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M A G A Z I N E

DECEMBER 2015

2015
Holiday
Shopping
Guide

The Keepsake Maker
Boom, Crackle, Repeat
Stay Safe
Making Merry
Here's to a New You
In the Kitchen
With Lisa Amoriello

The
Greatest Gift
At Home
With Alan Richey

Overcoming
Obstacles
Jobs for Life gives a
step up, not a handout





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ON THE COVER



Alan Richey's friends mean more to him than 400 nutcrackers!

Photo by Vanessa Polozola.

CONTENTS

December 2015 • Volume 10, Issue 12



8 **Overcoming Obstacles**
Roadblocks only signal that a detour's ahead for Crystal Lewinson.

52 **Making Merry**
Put the "ho, ho, ho" back into your Christmas decor.

16 **The Keepsake Maker**
The art of creating jewelry has captivated Carol Dougherty.

24 **The Greatest Gift**
At Home With Alan Richey.

30 **Boom, Crackle, Repeat**
Mike Wagner's passion lights up the night sky.

44 **Stay Safe**
The Operations Support Team, part of the Citizens Fire Academy Alumni Association, serves the city's bravest servants.



68 BusinessNOW

70 Around TownNOW

72 FinanceNOW

73 HealthNOW

76 CookingNOW

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Editor's Note

Happy Holidays, Mansfield!

What a joyous time of year! This special month, marked by family, festivity and friendliness, is also significant in that another year is coming to a close. As I reflect over the past 12 months, I am pleased with my experience working within this close-knit and progressive community. Sadly, this will be my last issue with *MansfieldNOW* as community editor, as new and exciting doors have opened up to me. Despite my heavy heart,

I am delighted to pass the torch back to Melissa Rawlins, as I know she appreciates the character and charm of this place just as much as I do. The time I spent working in the community will not soon be forgotten.

With this, my final editor's note, I want to offer you all my sincerest of well wishes for all of your endeavors in 2016. May all of your days be merry and bright!

Kindest regards,

Sara

Sara Edgell
MansfieldNOW Editor
sara.edgell@nowmagazines.com

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

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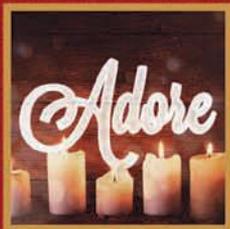
Christmas is the best time of the year, and at Hillcrest it is always a special time of year as we celebrate the birth of our Savior! From nights of worship led by our worship ministry and our children and students to a concert featuring saxophonist Nathan Woodward, this December has plenty of opportunities for you to celebrate the season. Join us for Christmas at Hillcrest to hear about the greatest gift that is available to all, the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.



Believe in Christmas SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6 • 3:00 & 6:00 PM

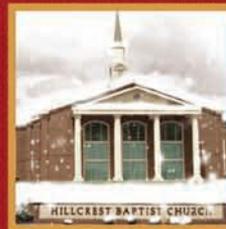
Deeply embedded in the story of Christmas is a word that takes us from simply hearing about the birth of Christ to allowing our lives to be transformed by His love. It is with an expectant heart that we **believe**. With this belief we find hope and peace through the Son that God sent down to earth. Familiar carols and captivating new songs combine to make this a Christmas worship experience you won't want to miss.

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For more information about Christmas at Hillcrest, visit us online at the link below.

www.hillcrestbc.com/christmas



Overcoming Obstacles

— By Virginia Riddle



When the skilled auto industry jobs started shutting down in Michigan, Crystal Levinson and her husband, Leslie, knew it was time for a change in address for their family. A sister living in the Dallas Metroplex encouraged them to move to Texas. "It took some convincing, but we packed up the children and drove to Texas in 2010," Crystal said.

At first, the family felt pretty uprooted while living with her sister, until Leslie and Crystal both found work. Crystal obtained work as a customer service representative at a financial institution, and Leslie, who is HVAC-certified, went to work for a construction company. It wasn't long before the family moved into an apartment of their own. Their children, Leslie Jr., now a senior in high school, who currently lives in Michigan; Myrakle (Miracle), who is now a senior at Frontier High School; 12-year-old Elijah, who attends T.A. Howard Middle School;

“My future, and that of my family, is definitely brighter now. I preach to my children that education is so important, and I’m leading by example.”

and 9-year-old Nehemiah, who attends Cross Timbers Intermediate, had enrolled in their new schools and were making friends. However, Crystal wanted more for her family with this renewed life.

Crystal had been a student at Central Michigan University and had only a few credit hours left to take before completing her bachelor’s degree. She had always felt a real calling to teach, but now had her hands full just meeting the day-to-day challenges of helping build a secure new life for her family. Getting started back on a track to success was going to be difficult.

“Leslie and I have never looked for a handout — we’ve always worked. We were doing the best we could to make a great life for our children, but it wasn’t enough,” Crystal recalled. “We were almost homeless and felt like we were at a dead end with no tomorrow. But through a lot of prayer and a great church home, I knew things were about to change.

“Someone told me about the Wesley Mission Center in Mansfield. They helped us with our immediate needs of food and utilities, but more importantly, I enrolled in two of their programs: Jobs for Life and the Robin’s Wings Women’s Program.”

Jobs for Life is an eight-week job-training program that partners with the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce. One of the program’s main goals is to promote self-sufficiency, and this is what Crystal and her husband desired. Mentors called Champions, who have successful careers, support the participants as they receive job- and life-skills training. Participants



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are selected for each class through an application and interview process. Upon completion, they receive a certificate and letters of recommendation. Help is also available to participants through the WMC Care Center in the form of gas cards and professional attire for interviews. A book highlighting available jobs in the area is kept up-to-date in the Care Center's lobby.

“The Champions are successful individuals, who enabled us to move





past roadblocks that were keeping us from being successful. They are awesome people to network with," Crystal recalled. "I learned the art of public speaking, interview strategies and résumé critiquing."



The program enabled Crystal to take a step up to success. "It helped me emotionally, increased my faith, encouraged prayer, and I received a scholarship to return to my studies at CMU through online courses." The family traveled back to Michigan when Crystal graduated in 2012. "It was so awesome to see my husband, children and my mom's faces at my CMU graduation, but even more awesome was when they came to my graduation from Jobs for Life," Crystal said. "I don't know where I would be today without this program and the support of my family."

Crystal had become inspired and led to be a teacher, so with her degree now in hand, she applied for the Texas Alternative Certification Program, which she completed while she taught fourth grade math and science in Grand Prairie ISD. "I appreciated my principal, who was empowering and encouraging, and I loved improving after my observations."

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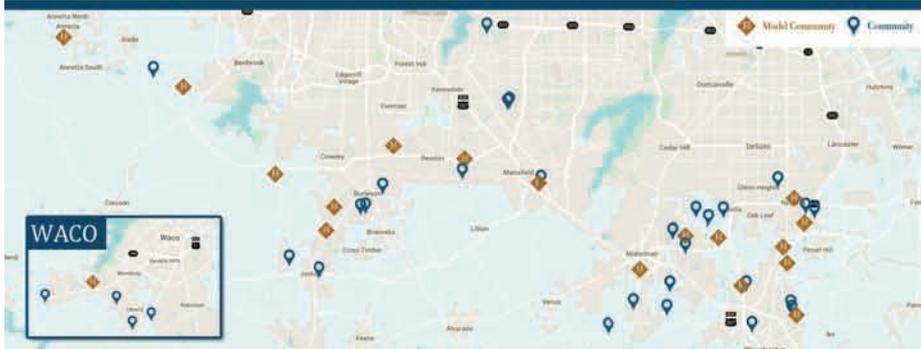
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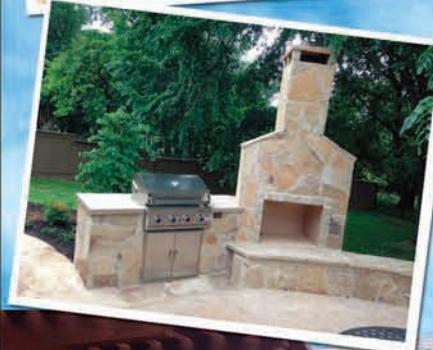


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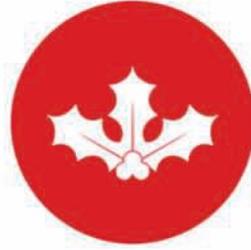
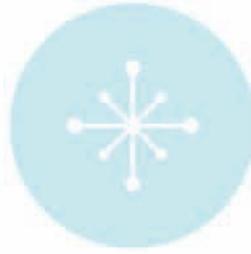


I've always wanted to teach and enjoy work that I'm passionate about. It's a way to use God's gifts," she said. "Some of my children's teachers and administrators in Mansfield are also my mentors now."

This school year, Crystal is proud to be able to say she is now a Certified Texas Teacher. With her Standard Teaching Certificate, she is confident she will find the right teaching assignment. "I want to serve where I can fill the most need," she said.

In the meantime, Crystal is continuing to attend Robin's Wings Women's Program, which educates and empowers women in the Mansfield area. Child care is provided for the quarterly meetings, which include a speaker and brunch. Scholarships are made available to participants. "My future, and that of my family, is definitely brighter now. I preach to my children that education is so important, and I'm leading by example," Crystal said.

She also attends alumni outings and began serving as a Champion this fall



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for the program. “We became a family for life,” Crystal said. “Mansfield is a very diverse community. We are all in this together. The support network I now have is amazing! It is a lifetime connection that will always be there for me and the other program alumni.”

When not working or parenting with Leslie, Crystal is an artist who enjoys drawing. She is ever so proud of her daughter, Myrackle. She was born weighing only 1 pound. Per doctors, she would not be able to learn, see or even walk. She is now a high-achieving senior at Frontier.

Some of Crystal’s long-term goals are to continue to work on her health, pray for scholarships for her children and own their first home. “We learned in the programs that as mothers and wives, we have to take care of ourselves so we can take care of our families,” Crystal said.

The family has also learned through the WMC programs how to save and spend wisely, especially during the holidays. “My family enjoys doing things for others. The children are very humble and giving,” Crystal said.

“My message to others is that dreams and goals can happen. It doesn’t matter what you’re struggling with — you can overcome roadblocks in your life and achieve success and long-term stability,” Crystal said. “Those roadblocks are created by us to throw us off course. We have to support each other to get past those obstacles. You can make your life become all that you had ever hoped it could be and improve your children’s lives and secure their futures.” **NOW**

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The *Keepsake* Maker

— By Sara Edgell



*"I have
always valued
handmade items
very much."*



Creativity and craftiness have always been markers in Carol Dougherty's life, and so has making memories. She has tried her hand at a wide variety of active hobbies and activities from gardening to cake decorating, investing her time and exercising her creative muscle in doings that produced something to enjoy. Her efforts were directed toward making special moments and mementos for her loved ones. For her, crafting has always revolved around enjoyment and family. "I have always had lots of creative energy, and at different times in my life, it has manifested in different ways," Carol said. "I have always valued handmade items very much."

As a girl, Carol learned to crochet with her maternal grandmother. As a young mother, she would sew throw pillows,



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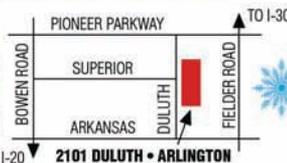
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curtains and even her own maternity clothes. But, neither of these were her real passion, so she continued to dabble in the arts in a variety of ways. She made door wreaths for the holidays and memory quilts for her grandchildren. She even tried her hand at cake decorating after taking a class. "I always made and decorated themed and elaborate cakes for birthdays, holidays and celebrations," she remembered. "Now I keep it simple, but I still do cakes from time to time."



When she discovered gardening, she immediately fell in love. For many years, she grew vegetables and flowers in seasonal gardens in her spacious New York yard. Eventually, her husband, Mike, was relocated to Texas for work, which meant Carol had to adapt her green thumb to Texas' trademark wild and crazy weather. However, she found her love for gardening only blossomed. "The weather here allows for longer growing times, which is wonderful," she explained. "I was really able to do so much more here than in New York."

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About three years ago, though, Carol found herself looking for something new to get herself into. She loved working with her hands, and her desire to express her creativity in a different way was unavoidable. Typically, she would spend evenings watching television with her husband. However, she wanted to maximize this time with something mentally stimulating that would also keep her hands busy. When she learned about jewelry making classes offered at a local crafting store, she signed up for one. Once again, she instantly fell in love, and her creative juices flowed. After years



of literally getting her hands dirty in the garden, Carol set her hands to work in the art of jewelry making.

Any given evening, Carol can be found at her workstation in her living room, sitting in a comfy recliner with a mobile table and special adjustable light working on her custom jewelry, while her husband enjoys his evening shows. "We are still together, and we are both content because we are doing what we like to do," she smiled. She also regularly attends classes to socialize with others who share her love for the hobby. Earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, charms and bobbles — you name it, and she can make it!

In hardly any time, Carol learned several techniques ranging in difficulty levels that enabled her to perfect her craft. She began with simple beadwork but quickly worked her way up to more intricate, multi-element pieces. She even attempted bead weaving, which can be very difficult and time consuming due to the complexity of the pattern. However, Carol loved the challenge and the end result.

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Eventually, she began to experiment with manipulating wire by twisting and wrapping metal wire strands into custom, one-of-a-kind pieces. Using a variety of tools, including an anvil, files, wire cutters and needle nose pliers, she found her perfect creative outlet. Carol wraps and twists wire to make multiple layers, as well as coil shafts to add complexity and dimension to her designs. She considers it to be a free form because there are no specific rules. Essentially, anything goes. "I start by creating a base and pick out beads to use, then it just comes to me. It just flows, and I let it," she explained. Without any real plan, she simply lets the process happen and the jewelry takes shape organically. "Inspiration just comes to me. For me, making jewelry is about the creative part of the process. That's what I really enjoy," she explained, "and I love working with copper. The finished product is always *so* pretty."

Additionally, Carol implements a hammering technique to flatten the copper and other wires she works with, which changes the appearance and adds to the aesthetic quality of the piece. "Hammering the wire and then filing it down so it's smooth results in a very nice three-dimensional effect. It gives the wire a new texture that looks really good," she explained.

But jewelry isn't her only specialty. She also enjoys making keepsake pieces for herself, family and friends. During a class, she learned how to make what she calls a multipurpose angel charm. Essentially, it is a hook-shaped stick with an angel charm and colored beads dangling on the end. The hook allows for the bobble to be hung virtually anywhere. "I have my patriotic angels hanging in my car. They are red, white

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and blue. I know other people hang them from their light fixtures or lamp shades and some use them as bookmarks,” she said. “I make those the most because people just love them.”

Carol also makes a family memory tree ornament designed specifically to be hung on the Christmas tree. She uses birthstone-colored beads symbolizing the birth month of each family member. It can be customized to fit any person’s family up to three generations. “Of course, I love Swarovski crystals. They are so pretty, especially when the light hits them just right,” Carol smiled. “They work perfectly on the memory trees.”

Capturing memories in an artistic way was never Carol’s intention, but as a byproduct of her hobby, she is pleased her creations carry special meanings. In fact, most of her favorite pieces she has made have special meaning to her. One is a necklace she created using the birthstones of her mother and sister, and another is a bead-woven pearl bracelet. She also held on to a copper ring because she had worked so hard on twisting and hammering the wire that she simply could not part with it. “Before I knew it, I ended up with more jewelry than I knew what to do with! I had to start gifting some of it just to make room for more pieces. Some things I just can’t let go of. They’re just too special to me,” Carol smiled.

In the end, Carol makes her jewelry for the enjoyment and to stay busy. But she also does it to give people something with sentimental value — a handmade keepsake to last a lifetime. **NOW**

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The Greatest Gift

— By Carolyn Wills

At Home With Alan Richey

The story of Alan Richey's past four Christmases is a sweet reminder that love is the greatest gift of all. It is a story about a surprising, endearing and all too brief friendship and an explanation of why this Christmas is filled with special poignancy and meaning for Alan, his mother and all who knew a gracious woman named Peggy Pritchard.

For five years now, Alan has transformed his 2,100-square-foot home into a magical Christmas wonderland, and it is his treasured task and privilege. "I start decorating in October and finish in about three weeks," he said. He works single-handedly, staging from among his massive collection of decorations, approximately 400 nutcrackers and a 9-foot tree. "Setting up the tree takes four hours," he explained. Fortunately, his traditional/retro-modern house has a spacious, high-ceilinged living room that easily accommodates the giant Christmas tree.

The light-colored brick home, built in 1981, was less than 2 years old when Alan became its second owner. It has now been his home for 32 years. "I grew up in Wichita Falls," he said. "In 1979, my family survived a tornado that destroyed our home, so we've been blessed." Today, his mother and older and younger brother all live in Fort Worth. "My father has passed away, and I've always been close to my mother," he added.

Alan's three-bedroom home, located in one of Mansfield's older established neighborhoods, is certainly suitable for an accounting professional with a degree from Midwestern State University and an international business and marketing master's degree from Dallas Baptist





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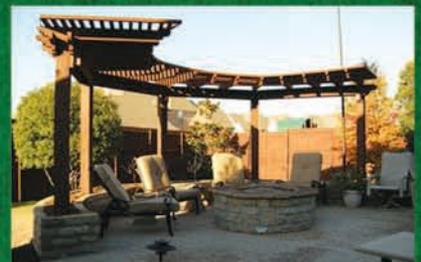
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University. There is, however, much more to Alan. He's a world traveler, art connoisseur, collector, devoted son, brother and friend and became a Christian at the age of 7. His home is a reflection of an amazingly colorful, discerning and interesting life.

Through a leaded glass door, the home opens to a living room with an enormous brick fireplace and chevron-patterned wood accents. Along the wall to the right, two large, red-leather sectional sofas face a row of glass and metal étagères filled with art pieces and mementoes. "After college, my goal was to travel," Alan smiled. For the past 15 years, he's averaged two to three trips per year and among his many destinations are Hong Kong, England, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Greece,





Israel, South America and Canada, as well as 40 states in the U.S. Discovery, adventure, a bit of whimsy and a colorful taste clearly define his style.

In 1982, while enjoying a Siegfried & Roy performance in Las Vegas, the two stars came down the aisle, stopped and shook Alan's hand. "The whole show was unbelievable, and it sparked my fascination with tigers," he explained. That fascination led to surrounding

himself with tigers in the form of amazing paintings by renowned artist Christian R. Lassen, huge stuffed tigers, statues, photos, clothing with tiger images and even two tiger tattoos.

"I love dolphins, too," he said. His other collectibles include flip-flops (the shoes), shot glasses, Hard Rock Café miniature guitars and "destination" magnets. On par with the Lassen paintings, he also admires Jay Strongwater

bejeweled frames and figurines, Waterford crystal and "Fleur de Lis" fine bone china by Spode.

"I've been very happy with this house," he smiled. "The floorplan and size are great, and I have to say all the rooms are my favorites." To the left of the living room, the first bedroom is used as his office, and it also features treasure-filled glass and metal étagères. The second bedroom is reserved for guests, and the



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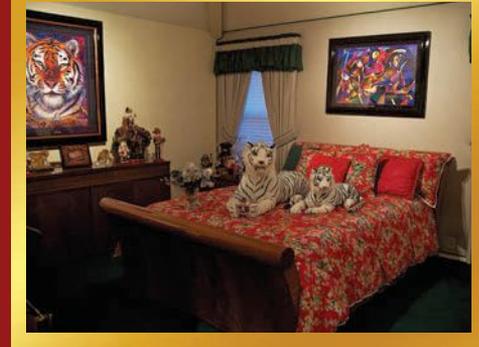


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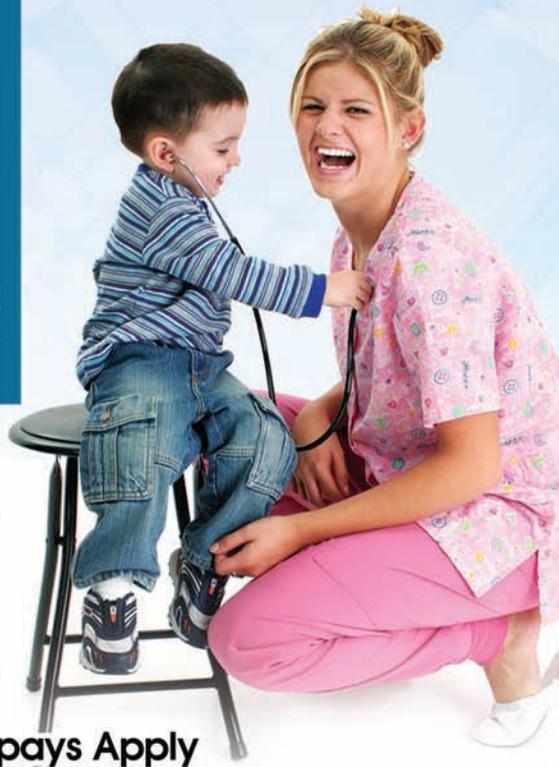


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third is the master suite with a gorgeous queen-sized sleigh bed and an attached bath the size of many bedrooms.

To the right of the living room, a semi-enclosed bar displays an ornate antique cash register. The bar opens to a lovely formal dining room with plantation shutters, an elegant dining table and a London cabinet. Across from the dining room is the updated, roomy kitchen and, finally, on the other side of the kitchen is a game room with a 1936 slot machine, pin-ball game and game table.

On any day, Alan's house is a treat to visit but, since Christmas 2010, a visit during the holidays is a treat beyond comparison. "Before then, I had two Christmas trees and that was it," he smiled. February 2010, arrived with a chance meeting that changed his life. "I was sitting in a beauty shop waiting for my mom when Peggy Pritchard walked in," he explained. "Her appointment followed my mother's, so she sat next to me. We talked for about 45 minutes, and I felt like I had known her forever."

When Peggy said she needed a dessert for a funeral service at her church, Alan offered her a great brownie recipe. The brownies were hugely successful and, soon after, Peggy invited Alan and his mother to a funeral for her beloved dog, Fifi. "We understood her loss," Alan said. "We took her some brownies and, after that day, became very close friends."



Their friendship blossomed into monthly dinners and get-togethers centered on remaining in touch. "We had a lot of fun," Alan smiled. Peggy and her husband lived in a 12,000-square-foot-home, which was decorated for every occasion similar to Alan's. "Peggy was a sweet, wonderful person who loved decorating, especially for the holidays," he added.

"She knew that I liked nutcrackers," he explained. "I only had one, and he never moved from the glass shelf in my living room." That lone nutcracker was soon joined by 25 others, all given as a birthday surprise for Alan. Then, as time passed, more nutcrackers arrived. "Within three years of knowing Peggy, I had 400 nutcrackers, including six that are 6 feet tall and many tiny ornaments," he said. The nutcrackers were also accompanied by Christmas trees, Santa figurines and a variety of ornaments. "I finally told her I had no room for another decoration!" he grinned.

Each year, each nutcracker becomes part of Alan's elegant and elaborate holiday scene and, thankfully, Peggy was able to visit his home the first four years. "She thought I did a great job because I did it all by myself," he smiled.

By 2014, Peggy's health was failing. "She donated a truckload of decorations to my mom's church in 2011," Alan said. Peggy always had a Christmas party with Alan and his mom, but on September 7, 2014, she passed away at her home. "My mom and I sat with her family at the funeral," he said.

This holiday season as he enjoys his home trimmed with the wonderful ornaments Peggy gifted to him, Alan will cherish the memories of his friend. "Peggy was a gorgeous and beloved lady and, for all of her generosity," he said, "her greatest gift will always be her loving friendship." **NOW**



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BOOM, Crackie, Repeat

— By Sara Edgell





Mike Wagner has always lived life in a big way. He has never been one to shy away from any opportunity to get his adrenaline pumping. From aviation and skydiving to motorcycles and fast cars, Mike's life and hobbies are the picturesque embodiment of the common saying, "Go big or go home." When it comes to fireworks, there is no difference for the extreme enthusiast.

As a boy, Mike loved fireworks — the bright, beautiful colors and the loud, booming sounds were both exciting and enticing. There simply wasn't anything better than watching the night sky light up with vibrant, sparkling colors — except for knowing he made it happen. "I would spend my very last dollar at the fireworks stand," Mike admitted. "My dad told me once, 'Why don't you just light a \$100 bill on fire?' I said, 'Because it doesn't go boom!'" Although his love for fireworks hasn't always been understood, Mike stuck with it, and as a grown man, his love for the brilliant explosives has only grown. "I just love them. My favorite are the multi-shot cakes. One thousand of them go off in just seconds. It's amazing."

Originally from Kansas City, Mike and his wife, Audrey, moved to Texas in 1991. Mike had the opportunity to attend college in the Lone Star State to work toward a degree in aviation. Although he never technically worked in the field, he does enjoy flying and did use his skills when he owned an installation company for many years. When the installation company was bought out in 2006, Mike found himself retired and utterly bored. So for fun, he started to focus on his firework hobby by putting on extravagant firework shows at his home for family, friends and neighbors. As the crowd continued to grow each year, Mike continued to go big. Eventually, the event grew so large that vendors started showing up and their daughter, Payton, would quickly run out of the glow sticks she sold. "We would have over 7,000 people show up at our house for these shows, and it was all through word-of-mouth," Audrey said.

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Shows of this scope required copious amounts of planning, but Mike reveled in the process, sparing not a single penny nor overlooking the tiniest detail. Each show is meticulously planned to music and true to character, he pushed the limits on what he could do by designing and building his very own fire elements that he calls dragons. His ultimate goal was to offer a family-friendly event to showcase his hobby and passion and leave a lasting impression on the viewers. However, it was a costly undertaking. Often, the total cost for the hour-long spectacle ended up in the thousands, leaving Audrey baffled. "I told him he had to figure out a way to make money doing it," she said.

So with Audrey's help, he turned his hobby-gone-wrong into a profession. Fast forward eight years and Mike is the mastermind behind the thrilling pyromusical shows featured not only in local Mansfield community events, but also across the country. For him, this was a big deal because he had longed to share what he could do with the people of the town he loves so much. "I knew all we needed was the chance to do just one show," he said. "We love everything about this place, and I just wanted to share what I love with my community." In 2013, Mike was asked to do the Hometown Holiday firework show, which was an explosive success. He has been doing shows for various other city events ever since.

Although the show is only 3.5 to 4 minutes in length, it requires just as much planning and attention to detail as



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the lengthier shows Mike put on at his home. However, many different variables come into play, including the safety of the audience, venue size and location and proximity of surrounding structures. "The biggest challenge with this show is the size of the venue," he explained. "There has to be a distance of at least 70 feet per inch of the shell size away from the crowd. Just to be safe, we do 100 feet."

This means he has to be mindful not only of what he is shooting, but where he is shooting it from. "City Hall is an interesting location because it's surrounded by homes and businesses. There's also the train tracks to consider. For Rockin' 4th of July at Big League Dreams we are basically restriction free, but not in town," Mike explained. Therefore, the level of complexity for the Christmastime show increases significantly, requiring Mike to spend anywhere from three to four months to put everything together. The entire show consists of a 1,400 shot count, which is the number of actual fireworks illuminating the night sky. With this number of shells to arrange, factors like shell type and size, as well as color scheme and arrangement, must be considered. Because the show is a pyromusical, an additional planning factor concerning music selection comes into play.



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Since Hometown Holidays is a family-friendly, community event, Mike sticks with the timeless crowd favorite Trans-Siberian Orchestra. The 2014 show featured the dramatic, yet festive, holiday music, which was meticulously choreographed with vibrant fireworks and fire features. "The music takes the longest," he admitted. "It takes one hour of choreography for every one minute of the actual show. I never want the sky to be dark during a show, so we get down to 100th of a second. I am very particular when it comes to this."

The results are truly breathtaking. The culmination of the vibrant colors, blazing fire features, ground-shaking detonations and moving music is truly an experience to be had. According to Mike, "Every time the crowd sees the fire, they ask me if that was supposed to happen. I laugh and tell them yes, it was part of the show, and they always say, 'Do it again!'"

Spectators at this year's event can look forward to much of the same concerning the firework display because Mike's formulation has proven successful time and time again. "Mike makes sure that every second of the show is just as exciting as the next," Audrey said, "and everyone just loves it."

When the show comes to an end, the loud booms cease and the sky fades back to black, the moment comes that makes all of the planning and preparation worth it. The air is filled with a different type of booming sound, as a roar of delighted approval erupts from the spectators. For Mike, there's nothing as rewarding as hearing that sound. In the end, sharing his love for fireworks with the town he and his family happily call home is what it's all about. **NOW**

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Stay Safe

— By Sara Edgell

In 1991, the Washington Redskins took to the field in Super Bowl 26 and as a team, they also took the game — bringing home a win and memories that would last a lifetime. A tight end on the team, John Brandes, learned then the importance and power of teamwork and camaraderie — two things that have stuck with him and proved necessary throughout his various endeavors. One such endeavor is his involvement with the Citizens Fire Academy Alumni Association and their specialized four-man team called the Operations Support Team. Now, instead of taking to the field protected by a helmet and pads, John arrives on the scene prepared to help firefighters battle a blaze.

Jud Ladd, one of John's longtime friends, is the director of training for the CFAAA and helps coordinate a Mansfield Fire Rescue-instructed, 10-week Citizens Fire Academy each spring. The Academy offers Mansfield residents the opportunity to undergo fire education, safety training and firsthand experiences related to the fire department and what firefighters deal with while on the job. Upon graduation from the Academy, each member has the opportunity to join the Alumni Association.

The CFAAA is a volunteer-based, nonprofit organization established in 2005 to support, assist and raise funds for the brave firefighters and paramedics of Mansfield Fire Rescue. "Because we're volunteers, we believe we save the city money and keep fire crews focused and available to handle the emergency situations they are paid and trained to do," Jud explained. "We think Mansfield is unique in its volunteer provision of air, light and disaster management services."

Knowing John's appreciation and admiration of the profession, Jud encouraged John to enroll in the program. "It was everything I thought it would be and more," John said. "We took classes taught by firefighters and got lots of hands-on experience. It was really fun, too."





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Two years ago, the group saw the opportunity to provide more assistance to the firefighters, which led to the formation of the Operations Support Team. Working closely with Assistant Fire Chief Eric Peterson, John, Jud and two others underwent intense training and subsequent certification to form the two major units of the OST. One unit, a four-person special ops team, would focus on air and light services while the other unit, a six-person team, would focus on rehabilitation services. Ultimately, John, Jud, Jack McMurry and Russell Rosenstein would work in tandem with firefighters on emergency scenes to provide supportive services crucial to promoting and ensuring safety, efficiency and optimum physical performance.

John shares this passion with the three other OST members and as a volunteer, donates a great deal of his time and energy to ensure the team functions and operates at a high level, while also providing support to Mansfield Fire

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Rescue. He has a great appreciation for firefighters everywhere and is honored to have the opportunity to help out and show his support. Just like he worked with a team to win the Super Bowl in '91, John works alongside his OST teammates to offer the utmost support to firefighters as they risk their lives for the community.

Their primary purpose is to provide breathable air, rest, nourishment, hydration and lighting services to firefighters on active fire and water rescue missions. When an emergency situation arises, the OST is dispatched to support firefighters as they work on-scene. "We had to go through crucial training to make sure we learned how to do this right," John said. "We don't want to jeopardize or disrupt the firefighters' teamwork on the fireground. We want them to know they can count on us."

That's why staging the scene and understanding safety boundaries are also important to the OST. They have developed a color-coding and cylinder placement system involving red and green mats: red to stage empty air cylinders and green for the full cylinders. When empty bottles hit the red mat, John immediately begins the process of re-filling them. When needed, he also changes the tanks in the firefighter's air pack. Each 30-minute bottle actually only lasts a fit firefighter about 20 minutes, so they often need replacements. "They come out, put their hands on their knees and bend down. That's the universal sign they need a new air tank," John explained. "I pop off the old one and snap a new one in. When I'm done, I pat them on the back to signal I'm done."

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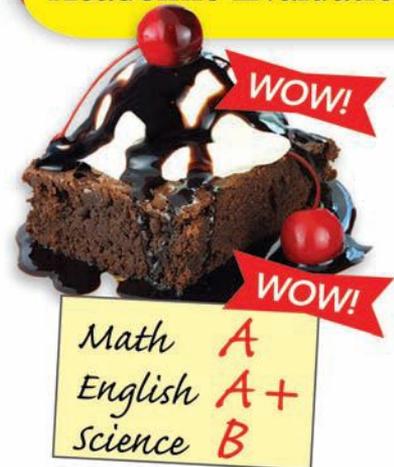
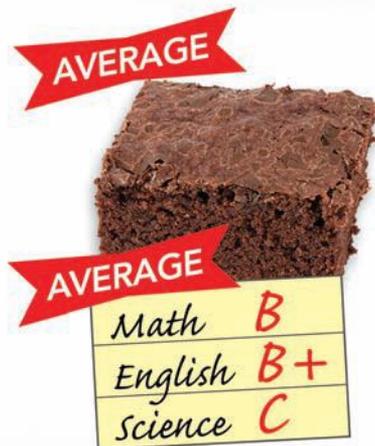
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Because they work under very demanding physical and environmental conditions, it's imperative for firefighters to go to rehab for 20 minutes after every two bottles of air they use. Rehab 1, one of the OST's two service trucks, is safely positioned within the strict boundaries of the scene. There the OST sets up their rehabilitation tent and gets ready for action. Gatorade, bottled water and nutritionally rich snacks are on hand to provide hydration and nourishment. They soon will undergo training to provide a vitals check to monitor blood pressure and body temperature, as well.

Another tool they use are cool core chairs, specialized folding chairs with arm troughs that are filled with water and ice. These critical rehabilitation services provided by the OST on the scene help firefighters rest and recover, so they don't deplete their energy too quickly. "The cool core chair quickly and safely lowers their core temperature. They love it and sometimes fight about who gets to use the chairs first," Jud smirked.

The mobile tower lighting the OST provides comes from Utility 1, the OST's other service truck. On search and rescue

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In one of northeast Mansfield's busiest shopping intersections, Amaris Nails & Spa helps you get your bearings. Relaxation comes naturally inside the elegant salon, where calm, observant women tend to all your beauty needs. Amaris' professional staff cares for details like nails, cuticles and pores, while you regroup and focus on the larger picture of your life.

The view from any of 25 pedicure chairs encourages meditation. The high-ceilinged salon feels high-tech thanks to touches of silver lacquer, gray adobe, gold gilt, beige tile and milk chocolate leather on clean, expansive floors and wide, granite counters. A crystal chandelier hangs in the center of the spa, perfecting the contemporary ambience. Happy, funky music playing at just the right decibel level allows for good conversation.

Quality services abound in Amaris Nails & Spa, a fully sanitized, upscale salon. The owners are as concerned about your health as you are. Their combined 20 years' experience produces a worry-free spa adventure in a relaxed environment.

Amaris staff attend classes throughout the year. Nail technicians, makeup artists and eyelash extension specialists are certified and stay current on sanitation procedures, as well as new techniques. Every Monday, Amaris hosts a drawing for eyelash extensions, facials, manicures, eyebrow waxing or pedicures, and winners are announced on their Facebook page.

Amaris' nail technicians use tools sanitized in their medical-grade M9 Autoclave, as well as a new file, buffer and pumice stone for each customer. Continually upgrading to the newest technologies, each pedicure is administered with a 100-percent disposable air jet, preventing debris from getting trapped in the jet, and fully disposable liners in the gold foot basins.

With your ankles resting on padded foot rests, the technician works while you relax. All year-round, Amaris offers five pedicures ranging from \$28 to \$55. The seasonal pedicure this month is comprised of skin-softening, mineral-rich mud and scents that that will remind you of the holidays. Using top-notch products, like S&S dipping powder and OPI Nail Lacquer, Amaris stands behind all work and corrects any problems. To promote relaxation, neck and shoulder massages are given during the manicure. You will also be offered snacks, water, soft drinks, wine, mimosa or a margarita.

If you're just meeting the staff this month, you'll notice them wearing red, green or gold along with their traditionally sleek, black uniforms. During this season of gift-giving, consider buying your friends and loved ones gift certificates from Amaris Nail & Spa. They are currently offering a free 10% bonus gift card to purchasers who buy gift certificates of \$35 or more, which makes your holiday gift giving even better.

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Christmas

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operations, John and the rest of the team raise and maneuver the light tower to provide lighting essential for firefighters to successfully make the rescue. To date, the OST has worked over 33 fires, have been involved in a few water rescues and have assisted with storm damage control. "We are just a little part of the big picture," John humbly shared. "We do this because we just want to help and show our appreciation. It takes a lot of trust for those guys to let us do what we do, and that's not something we take lightly."

John, due in part to his passion for serving Mansfield Fire Rescue, and in part because his daughter, Shelby, is an Arlington firefighter, understands how critical these services are to the safety and effectiveness of firefighters in general, and Mansfield firefighters in particular. "I wanted to be a firefighter one day, but after getting married and having a family, I didn't. This is my way of getting to be involved and giving back to something I highly respect and appreciate. It's like a brotherhood being able to work alongside those guys."

And that brotherhood is something John knows well. From his experiences on the gridiron to his experiences on the fire scene, John understands the importance of teamwork and supporting one another to stay safe. **NOW**



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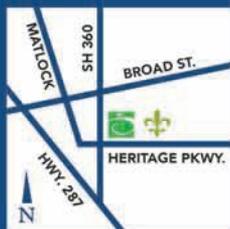
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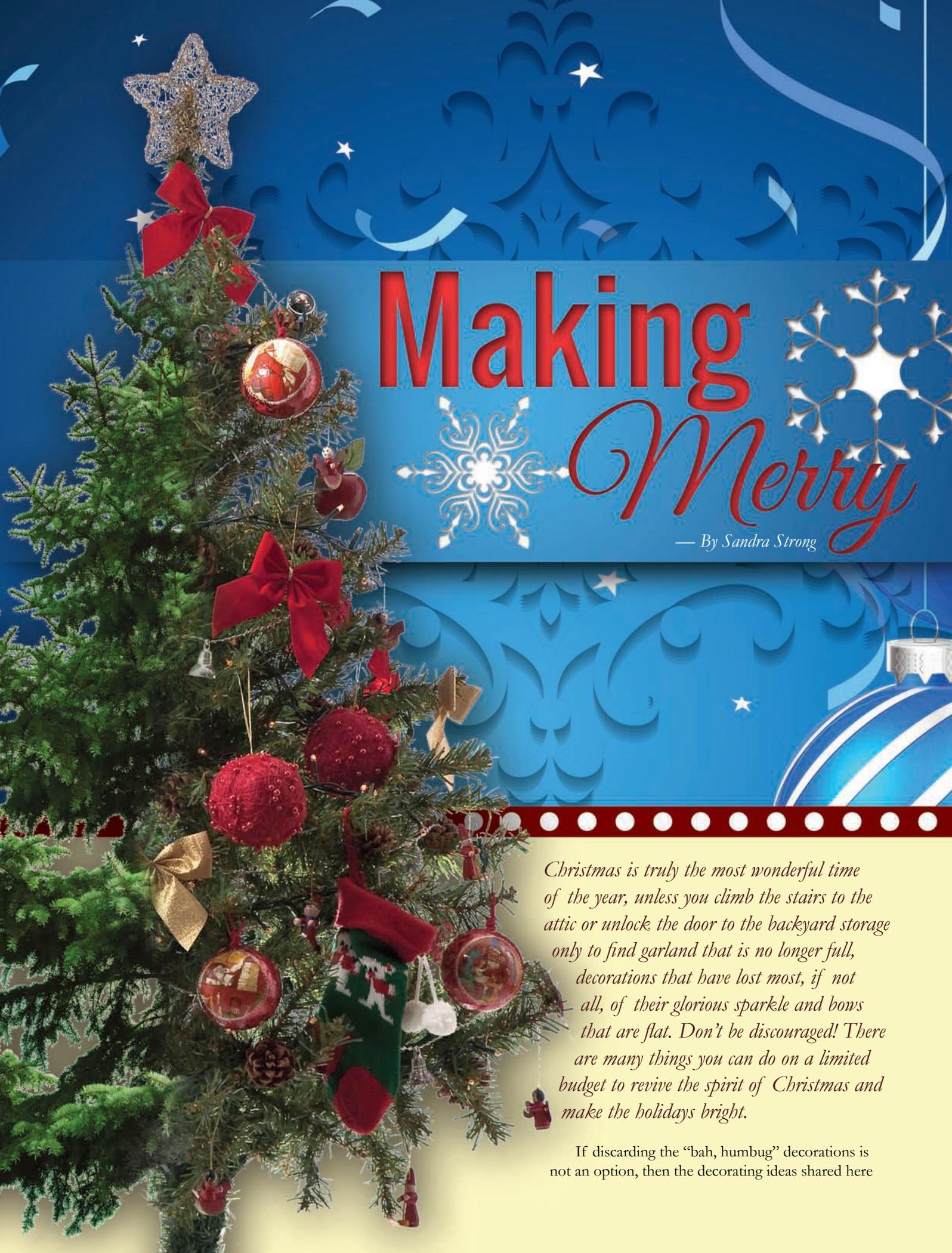
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Making Merry

— By Sandra Strong

Christmas is truly the most wonderful time of the year, unless you climb the stairs to the attic or unlock the door to the backyard storage only to find garland that is no longer full, decorations that have lost most, if not all, of their glorious sparkle and bows that are flat. Don't be discouraged! There are many things you can do on a limited budget to revive the spirit of Christmas and make the holidays bright.

If discarding the “bah, humbug” decorations is not an option, then the decorating ideas shared here



will, hopefully, be the help you need to restore your holiday favorites to their original glory. Each suggestion can be accomplished alone, but why not get everyone together for some good, old-fashioned family time. You might even start a new Christmas tradition.

Decking the Halls

Here are a few ways you can revive your garland. The easiest option is to take two strands of old garland and twist them together from one end to the next, securing both ends with floral wire. Once secured, the two strands will need

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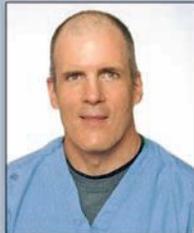


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to be entwined, one with the other. This process calls for patience and plenty of time to do it properly. As you entwine the two, you will touch each small limb on the garland strands, merging them together as you work from one end to the next.

To further fill out the garland, you can also add a string of twinkling lights and some holiday ribbon. These options can be added and removed from season-to-season in order to give the decorations a new punch each year. You might use white lights with blue ribbons one year and decide to go all out with red lights and Scotch plaid bows the next. One year, you may even decide to forgo the ribbons and bows and tie themed ornaments and festive greenery to the garland. As your taste in holiday decorating changes from year-to-year, now, so can your fluffy strands of garland.

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Trimming the Tree

Some homes boast one tall, regally standing, fresh cut tree, while other homes have trees of varying shapes and sizes in every room. Regardless of how many trees you display, there are some easy guidelines you can follow to ensure the tree-decorating process is one that lends to good memories, instead of huge holiday headaches. Patience will, once again, be important as you plug in the pre-lit tree or the string of lights to begin wrapping the tree in their warm



glow. Last year, the pre-lit tree worked. You may find that it doesn't this year. The process to find the one bulb that has caused the lights to go out is difficult and, many times, impossible. In this case, you have three options — throw the tree out the backdoor, string working lights over nonworking lights or grab a trusty pair of scissors and start cutting the lights from the tree.

For those who opt for a tree that is not pre-lit, your struggles could be just as great, especially if the light Grinch somehow got into the lights that were organized and working when you stored them neatly away the year before! If you find this is the case, get a large cup of hot cocoa, have a seat and let the untangling begin.



Ornamental Revitalization

Ornaments on a Christmas tree are what keep the memories alive within the branches each year. The engraved spoon commemorating baby's first Christmas, the paper star those same little hands made once they got to kindergarten and vintage glass decorations that have been passed down through the generations evoke emotions each time the tree is trimmed. Sometimes, these same decorations need to be rejuvenated to bring back their original beauty.

Silver polish and a buffing cloth will shine up the spoon in no time. All it takes to add a button or some glitter back to the paper star is a few small dots of Elmer's glue. The vintage decorations will

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need something altogether different — something called TLC. Vintage and antique ornaments need to be stored in a dry, climate-controlled area. Hot temperatures have a tendency to tarnish and fade the colors, while colder temperatures cause these same ornaments to become brittle. The way these family heirlooms are stored is quite important in ensuring their holiday lasting power. Wrapping them in white tissue paper before placing them gently in their storage container helps keep them in one piece until you are ready to enjoy them again.

Outside the Box

Decorating outside the box takes on new meaning as children marry and have children of their own. Although it sounds like something Scrooge would do, some may choose to not put a tree up until children understand that the tree is to look at and not to touch. One unique idea, which has been passed down through the generations, is to take the baby out of the playpen and add the tree in his or her place. This allows the child to still be mesmerized by the tree's beauty, while keeping them safely away from breakable ornaments and the "no-no's" that will surely come with each touch. Another option is to simply downsize the tree, so it can be displayed on a tabletop or the fireplace mantel.

Regardless of what you decide to do, the main focus should be on having family fun. Garland, decorations and bows will come and go, but your Christmas memories can last a lifetime, if they are preserved and cared for properly. **NOW**

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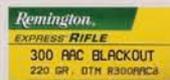
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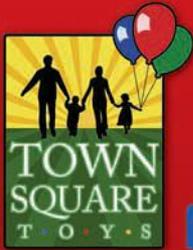
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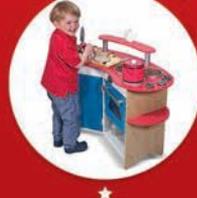
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Children will enjoy the award winning George S. Eccles Dinosaur Park, Ogden Nature Center and Treehouse Children's Museum. The 8-acre Dinosaur Park is filled with 100 life-sized dinosaurs based on actual skeletons, robotic dinosaurs

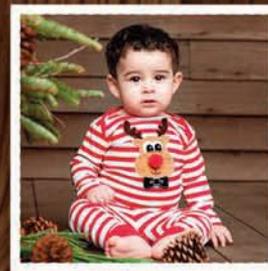


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Ogden has accommodations with easy access to each venue. Ogden is an ideal travel destination offering one-of-a-kind outdoor recreation and metropolitan delights throughout the year. The town offers luxury mountain getaways, with mountain trails at your back door, to restored historic hotels located right downtown. In addition, the Ogden-Hinckley Airport is only five minutes away from downtown or the Salt Lake City International Airport is a quick 35-minute drive.

Travel times from Ogden are more than reasonable for educational daytrips to exotic sites like Utah's Great Salt Lake, where high-salinity water is so buoyant that people can easily float. You'll find opportunities for great hiking and wildlife viewing, including bison, antelope and birds, at Antelope Island State Park. Swimming and sunbathing are also popular on its clean, white sand beaches. Freshwater showers are available to rinse off after swimming, before the 40-minute drive back to your lovely lodging in Ogden. For more information on great escapes available throughout the year, go to www.visitogden.com. **NOW**

By Aimee Edwards. Photos by Out of Bounds Creative.

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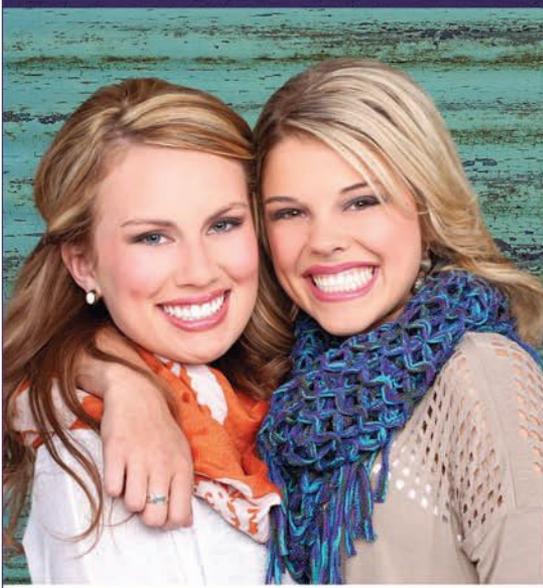


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Dr. Bishara and his well-qualified staff strive to offer services that exceed their clients' expectations.



Here's to a *New You*

Patients are handled with caring and capable hands at Paragon.

— By Sara Edgell

The holiday season with all its parties, family gatherings and New Year's resolutions can be stressful for men and women of all ages because this is typically a special time when they want to look and feel their best. Dr. Mark Bishara and his staff at The Paragon Plastic Surgery and Medspa can help each individual man or woman look and feel his or her best for all the events of the holidays. Dr. Bishara takes the time to cultivate individual relationships with his patients in order to ensure they receive their desired look. He uses the term "patient" because he says, "I feel the term 'patient' is a more personal and appropriate term because I am working with people in personal ways."

In his new state-of-the-art facility, which was completed in 2014, he offers the full gamut of cosmetic procedures, such as

robotic hair restoration, breast augmentation, tummy tuck and a variety of laser procedures. The calming music and soothing decor create an atmosphere to ease the nerves of any anxious patient. "Sometimes patients come in extremely nervous, and my goal is to provide a calming, relaxing environment to reduce their anticipated anxiety," he said. Additionally, Dr. Bishara takes the time to listen, discuss and explain all treatment options before outlining an appropriate treatment plan.

In his Paragon office in Mansfield, Dr. Bishara offers "Wrinkle-Free Wednesday." Patients can come in for BOTOX and XEOMIN treatments at discounted rates. It's easy to see why this is the most popular and busiest day of the week for Dr. Bishara and his staff. He treats hundreds of patients

seeking these noninvasive, preventive procedures. “We go through enough BOTOX to remove every single wrinkle from an elephant’s skin,” he grinned, “but my goal is for them to still look like themselves.” As an AAAHC certified facility and dual trained surgeon, he can also provide acute care as well. His goal is to make sure every patient’s needs are satisfactorily and effectively met.

In the spirit of giving this holiday season, Dr. Bishara plans to open a combined clinic offering reduced rates for general surgical procedures including lumpectomy, advanced laparoscopic hernia and gallbladder procedures and varicose vein ablation. “The current medical system in this country is not sustainable,” he said.

“Sometimes patients come in extremely nervous, and my goal is to provide a calming, relaxing environment to reduce their anticipated anxiety.”

As a responsible physician, he wants to provide clinical services that promote and foster a medical system that’s sustainable and affordable. That is why he has announced the addition of four advanced laparoscopic surgeons to the staff at the Paragon Surgery Center in Mansfield. Surgical procedures are now being offered to all patients statewide for a cash price that’s often less than some deductible plans. Some patients will still be able to submit the charges for reimbursement through their out-of-network benefits.

So, as the holiday season and the New Year approach, call one of Dr. Bishara’s three convenient locations to make an appointment. Let him and his staff ensure you enjoy the holidays knowing you truly look your best. **NOW**

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Jeff Brogden, Eric Petry and Donald Williams work together at a joint Mansfield Minority Chamber and MISD contractor information session.



Dr. Shawndra Young cuts the ribbon for Diabetes Wellness Group while Chamber Ambassadors strike a pose.



Angie Eddins (middle) of Angmar Properties presents Gill Children's Services with a \$60,000 check after the Play A Round Charity Golf Tournament at Southern Oaks Golf Course.



At the Mansfield Public Library, Lawrence Hill studies geometry for his professional engineering license.



Members of the Mansfield High School Student Council volunteer at the Mansfield Marines Golf Tournament as a way to give back and help a local group within the community.



Golden Air HVAC's Lisa Dwight clowns around while helping out at the Women's Division luncheon.



Violet Ileso gives Susanne Engelbert shopping bags that she'll recycle at Eterna Health Food.



Garland Gibbs checks out the kaleidoscope outside the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce.

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Time to Harvest Your Losses?

The fourth quarter is a good time to determine if harvesting your losses would be an effective tax strategy.

The fourth quarter is a good time to review your overall asset allocation to ensure it is both tax efficient and aligns with your financial goals. Since some investments generate more taxable distributions than others, it's important to evaluate your investments, after-tax returns, portfolio turnover ratio and historical distributions to get a sense of your annual tax liability. Especially at year end, you have the opportunity now to take steps to help minimize this year's tax liability.

One way to diminish your 2015 tax burden is to harvest capital losses in order to offset realized gains. The deadline to sell securities to realize a gain or loss is December 31, 2015. However, be aware of the "wash-sale" rule. This rule will not allow you to deduct capital losses on the sale of a particular security if you initiate a similar position within a 61-day period (30 days before the sale date and 30 days after the sale date). Note that these rules apply to both taxable and nontaxable accounts. So, for example, you can't liquidate a position in one account and establish a similar position in your IRA within that timeframe.

If your capital losses are more than your capital gains, you can claim a capital loss deduction. You may use your total net loss to reduce your income dollar for dollar, up to the \$3,000 limit per year.

If you have a total net loss that is more than the annual limit, you can carry over that unused portion to next year and treat it as if you incurred it in 2016. If part of the loss is still unused, you can carry it over to later years until it is completely used up.

Here's an example of how to claim the capital loss deduction. Let's say Earl and Samantha sell securities at the end of this year. The sale yields a capital loss of \$7,000, and they have no other capital transactions. On their joint tax return for 2015, they can deduct \$3,000 of the \$7,000 loss. Next year, they can carry over the unused part of the loss, \$4,000 (\$7,000 - \$3,000), up to the limit for that year.

It's important to work with your financial and/or tax advisor to determine if harvesting your losses would be an effective strategy to help reduce your 2015 taxes. **NOW**

Tax-loss harvesting dos and don'ts

Do: Sell depreciated investments that don't fit your strategy.

Do: Research your records and cost basis carefully before you sell any investment.

Don't: Undermine long-term investing goals for tax purposes.

Don't: Buy a substantially identical security within 30 days before or after the sale.

Source: Fidelity

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Jonathan Pope is a Raymond James Financial Advisor based in Duncanville.



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Straighten Up

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

“Stand up straight!” How many times have you heard that in your lifetime? It could’ve been from your mom, your teacher, dance instructor or a friend. Depending upon who gave the order, you may or may not have tried to accommodate them. But who wants to stand straight when a good slouch seems to work just as well? And, what about that cozy curl into the big chair? Why sit up straight when the opposite feels so right and comfortable? Here is an inconvenient truth: Unless you have been taught and encouraged to practice good posture, you probably need some encouraging reminders.

The correct posture follows the natural curvature of the spine. A good standing posture starts with holding your head up, shoulders back, stomach tucked, knees relaxed, not locked, and your feet a shoulder’s width apart. A good sitting posture begins with your buttocks touching the back of the chair. Have your back and shoulders straight and feet planted on the floor. Your weight should be equally distributed. Use an arm rest. If you need to turn while sitting, do not twist. Turn your whole body. Practice good computer posture by sitting with good posture and keeping your arms and wrists parallel to the floor. Make sure the computer screen is at eye level.

Posture plays a big part in your overall health. One of the areas impacted is your breathing. There is a reason programs

such as yoga and Pilates place so much emphasis on breathing. For the brain to function properly, it is critical for it to receive the oxygen it needs. This improves your critical thinking. Proper posture facilitates that. When you use good posture, your muscles, ligaments and joints are aligned as they should be, and this alignment allows internal organs to be positioned properly inside the body. When your organs are compromised because of bad posture, they can’t function as they should, and that sets up other issues, such as digestion or respiratory problems.

There is less wear and tear on the skeletal system when you maintain good posture, thereby lessening the prospect of injury. Going against this can set you up for arthritis, back pain and body fatigue. Good posture equals a more efficient system. Other considerations would be to invest in a good mattress for the good of your spine at night and an orthopedic pillow. Wear quality footwear. Sit in a solid chair that gives your back the support it needs. There are good reasons for all of this attention to posture. In addition, you will look better and exude confidence when you stand and sit up straight! **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.

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December 3

Tree Lighting: 6:00-6:30 p.m., MISD Center for Performing Arts, 1110 W. Debbie Ln. Families throughout Mansfield are invited to enjoy cookies and hot chocolate while recognizing the Ben Barber High School students who designed and created the holiday decorations in front of The Center. MISD Day Care Center children will be singing holiday tunes. (817) 299-1230.

December 4, 5

Hometown Holidays: **Friday**, 5:00-9:00 p.m., City Hall; **Saturday**, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Historic Downtown Mansfield. Friday, before the Tree Lighting, shop at the Holiday Market before *It's a Wonderful Life*, presented by Mansfield Community Theatre. Saturday, run in the Kiwanis Falalala 5K. Later, the Music Place performs *Shrek the Musical*, followed by Hometown Holidays Parade! www.mansfieldtexas.gov and www.falalala5k.com.

December 5

12th Annual House of Hotrods Car Show & Christmas Toy Drive: 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., 2301 FM Hwy 1187. Food, games, a DJ, vendors, Santa and so much more. Trophies will be given for the following categories: Best Paint, Best Interior, Best Mechanical, Best Engine and Staff

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December 6

Holiday Home Tour: 1:00-6:00 p.m., various Mansfield neighborhoods. Be inspired by five homes decorated for the season. \$25 in advance; \$30 day of event. Proceeds enable Mansfield Women's Club to give in the Mansfield community in positive ways for the health, welfare and education of women and children. Contact Kathleen Powers, (817) 932-2329 or Launa Barboza, (817) 453-2829, or visit www.mansfieldwomensclub.com.

December 9

Toys for Tots: 5:00-10:30 p.m., MISD Center for Performing Arts, 1110 W. Debbie Ln. Bring the family to this free, fun way to support the community. Legacy High School marching band leads the parade, plus food trucks, a snow-sledding hill and over 30 performances by choirs, dance troupes and cheerleaders. Bring a toy. Lynn Wilkie, (817) 299-1230.

December 12

Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off: 10:00

a.m.-3:00 p.m., Mansfield Environmental Collection Center, 616 S. Wisteria St. Residents who live inside the Mansfield city limits (proof of such as a utility bill or drivers license is required) are invited to bring household hazardous waste items. Contact David Macias, City of Mansfield, (817) 276-4200.

December 17

The Night Before Christmas: 5:30-7:30 p.m., Mansfield Public Library. Always free. A special guest reads *The Night Before Christmas* and you can write your letter to Santa while enjoying a Christmas snack. Call Yolanda Botello, (817) 276-4200.

December 19

The Nutcracker Ballet: 2:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m., MISD Center for Performing Arts, 1110 W. Debbie Ln. Over 100 performers from The Art Ballet Academy help complete your holiday season. \$15 reserved seating tickets on sale at www.tix.extremetix.com/Online/?siteID=3503. (817) 299-1230, www.center.mansfieldisd.org or check Facebook.

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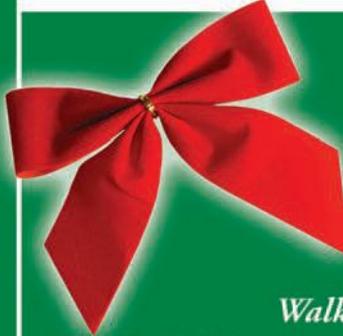


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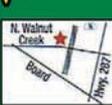
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In the Kitchen With Lisa Amoriello

— *By Sara Edgell*

From a young age, Lisa Amoriello was taught to cook with love. While her love of cooking and being in the kitchen no doubt comes from her mother, her cooking hero is Julia Child. “She had to work so hard at becoming the cook she was. She wasn’t a natural, and I’m the same. She has always inspired me to work hard and try new things,” Lisa explained.

Now, Lisa cooks primarily for her family and enjoys family traditions like Christmas Cookie Day where all the women of her family gather to bake cookies for the holidays. “I think cooking may be my love language!” she smiled. “It’s always the first thing I think of when I want to show someone how much I care.” **NOW**

Krislins

- 1 cup butter, softened (not melted)**
- 1/2 cup sugar**
- 2 cups flour**
- 2 tsp. vanilla**
- 1/2 cup pecans, finely chopped**
- 1 cup powdered sugar (approximate amount for rolling)**

- 1.** Cream butter and sugar together with an electric mixer. Add flour in two batches until well-combined but not overmixed. Add vanilla and blend. Fold in pecans on the lowest speed until just combined.
- 2.** Roll finished dough into balls just a bit larger than quarter-sized and place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 325 F for 35 minutes.
- 3.** Remove from oven and immediately roll each ball gently in powdered sugar. Be careful because they break easily while hot!

Praline Cookies

- Cookies:*
- 1 2/3 cups flour**
 - 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder**
 - 1/2 tsp. salt**
 - 1/2 cup butter, softened (not melted)**
 - 1 1/2 cups brown sugar, packed**
 - 1 egg**
 - 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla**
 - 2 dozen pecan halves (approximately)**

- Icing:*
- 1 cup brown sugar**
 - 1/2 cup heavy cream**
 - 1 cup powdered sugar**

- 1. For cookies:** Sift dry ingredients together in a bowl and set aside.
- 2.** In an electric mixer, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Add dry ingredients and blend until incorporated.

- Add egg and vanilla. Blend until incorporated.
- 3.** Scoop dough and roll into balls about the size of a walnut. Place two inches apart on a sheet pan with parchment paper. Lightly press a pecan half into each ball. Bake at 350 F for 10 to 12 minutes.
- 4. For icing:** Wait to make icing while cookies cool. In a small saucepan, bring brown sugar and heavy cream to a boil over medium-high heat. Whisk in powdered sugar until smooth. Spoon hot icing immediately over cookies before it hardens.

Italian Meatballs

- 1 egg**
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped**
- 1/4 large onion, minced**
- 2 fresh garlic cloves, minced**
- 1/4 cup breadcrumbs**
- 3/4 lb. ground beef**
- 3/4 lb. ground Italian sausage**
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated**
- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt**
- 1 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning**
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper**

- 1.** Whisk egg in a small bowl. Add parsley, onion and garlic. Combine and set aside.
- 2.** In a large bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Mix gently by hand. Add egg mixture and continue to combine until both mixtures are incorporated.
- 3.** Portion meatball mixture into 2-oz. portions, using hands to gently form into balls. Do not pack too tightly together. Bake at 350 F until meatballs reach an internal temperature of 150 F. Allow to rest for a few minutes before serving. Meatballs will continue to cook to required internal temperature of 155 F while resting.

Beer Bread

- 3 cups self-rising flour**
- 3 Tbsp. sugar**
- 1 12-oz. can beer, preferably room temperature**
- 1/2 cup butter, melted**

- 1.** In a large bowl, combine flour and sugar. Pour in beer and fold together until incorporated. Dough will be sticky.
- 2.** Prepare a loaf pan with nonstick spray; scoop dough into pan. Bake at 350 F until browning begins, around 45 to 55 minutes.
- 3.** Remove from oven and pour melted butter over loaf. Return to oven and bake 10 more minutes until golden brown.
- 4.** Allow to cool for 10 minutes in the pan. Turn bread over onto a cooling rack to finish cooling. Slice carefully with a bread knife.

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