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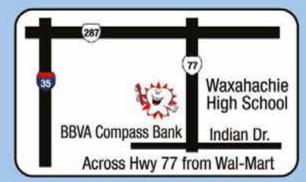
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### ON THE COVER



The Owens build holiday traditions.

Photo by Kobbi R. Blair.

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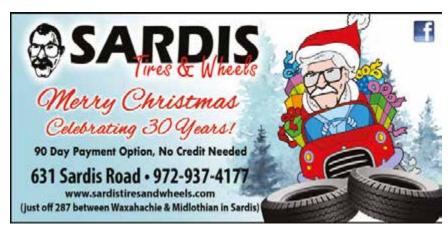
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Adam Walker WaxahachieNOW Editor adam.walker@nowmagazines.com (469) 285-2008

Adam

### **EDITOR'S NOTE**

Ding dong merrily on high ...

Yes, I'm that guy. I've been listening to Christmas music since October. In fact, I'll bust out a Christmas CD or two anytime of the year, anytime I feel like it. My Christmas music collection contains hundreds of songs from dozens of countries, written over the last several hundred years. When I get tired of "O, Holy Night" and "Away in a Manger," I pop in something from India or Nigeria or Taiwan. If you like so-called World Music, there is literally a whole world to choose from.

Recently, I discovered a Greek Orthodox Christmas song, "Anarchos Theos Kataveviken," that is supposed to be the oldest example of a Greek Christmas song for which we have both the words and the music. It's about 1,000 years old, and it makes me want to dance.

A few years ago, I spent several months in Solomon Islands, living and working with the people who speak Natqgu. Before I left, I got a group of women to record several of their Christmas songs for me. It was just friends sitting on a porch, using palm-leaf fans for percussion, and some amazing close harmonies.

Whether it's a simple song like the Czech "Rocking Carol" or "Go Tell it on the Mountain" ... or a soaring Bach cantata or the Christmas sections of Handel's Messiah, Christmas songs speak to me and make me remember why this time of year is special. Jesus probably wasn't born in December, but this is when we remember the event. We get distracted from that, but the right song can bring the truth back in focus.

Christmas bells are ringing!

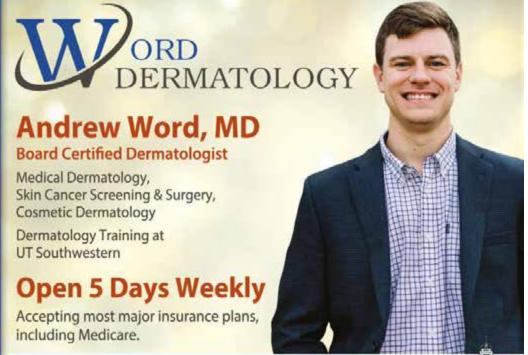
P.S. The publisher and staff of NOW Magazines would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and the happiest of holiday seasons!



Amanda Krawietz, PA-C **Nationally Certified** Physician Assistant



Michelle Shelton, PA-C **Nationally Certified** Physician Assistant



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"Coincidentally, a lot of people who are anxious about going to the dentist are also people who don't have good insurance. That's a bad combination. I have membership plans for patients without insurance, and really good discounts on implants and dentures. A membership might not be necessary if you only need one simple procedure, but if you need sedation and a lot of work, it really pays for itself."

Dr. Allala is a graduate of the Texas A&M School of Dentistry. "When I started there, it was still Baylor. My diploma has both names on it," she recalled. "I specialize in oral surgery, and we're really good at it. I'm nothing without my team. We do everything in dentistry. I like being well rounded. I enjoy being an overachiever, so I'm constantly taking continuing education, keeping up with all the

newest techniques and technology. I'm also a native Spanish speaker. I grew up speaking both languages. Our YouTube videos explaining procedures are available in both English and Spanish."

Dr. Allala is proud of the service they provide at Serenity Advanced Dentistry. "I think we give five-star service. And I know my staff is five-star. We know what works and what doesn't. I know it sounds comy, but this is my life's work. Most of my staff have been with me for years, at different locations around DFW, before I came to Cedar Hill. I met Mariela seven years ago, in Pleasant Grove. It was my first job out of school. Racine has been with me four years, and Jazmine three years, both in Red Oak. Our newest team member is lessica. She found us three months ago when she emailed me looking for an opportunity to shadow a dentist."

"I LIKE BEING WELL ROUNDED. I ENJOY BEING AN OVERACHIEVER, SO I'M CONSTANTLY TAKING CONTINUING EDUCATION, KEEPING UP WITH ALL THE NEWEST TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGY."

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theserenitydentist.com | 972-634-1434 Dr. Cristina Allala 605 E. Belt Line Rd., Suite 101, Cedar Hill





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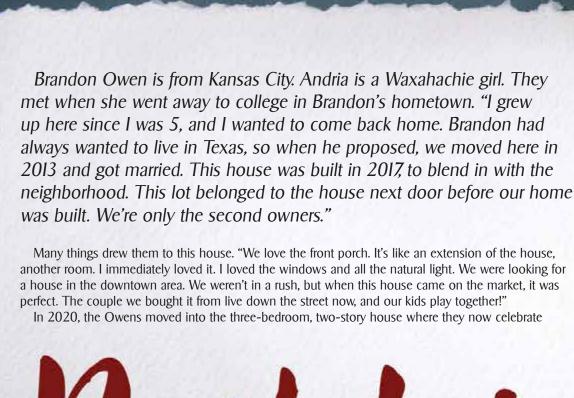
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Pyrenees. She's a fun addition to the family. Decorating my house is less about what it will look like and more about how it will feel. I always want it to be warm, safe, inviting and nostalgic. I use a lot of natural elements berries, dried oranges, cinnamon sticks. The tree is fake, but I love to use fresh garland and wreaths. They give the scent I love."

The kitchen and the living room form one open concept living area. "I have a gingerbread theme in the kitchen decorations. Hot chocolate is important because of the kids. My mom would make hot chocolate mix and keep it in a big honey jar on the kitchen counter. One year, I made homemade cinnamon rolls, and now that's an expected part of Christmas. And, of course, we have Christmas cookie night. We lead a home group at church, so we have them over for a party. And we're having a party for our daughter's school. We're all going to walk down to see Bethlehem Revisited. and then come back to the house for more hot chocolate! Our house is a revolving door at Christmas."

Bethlehem Revisited has played a big part in Andria's Christmases past. "I've been every year since I was 5. In fact, I used to be in it when I was in high school. I did it for the community service hours required at school. I figured it was a fun way to knock it all out in two weeks! I never thought that I'd be raising my family in Waxahachie one day, but

it's fun that my kids can experience the same things that I did. It's sweet and special to give this to my kids."

Brandon and Andria fit other fun, nostalgic things into their family celebrations, "We like to drive down Main Street and look at the Christmas lights, while listening to Christmas music. We also like to dress in our Christmas pj's and go to the store, let the kids both pick out an ornament to represent the last year for them, then drive up to Highland Park to see their lights and get more hot chocolate. Last year, we took Polaroids every day in December. Brandon loves Christmas as much as I do. He always wants to put the tree up early, and he plays Christmas music all through the year. He's the leader of a lot of the Christmas shenanigans."



Sometimes the bustle of the season can push the meaning aside. "Brandon and I both grew up going to church on Christmas Eve. We still do that. Then, we go to my parents' home. We don't put any gifts out until the kids go to bed on Christmas Eve. Then Brandon and I will have dessert and a drink while we watch a Christmas movie in the media room upstairs. Christmas morning is at home here. We have a big breakfast, and then we open the presents, one by one, everyone taking turns. It's important to slow down and savor things." NOW







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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 funfor-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







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Why choose Macho Self Storage? Macho Storage has deep roots in Texas with numerous locations throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The company is owned by the family of Bill "Bum" Bright, previous owner of the Dallas Cowboys football team. Their managers, Chris and Frances Young, have over 20 years of successful experience in property management. Their background includes winning numerous awards at property level and as regional managers.

The Waxahachie location also has the distinguished honor of having won the Best in Ellis County. "We focus on providing customers with a friendly encounter that meets all their storage needs," Chris said. "This includes a safe and secure storage environment that features simple and fair pricing. We offer climate- and non-climate-controlled units from a small  $5 \times 10$  to a large  $10 \times 30$ . The property is extremely clean, very secure and under 24-hour video surveillance."

Office hours are Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Once you're signed up, computer coded gate access is from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. all week.

"We're proud to be a part of the Waxahachie community, because the people are fantastic," Chris said. "We also partner with law enforcement agencies and strongly support our proud veterans. Macho actively sponsors youth sports team associations and the local high school. During November and December, we collect Toys for Tots, so please drop off gifts at our location."

There are numerous reasons to consider Macho Self

Storage, and it's the perfect choice. "We're the ideal location to place your belongings when moving your household goods. It could be a small, local move or even temporary storage for a long-distance relocation," Chris said. "Perhaps your children are coming back for a season during a break at college. Maybe your parents are seeking additional care, or there's a change in their living situation. Do you need to free up some room in the garage? Are guests coming for a holiday visit? Sometimes, you need spare room for supplies, personal items or seasonal decorations. Businesses often need additional space for inventory, plus it's tax deductible. Traveling sales representatives and event planners can also benefit from using storage. Real estate agents understand how important it is to properly stage a home, as well. The possibilities are endless, and the value is beyond expectation. Every rental includes a free high-security lock, and property protection plans are also available."

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### **Around Town**



Fresh Market Coffee is a favorite hangout for friends, Kristin Shaver and Nikol Sutherland, and their children, Owen Shaver, Grayson Sutherland and Olivia Shaver.

### **Zoomed In:** Ed Faught

By Adam Walker

Ed Faught manned a table at the Veterans Day celebration to unveil the statue of Chris Kyle. He was there representing the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3894. "I'm a Vietnam veteran, and now, I'm serving my post as the judge advocate, which means I'm responsible to advise my VFW post about our bylaws. Working with the VFW is something I do to help the community. I've been a member of this post since I moved here in 1989. We support veterans' issues and talk to students about service. One thing we do is hold Friday night bingo to help other organizations. We're required by law to donate all the money we raise through bingo, so that's one of the ways we help the community."



The Texas Country Reporter Festival draws crowds.



ClearSky Rehabilitation Hospital of Waxahachie opens for patients.



Dorothy's Uniforms cuts the ribbon on their new facility.



The SAGU Lions soccer team takes on the Arlington Baptist University Patriots.



Kristen Burch and Whiskey get their steps in on a cool fall day.



The Life High School Waxahachie boys' cross-country team qualifies for the state track meet.



Members of the Literary Ladies Book Club at Paper Leaves Shop bond over a good book.







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Saturday, December 9 | 6-9 p.m. FREE Admission Railyard Park – 455 S. College St.

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Railyard Park - 455 S. College
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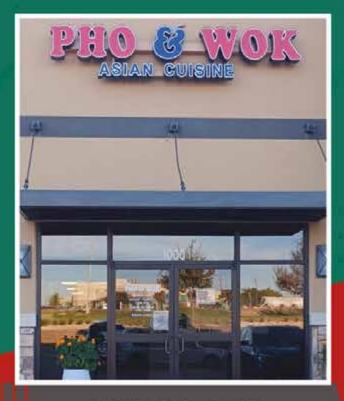
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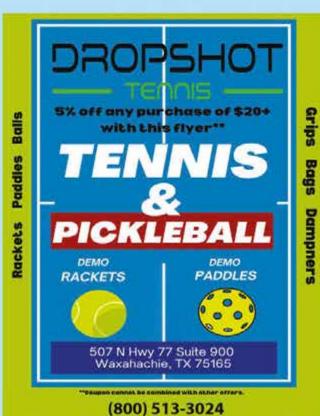
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"Last Christmas, I hosted dinner at our newlywed home for the first time. I managed to make breakfast and Christmas dinner and host our families from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. with snacks in-between. Everything came out perfect and hot at the same time. Considering we also hosted our first Friendsgiving a month prior with the success of my first turkey coming out succulent and falling off the bone (without a morsel left), I felt so proud of how much I have grown!" NOW

#### Nanaimo Bar

A Canadian favorite.

- 4 Tbsp. powdered cocoa
- 4 cups crushed graham crackers
- 2 cups shaved coconut
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup, plus 2 Tbsp. butter (divided use)
- 1 cup, plus 2-3 Tbsp. crushed walnuts

- 4 Tbsp. milk, plus extra
- 4 Tbsp. vanilla pudding
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 8 oz. semi-sweet chocolate

**1.** In a large bowl, mix the first 6 ingredients with 1/2 cup of the butter and 1 cup of the walnuts; knead until it becomes a soft, pliable lump. Add milk or more butter to soften it up, as needed. Place this bowl in hot water (a double boiler) for about 5

minutes to help the eggs rise and pull it all together. Press into the bottom of a pregreased 6x9-inch pan.

- 2. In a separate bowl, with a blender, combine 1/2 cup of butter, 4 Tbsp. of milk, pudding and confectioners' sugar, to create a custard. Spread on top of the bottom layer.
- 3. In a saucepan, melt together the chocolate, remaining 2 Tbsp. of butter and a splash of milk, if needed. Stir continuously, until it's all melted. Carefully, pour over the custard layer. Sprinkle with remaining walnuts. Refrigerate before serving.

### Eggplant Parmesan

2 large eggplants Coarse salt, as needed 6 bread slices I tsp. garlic powder 1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. black pepper

2 tsp. Italian herb blend

1/2, plus 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, shredded (divided use)

3 eggs, whisked

1/2 cup all-purpose flour 1/4 cup olive oil 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 cups marinara sauce 1 lb. mozzarella cheese 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, shredded 1-2 Tbsp. fresh basil, chopped I tsp. fresh oregano, chopped

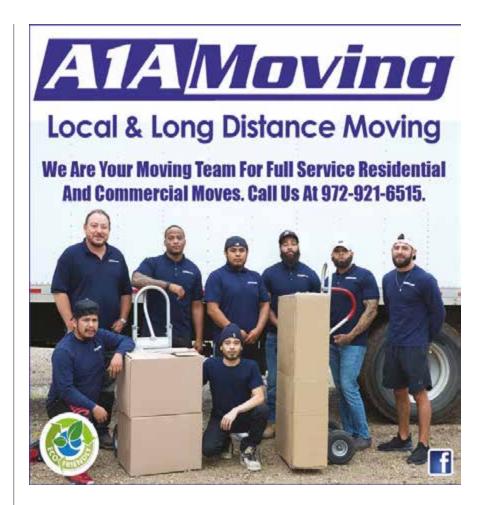
- **1.** Remove the stems from the eggplants; slice into 1/4- to 1/2-inch-thick slices. Arrange on a pan; sprinkle with a pinch of coarse salt on both sides. Let sit and sweat excess moisture for 10 minutes. Pat firmly with paper towels to dry thoroughly and wipe off the salt.
- **2.** Toast the bread slices. Chop them to crumbs in a food processor. In a bowl, combine the crumbs with garlic powder, salt, pepper, Italian herbs and 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese.
- 3. Prepare three bowls containing whisked eggs, flour and breadcrumb mixture. Coat each eggplant slice in the flour on both sides; dip into the eggs. Then dip into the breadcrumbs, coating well; gently shake off excess crumbs.
- 4. In a skillet, add 1-2 Tbsp. of oil at a time; cook the breaded eggplant for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Repeat until all the eggplant has been fried.
- 5. Spread a generous layer of marinara sauce on the bottom of a large casserole dish. Layer the eggplant slices, mozzarella, a spoonful of marinara and some of the remaining shredded Parmesan. Repeat an additional layer.
- **6.** Bake at 400 F. uncovered, for 30 minutes until the cheese is browned and melted. Top with chopped fresh basil and oregano.

### Steak au Poivre Soup

- 3 Tbsp. whole black peppercorns
- 4 4-oz. filet mignons or 2 8-oz. sirloin steaks, sliced in half

Kosher salt, to taste

- 1/2 cup, plus 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 Tbsp. butter
- 2 thyme sprigs, plus 1 Tbsp. chopped leaves (divided use)
- 2 large shallots, 1 finely chopped, 1 sliced into rings (divided use)
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup cognac or brandy
- 5 cups low-sodium beef broth
- 1 1/2 lbs. waxy baby potatoes, quartered
- I cup heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- **1.** Grind the peppercorns on the coarsest setting of a pepper mill. Season the steaks on both sides with a generous pinch of salt and crushed peppercorns, pressing the peppercorns into the meat.







2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat 2 Tbsp. oil until shimmering. Cook the steaks, gently pressing to make sure you don't lose any peppercorns, until well browned on one side, about 3 minutes. Flip the steaks; add the butter and thyme sprigs. Continue to cook, spooning the butter over the steak, until the tops are crusty and well browned and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers 135 F, 2 to 3 minutes more. Transfer to a cutting board; let rest. Strain the fat remaining in the skillet and reserve.

- **3.** Wipe out any large chunks of pepper from the skillet. Return the reserved fat to the pan; cook the chopped shallot over medium heat, stirring often, until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic and chopped thyme, stirring until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the flour; whisk until combined. Continue whisking, until the flour darkens slightly, about 2 minutes. Whisk in the cognac or brandy until smooth. Slowly whisk in the broth.
- **4.** Add the potatoes; bring to a simmer. Cook until the potatoes are tender and the

soup is thickened, about 15 minutes. Reduce heat to low: stir in cream and Worcestershire. Cook, stirring, until warmed through and combined, about 5 minutes more.

- **5.** Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over medium heat, cook the sliced shallots and remaining 1/2 cup oil, stirring occasionally, until the oil begins to bubble around the shallots, 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low; continue to cook until the shallots are golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes more. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the shallots to a paper towel-lined plate; season with a pinch of salt. Let cool slightly.
- **6.** Divide the soup among serving bowls. Cut the steak into cubes; top the bowls with the steak and fried shallots.

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

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For many people, personal fashion can be challenging. It's hard to find clothes that make you look and feel good. The fear of your style choices making you stand out in an unpleasant way can be a beast of its own. Due to fashion's cyclical nature, you might already have this winter's trends in your wardrobe.

Burgundy is "in" again this season, which is good news for Aggies fans, whose closets are filled with burgundy's sister shade. This rich, warm color is perfect for the brutal Texas winter. There is no wrong way to wear solid-colored clothing. You could rock an entire outfit of burgundy pieces or add a splash of it here and there to tie the whole look together. To save a bit of money and closet space, try accessorizing with burgundy. Find a good, solid-colored burgundy coat, and you can make any outfit in season.

In a move that harkens back to the retro-futurism art style, metallic silver is having its moment in the wardrobes of fashion icons. Whether it be a shining polyester dress or reflective chunky shoes, this trend is reminiscent of decades-old depictions of what the 2020s *might* look like. While silver is a solid color like burgundy, silver works best as the focal point of an outfit. If you are going to wear silver pants, don't pair them with a silver top, otherwise you might come across as a droid from *Star Wars*. Instead, pair it with a black, dusty rose or soft cream blouse. Silver shoes can be a fun way to make any casual or swanky outfit a bit more out of this world.

Classic prints such as polka-dot and plaid are back. Like with silver clothes, a general rule of thumb for printed fabric is to make it the centerpiece of the outfit. Pairing a polka dot blouse with a plaid skirt could unintentionally turn a casual outfit into a loud eye sore. Instead, the other elements of the ensemble should be solid colors that complement the printed fabric. That way, the eye will naturally gravitate toward the patterned piece, instead of getting lost in the noise. You could even pair your polka dot blouse with your silver heels or pull the burgundy look in with a plaid skirt to double your fashion points.

It's common knowledge in the fashion world that former style trends tend to cycle back into the mainstream eventually. This fashion season pulls items from several different decades back into people's closets.

Strolling in from the 1950s are the classic A-line and swing dresses. With their fitted bodices and flared skirts, these dresses are perfect for those who want to show off their form while still having fun twirling on the dance floor. Accessorize this look with a timeless strand of pearls or a peacoat for warmth.

Dust off the shoulder pads because exaggerated shoulders from the 1980s are officially back. Whether paired with a nice top and slacks or a T-shirt and jeans, a padded blazer makes nearly any outfit board meeting ready.

Double denim is the epitome of recycled fashions. Double denim has had a resurgence in popularity every decade since the 1970s. If you wish to pull this bold look off, you must be willing to commit. Your look should consist of either the same shade of denim or completely contrasting shades — think navy and white.

Oftentimes, it's the accessories that make the outfit shine. This winter, professional neckties and bold neckerchiefs can add the final touches to your outfit. While nothing beats the traditional black tie or a neckerchief in the same shade as your blouse, if you want your outfit to pop, try playing with opposing colors. You can even pull in patterned materials if you want your accessory to be your outfit's centerpiece.

Fashion works as a way of expressing oneself. It can be used to make one fit in or stand out in the crowd. Sometimes, it can be tricky figuring out how to make it work for you, but through constant study and willingness to experiment, you can master the art of fashion.

#### Sources:

double-denim.

I. Agnew, C., & Gervais, E. (2023, August 14). The Top Fashion Trends for Fall-Winter 2023-2024. Elle Canada. https://www. ellecanada.com/fashion/trends/the-topfashion-trends-for-fall-winter-2023-2024. 2. Barlow, L. [The Style Insider]. (2023, August 18). 10 Wearable Fashion Trends That Will Be HUGE In 2024 [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=06gGPohnay0. 3. Salessy, H. (2023, September 25). 18 fashion trends to know for Fall/Winter 2023-2024. Vogue France. https:// www.vogue.fr/fashion/galerie/fashionweek-trends-fall-winter-2023-2024. 4. (2021, March). How to Style Double Denim. Levi's. https://www.levi.com/ IT/en/blog/article/how-to-style-





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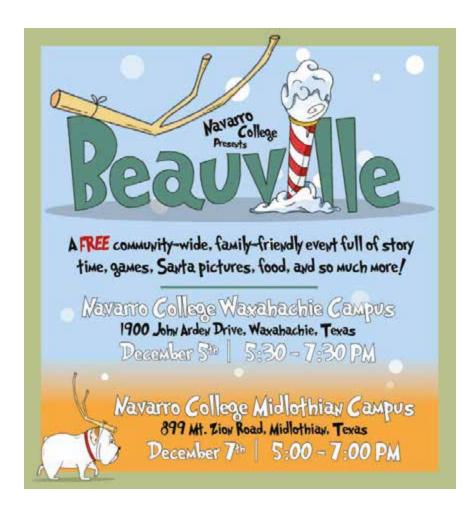


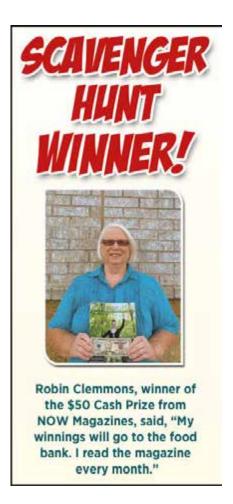
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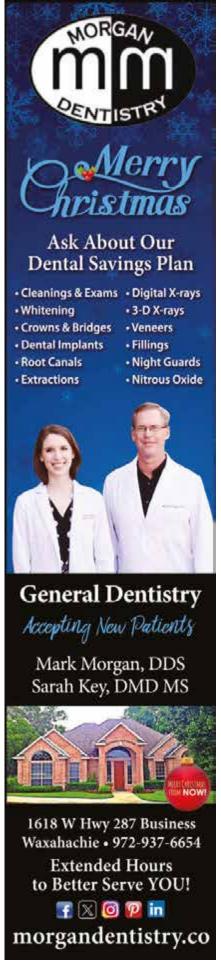












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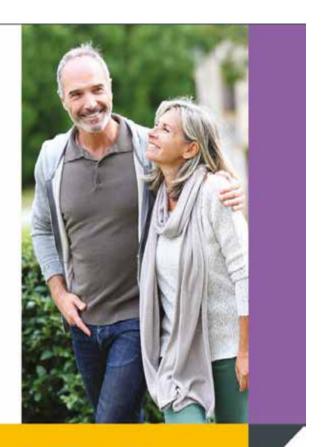
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#### 12/14

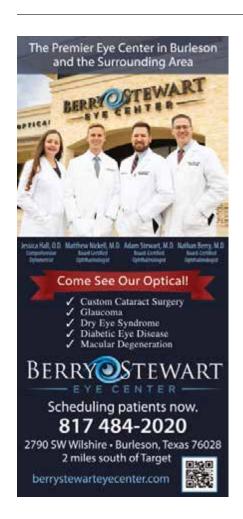
#### **Finley Holiday Concert:**

7:00 p.m., Coleman Fine Arts Center, 100 N. Hwy. 77.

#### 12/31

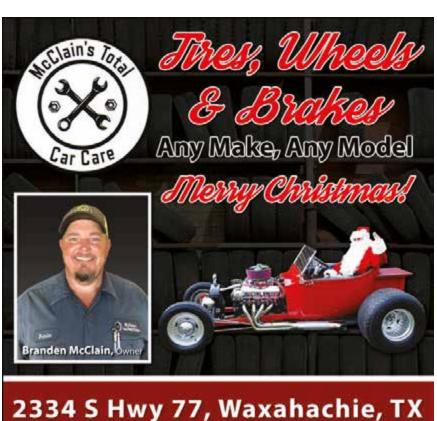
**NYE Decades Time Warp:** Dance to tunes of the '60s and '80s as the New Year dawns. \$25. 9:00 p.m., Southern Roots Brewery, 421 S. College St.

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









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# Memorial Chapel

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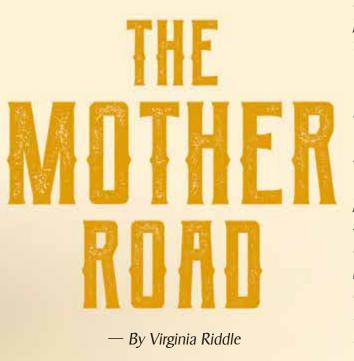
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The retro of today was the modern of yesterday. When the famed Route 66 highway was commissioned in 1926 and fully paved in 1930, it ran through small towns and booming cities southwest of its Chicago starting point through Amarillo's wild west and Native American reservations and pueblos in New Mexico and Arizona, westward to the glitz of Los Angeles and Hollywood. The road beckoned to wanderers, sometimes seeking fame and fortune by choice or by necessity. John Steinbeck in The Grapes of Wrath called it the Mother Road, carrying desperate people during the Great Depression to jobs in California, and the route became "The People's Highway" during the 1930-1940s Dust Bowl period.

With the advent of the automobile and truck, travel was faster, and Route 66 became Americans' favorite east-west throughfare. A Tulsa, Oklahoma, businessman and chairman of that state's highway commission, Cyrus Avery, is credited with dubbing the highway "Route 66" and helping to lay out all even-numbered federal highways to run east and west and all odd-numbered federal highways to run north and south. Cyrus also founded the U.S. 66 Highway Association and promoted the highway as the "Main Street of America."

The desperately poor packed up their few belongings and camped along the route, finding temporary work when money ran thin in the Depression and Dust Bowl days. However, Fred Harvey of *The Harvey Girls* fame opened hotels and restaurants in cities boasting highway and railway stops for wealthier travelers.

The 1940s brought WWII troupe and supply movement along the road. Leisure travel was suspended mostly due to gas and food rationing. However, travel courts sprang up to accommodate families finding work in defense plants and

needing weekly/monthly accommodations near military posts. Personal vehicles could be parked beside the units in carports. Since they were hotels for motorists, the term "motel" was born.

When veterans returned following the war's end, the economy boomed. Rationing was lifted. Most families had at least one car. Disneyland opened, and westerns were popular on television and in the movie theatres. All of this made travel to the Southwest enticing. With the Grand Canyon National Park and Southern California's beaches beckoning, the desire to get out of the cities and experience sites veterans had seen was evident on Route 66. Folks were "getting their kicks" as the popular song written by Bobby Troup and sung by Nat King Cole stated. Indian trading posts, tourist courts with restaurants, movie theaters — all with their distinctive architecture and neon signs — sprang up along the road. Hospitality venues touted air-conditioned rooms, swimming pools and TVs in each room, all newly available to attract hot travelers who still might not have AC in their vehicles.

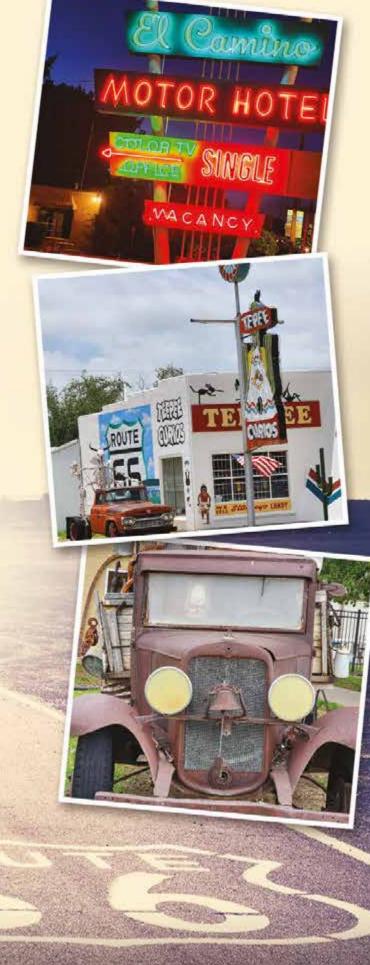
In 1956, a congressional law passed, creating the interstate system, which would spell Route 66's demise as the Mother Road. It took five interstates (I-55, I-44, I-40, I-15 and I-10) built over three decades to replace Route 66. Businesses, such as the famed Big Texan Steak House in Amarillo, Texas, with its towering neon cowboy sign, moved from its Route 66 location to a new home on I-40 as traffic counts moved. Mom-and-pop businesses died as chain operations opened along the interstates.

Route 66 was officially decommissioned in 1985. By 1990, the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program was created, recognizing the significance of the road in American history. Today, parts of the road still exist and are marked, such as Amarillo's Route 66 Historic District. Businesses are being restored all along the route, and travelers can experience the glory of a desert sunset with a neon sign in the distance flashing a welcoming *Vacancy!* 

Photos by Virginia Riddle, LLC, unless otherwise noted.

#### Sources:

- I. Bender, Andrew, et al. Route 66. Lonely Planet Road Trips,
- Ft. Mill, South Carolina, 2018.
- 2. https://americanhistory.si.edu.
- 3. https://www.nps.gov.











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