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DECEMBER 2025

Keepsake Christmas

At Home With Brett
and Aimee Grant

2025 Holiday
Shopping Guide

In the Kitchen With
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Ho-Ho-Oh-No?

Making this season special can cause overwhelm instead of joy. What's meant to be magical can lead to exhaustion, not just for the planners, but for children on the receiving end of gifts and activities. It's difficult not to get caught up in the holiday hoopla, but here are some ideas to help us feel more of the magic, less of the madness ...

Forego trends for tradition. Do you really need new matching pajamas for the whole family, or is that an expense you can live without? Is getting the perfectly posed family photo worth the time and anxiety? Must you attend a light tour or performance each week? Do you need to bake homemade treats for every friend, neighbor and co-worker? If these things are important to you, by all means, continue! But if they lead to more meltdowns than memories, consider scaling back.

Think about evaluating your traditions. Make a list of family favorites, and let everyone pick one to spearhead. Sharing the decisions and the responsibility not only divides the stress, it may multiply the joy!

Have a wonderful and peaceful 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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ON THE COVER



The Grant family cherishes family heirlooms and continuing traditions at the holidays.

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Keepsake Christmas

At Home With Brett and Aimee Grant

— By Angel Morris





Cool, cozy and eclectic come to life at the home of Brett and Aimee Grant. “My husband and I were antiquing and happened upon a booth straight out of the ’60s that we both loved. At the time, we had a home full of other people’s furniture that they so generously donated to us when we were newlyweds. Beautiful, just not our style,” Aimee recalled. “When we moved, we held a huge garage sale, sold almost everything that didn’t have sentimental value, and began collecting furniture, art and housewares that fit the mid-century era. And the heirlooms we have from family that mean so much fit right in, too.”

The Grants, including sons, Fisher and Grayson, use that same approach when decorating for the holidays. “We love the look of vintage Christmas and have many collections. Santa collectibles that were Brett’s mom’s adorn the entryway. The mantel holds our collection of old and new bottlebrush trees, and our stockings were made by Brett’s grandmother,” Aimee described.

Along with a nativity scene in every room, each space has its own Christmas tree. One revolving tree holds keepsake ornaments from Brett, Aimee and Aimee’s mom, as well as special handmade ornaments from the boys. Hand-stitched tree skirts once belonged to Brett’s grandmother and mother.

Another revolving tree has all blown glass ornaments — a collection started by Aimee’s mom on Brett and Aimee’s first Christmas together. “So now, every year we all get a blown glass ornament commemorating that year and add it to the Grant Family Tree,” Brett explained.

Two smaller trees hold antique glass balls tying into the Grants’ mid-century decor. “The trees in every room reflect the space they are in: a tiki room tree, a purple and bumblebee tree in Aimee’s craft room, the boys have bedroom trees with ornaments they have selected, and there are trees in the entryway, kitchen, restrooms and dining room, too. You can never have too many trees!” Aimee claimed.

In 2011, Aimee became especially sentimental about Christmas. “I lost my mom unexpectedly right before Thanksgiving, and that year, once I began to decorate for Christmas, I had the urge to fill our home with things that hold memories,” she shared. “So especially at Christmas, keepsakes adorn our home from both mine and Brett’s childhoods and families, and we began some traditions for our boys that I hope they will carry on for their lifetimes.”

The memory of a tree with blue lights and huge ball ornaments from Aimee’s childhood home inspired a garland above the Grants’ entry that shares the same decor. “We also have happy multicolored lights and two lit angels at the door that remind us to rejoice in the season,” Aimee noted.

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Merry Christmas




Holiday memories aren't the only thing intertwined between Brett and Aimee. "We met when Aimee was 7 and I was 11. Our moms began working together in the front office of J.R. Irvin Elementary (now The Mile) back when it was the only elementary school in Midlothian, and our families became inseparable," Brett explained.

Brett had been raised in Midlothian, and Aimee moved here just before second grade. Brett was a volunteer firefighter for Midlothian Fire Department through high school, and he and Aimee both graduated from MHS. Brett served as a Navy Corpsman after graduating in 1993 and earned a degree in business administration. Aimee went to nursing school after graduating in 1996. "We both flew the coop after graduation and had other life experiences, but the Lord blessed us and brought us back together again. On April 16, 2005, the same anniversary date as Brett's grandparents, we got married," Aimee said.

After getting married, Brett completed the fire academy, earning his fire science degree as well as completing EMT and paramedic training. He has risen through the ranks of Rowlett Fire Department over the last 19 years, currently serving as the Battalion Training Chief. He also teaches at Navarro College as a fire/paramedic instructor and owns/operates Time to Act Certification Services, teaching life support, on-the-job safety and more.

Aimee went to nursing school at The University of Texas at Tyler and became a nurse in 2001. She trained at Arlington Memorial Hospital as a labor and delivery/nursery nurse. She worked





in a few other hospital locations, always in women's and children's services, for more than two decades before hanging up her stethoscope and going to work full time for Mentors Care. She now works at Life School Oak Cliff High School as the Mentors Care coordinator on campus.

The Grants built their current home and moved to Autumn Run in July 2016, after good friends built a house in the neighborhood. "We ended up building right next door to those friends and have gotten very close with all our neighbors," Aimee stated. "We celebrate birthdays and special occasions, and you can often find us playing games, watching movies, watching football games, singing karaoke or enjoying some other neighborly shenanigans."

Sharing Christmas moments with neighbors and family is special to the Grants, too. "We really like to decorate early and enjoy the decorations as long as we can. At night, we turn off all overhead lighting, start the fireplace and enjoy the glow of all the trees lit up at once," Aimee described.

Brett continued, "We watch every old, classic Christmas movie possible, and we host a 'Crazy Santa' Christmas party with our extended family. It's one of our favorite days of the year."

Ultimately, it's about surrounding themselves with things that bring joy during the holidays. "Keepsakes and the memories that come with them are all we have left of Christmases past, so we hold onto them, treasure them and keep them alive every year," Aimee admitted. "I love our home full of memories and look forward to making more of them for the rest of our days." **NOW**

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— By Angel Morris

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Midlothian, off Hwy. 67 in Cedar Hill. "I grew up in a family-owned paint and body shop in Dallas, and my own career in the collision business began in 1972," Darrell recalled.

Darrell has been employed full time in the automotive/collision repair industry since graduating high school. The decision to become owner and operator of his own business came after working in management since 1987 at other high-profile collision repair companies in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex. "Superstar Collision is a true family-owned and -operated business including my wife, two sons, daughter-in-law and nephew. All are involved in the business in some capacity or another," Darrell said.

Superstar prides itself on employing people who truly have a vested interest in doing things correctly and retaining the customer. The relationship between Darrell and most of the management dates to the early '90s, with the average tenure of all management being 15 years.

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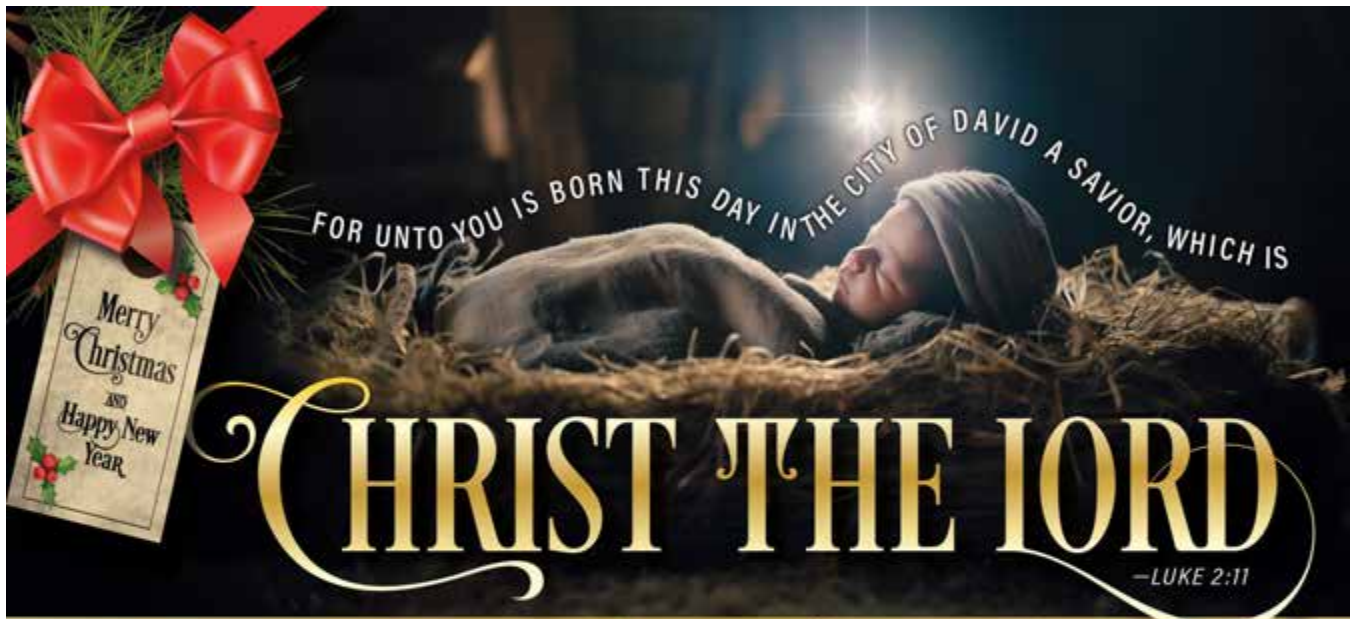
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Zoomed In: Brad Scheckelhoff

By Angel Morris

Brad Scheckelhoff began working construction as a carpenter in 1982. “I worked my way up and retired as senior superintendent in 2024. Now that I’m retired, I have plenty of time for golf and woodworking,” he shared.

The latter hobby turned into creating nativity stables and layered crosses for the holidays, which Brad showcases on the Midlothian Everything Facebook page. “Seems like it’s way too hot to work in the garage until this time of year, which fits perfect for building Christmas gifts or decorations.”

The proud grandparents of 5-year-old twin boys and two Shih Tzu puppies, Brad and his wife moved to Midlothian in 2018. “We’re excited about some of the renovations happening downtown,” he noted. “Hopefully, we’ll get a good steak house soon.”



Alain Kraussman Hall sells and teaches others how to create custom pour-painted ornaments and more through Artistry by LARK Designs.



HOTWORX Midlothian members, Jennifer Adams and Tammy Wright, visit Workout Wanda at the Midlothian Downtown Business Association Scarecrow Festival.



The Midlothian Panthers are back-to-back undefeated 15-5A District Champions after not dropping a single set in all 16 district matches.



American Legion Auxiliary Chris Kyle Post 388 volunteers prepare a meal raising funds for local veterans.



Hailey Atkins is already in the spirit of Christmas, dressed as a gingerbread girl, during the city's Downtown Trick or Treat event.



Lyla Flores and Mika Stansberry strike a pose for Party Week at On the Move Dance Studio.

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The Pie That Gathered Us – Apple Pie



CookingNOW IN THE KITCHEN WITH MCKENZIE TURNER

— By Angel Morris



McKenzie Turner is a stay-at-home mom who has always loved to play in the kitchen. “Baking has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. From watching my grandmother roll out pie dough in her tiny Texas kitchen to experimenting myself with flavors at midnight while my baby slept, it has always been more than just recipes. It’s about connection, tradition and heart,” she expressed.

McKenzie pours enthusiasm into every pie, cheesecake and special sweet she creates. “My baking was born from a deep love for nostalgic desserts, warm Southern charm and the joy that comes from sharing something sweet with others,” she reflected.

As the owner and baker behind The Vintage Whisk Company, a small, home-based baking business, McKenzie’s baking goal has always been simple. “To create desserts that feel like home, with flavors that spark joy and stories that bring people together.” **NOW**

3. Set the skillet over medium heat. Add the brown sugar, sugar, flour, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir gently with a rubber spatula to avoid breaking the apples.
4. Once mixed completely, set a timer to 20 minutes and cover. Stir every 3 minutes or so, replacing the lid each time.
5. Cook until the apples are fork tender but still holding their shape. (The apples will not soften when baking, so make sure to taste test to see if the texture is good.) Remove from heat; stir in the vanilla.
6. Spread the cooked apple mixture onto a baking sheet; place the baking sheet in the refrigerator until completely cooled.
7. Get out one sheet of pie dough, and prepare it in a 9-inch pie dish. Add the cooled pie filling, including all the gooiness, into the pie crusted dish. Top with the second pie sheet. *Note: I do a lattice crust on top, but you could also use your favorite Christmas cookie cutters to add a little more Christmas spirit to the top!*
8. Mix the milk and beaten egg in a small bowl. Right before placing the pie in the oven, brush the crust with egg and milk wash. Sprinkle the top with sugar and cinnamon.
9. Place the pie onto a foil-lined baking sheet; bake for 15 minutes, until the crust is turning light brown.
10. Reduce the heat to 350 F. Remove the pie; cover with foil to protect the crust from burning. Bake an additional 40-45 minutes, or until the edges are brown and the center is light golden brown.
11. Let the pie cool on a cooling rack for at least 4 hours. Store at room temperature for up to 2 days, and then store in the refrigerator for an additional 2-3 days.

Leveling up your pie:

- 👉 Try mixing up the types of apples you use for a more in-depth flavor.
- 👉 Make your crust from scratch.
- 👉 Use lime juice to add a more unique taste.
- 👉 Add a dash of cardamom for that “something special.”
- 👉 Make it ahead of time for ease on the holiday. Freeze the unbaked pie. Just skip the egg wash and flash freeze an hour before wrapping in plastic wrap. Wrap in foil.

The Pie That Gathered Us – Apple Pie

1/4 tsp. lemon zest
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
4 lbs. apples, peeled, cored and sliced
3/4 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup sugar
5 Tbsp. flour
1/4 tsp. salt
1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon, plus some for topping

3/4 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. vanilla
2 sheets of pie dough (homemade or store-bought works well)
1 Tbsp. milk (for brushing pie)
1 Tbsp. beaten egg (for brushing pie)
1 Tbsp. raw sugar (for topping pie)

1. Preheat the oven to 425 F; allow to heat 20-25 minutes before baking.
2. Zest and juice a lemon. Add the juice to a cast-iron or any deep skillet. Add the apples to the skillet.





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DECK-OU PAGE THE HALLS

— By Emma McKay

As the Christmas season draws near, people start dusting off their yuletide decorations — and adding new ones to their collection. While the knickknacks on store shelves can be cute, nothing feels more in-line with the holiday season than homemade trinkets. Decoupage ornaments or candles puts a personal touch on otherwise plain objects, and the memory of making them can be created without spending much money. To create these beautiful statement pieces, you can upcycle items you already have on hand or easily find most of the supplies at a thrift or dollar store.

DECOUPAGE ORNAMENTS

Decorative napkins

Scissors

Glass Christmas ball ornaments (Depending on your napkin/tissue paper pattern, white or clear balls may work best.)

Flat paintbrush or painting sponge

Mod Podge

Ribbon

1. Carefully separate the layers of your napkins, discarding the blank layer.
2. Cut the napkins into 1-inch strips, long enough to wrap around the circumference of your ornament but not more. If your napkin has large images on it that you do not want broken up, you can use the creases in the napkin to help guide you into cutting it into fourths.
3. Remove the hangers from your ornaments.
4. Brush a thin layer of Mod Podge on the ornaments.
5. *For napkin strips:* Place one end of a napkin strip at the top of the ornament, then wrap it around the length of the ornament, making sure it adheres to the curve of the ball.
6. Rotate the ornament 90 degrees, then repeat Step 5. When looking at the bottom of the ornament, the napkins should make an X.
7. For the remaining blank space, either repeat Step 5 until the whole ornament is covered, or cut the strips of napkins to the size of those spaces and adhere them.
8. *For napkin fourths:* Place one corner at the top of the ornament, then carefully wrap the napkin around the rest of the ornament, making small folds to cover the whole thing.
9. Now that the whole ornament is covered, brush a layer of Mod Podge over the napkins. You may need to adjust the material or add a little bit of Mod Podge under any folds to make it lie flat against the ornament's surface.
10. Let the ornament dry for a few hours.
11. Once the Mod Podge has completely dried, trim any excess material around the top of the ornament, so that the hanger will fit as you place it back on the ornament.
12. Tie a piece of ribbon into a bow on the loop of the hanger.

DECOUPAGE CANDLES

Decorative napkins
Scissors
Electric or real cylinder candle
Flat paintbrush or painting sponge
Mod Podge
Craft glue (optional)
Ribbon, rhinestones or other decorative things (optional)

1. Carefully separate the layers of your napkins, discarding the blank layer.
2. Cut the napkins to the height and circumference (plus 1/4 inch) of your candle, or just cut out any large images that you want from the napkins to stick them on individually.
3. *For full coverage:* Brush a thin layer of Mod Podge over the candle.
4. Line up the edge of the napkin with the bottom of the candle, then carefully wrap it around the rest of the candle. Have the 1/4 inch extra length of napkin overlap the start of your napkin, so the candle is completely covered.
5. *For just the images:* Brush Mod Podge on the candle where you wish to place the image, then apply it to the candle. You can even treat this as a collage, using images from different napkins and overlapping images to create your own unique scene. When overlapping the napkins, be sure to give the first one that's Mod Podged down time to dry. Otherwise, the excess glue could tear the napkins.
6. Brush a layer of Mod Podge over the napkins, smoothing out the wrinkles as you go.
7. Let the candle dry for a few hours.
8. Once dried, you can glue ribbons, rhinestones or whatever crafting supplies you'd like to fill in any gaps or cover the rough edges of your napkins.
9. If you don't want to use Mod Podge on the candle, you can also apply the napkins using an iron or another handheld heat source. Just place the napkins where you want them, wrap the candle tightly in parchment paper, then on low heat, slowly work your iron around the candle. This melts the wax enough to bind to the napkin. Once the candle has cooled, you can remove the parchment paper and enjoy your new decoration! **NOW**

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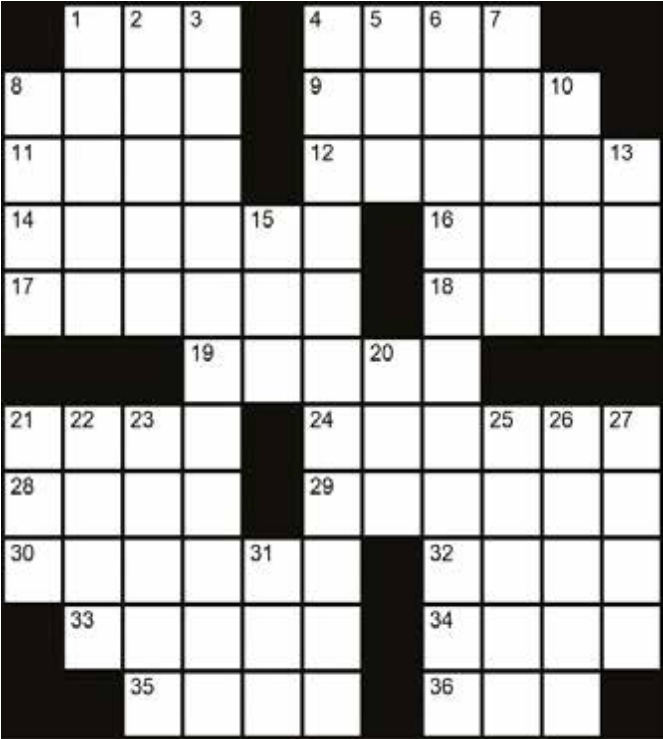
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Across

- 1 Chucklehead
4 Rover's reward
8 --- Battlefield Historic State Park
9 Blue ribbon, for example
11 --- Bradley, five-star General
12 "Pride and Prejudice" heroine Elizabeth ---
14 Acquire
16 Hi or 'bye in Italy
17 Where Dorothy was blown away
18 Quick sharp bark
19 Monica Lewinsky's former friend Linda ---

Down

- 1 Girl Scout cookie
2 "He's --- fool!"
3 1980s Soviet policy of reconstruction
4 Distributing tasty bribes gets home helps
5 "You --- it to yourself"
6 Nosy pelican flapped about in the House
7 Orange Sesame Street room-mate
8 Charging station
10 Distribute cards
13 Beat
15 Ingot

- 20 Sports money-maker
21 Make lace
22 Farm fare
23 Mary --- of "The Maltese Falcon"
25 Start fighting
26 They take the cake
27 "Pandora's Box" painter --- Magnitte
31 Eldest of the "Little Women"

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Easy


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

Medium

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

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DECEMBER

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12/5

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Dress in your holiday best and enjoy an evening of timeless tunes and festive melodies. Children 18 and under: \$15; adults: \$30. Waxahachie ISD Performing Arts Center, 3001 US 287 Waxahachie. Purchase tickets at <https://www.waxahachiesymphony.org/>.

12/5-12/7 and 12/12-12/14

Bethlehem Revisited:

Step back in time and walk the streets of ancient Bethlehem as Mary and Joseph did on the night of Christ's birth. 6:00-9:00 p.m., 402 N. College St. (behind Central Presbyterian Church), Waxahachie.

12/6

Jingle Belles 5K & Rubies Fun Run:

Every step helps support the Heritage High School Belles and Rubies drill teams with contest fees, costumes, props and more. Registration and packet pickup: 7:00 a.m.; fun run begins: 8:00 a.m.; 5K race begins: 8:30 a.m.; awards ceremony: 9:30 a.m., Midlothian ISD Multi-Purpose Stadium, 1800 S. 14th St.

Christmas Cookie Walk:

Fill a box with the homemade cookies of your choice. Proceeds help feed children in need. 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., First Methodist Church, 800 S. 9th St.

Midlothian

Christmas Celebration:

Festivities include take-and-make crafts, holiday market, selfies with Santa, toy drive, entertainment and more. 1:00-5:00 p.m., downtown 8th Street. Movie Magic Light-up Parade: 6:00 p.m., downtown North 8th Street to West Avenue F to Overlook Drive.

Rudolph's Hot Rod Holiday:

Car show and Christmas market. Free to attend. Car show payments received only at the gate. 2:00-6:00 p.m., Paws for Reflection Ranch, 5431 Montgomery Rd. Pre-register your car at <https://pawsforreflectionranch.org/>.

12/12

Merry Movie Night:

Bring the family to watch *The Polar Express*, and enjoy free refreshments while supplies last. Bring blankets and chairs for lawn seating. 6:30 p.m., Midlothian Community Park, 3601 S. 14th St.

12/13

Fueling for Families:

Car show benefiting Anchor Home. 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Union 28, 651 Highlander.

Christmas at Founders Row:

Live music, a petting zoo, crafts and other activities. Tickets are required for ice skating and photos with Santa, but entry is free. 3:00-8:00 p.m., 314 E. Ave. E.

12/13-12/14

Historic Waxahachie Christmas Tour of Homes:

Advance ticket: \$25; tour weekend: \$30. 1:00-7:00 p.m. For more information and tickets, visit <https://www.historicwaxahachie.com/2025christmastourofhomes/>.

12/14

The Trail To the Manger:

The Lone Star Cowboy Church Band and the Little Wranglers will perform popular songs and traditional favorites. 10:00 a.m., The Lone Star Cowboy Church, 1011 E. Ovalla Rd., Red Oak. For details, call (972) 576-0900.

12/18-12/20

It's A Wonderful Life:

A live radio play by Back Porch Theatre Inc. 7:00-9:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. Tickets: backporchtheatre.org/ticket-sales/.

Weekdays

Library Events:

Daily events for a range of ages, from Book Babies and Disney Trivia, to Dungeons and Dragons, Adult Yoga and more. Midlothian Public Library, 215 N. 8th St. Visit midlothian.libcal.com for schedules.

Second Saturdays

Resilient Together:

Connect with others who understand the challenges of living with MS. 10:00 a.m.-noon, Harvest Hill Church (first floor, red room), 1250 Walter Stephenson Rd. RSVP to mallory.msfriends@yahoo.com.

Third Saturdays

Urban Well Food Pantry:

Everyone receives a large box of fresh foods while supplies last. 9:30-10:30 a.m., Creekside Church, 5491 E. Hwy. 287. Text (817) 944-0318 to volunteer.

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



If you are an adult who is afraid of going to the dentist, or even just a little extra anxious, Serenity Advanced Dentistry may be just what you are looking for. "We do a lot of sedation dentistry, mostly for adults," Dr. Allala explained. "It's kind of my niche. Many adults may have some pretty serious anxiety about going to the dentist. They may not even seek care. They'd rather be in pain. I provide a place to take care of these people. When patients elect to get treatment, we lower the statistics of people living in pain. I like being able to contribute to improving people's lives."

"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 corny, 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 Jessica. 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."

Serenity Advanced Dentistry has all the newest technology to make your experience convenient. "We have hospital-grade blood pressure machines, so we can do sedation. We also have intraoral scanners, so I can see inside your mouth, from every angle, before I ever go in for your procedure. We print dentures and place implants right here in the office. With our skills and strategies, most patients don't even feel our injections. We have TVs in every room to keep you entertained while we work. It's all about efficiency — working smarter, not harder. That's why I designed the floor plan of the office myself. And we're really big on sanitation and sterilization. It's important to maintain a sterile environment, which is why we're closed every Friday for deep cleaning the office and training."



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