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DECEMBER 2023

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At Home With Lynn
and Jackie Webster

In the Kitchen With
Rhonda Smith

2023 Holiday
Shopping Guide

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Scavenger Hunt

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ON THE COVER



Santa decorates the Amish table in Lynn and Jackie Webster's breakfast nook.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

If every day was like Christmas?

I have a couple of grandsons, ages 6 and 5, who have their own ideas of what Christmas is and when it comes around. In September, I asked Beckham and Easton when Christmas occurs. Easton, the younger of the two, said Christmas was on August 6th, which coincidentally is the same month that his birthday falls. Beckham said he did not know what the date was, but he knew it was a very special day for the family to get together. When asked if it was someone's birthday, he knew it was the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Looking back at pictures of these little guys during Christmases past, I see perpetual smiles anticipating the next brightly wrapped package or perhaps the next sweet treat. If we go back a few extra years, their poses are comfortably sleeping in one of their parents' or grandparents' arms, oblivious to the chaos that their siblings and cousins are creating around them.

They understand what a special season we are in this year, as they see the fir trees and decorations appear in their living rooms. While their expectations may be all over the place, there is also confidence there, knowing something really special is about to happen. The confidence is from the good memories of Christmas over their few short years. When the celebrations start, there will be wide-eyed wonder and certainly joy!

There is that Elvis song about everyday being like Christmas. The lyrics include, "Why can't that feeling go on endlessly?"

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A Crafty CHRISTMAS

Lynn and Jackie Webster's home is warm and inviting, with an open floor plan that welcomes their guests. The linear kitchen adds to the concept and flows freely from the formal dining room to the tastefully furnished breakfast nook. Everything seems to open to the living area, which is accented by the fireplace. This comforting and attractive focal point invites conversation. During the holiday season the mantel is decorated with family stockings, while a G. Harvey painting that Lynn acquired during his travels "years ago" hangs above them, watching over the living room.

The Websters are obviously very happy together. Their pleasant demeanor overshadows the beauty of the home they built just four years ago. Having married in 2017, they soon decided that it was important to build a new home together as they merged their lives. "Lynn had most of the ideas about the design of the home, but the general idea was a joint effort," Jackie offered. While the decor of the home was probably influenced by both, Jackie has a heritage of crafts and craftsmanship that she and her father worked on together, and it is reflected in not only the holiday decorations, but throughout the home year-round.

Near the hearth is the tastefully appointed Christmas tree, and Jackie's crafts as a parent and a teacher show up in the handmade ornaments. A simple Santa cut out of construction paper and decorated with a cotton beard and plastic eyes is one of the simplest of child crafts. There is also a gingerbread man and another Santa that her son made many years ago with simple dough. "Christmas cookbooks often have the recipe for combining flour, salt and water to make the dough that can be shaped into an ornament and baked," she said. "Then the children can paint their creations in bright colors." Many of the other ornaments



AS

— By Bill Smith

At Home With Lynn and Jackie Webster





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were just things the couple acquired from craft shows and holiday shops as they traveled.

Lynn said, “She has an artist’s talent.” Jackie seemed to demur the compliment, but the other decor though the home speaks too loudly to ignore. “Jackie and her dad did the stained glass together,” Lynn mentioned as they pointed out the unicorn Jackie created that claims a prominent window. Her father made the stained-glass lamp, as well as the horse, which he made when they lived in Florida.

The pleasant sunroom opens from the living area, and more of Jackie’s father’s talent is displayed as two stained-glass room dividers. He also created the stained glass that decorates the entrance to the Ennis Welcome Center.

The breakfast nook in the Webster home could easily be mistaken for a second formal dining room. “We saw a display model of the Amish table and chairs at a furniture store in Indiana,” Lynn said, “and knew it was something we wanted in our home. They also built the buffet. We had to wait about a year for the Amish craftsmen to build it and finish it the way we wanted, and, of course, the furniture store shipped it to us, ‘for a price,’ but we think it was worth it.” Decorated with a few of Lynn’s Santas that he has collected over the years and accented by a small, white Christmas tree in the corner, the breakfast nook is a perfect area for the morning coffee or hot chocolate during the season.

The spacious master bedroom is not overlooked for holiday decoration. Another small Christmas tree marks the center of the dresser. Jackie explained, “The tree was made by one of the teacher aids when I taught at Sam



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Houston Elementary. It is an inverted tomato cage, decorated with maroon and white garland.” The dresser is the perfect display for the crafty tree as it is also reflected in the dresser mirror.

Jackie’s artistic talent is not limited to stained glass and Christmas ornaments, however. Almost every room has a painting of hers. Some of her work is oil, and other is acrylic. “I have painted seascapes and other scenes from copies of postcards, and I have painted copies of large posters,” she related. “We laugh about my painting of the three-legged bull. Lynn has said I need to add the other leg, but I told him it is obscured by the dust the bull is kicking up!”



The painting is not limited to canvas. The guest bedrooms are decorated with furniture that was either handmade or restored after being purchased needing some tender loving care. The old desk in one bedroom required sanding, painting and varnish on the top, and Jackie hand painted the Japanese scenes that decorate the drawer fronts. The sewing machine cabinet has a similar finish with traditional oriental decoration and a hand-painted dragon on the end. Another handmade dresser supports a couple of antique kerosene lamps that originally belonged to Lynn’s grandmother. “They lived about 10 miles from the nearest town in southern Indiana. It was not that they could not afford electricity, it was just that it had not reached that far into the rural areas then. They also had a gasoline powered washing machine!” Lynn recalled.

During the holidays, the front elevation of the Webster home is decorated with white lights, including a lighted manger scene in the front yard and an inviting Santa Claus and snowman on the front porch. This beautiful home is full of treasures that reflect the loving family, traditions and the magic of Christmas! **NOW**



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Having been born in Cali, Colombia, one might wonder how Dr. Pedro Franco settled his practice in Ennis. “I fell in

love with Ennis the first time I drove through,” Dr. Franco remembered. “That was almost 13 years ago, and I thought it was beautiful. I did my research on Ennis, and I decided to open an office here. We are a part of the community and enjoy attending football games and other local events.

“Today, I look forward to the drive to Ennis, away from the chaos that Dallas can sometimes be. We have everything here for our patients that a similar practice in Dallas or any other major city would have.”

The practice continues to move forward with the latest technology, and Dr. Franco is obviously recognized by his peers. “I am the past president of the American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. I am also an examiner for the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. There are about 70 of us across the United States, and I am happy to be the one in Ennis! This position rotates for six-year terms. It is an honor in our profession to examine our peers.”

Another thing that Dr. Franco is obviously proud of is that his practice is non-opioid. “We see every day about 150 people dying in the United States from opioid abuse.

About five years ago, we began fighting the opioid epidemic. One of the entry points was young people getting their wisdom teeth out and using the opioids, then continuing with them by stealing the pills from their parents and grandparents. We moved to multimodal pain management and are very happy that our practice is opioid-free. We can manage pain with alternatives.”

Another part of his professional life is lecturing others in oral surgery, and he has made multiple trips to Tampa, Brazil and Spain. “I also go on a mission trip to Colombia each year with others as we work with cleft lip and palate. We are just the instruments that the Lord uses to perform His healing,” he said with obvious compassion.

Every doctor’s office has its walls decorated with diplomas, and Dr. Franco’s office is no exception, testifying of his graduation from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana School of Dentistry in Bogota, Colombia. Later, he attended Loyola University in Chicago, before serving a post-graduate fellowship at Baylor University Medical Center. He left his practice in Bogota to join the faculty at Baylor College of Dentistry, Texas A&M University, where he taught for five years before returning to private practice.

Dr. Franco has a seasoned staff that is dedicated to providing the finest of care to their patients. Dr. Zaidi graduated from Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with a Doctor of Dental Surgery, then completed his Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery residency at Louisiana State University. He has a particular interest in placing dental implants, wisdom teeth, facial cosmetics and orthognathic jaw surgery. Dr. Indrakanti received his Doctor of Dental Surgery at the University of California, Los Angeles and received surgical training at Parkland Memorial Hospital, completing his medical doctorate at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. He also practices the full scope of oral and maxillofacial surgery, including wisdom tooth removal, facial cosmetic and corrective jaw surgery and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) surgery.

Dr. Franco concluded, “If there is one thing that sets us apart, I would have to say it is our patient care. We treat our patients like family.” **NOW**

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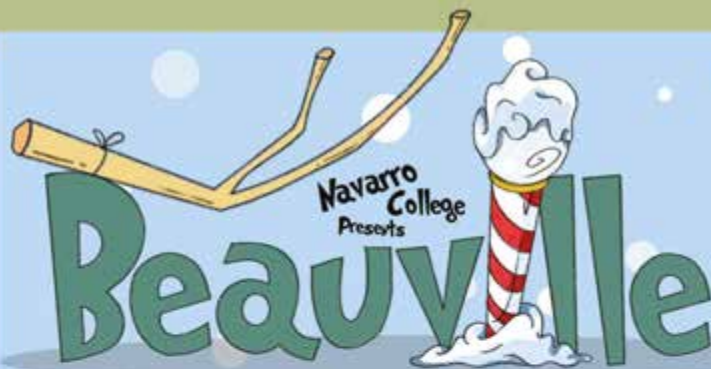
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Zoomed In: By Bill Smith Leslie, Julian and Kilian Malagon

Leslie, Julian and Kilian Malagon enjoyed a beautiful morning downtown. “I have lived in Ennis all of my life,” Leslie said. “I graduated from Ennis High School in 2021, and I am looking forward to going to the football game this week. My brother is a senior, and I will be on the field with him for senior band night.”

She and Julian have been married for five months and are obviously proud of their 2-month-old, Kilian. Although Julian is not a native of Ennis, he appreciates the events Ennis offers for young families downtown. Julian works in marketing, and Leslie is a stay-at-home mom.



Becky Hogle and her Lab mix, Snoopy, spend the day at the dog park.



David Gale and Gabriel Balarde enjoy a high view of the pumpkin patch and hay maze.



The Ennis High School Class of 1973 gathers for its 50th reunion.



David Newman volunteers to decorate downtown for fall.



Nancy Baker carves a huge pumpkin for display downtown.



Angela Webb works on crafts with Adrienne and Angela.

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A photograph of Rhonda Smith, a woman with short grey hair, wearing a white apron with a circular logo that says "I Love To Bake". She is standing in a kitchen with green cabinets and a yellow oven. On the counter in front of her are a large metal bowl, a small pot on a burner, and a frying pan. The text "CookingNOW" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

RHONDA SMITH

— By Bill Smith

"I remember cooking a little growing up, and, at first, it was just a chore," Rhonda Smith recalled. "I began to enjoy cooking after I married and started cooking for my husband and our children. My mom and dad were both good cooks, and I brought a lot of their dishes to my table. Their recipes and mine have always been 'down-home cooking.'"

"I recently visited a museum in Omaha, Nebraska, that had a new exhibit featuring Julia Child. The exhibit included the set of her kitchen that was on her TV show," Rhonda said with a smile. "Standing over her stove with pans and utensils, wearing an apron with her name on it, sparked a new interest for me to try some new recipes!" **NOW**

Pineapple Pie

- 1 deep dish piecrust
- 1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1/2 stick margarine (2 Tbsp.)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 eggs, well beaten
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- Cinnamon, to taste

1. Bake the piecrust according to the

package directions.

- 2. Mix the next 6 ingredients well; add to the piecrust.
- 3. Sprinkle the cinnamon on the top.
- 4. Bake at 400 F for 40 minutes.

Cheesy Beef Rolls

- 1 1/2 lbs. lean ground beef
- 1 egg
- 1 small can (5.33 oz. or 2/3 cup) evaporated milk

- 1/2 cup dry breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1 Tbsp. mustard
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, grated
- 3 6-inch brown and serve French rolls

- 1. Preheat the oven to 350 F
- 2. In a large bowl, mix the first 9 ingredients.
- 3. Split the rolls in half lengthwise.
- 4. Spread the cut sides of each half with a heaping 3/4 cup of the meat mixture.
- 5. Place on a foil-lined baking sheet; bake for 35 minutes.

Fried Potatoes

- 1 cup Crisco vegetable shortening
- 5 lbs. potatoes, peeled and sliced about 1-inch thick
- 1 large onion, chopped
- Fiesta chicken rub, to taste
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste

1. Melt the shortening in a 14-inch skillet over medium heat.
2. Add the potatoes and onions to the skillet. Cook with the lid on the skillet, turning regularly until the potatoes are tender and begin turning brown. Watch closely; do not allow them to burn.
3. Season to taste with Fiesta chicken rub, salt and pepper.

Crock-Pot Cheesy Chicken Spaghetti

Nonstick cooking spray

16 oz. dry spaghetti, cooked

1 lb. Velveeta light cheese

1 12.5-oz. can chicken breast, drained and flaked

1 10.5-oz. can 98% fat-free cream of mushroom soup, undiluted

1 10.5-oz. can 98% fat-free cream of chicken soup, undiluted

1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel diced tomatoes and green chilies

1/2 cup water

1 small onion, diced

1 medium green bell pepper, diced

Salt, to taste

Pepper, to taste

1. Spray a Crock-Pot with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Add all the ingredients to the Crock-Pot; stir to mix well.
3. Cook on low heat for 2-3 hours. Stir again just before serving.

Mom's Cherry Brown Cookies

2 eggs

1 cup shortening

2 tsp. vanilla extract

1 16-oz. box light brown sugar

3 1/2 cups flour

1 tsp. baking soda

1/2 tsp. salt

1 8-oz. jar maraschino cherries, drained and chopped

1 1/2 cups nuts, chopped (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
2. Mix the eggs, shortening, vanilla and brown sugar until creamy.
3. Add the flour, 1 cup at a time, mixing well, along with the soda and salt.
4. Add the cherries.
5. Add nuts, if desired.
6. Form into balls about 1 inch in diameter.
7. Place on a greased cookie sheet; bake 8-10 minutes.

Beef Onion Stew

1 lb. hamburger meat

1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce

1 pkg. Lipton Beefy Onion Soup Mix



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Merry Christmas

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Beef Onion Stew

2 large potatoes, diced
2 large carrots, diced
1 cup frozen corn or 1 16-oz. can corn
1 large tomato, diced or 1 16-oz. can diced stewed tomatoes
1 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 Tbsp. chicken rub
Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste

1. Brown the meat. Add the Worcestershire sauce and the beefy onion soup mix.

2. Add the potatoes, carrots, corn and tomato. (If you use canned corn or canned tomatoes, you will not need to add extra water. If not, add 1 cup of water.)
3. Add the spices. Let it simmer for 30 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

Tortilla Soup

1 tsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 medium bell pepper, diced

1 lb. ground turkey (85/15)
1 1-oz. pkg. taco seasoning
1 28-oz. can petite diced tomatoes
1 15-oz. can reduced-sodium black beans
1 15-oz. can corn
1 4.5-oz. can green chilies

Toppings:

Sour cream, to taste
Green onions, to taste
Tortilla chips, to taste

1. Heat the olive oil in a medium skillet; sauté the onions, garlic and bell peppers.
2. Add the ground turkey; cook until browned. Stir in the taco seasoning.
3. Add the tomatoes, beans, corn and green chilies. Bring to a boil.
4. Serve with toppings to taste.

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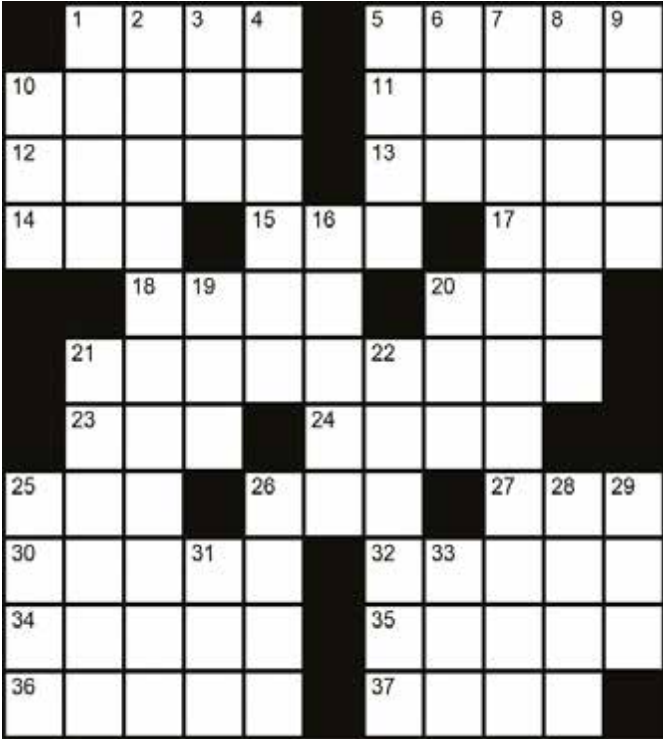
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Across

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- 5 "America's Most Wanted" presenter John ---
- 10 Trite and tiresome
- 11 Gem state
- 12 Exclusive group
- 13 Unpaid worker that never tires
- 14 Eccentric
- 15 Cut and dried grass
- 17 Saturn's wife
- 18 Decorated
- 20 Front end cover on a car
- 21 Excels
- 23 Drug also known as "ozone"
- 24 Involved with
- 25 It regulates flyers
- 26 Bring to bear
- 27 Hoppy beer
- 30 No fun
- 32 Shun
- 34 It's an honor
- 35 They are often checked
- 36 Short literary composition
- 37 Act fresh

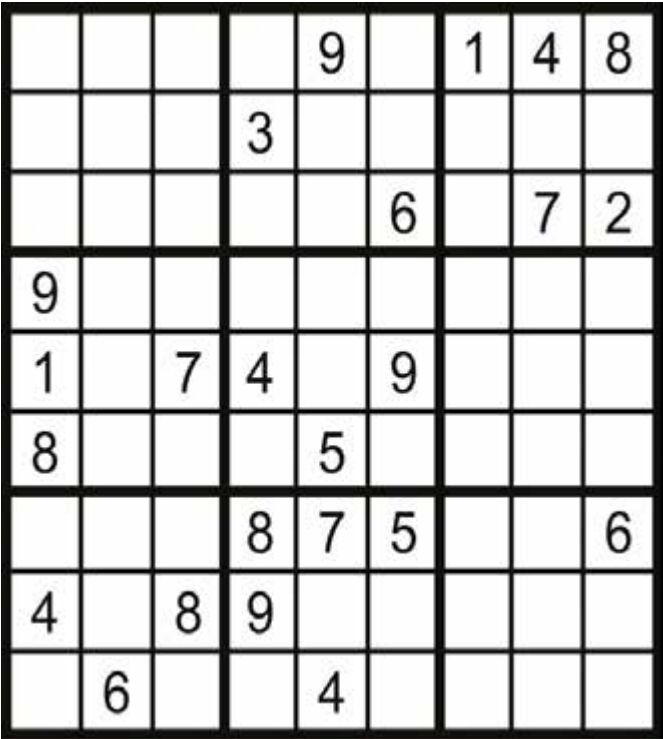
Down

- 1 "Deal!"
- 2 Dr Cid reacts about ways to pay
- 3 Mandela's party
- 4 When that time arrives
- 5 Lean and muscular
- 6 Commotion
- 7 Noon burials arranged for bodies in the workplace
- 8 Patronize
- 9 Strong attraction
- 10 Head honcho
- 16 Ethiopia's capital, --- Ababa.
- 19 Bottle top
- 20 Discontented shout from the bleachers
- 21 Suit passed out
- 22 Untrustworthy people
- 25 Celebrity
- 26 Grotesque
- 28 Oil pipeline inserts
- 29 Lifeblood of TV and the web
- 31 Baseball league below the Majors
- 33 Through

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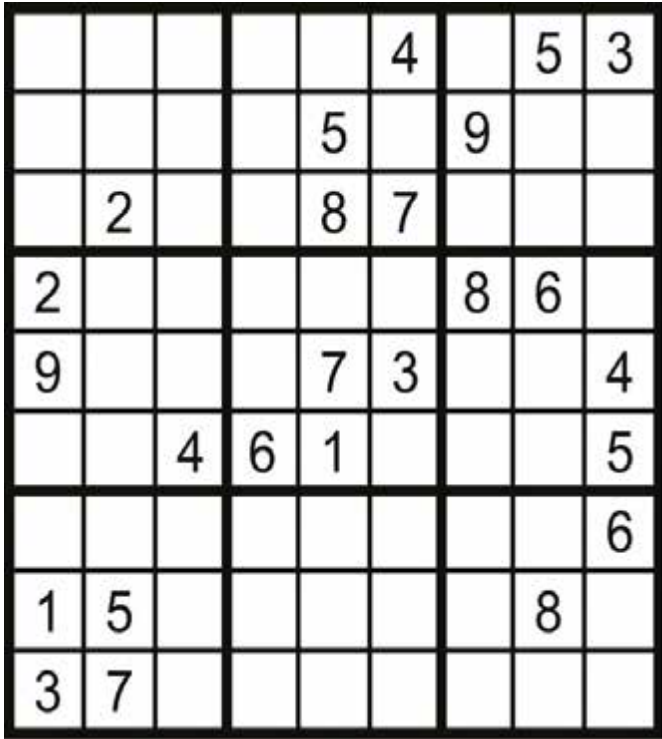
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Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays

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CONTEST

— By Angel Morris



Of all the activities available for families during the holidays, the traditional custom of building gingerbread houses has regained popularity in recent years. With the advent of gingerbread house kits, this fun-for-all-ages activity is as easy as choosing your favorite frostings and candies to add to pre-built structures.

Traditionalists can still build the houses from scratch themselves, of course, starting with structural gingerbread dough or even graham crackers. Today, however, packaged kits that provide the basic pre-built house allow all ages to join in the fun on a level playing field.

While spending time together building a single house can be enough, some families take the tradition to new levels by

making it a friendly holiday competition. Here are a few ways to implement your own family gingerbread house-building contest.

SUPPLIES

Boxed houses. If you're going the pre-built route, simply stop in your neighborhood grocery or chain store where you'll find a variety of boxed houses from small to large. These typically range in size and shape and include many tube icings, as well as a variety of decorative candy pieces.

Decorative items. Families may set a dollar amount in advance and let each participant shop for additional decorative items — these may be candies or craft items, such as pipe cleaners, stickers, popsicle sticks, small ornaments, etc.

Theme. To increase the opportunity for creativity, some families choose a unique theme in advance, around which participants design their houses. Themes may be Christmas related or more unique.



Some theme possibilities include: Texas Christmas, My Favorite Movie or House of the Future. Families can decide if everyone follows the same theme or if each individual comes up with his/her own theme and announces the theme upon the contest's end.

Timing device. Make sure you have an oven timer, cell phone alarm, clock or watch available.

SET UP

Building surface. Make sure your building surface is well-covered to allow for easy clean up. Towels, newspaper or poster board are inexpensive ways to cover tabletops.

Lay out supplies. Open one gingerbread house box for each participant or team. Family members can compete against each other individually or establish teams such as boys vs. girls, children vs. parents, etc. Place decorative icings and candies at each building station — either those that come in each gingerbread kit or the candy/craft items purchased in advance.

THE CONTEST

Criteria. Agree on the criteria by which each house will be judged. For example, best theme, most creative, most traditional, etc.

Pick judges. Agree on who will be the judges. Perhaps you want to invite neighbors over to vote, or you want to post images on social media for friends to rank their favorites. To be fair, you should not indicate which family member designed which house.

Prizes. Decide what prize the winner receives. Maybe it's bragging rights for the year, a homemade trophy to keep in one's room or the opportunity to open a Christmas gift earlier than anyone else. Perhaps the winner gets to choose which house he or she actually wants to eat. Prizes need not cost money. The more creative, the better!

Time. Choose the amount of time you want to allow for construction of the gingerbread houses, and make all participants aware of start/stop times. Set the timer, and start decorating! It will be fun to watch one another's houses come to life and see how creative individuals or teams can be.

Upon completion, let the agreed upon judging commence, followed by an awards ceremony. Eating the houses together can wrap up the contest, or the gingerbread houses can be displayed on a dining room table for the rest of the season — not only making a one-of-a-kind decorative holiday display, but also as a reminder of the fun time enjoyed by the family.

BUDGET-FRIENDLY TIP

If your family might enjoy this type of contest but is not interested in eating the completed product, you may consider buying the gingerbread kits after the holiday and saving them for next year. Post-Christmas clearance sales means you can purchase the houses for 50, 75 and even 90 percent off retail prices.

Decorative candies can also be bought after the holidays on deep discount. Making gingerbread houses is a great Christmas activity to do on a budget. **NOW**

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.

12/1-12/17

A Christmas Story:

Based on the motion picture, adapted by Philip Grecian. Come see this Christmas classic. Contact the theater for tickets and show times. Theatre Rocks!, 505 NW Main St. (972) 878-5126 or email Suzanne@TheatreRocks.com.

12/1-12/31

Elf Seek & Find:

Enjoy fun-themed holiday windows and decorations from our charming downtown merchants. Pick up your Elf Seek & Find map from the Ennis Welcome Center, 201 NW Main to see if you can find all of our downtown elves!

Holiday Carriage & Surrey Rides:

Experience the holiday magic of Ennis via a horse-drawn carriage or sully through the charming, tree-lined historic neighborhoods and downtown aglow with holiday lights. More information will be available for this ticketed event. Contact the Ennis Welcome Center, 201 NW Main St. (972) 878-4748.

The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra Christmas

Concert:

Presented by the Waxahachie Symphony Association. 7:00 p.m., WISD Performing Arts Center, 3001 U.S. 287, Waxahachie. For tickets and

more information, visit <https://www.waxahachiesymphony.org/>.

12/2

Cookies With Mrs. Claus:

Enjoy a magical Christmas experience making an illuminated gingerbread house and listening to stories with Mrs. Claus. \$35. Select times and tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cookies-with-mrs-claus-tickets-741528189777>. 201 NW Main Street.

Lucky C.C. Car Show & Toy Drive 2023:

Calling all cars, trucks, hotrods, rat rods, customs, lowriders and motorcycles! Display your car for a good cause. Registration: \$10 and an unwrapped toy. Downtown Ennis. Chubby, (469) 774-5692.

12/6

Ennis Retired School Personnel Meeting:

Luncheon and raffle. 11:00 a.m., First Methodist Church Family Life Center, 300 N. Sherman St. For more information, email EnnisRSPA@gmail.com.

12/7-12/17

The 24 Days

Before Christmas:

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counting down to Christmas. Recommended for all ages.

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12/9

GriefShare — Surviving the Holidays:

Free. 2:00-4:00 p.m., Baylor Baptist Church, 210 N. Preston St. For more information, call the church office at (972) 875-2521.

12/9-12/10

Historic Waxahachie Christmas Tour of Homes:

Tour five historic homes decorated in unique holiday styles. 2:00-8:00 p.m. For tickets and details, visit <https://www.historicwaxahachie.com/2023-christmas-tour-of-homes/>.

12/12

Free Pictures With Santa:

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12/17

Christmas Organ Concert:

Free, but please make reservations. 5:00 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 201 N. Main Street. For reservations, call Judy Wensowich at (972) 921-8800.

Tuesdays

Rotary Club of Ennis Meeting:

Lunch, club business and program. Noon, First United Methodist Church, 300 N. Sherman St.

Second Tuesdays

Ennis Masonic Lodge

#369 Meeting:

7:00 p.m., 209 North Dallas Street.

Wednesdays

Ennis Host Lions Club Meeting:

Noon, Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200 Country Club Rd.

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