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M A G A Z I N E

DECEMBER 2022

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At Home With Richard and
Jeniffer Peña

Santa's Helper

Amy Barrientos gets
letters to the North Pole
and back

2022 Holiday Shopping Guide

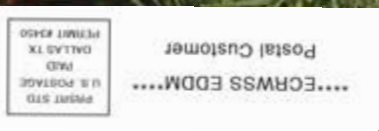
In the Kitchen With
NOW Community Editors

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Featured Business:
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ON THE COVER



The Peña family decorates big for the holidays.

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Angel

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The magic of nostalgia ...

More than any time of year, this is the obvious season for nostalgia. The music, the movies, the memories — not to mention the biggest birthday remembrance ever — make Christmas, truly, the most wonderful time of the year. Not everyone feels this way (and some years are better or worse than others for us all) but I can't help but appreciate December's joyful possibilities. I may be a bit odd because I can be happy in a group of people or just as pleased to be all alone. This month, I find opportunities for both. I also make time for reflection, as another year comes to a close.

In a nod to childhood, I'll watch all-time favorite films (have you seen *A Christmas Story Christmas*, the sequel featuring many of the first film's original actors, including Ralphie himself?); listen to carols in the car all month (*O Holy Night* is my favorite, but Run D.M.C.'s *Christmas in Hollis* is a close second); and snack on all the go-to goodies (those pretzel thingies with a HERSHEY'S Hug and a red M&M on top prove just how childish my tastebuds lean)! I'll wrap gifts for those I hold dear, lovingly packaging items I hope express how much each recipient means. And, in the quiet hours, I'll acknowledge what a blessing it is just to have simple things to enjoy year after year ... a result of the Greatest Gift we've ever received wrapped in swaddling clothes all those years ago.

The magnificence of Christmas ...

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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BLENDED & BLESSED

At Home With Richard and Jeniffer Peña

— By Angel Morris

For the Peña family, holidays mean making memories and giving thanks for the gifts with which their blended family has been blessed ... starting with their unique love story. “Jen and I knew each other because our boys played soccer together when they were 4. Later, when the boys were in 7th grade, they were partners for a class project,” Richard remembered. “It was Super Bowl Sunday, and I heard a knock at my door. My son didn’t tell me he invited anyone over to work on a project, but I was pleasantly surprised because I had always admired Jen and thought she was beautiful.

“I invited them in, and the boys went to work on the project. Jen left, and all of the sudden, I received a text asking me what was for dinner. I invited her over. That was February 3, 2015. Our lives were beginning unbeknownst to us.” They began dating and were married a year later, becoming a family of seven, including sons Chad, now age 23; Nickey, 21; Corbin, 20; Landen, 18; and Presley, 14.

In 2016, the couple planned their wedding and built their six-bedroom home in The Grove. “We wanted this plan, and they weren’t building it anywhere else. It worked for our family for a short time — then the boys left,” Richard noted.

“Now our daughter basically has an entire apartment to herself upstairs,” Jeniffer said. “When she graduates, we’d like to look at a house on the lake.”

In the meantime, the Peñas enjoy their home, particularly at the holidays. “I love to decorate for Thanksgiving and Christmas. My husband and the kids enjoy all the holiday vibes and smells,” Jeniffer noted. “I’m a little obsessed with Christmas decor. I even change our bedding to match the holiday.”

The family starts watching Christmas movies as soon as they begin airing, including favorites: *Coat of Many Colors*, *Elf* and anything on the Hallmark channel. “And Christmas music will be playing — especially Elvis — as we decorate the tree,” Richard described.

The Christmas decor goes up earlier and earlier with bonus items every season. Clusters of trees of all sizes and materials, holiday-messaged signs and buffalo plaid and ticking stripe stockings are some decorative staples. “The smell of cinnamon spice candles fills our home all December, and I add something new to our decor each year. Presley now has a love-hate relationship with it all,” Jeniffer joked.

The six larger Christmas trees scattered around their two-story home showcase Jeniffer’s love of “fancy, vintage and glass





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bulbs,” plus ornaments with special meaning to the family. “I love our Marine and Army bulbs and the police car ornament,” Jeniffer noted.

Richard is a Marine Veteran and retired police officer. “He headed the MISD safety program for eight years,” Jeniffer explained, “So he was known as Officer Peña everywhere he went for a long time.”

Jeniffer is also known locally, having been a hairstylist for 12 years at Swink Color Bar, while Richard has become a Realtor. “We were reminded how supportive the community is when Richard got COVID-19 last year,” Jeniffer recalled.

Throughout Richard’s 98-day hospitalization, the community supported the Peñas. “There were something like 1,200 people following our Facebook page of updates on Richard,” Jeniffer stated. “Six officers escorted us home from the hospital, with people along the roads from the high school and into our neighborhood cheering him on.”

While he still used a walker, Richard was off oxygen, recovering well, and soon ready to return to the school board trustee role to which he’d been elected in May 2021. The Peñas were excited to get back to pre-pandemic mode as soon as his health allowed.

“Richard had just started real estate when the world shut down. I didn’t work for seven weeks. We actually enjoyed that time, traveling together to places where no one else was around,” Jeniffer admitted.

Traveling is a big part of the holidays for the Peñas, too. Before hitting the road, there are some special family traditions. “We normally celebrate Christmas Eve at my parents’ in Ovilla. Christmas morning, we open gifts with





the kids who are able to be here,” Jeniffer outlined. “I usually cook a breakfast casserole with a recipe from my bonus mom. All the kids love it. Now that they are older, we get a kick out of playing games. We have a money-shooting gun that we fill with a mix of fake and real money and make it rain. It’s exciting to see who gets the most real money. Then we’re usually ready to hit the road,” Jeniffer outlined.

Some of the Peñas’ favorite holiday destinations are Branson, Missouri, and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. “*The Sight and Sound Jesus* show in Branson is amazing. It is the best visual reminder of the true meaning of Christmas,” Richard offered.

“We like to make memories. We exchange gifts but activities are better than having stuff to open,” Jeniffer said.

One of their best gifts, they say, is the family they have made. “If I had a message to other blended families, it would be that every day is a challenge, but things smooth out,” Richard noted. “Anything you want to be successful at takes work. Marriage is the fight of your life, and blending families ups that challenge.”

“We were two Type-A personalities who had been single parents doing things our way for a long time,” Jeniffer continued. “There has to be a lot of give. But we were lucky our kids meshed very well.”

And when the kids fought like other siblings, “I told them to work it out on their own,” Richard said. “The louder they got, the higher I turned up the volume on the TV.”

Members of The Avenue Church, the Peñas appreciate home and family now more than ever. “We’re real people with real problems, but we have a lot of blessings, too,” Richard continued. “We saw firsthand that when push comes to shove, our community is behind us. They will always step up and do what’s right.” **NOW**

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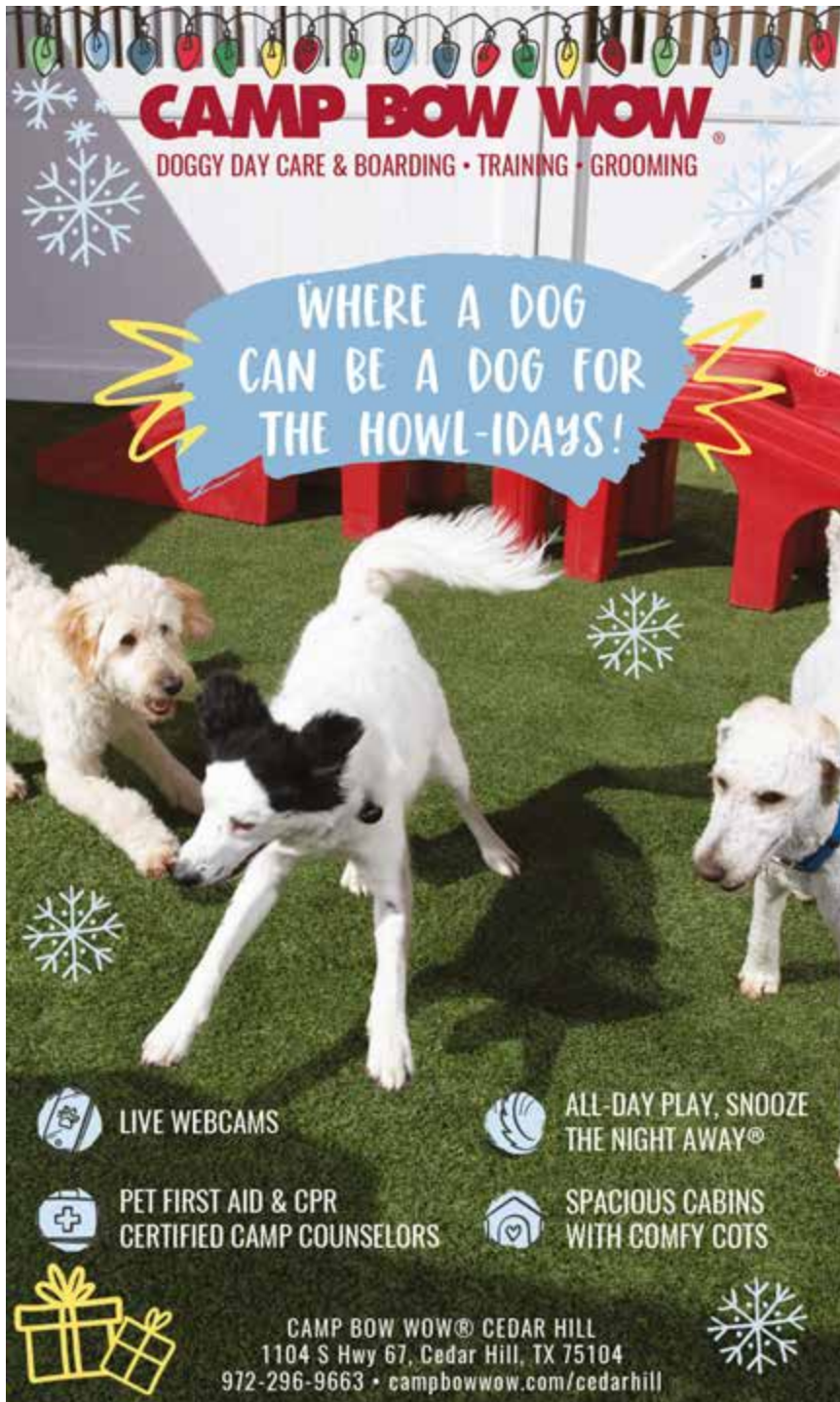
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At Christmastime and year-round, Southwestern Land and Title believes that investing its time and resources in Midlothian helps ensure a vibrant and prosperous community. “We foster a company culture that encourages giving back. We believe that serving others and helping them move forward is the way to go,” said Clay Guest, company founder and president.



A Class of 2002 Midlothian High School graduate, Clay said he is pleased to offer his hometown, “the most expedient, friendliest and innovative title company in the Metroplex. I’m passionate about Midlothian, its people and its growth,” he noted.

Upon graduating from Midlothian, Clay went on to obtain a degree from Texas Tech University and earned an MBA from Dallas Baptist University. Being a familiar face in the community, he saw the opportunity in the title business here in Midlothian and created Southwestern Land and Title, where he helps buyers and sellers receive quality service in a timely manner.

Clay and his wife, Holly Guest — a kindergarten teacher at Longbranch Elementary — both believe in giving back. Southwestern Land and Title sponsors events for chambers of commerce, school districts, Rotary clubs and other nonprofits like Habitat for Humanity and Texas All Creatures Rescue.

“We believe in the motto ‘service before self’ and enjoy seeing our community rally together for the greater good. We

were made to thrive, and our goal is to always give our time and resources to help others,” Clay promised. “I want to earn your business by closing fast and winning on customer service.”

The SWL&T Midlothian team includes Reyna Castillo, escrow officer and former Texas Realtor, who brings more than 24 years of real estate experience to the team. She is an assistant district governor of Rotary International serving her community locally and internationally for more than 14 years. Reyna and her 9-year-old daughter stay busy with her school and athletic activities, and together they enjoy fostering and rescuing dogs.

A mother, veteran/police officer’s wife and business administration graduate from Texas State University, Hillary Leavitt serves as business development director, expanding on 14 years in marketing and sales. Hillary lives in Midlothian, loves supporting local businesses and volunteering at her son’s Midlothian elementary school.

Those who work with SWL&T offer rave reviews. “Southwestern Land and Title is Ellis County’s leading title agency, delivering the ultimate closing experience to every buyer and property owner,” offered Jim Mentzel, president of Mid America Mortgage Southwest Inc.

Jonathan Douglas, real estate broker/owner of Meta Real Estate Midlothian shared, “My team has closed more than our fair share of deals over the last few years at more than a dozen title companies. The only title company that has been consistently easy to work with and on top of the ball has been Southwestern Land and Title. Beyond that you’ll be hard-pressed to find people more involved in this community than Clay, Reyna and Hillary.”

Haleigh Bush Kurth, real estate broker with NextHome On Main, The Better Together Realty Group, said she trusts the SWL&T team to handle transactions with care. “They embody our community and culture, always putting their people first. From agents, buyers, sellers and lenders SWL&T makes you feel like family!”

Clay and his team appreciate the chance to help folks navigate the closing process. “Southwestern Land and Title is here to welcome buyers home with ease and grace, while giving back to the community that welcomes us.” **NOW**

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Zoomed In:
Hazel Vacante

By Angel Morris

When *The Amazon Toy Catalog Book* arrived in mailboxes this year, Hazel Vacante was quick to sit down with a Sharpie marker and select things for her wish list. “I love toys, and there are so many to pick from!” Hazel explained. “My favorites are Mini Brands and Calico Critters.”

Hazel is one in a set of triplets, and she admittedly enjoys choosing things from the catalog for her sister, Cora, and her brother, Frankie, almost as much as for herself. She also enjoys making arts and crafts, but this time of year says one thing is most important: “Jesus being born is the best thing about Christmas, and we get to celebrate His birthday.”



Rory Sunderland and Layla Knight support the J.A. Vitovsky Elementary faculty team at the Midlothian Education Foundation kickball game.



Midlothian High School staff and parents of the girls’ volleyball team members cheer the players on to the finals.



The Midlothian Lions partner with Elevance Health Foundation to host a mobile food pantry.



Midlothian Chamber of Commerce presents its 2022-2023 Leadership Midlothian class members.



NOW Magazines community editors exchange Zoom for an in-person staff meeting at Lighthouse Coffee Bar.



Tar and Mandy Scott are two subjects in the Dogs of Cement City Calendar now available for order on Facebook.



Audrey, Lindsey and Jaxon Prince experience their annual Shadowcreek Pumpkin Farm visit.



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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.

To search for more great recipes from any of the 9 NOW Magazines publications, visit www.nowmagazines.com



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A collage of images for Cowtown Cottages. It includes several red Christmas ornaments with QR codes and the company logo. The background images show the interior of a modern cottage with a large living area, a kitchen, and a balcony overlooking a lake. Text overlays include 'DESIGNER COTTAGES that feel like home', 'THE CHRESTOS Lakefront Vacation Rentals', and 'Primrose Village TINY HOME/RV PARK 10321 FM 1902 Crowley, TX 76036'. At the bottom, a couple in Santa hats is shown next to the text 'Santa Baby ... Slip a Cottage Under the Tree for Me!' and contact information: 'Cowtown Cottages 12730 Rendon Rd, Burleson, TX 76028 817-253-0049'.



— By Angel Morris

SANTA'S HELPER



Midlothian Postal Service employee Amy Barrientos is proof that Santa Claus exists, as long as you believe. Amy has a direct line to St. Nick, as organizer of the MPS Letters to Santa program. “My first Christmas at the post office, no one was specifically assigned to organize the letters or make sure Santa sent a response because everyone was so busy with normal operations,” Amy, who started at MPS in 2015, recalled.

So, with Santa’s permission, Amy began responding to letters during her lunch break. “I got about 10 to 15 letters for the first two years, but I guess word started to spread,” Amy surmised.

As interest increased, Amy emphasized to carriers that they had to make sure a return address was on every Santa

letter in order for a response to be sent. Children were also reminded via social media to include their address for Santa. “Letters started coming in earlier, which made me happy, so I had time to respond to everyone. Each year, it has grown more and more,” Amy said.

Participation grew so much, Amy had to employ the assistance of her family to make sure every child received a response. “I started to bring the letters to my family’s Thanksgiving and had everyone help,” Amy explained.

With the enthusiastic assistance of her mom, Patricia Garza; her older sister, Natalie; and her own daughters, Elena (6) and Alyana (3), Amy now has a system for handling Santa letters, starting with ordering special supplies in early fall. “As soon as the first letter comes in, I like to start responding to stay ahead of the game, so it won’t be too much to handle,” Amy stated. “With my girls, we love to turn on Christmas music, sit by the fire that my husband, Ruben, makes, and just start. The girls help with the arts and crafts part, like adding fun stickers. Once they get tired, we pick out a cartoon Christmas movie, and while they watch, my husband will make me some coffee or hot chocolate, and I work on responses.

"Then, when the rest of my family gets involved, it's basically an assembly line," Amy described. "I write a Santa-approved response, and my family helps stuff and decorate envelopes."

Amy usually knows just what Santa would want her to say. "There are a few letters that stand out from the rest. Some are sweet like requests for a new sibling. Or those that say, 'All I want for Christmas is for my family to get some sleep because my baby brother or sister is up all night crying,'" Amy said.

"Some older children write and say their parents are making them do this for their little siblings, and they just want a million dollars. Those are the ones Santa likes to remind they are never too old to believe and that he is always watching, but better luck next year on the million dollars," Amy joked. "But Santa has me tell them he'll get them something else they like instead."

Other times, Santa's replies are a little harder to give. "The ones that get me are those saying that all they want for Christmas is enough food for their families, or they just lost a family member and wish that they can see them for one more day," Amy reflected. "Or a little one just lost a sibling and wants their mom to be happy again."

Amy's family taught her that small acts of kindness, like a reply from Santa, matter. "Growing up, while all of my siblings were in school — there are five of us — my mom would help out all of our teachers. She would put packets together, help make the centers, make little games the teachers wanted her to make. Once we all got older, she started substituting at our schools. Everyone loved her!" Amy recalled. "My older sister always loved doing stuff like that, too, and now she's an elementary teacher with a classroom of her own."

When not helping St. Nick, Amy enjoys decorating, arts and crafts and co-ed softball with her husband. An MHS graduate who attended Navarro College, Amy sees the Letters to Santa program as her way to spread kindness. "I hold on to the responses until closer to Christmas, because that's when Santa knows kids are most excited to hear from him," Amy explained. "I feel like this is something kids can look forward to no matter what's going on in their lives." **NOW**

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	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9
	10					11				
12					13					
14					15					
16					17					
18				19				20	21	22
		23	24				25			
26	27						28			
29						30				
31						32				
33						34				

- 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



Jaynes
Memorial
Chapel



Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

	1							
		8				2		
					7			4
	6			4	1			
		1	8	7	6		5	
							2	
					8			
9					4	6		
2		3	9					8

Medium

1	6							
			9			7		1
		9			5		2	
		1	4			9		
	4					5		
		2	3					8
	1							
7			1		4			9
				2		4		5

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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

City Christmas Tree Lighting:

Musical accompaniment for the reading of *The Christmas Story* and official tree lighting. Bring a new, unwrapped toy for Manna House. 6:00 p.m., Heritage Park, 234 N. 8th St. Rain out date, Dec. 2.

12/3

Jingle Belles 5K and Rubies Fun Run:

Hosted by the Heritage Belles Booster Club, a portion of proceeds benefits Bridges Foundation. All racers receive Cox Racing chipped bibs, timing and running bells. One-mile fun run: 8:00 a.m.; 5K: 8:30 a.m., Midlothian Community Park, 3601 S. 14th St. Learn more at <https://JingleBellesRun.itsyourrace.com/register/>.

Southern Star

Christmas Celebration:

Parade and outdoor festivities, including selfies with Santa and children's activities, and an outdoor holiday market. Festivities: 1:00-5:00 p.m., Heritage Park, 234 N. 8th St.; parade: 6:00 p.m., Downtown North 8th St.

12/4

Jingle Beats:

Presented by First Class Productions, free holiday

concert featuring Center 313. Bring chairs and blankets for lawn seating. 6:00-7:30 p.m., Midlothian Community Park Amphitheater, 3601 S. 14th St.

12/9

The Polar Express:

Free movie sponsored by Methodist Midlothian Medical Center and In-N-Out Burger. Bring chairs and blankets for lawn seating. 6:30 p.m., Community Park 3601 S. 14th St.

12/10

Bikes for Tykes:

Bring a fully assembled bike or donation for a local underprivileged child. All donors will be entered into a drawing for a free whole home air purification system from Texas Ace Heating & Air. 8:00 a.m., Jimmy's Pizza, 300 N. 8th St. Call (817) 240-6701 with questions.

12/10-12/11

Christmas Tour of Homes:

See some of the best decorated houses in Waxahachie. \$10-\$25. 2:00-8:00 p.m. For ticket information, visit historicwaxahachie.com.

12/11

38th Annual Ellis County Toy Run:

10:00-11:00 a.m., Heritage Park. 234 N. 8th Street. For more information, visit <https://midlothian.tx.us/Calendar.aspx?EID=13728&month=12&year=2022&day=15&calType=0>.

12/25

Christmas at the Coffee Bar:

Celebrate Christ's birth at this 1-hour family service. 11:00 a.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th St.

Second Tuesdays

National Active and Retired Employees:

Monthly luncheon featuring guest speaker. 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., at various restaurants. Email rjcarey1@gmail.com or call (972) 775-2463 for more information.

Wednesdays

DivorceCare:

Group sharing for those who have gone through or are going through divorce. DivorceCare for Kids ages 5-12 meets at the same time. Care for younger children available. 6:30-8:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 800 S. 9th St. For more information, call (972) 775-3993.

Third

Wednesdays

Lancaster Women's Connection:

Welcoming all women in Ellis County to its once-a-month event. Cost is \$15 which includes lunch, a special feature and a Stonecroft Speaker. Reservations due **Thursday** prior to the monthly meeting. 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Country View Golf Course, 240 W. Belt Line Rd., Lancaster.

Contact Dee Ann Ellis at deeannellis@sbcglobal.net or (972) 921-6221.

Thursdays

Celebrate

Recovery Meeting:

A Christ-centered recovery program designed to help those struggling with hurts, habits and hang-ups. 7:00-9:00 p.m., The Lighthouse Church, 1400 N. 9th St. For more information, email cr@dfwlighthouse.org.

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



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