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Santa represents the spirit of giving on the Elliott's tree.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

O Tannenbaum ...

When I had my first apartment, I was still in college. I was a young, single guy, but I had to celebrate Christmas right. I bought a tree, even though I barely had furniture, and set it up, with a cheap cotton wool skirt.

But I made sure I had lights — strands and strands of white lights — and shiny iridescent garland and icicles. I bought more ornaments than I should have on my tiny budget, and Mom gave me a few ornaments off her tree. It was kinda Charlie Brown-y, but I enjoyed it.

I spent a few years at home, then unboxed it when I had my next apartment. And I added a lot more unique ornaments. Hardly anything was a set, except the icicles and snowflakes. I got it back out for a Christmas in July party, before I moved to Taiwan for three years.

There I had two trees, one in my apartment, and one in my classroom. I found ornaments at department stores, stationary shops and at the Christian bookstore ... even at the night market. When I came back to Texas, the most Chinese of those returned with me.

Over the years, I added ornaments that reminded me of every corner of the world where I have friends. It's very eclectic, and very me. Romanian wooden eggs; a pink elephant from Nepal, via Pier One; straw and shell ornaments from the Philippines; a Kente cloth ball; a pewter cuckoo clock from Vienna; a matchbox Nativity from El Salvador. And lots of stuff that's just pretty. It reminds me of important things.

How lovely are thy branches!

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!



Adam

Adam Walker
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Season of Giving

— By Adam Walker

Bob and Adriana Elliott raised their daughters in Duncanville, with a tradition of handmade Christmas gifts. It was a way of emphasizing the giving aspect of Christmas, while de-emphasizing the commercial aspects. It's a tradition they maintain to this day. "Last year, we made homemade soaps for everyone. Another year, we made an art history card game. This year, we're putting together a family recipe box," Bob explained.

Adriana, who is an ordained priest with the Episcopal Church, agreed. "My mother, who lives with us now, is a great cook. She makes so many dishes from Mexico, but she cooks everything without recipes." That makes it more challenging to assemble, but they consider it well worth the effort. The recipe collection is a way of preserving some of Adriana's Mexican heritage and Bob's Upstate New York heritage for their daughters, grandchildren and generations to come.

"We always combined traditions at Christmas," Bob reported.

Adriana added, "On Christmas Eve, my sisters, brothers and I would make tamales and frijoles a la charra."

Bob continued, "And on Christmas Day, we'd have food from my side of the family — turkey, ham and Polish sausage. I'm not Polish, but I was born in Buffalo, New York." Christmas cookies, fudge and peppermint bark have also been longstanding features of the season at the Elliott house.

When they moved to Duncanville, 34 years ago, Adriana had one requirement. It had to be a two-story house. "It's a status thing in Mexico," Bob explained. "You have your business on the first floor and live on the second floor."

"We looked at a two-story house near here, but it was a mess," Adriana remembered. "Then we looked at this house, and I decided that we didn't need a two-story house." Eventually, the house did get a second-floor room, in a remodel. It serves as the reverend's library and study. And the stairs provide decorating possibilities.





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“Our middle daughter loves nutcrackers,” Bob explained. “She collected a lot of them. We bought a lot of them for her, some really big ones. But we have some that are ours, too.” Now their daughter is living in Chicago, so it was time to load up a van and haul all her nutcrackers, including all the really big ones, to their new home in Illinois. But Bob and Adriana still have sufficient nutcrackers left to guard the stairs. They’ve even added three new replacements!

Their tree, which stands in front of the French doors in the music room, off the dining area, speaks of joy and family and food. Candy themed ornaments join photo frames with pictures of their daughters, cartoon characters and stockings. These are joined by a red glass ball declaring *Dios te ama* — God loves you. The eclectic mix of whimsy says, here is a family who love each other and value the memories of Christmases past.

The mantel in the den is spangled with stockings, while huge glass flutes filled with glass balls flank the fireplace with holiday cheer. A large wreath of greenery surmounts it all.

“I’ve been an Episcopal Reverend for a long time, first at St. Anne’s in DeSoto, and now at St. Mary’s in Irving. But I’m retiring this year, so we can finally travel at Christmas. Until now, my duties always kept us here, meaning our daughters had to come to us. Now we can go to them,” Adriana explained.

Their outdoor decorations feature the huge trees in the front yard, wrapped up their trunks and along their great, spreading branches with miles of Christmas lights. “We’ve lost a few trees

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recently to a disease attacking them, but there’s just something nice about a lighted tree,” Bob explained.

“We need our middle daughter back here to help him with that,” Adriana added.

“Yeah, she was always my assistant,” Bob agreed.

After so many years in Duncanville, Bob and Adriana are definitely at home. “We raised our daughters here,” Adriana reminisced. “They got a great education in the Duncanville schools, and each of them went on to great universities. One of my daughters played at Carnegie Hall with the Duncanville band. We have wonderful neighbors — everyone — all up and down the street. And this has been a wonderful house for us. Our daughters grew up here. Our granddaughter and grandson visit us here. And now my beautiful mother lives with us.”

Now is the season of giving. But it sounds like the Elliotts have also received a lot. **NOW**

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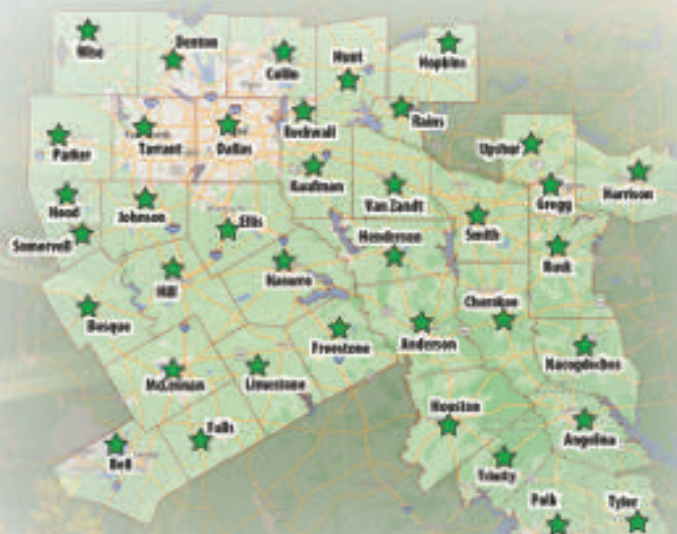
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figurines and plaques are among the items they can personalize. “We can add a person’s name, a Scripture verse, a cross or a dedication to many items. If it’s made of wood or metal, and you buy it here, we can personalize it for you, right here, with our laser engraver. We have a lot of seasonal items for Christmas right now, and many of those can also be personalized.” Once you have the gift in hand, they also have gift bags and greeting cards.

Their shelves host a range of titles on Christian living, prayer and Bible studies. They also have Christian biographies of ministers and missionaries as well as athletes and entertainers.

In addition to books and gifts, OCBF Bookstore also has a business center. “We can ship anywhere with UPS, FedEx and USPS. We have daily pick up and drop off service. You can buy your gifts here and ship them before you leave the store! And we’re available to the community at large, not just our OCBF Church members. It’s a good service to have. We also do digital printing of business cards, pamphlets, brochures and fliers. We can print programs for graduations, funerals and other events, as well as spiral notebooks for classes and seminars. We can also do posters in sizes up to 13 x 19. Our business center is open whenever the bookstore is open. A lot of people in the community still don’t realize we offer these services to the community,” Terri explained.

“Here at OCBF Bookstore, our slogan is: ‘Your one-stop shop for quality Christian resources,’” Terri explained. Whether you are looking to buy a gift, study up on a topic, ship a package or print a project, Terri and her friendly team at OCBF Bookstore stand ready to help. **NOW**



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Zoomed In: Larry and Kreshaunda Lowe

By Adam Walker

Husband and wife, Larry and Kreshaunda Lowe, paused in their shopping in order to take advantage of a nice day and have fun with a little bit of outdoor chess at Hillside Village Shopping Center. Kreshaunda stood by her rook, as Larry explained the intricacies of how the bishop moves.

"We're just enjoying the sunny day in between the crazy weather," Larry explained, while standing guard over his pawn.

"And trying something new," Kreshaunda added.

Though it was just started, they both seemed to be having fun with the game and each other's company. With checkmate far in the future, both mind and body would be getting in a little exercise, moving the giant pieces and planning for ultimate victory.



Cheryl's Aerobics meets in Les Zeiger Park on a sunny Saturday.



Cedar Hill All Pro Dads work the car line at High Pointe Elementary School.



Janice Odom and Joan Pipkins encourage voters during the election.



Students of First Methodist School Duncanville dress up as community helpers.



Raine Aaliyah Close is ready to party under the sea.



The Women Who Read Book Club hosts an author event with bestseller Kim Michele Richardson.



Jurnee Doss, student council president at Waterford Oaks Elementary, holds the mayor's proclamation of Red Ribbon Week.



Simon Spencer celebrates with his family and trainer after winning his first bodybuilding show.



Alpha Health Primary Care Clinic holds its ribbon cutting.

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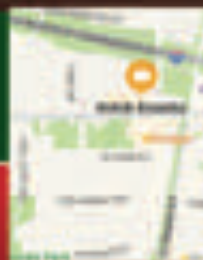
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CookingNOW In the Kitchen With NOW COMMUNITY EDITORS

— 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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 1 8-oz. tub Cool Whip, thawed
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 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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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.

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— By Bill Smith



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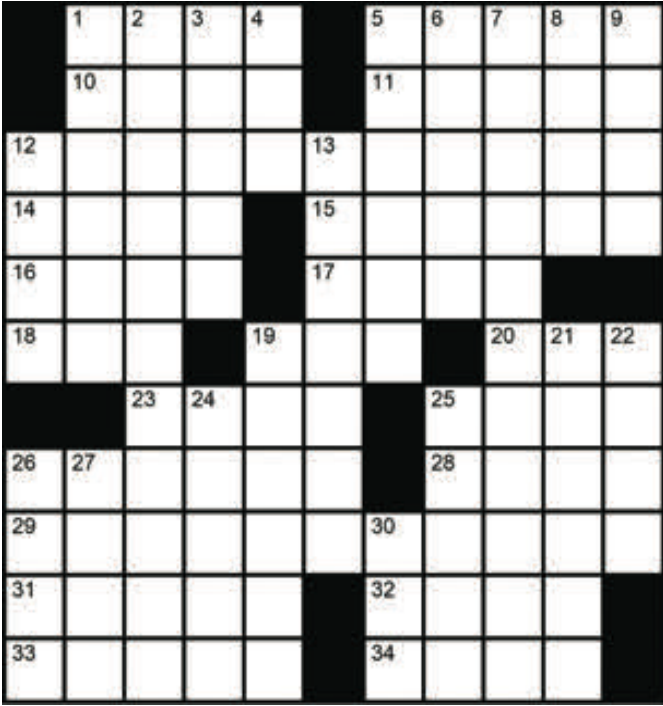
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Crossword Puzzle



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- Across**

 - 1 Workplace watchdog
 - 5 Saw
 - 10 Half of a boilermaker
 - 11 Two-wheeled Delhi carriage
 - 12 Like the best of U S?
 - 14 "But, --- ! what light ... " (Romeo and Juliet)
 - 15 Bricklayers
 - 16 Purposes
 - 17 Bridge support
 - 18 It precedes beauty?
 - 19 Shot
 - 20 Top private
 - 23 Going with it is usually the easy option
 - 25 Barry Manilow's faded showgirl
 - 26 Relaxing order
 - 28 Nest eggs, briefly
 - 29 Most prominent position
 - 31 Discrimination
 - 32 By its own action
 - 33 Silky
 - 34 Competition for all comers
- Down**

 - 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

Online versions and solutions available at www.nowmagazines.com. From our Homepage, click on the Crossword-Sudoku tab. Click on a puzzle. Click on the See All button to view solutions.



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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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pages 6, 13, 19, 23, 30

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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

Holiday on the Hill:

Enjoy kids' activities, live performances, photos with Santa and the official tree lighting. Free. 5:30-8:30 p.m., Downtown Cedar Hill.

Mayor's Quarterly 360 Meeting:

Find out what's happening in DeSoto. Free. 6:30-7:30 p.m. City Council Chambers, 211 E. Pleasant Run Dr.

12/2

Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting:

Join in a Duncanville tradition. Free. Parade: 7:00 p.m. Tree lighting 8:00 p.m., 101 Main St., Duncanville.

12/3

Run the Mount 5K:

Come for a day of walks, runs, music, food, hayrides and activities. Free admission. See website for cost and registration for the 5K. 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Mt. Lebanon Camp, 1701 Texas Plume Rd., Cedar Hill. <https://runsignup.com/Race/TX/CedarHill/RunTheMount5K>.

Brandi's Corner:

Free Christmas shopping for pre-K-6th grade kids to find gifts for family members. Gift wrapping included. 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 128 N. Roberts Rd., Cedar Hill.

12/5

Crafty Cafe

Holiday Ornaments:

Tweens, 8-12, come get your crafts on and make something to hang on the tree. Free. 5:00-6:00 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

12/6

Mugs and Movies:

Teens, come enjoy some hot chocolate and a holiday film. Free. 5:00 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

12/6-12/9

Path of Lights and Christmas Village:

Experience the lights, live music, a holiday craft bazaar and the Christmas Choo-Choo. Free. 5:30-9:30 p.m., Newman International Academy, 1114 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill.

12/7

Immune Boosters and Busters:

Learn how proper nutrition keeps your immune system strong. Free. 5:00-7:00 p.m., DeSoto West Middle School, 800 N. Westmoreland Rd.

12/10

Breakfast With Santa:

Enjoy a meal with the big guy. Free. 9:00 a.m., First United

Methodist Church, 128 N. Roberts Rd., Cedar Hill.

Hometown

Holiday Celebration:

Come out for family fun, food and vendors. Free. Noon-10:00 p.m., DeSoto Town Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Dr.

Christmas Musical:

Local singers belt some holiday tunes. \$5-\$15. 8:00 p.m., DeSoto Corner Theater, 211 E. Pleasant Run Dr.

12/13

Sugar Cookie Decorating:

Teens test their icing skills. Free. 5:00 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

12/16

Parents' Night Out:

Drop off 6- to 12-year-olds, and get that Christmas shopping done! Free. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Duncanville Rec Center, 201 James Collins Blvd.

12/17

Cookies With Santa:

Come nibble on some treats with the jolly old elf. Free. 10:00 a.m.-noon, Duncanville Rec Center, 201 James Collins Blvd.

Sell the Sale:

Dr. Cassandra Bradford teaches how to price and market your

products. Free, but registration required. 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., DeSoto Public Library, 211 E. Pleasant Run Dr. bit.ly/bbcs2022.

Masquerade Ball:

Dance the night away with a bar, food and music. Prize for best dressed king and queen. \$10-\$15. 6:00 p.m.-midnight, Duncanville Lions Club, 210 Lions Trail. See Eventbrite for tickets.

12/20

DIY Holiday Ornaments:

Teens craft some new ornaments for the family tree. 5:00 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

Third Saturdays

Duncan Switch Saturday

Street Market:

The event includes vendors, food and fun. 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Main and Center streets, Duncanville.

Tri-City Animal

Shelter Adoptions:

Come meet your new furbaby. 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 100 S. Main St., Duncanville.

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



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