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M A G A Z I N E


December 2009

**Fairfield
Dickens of
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**The
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**Talent to
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***At Home With*
John and
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On The Cover

Christmas display at T & Company.

Photo by Linda Moffett.

Editor's Note

Holiday Greetings to Corsicana and Navarro County!

The tree lighting event in Corsicana is a wonderful way to begin the holiday celebration. If you did not see the parade and hear the music, you can still spark a festive feeling by walking downtown under the lights that are hanging overhead and shining in the beautifully decorated store windows. This is a good year to shop in your hometown stores for gifts for family and friends and, do not forget, choose something special for the folks who do not have families or the means to enjoy gift giving.

The churches, large and small, are another place to go to celebrate the true meaning of this holiday time. They, too, are decorated to inspire a holiday message about hope and loving generosity that will guide you through another year. Take that message with you to light up the holidays in your own home.

Happy Holidays!
Joan Kilbourne
CorsicanaNOW Editor



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722 Forest Lane - 3/2 w/ marble entry, huge living area w/ fireplace, spacious kitchen & large master suite. Julie 903-654-3970



1878 W 3rd - Spacious 3/2 on large shady lot. Hardwoods, 2 fplcs, recent appliances & sun room w/ double! Julie 903-654-3970



1101 The Shores Dr - Spectacular 5br/3 waterfront with 2 living areas, 2 utility rooms, & gourmet kitchen. Too much to list! Julie 903-654-3970



123 SECR 3147 - Stunning 4/5/7 waterfront in Lakeside Estates. Home theater, basketball court & much more, on 2 acres! Julie 903-654-3970



148 Bay View Cr - Beautiful 5/3/2 waterfront home in White Rock Subdivision, 2 master suites, granite, vaulted ceilings & more! John 903-641-3359



120 SECR 2231 - Awesome 15 acres with trees, water frontage, boat dock & ramp, home, barn, 2 storage buildings, 2 ponds, and more! Julie 903-654-3970



416 Fidler Lane - One-of-a-kind 4/3/2 in Vista Ridge with great water views! Open concept, coffee bar, double ovens, Tuscan fireplace & 20 ft ceilings! Julie 903-654-3970



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119 Pugh Lane - Well-maintained 4/3 w/ game room, wet bar, 2 stall barn w/ electric, water & tackroom. 30x45 workshop w/ 16' doors. Priced to sell! Annette 903-654-3354



Lot 206 The Shores - Beautiful lot with open water view, electric & water available and on cul-de-sac. Christine 903-654-0720



000 CR 0190 - 79+ acres previously used for grazing, tall native grass, some trees, 2 stock tanks & county road frontage. Christine 903-654-0720



000 ACR 2160 - Nice property close to RC Lake that is suitable for home site, 2 tanks, 2 ponds & working pens. Christine 903-654-0720



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000 Oak Grove Rd - Great location for housing, previously platted for subdivision. Christine 903-654-0720



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The Santa House

— By Joan Kilbourne



**In the Texas spirit of
“Y’all come”
Evelyn would open the
windows so they
could smell the
cookies baking.**

Did you know that Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus live right here in Corsicana? Every year more and more families learn about the Christmas party that takes place in December at Santa’s house. Rumor has it that Charles and Evelyn Harrison know quite a bit about this event since it takes place in their big backyard. During most of the year, the jungle

gym and the bathtub that serves as a fort or a ship that sails away on adventures are enjoyed by the Harrison’s six grandchildren and their five great-grandchildren. But in October, a transformation begins. Mr. and Mrs. Claus bring their big red sleigh out of the shed. They unpack thousands of lights and set up the serving table for the party. Painted wooden figures pepper the space with Christmas characters and lighted bells are hung from the flagpole in the front yard.

Evelyn Harrison, sometimes known as Mrs. Claus, grew up in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She passed the civil

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service exam as a high school senior and when she graduated, she was employed at the Air Force base in Sioux Falls. That is where she met and married Charles, who was stationed there. Evelyn has convictions about the value of families staying together. "I am one of eight children," she said, "and I am the only one still living. I urged my cousins to get together here



while they are still able to come. I even sent them 'stimulus checks' to be sure they would."

Charles Harrison, sometimes known as Santa Claus, grew up in Kerens, Texas, which was home to his great-great-grandmother. Both of his great-grandfathers were in the Civil War. When Charles enlisted in the Air Force, he was involved in World War II. He served in the infantry until he was injured. After that, he was sent to be a nose gunner on a B29 Liberator plane. Charles said, "I knew nothing about guns or planes but that didn't matter at that time." Later, he became a teletype operator and again, "All I knew was how to type." Charles arrived at the Air Force Base in Sioux Falls with 40,000 men, all scheduled to go to Japan. The plan changed when the A-bomb fell. "The base closed at the end of the war," Charles said. "I was in headquarters detail, so I closed the gates."

Back home in Texas, Charles had

worked on a farm for \$1 a day, so he wasn't surprised when he found a job working on a farm in South Dakota and was told that he would be paid \$1. "What surprised me was learning that they meant to pay \$1 an hour." When he returned to Texas, Charles said, "I worked at the agriculture school the Army managed in Kerens. The Army started a junior college in the



barracks and that was the beginning of Navarro College. Altogether I was in the Air Force for 21 years." Charles explained that he served a year beyond the required 20-year retirement mark "to be sure some joker wouldn't count wrong and mess it up." Even now, he remains connected to the service. There is a picture on the wall of their home of Charles in the uniform of the Commemorative Air Force.

When Charles and Evelyn returned to Texas, they began farming on Charles' grandmother's corn and cotton farm. Later, he joined the tombstone business in the footsteps of his father, grandfather and uncles. "In those days," Charles remembered, "people could take an insurance policy for 10 cents a month, and when it was needed, they would be provided a \$100 monument." The large raw granite slab table in the backyard of his home is a reminder of that time.

In 1987, the couple moved to their present home in Corsicana. While

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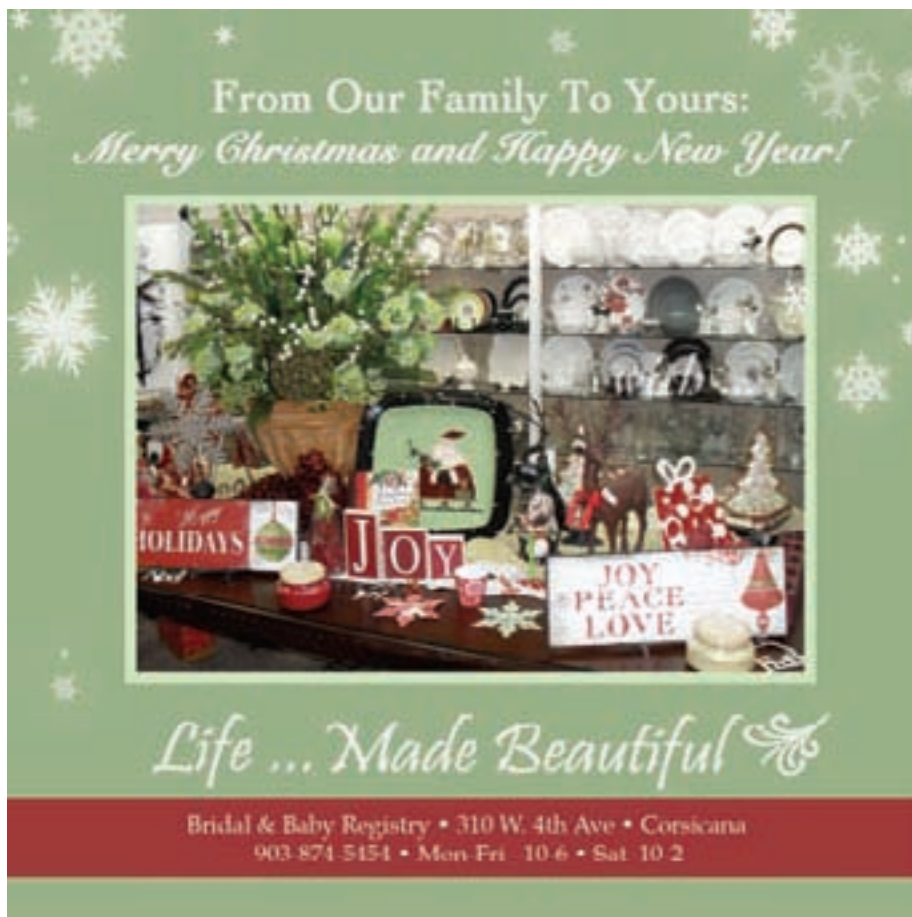
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their son-in-law, who lived in Garland, was building their house, Charles and Evelyn worked each night clearing the site after the workers left. "No one would come to do it all the way from Garland, so we came home from work and afterward we were sometimes too tired to bother eating dinner. We both lost 20 pounds," Evelyn said. Charles and Evelyn paid off their house working at jobs that paid well during the industrial boom time in Corsicana; Charles worked at Bethlehem Steel



When Charles enlisted in the Air Force, he was involved in World War II.

and Evelyn worked at the hat factory. Evelyn remembers that it was hard to learn how to sew the braid for the hats. "I even cried sometimes at first," she said. But the boss was encouraging and the \$3-an-hour pay was a big step up from her previous job that paid only 75 cents an hour.

The Christmas party tradition began in the late 1950s in Kerens. Charles was already dressing as Santa to ride in the Kerens' Christmas parade. Their oldest daughter was impressed that her daddy "frowed" away candy in the parade. Her first grade class was invited to the first party. The next year, 25 families drove

by in cars to see the decorations and eat cookies. The third year, more than 50 people began to walk around the yard looking at the new lights and displays. In the Texas spirit of “Y’all



come” Evelyn would open the windows so they could smell the cookies baking. And they did come! Last year, the party in Corsicana had more than 1,000 visitors.

Evelyn makes cookies all year long to freeze for the party in December. The Harrisons have three lots to decorate, starting in October and ending on Thanksgiving Day. There are cutout wooden figures, and countless lights to see. Santa sits on his big, red sleigh inviting children to join him to have their pictures taken. Children can ride on the barrel train, climb on the jungle gym (painted red of course), jump in the bounce house and ride down the slide. They can sit in the bathtub the Harrison children used when they were small to take imaginary journeys.

When she could no longer find space to store enough cookies for the crowd, Evelyn searched everywhere for a popcorn making machine. When she inquired at Corsicana National Bank, she was told, “Use ours.” Neighbors help serve the cookies, nachos and popcorn and pour punch and coffee for visitors. Neighbors drive the tractor that pulls the barrel train. A group of neighbors gathered for punch and cookies at Santa’s house in October to work together refreshing the paint on the cutout figures. Asked why they began hosting the Christmas party, Charles just smiled and said, “We just wanted to have a good time.” **XXX**

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Glitz & Sparkle

— By Sandra Skoda

At Home
With
**John
&
Carolyn
Yates**



When the holiday season arrives at the two-story Georgian home of John and Carolyn Yates, the first things that come to mind are the children. “We work hard to create lasting memories for the grandchildren,” John said, as Carolyn smiled in agreement.

Lasting holiday memories that quickly come to mind include the Corsicana High School Choir and the age-old story of the true meaning of Christmas. Carolyn fondly recalled the excitement and joy the entire family had one year as she opened the French doors to the formal dining area so the family could hear the choir as it sang a medley of carols from the backyard covered patio. “The children handed out a gift to each choir member,” Carolyn said. “This taught them the importance of giving, as well as receiving.” Another year they invited Charles, Corsicana’s well-known bartender, to come serve the family dinner. The children took great delight in his banter and easy manner.

The year that seems simple in comparison was the year Carolyn recited the Christmas story, from the Bible. “John and I want them to know and understand the true meaning of Christmas; that it’s not all about the gifts,” she explained.



"One of John's boys puts the story into action within his own family. Jesus only received three gifts, so they only receive three gifts."

The two-story home, built in 1929, becomes a Christmas wonderland as Carolyn, also known as the Christmas Queen within her circle of family and friends, retrieves boxes from the attic and the storage building located in town. "There's at least five full pickup truck loads in the storage building



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alone," John confessed. Before a single ornament or keepsake is displayed, Carolyn completely cleans the house to make room for all the family collectibles. "She takes everything off the mantel, the tables, the bookcases," John said. "She starts with a clean slate."

The process begins immediately following Halloween, and Carolyn does not dream of taking it down and re-boxing it all until sometime in mid-to-late January. She readily admits that it is a long, and sometimes tedious, undertaking, but nothing is too much



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for her family. "I still decorate 'big' for the grandchildren," she said. "They love the glitz and sparkle."

The Yates home is decorated from top to bottom; no nook or cranny is left untouched by Carolyn's talented hands and vivid imagination. Glitz and sparkle are the perfect words to describe the different vignettes and table scapes Carolyn creates from one season to the next. One year, she added mirrors to the top of the dining

room table before putting her white china in place. Silver trays and bowls accented the mirrors, as silver crystal icicles hung everywhere. "When the candles were lit, the room jumped and danced," Carolyn remembered, while the overall effect reminded John of fire and ice. The antique sideboard is also heavily decorated with garland, lights and a cherub statuette.

Carolyn admits that her mood dictates her decorating theme from year to year. "Last year was a somber time," she said. "As a nation, I felt like we needed hope." Hope became the theme in the formal living room as she placed an eclectic hand-stitched picture in the center of an oversized wreath on the fireplace mantle. The picture held one simple word stitched in deep red — Hope. She accented with garland, twinkling lights, a needlepoint picture of Mary and baby Jesus on one side and a guardian angel on the other. This same year, Carolyn used her amber Depression glass with green goblets in the dining room, while her Spode

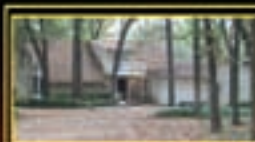
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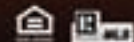
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Christmas dish collection donned the table in the breakfast nook. "She has at least 10 sets of china," John said. "Everything from antique to contemporary."

Her large collection of Byers carolers are regally displayed throughout the home. "The collection started small, but it grew and had puppies," she laughingly said. "The collection has grown to include no fewer than 200 carolers." John's favorite is the grouping of Salvation Army carolers, which Carolyn is eager to display

each year for his enjoyment. Twenty to 30 Santas, several from her Lyn Haney collection, offer jolly holiday cheer as they peek from the shelves of bookcases and end tables. On occasion, two large nutcrackers take their place beside The Salvation Army carolers.

Three large, beautifully decorated trees can be seen in the formal living area, the master bedroom and in the guest quarters located above the two-car garage. Lots of smaller lit trees are placed strategically, many within the vignettes.

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The couple, when asked, really had no favorite ornament. "We buy a new Christmas ornament every year," John said, "usually during the holiday season." They have purchased some as close as Jefferson, Texas, and the most recent one, a Waterford crystal ball, on a trip to New York. They also include a large selection of Christopher Radco ornaments, delicately hand blown into hanging works of Christmas art.

The banister leading upstairs is heavily laden with natural decor. Carolyn's Snow Village collection can

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be found on a window shelf that spans the entire wall in the sunroom with its original stone floor. Christmas transformation is evident wherever one looks when all the decorating is complete.

John and Carolyn love reminiscing about their own childhood and what Christmas meant to them as adolescents, and now as adults. John's

father was a carpenter who built many of his gifts. "I still have a desk he built for me years ago," John said. "It has so much more meaning now than ever before." Carolyn remembers the cooking her mother did and the hospitality she bestowed on all her holiday visitors. "We had so much food," she confessed. "Friends would



drop by. We had lots of gatherings."

With all the decorating, parties and family get-togethers, it is hard for John and Carolyn to have any "us" time, so they have reserved Christmas morning for themselves, and of course their newest addition, Sophie, a puppy with pink bows in her hair and a constant wag to her tail. Carolyn may prepare a breakfast fit for a king, or they may just sip coffee as they relax and enjoy the glitz and sparkle that another holiday season has provided. "It's our day," John said, smiling at Carolyn. "Yes, it's our day, and it's the first day I actually get to sit back and enjoy it all."

Sometimes tradition can be having no tradition at all. Doing something different each year has become tradition for John and Carolyn, and it works perfectly for the pair. As Christmas music played softly in the background, they both agreed, "Christmas is our most favorite time of year." **NOW**

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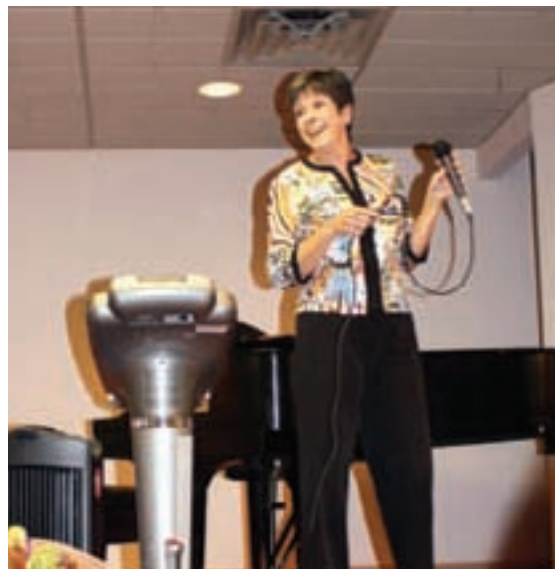
Clark Barker and Jayne Shields pose after their wedding ceremony at Northside Baptist Church.



Dorothy Carrigan and Eva Bobalik proudly display their home decor and merchandise at the Taste of Home Show.



Laura Martinez and Tamarah Brooks serve goodies at the Corsicana Chamber Monster Mash Bash.



Zanada Schoppert entertains the ladies at the ABWA meeting with a medley of songs.



Lydia, Becky, Ashlie and Austin are in disguise and collecting treats at the downtown Halloween event.



Participants of the CHS cheerleaders clinic for girls ages 4 through 6th grade show their spirit at a Tiger home game.



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Dickens of a Christmas

— By Alex Allred

Ebenezer Scrooge has no place in Fairfield, Texas, yet the infamous tight-fisted, foul-tempered old man will feature prominently in this year's Christmas celebration. The "It's a Dickens of a Christmas" parade and celebration on December 5 is themed after the *A Christmas Carol* classic, complete with a "shopping spree in downtown Fairfield," said Fairfield City Administrator Jeff Looney.

Each year, hundreds if not thousands, of Texans drive through Fairfield on their way to the annual holiday festivities held in Marshall, Texas, but there is no shortage of Christmas spirit in Fairfield. Even as Fairfield sets up an elaborate tree at the foot of the historic courthouse steps, the same building that was constructed in 1919, city officials are already looking at next year with hopes of building an ice skating rink and possibly showing holiday movies to the public. "We want to embrace the real spirit of Christmas' past, present and the future," Jeff said with a smile.

Ebenezer's Escapades, a.k.a. the shopping spree, translates into stores staying open late December 5, each offering prizes to its

customers. "At the end of the parade and Christmas tree lighting," Jeff said, "floats will be awarded for first, second and third place, totaling in the amount of \$1,000." Vendors will also raffle off prizes at the end of the parade in the amount of \$500 for first prize, \$250 for second, \$150 for third and \$100 for fourth place.

Beyond the obvious economic boost, Jeff hopes "It's a Dickens of a Christmas" will also instill that feeling of warmth, family, excitement and hope that the holidays have brought in the past.

Even in a downward economy, Jeff believes in the spirit of the season.

As the president of the board for the nonprofit organization, Camp of the Rising Sun, "I've always had a special place in my heart for those in need and believe everyone should get the opportunity to reach their full potential," Jeff said. The camp "is a free summer camp for special needs children where the needs range from speech issues to being severely handicapped but we never turn any child away, no matter how severe!" said the camp's executive director, Jamie Kitchens.

Although it is a summer event, the giving begins now and Fairfield is more than ready. In fact, Jeff and Jamie, along with a tremendous volunteer base, have organized a gala event on December 3 at the Halbert House in Corsicana. Casino Night, complete with wine and cheese, door prizes and an auction, benefits all the special needs children of Navarro and Freestone counties. Indeed, there is no bah-humbug in Fairfield! **NOW**



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Talent to



Phyllis Pallanich is a gifted artist who finds joy in a talent that she shares freely with her community. “As a child,” Phyllis said, “I always drew. It drove my mother crazy that I used up all the school paper she bought. I drew on every page. I like paper still, how it feels and what I can do with it. I like boxes, too; maybe it is the hope of what it can hold inside, what treasure could be there.” Her talent was first recognized in grade school. “I always entered the poster contests and won ribbons, usually first place,” Phyllis said.



— By Joan Kilbourne

“In high school mom wanted me to be a secretary,” Phyllis remembered, “so I took typing in a business course. Finally in my senior year, I got an opening to take an art class and I loved it. I was in three or four plays a year, and I played sports and I also played in the marching band. I was asked to play the bass drum, and they liked it because I played loud and I could keep the beat,” Phyllis laughed. “Some boy who played in a rock band thought it wasn’t cool to play the kettledrums in the orchestra, so I played them, too.”

“I wanted to go to college to be a commercial artist. My older sisters did not go to college, but I said I would work to pay my own way. While I was in college, the place I worked burned

down to the ground. That’s when I found a job in the display department of a department store. We would dress mannequins, do fashion shows and dress the windows. It was the headquarters store so we also designed signs and designed and built the backgrounds for the clothing and furniture window displays. I even learned to lay type for the signs and work on 10-foot ladders. At age 19, I was the youngest display supervisor ever. It was great. I got to touch all the new clothes and housewares as they came in.”

When Phyllis married and became pregnant with her son, she left the department store and worked in retail shops while she was rearing Shawn and then Sarah. The artistic drive

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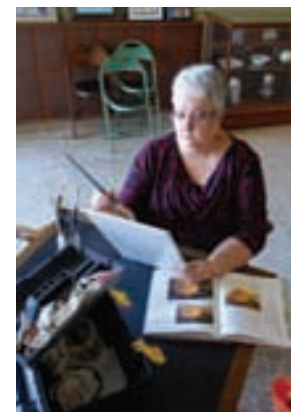


was persistent, however. Artists like Phyllis find ways to create even when children, home and work demand time and attention. When the children were small, Phyllis tried to include them in her art projects. She remembered an airbrush gun that the children liked to use to decorate their own clothes and objects around the house. "By the time you set up something for them and guide their work and then clean up

after them, there is little time to create the body of work it takes to make a career in art," Phyllis explained. "I would see some

craft that looked interesting and try it. I sold some things I made and taught classes in painting in a folk art style. I liked to sew, too, and the most fun was making Halloween costumes. I made a costume for myself every year for the street festival in Hillsboro. They gave out prizes, and I won first place every year until they made me a judge so I wouldn't win all the time," she said as she smiled happily. "My best costume was the spider with gloves at the end of each arm and all the arms would move when I moved my arms."

A few years later, life took another turn in Hillsboro where Phyllis worked at a business office supply center and became a partner with the owners. They built the business from earning \$80 a day to \$80,000 a month. She met her husband, Rick Pallanich, and with him moved to Corsicana to create the office supply business they run today. Phyllis



Sarah and Jerrie

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Arts NOW

designed the cards, letterhead and signs for the store. At first, the long hours in the store left little time to explore new forms of artistic expression that she found interesting. In an effort to work again at her art, Phyllis joined the Arts Council, and her portrait of a Tibetan lady was chosen for the Council's announcement cards. Two years ago, Phyllis' work was accepted for display in a juried art show. She



also won third place in the Paint Corsicana contest. Five of her pieces were shown at the Jordan Art Gallery and an ink wash drawing was sold there. She made drawings of familiar places around the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, put them on note cards and donated them to the Altar Society for fundraisers.

One day Phyllis may realize she is living her dream of becoming a commercial artist. For now, however, she looks forward to having studio space where she can explore new avenues in the arts like quilt making, stained glass design and wood carving. She is also enjoying an oil painting class taught by Barbara Jones where other artists, like Phyllis, are satisfying a desire to express ideas on canvas. And, like Phyllis, they juggle art with the rest of their busy lives. Phyllis said, "I feel like a cup being filled up when I am there." **NOW**

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Spunky little Cynthia Rojas was 8 years old when she decided to be different. As an adult, Coach Rojas keeps a busy schedule making a difference in the lives of the children she touches. Her workday begins at Navarro Elementary School and ends at Collins Middle School where she assists the Collins coach with last period and after-school activities. She appreciates both assignments. “I enjoy bouncing around,” she said. “I get to

Challenging Words

— By F. L. Brewer

be in two worlds. I get to help shape the little ones here [at Navarro] and do my part coaching the older kids at Collins.”

Cynthia is a graduate of McMurry College in Abilene where she began her studies as a business major, but switched to kinesiology — the study of human movement — because an instructor who took an interest in her noticed she had natural abilities with sports and children. Cynthia explained, “Doctor Pug Parris said I had a wonderful relationship with students, especially young kids.”

Her love of sports began when she was 4 years old while she watched her cousin’s soccer game in her hometown of San Angelo. “I saw them kicking this ball around and at that moment,” Cynthia said, “I literally fell in love with soccer. I asked to be on the team, and even though there wasn’t a place for me, Coach Jerry Barnard became my guardian angel when he made a place for me.” As she grew, soccer provided a much needed escape from a difficult childhood. Since then, the popular and highly competitive game of soccer has become her sport of choice to coach.

Cynthia’s bond with children began when she, herself, was barely old enough to know her right hand from her left. Now 28 years old, she recounts the complex problems of her childhood: “My mother was 13 when I was born, and we grew up together. My father was an alcoholic and went to prison when I was 15. I grew up taking care of my younger sister and brother.”

Growing up the eldest child of a dysfunctional family had few positives, and she bore the added burden of being taught by the same teachers who had taught her



parents. "They told me I was just like my parents," she explained, "and I would end up just like them." Instead of taking their grim prophecies to heart, Cynthia took their words as a challenge, resolving to do something important with her life.

For a time, the pressure to join gangs compounded the stress of her family life. Cynthia refused to join a gang, and was physically and emotionally persecuted for not



becoming part of one of these groups. As a result, she understands why youngsters are drawn to gangs. "A gang is a type of family," she said, "and sometimes, the gang is the only family they know, and they hold on to it. I paid the price. I was jumped by five girls and beat up two times, but I stood for what was right. I knew I was not in school to be popular or to please a person. I wanted to be a good person and education was my priority." After Cynthia withstood the gang members' threats, she gained the girls' respect. "Don't feel sorry for me, because I won a lot of honors in high school," she admitted. Among them, she was voted Valentine Queen, Most Beautiful and Most Popular.

Since her vow to be different at age 8, Cynthia has already achieved much more than some would have thought possible. "I am the first person in my family to graduate high school and college," she stated. "My mother went back to school to get her GED, but my grandmother, who worked in the fields, still doesn't read or write."




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When Cynthia looks at her students, she is aware they are the future. She is conscious that she is helping form their character and develop life skills as well as athletic skills. She assisted coaching in college and knows that the foundational skills necessary to make a good college player are taught from childhood. "I

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have learned to identify the ones who need help," she said.

Cynthia acknowledges the benefits of sports for everyone, but especially encourages single parents to pursue athletics with their children. "Do whatever you can to get kids involved in sports or any activity. Kids need to understand about losing and winning. Sports can possibly save their lives as they saved mine. I didn't dwell on my life the way it was, but sports helped by giving me the confidence to succeed at other things," she said.

Although she is new to the area, Cynthia likes Corsicana, its size and especially her students. "It's not too big," Cynthia said, "but big enough and the people are really nice."

About her life, "I don't want people to feel sorry for me. I don't regret the things that have happened to me. It made me who I am, and I'm not my parents. I'm my own woman now with my own values, and I'm able to talk about it [childhood] because it made me strong. I'm able to be there for those kids who live the way I did." **NOW**

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T is for *Tempting*

— By Joan Kilbourne

It would be easy to spend an hour seeing everything displayed in a glittering array of jewelry, clothing, accessories, baby clothes and decorative gift shop items. This glorious collection of things one wants to take home reflects the eclectic tastes of Joanna Hunt and Teresa Jenkins, business partners of T & Company. Teresa explained, “The T is for Teresa and, I guess, the Company is for everyone else.”

“Joanna and I have different tastes,” Teresa said. “I like things that are simple. I like Asian items. Joanna likes items that are more ornate. She likes jewelry. I tell her she is more gilded than Louis XIV of France. Still we get along as friends and business partners. Joanna does the bookkeeping now, and I assemble things; make flower arrangements and wreaths. I used to hate seeing ‘some assembly required’ on a package, and I hated arranging bouquets for my mother. Now I love it

all.” Teresa says her office is the storeroom. With the help of high school and college girls who work there, she opens new merchandise and rearranges the displays. The girls who work with her must enjoy Teresa’s cheerful humor. The screen saver on the computer says, “This is a good place for crazy ladies to work.”

Teresa became a hairdresser in 1973 when she had her first child and started a beauty shop in the backyard. Joanna Hunt came from Houston, after she finished college, and joined Teresa when she had a shop on Main Street. “I worked doing hair for 23 years,” Teresa said. “I know generations of families.” But Teresa had a dream. “I often thought, *When I grow up, I want to be a department store.*” T & Company began as a display of gift items in the beauty salon. She and Joanna built a new building on the parking lot next to the salon. “There were four outside doors opening onto the lot,” Teresa explained. “We put legs on the four doors and used them as

Business NOW

tables. We had lots of space here for about six months, and then it busted out. Today we have 10 employees in the salon and four or five in the gift shop."

Teresa and Joanna go together to the market in the Dallas Trade Center to buy merchandise. Joanna sets a budget, and they try to keep one another out of tempting shops. "It is time to buy Christmas things in January," Teresa said. "You just get the holiday things put away and you are tired of them, but when you get to the market you get excited again to see all the new things. The market is fun, but I like changing things best. I like to take something and make it do what it's not supposed to do." One of her creative



projects was building a dressing room with a graffiti wall. There is paper on the wall and pencils are available so people can write on it.

A woman entering the store was overheard saying, "I always come here by 9:30, but I got busy today." Her companion said, "I always try to come in early," and she headed right for the shelf she wanted. Clearly, T & Company has faithful customers who come regularly to shop. Teresa said, "Someone told me she could not come in because she didn't have any money to spend. So I told her to leave her purse in the car and come in. It's OK. We sing and laugh and have fun here."

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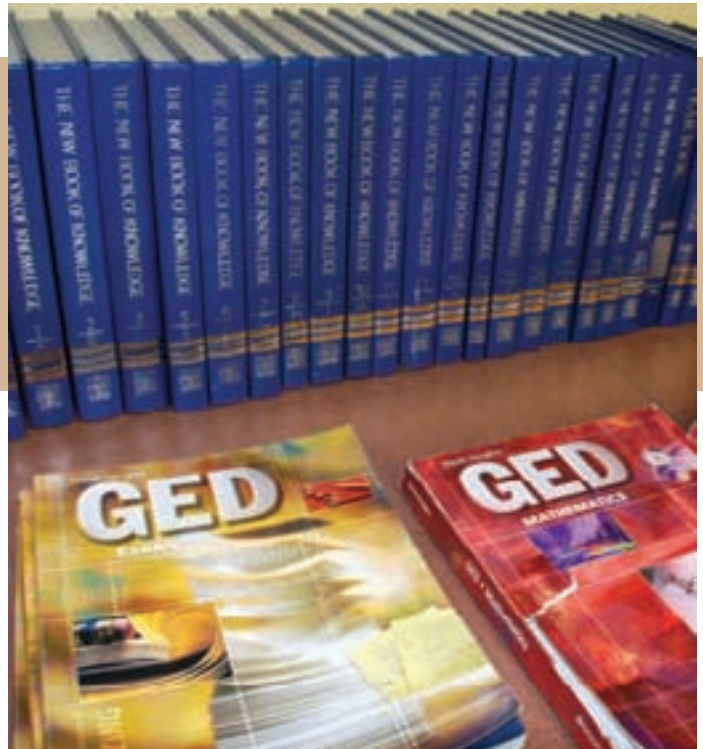
Building a Learning Community

— By Joan Kilbourne



When big changes occur in a community, the people who make it happen are often surprised at their success. They work so hard solving day-to-day problems that they do not recognize their achievement until someone says, "Thank you for changing my life." Terry Chapman, the manager of Lago De Plata Apartments, held up a photo of a young woman in cap and gown and said with pride, "She came here after the hurricane [Katrina] with nothing. She worked in our Learning Center to get her GED and now she has graduated from Navarro College with an associate's degree in criminal justice." B.T. Armstrong, coordinator of the Neighborhood Network Learning Center (NNLC), which is located in the apartment complex, added, "We hang our students' GED certificates on the wall to show how proud we are of the graduates so others can see what is possible for them."

Terry Chapman left high school early to join the Army. He was required to earn his GED, and Terry said, "It was the best thing they ever made me do." When Terry retired from the Army Reserve he worked at a school in Rice, Texas, until he saw an ad for the apartment manager job in Corsicana. "The ad did not identify the apartment location," Terry said. "Thirty people applied and drove out here and 29 drove away again. So I got the job." Ricky Walter, apartment manager for six years, told Terry that he had done half a circle



turnaround during his time there. "He told me now the other half of the circle was mine," Terry said.

Terry responded to the challenge. It took four years to make the turnaround he wanted to make. "I needed to change the atmosphere," Terry explained. "They told me 'The drug dealers are in charge here,' but I showed them that I was in charge and they had to go. I have an emergency phone connection to the Police Department, but I haven't had to use it in the last two years." Now residents have the added protection of a police substation located in the complex.

Terry has a mission. He believes "Education is the key. You can goof off, but if you don't get it, you'll get stuck where you are." His partner in the effort to make education a priority is B.T., who worked for 17 years at the Tri-State Driver training school in Palmer. When the school closed, he took a part-time job at Lago de Plata and found he liked helping others to help themselves. Terry saw that B.T. did a great job organizing things and knowing how to talk to out-of-control young men, getting them to turn around their lives. He offered B.T. a full-time job as coordinator of the learning center. B.T. describes his job as helping individuals connect with community organizations to get needed services. "We have monthly events for the residents and the whole community," he said. "We had a wiener roast, and we did a backpack giveaway at the start of school. After the first day of school, the children are given ice cream treats. During the school year, they are given Popsicles one day a week to know they are wanted, that they are loved." B.T.

Education **NOW**

added, "Life is forever learning. You have to push yourself to stay up in a changing world."

The NNLC, a federal program active in eight states, sponsors the local Learning Center. While these centers are located in low-income areas, students who live anywhere in the city are welcome to attend classes. Betty Calhoun, an instructor from Navarro College, teaches English language, literacy and GED classes. Residents of Lago De Plata pay \$85 to enroll in a GED program and when they graduate, the management team gives them a full reimbursement. In this way, B.T. and Terry demonstrate their commitment to the education of the residents.

Terry is proud to point out that only Corsicana will be certified as a model NNCL program on September 30. It is a significant achievement that was accomplished, Terry said, "one day at a time." During the four years he has worked to develop his vision of a thriving community, Terry admits that, "The city manager saw a lot of me. I kept telling him I just want [for the East side of town] the same as the rest of the city." A sign that the city recognized the change in that area came when the mayor, the police chief and city council members attended the first graduation ceremony at the Learning Center.

Terry and B.T. have big plans for the future. "We could have classes in the community room. There are computers and a kitchenette. We could have cooking classes there. We'd also like to have classes out here on job readiness, on resume writing, dressing for work, interview skills. I want the rooms to be occupied eight hours a day," Terry said. "Sometimes the blinds got pulled down in front of me, but I will keep moving toward the light." And B.T. will be there too. He said, "I'll retire when I know what that is." **NOW**



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In The Kitchen With Sheryl Fuege

— By Faith Browning

Since she was a young girl, Sheryl Fuege has loved cooking. “My grammie would stand me on the white stool with my apron on and let me help her cook,” she recalled. “She taught me many things like cooking, sewing, embroidery, hospitality and the love of doing the right thing.”

Sheryl and her husband are teachers, and both come from a long line of educators. Her husband is 100 percent German, so she takes pride

in preparing the traditional German Christmas Eve meal. “One thing that I hold tight to is the German heritage, even down to hiding the glass pickle on the tree,” she stated. “Every holiday is a big event for our family. We all try to get together to celebrate our love and family.” **NOW**

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

GERMAN FRUITCAKE

3/4 cup butter (Fresh churned is best.)
2 cups sugar
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 tsp. almond extract
4 eggs (Yard eggs are best.)
3 cups flour
1/2 tsp. allspice
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1 cup buttermilk (Farm fresh is best.)
1 cup pecans
2/3 cup homemade cherry preserves
2/3 cup homemade apricot preserves
2/3 cup pineapple preserves

1. Preheat oven to 325 F.
2. Cream together the butter, sugar, extracts and eggs.
3. Grease and flour your favorite Bundt

- pan; set aside.
4. Sift all dry ingredients together.
5. Alternate adding dry ingredients and buttermilk to creamed mixture.
6. Fold in nuts and preserves. Pour into pan.
7. Bake for 1 1/2 hours. Cool in pan for 10-15 minutes then remove.

GRAMMIE PICKLES

1 qt. homemade sour or dill pickles, drain off liquid
2 cups sugar
3-4 Tbsp. malt vinegar

1. Slice pickles into rounds, medium thickness is best, and place into a glass bowl.
2. Pour sugar over pickles and sprinkle with malt vinegar.

3. Cover with a plate.
4. Let pickles set overnight, stirring three times over the course of the night.
5. Place pickles back into jar with enough juice to cover; refrigerate.

APPLE STRUDEL

4-5 apples
1 3/4 cups sugar
Cinnamon to taste (I use 1 tsp.)
1/2 tsp. cardamom
Raisins and nuts, as desired
Puff pastry
1 egg, whipped with 1 Tbsp. water
Sanding sugar

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. Peel, core and thinly slice apples.
3. Stir together the sugar and spices.
4. Sprinkle apples with sugar mixture;

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Who's Cooking NOW

stir in raisins and nuts.

5. Lay out puff pastry; spoon apples onto the long side of pastry. Roll up jellyroll style.

6. Continue to spoon apples and roll until all mixture is used.

7. Place on baking sheet, seam side down and tuck ends under.

8. Brush with egg mixture and cut several slits about 2-inches apart on top of roll; sprinkle with sanding sugar.

9. Bake for 35 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on sheet for about 10-15 minutes before serving.

PICKLED BEETS

4-8 beets, sliced, rough cut, quartered

1 cup vinegar

1 to 1 1/2 cups water

1 cup sugar (Can substitute Splenda for sugar.)

1 Tbsp. (small palmful) pickling spices

1. Fill quart jar(s) with beets.

2. Bring remaining ingredients to a boil.

3. Place a metal spoon/case knife into jar(s) before pouring boiling liquid over beets.

4. Seal according to jar maker's instructions.

SPAETZLE (DUMPLINGS)

2 eggs, beaten slightly

1 1/2 cups flour

1/2 cup milk or cream

1 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. baking powder

1. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil. Reduce the heat and maintain a simmer.

2. In a bowl, stir together all ingredients until smooth.

3. Place Spaetzle maker (ladle type utensil with holes) over hot water.

4. Pour in some batter. Move hopper back and forth to form small dumplings. When they begin to float to the surface, cover pan and keep covered until the Spaetzle appears to swell and becomes fluffy.

5. Remove Spaetzle and continue process until all ingredients have been used. Serve this with roulade (sausage).



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WUNDERWEAVE



Give Your Grandchildren the Gift of Life

— By Lynda Housley

When you are trying to choose just the right gift for your grandchildren, you can have a tough time sifting through the newest trends and fads. Last week it was this pop star, next week it may be a new cartoon character. On top of that, you don't want to get something that won't last 10 minutes out of the package.

One gift that will last for many years is a life insurance policy. There are many reasons why it can be an excellent gift for your grandchild.

• Affordability

The younger the child's age, the lower the premiums.

• Protection

Illness or injury may affect a child's ability to purchase life insurance coverage later in life. Coverage purchased now will continue to provide protection, even if a child's health changes, provided premiums are paid as



required by the policy.

• Financial Security

Life insurance can be the foundation for a strong financial plan. The child may be able to borrow against the accumulated cash value (with interest charged) to pay for future expenses. While loans decrease death benefits and cash surrender values, the proceeds can be used for important expenses such as a college education or the purchase of a home.

Giving a gift of life insurance to your grandchild can be one of the most significant things you do during your lifetime. He or she may not understand at the time how important the gift is, but should grow to appreciate it in the future.

Take the guesswork out of your gift shopping. Life insurance is a gift that will last a lifetime. **NOW**

Lynda Housley is a State Farm agent based in Corsicana.



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Sleep Stops Here

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.



It is getting harder to find a good night's sleep. Approximately 40 million Americans wake every morning feeling exhausted, or they drag themselves through the night to face another day without sleep. There are many different sleep disorders with some of the most common ones being insomnia, narcolepsy and sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is a disorder that affects roughly half of all Americans in their struggle to wake refreshed and rested.

Sleep apnea, defined as cessation of breath, may occur hundreds of times during the night; you simply stop breathing for a few seconds, start breathing again, stop again and so on. You may be completely unaware this is happening, and only be conscious of the side effects during the day — a constant feeling of tiredness and drowsiness. You may have morning headaches and feel irritable or waken with a dry throat. If you do not realize that a problem exists, your bedmate surely will. Sleep apnea is punctuated with snores, snorts and even choking sounds during the night. Not everyone who snores has sleep apnea nor does everyone who snores need to rush out to see his or her physician. A visit to the doctor may be in order if your bed partner notices loud snoring with long pauses (about five to 10 seconds) of not breathing.

These episodic periods of not breathing can be very stressful

on your cardiovascular system. Consider the physiology when you stop breathing. Your oxygen level falls to a precarious level. Hence, your organs are not getting the oxygen they need to function properly. Your body tries to compensate by having your heart work harder or pump faster to provide the body's cells with the proper amount of oxygen. This will increase your blood pressure. With this scenario recurring many times an hour over the course of the night, you increase your susceptibility to hypertension, a stroke or cardiac arrest.

When you visit your doctor, he or she will evaluate your medical history along with information you give regarding your sleeping habits and how that is affecting your daily life. An examination of your nasal and oral tissues for abnormalities will also be done. If a sleep disorder is diagnosed, treatment will be aimed at restoring normal sleep activity. This may be as simple as implementing some lifestyle changes such as avoiding alcohol, losing weight and learning to sleep on your side. Sleep apnea can be serious. An effective treatment plan from your health care professional will help to improve your sleep and banish those exhausted mornings. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.

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Outdoors
NOW

Gardener Gifts

Under the Tree — By Nancy Fenton

It is that time of year again, and I have been going through the catalogs and newspaper clippings that I have saved all year in order to compile a Christmas wish list. There are some new things on the market and lots of old standbys, such as medium-sized tarps to pick up all those pesky leaves and weeds that come out of the flower beds. Good gloves are always nice. Both Amaryllis and Paper White bulbs are fun gifts, and after several months of indoor enjoyment, they can go into the yard come spring. The indoor/outdoor weather station allows you to check the temperature outside without leaving the house.

I am going to ask for several Slinkies (metal ones) this year. I have it on good authority that a metal Slinky attached to the bottom of a bird feeder surrounding the pole will deter squirrels and raccoons.

New this year is a butterfly habitat, complete with a coupon for cocoons to be ordered when your gardener wants to watch them hatch. Planting bags are another new find. These are bags with handles that hold between 16 and 45 quarts of soil that can be planted and then moved around. They sound perfect for porches, balconies, and small patios or yards.

A rain barrel is also a great gift, and you can go a step farther and install it on your gardener's downspout or under a valley in their roof. Rain barrels can be purchased online or from catalogs, but they are a lot more expensive than those made in the rainwater harvesting classes currently being held around the area. Half-day workshops run between \$30 and \$50 and participants come out with a 55-gallon rain barrel ready to attach to their downspout at home. Catalogs charge \$150 and up plus shipping. Check with the following people for a workshop in your area: Waxahachie: John Smith, Waxahachie Parks Department, (972) 937-7730 ext. 181; Cedar Hill: Josh McLerran, (972) 291-5126 ext. 2818; Midlothian: Kathleen Hamilton, (972) 775-7123.

Have a great holiday and enjoy the cooler weather. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.



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Cook Center Planetarium *Cosmic Voyage* holiday show. You will see a view from the surface of the Earth to the largest observable structures of the universe and back down into the sub-nuclear realm. *The Christmas Star* program explores the scientific study about which celestial object guided the wise men on their journey to Bethlehem. *Cosmic Voyage* show: Fridays: 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. *The Christmas Star* show: Fridays: 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. For more information, call (903) 875 7592. www.cookplanetarium.us.

December 1

Wayne and Dianna Frost Art Exhibit, sponsored by the Navarro Council of the Arts, at the Warehouse.

December 1-9

VOICE's Texas Youth Tobacco Awareness Program: 4:00-6:00 p.m. For minors charged with attempted purchase, consumption or possession of tobacco. Participants are required to attend all sessions. Classes are \$100 for all sessions. Contact John Goodnight at (903) 872-0180.

December 3

Camp of the Rising Sun Gala and Casino Night, benefiting special needs children of Navarro and Freestone Counties: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Halbert House, 1250 W. Third Ave. Auction of the decorated Christmas trees at 9:00 p.m. For more information, contact Jamie Kitchens at jamie@campoftherisingsun.org.

Events continued on p60.



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What's Happening **NOW**

December 4

Ball in the House, an all male a capella singing group from Boston that won on America's Got Talent: 6:00 p.m., Palace Theater.

December 5

Holiday Tour of Homes: noon-5:00 p.m., Third Ave. Tickets to benefit the camp are \$10 in advance and \$12 on the tour.

Jingle Bell Jog: 9:00 a.m., YMCA.
Family 5K/1 mile run/walk.

December 5, 12

Christmas Marketplace - Shop Corsicana: 8:00 a.m.-noon, 311 N. Main St. Sponsored by Farmer-Rancher Network Markets. Fall and winter produce, meat, cheese, eggs, baked goods, jams jellies, arts and fine crafts.

December 10

Palace Food and Wine Club's Holiday Gala and Bazaar: 6:30 p.m. at Cook Center. To make reservations, call (903) 874-7792.

December 16

Kerens Christmas Tea and Tour of Homes: 2:00-5:00 p.m. Tickets: \$8, available at Kerens Library and Corsicana Visitors Center. Tour map is on the ticket. (903) 396 2665.

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