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DECEMBER 2011

# NOW



## REACHING OUT TO YOUTH

At Venue 2:17, Brenda Stewart explores life with local teens.

### Also Inside

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Keeping Indigenous Cultures Alive

Hopping With Style

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With JoAnn Fincher

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Christmases are always  
jolly in the home the  
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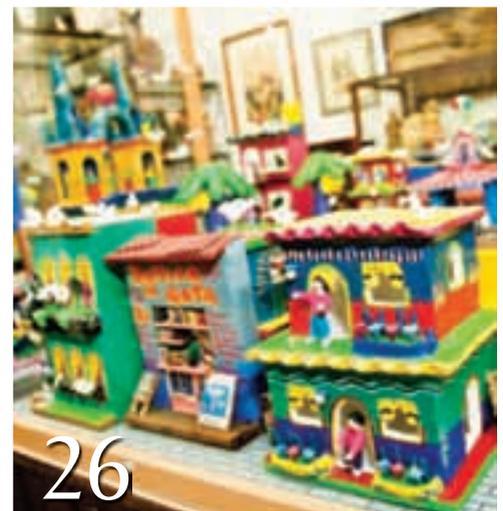
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# Editor's Note

*Hello, Weatherford!*

Thanks to the United States Air Force, I have experienced history in wonderfully exotic places – from Panama, Central America, to Chivenor, England. My parents took me on tours of historic sites everywhere we lived. The most fun “living museum” I can remember was in Williamsburg, Virginia, where I won a cherry pie eating contest with my hands tied behind my back.

In this Air Force brat's opinion, Weatherford's as rich historically as anywhere I've visited. The 30th annual Parker County Heritage Society's Candlelight Tour of Homes is Saturday, December 10. The Heritage Society has used the funds raised during these tours to accomplish a variety of preservation tasks in our area. In fact, one of their prior projects – Chandor Gardens – is my first pick on this year's tour!



*Melissa*

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# REACHING OUT TO YOUTH

— By Amber D. Browne

*Brenda Stewart founded Venue 2:17 two years ago to give local youth a safe environment to gather and engage in positive behaviors. She saw a need for unsupervised teens to have a place to socialize and explore new, healthy interests. Venue 2:17 gives them an outlet to learn communication and leadership skills, but it also gives Brenda a chance to share her faith with them.*



The walls throughout Venue 2:17's new location on West Church Street in downtown Weatherford are tagged with Scripture. "You never know who's reading it," Brenda said. The children have many questions, but they may not open up and ask until they have developed a relationship with the adult volunteers. "They won't develop a relationship with you until they have your unconditional love and know that you are always here for them," Brenda explained. "And parents are welcome to come check us out, too."

Venue 2:17 is not just about spreading the Word of God to local youth. They can buy or trade gently-used clothing, including Hollister and Aéropostale and accessories are also available. The teens can read donated books and Bibles in a small library section. One room even houses a pool table, flat screen TVs and





video games. Also featured are a couple of tables at which youth can hang out and discuss life. The new location allows them to ride their bikes and skateboards to the facility.

Bands set up each Friday and Saturday night. Brenda does not go out looking for bands, but calls them “divine appointments.” They contact her, and she listens to their lyrics before they are allowed to play. So far, about 60 bands have traveled to Venue 2:17 from across the region and as far away as Austin and Oklahoma. “They just want to play for God. And, they want to play loud,” Brenda chuckled.

Brenda believes God called her to create Venue 2:17, so she started the teen ministry in a warehouse off Peaster

Highway in 2009. “I wanted to do something that He wanted me to do. It was to reach teenagers,” she explained. To do that, you have to reach them where they hang out, when they hang out. “I’m really too old to go to the skate park,” she laughed.

The center is a safe place for youth to meet Wednesday through Saturday nights when they need support and companionship. It’s even open on Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. All children are welcome, but most guests are in their teens. Some teens have texted Brenda at 4:00 a.m. while walking the streets. She wishes Venue 2:17 could be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but it’s just not possible right now.

Adult volunteers keep an eye on the youth and make sure they abide by the rules. There is no bullying, no cursing and no vulgar talk. “We’ll just go up and

say, ‘No,’ because they’ll push it. They’ll see what they can get by with, but if you make it known, then they’ll tell the other kids,” Brenda explained. “If they don’t want to be watched, they won’t come back.”

The volunteers hold a Bible study each Friday and Saturday night to devote time to inspirational readings and Scripture. Viola Jones is one of the adults who volunteers on Friday nights. “They’re really open, and they really want to know,” she said of the teens’ and tweens’ curiosity about matters of faith. The devotional time gives the kids a chance to just listen or ask questions.

Brenda tries to teach the youth that everyone is a product of their own choices. “You’re the number one source of most of your problems,” she said.

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Youth are always under a lot of peer pressure, but Brenda and Venue 2:17 volunteers try to teach them they cannot be everything everyone wants them to be.

There's so much more to Venue 2:17 than just fun, games and learning about God. Venue 2:17 and its youth also reach out to the community. "We're here to serve," Brenda said. The group has fed children at McGratton Park. They will





have a float in the Christmas parade in Weatherford featuring a Christian band. Venue 2:17 also has a booth outside its location during Christmas on the Square.



Local youth can donate \$1 for a ticket to enter drawings for merchandise. Brenda gets plenty of favorites for the giveaways including skateboards, bicycles and hats.

Brenda is grateful to her 12 sponsors, including area businesses and two local families, who give monetary donations to keep Venue 2:17 open. It means a

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lot to those who frequent the facility to know there are people who care enough to donate time and money to keep their place up and running.

She also gets a lot of behind-the-scenes help from her husband, Kelly, who works as an independent contractor in the area. "He's the one God gave to me," Brenda said, tearing up. Brenda and Kelly have known each other since dating



in high school, but they separated. They were both involved in marriages that did not work out, and Brenda said God brought them back together in 1995. Kelly gives Brenda the freedom to work with the youth and makes sure she takes some time for herself, too.

Brenda and Kelly have a 13-year-old daughter, Maggie, whom Brenda homeschools. Maggie enjoys spending time with her friends and her mom at Venue 2:17 on weekends, and Brenda has found homeschooling to be a good way to pass on family beliefs.

Brenda aims to help prepare other children for the future, as well, through the ministry of Venue 2:17, which was fittingly named for a verse in Acts that says God will pour His Spirit out on all mankind. Brenda, with her bubbly and positive personality, hopes the new location in town will help her reach more children, while giving them a place to grow. "Our mission at Venue 2:17," she said, "is to reach the younger generation before they have to be rescued." **NOW**

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# Committed To Teaching

— By Amber D. Bronne

*Margie Crutchfield wanted to be a teacher since she was a little girl. “I used to line my dolls up and teach them,” she said. Mrs. Crutchfield has been teaching for more than 26 years and now teaches first grade at Stuard Elementary School in Aledo. She has always enjoyed teaching younger children. “Young kids are so eager and so full of life, so interesting. They love to learn,” she said.*

**“Experience is so important in teaching. You learn a lot as you go.”**

First grade is the age when children learn to read. “That’s like a miracle to me,” Mrs. Crutchfield said. Children advance at each grade level, but in first grade, it is very obvious. “You can see the advances, and they are quite dramatic,” she explained.

Education in the classroom is much different than a generation ago. Instead of just reading a book alone to get the information, the children participate in partner and group work. Her classroom is full of centers, with many focusing on literacy. Students can hang out on colorful





bean bags to read or sit together on two small couches for “buddy reading.” A literacy library down the hall has books available for students according to their reading level, so each one can progress. “Every child is an individual,” Mrs. Crutchfield said. She will work with a student who does not progress as quickly as the entire class, but every student gets individual learning time with her.

The students also have writing workshops, spelling tests, mathematics, social studies and science time.

Although the majority of classroom learning is through investigation and projects, books are very important. “It’s important for a child



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to learn to read nonfiction text, so we still have textbooks,” she explained.

Technology is another major change in the classroom. “They are very comfortable with technology,” she said. “They are socially used to more active environments.” Mrs. Crutchfield has a set of computers in the classroom, and students go to computer lab twice a week. She also posts classroom information on a Web site for the parents, but notes are still sent home in hard copy.

Academic subjects come first, but Mrs. Crutchfield tries to instill that learning is fun and you can be very successful, but it takes hard work. She also works on building character. “I try to ensure that everybody does their best by the way I plan my curriculum.” Her curriculum is challenging, but she works with the children so they grow academically by at least a year or more.

Her students’ parents provide major support in the classroom. Even though the current economy may not allow the parents to help as much as they would like, they will volunteer time in the classroom and help take care of the students’ needs. As primary room mom, Lindsay Carpenter volunteers her time in Mrs. Crutchfield’s class each week. She runs copies, puts together assignments and even sharpens pencils. “I think she’s wonderful. She really seems to have the kids’ best interest at heart. She’s there for the right reasons,” Lindsay said. Lindsay’s son, Max, was initially intimidated about first grade, but he is now at ease. “He

knows that she is there to help him,” Lindsay added.

Mrs. Crutchfield encourages parents to be involved. “Know what your children do. Read to your kids,” she said. “Even while they’re learning to read, they need to be read to and then they need to talk about what they’ve read.”

Even though the students are always busy learning through multiple activities, Mrs. Crutchfield tries to incorporate fun into the classroom. “I’ve learned not to be so serious and to enjoy life,” she said, referencing what her students have taught her over the years.

This is her 12th year teaching in Aledo. Mrs. Crutchfield’s profession has taken her into prekindergarten, kindergarten, first-grade and even third-grade remedial reading classrooms across the country. She has educated children in Arkansas, Michigan and Fort Worth, before moving to Aledo Independent School District (ISD).

“Experience is so important in teaching. You learn a lot as you go,” she said. Mrs. Crutchfield wants to teach at least five more years. It saddens her to think about the possibility of retiring. “I’m getting older, and I don’t know what the future holds. As long as I’m capable and as long as I feel like I’m able to give them what they deserve, then I’ll be here.” Mrs. Crutchfield is a firm believer that if you do not like teaching anymore, you need to quit, no matter your age. “Children are too important to be taught by somebody who doesn’t want to be here,” she said, tearing up.

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For Mrs. Crutchfield, teaching is a full-time commitment, much more than just a career. “I love it. It’s my hobby. It’s my everything,” she confessed. Teaching is always on Mrs. Crutchfield’s mind. “It’s one of those things that you think about constantly, even when you’re not working.” Walking through the grocery store, she thinks about learning tools she can incorporate into the classroom.

Mrs. Crutchfield has been married to her husband, Mark, for nearly four decades. He works in the technology field for the Aledo ISD. Mark sometimes thinks his wife may spend too much



time at school, but he understands her commitment because he was once a science teacher. Mrs. Crutchfield spends a couple of hours in the classroom after the school day ends, but she is not the only one. “This is a great campus. I couldn’t do what I do if I didn’t have the support from my colleagues.” She says Stuard’s principal, Ron Shelton, is also very supportive to her and other faculty members.

She has no specific plans for what she will do after she retires. Her two children are grown. Her son, Christopher, lives in Virginia and works in the patent office in Washington, D.C. Her daughter, Jennifer, works in graphic design in Fort Worth. Mrs. Crutchfield and her husband do not have any grandchildren now, but she hopes to have some by the time she retires in the next five or six years. When they were younger, she and her husband thought about teaching in a foreign country, but she does not know if they would do that now. The two will probably do more charity work and become even more involved in church after retirement.

Mrs. Crutchfield has always loved teaching. “I really do have a great time doing this,” she confessed. “I go home excited. Tired, but excited. I can’t wait to get back.” **NOW**

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# 2011 Holiday Shopping Guide

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

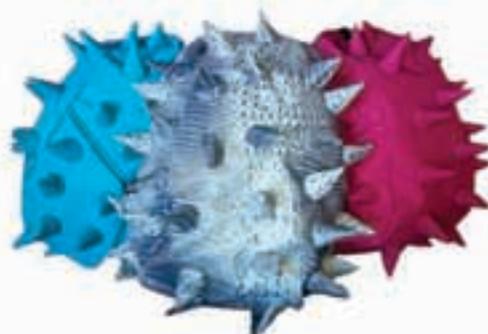


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# 2011 Holiday Shopping Guide

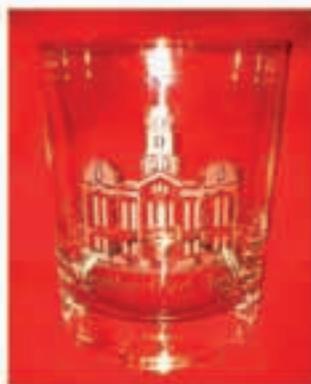
★ A quick look at the gift items and discounts available locally. ★



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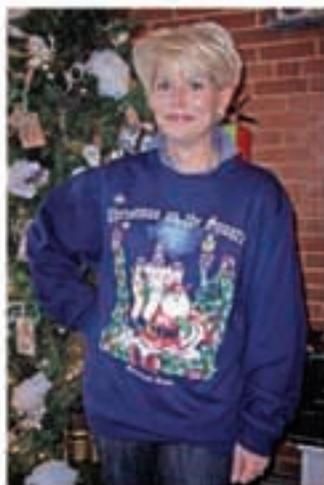
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*New Hope Baptist Church celebrates victory over breast cancer at their Purple Tea. Among the honored guests are two-time breast cancer survivor Yolanda Chavers, left, and Kit Marshall, Mayor of Aledo.*



*Weatherford Noon Lions donate \$300 to Center of Hope. Michele Snow presents check to Michelle Buchanan, special projects coordinator, Center of Hope.*



*American State Bank employees pose with Venue 2:17 Teen Ministries, the \$5,000 winner of "Giving Back to Weatherford." (Not pictured: Texas Pythian Home, \$3,000 winner; Texas Metro Wildlife Rehabilitates, \$2,000 winner).*



*Chris Accardo, Weatherford Public Library assistant director, with Amberley Parker and Christy Bellab, who will be cataloging and digitizing Parker County history for the new PEACH archive.*



*The East Parker County Chamber holds a ribbon cutting for Texas Sweets.*



*Taylor McBride has fun on the slide at the Cherry Park playground.*

# Christmas — at — A Place For Grace

— By Melissa Rawlins

At Home With  
*Steve and  
Lynette Gray*



*Generosity certainly shows its jolly face at Christmas in the Gray household. Gifts are given and received here every day, in one form or another, making life special for the whole family. Peek into 10-year-old Rayann's room, for instance. Popping with hot pink, black and purple, the room is filled with little animals and dolls which, along with the comfy bedroom suite, are important to Rayann because somebody has given them to her along the way. The sweet girl is herself a little gift to her parents, Steve and Lynette Gray, who quit their jobs and started A Place For Grace Children's Home.*



Even without government support, nine children are happy there. The couple took in Rayann when she was still in diapers. The eight boys who share Papaw (Steve) and Nette (Lynette) with Rayann have also been part of this family since their earliest days. And they all have enjoyed many Christmases together in the home the Grays bought 15 years ago for the express purpose of loving children who needed a family.

Fostering 46 children over a 15-year period, after rearing their own four, has strengthened the already-powerful, big hearts fueling Steve and Lynette's approach to life. They learned to do everything on a grand scale, from making nine lunches every school morning to sitting down for breakfast at a 16-foot circular table that easily seats 12. When they gather near the huge Christmas tree, there are more than enough hugs for everyone — even some intended for 23-year-old Tye, who is in Abu Dhabi as an embassy guard with the United States Marine Corps. On Christmas Eve, the Grays open gifts with their kids: Brandy, 34; Tonilyn, 31; Brady, 26; their four grandkids: Braxton, 9; Brooklyn, 7; Mallory, 8; and Dalton, 13; plus all their foster kids: Tristan, 15; Dylan, 12; Ethan, 10; Dustin, 9; Lane, 13; Dakota, 13; Hayden, 14; Christopher, 12; and Rayann, 10.





The children's excitement for Christmas brings joy to everyone in the room. "We open gifts in shifts by age from youngest to oldest. It usually takes about four hours to get it all done," Lynette said. "The next day on Christmas morning, Santa Claus always comes for cookies and milk the children have left out for him, and he brings the big thing they really wanted." Over the course of the day, as many as 50 people will visit while the Grays' daughters, Brandy and

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Tonilyn, cook Mexican food and serve Christmas dinner to the extended family.

This is a clan who loves to help each other. "Our four grandkids are about the same age as the kids we have here," Steve said. "They pal around a lot, and that helps us."

"When we started A Place For Grace, our sons Tye and Brady were 8 and 10. Our new lifestyle was a shock, but it became

reality for them," Lynette said. "They did well with it and are still very active in the home." Brady acts as the big brother to the children — helping them with their work for Weatherford Christian School, which they attend on grants and scholarships, and their sports, which range from basketball to football and soccer. Brandy and Tonilyn help out with house cleaning and also with "girl stuff,"

like polishing Rayann's fingernails and making bows for her hair.

The Grays assist the children they care for in every way, as though they were their own children, but their goal is that each can go back with their biological family. "We have had about 10 children adopted that we have assisted or who have come through us. Some of them have been reunited with their parents or gone to aunts and uncles or grandparents. Each individual situation is unique in itself. If they cannot be reunited, we want them to have a forever home," Steve said, adding: "I don't expect the nine who are with us to go anywhere until they're grown."

"We feel each child should be with their biological family, if that can be," Lynette said. "If not, we want to provide them with loving bonding and family atmosphere."

When Steve was 40, Lynette's conviction to love children who needed love became his conviction, too. They began fostering children in their four-bedroom home in town, but with seven kids they knew they needed to expand.



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While Steve was away on a business trip, Lynette discovered the place in the country where 11 people now comfortably live. “She called and said, ‘I found a home to make a children’s home.’ I came home from Chicago that weekend,” said Steve, who had determined through prayer to retire from his career in the nuclear industry in order to be home to help Lynette and to father the children. The home Lynette had found was ready to be moved into: like two homes stacked on top of each other, the 4,000-square-foot house had two kitchens and eight bedrooms. “That in itself was amazing enough — that God would provide a house we didn’t have to build or spend an enormous amount of money on, since the folks who owned it knew what we wanted it for and wanted us to have it.”

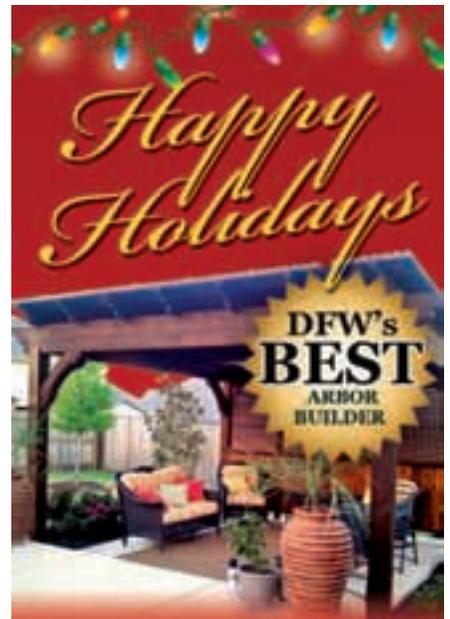
“It’s definitely a God thing,” said Lynette, grateful for all the sacrifices people in the community have made for the children living at A Place For Grace.

“Pulliam Pools gave us the swimming pool. That has [provided] more family time than we’ve ever had. We are out there all day, cooking and eating.” Steve built the gazebo over the grill, which he tends, and Lane plays pool boy, often turning on the radio while he cleans the pool. A few of the boys also mow the grass on the five wooded acres.

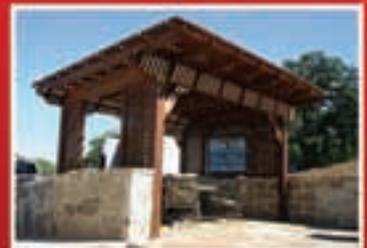
All the children take turns feeding and watering the dogs, cats and horses out back, and indoors they each help with laundry and clean-up after the two sit-down meals Lynette serves each day. The children are responsible for their own bedrooms, which were decorated with funds donated by The Kiwanis Club of Weatherford. The Grays let the kids pick a theme for their bedroom, and Steve painted them whatever colors they wanted — the boys asked for the colors of either the Dallas Cowboys or



The University of Texas Longhorns, and Rayann chose pink-and-black zebra stripes. The Kiwanis, in fact, regularly add to the joy at A Place For Grace by throwing an annual Christmas party for the children’s benefit. Learning to receive, as well as to give, in their colorful, comfortable home, these kids know what it is to be part of a loving family and a supportive community. **NOW**



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# KEEPING INDIGENOUS Cultures Alive



*The Museum of the Americas in Weatherford is celebrating its 10th anniversary this December, and Harold and Elizabeth Lawrence hope their love of native art shines through in the exhibits. The museum on Fort Worth Highway features hundreds of pieces from Native America, Mexico and Latin America. "This is more of a teaching collection than it is a masterpiece collection because it is comprehensive for crafts produced by region," Harold said.*

Harold began collecting Native American pieces over five decades ago. "I got interested in Native American history and material culture, and before long, the collecting became a collection." He developed an interest in indigenous people while growing up in Oregon. He then spent time serving in the Coast Guard in Alaska and attended graduate school in Arizona — all places with important Native American populations.

Native American thought is different from Western thought. "They put things together intellectually in a different way, and

a lot is conveyed through body language rather than verbally. Sometimes it's what is not said that is important," Harold explained.

"There's a little perversity in my collecting in that it shows that despite government policies, Native Americans maintained an identity," he said. "They continued to make traditional crafts, to follow tribal customs and traditions and identify themselves as cultural units."

The Indians were desperately poor, so making traditional

crafts was one way to support their families. They primarily produced crafts for the tourist industry, but they continued to make items for ceremonial purposes and to trade among themselves.

The museum is divided into two parts, the Native American section is divided into geographic regions from the Rio Grande River through the Arctic, and the second section is folk art and indigenous crafts of Mexico, Central and South America. In the Native American area, according to Elizabeth, nearly every craft that was produced by each of the recognized tribes is represented in the collection. The pueblos of New Mexico produced beautiful pottery while more basketry comes from Arizona, California and the North West Coast. Elizabeth's favorite piece is a small Nootka-Makaw basket from the 1890s. "This basket, made with native salt grass, is incredibly tightly woven. It's as finely made as any basket ever produced anywhere. I'm in awe of the craftsmanship that was required to make this basket. Most baskets made today by these same peoples are not made from native materials; instead the women use raffia imported from Madagascar," Elizabeth explained.

Carved masks used for celebrations and in rituals are also on display. Shelves hold totems, wood carvings, textiles, bead and leather work and arrowheads. A Texas arrowhead collection is prominently featured in a hand-carved, folk art frame featuring the birds of Texas. Harold and Elizabeth encourage visitors to bring in their own arrowheads



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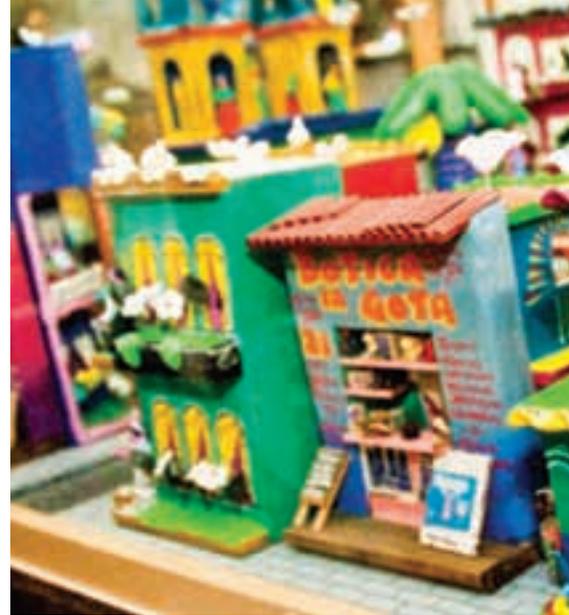


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and use the display to identify them. Another small arrowhead collection is in the North West Coast case and holds arrowheads collected by Harold's great-grandmother on the family farm in Oregon.

The Texas cabinet features a unique collection of both cane and pine needle baskets made by the Alabama Coushatta that Harold began collecting back in 1969, after he moved to Texas. This Texas Indian reservation located near Livingston, Texas, once had a wonderful museum, but 10 years after he purchased the baskets, the museum burned down. "They don't make the cane baskets any more. They haven't made them since the '50s," he said.

Elizabeth has been collecting Mexican

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folk art for decades. She owned a shop in the Fort Worth Stockyards from 1979-1980, so she traveled to Mexico often on buying trips. Many special pieces she kept for herself are now on display at the museum. The Mexican area features a large village that holds dozens of miniature pieces of folk art. "In Mexico, people love miniatures. I love Mexico because of the vibrancy of the folk art, the color, the creativity, the passion for life," she remarked. Other art from Mexico includes hand-blown glass pieces, tin work and a Day of the Dead collection.

The South America room includes a tribute to the Gaucho, or cowboy, of Argentina. Displayed are a variety of items used by the Gaucho including bridles, halters, saddles, spurs and clothing that depict his way of life. In the Amazon cabinet, a real eye-catcher is an eight-foot long blow gun, complete with darts.

Three years ago the museum added a changing exhibit room. "This room really gives us a lot of flexibility. We do at least three exhibits each year, and this allows us to bring in different folks with a variety of interests, or just provide visitors with a reason to keep coming back," Elizabeth said. The last exhibit was titled Along the Navajo Trail, and past exhibits have included Women Artists of Texas, Historia y Cultura Del Charro/History and Culture of the Mexican Cowboy, and Mayólica Pottery from Spain and Mediterranean to the New World, to name a few. Each December the



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museum offers an exhibit of nativities from the Americas with more than 100 folk art nativities.

Most of the museum's collection was acquired by Harold and Elizabeth during their travels over the years. "We're adventurous buyers," Harold said. They buy the indigenous crafts at reservations, antique stores, pawn shops, local markets and even Weatherford Trade Days. Some items have been donated to the museum.

The couple met at Texas Christian University while Harold was working on his doctorate and Elizabeth was an undergraduate. They were friends for years before they married and have been a happy couple for nearly 30 years now. They have one daughter, Whitney, now 25, who spent much of her childhood traveling the world with her parents, collecting and visiting museums.

Harold taught English at Weatherford College for 32 years. "I didn't want to stay at home after I retired," he confessed. So, he put his habit of collecting to good use. The two packed up their collection and moved it from their specially-built room at home into the museum.

Local residents often take the opportunity to check out what the museum has to offer, but many are visitors to the Weatherford community. Tours are available to organizations, churches, schools and other groups, and a gift shop offers collectibles, greeting cards and other gifts. An extensive research library is an important asset to the museum collection.

Harold thinks it is important to learn about indigenous cultures. "Not everyone sees the world the same way," Harold said. "If everyone understands that different people value different kinds of things, it might lead to a little bit more tolerance and understanding." **NOW**

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# A Gardener's Christmas List

— By Nancy Fenton

Is it really Christmas again? After our dry, long summer, it seemed the cool would never come. I'm still trying to get my spring bulbs in the ground! If yours are not in yet, don't fear. There is still a bit of time left. The bulbs may come up a bit sooner and bloom a bit smaller this year, but they will make it and store up food for next year. Come to think about it, a gift certificate for several hours of gardening help would be a perfect gift for me!

As for the other gardeners in your life, try a pair of "rose gloves" (heavy duty gloves with long sleeves that protect the arms from thorns.) A new hoe or rake can make a smile on a gardener's face. One of my favorite gifts was a conveyor belt type Loadmaster for moving mulch and other large loads from our pickup to the ground or wheelbarrow. No more shoveling from one place to another. I can unload a full pickup of compost or mulch in less than an hour by myself!

The tarp is always a winner to pull around weeds, clippings, etc., as is a wheelbarrow for heavier things. (Don't use metal please! The rust doesn't do a thing for our plants). A rain gauge, clippers, never-dull scissors and various whetstones are all great stocking stuffers. One of the best gift certificates for central



Texas would be tickets to the Dallas Blooms at the Dallas Arboretum in April.

If you are the gardener, do what I have been known to do. Pull out the advertising pages with items you want, circle them and leave them on someone's desk! It usually works well, especially for ensuring the right-sized item gets purchased. **NOW**

*Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.*

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- December 11 - Gift Market final day noon - 5 p.m.
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Tuesday-Saturday: 10:00 A.M.-5:30 P.M.



Smiles, like those of Keelie and Stormy Moore with Ellie J. and Courtney Clark Saltzgeber, are very common in Frogs 'n Fairies Children's Boutique.

## HOPPING WITH STYLE

*Celebrating one year in business this month, Frogs 'n Fairies' boutique style attracts moms from miles around. — By Melissa Rawlins*

This month, 10 percent of every sale made at Frogs 'n Fairies Children's Boutique will be donated to Center of Hope. The family of Courtney Clark Saltzgeber, owner, has supported Center of Hope for years, and it was important to her to have her business do the same. Such concern for the community stems from care for individuals, which is why customers at Courtney's store receive one-on-one service.

Courtney and her friend and employee, Stormy Moore, strive to remember your name and face, acknowledge you when you walk in the door and help you find great things to fit your style and budget. And moms know it. Some come from as far away as Decatur, Seymour, Bridgeport and Abilene for Courtney's affordably priced, quality children's clothes.

One cool morning, Stormy helped a mom searching for winter stuff for her new 8-week-old baby girl. Picking up on the mother's personality, Stormy showed her a Rabbit Moon outfit made of pima cotton. The mother gushed, "Oh, I love these!" Stormy is a mom herself, so she understood this mother — who normally shops on eBay but is excited to find a local children's boutique where she can discover church and play clothes. Stormy reminded her that when she has another child, and baby sister needs clothes to match the older girl's, she can come in Frogs 'n Fairies for coordinating outfits.

Courtney, who has a son and three daughters and frequently dresses the girls to match, leans on her own experiences to choose the boys' and girls' clothing on Frogs 'n Fairies racks.

## Business **NOW**

One of their best-selling, tiny T-shirts is silk-screened with the words: “My mommy’s hot, I’m cute, my daddy’s lucky.”

Humor certainly abounds in Frogs ’n Fairies. “We took ideas from all the family members for a name for the boutique,” Courtney remembered. “We love frogs, so it just kind of happened.” Although to date no child has ever brought a frog in, Courtney keeps stuffed frogs around the store, and customers’ children always want to play with them. “Often, they end up taking those frogs home with them.”

People often say that girls are more expensive than boys, and Courtney has found that it’s true. “When we found out we were having our third daughter, I wanted her to be able to be dressed cute, in boutique-style clothing, without having to pay boutique prices,” Courtney said. So Frogs ’n Fairies mission is to offer high-quality boutique clothing at non-boutique prices. “Any mother, relative or friend could come in to Frogs ’n Fairies and find something they love and be able to take it home.”

The shop always has something to catch a mom’s eye. Customers will find racks positioned both high and low, filled with boys’ clothes, from preemies through size 7-8, and girls’ clothes, from preemies through size 14-16. Some of the brands are well-known, like Peaches ’n Cream. Others are just becoming trendy, like Rabbit Moon, Haute Baby and Le Top. Elementary-age children love the MadPax backpacks that look like dinosaur armor, made of faux leather in pink, blue, snakeskin and — for TCU fans — purple. Older girls come to Frogs ’n Fairies for Miss Me jeans in sizes 7-14.

While mother shops, children can play in the sweetly decorated back corner of the store. Sephronia King painted the murals of the frog and the fairy, and the squirrel, rabbit and little butterflies playing around the tall tree. Kids love the chalk wall and crayons, specifically designed by Courtney because she herself has benefited in other shopping experiences when there is a kids’ section in which older children can color and play while mom enjoys extra time in the store. And at Frogs ’n Fairies Children’s Boutique, shopping really is quality time. **NOW**



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## Blue for Christmas

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Elvis Presley's rendition of "Blue Christmas" touches many people in December. It may seem to be an anomaly to think of being blue or depressed when everything external overflows with color, lights and good cheer, but some people look at the red and green lights and still feel blue. They suffer from a very real disorder called seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

SAD is a depression disorder that is sometimes called the winter blues. It makes its appearance usually in the fall and lasts through the winter. A rare form of SAD can occur in the summer. This discussion is for the winter version. People who have this are miserable and exhibit many symptoms that interfere with the quality of their lives. SAD may be affected by geographical location according to the availability of light in that region. For example, it is estimated that 1 percent of Floridians are affected whereas 10 percent of residents in Alaska are affected.

Some of the symptoms are a feeling of depression, hopelessness, a tendency to eat too much that results in weight gain, lethargy, a decreased interest in doing activities previously enjoyed and increasing isolation from others. It is important that a physician diagnose this disorder because the symptoms may point to a different psychiatric problem. However, if SAD is the disorder, appropriate treatment is available. The cause is unknown but the

correlation between the availability of sunlight and timing of the season cannot be ignored.

Since lack of sunlight may trigger this, it makes sense to utilize light therapy to increase exposure to light. Light therapy, sometimes called phototherapy or bright light therapy is the exposure of affected persons to a special lamp under controlled situations to mimic sunlight. During treatment, you merely sit under a lamp for a time period determined by your health care professional once or twice a day. Eyes are open with the body turned toward the light. Common thought supports the belief that light triggers chemicals in the brain that affect a person's mood and makes them feel better by lessening the symptoms of SAD. In some cases, antidepressants are prescribed.

If you think you are susceptible to seasonal depression and are having thoughts of suicide, please seek help immediately. Even if thoughts of suicide are not an issue with you, do not sit alone in a darkened room feeling blue. There is light and help a phone call away. **NOW**

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

### December 1-23

Folk Art Nativities of the Americas: **Tuesday-Friday**, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; **Saturday**, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Museum of the Americas, 216 Fort Worth Hwy., across from the Farmers Market. Over 100 nativities crafted by village artisans and indigenous peoples throughout the American Southwest, Mexico, Central and South America. Call (817) 341-8668 or visit [www.museumoftheamericas.com](http://www.museumoftheamericas.com).

### December 1-January 3

Expressions from the Soul: **Tuesday-Saturday**, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., **Sunday**, 1:00-5:00 p.m., The Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Drive. Works in watercolor, bronze, metal, oil, mixed media, glass, jewelry, leather and wood. Admission to the museum is always free. Visit [www.dosscenter.org](http://www.dosscenter.org) or call (817) 599-6168.

### December 1-December 17

Holiday Festival: 3:00-8:30 p.m., Clark Gardens, 567 Maddux Road. Sparkling lights, sleigh bells, horse-drawn hay ride, model trains, Santa and carolers provide family-friendly fun. For more information, visit [www.clarkgardens.com](http://www.clarkgardens.com) or call Beverly at (940) 682-4856.

### December 2

17th Annual Celebrity Cutting: 7:00 p.m. Will Rogers Coliseum, 3401 W. Lancaster Avenue, Fort Worth. Featuring local and national celebrities in an exciting cutting competition to raise funds for economically challenged cancer patients, plus live entertainment by Lyle Lovett. Contact Careity Foundation at visit [www.celebritycutting.org](http://www.celebritycutting.org) or (817) 882-4100

### December 3

CASA's 6th Annual Breakfast with Santa: 8:00-9:30 a.m. or 10:00-11:30 a.m., Central Christian Church, 1602 S. Main. The event consists of a picture with Santa to take home, goodie bags, crafts, face painting, story time, hay rides and, of course, a great breakfast. Tickets are available at Worthington Realty, 1701 Santa Fe Dr. and also at the CASA office 200 Palo Pinto St., Ste. 107.

Christmas Parade: 10:00 a.m. Starts at the Ninth Grade Center on South Main Street, heads north and wraps around the courthouse in historic downtown Weatherford. The parade ends at Cherry Park. Immediately following the parade, the

public is invited to a reception hosted by Sons of Confederate Veterans, Order of Confederate Rose and United Daughters of the Confederacy at The Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Drive. Admission is \$12. Contact Howard McClurkin at (817) 597-4989 or [www.weatherfordchristmasparade.com](http://www.weatherfordchristmasparade.com).

Christmas on the Square: Noon-5:00 p.m., 1 Courthouse Square in historic downtown Weatherford. Live entertainment, arts and crafts, children's activities and downtown merchants. Call (817) 596-3801 for more information.

11th Annual Christmas Tyme in Aledo: 5:00-9:00 p.m., downtown business district, the south end and along Maverick Street to the Community Center. Music, fun and food. Santa arrives at the Community Center at 6:00 p.m. on a fire truck to light the community Christmas tree and pose for pictures. The 34th Annual Arts and Crafts Fair will run from 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. at the Aledo Community Center.

### December 5

Christmas Band Concert: 6:30-7:30 p.m., Durant Auditorium, Weatherford High School. Hall Junior High Band performs Christmas music for the public! Call (817) 598-2858 for more information.

Parker County Community Choir Concert: 7:30-9:00 p.m., Marjorie Black Alkek Fine Arts Center, Weatherford College, 225 College Park Drive. Directed by Rob Laney, the choir is made of Weatherford College students, as well as community members. This annual concert features selections from Handel's *Messiah*. Call Sheila Kincaid in the Fine Arts and Communication Department at (817) 598-6458.

### December 9

Christmas Open House: 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., First National Bank Weatherford, 220 Palo Pinto Street. Come enjoy the holiday spirit, tour a beautiful Christmas Snow Village and, at the end of the day, have your photos made with Santa between 4:00-6:00 p.m. Call (817) 598-4900 for more information.

Holiday Chorale Concert: 7:00-8:30 p.m., Durant Auditorium, Weatherford High School. Weatherford High Chorale performs Christmas music for the public! Call

(817) 598-2858 for more information.

### December 10

Candlelight Tour of Homes: 1:00-8:00 p.m. Starting with The Flinn Home at 402 Garner Road and ending at The Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Drive. A total of seven historic sites are on tour this year, and volunteer docents are on hand in each to answer your questions and tell you stories of Weatherford's past. Sponsored by First National Bank Weatherford and Plains Capital Bank, as well as the Parker County Heritage Society. For more information, visit [www.parkercountyheritagesociety.com](http://www.parkercountyheritagesociety.com).

### December 10-11

Candlelight Gift Market: **December 10:** 9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. **December 11:** Noon-5:00 p.m., Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Drive. Specialty and unique items from local artists and cooks. Call Betsy Pedigo at (817) 599-6168 for more information.

### December 11

Christmas Concert: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Durant Auditorium, Weatherford High School. Tison Junior High Band performs Christmas music for the public! Call (817) 598-2858 for more information.

### December 15

Christmas Concert: 7:30-8:30 p.m. Durant Auditorium, Weatherford High School. Weatherford High School Choir performs Christmas music for the public! Call (817) 598-2858 for more information.

### December 17

Le Chateau K-9 Adoption Event: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., 5011 E. I-20 Service Road North, Willow Park. For more information, call (817) 441-8844.

### December 19-January 2

Holiday Break for Weatherford Independent School District. For more information, contact Weatherford ISD at (817) 598-2800.

### December 27

Weatherford City Council meeting: 6:30 p.m., 303 Palo Pinto Street.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to [melissa.rawlins@nowmagazines.com](mailto:melissa.rawlins@nowmagazines.com).*



## In The Kitchen With JoAnn Fincher

— *By Melissa Rawlins*

Spicy foods make JoAnn Fincher happy. She also has a thing for cherries, dates and raisins. A co-worker at the Weatherford National Bank gave JoAnn a recipe for fruitcake that she sent last year to her grandson, who was fighting in Afghanistan. This year, she and her daughter, Brenda Cole, will spend several days in the kitchen cooking the holiday meal for everyone in the family — most of whom live locally. Born in Brock, Texas, 79 years ago, JoAnn got cooking lessons first from her sister. She refined her skills while caring for her husband and four children. Here, she shares recipes for her holiday specialties. Making dressing, pretzel salad, desserts and corn casserole, while her daughter prepares the turkey, JoAnn has fun in the family tradition. **NOW**

### Grape Salad

- 2 Tbsp. butter or margarine**
- 2 Tbsp. flour**
- 1 1/2 cups milk**
- 8 oz. miniature marshmallows**
- 1 20-oz. can pineapple chunks, drained**
- 2 lbs. (4-5 cups) seedless green grapes**
- 1 cup pecan pieces**

- 1.** Melt butter on low. Add flour and mix well. Add milk and cook until thick, making a white sauce.
- 2.** Fold in marshmallows and cook until melted. Fold in remaining ingredients.
- 3.** Chill at least 1 hour before serving. Can be kept in refrigerator up to 3 days.

### Mexican Corn Bake

- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese**
- 1/4 cup margarine**
- 1/4 cup evaporated milk**
- 1/4 tsp. garlic salt**

- 1/4 tsp. red pepper**
- 2 14.75-oz. cans whole kernel corn, drained**
- 1 10-oz. can Rotel chilies and tomatoes, partially drained**

- 1.** Place cheese, margarine, milk, garlic salt and red pepper in a small saucepan.
- 2.** Cook over low heat until cheese melts, stirring until blended.
- 3.** Add corn and canned tomatoes and chilies, mixing well.
- 4.** Bake at 350 F for 20 minutes.

### No Bake Fruitcake

- 1 16-oz. pkg. dates**
- 1 lb. candied cherries**
- 1 lb. seedless dark raisins**
- 8 oz. pkg. Angel Flake coconut**
- 40 oz. pecans, chopped**
- 1 14.4-oz. box graham crackers, crushed**
- 8 oz. butter**
- 1 14-oz. can Eagle Brand Sweetened**

### Condensed Milk 50 regular marshmallows

- 1.** Chop dates and cherries. Mix well in a large bowl. Add raisins, coconut and chopped pecans.
- 2.** Crush graham crackers into fine crumbs, then add to fruit mixture. Mix well.
- 3.** In heavy saucepan, melt butter. Add Eagle Brand milk, then a few marshmallows, one at a time, until all the marshmallows have been added and are melted. Pour this over the fruit mixture and graham crackers. Mix well.
- 4.** Press mixture firmly into greased tube pan. Put in refrigerator 24 hours.

### Pretzel Salad

- 1 cup pretzels, crushed**
- 1 cup plus 3 Tbsp. sugar (divided use)**
- 1/2 cup butter, melted**
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened**
- 4 oz. Cool Whip**
- 1 6-oz. pkg. strawberry Jell-O**
- 2 cups boiling water**
- 1 pint frozen strawberries**
- 1/2 cup cold water**

- 1.** Mix crushed pretzels with 3 Tbsp. sugar and butter. Pat into 9 x 13 dish and bake at 350 F for 10 minutes. Cool.
- 2.** Mix softened cream cheese, sugar and Cool Whip. Spread over cooled crust.
- 3.** Mix Jell-O and boiling water until dissolved. Add frozen strawberries and cold water. Cool until slightly thickened; pour over top of cheese mixture. Refrigerate overnight.

### Microwaved Peanut Brittle

- 1 cup raw peanuts**
- 1/2 cup white Karo syrup**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 1 cup white sugar**
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla**
- 1 tsp. butter**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**

- 1.** Stir first 5 ingredients together in a large quart Pyrex measuring bowl. Cook in microwave on high for 2 1/2 minutes.
- 2.** Stir; cook additional 4 minutes.
- 3.** Stir in butter and cook 3 minutes.
- 4.** Stir in baking soda, until mixture foams up and turns white.
- 5.** Pour immediately on a buttered cookie sheet. Let set at room temperature until it is breakable, about 15 minutes. Break into bite-sized pieces and store in air tight container.

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*Chandler, Alex & Peyton Doggett*

*Photos with Santa  
from 4:00-6:00*

Santa Photos by  
Megan Parks Photography



*Visit the Snow Village  
by Jan Barton  
and Beta Sigma Phi*

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* We will also take Military Family photos \*  
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