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At Home With Mike
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Accidental Competitor

Ninja Warrior, Jared Bandy,
shares his story

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ON THE COVER



Mike and Marian Blowers chose a great house for Christmas decorations and for their growing family.

Photo by Amanda Olson.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Weatherford Friends!

I always loved Christmas. I close my eyes and still see the family trips to Mother Goose Land and Mrs. Baird's Bakery to see Santa, tour the factory and enjoy hot, fresh buttered bread. An evening drive to see lights became my own family tradition, with hot chocolate added to the mix. Now, my children take their kids. The ageless movies, music and family times still fill our evenings and weekends this month. I try my best to focus on a baby in the manger. He is my reason for all the celebration. The sights, smells and sounds of Christmas still make it my favorite holiday.

Sadly, too often, I get caught up searching for, or making, those perfect gifts. And then, when December 26 arrives, I feel cheated — as if I missed something wonderful. This year, I'll still do traditional things and, possibly, create some new traditions. But instead of stressing, I'd rather simply enjoy the season and make more memories than gifts. Cherish your holiday.

Merry Christmas,

Lisa

Lisa Bell
WeatherfordNOW Editor
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P.S. The publisher and staff of NOW Magazines wish you and your family a very merry Christmas and the happiest of holiday seasons!



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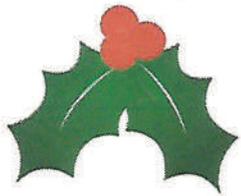
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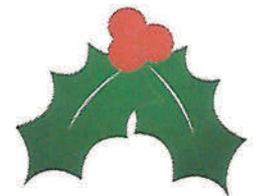
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Accidental Comp



Growing up in Weatherford, Jared Bandy didn't dream of competing on American Ninja Warrior, a popular NBC show. In high school, he played soccer and rode dirt bikes in motocross races. His love for dirt bikes eventually led him to riding street bikes as well.

A single moment on June 2, 2011, didn't destroy Jared's love for motorcycles, but that day changed his life. As he sat at a stop sign near the College Park apartments, a car sped toward him from behind. Looking in the rearview mirror, he realized the driver had no intention of stopping. The woman — he later learned was high on meth — plunged into the back of his motorcycle, throwing him backwards. His head landed on her windshield, smashing it and leaving Jared with multiple skull fractures, numerous stitches and staples and short-term memory loss. His motorcycle stuck in the car. When Jared saw it later, the bumper looked like part of the bike. A police officer told Jared they found his footprint on the roof of the car. In spite of not wearing a helmet, Jared survived. But the road back to his old self took time.

1 etitor

— By Lisa Bell



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Released to his family's care after a week in the hospital, Jared spent the next month without any stimulation. No television, lights, electronics — nothing to aggravate his brain. He needed time to heal. "My family was a vital part in my recovery. I thank them very much," he said.

Over the next year, Jared continued experiencing bad headaches. Once active and relatively healthy, he no longer exercised. As his heart rate increased, pain pounded against his skull. He suffered from post-traumatic head injuries and other side effects from the crash. He ate junk and drank too much alcohol, neither of which he claims pride in doing. Consequently, Jared was out of shape — overweight and unhealthy.

While this young man made excuses for a while, eventually he took ownership of his life. In February 2015, he decided to change and joined Anytime Fitness for help.



Weekend Warriors look forward to tackling Jared's obstacles.



Jared Bandy and Aaron Brabson stay on top of their game by creating obstacles for physical training.

He worked with trainers for six months, dropping from 200 pounds to 169. "I felt great," Jared said. "The six-month transformation changed my life and habits." He became interested in obstacle course races and did well with Dallas-based Obstacle Warriors, taking on the nickname "Never Settle Ninja." As his skills improved, he decided to send a tape to *American Ninja Warriors* and got the call with an invitation to compete on the show. His first competition in May 2016 put him in the top 30 finalists, and he advanced.

Later, in Oklahoma City, where only the top 15 advanced to Las Vegas, he placed 20th, just missing the cut. "Which is OK. I got to watch all my friends," he shared. "The Ninja community is great." Jared talked about the actual event. The competitors want to win, of course, but they also encourage everyone to finish.

The fierce competitors treat each other like family, rooting for each other. "It would be so cool if everyone finished."

The "bar hop" defeated Jared during the competition, but that hasn't stopped him. He builds obstacles in his backyard and trains on them. In addition, he makes them portable and takes them to the fitness center where they hold Weekend Warriors each month. They started with 13 contenders, and by the next month, 22 people joined the ranks. Jared and Aaron Brabson brainstorm new



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obstacles to build, including some similar to those seen on the television show.

Jared is determined to go back and compete again. "I'm a Ninja Warrior, but I'm not an American Ninja Warrior until I make it to the top of Mount Midoriyama," he admitted. He currently works out about one to one-and-a-half hours five or six days each week. His workouts focus on specific parts of his body, and he sometimes runs as well. He plans to run more to increase his speed.

Following a healthy lifestyle, Jared doesn't obsess over exercise or diet. On occasion, he eats what he wants. He also uses health supplements and enjoys sharing nutrition and supplement facts. As his crazy work schedule allows time, Jared trains with area warriors and competes in obstacle course races. He appreciates the challenge and camaraderie as he prepares for another try at becoming the next American Ninja Warrior.

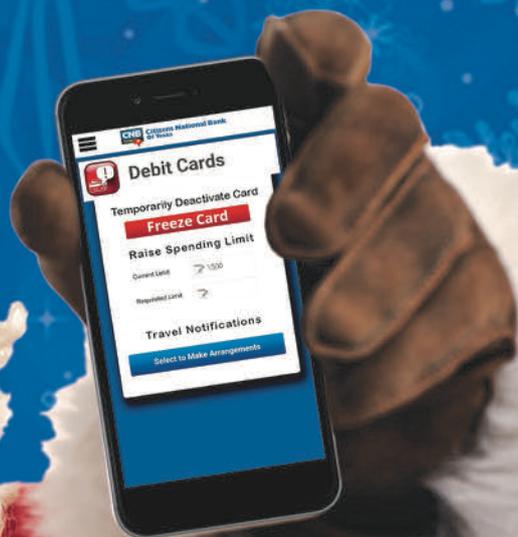
"It's surreal when you're on the show," he said. The first time contestants see the obstacles is when they actually face them. No one gets to practice. All they can do is prepare their bodies, then watch the show and try to reproduce some of what they see as training tools. But the show normally includes a new obstacle, which isn't revealed ahead of time. As Jared waited right before competing, he could see only the first one or two obstacles. The rest appeared as he moved between them.

Forgetting the cold, the height above the ground, noise and lights, he focused on the task before him. Jared heard a few distinct voices, like his family and friends who drove to Oklahoma City to watch. "The crowds come to cheer a specific ninja, but they

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want everyone to do well," he divulged. The warriors themselves cheer their comrades forward and feel bad when anyone loses their grip or balance and falls.

Jared credits motocross racing with the ability to stay calm under pressure. Riding inches from other bikes has a way of teaching that skill. He prepares for everything. With secrecy about which obstacles he faces, he works on being able to swing, jump and grab, grip strength, balance and basic overall fitness.

In the future, Jared wants to advance to Las Vegas, beat the mountain and make it to the top. He also wants to join Aaron on the podium at Obstacle Course Races. "Aaron's already there," he said.

Friends and family, including his motocross family, support Jared the most. He still rides motorcycles, although he always wears a helmet these days. Even when driving a car, he's more aware of someone coming up fast behind him.

Look for Jared on Facebook under his name, on Instagram as NeverSettle_Ninja, and on future NBC *American Ninja Warrior* shows. With his determination and hard work, he most likely will appear there again. **NOW**

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— By *Lindsay L. Allen*

The Whittington family officially doubled in size this last February when the adoption of their two baby girls was finalized. "I'll never forget the sound of the judge's gavel declaring the adoption was final. It was such a wonderful day, and we were able to share it with about 60 of our closest family members and friends who were all there at the courthouse for it, too," Marlin Whittington remembered.

Jason and Marlin, now the proud parents of 2 1/2-year-old Za'Mariyah Hope and 18-month-old Arleigh GraceAnn, wanted to include Hope and Grace in the girls' names because, "God had given us just that throughout this whole process," Jason Whittington noted. It wasn't always easy, and the process demanded sacrifices and strength. But in the end, "The hole we had from trying to have a family was filled when we were able to take these two little girls, who had no future, and call them ours," Jason added.

The Whittingtons worked through Buckner Foster Care and Adoption to become licensed foster parents. After seven weeks of classes to become CPR and first-aid certified, amongst numerous other requirements, Jason and Marlin

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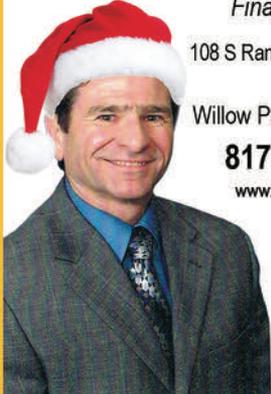
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were ready to take in children. "When you fill out the paperwork to become a foster parent, you have the option to select your preferences, be it race, sex, age, etc., but we decided to leave it all blank and care for whomever," Jason recalled. "How could we turn a child away who needed a home?"

The Whittingtons had only been licensed for two days when they got a call at 11:00 p.m. saying a 2-year-old and 4-year-old were on their way, which sent Marlin to the store at midnight to buy a pack-n-play, kid-friendly food and diapers, as the toddler wasn't yet potty trained. They were able to care for



these two children for six weeks before they were returned home. "CPS's main goal is reunification. They want to place kids with their family, and we knew that going into it, but it was still so hard to lose them because our No. 1 goal was to love them like our own and show them what a healthy family looked like," Jason said.

It wasn't two weeks later, though, that they received another call, this time at 2:15 a.m., telling them Za'Mariyah needed a home. At 11-weeks-old, this baby had spent her whole life in a homeless shelter. At 4:00 a.m. the same morning, in September 2014, Jason and Marlin gained possession of their oldest daughter. Fast-forward six months, and CPS learned that the biological mother was pregnant again and asked Jason and Marlin if they would be willing to care for the new sibling who was on the way. The girls are full sisters and the Whittingtons were able to bring Arleigh home from the hospital at 5 days old.

"When they told me our second daughter had been born, and they would bring her to us in about a week, I told my CPS worker that I needed to be at the hospital before this one-week mark. When I showed up at the hospital, our baby girl was in a satellite nursery away from all other babies, under a Jane Doe name and didn't even have any clothes to her name," Marlin explained. "We were able to feed her and change her and let her know someone was there for her and loved her."

Because of the restrictions and paperwork, the adoption of both girls wasn't finalized



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until 2016, but the family didn't need the official sign-off to know these girls were theirs or to love them the only way a parent can. "We really don't need to be doing anything special to have fun. We just love being together and being a family," Jason said.

The process of fostering and adopting was different for Jason and Marlin, but they are open to and excited about, hopefully, fostering in the future. "When the girls get older, we want to foster teenage children. We know the low odds of older children being adopted and would love to take in teenagers before they graduate out of the foster program. Our girls' biological mother was a foster child who graduated out and was never adopted, and we see the ramifications and cycle of that," Jason added. "Fostering provided us, as a couple, a sense of contentment, knowing that we could be there for kids at a certain point in their life when they needed someone to love them."

The road to adoption required numerous meetings and home visits with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) workers, caseworkers and lawyers, but in the end, it all completed the Whittingtons' family with their two precious daughters. "I'm a sucker for clothes, and I love dressing the girls up," Marlin said. "Za'Mariyah





started preschool at our church this year, and her vocabulary has really grown. They both love Mickey Mouse and the local Splash Kingdom waterpark.”

On any given night, you can find the girls sliding in their backyard, and Za’Mariyah is usually FaceTiming, with little sister Arleigh observing. “My sister lives in Tucson, Arizona, and so she and Za’Mariyah talk just about every evening. My in-laws, ‘Nana and Big Daddy,’ literally live across the street, but Za’Mariyah feels the need to FaceTime them regularly, as well,” Marlin said. “I’m sure it’s just a matter of time before this nightly routine for Za’Mariyah becomes Arleigh’s, as well.”

Jason and Marlin have been married for 16 years now, and while they vacillated between different options and adoption agencies, they would now tell you that it panned out at just the right time, with just the right girls to make their family of two into four.

“If I could offer anyone advice, whether it’s fostering or adopting, I would be up front about the ups and downs that come with it. With fostering, you have to realize that reunification is the end hope, and if you get to adopt those kids at the end of the process, then that is a bonus,” Jason said. “With adoption, the road looks a bit different, but it will still be a longer process than you think it should be, and you have to be prepared for that.” **NOW**

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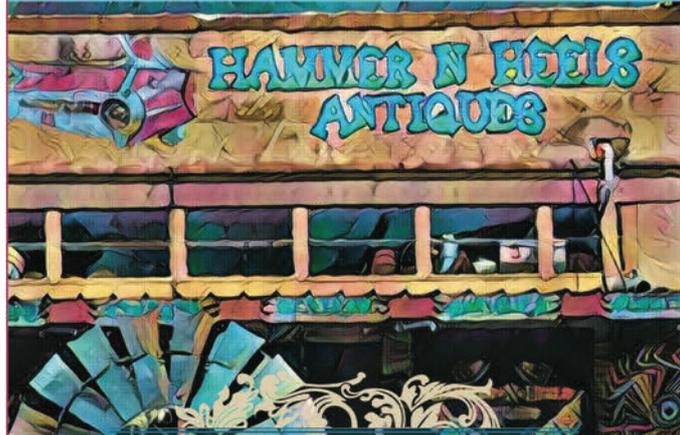
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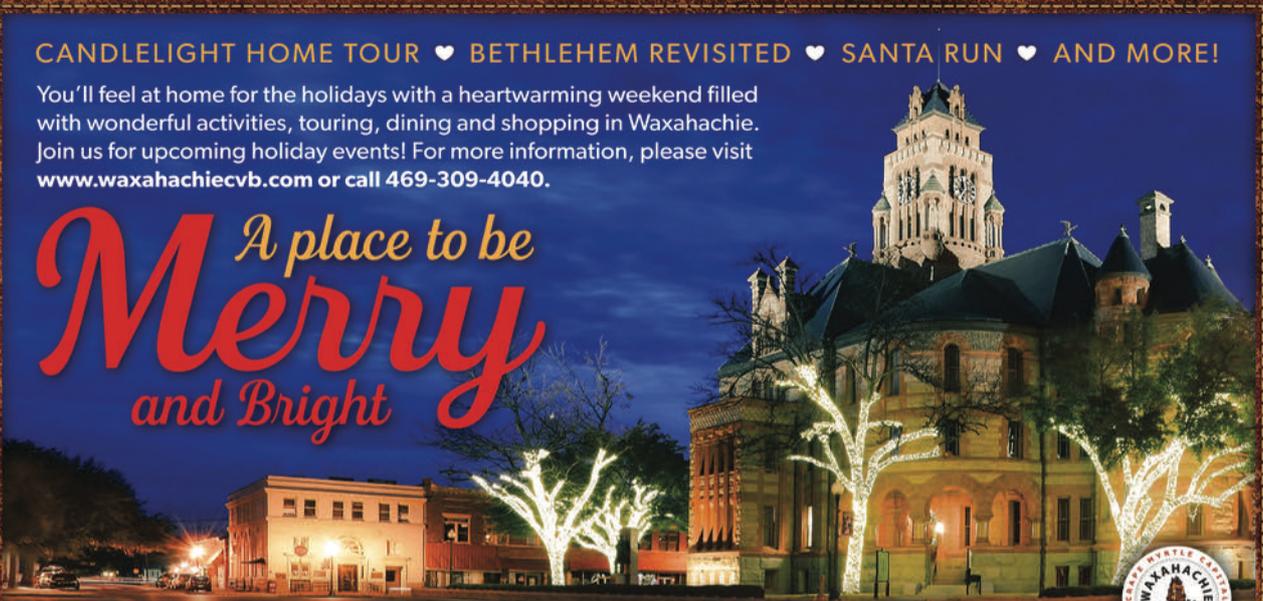
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— By Amber D. Browne



At Home With Mike & Marian Blowers

The Candlelight Tour of Homes sponsored by the Parker County Heritage Society each December has featured dozens of homes since the event's inception 35 years ago. The home of Mike and Marian Blowers will share its history with tour participants this month. The young couple purchased the early 20th century Victorian near Historic Downtown Weatherford in July 2015. Remodeling and



renovations have been ongoing since that time, but the work doesn't sway the Blowers' drive to keep the house true to its history. "We've always liked old houses. We just like the character of it," Marian shared. "We like projects where the emphasis is on our home. It's a lot of work, but it's rewarding."

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Much has been done to update the home since its first appearance on the Candlelight Tour of Homes last year. Although the new parents of now 2-year-old Elizabeth were busy with remodeling projects, creating a home for their family was a top priority. The most substantial project was the master bathroom, which is now complete. "We gutted it to the point where there was no floor," Marian explained. Mike removed some of the shiplap to reach the electrical and plumbing, which they updated. The master bathroom is bright and elegant with a marble countertop and colors of white and gray throughout the room. During the overall renovation process, they discovered about 15 different wallpaper designs added to the decor over the years. They closed in a door that led into a large office, now under construction. They plan to drywall and paint the office area and add floor-to-ceiling bookcases on one wall. With 12-foot ceilings, the shelves will host an extensive library.

The 12-foot ceilings found throughout the first level of the home

provide ample space for Christmas trees. "Last year, we moved from a house that's less than half this size. All the decorations looked really small, so we splurged and got a huge tree," she said. The 9-foot tree in the sitting room off the foyer is decorated with glass ornaments the couple purchased over the years. "Whenever we take a trip, we get an ornament," she said. Each one has its own story. One of their cherished favorites is the glass ornament purchased during their honeymoon to St. Lucia. Another is a peach ornament from Georgia.

Mike's toy train chugs along underneath the tree, sparking childhood memories. "Christmas is our favorite holiday. It makes you feel like a kid again," he shared. With Elizabeth celebrating her second Christmas this year and her little brother on the way, the young family will share traditions passed down through generations. Marian plans to get matching Christmas pajamas for the children each year, and, of course, hot chocolate is a must when searching neighborhoods for Christmas lights.

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Mike's family from Carrollton visits during Christmastime to watch Elizabeth's gleeful eyes as she opens gifts. "Last year, she was young, so she wanted to play more with the tissue and wrapping paper than the actual presents," Marian laughed. They all get comfortable on the tan tweed sofa and love seat near the tree and share meals on the sturdy wooden dining table in the adjoining room.

The Blowers painted the room a light gray and kept the white crown molding, doorframes and window frames. Modern light fixtures replaced polished brass fixtures throughout the connected rooms. "We like to pay homage to the character of the home, but freshen it up," Mike said. The oversized windows throughout the first level of the home sparked their interest. "When we walked into this house, we loved it," he said. The original wood floors have been refinished, and an antique, decorative mantel has been affixed to one wall in the dining area, adding to the historic feel of the home.

In the foyer, Marian spent hours removing four layers of paint from the doorframes and transom window frames, and then finishing with shellac. They added drywall to one wall in the foyer, which is now home to more than half a dozen mirrors of various sizes. They added push button light switches found at an online antique hardware store to the foyer. "We thought it was fun, for in here," she shared.

The foyer is Marian's favorite place to decorate for the holidays. She adds garland, berries, pinecones and ribbon along the staircase. Her color scheme changes each year, but the decor remains classic. Wreaths are hung with care on each exterior front window, and white lights brighten both inside and out. "I use as many lights as possible. Every year, I add to my collection," Mike grinned.

This year's decor for Elizabeth's small tree upstairs will change. Last year, the pink and silver tree featured baby socks and shoes as ornaments. Her room is on the Blowers' to-do list. They plan to take the walls down to the shiplap and add insulation, cutting down on energy costs. The same process was completed in the nursery, which awaits the arrival of the family's newest addition.

An upstairs room has been remodeled into a large bathroom for the children

and guests to share. The bathroom is light sage and features a claw foot tub that was once housed in the master bathroom. The adjacent guest bedroom provides ample space for rest and relaxation. Marian's family visits from Missouri over the Thanksgiving holiday. They get to participate in one of the Blowers' Christmas traditions of decorating the home the day after Thanksgiving.

Mike and Marian met in 2005, while in college in Missouri. Mike was hired at Lockheed Martin, and they moved



to Fort Worth in 2010. As their family grew, they needed more space and decided to move farther west. They had fallen in love with Weatherford during daytime trips to downtown and visits to the Parker County Peach Festival each summer. "We loved it — the people, the smaller town atmosphere," Mike said. Although Marian was raised in Missouri, Mike says she's converted to Texas quite nicely. "She can handle spicy foods now," he chuckled.

The Blowers travel to Missouri to visit family when they can. They still enjoy visiting downtown Weatherford, and now they live close enough to walk. Picnics at Cherry Park and playdates with a local mommy group keep Marian busy. "It's good to get her [Elizabeth] to socialize and for me to socialize with other moms."

Free time is a luxury, so when possible, Marian likes to sew dresses for Elizabeth. She also created her first quilt for Elizabeth's "big girl" bed. Mike plans to start home brewing beer again soon, but for now, he'll cherish time spent with his family. "We love Weatherford," he said. "We're staying here forever." **NOW**

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Christmastime is near, and you may already see adornment and trimming on your neighbors' houses. Many people have family heirlooms or other sentimental pieces inside their homes, but they are typically more open to trying something new on the outside of the house. Be creative, and let your house front be your pallet. If you are ready to change up how you dress your house for the holidays, here are some ideas to win your neighborhood decorating contest!

Lights, Decor, Action!

- *Know your options.* There are dozens of styles of light strings, with slight variations along the way. While regular





ND

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

indoor lighting has been moving away from traditional incandescent bulbs in favor of more eco-friendly models, Christmas lights are still offered in any number of styles. You can buy strands relatively cheap that will have the same yellow “soft-white” you have seen for decades, or you may opt for new light-emitting diode styles that will cost more up front but save money on electricity for years to come.

• *Bulbs are not created equal.* The other side of having plenty of options is that you have to be careful when buying new strands. When it comes to LED’s, especially, every company will have slightly different hues, so buy enough strands. Lights are categorized by size,

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but even sizes can fluctuate between brands. When you find the color and style you want, consider buying several extra strands. Spending a little now will outweigh having to start over in a few years just because a few strands are dead.

• *Plan before you hang.* When decorating, it is a major source of frustration to reach the end of your last



strand just before you get to the edge of your house. Measure your edge, and factor in losing a few inches per strand for the slack you will inevitably have and the inches you lose at each strand connection spot. If you end up with extra lights, you can either hide them in the gutter, or you can take out a bulb to cut the power to the excess lights. A professional Christmas light installation company can assist you in creating the look you are dreaming of.

Use the Yard

- *Less is more, sometimes.* Somewhere between an empty front yard and a Griswold-style Christmas, there is a happy medium, displaying just the right amount of holiday cheer. You want to avoid crowding too much outside, but think about adding lights to your trees or bushes. Companies even make light nets that make it easier than ever to cover your shrubs and small trees.

- *Include a statement piece.* There is much more than lights available for decorating your yard. There is an ever-growing list of variety in inflatable decorations, so you can be the first on your block with the latest trends.



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Reindeer made of wire or cut out of wood are a great addition, and you can even use hunting decoys with a few accessories for a truly unique look. A Nativity scene is a popular choice with lots of options. You can display something as simple as Jesus, Mary and Joseph, or opt for the entire scene, complete with wise men, animals and a lit up Star of Bethlehem.

- *"Spruce" it up.* Most people put either an artificial tree or a cut-down real tree in their house for the season. One fun option is to plant a Christmas tree in your front yard. There are many varieties of pine trees, especially, that will grow well, and their increasing size lets each year be a new decorating experience. This is especially great if you have young children who grow older as the tree gets bigger each year.

- *Plan your power.* If you are adding lights to your trees, make sure to start the chord at the bottom, otherwise, you will have to run power up into your branches. Also, have an idea of where you will plug each chord running into your yard. You want to avoid too many possible tripping hazards, and if you can, try to hide the cords so as not to detract from the yard's beauty in the daylight hours.

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Themes Bring Everything Together

• *Take it "light-ly."* There is no specific right combination of lights, especially when decorating the outside. You can go all white, colored or settle on a blend of the two. But, symmetry is usually more visually appealing, so try to have a pattern to your light and ornament setup. The key is to avoid one strand or section that looks out of place among the rest.

• *Your lawn needs focus.* If you have a hunting Santa next to a newborn Jesus, all behind a skeleton from *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, your display may be sending mixed signals. Pick a genre and fit your decorations within that theme. Some great options include: gingerbread men, toy soldiers, Santa and his elves or religious themes. You can also get creative and add lights, red hats and jingle bells to any lawn motif to make a theme of your own.

• *Plan with the neighbors.* If you can get people on your block to agree, consider having an entire neighborhood theme. One option is to do something simple like coordinating your light color and placement. For something really special, work together to put on the 12 Days of Christmas, or you can even create an entire Dickens' Christmas village.

Whether you want a simple yard with well-placed, coordinated lights, or you want to transform your entire neighborhood into a white winter wonderland, use these tips and start with a solid plan to ensure your yard is full of holiday cheer! **NOW**

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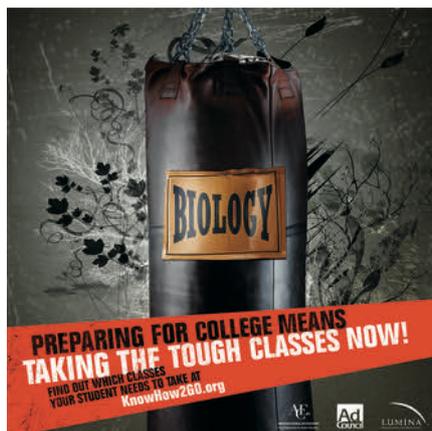
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First National Bank strives to maintain the original family environment.

Banking Flair

Weatherford's hometown bank strives to build relationships far beyond financial statements.

— By Lisa Bell

Founded in May 1880, the First National Bank in Weatherford originated as a business on the town square. The location changed to Palo Pinto. A new location appeared on College Park. The bank added a third location in Hudson Oaks, and in the future, additional sites are probable.

The new buildings look far different from the original bank, but one thing hasn't changed for FNB. They still want to focus on banking and building relationships within the community. "We focus on being the best we can be in the area where we specialize," said Chairman of the Board Zan Prince. "Our customers deserve the best in every area. We facilitate that."

First National Bank has always been family-owned, and

that hasn't changed either. While they offer normal banking services — deposits, safety deposit boxes, loans, etc. — they also pride themselves on being a conduit to connect individuals and business with each other.

As the director of marketing, Evon Markum often acts as a facilitator to connect people to what they need. "I've always been interested in helping small businesses and families," Evon said.

Both women agree — FNB is unique because of their commitment to employees, to customers and to community. The bank atmosphere feels like family, and in the community, they give back in many ways. "It's an awesome place to work," Zan stated.

Evon, 13 years as an employee, added, "It's been great. I love working at the bank."

Evon worked tirelessly to help put together the Pink Luncheon recently, but all employees receive encouragement to spend their time volunteering wherever they find their passions. The bank itself partners with community organizations like Center of Hope, Manna House, Senior Center and the Careity Foundation. They also support Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary. "We are called to be good stewards of those resources and things we're entrusted with," Zan said.

Both women are longtime residents of Weatherford, and they love their town. People see them out and about. Whether volunteering for one of the charities they support or cheering family members at ball games, the community knows them. When they support community members and different events, it isn't always financial. These women and other bank employees participate in walks, blood drives, Salvation Army bell ringing and even building houses with Habitat for Humanity.

In December, FNB gives back more to the community. Because of a direct connection to Santa Claus, they sponsor him for the annual parade — on December 3 this year. Then he returns for their open house on December 9. Evon and Zan both want people to come by that Friday and see the Snow Village. Santa will be there from 4:00-6:00 p.m. and ready to take photos with children, compliments of the bank.

Working with FNB of Weatherford also means everything happens at a local level. "People come to us and we make things happen," Evon stated. Making a decision doesn't require calling headquarters in another state and waiting days or weeks for an approval or rejection, which comes from someone who doesn't know the customer.

Zan said, "Make sure you're connected to someone who understands you, your family, your business." Look for someone to help weather the storms and be there in good and bad times. That's FNB of Weatherford's goal. **NOW**

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Consider This When Starting a Small Business

According to *Forbes*, more than 500,000 small businesses open each month. If you're looking to join the entrepreneurial club, consider this planning guide for starting a small business.

Laying the Groundwork

It's important to have a well-developed business proposal that meets an untapped need. Follow these steps to think yours through:

1. *Decide on a business idea.* Think about your strengths and interests: What could you do forever? What could you never do? How do you feel about interacting with people or spending your time at a desk? Ask yourself these questions to narrow down your business ideas and options.

2. *Research market demand and competition.* You should feel confident that your product or service will have a hungry audience and that you can offer it in a better way than your competitors.

3. *Write your business plan.* You'll need the following components:

- Executive summary
- Organization and management
- Funding requests
- Company description
- Service or product line
- Financial projections
- Market analysis
- Marketing and sales plan

Setting Up Shop

Before getting your small business up and running, you'll need to complete the following legal requirements. Consult an attorney and/or accountant for guidance relevant to your specific situation.

1. *Decide your business structure.* Is your business a sole proprietorship or a partnership? The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) can provide more information on types of business structures.

2. *Most states require you to apply for one or more licenses, permits or identification numbers.* Learn more about the small business requirements for your state.

3. *If you plan to employ people to help run your small business, you'll need to apply for employee identification numbers through the IRS.*

4. *Determine whether you will use the calendar year or a fiscal year for taxes.*

Also, talk to your insurance agent about special small business insurance needs. You'll want to do your best to protect the investments you've made, and important coverage can vary by business. **NOW**

Article provided by The Mader-Bagley State Farm Agency.



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A Multifaceted Jaw Problem

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Do you ever think about your chewing mechanism? Probably not, because it is as natural and automatic as breathing. However, if something interferes with it, you will think about it a lot! The action that makes all this activity possible begins in the temporomandibular joint. Think of it as a hinge that connects the lower jaw, called the mandible, to the skull. Put your fingers in front of your ears and open your mouth. Now move your jaw up and down and side to side. This is what gives you the ability to chew on whatever you want. Because this joint is so multifaceted and complex, its actions can create challenges if there are problems.

When these problems occur, they are known as temporomandibular joint disorders, or TMD. These disorders are characterized by an aching pain and tenderness in the joint and surrounding area. Or, there may be no discomfort at all. Chewing, talking or opening the mouth widely can cause distress. Along with those symptoms, one might experience persistent headaches, limited function in the jaw, noises of clicking, popping and grating in the area or a feeling that your bite is off. Sometimes, the jaw area can lock or feel as if it's stuck when the mouth is open.

These symptoms are difficult to treat because the cause of TMD has not been established. However, there are factors that can increase your risk or exacerbate the condition. Someone with arthritis may experience the affliction in that joint. Extended periods where the mouth is open wide for a

significant amount of time, such as a long dental procedure, can precipitate the discomfort. Other possible causes are autoimmune diseases, injuries to the area and stress, which may cause grinding of the teeth or jaw clenching.

One of the goals for treatment is to alleviate the pain. Over-the-counter pain medications and, sometimes, prescription medications may be used. Eat soft foods that won't aggravate the condition. Try to consciously rest the jaw area and become aware of grinding or clenching episodes when awake. Bite guards at night may be a good option, if you tend to grind or clench in your sleep. If the muscles in your face feel especially tense, a massage of that area and a warm pack may provide some relief.

For some, the discomfort from TMD is temporary and not very severe. It may come and go as factors that affect it present themselves. For those experiencing significant discomfort that doesn't go away with home treatments, it may be necessary to see a health care professional for help. **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 2

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Supper with Santa: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Clark Gardens, 567 Maddaux Rd. Enjoy an evening in the garden complete with dinner and our special guests, Mr. & Mrs. Clause. More info: Lauren Wright (940) 682-4856, Lauren@Clarkgardens.com, or visit www.clarkgardens.org.

December 2 — 18

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December 3

Christmas Parade: 10:00 a.m., Ninth Grade Center, north on main to courthouse and ends at Cherry Park. Visit www.chamberdata.net.

39th Annual Arts and Crafts Fair: 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., Aledo Community Center, 104 Robinson Ct, Aledo. Unique gifts from more than 25 vendors. For more details, please visit www.aledo-texas.com.

Photos with Santa: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Weatherford Public Library, 1014 Charles St. Bring your own camera.

Christmas on the Square: 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Downtown Weatherford. Shop downtown stores and holiday vendors. Fun entertainment and events for the kids. Visit www.chamberdata.net.

16th Annual Christmas Tyme in Aledo: 5:00 p.m., local storefront businesses will stay open late for shoppers. For details, visit www.aledo-texas.com.

Garden A Glow: 6:00-10:00 p.m., Clark Gardens, 567 Maddaux Rd. More info: Lauren Wright (940) 682-4856, Lauren@Clarkgardens.com, or visit www.clarkgardens.org.

December 5

Handel's Messiah: 7:30 p.m., Weatherford College Alkek Fine Arts Center, 225 College Park Dr. Presented by the Parker County Community Choir. Free admission. Contact Joe Nicikowski at (817) 598-6403 or jnicikowski@wc.edu.

December 9

Holiday in the Park: 6:00-10:00 p.m., Heritage Park. Enjoy sleigh rides, photo booth, bounce houses, maze, snow slides and Santa. For more

information, call (817) 598-4034 or visit www.weatherfordparks.com.

December 10

Doss Heritage Christmas: 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., 1400 Texas Dr. Featuring photos with Cowboy Santa, children's crafts, activities, music and more. Free event. For details, please visit www.dosscenter.org.

35th Annual Candlelight Tour of Homes: 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., various locations in Weatherford. Purchase tickets at the Weatherford Chamber office or at the Doss. For additional info, visit www.parkercountyheritagesociety.com.

December 17, 18

The Start of Bethlehem Experience: 5:30-8:30 p.m., Capernaum 1st Century Village, 10700 FM 920. For details, visit www.starofbethlehemexperience.com.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to lisa.bell@nowmagazines.com.

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In the Kitchen With Ila McWhorter

— *By Lisa Bell*

Ila McWhorter comes from a family of great cooks originating in France. “My mother could bake, cook and can anything. She was a wonderful cook,” Ila shared. “Cooking is an enjoyment to me, too.” After teaching all day, she came home and read a recipe book or magazine. Then she’d get in the kitchen and bake yeast rolls or make cookies for the neighborhood.

She reads a recipe and then makes it, but with a few tweaks. “My enjoyment in cooking is seeing people enjoy the food I cook. I love to see people smile,” she said. Her recipes come mostly from her mother, mother-in-law and her own creations. “I hope these recipes will make your family smile and say, ‘This is good,’” Ila said, grinning. **NOW**

Hilda’s Marinated Turkey

1 cup soy sauce
2 Tbsp. honey
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 tsp. ground ginger
1 tsp. dry mustard
1 tsp. lemon juice
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 6- to 7-lb. turkey or turkey breast
1/4 cup flour
Salt and pepper, to taste

1. In a small bowl, combine the first 8 ingredients.
2. Place turkey in plastic, heavy-duty freezer bag and add marinade.
3. Close the bag; refrigerate overnight, turning bag.

4. Remove turkey from bag, place in pan and pour marinade over turkey.
5. Bake at 325 F for 1 1/2 to 2 hours until tender. Baste while cooking. (Note: You may also smoke the turkey in a smoker or use a slow cooker.)
6. Strain pan juices and skim off the fat.
7. Stir flour into juice and add water if necessary to make 2 cups and cook until thick. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Hawaiian Sweet Bread

6 1/2 to 7 cups flour (divided use)
3/4 cup mashed potato flakes
2/3 cup sugar
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ginger
2 tsp. vanilla
2 pkgs. yeast

1 cup milk
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup butter
1 cup pineapple juice
3 eggs

1. Lightly spoon flour into measuring cup and level off. In a large bowl, combine 3 cups of flour, potato flakes, sugar, salt, ginger, vanilla and yeast.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat milk, water and butter until very warm (120-130 F)
3. Add warm liquid, pineapple juice and eggs to flour mixture. Blend at slow speed until mixture is moistened.
4. Beat for 4 minutes at medium speed; by hand, stir in 3 more cups of flour to form a stiff dough.
5. On a floured surface, knead in remaining flour until smooth and elastic (about 5 to 8 minutes.)
6. Place dough in a greased bowl. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and a cloth towel. Let rise in a warm place until double in size (about 1 to 1 1/2 hours.)
7. Punch dough down and make into 3 loaves or 2 pans of rolls. Cover and let rise about 1-2 hours.
8. Preheat oven to 375 F, and bake 25-35 minutes until golden brown.

Gordon’s Pork Roast

1 2-4 lb. pork roast
1/2 tsp. salt
Pepper, to taste
1/3 to 1/2 cup brown sugar or
1/2 cup maple syrup
5-7 cups apple juice or apple cider
1/2 tsp. caraway seed
1/2 tsp. Liquid Smoke
1 can biscuits (optional)

1. Salt and pepper the roast; place in a slow cooker or pan for the oven.
2. Dissolve sugar/syrup in apple juice/cider and add caraway seed and Liquid Smoke.
3. Pour liquid over roast. Cook on low in the slow cooker for 6-8 hours or in the oven at 325 F for 3 hours.
4. If cooking in the oven, uncover the roast. Separate and place biscuits on top of the juice to make dumplings, if desired.

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