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DECEMBER 2022

Sharing the Cheer

At Home With Rob
and Norma Hall

In the Kitchen With
NOW Community Editors

2022 Holiday
Shopping Guide

Personalized Christmas Displays

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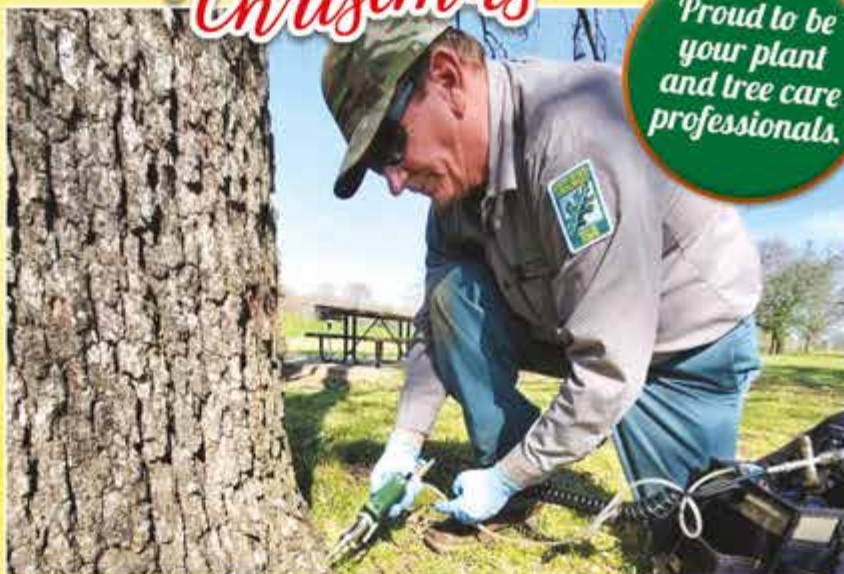
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Sandra

Sandra Walters
MansfieldNOW Editor
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Mansfield Family...

Many people started their Christmas decorating just after Halloween, and it could be tough for them to take it all down when that time comes. These individuals are undoubtedly eager to make new memories and reflect on previous holiday experiences.

As I reminisce, I recall one of my favorite Christmas celebrations as a little girl growing up on the south side of Fort Worth, Texas. We lived in a small, wood framed rent house on Glen Garden, and we had one of those artificial silver Christmas trees that was embellished with homemade ornaments and the traditional circular ones. My mom didn't put all of the gifts under the tree until the night before. I remember trying to sleep, but I was too excited about the next day. I can still see the lights shining underneath our bedroom door. My sister and I tried to peek while chatting with great expectation, but we eventually fell asleep.

The next day, we jumped up ready to see what Santa had brought us. It's interesting that we believed Santa brought presents when our mom was wrapping up the gifts. Oh well, our critical thinking skills weren't developed yet. At that age, I probably didn't care who brought the gifts. We just liked presents. I remember getting some clothes, a Baby-That-a-way and accessories for the doll. I was so proud of her until I "accidentally" burned her hair in the heater. I simply wanted to see if it *would* burn. Well, it did, and I got into big trouble. However, it's still a fond memory.

There's no holiday like Christmas. As you create more memories with your kids and grandkids, have a blessed holiday and an amazing new year!

P.S. The publisher and staff of NOW Magazines would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and the happiest of holiday seasons!

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Sharing *the* Cheer

At Home With Rob and Norma Hall

— By Sandra Walters

The Hall family has a history of decorating, it appears, and both Rob and Norma take pleasure in trimming their home for the holidays. “I am from a southern Alabama family of 11 children including me,” Rob said. “On both sides, there are five siblings, and I’m the middle child. It is just something we always did for all occasions. Even as a single man, I decorated.”

Norma said, “Our kids refer to themselves as ‘Team Robbie’ because Rob will go over and above for them.” It’s like he becomes a superhero when asked to do something for someone. Rob shares these “Team Robbie” skills with the community when participating in making holiday lawn displays. He uses the handyman skills and work ethic that were passed down by his dad and reinforced by his military background. He allows his abilities to put smiles on the faces of family members and others.

“I got my inspiration from my mom,” Norma shared. “She used minimal funds to make things beautiful. My mom was a designer at heart, and it was passed on to her girls. My sister, Yvette, comes second in inspiring me. I was always in competition with her, but now she’s the Decorating Queen of the World. I watch her and get ideas.”



Cease the Grease



Holiday Grease Roundup

November 21 - January 9

Don't pour used cooking oil or grease down the drain. Recycle for free at the Environmental Collection Center, 616 S. Wisteria St. The collection station, located outside the gate by the dumpster, is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the collection event.

Drop off Christmas trees* to be recycled into mulch at the Mansfield Home Depot, 1725 U.S. 287 Frontage Road.

Christmas Tree Drop-off

DEC. 26 - JAN. 20



*No artificial or flocked trees, please



Today, the couple combines their talents and makes things fabulous together. Norma has a vision and discusses it with Rob. "I said, 'Honey, you should create a scene on the lawn with Santa and his reindeer where people can see Santa flying in the air from different angles.'"

As you observe the Christmas display on the Halls' lawn you will see Norma's project manager and designer skills and the handywork of Rob. Especially when it gets dark, the elegant decor takes your breath away. If an individual looks carefully, he or she will discover the setting while driving in their neighborhood, glimpsing Santa and his reindeer through the trees in the action of flying into the air.

When the front door is entered, guests are welcomed by a warm, inviting wreath on the door. Turn right to discover the formal living area, prepared for the occasion. A Santa Claus is the centerpiece of the table. The matching tablecloth and napkins, fine China and silverware create exquisite place settings that complement the space. The room is embellished with matching maroon vases and enhanced by the wall flower holders with special floral arrangements of green, maroon and white flowers.

While wandering left, a guest will notice the stairwell. The handrail is lined with dark forest green garland that incorporates maroon, circular ornaments. The light illuminates the other gems in the place like the poinsettias, arrangements in the nooks, the beautiful hardwood floors and a Christmas tree decorated in the traditional red and gold.

When a guest enters the living room area, he or she will find a digital picture of this wonderful family including Rob,





Norma, Megan, Jason and Brandon displayed on the flat screen TV above the fireplace. As you look around the room, you will notice the Christmas tree to the right with gold ribbon throughout, stockings attached to the mantel, pillows, two golden Nutcracker statues and a little winter town. Norma said, "We love the traditional maroon and green. It just works for us. We've added a little gold to make the colors pop."

Norma continued, "Our kids have a tree even though they are young adults. I remember the year we didn't put it up, and they were extremely disappointed. Therefore, the next time they came over, we made sure their tree was displayed. We didn't know they felt that way about the tree. Our daughter is now carrying the tradition on by decorating her home."

When asked why they put so much effort into their holiday designs, they answered, "We like putting a smile on people's faces. People don't smile enough anymore, so if we can help them smile, we will. Many neighbors use this setting as a backdrop for their pictures. We look at our camera later in the day, and we see people happy and laughing as they take pictures in front of our house."

The Halls have been together for 30 years, and they still find decorating exciting and fun. Memories are special and appreciated, so they want to keep them coming. They concluded, "We love celebrating with people, inviting them into our world and being active. Come and use our decor as a backdrop for your Christmas pictures and say hello. Many people may wonder how or why we created this display in such an elaborate manner. It simply comes from a place of love. That's just who we are." **NOW**

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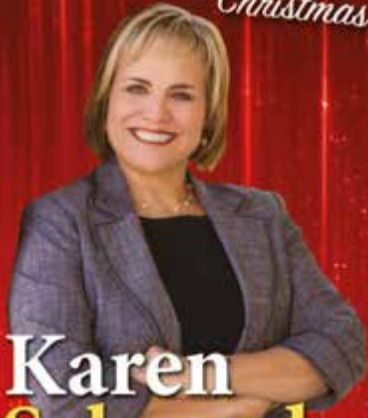


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BusinessNOW St. Jude Catholic Church

— By Sandra Walters

St. Jude Catholic Church

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<https://www.stjudemansfieldtx.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/stjudemansfield/>

Hours:

Mass Times:

Saturday: 5:00 p.m. (English) and 7:00 p.m. (Spanish)

Sunday: 7:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. (English)

and 1:00 p.m. (Spanish)

Office Hours:

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Friday: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. · Saturday: Closed

Sunday: 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

St. Jude Catholic Church celebrated 124 years in 2022. This church traces back to 1898. There have been several additions to the original building since the 1800s. Julie Cosby stated, “We are the only Catholic church in Mansfield, and we have



approximately 2,700 members. But we initially began as a small congregation.”

Six families got together in a home to start this church. Once a month, the father and priest would take the train to Mansfield to celebrate Mass with the local Catholics. St. Joseph Catholic Church was established in 1898 as a modest frame structure. The redbrick church on Dallas Street was constructed in November 1928 when the group expanded to 28 households. In 1971, the third structure was given the current name, St. Jude Catholic Church.

When asked what she would say her church is known for, Julie responded, “We give back. We have 50 ministries with volunteers who assist the disabled in Special Olympics and go to the prisons monthly to pray with inmates. We partner with the Common Ground Network to distribute meals to families while school is out and participate in the backpack and Christmas Gift Program. Our St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) gives away food on Wednesdays, Saturdays year-round and holidays. SVDP also aids people with paying utility bills. We recently had our

45th Annual Fall Festival, and it's always so much fun connecting with the community!"

This church has strong roots in Mansfield. Many events start and stop at St. Jude. Most parades start there. For example, the Veterans Day, Pickle and Christmas parades all start in the parking lot that oversees the beautiful architecture of this church.

Pastor Father Daniel Kelley said, "I have been pastor of St. Jude for a year-and-a-half. I feel very blessed by the Lord for being here. I really enjoy living in Mansfield. I am amazed at the rapid growth of Mansfield, but also of this parish. This is a fun parish to pastor."

During the pandemic, many people stopped coming, but now people are starting to return. They recently added 700 families this year, so St. Jude is experiencing a lot of growth.

Now St. Jude Parish serves many nationalities of believers, which include Americans, Vietnamese, Hispanic, Nigerians, Filipino and more. They have five Mass celebrations in English and Spanish. Their mission statement reads, "We, the parishioners of St. Jude Roman Catholic Parish, are a diverse community through Baptism in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith. As disciples, we follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, celebrating the Sacraments, and serving the Mystical Body of Christ. Through God's grace, the community's mission is to lead to participate in communion of the Father and the Son in the Spirit of Love."

The St. Jude youth benefit from a robust catechesis program. Four hundred and fifty elementary school students are learning about Christ together. The Chosen Curriculum, Faith and Life and the Holy Bible are used for 425 students from junior high and high school as they prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Teenage youth join in the Life Teens and Edge movement, which teaches them to take part in liturgies, upbeat music and stimulating conversations.

Julie concluded, "I've been a member since 2006. I volunteered so much that I was offered a job as the DRE (director of religious education) and now the business manager. I love what I do. I'm excited about the Parish Hall expansion because we are seeing so much growth." **NOW**

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Sat. Dec. 24 - 7:00 PM Spanish	Sun. Dec. 25 - 10:00 AM
Sat. Dec. 24 - Midnight Mass	Sun. Dec. 25 - 1:00 PM - Spanish

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Zoomed In:
Mariah Dietrich and
Nadia Caudell

By Sandra Walters

Mariah Dietrich, the director and event coordinator of the Mom Boss Expo in Mansfield, and Nadia Caudell, another coordinator, take in the festivities that resulted from their preparation. “I want to thank my team of vendors, volunteers, organizers, coordinators and customers who came out to support. This is a time of fun activities as we support local small businesses,” Mariah noted.

Visitors enjoyed more than 60 Mom Boss Expo vendors at the event. “All throughout this venue, mom bosses from our neighborhood sell unique Christmas presents and other goodies,” Mariah explained. “We look forward to doing it again!”



Lisa Osburn, Tracy Pach, Laura Hash and Liz Lanzafamea enjoy Boots, Bags and Bling.



Alena Koenig dresses like her dad, Officer Andrew Koenig.



Kaly Gatewood, Lauren Baur and Jessica Williams celebrate being Mansfield’s Cross-Country District Champs.



Krystal Meaux, Jacqueline Jones and Michael Moore enjoy spending time with family.



Emily Harbin, a TCU student, studies at the Flying Squirrel Coffee Shop.



The Rams show off their rings after they win the championship game.



Jordan Levi Shankle's wish to go to Disney World comes true.

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CookingNOW In the Kitchen With NOW COMMUNITY EDITORS

— By Lisa Bell

A special thanks to The Lighthouse Church in Midlothian for the use of their kitchen for the photo shoot.

At NOW Magazines, community editors enjoy creating monthly cooking features — a favorite of readers. Here we share some of our own special holiday recipes.

Angel Morris covers *MidlothianNOW* and *NorthEllisCo.NOW*. She enjoys baking because she said all her teeth are sweet. She most enjoys breakfast for dinner with her family. Virginia Riddle, editor for *CorsicanaNOW*, enjoys traveling. Her Grandmother Bates always brought ingredients for ambrosia. “The smell of the oranges was so rich and heavenly.”

EnnisNOW editor, Bill Smith, said, “While my wife, siblings and in-laws helped with holiday meals, everyone knew Mom was in charge, and she set a high bar for all the food.”

Editing *MansfieldNOW*, Sandra Walters shared, “My husband’s grandmother (Nebber), mother-in-law (Gail), Mrs. Scales and Mama Gee always created exquisite meals during the holidays.”

Adam Walker, the *SouthwestNOW* and *WaxahachieNOW* editor, loves exploring the world of food. “But I’ll stop anywhere that has good chocolate,” he admitted.

Covering *BurlesonNOW* and *WeatherfordNOW*, Lisa Bell grew up as Mom’s baker and said, “I come from a long line of fantastic cooks.” **NOW**

Pretzel M&M Hugs

Angel Morris — a fun way to involve kids in the kitchen.

Servings: One bag of Hugs contains about 75 pieces (one batch). The bags of M&Ms and pretzels yield 4-5 batches total.

1 16-oz. bag Snyder’s Snaps Pretzels, square shaped (not butter flavored)

1 11-oz. bag HERSHEY’s Hugs chocolates (or your favorite flavor)
1 11.4-oz. bag red and green M&Ms

1. Preheat the oven to 200 F. Line a cookie sheet with a baking mat or parchment paper. Place the pretzels on the cookie sheet in a single layer; top each pretzel with 1 HERSHEY’S chocolate.

2. Bake 4-6 minutes, or until the chocolate is shiny and soft, not totally melted! Remove from the oven; carefully place 1 M&M in the center of each soft Hug. Press down on the M&M to spread the chocolate.
3. Place in the freezer or refrigerator for 10-15 minutes, allowing the chocolate to set. Store in an airtight container. *Note: If using multiple flavors of HERSHEY’S Kisses, make each flavor in its own batch as melting times will differ from flavor to flavor.*

Ambrosia

Virginia Riddle — 4 servings (can double or triple)

2 cups fresh oranges, cut into bite-size pieces
1/4 cup coconut, shredded
1 20-oz. can pineapple tidbits
19 maraschino stemless cherries, halved (Reserve 4 whole cherries with stems for topping.)
2 tsp. sugar
1 8-oz. tub Cool Whip (optional)
3/4 cup pecans, chopped (optional)

1. Combine all the ingredients; stir well.
2. Serve as an appetizer or dessert in compote dishes; use whole cherries with stems to top each dish.

One Dish Chicken, Potatoes and Green Beans

Bill Smith

Spray cooking oil

- 2 14.5-oz. cans green beans**
- 2-3 chicken breasts; cubed**
- 3-5 small to medium potatoes**
- 1 pkg. dry Italian dressing mix**
- Black pepper, to taste**
- 1 stick butter, melted**

1. Lightly spray a 9x12-inch baking pan with the cooking oil. Drain the green beans; place them in 1/3 of the pan area.
2. Add the chicken next to the green beans; then add the potatoes. The chicken, green beans and potatoes should each cover about 1/3 of the pan.
3. Sprinkle the dressing mix over everything. Add black pepper to taste.
4. Drizzle the butter over the top. Cover with foil; bake at 350 F for 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Nebber's Rolls With Modern Twist

Sandra Walters

- 1 cup shortening**
- 2 1/4 cups water (divided use)**
- 1 1/2 cups sugar**
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 3 pkgs. instant dry yeast**
- 3 eggs**
- 8 cups flour**
- 2 sticks butter, melted**

1. Place the shortening, 1 1/4 cups water, sugar and salt in a bowl; heat the ingredients in the microwave for about 30 seconds. Stir until the shortening is melted; cool to lukewarm.
2. In a large bowl, dissolve the instant dry yeast in 1 cup lukewarm water.
3. Add the shortening mixture and eggs; gradually add the flour, beating well with a spoon.
4. Once combined, knead until soft, circular and elastic. Place the dough in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top of the dough.
5. Cover with a cloth; let rise in a warm place for 10-15 minutes.
6. Roll out flat; cut using a small, circular cup on a flat surface. Dip the cut out dough into the melted butter. Fold in half; place the dough close together in greased baking pans.
7. Bake at 350 F for 15-20 minutes. Brush with butter and serve.

Chocolate Ribbon Pie

Adam Walker

- 4 oz. cream cheese**
- 2 Tbsp. sugar**





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2 Tbsp. condensed milk (divided use)
1 8-oz. tub Cool Whip, thawed (divided use)
1 9-inch Oreo Crumb Crust
2 cups cold milk
2 4-oz. pkgs. chocolate fudge instant pudding
Cocoa powder or chocolate shavings

1. In a bowl, beat together the cream cheese, sugar and 1 Tbsp. of the condensed milk until smooth. Gently fold in half of the Cool Whip. Spread on the bottom of the crust.
2. In another bowl, combine the milk and remaining condensed milk. Add pudding; whisk for 2 minutes. Pour over the cream cheese layer.
3. Refrigerate for 4 hours, until well set and chilled. Top with the remaining Cool Whip; spread evenly. Garnish with cocoa powder or chocolate shavings.

Lazy Day Soup

Lisa Bell — perfect for large gatherings when people want to eat at various times.

1 medium onion
1-2 Tbsp. olive oil
2 lbs. lean hamburger meat
Garlic powder, to taste

Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste
1/2 to 1 tsp. cumin
2 Tbsp. cornstarch
1 2- to 3-lb. bag frozen mixed vegetables
1 46-oz. bottle V-8 Juice
Sour cream, for garnish (optional)
Cheese, for garnish (optional)

1. In a large skillet, sauté the onions in the olive oil until softened. Add the hamburger; brown, stirring in the seasonings. (I usually add other favorite spices.) When the meat finishes cooking, stir in the cornstarch.
2. Transfer the meat to a 6- or 8-qt. Crock-Pot. Add the frozen vegetables and V-8 Juice. Stir everything well; cook on low for at least 4 hours. Add water or broth if extra liquid is needed.
3. Serve in individual bowls with sour cream and cheese, if desired.

Cherry Pecan Bread

Becky Walker, Managing Editor

1 16-oz. jar maraschino cherries
2 cups flour
2 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt
1 1/2 cups sugar


1 cup vegetable oil
1 tsp. vanilla extract
3 large eggs
1 cup pecan pieces
1 Tbsp. cherry juice

1. Remove the cherries from the jar. Reserve the juice. Slice each cherry in half; set aside.
2. In a large bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, salt and sugar.
3. Add the oil, vanilla, eggs, cherries and pecans; mix together. Add the cherry juice; mix well.
4. Evenly divide the batter between 2 well-greased loaf pans. Bake at 350 F for 50-55 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.


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- Virginia Woolf



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PERSO
CHRISTM

Christmas is almost here, but it is not too late to decorate your yard for the season with some easy and inexpensive do-it-yourself decorations. You may even have some of the basic parts for these decorative additions from other seasonal decorations that you can repurpose. Another source will be discount stores and hardware stores.

Everyone likes to see Christmas lights as part of decorations, and they can be added rather inexpensively to most of these projects. Long strings of large bulbs that need a 110-volt receptacle can be used, but with the availability of LED string lights powered by either replaceable or rechargeable batteries, extension cords and outdoor receptacles may not be necessary for these ideas.

Old wooden pallets can be a crafter's delight. A wooden-pallet Christmas tree is easy to make, and the only tools required are a claw hammer, nails and a saw. Carefully take the pallet apart using a claw hammer and/or a pry-bar, cut the one-by-four boards into a large triangle (Christmas-tree shape) and reattach them to one of the two-by-four boards, then either paint your decorations on, add string lights or both. To provide additional support for the tree, you can sharpen one of the two-by-fours into a stake and drive it into the ground with a mallet, or use the two-by-fours as supports behind the tree for it to lean on.

Do you already have trees in your yard to decorate? Make these simple stars and snowflakes using craft sticks (Popsicle sticks-tongue depressors). Just stack several of the sticks, glue them in the middle, and arrange them to look like stars and snowflakes. Decorate them with paint and glitter. Maybe add some binder's twine in the middle to hang them from your tree branches.

Giant round ornaments are a popular addition to outdoor decorations, and an easy and inexpensive do-it-yourself project can be made with large, inflated plastic balls that you

can find in bins at big-box stores. Just spray paint the balls in holiday colors, add a wooden dowel with a spot of glue in the hole where the ball is aired up, and they should be relatively easy to stick into the ground. Add ribbon to the dowels for an additional touch.

Repurpose your plastic Halloween pumpkins into a snowman! If the plastic jack-o-lanterns have a handle on them, remove them, then just use a glue gun to hold three of them stacked together. (If there is a jack-o-lantern face on them, just turn it to the back.) Spray paint them white, glue on some large black buttons and paint a face on or use other craft items for the nose, mouth and eyes. A couple of sticks from your yard form the arms, and of course you can add a scarf and a hat. Look at Frosty go!

Paper-plate lollipops may be the least expensive decoration that you can imagine, but they may also be the most decorative and unique. Simply glue or tape a half-inch wooden dowel, (you might want to use differing lengths for variety, one foot to three feet long) to the inside of a paper plate. Glue another paper plate, upside down, to the edges of the first plate, covering the dowel. Paint both sides of the lollipop solid, with stripes or other shapes. Cover the lollipops with cellophane joined to the dowel with a ribbon, then place the lollipops in groups around your yard with the dowel driven into the ground.

Finally, make large candy-cane decorations with three- or four-inch PVC pipe. Use a long, straight piece to make the candy cane as tall as you desire, probably three or four feet, then glue elbows and small sections to the top to make the hook shape. Paint the candy cane with white spray paint. Allow it to dry, then use painter's tape to circle the candy cane at an angle from top to bottom. Spray the area between the tape with red paint to complete the decoration. Slide the bottom of the candy cane over a two-by-four stake driven into the ground to make the candy cane stand up.

Outdoor decorations are done! Now, let's trim the tree! **NOW**

Sources:

1. www.prudentpennypincher.com.
2. www.smartschoolhouse.com.

NALIZED AS DISPLAYS

— By Bill Smith



A Stressless **CHRISTMAS**

— By Bill Smith



Thinking about the very first Christmas, the one we celebrate from so long ago, we reflect on a calm scene of visitors coming to see a newborn child in a manger. But we often stress as the holiday approaches. Perhaps there are a few things we can do well before Christmas, so it is just a season of joy!

Can you commit to having a plan? Just get a few calendar pages and put the scheduled events down where you can see them, and keep it in plain sight. Electronic calendars are great, but having a wall calendar where the whole family can see it might prevent conflicting schedule surprises!

Do you set a budget? Change is hard, and if overspending has been your tradition, then changing to a budget might seem to add stress rather than reduce it. However, if you are able to get the family and friends on-board with the idea, it can be a great win-win for everyone. Perhaps this could be the year you exchange handmade crafts rather than expensive gifts, or perhaps you join together to adopt a family that could use your help.

Time may be your greatest gift, whether given or received. An outing together with those you love may be the gift you remember the most. Shared time at a holiday movie or the theater may be just the stress reliever you have been looking for. A destination Christmas does not have to be a trip across the ocean. Sharing the expense of a bed-and-breakfast or even a cabin in a state park during the holidays could create memories for many Christmases to come, and it could become a new family tradition.

Schedule some time just for yourself. Go so far as to put it on the wall calendar and allow everyone else to do the same. Take a break for a while and have some "me time," whether that is just a trip to the coffee shop, or an evening curled up

with a good book. And don't neglect your exercise time. Put your trips to the gym on the calendar, or just go for a walk.

Could adding something to the schedule reduce your stress? Perhaps if it is something that just makes you happy. Maybe this is the year you sing in the Christmas program at your church, or you join the group that goes caroling around the neighborhood. If you enjoy baking, another idea is baking gifts for friends and co-workers. A simple pound cake, baked in mini-foil pans or muffin cups, wrapped in just clear cellophane and a ribbon makes a thoughtful and delicious gift.

Let someone else do the gift wrapping. Some stores do it for free or for a nominal price if you ask. If you can come home from shopping with the gifts ready to put under the tree, that's one less task for you.

Do you shop online or in the store? A lot is done online these days, and some find that less stressful than shopping in person, but there is still a lot to be said for shopping with local vendors who can make suggestions for those on your list. And most of us have experienced the stress of an online item being out of stock or having shipping delays.

If a children's toy says, "some assembly required," avoid it at all costs! Not really! Just don't wait until midnight on Christmas Eve to find out what "some assembly" means. After putting together two bicycles and a big wheel scooter, you don't want to open the Barbie Doll House and find it requires more assembly than a 5,000-piece jig-saw puzzle. It could keep you up until 4:00 a.m., and there won't be enough coffee on Christmas morning to open your weary eyes!

The bottom line for a stress-free Christmas is having a plan. Some people can be happy rolling along with "whatever happens is OK with me," but what they are really saying is "my plan is to not have a plan." Actually, that may be a pretty good plan, too! **NOW**

Source:
www.womensday.com



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- 1 Rectangle
- 2 Martial arts
- 3 Preliminary races
- 4 Set to go off
- 5 One kind of jacket
- 6 Composure
- 7 Embody
- 8 "A Visit from the Goon Squad" writer
- 9 Rather and Duryea
- 12 Serving in the navy, perhaps
- 13 Invest with authority
- 19 "To strive, ---, to find, and not to yield." (Tennyson, "Ulysses")
- 21 Large wine holder
- 22 Legal proceeding
- 24 Frothy milky espresso
- 25 Became cheerful
- 26 N T book
- 27 Small dabbling duck
- 30 Brazilian saint

Easy

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Jesus is the Reason for the Season





— By Angel Morris

Christmas Craft:

ADVENT CALENDAR COUNTDOWN

Advent calendars are a way to help children count down to Christmas Day, with daily treats and reminders of the season's origin. But how did the Advent calendar itself originate?

Advent begins on the Sunday nearest the Feast Day of Christ's first disciple, St. Andrew the Apostle, which is marked November 30. That Sunday, and the next three, make up the four-week period of Advent celebrations. It is estimated these celebrations have taken place since the fourth century, initially considered the period of time during which those converting to Christianity would prepare for baptism.

Today, Advent is commonly associated with the weeks leading up to Christ's birth, celebrated December 25. Derived from the Latin word for "coming," Advent is often marked by calendars through which daily reminders tell us Christmas is drawing near. As a result, Advent calendars are typically dated December 1–24, rather than beginning November 30.

In the early 1900s, Gerhard Lang printed what is widely

considered the first Advent calendar, inspired by one his mother made featuring 24 colored pictures attached to cardboard. Gerhard added doors in front of each image, and this design is still popular today.

Around the time Gerhard produced his calendar commercially, a German newspaper also shared an Advent calendar insert as a gift for readers. The idea caught on, and a trend was born. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, shown in national newspaper photographs opening an Advent calendar with his grandchildren, helped spark the tradition in the states.

Now, pre-made Advent calendars can be found from gift shops to dollar stores. Their doors typically open to reveal small pieces of chocolate or candy, sometimes having printed quotes or Bible verses within. These time markers are also a simple and meaningful craft for families to DIY.

One easy version involves very basic supplies: brown paper bags (smaller is better), clothes pins, crayons or markers and twine — plus the treats you want each bag to hold. Consider your family's favorite snacks and/or small age-appropriate trinkets. These can be faith-based or follow the theme of your choosing.



For those who plan to take turns opening days on the calendar, consider gifts that relate to who will be opening each day: For Mom, lip balm, an ornament, earrings or jewelry; for Dad, knock-knock jokes written by the kids, a keychain or a small-framed family photo; for the children, small books or mini versions of their favorite games or characters. Any age enjoys a coupon for special time together or notes about what they mean to the family. Of course, the traditional candy or snack is inexpensive and fun.

To prepare the calendar, family members divide up the bags and add their own artwork to the containers for which they are responsible, including the number of the day on which the bag should be opened and the person who should open that bag. Decorating need not be limited to drawing. Stickers or other craft supplies can be utilized to customize bags, as well.

Once bags are decorated, a shopping trip for filler is in order, when everyone can choose what goes in the bags they designed, keeping in mind the aforementioned gifts or whatever they feel suits the designated opener. Back home, bags are filled and attached to twine with the clothespins for prominent display somewhere in the home. Securing

your Advent calendar to a fireplace mantel is a great way to decorate for the season, too! Just don't light the fireplace while it's hanging there!

Mini stockings, mittens, small boxes — the container of your choosing — can be substituted for paper bags, and the filler can follow any theme you wish. Perhaps handwritten notes are more meaningful than trinkets as the children get older, and especially so for parents when written by their kids.

Items need not be hung from twine and can simply sit across a hearth or table or inside a basket or box. Families may prefer the same style each year, or like the idea of something new every Christmas. Perhaps Mom and Dad fill each day for the kids, or maybe the whole family takes part. When it comes to Advent calendars, the way you count down to the biggest holiday of the year is up to you! **NOW**

Sources:

1. <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/26522/brief-history-advent-calendars>.
2. <https://www.archons.org/-/nov-30-saint-andrew>.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER

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

12/1-1/1

Light Park:

You won't regret bringing your family to an immersive, mile-long, drive-thru spectacular with more than 1 million lights and the world's largest drive-thru light tunnel. Cost: \$29 per car. **Mondays-Thursdays:** 5:30-10:00 p.m.; **Fridays-Sundays:** 5:30-11:00 p.m., Light Park, Hurricane Harbor Arlington, 1800 E. Lamar Blvd., Arlington, TX 76006.

12/4

Mansfield Women's Club Annual Holiday Tour of Homes:

Tour six great homes decorated for the holidays, and get into the spirit! This fundraiser helps those in need in Mansfield. Cost: \$25. 1:00-5:00 p.m. Purchase tickets at Tom Thumb, Merle Norman or Poured. For more information, call (817) 932-2329.

12/8

Salt Dough Keepsakes:

Bring the family to celebrate the season with a special DIY project. Create holiday keepsakes with us as we mix and form our own salt dough ornaments! Program is a come-and-go format. All supplies are provided. Free. 4:00-7:00 p.m., Library Program Room A, 104 S. Wisteria St.

12/9-12/18

Christmas Rehab:

Presented by The Fleetwood Project. World Premiere of this original play. What happens when a family loses their Christmas Spirit? An intervention filled with holiday caroling, ice skating, tree decorating, and fresh-baked cookies. **Fridays and Saturdays:** 7:30-9:30 p.m.; **Sunday the 18th:** 2:30-4:30 p.m. General Admission: \$17; seniors (55-plus): \$14; student: \$10. Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main St.

12/10

Holiday at the House:

Celebrate the holiday season at the Man House Museum. Tour the decorated Man House, enjoy hot cocoa and snacks, create a holiday card, make an ornament and craft a homemade present for friends or family! Admission is free for this event, but supplies are limited. Noon-4:00 p.m., 604 W. Broad Street.

12/16

Grinch Scramble:

Keep your eyes peeled for the Grinch while searching for candy canes with a flashlight! Look high and low while hunting; whoever finds the Grinch wins the grand prize! Music, games, snacks and more. Registration required. Ages: 12-15. 6:30-8:30 p.m., Behind the Mansfield Activity Center.

12/17

The Nutcracker:

The Art Ballet Academy presents the iconic holiday story with two magical performances. Cost: \$21-\$28. 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., Center of the Performing Arts, 1110 W. Debbie Ln. For more information, call (817) 299-1230.

12/22-12/30

It's a Wonderful Life Radio Play:

Enjoy the Christmas classic in a whole new way with this live radio play filled with holiday nostalgia! \$10. Shows dates: **December 22-23 and 27-30:** 7:30-9:00 p.m.; **December 23:** 2:30-4:00 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main St.

12/31-1/1

Sneaker Ball:

You are invited to share cocktails, wearing formal attire completed with your favorite sneakers as you bring in the New Year. Cost: \$85 and up. 9:00 p.m.-2:00 a.m., Fieldhouse USA Mansfield, 650 U.S. 287 Frontage Rd.

By Appointment

Mansfield Mission Market:

Families, seniors or anyone in MISD who needs food is welcome to walk-in. Pets are provided for, as well. **Monday-Saturday:** 10:00 a.m.-6:00

p.m., Mansfield Mission Center, 703 E. Broad, Thrift Store. For more information, call (817) 473-6650 or visit www.mansfieldmission.org.

Mondays

Sunrise

Toastmasters Club:

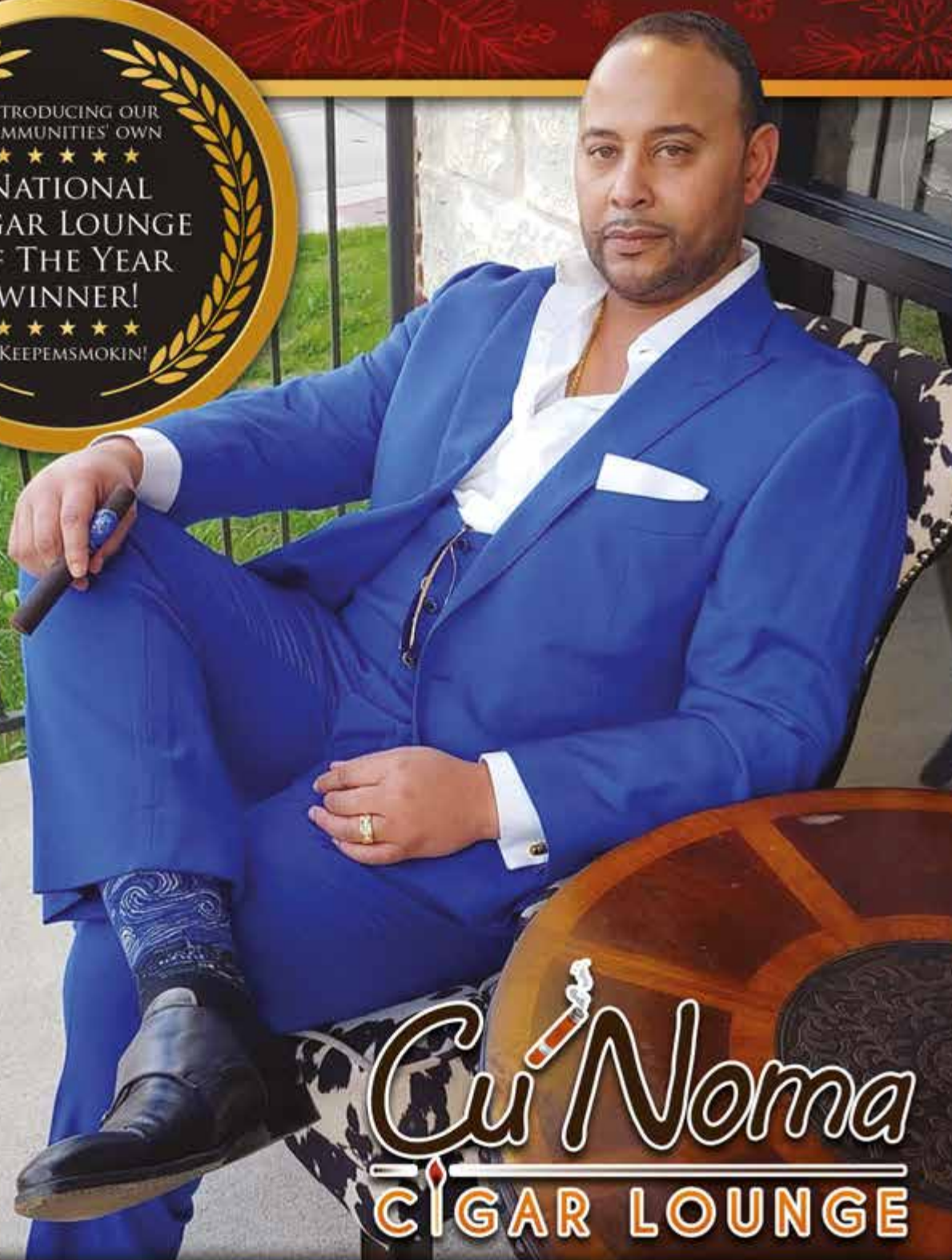
Become the speaker and leader you want to be. 7:00-8:00 a.m., Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, Canedy Community Room, 2700 E. Broad St. Contact Gary Lockhart at garyllock28@gmail.com.

Second Wednesdays

Mansfield Lions Club Meetings:

Work closely with MISD to provide free vision testing and eyeglasses to students who need them. Noon-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Methodist Medical Center, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 2700 E. Broad St. RSVP to Karen Williams, president, (817) 729-4978.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to sandra.walters@nowmagazines.com.



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