her father.

The Ark logo, which hangs from the rafters, was obtained from a movie house in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, thanks to Kathy Smith of Vintage Bank. "She collects Arks," Candace said, "but when she saw this one, she knew we had to hang it here in the store."

The company motto states: "All Creatures Great and Small, Ark Country Store Takes Care of Them All." Candice and Reggie take great pride in stocking items for every need or want imaginable, from the customer who competes for a living on the pro rodeo circuit to the teenager who horseback rides for the simple pleasure it provides. Just recently, they added a Justin water-resistant,

outerwear clothing line that makes working outdoors in the elements much more tolerable, as well as offering a convenient location for purchasing fishing and hunting licenses. "The line here is a lot shorter," Candace stated. "I believe we're the first feed dealer to have these licenses available to our customers."

Another thing, which is very important when it comes to satisfied customers, is the knowledgeable staff in place at the Ark Country Store. "We are certified Purnia dealers," Reggie explained. "Purina helps train our employees, as well as many of our valued customers, by offering horse and cow



owner workshops. We also offer items for animals with special needs."

Candace, following in her father's educational footsteps, attended college at Tarleton State University. "I went to school on a rodeo scholarship," she said, adding that her husband, Casey, also attended Tarleton. "I really think growing up on a farm with horses, show steers and coastal hay prepared me to know how to manage a business well, and I always wanted to be just like my dad."

The Ark Country Store is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. For more information, call (972) 937-8860. **NOW**

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Classroom on Wheels

— By Sandra McIntosh

Gary Coffey and Jim Murley are excited about the positive effects of the Reading Rider Program.

Jim Murley is one of 38 bus drivers in the Waxahachie Independent School District. Over the past 10 years, he has learned one thing about children: “They want to be praised,” he stated. “They thrive on it.” Underneath their sometimes rough exterior, Jim believes that all children want to do a good job in whatever endeavor they set their minds to.

When the idea of the Reading Rider Program began to take shape in Jim’s mind, he decided it was best to put his thoughts into action. “I believe God placed this idea in my heart,” Jim explained, “and instructed me to follow through with it.” Jim wasted no time getting his supervisor, Gary Coffey, involved in the program that, since its inception, has produced happier students on Bus 54, while also putting an end to most, if not all, discipline problems. “The transportation department is a family,” Gary said. “We do a lot of things as a group. Jim’s idea is just another example of that togetherness.”

Jim realized, when the idea drifted from his heart to his mind, that reading on the way home from school could benefit the students who range in age as well as grade level. Reading has given the students something to occupy their minds and unwind after a long day of learning within the confines of the indoor classroom. “I believe I carry the most precious cargo on God’s green earth,” Jim said. “This program allows me to be the best bus driver I can be.”

The bus is Jim’s classroom on wheels, and he considers himself to be more than “just a bus driver.” He takes his job

behind the wheel very seriously. “I must be perfect in every decision I make,” he said. “It’s like a teacher taking preparation to ensure a safe, disciplined and nurturing environment for their students. My bus is my classroom!”

The curriculum offered in the Reading Rider Program consists of books, books and more books, which remain on the buses for the reading enjoyment of the children. There is reading material available for every grade level, as well as books that can help bilingual students transition from Spanish to English. Even though the program is only in its third year, Gary and Jim have already begun to see the positive effects it has had on students from kindergarten through grade twelve.

Reading has helped with the concepts found in TAKS testing. Vocabulary, as well as a broadened understanding of things in general, continues to be on the rise. Some students are finding an escape of sorts as they travel around the world within the pages of the books. “I just wanted reading to be fun for the kids,” Jim explained, “because it’s all about the kids.”

Wanting to reward the students for a job well done, Jim was able to get the community involved by donating prizes and special incentives. Local merchants have contributed metallic pencils, \$5 gift cards and day passes to Six Flags Over Texas. High school students have also been doing their

part to be community-minded by supplying books for the cause. "Older students are going back to books they read as small children," Jim expressed. "They are adding inscriptions of encouragement for the kids on the bus. They're as inspirational to the program as the young readers are." The older students on the bus are also "stepping up to give back" by reading aloud to the younger students. It has become a win-win situation for all those involved. "Students are learning that reading is knowledge," Jim added. "That newly acquired knowledge is power that opens doors to their future."

Dale Rozas is another driver who quickly got on board with Jim's idea. At the onset, she had a large basket at the front of the bus where she stored her books. She soon realized she would have to come up with something different if she was going to get her bus loaded and on the road in a timely manner. "Each child would stop at the basket to get a book for the ride home," she laughed. "I came up with an idea the kids like to call 'kangaroo pouches.'"

The pouch-like pockets hang over the seats and hold the books that once were located at the front of the bus. The side facing the child in the next seat holds a selection of books, while the other side holds an enclosed pocket of sand to balance the weight. "I feel warm inside to have done something to add to the success of the program," Dale said.

Both Gary and Jim are hopeful because of the continued growth of the program that started with one bus but has now grown to at least a dozen. Several may wonder what Jim and the other bus drivers get out of the Reading Rider Program. The answer for Jim was easy. "There is no greater gift, reward or pay that can equal a smile from a child," he noted, with emotion building in his voice. "A smile or a laugh is worth more than gold." **NOW**

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Walmart donated over \$22,000 to area organizations. Hope Clinic, top left, gratefully received a portion of that donation during Walmart's reopening ceremony. Floats, top right and second row right, were a highlight during the Homecoming Parade. A ribbon cutting, second row left, was held at Sun Loan's new location. Carla Crawford from Marlin Elementary School, second row center, was named Walmart's Teacher of the Year during their reopening ceremony. The Shirells, bottom center, performed to a large crowd during the Texas Country Reporter Festival. A ribbon cutting, bottom right, was held for Walmart following the completion of an overall renovation.

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HAM AND CHEESE QUICHE

2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
 1 cup cooked ham, cubed
 1/4 cup onion, finely chopped
 9-inch deep-dish pie shell, thawed
 1/2 cup evaporated milk or small can
 2 eggs, beaten
 1/2 cup mayonnaise
 Preheat oven 375 F. Toss together cheese, ham and onions; spoon into pie shell. In a separate bowl, whisk together milk, eggs and mayonnaise until well blended; pour over ham and cheese mixture. Bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown. Test if done by inserting a knife into the center to see if it comes out clean. Cool before serving.

CORN BREAD STUFFING

1 pkg. corn bread mix, prepared according to package instructions, crumbled
 1 8-oz. pkg. Pepperidge Farm Herb Seasoned stuffing mix
 2 - 3 sticks butter

1 onion, chopped
 6 - 8 celery stalks, chopped
 6 - 8 eggs
 3 - 4 14-oz. cans chicken broth
 1/2 - 1 tsp. poultry seasoning
 Mix together crumbled corn bread and stuffing mix. Melt butter; sauté onions and celery until tender; mix into corn bread mixture. Combine eggs and broth; stir into corn bread mixture, as much as is needed. Add poultry seasoning and mix well. (It is better if made the day before.) Pour mixture into a 9 x 13-inch pan sprayed with cooking oil. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes at 350 F to 375 F. Do not over bake.

GRANDMOTHER'S BROWNIE RECIPE

4 eggs
 2 cups sugar
 1 cup oil
 1 cup flour
 1/4 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. vanilla
 1 cup pecans, chopped
 2 pkgs. Nestles pre-melted unsweetened

chocolate or 2 squares unsweetened baking chocolate
 Beat eggs; beat in sugar and oil. Stir in flour, salt and vanilla; mix well. Mix in pecans and chocolate; mix well. Pour into greased 9 x 13-inch pan. Bake for 25 minutes at 400 F. Do not over bake. Do not remove from pan until cool.

CINNAMON CREAM CRESCENT

2 cans crescent rolls
 2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
 1 cup sugar
 1 large egg yolk
 1 tsp. almond extract
TOPPING:
 1 egg white
 1 stick butter
 1/2 cup sugar
 1 tsp. cinnamon
 Spray 9 x 13-inch pan with cooking spray. Press one can of crescent rolls into pan. Combine cream cheese, sugar, egg yolk and almond extract; mix well. Pour into pan. Layer second can of crescent rolls over cream cheese mixture.

The holiday season brings out the spirit of giving in Barbara McClain and her family. For 15 years, they have spent Christmas Eve helping the First United Methodist Church prepare holiday dishes, which they serve to the community on Christmas Day. "We serve dinner to anyone who wants to join us," Barbara explained. "Last Christmas, we served almost 300 meals."

Barbara is also well known for her grandmother's brownie recipe. "This is a very old recipe," she expressed. "She lived to be 101 years old, and her mother lived to be 99 years old." Every year, Barbara donates her brownies to the Lord's Acre Sale Auction. "I donate a pan of brownies every month for a year," she said. "Last year, my brownies went for \$800!" **NOW**

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Who's Cooking **NOW**

Whisk egg white; brush egg white over crescent rolls. Melt butter; pour over second crescent layer. Whisk together sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over butter. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 F. May be eaten cool or warm.

STRAWBERRY BREAD

- 4 eggs
- 1 1/4 cup oil
- 1 24-oz. pkg. frozen strawberries, thawed
- 2 tsp. red food coloring
- 3 cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

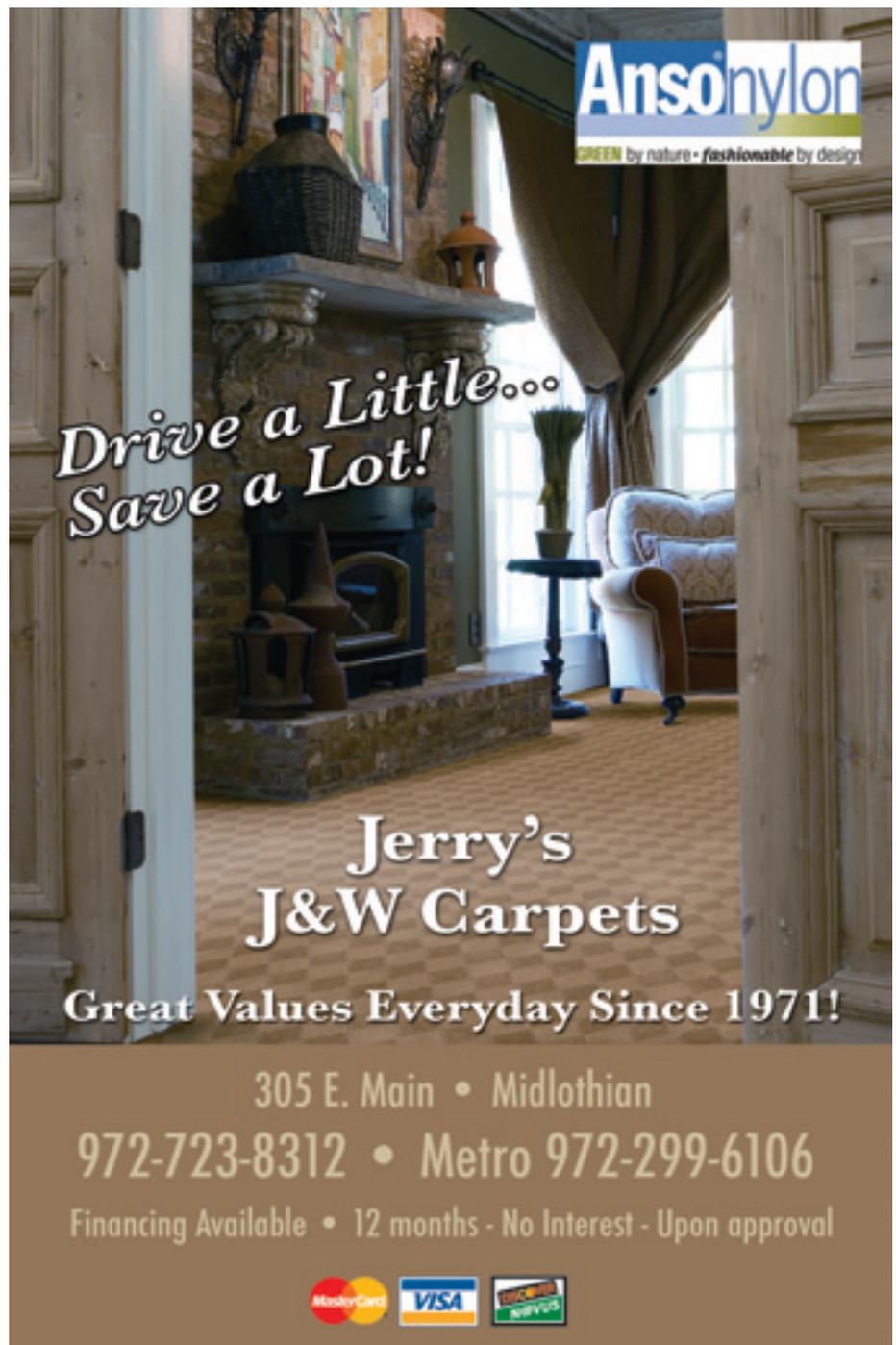
Mix eggs, oil and strawberries; add food coloring. In a separate bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking soda, salt and cinnamon; mix well. Gradually add dry ingredients into liquid ingredients; mix well. Spray pan of choice with cooking spray. I use mini-loaf pans. Bake for 22 to 24 minutes at 350 F; remove and cool. Can be iced like a cake or sliced thin and spread with cream cheese. This recipe makes 24 mini-loaves. You can wrap each in Saran Wrap, then place in freezer bags. They stay fresh frozen for six months.



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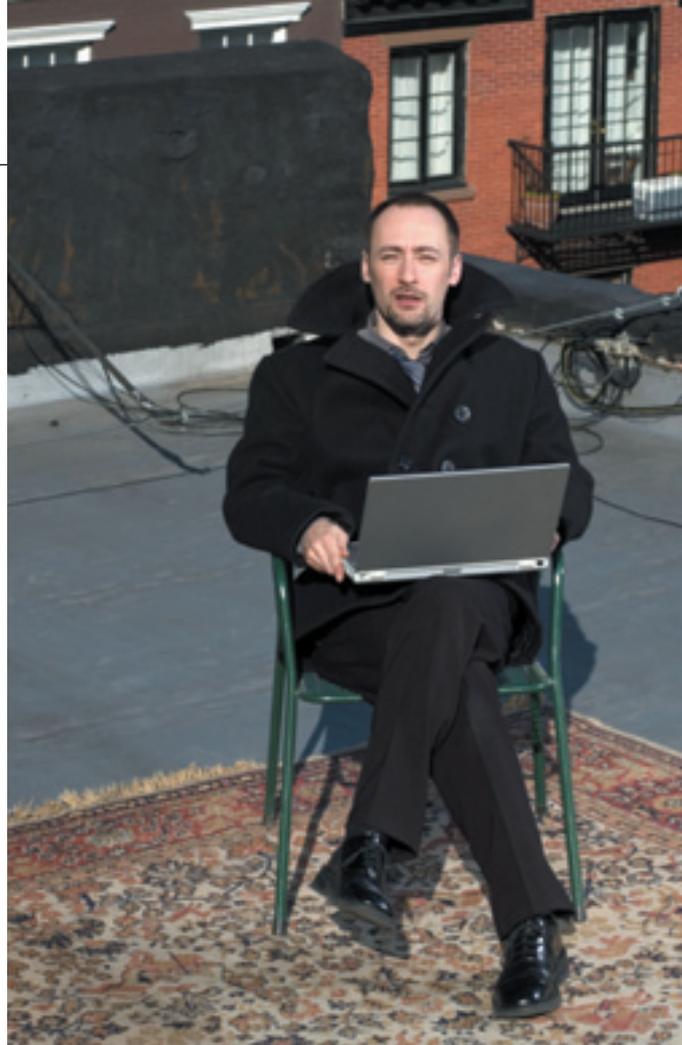
Are You Financially Exposed?

— By Adam Rope

Many people realize the need for life insurance but keep putting it off until it is too late. You may think that life insurance is confusing, expensive and complicated. You may think you do not know enough to make the right decisions for you and your loved ones. Postponing this decision leaves you and your family exposed financially.

Assumption #1: I will always be able to buy life insurance. You could develop a health condition that makes you uninsurable or could make life insurance too costly for you.

Assumption #2: I will get life insurance later when I am older or have a family. Life insurance may be needed at all stages of life. Whether married or single, male or female, with children or without, you may have financial obligations that need to be met. Life insurance provides financial security for you and your loved ones.



Assumption #3: My family and I are covered by the group insurance at work. To meet the future needs of your family, you need to have seven to 10 times your annual income. Most group term insurance amounts offered by employers will not meet this need. When you do not work for that employer any longer, you usually lose that coverage.

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Assumption #4: My husband has life insurance so I do not need it. Women often live longer than men, but not always. There are countless stories of men who had to shoulder the family financial burden along with the emotional burden after their wife passed away.

Assumption #5: My family can cover funeral and burial expenses. Burying a spouse or loved one is the most stressful time in a family's life. Having life insurance can reduce financial concerns for the family. Take the time now to review your needs and provide adequately for yourself and your family. **NOW!**

Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.

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Keeping the Lid On

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

Babies crying, debts mounting, family tensions and every time your boss looks at you — he frowns. No wonder your blood pressure is sky-high! If quieting the baby, stable finances and a satisfied boss could eliminate your hypertension, you could lessen the demand for blood pressure medicine. Unfortunately, the causes of hypertension are not so simplistic. Hypertension is when the blood pressure is higher than normal. Everyone's blood pressure can vary throughout the day. Your physician can help determine what is normal for you.

The exact causes of hypertension are varied and in any one individual, multiple factors may come into play. Those most at risk are women who take birth control pills, those who are pregnant and those who have a family history of hypertension. The familiar culprits of alcohol, a diet high in fatty foods and too much salt, smoking, not enough exercise and obesity work their destructive ways in this medical situation also. Knowing you are in the high-risk group is certainly helpful, but not foolproof. There are other causes of hypertension not so easily explained or identified. The definition of blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against blood vessel walls when the heart beats (systolic pressure) and when the



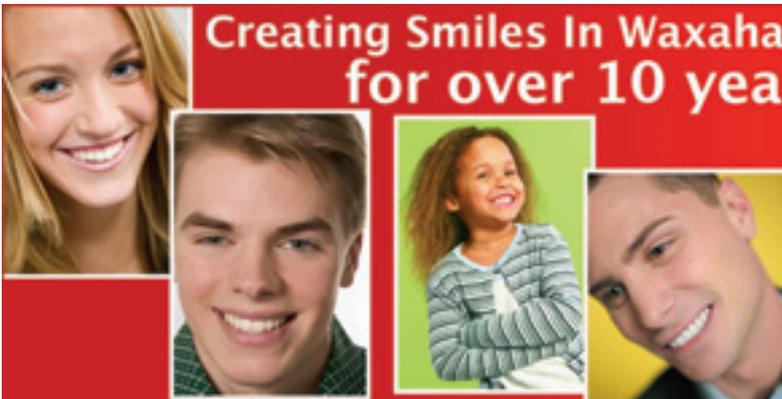
heart rests in between beats (diastolic pressure). Because of that pushing force, anything that causes significant pressure against the arterial walls such as narrowing of the arteries or the heart pumping faster and harder than it should can cause hypertension. Stress cannot be overlooked as well as the risk in older individuals. Chronic kidney disease can precipitate hypertension. Some disorders of the thyroid contribute to high blood pressure.

Usually, there are no symptoms that lead to the discovery of hypertension. For this reason, many call it the silent disease. The only way to know for sure is to have your blood pressure checked. If the hypertension has become critical, you may experience severe headaches, eye changes leading to difficulty with vision, becoming easily fatigued and/or irritated. If the kidneys become involved, blood in the urine would indicate possible renal damage.

Part of the treatment for hypertension is to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Drug therapy may be initiated by your doctor along with other healthful recommendations such as: stop smoking, avoid unhealthy fatty foods, avoid foods high in sodium content, maintain a healthy weight, exercise and limit alcoholic intake. Follow-up with your physician is necessary for blood pressure checks and appropriate lab work. Hypertension can be very dangerous. It is important to maintain the regime your physician plans for you. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician for questions regarding this topic.

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A Gardener's Christmas List

— By Nancy Fenton

It is the holiday season again, and a good time to talk about some of those items most wanted by your favorite gardener. This year, I purchased a Unifork for myself. The chief advantage to this tool is not the bright pink color, although it is easy to find even in a dark closet, but the weight. It weighs only three pounds! This is an easy-to-lift fork that is sturdy enough to turn wet compost or shovel heavy mulch. It does not dig very well in our hard clay, but neither will my other turning forks! It is not available in the stores, but can be ordered from Unionjackstable.com.

I have worn out my pop-up garden bag and would love to have another one or two. I saw one at Sherwin Williams lately and the larger plant and lumber stores have had them. Gloves



and small, sharp scissors are always good as are sweatbands and big brimmed hats. The catalogues have finally recognized that there are those of us who garden who are not six foot tall and 180 pounds and are now offering several light carts that look like they would carry a lot. I love my wheelbarrow, but it is getting increasingly harder to maneuver it around.

Gift cards to places that sell plants are good as are coupons redeemable for help in the yard and garden. Cleaning out that old garden area would be a great gift since many diseases winter over in the old stems and vines (especially tomato problems)! If your gardener is also a cook, Master Gardeners are putting together a new cookbook as we speak. It will have some great recipes. We have been trying them out all year!

Speaking of Master Gardeners, now is the time to sign up for the February training. Our County Extension Office has the applications and you can call (972) 825-5175 to have one sent to you. Here is hoping for a great holiday season for you and yours with love, laughter and lots of garden items under your tree! **NOW**

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Mary Jane Medlock
Certified Global Director #4090
maryjanemedlock@aol.com

December 2008

Community Calendar

December 5 - 7

Travel back in time to the night Jesus Christ was born during the annual Bethlehem Revisited event held at 402 N. College Street directly behind Central Presbyterian Church, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. Free admission.

December 6

The annual Waxahachie Christmas Parade will begin at 10:00 a.m. For the complete parade route, call (972) 937-2390.

The Christmas Market & Gift Show, sponsored by the Waxahachie Junior Service League, will be held at the Waxahachie Civic Center, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

December 6 - 7

The Candlelight Home Tour, 2:00 - 8:00 p.m. The weekend will feature four of the 12 homes chosen for this year's tour. Call (972) 938-9617 or visit www.waxahachiechamber.com.

The Downtown Waxahachie Victorian Christmas Festival offers market vendors, choirs, carolers, costumed characters, carriage rides, photos with Santa, lighted Victorian stroll, outdoor Christmas movies and much more. Call (972) 938-2101, ext. 198.

December 11

Chick-fil-A will kick-off their 12 Days of Christmas event with the crew from 94.9 KLTY broadcasting live with their book of Christmas Wishes. Make a donation to the Christmas Wish and receive a Chick-fil-A chicken biscuit.

December 12 - 14

Travel back in time to the night Jesus Christ was born during the annual Bethlehem Revisited event held at 402 N. College Street directly behind Central Presbyterian Church from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. Free admission.

December 13

Nicholas P. Sims library presents the Sims Ho-Ho-Ho Down, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Santa will pay a special visit. Children must be accompanied by an adult. (972) 937-2671.

December 13 - 14

The Candlelight Home Tour, 2:00 - 8:00 p.m. The weekend will feature four of the 12 homes chosen for this year's tour. Call (972) 938-9617 or visit www.waxahachiechamber.com.

The Downtown Waxahachie Victorian Christmas Festival offers market vendors, choirs, carolers, costumed characters, carriage rides, photos with Santa, lighted Victorian stroll, outdoor Christmas movies and much more. Call (972) 938-2101, ext. 198.

December 20 - 21

A Live Nativity will be presented under a large tent at New Beginnings Bible Church, located at 1970 FM 983 in Ferris, Texas. There will be three shows each day at 6:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Call (972) 842-2800 or visit www.newbeginningsbiblechurch.com.

December 22

Chick-fil-A will be taking donations throughout the day for the Women's Resource Center. Anyone making a donation will receive a free entree of their choice. Recommended donations include: receiving blankets, baby booties, pacifiers, bottles, onesies, diapers, etc.

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



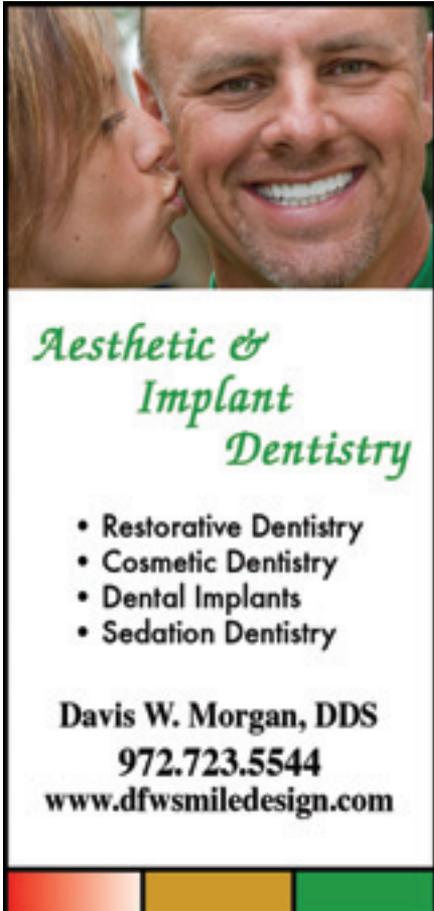
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