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December 2010

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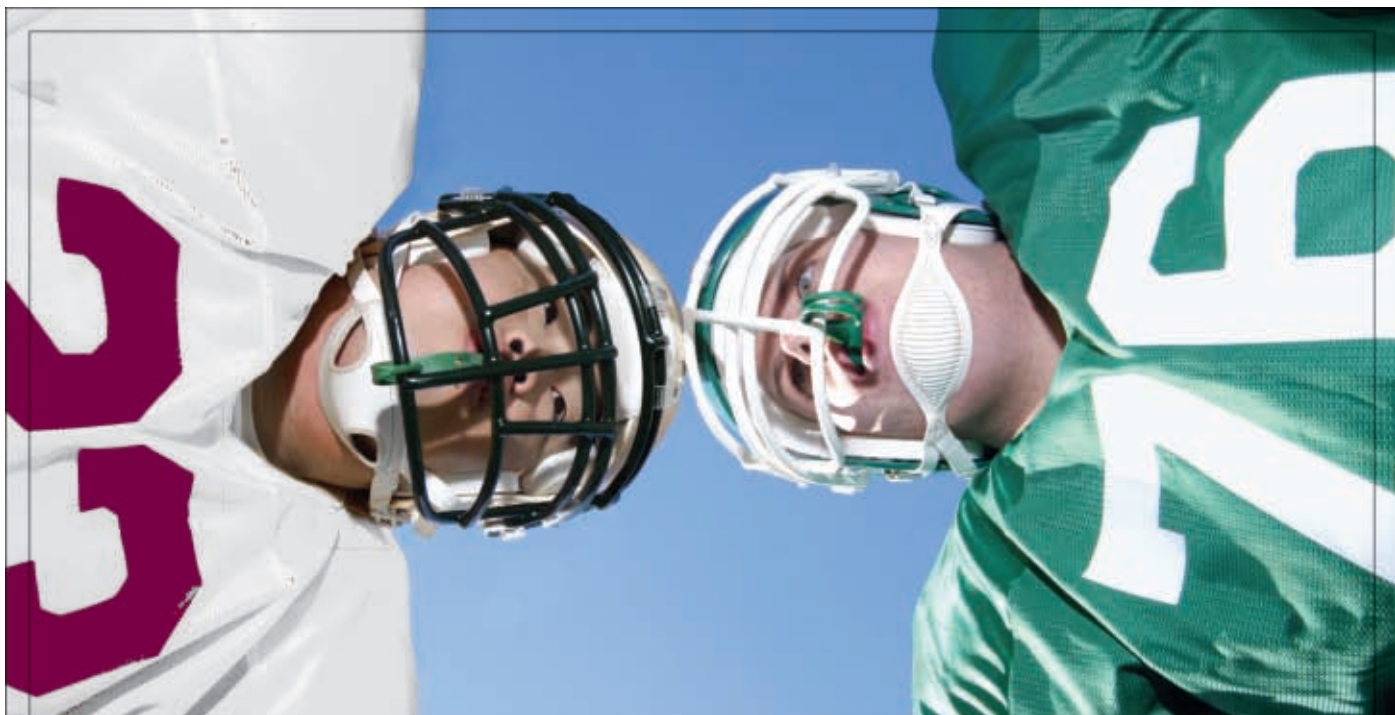
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On The Cover

Throughout their home, Jim and Liz Bennett love to display precious gifts from their family and friends.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

This time of year brings out the givers, including the youth in our city. Since October, various Key Clubs in Mansfield have been organizing Christmas programs to feed families in their schools. Each year in the fall, the Common Ground Network sends letters home with school children whose families have been identified as having a need. These families are invited to complete an application for the local Angel Tree program. More volunteers assign the families to participating Common Ground churches. Then the Key Clubs at Mansfield, Timberview, Legacy and Summit High Schools organize their student bodies to see how many families can be adopted by participating classes. The Key Clubs this year informed Susan Luttrell at FUMC Mansfield that, in total, the schools will adopt at least 200 families! According to Key Club sponsor and Kiwanian, Cheryl Litke, this huge undertaking and extraordinary gift inspires everyone involved.

Peace, Mansfield!

Melissa Rawlins

MansfieldNOW Editor

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THE GIFT of Hope

— By Melissa Rawlins

When Donnie and Teresa Sherwood began their life together 33 years ago, they were full of hope. Yet the two church-goers never imagined they would teach and give it, too! As their children entered youth programs, Teresa involved herself more and more in giving gifts of grace, life, confidence, dignity and self-respect — to the extent that she has helped mission programs at First United Methodist Church Mansfield (FUMCM) grow tenfold or more over the past 17 years.

In support of his wife, Donnie followed suit and found fulfillment working locally and remotely on youth missions. Their daughter, Emily, is preparing to be a teacher and has spent two months on mission adventures in Liberia and West Africa. What is Teresa's current hope? "I want to live a life that exemplifies the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in such a way that people who do not know Him would be drawn to Him."

The Sherwoods recently joined six other members of FUMCM for a mission trip to help Rwandan orphans — some of whom had been sleeping under trees before receiving help from ZOE Ministry. *Zoe* is the Greek word for "life," and the ministry's name originally stood for Zimbabwe Orphans Endeavor, though the mission has grown past the borders of just one nation. The Sherwoods' trip was part of a commitment by their church to sponsor 1,000 children through ZOE's Giving Hope Empowerment Project. According to ZOE's Web site, "The core focus of Giving Hope is to empower orphans and child-led families to become self-sufficient in two-three years, so they will not require lifelong assistance from outside relief programs." This Christmas Eve, FUMCM will be taking a special offering for these children, many of whom Donnie and Teresa have met.



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Donnie Sherwood with some Rwandan orphans in their coffee field.

Seeds of hope have bloomed into confidence for these children, whose lives have changed powerfully since ZOE came into their villages and helped them learn how to care for themselves. "One of the first young men we met, Cassion, was in charge of three working groups that came together to create a cassava field (a woody shrub which produces a starchy tuberous root, much like a potato)," Teresa said. "They make bread out of cassava. He told us, 'We want you to see that we didn't waste your gift!'"

The couple met a different group of orphans, who said when they came into ZOE's program they were only eating once a day. The children set a goal of eating twice a day and were able to meet it by planting a garden and eating what they harvested. "In their culture, when children start their lives they bring a gift to their parents; and they saw us as their parents. So they brought us a huge bounty of carrots, beans and tomatoes," Teresa said, crying at the memory. "That was a humbling moment."

Donnie gave many hugs to the orphans. "On other mission trips, you spend your time doing construction, which is what I like doing. We got to Rwanda, and our job was to be surrogate parents for these orphans," Donnie said. "They'd bring us a bowl of beans and a thank you gift. They understood the gifts were coming in from America through ZOE. It's important in their maturation, in their healing process, to be able to thank somebody tangible." This approach was unfamiliar to Donnie, who has gone on missionary trips to many places and had never before been asked to be a vessel for somebody to thank. However, as he watched the methods ZOE uses

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This is the ZOE Giving Hope group that gave gifts of their food to the young man who had been robbed.

in its Giving Hope ministry, Donnie was reminded of his 49-year-history with Boy Scouts of America.

"The Boy Scout method is to let the boys run their troop, decide on their activities, and we are to supervise," Donnie said. "I learned through scouting and high school youth mission trips the importance of standing back — showing the kids how to do it, working alongside, yet not doing it for them."

In a similar fashion, ZOE's mission in Rwanda is teaching free-market principles. "There is also community living and community care — the teachings of Jesus Christ," Donnie said. Approximately 1,000 children benefit from the ministry of one ZOE social worker, who works most closely with the leader of the group. The ZOE counselors teach these orphans basic life skills: how to care for themselves physically, mentally and emotionally. Teresa was impressed by the children's names. "One I met was called a name that meant 'Don't Worry Don't Cry.' Very often, they are comforting names they've chosen for themselves," Teresa said.

The children choose leaders from their orphan group, and then an adult mentor from within their own community. "The kids know who cares about them, and that's who they choose," Teresa said. "There are so many orphaned kids it's not always possible for them to live with family; and so many adults are so afraid of contracting AIDS they shun these kids, who then have lost all the social structure they need to get to the next level of growth. Some have gone to live with family who exploited them rather than caring for them. Giving a child a goat can be life-changing.

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This is FUMCM's mission group with Ernest. He built this hut himself, but it leaks badly and his group is helping him build a new house of mud bricks.

for making sure that everyone's land is prepared. If there is a handicapped child, some of the older kids will go help her prepare her garden," Teresa explained. "Once everyone's garden is prepared, they all get seeds. Then they harvest. Then they start giving away food. Then they write a business plan, and the group has to approve everyone's business plan before they can receive a grant from ZOE."

The success of the micro-financing ZOE offers hinges on teamwork in the working groups. Donnie recalls seeing love in action after one of the boys was robbed of the goods he was selling — plus all his food. "His group of orphans all got together to bring him a huge pile of food! It is that church of [the Book of] Acts [in the Bible!]" said Donnie, who recently taught from the Book of Acts in his own adult Sunday school class. "The boy was in shock that people would love him to that degree."

"That love idea gets back to the grace. So many of these kids say that before they came into ZOE, they felt completely on their own and unloved," Teresa added. "To come together and discover other kids were feeling this way, but now they have each other and [learning] they are worthy and loveable, was one of the biggest sources of joy to them."

"They are learning that God loves them, and is using His people to be His hands and feet. Then they turn around and give that back in their communities. In the villages we could spot the ZOE kids. They were self-assured and would never beg for money," said Donnie, whose heart was deeply touched by the moment when the children brought gifts to the boy who had been robbed. "That's the way all mission trips are. You always get more than you can ever give." **NOW**

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AT HOME WITH JIM
AND LIZ BENNETT

Teaching is only one of the many common bonds which Jim and Liz Bennett share and showcase in their Mansfield home. The Bennetts, both educators in the Mansfield Independent School District (ISD), purchased their first home last year. "We were looking for something in the area not too far from our schools," Liz remembered. When Jim mentioned that a fellow teacher's home was up for sale, Liz recognized the neighborhood from the walks they took while living in a nearby apartment complex. The couple was immediately attracted to the home and its location.



Both Jim, a social studies teacher at Della Icenhower Intermediate School, and Liz, an English teacher at Legacy High School, use their home to express their interests and family history. A cabinet with crystal dinnerware, a family heirloom and wedding gift from Jim's grandmother,



stands in a corner nook of the large family room. The Bennett family crest is featured on the crystals and includes a lion. Lions are a prominent theme throughout the home with statues on the front porch, fireplace, in the foyer and above the family room windows.



Merry Christmas

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The Bennetts also expressed their literary interest in their decorating style. Three *Lord of the Rings* replica swords occupy the columns separating the kitchen from the family room. Above the see-through fireplace, the couple hung paintings that were gifts to one another and depict characters from the *Dragonlance* literature series and a vampire novel they read as youth. Liz also made stocking hangers out of decorative tin gift boxes and displayed them on the mantel. Jim

places special treats for Liz inside the boxes throughout the season.

More than a dozen Christmas mugs the couple has received as gifts from students over the years occupy the bar area overlooking the family room. "It's an awesome excuse to have hot cocoa," Liz laughed.

With help from Jim's mother, Liz painted the home, choosing colors to accent the mood and color schemes of the rooms. "Having never lived in a



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years before they started dating and attribute the success and enjoyment of their marriage to their long-term friendship. "It's really nice," Liz explained. "We can do fun things together, and we always have things to talk about."

She graduated from The University of Texas at San Antonio with an English degree and teacher certification in English and reading. Jim, originally from Victoria, Texas, graduated from The University of Texas at Arlington with a degree in mid-level education.

Liz, who likes to bake, was immediately attracted to the kitchen with its large counter space and raised oven. To dress the kitchen area for the holidays, Liz uses leftover Christmas ornaments. She placed ball ornaments in wine glasses etched with snowflakes and in a decorative glass bowl to make the kitchen area more festive.

house, I looked forward to painting the walls," she said. "We got started as soon as we got the keys."

For her yoga room, she used a light green paint to go with the earthy decor. Liz began practicing yoga 11 years ago and enjoys having a quiet space dedicated for it. The room also houses her art supplies. "I framed my first set of pencils. I got them when I was 12."

A painting by Liz's sister hangs in the hallway of the home, and Liz placed a bouquet of scented metal roses on a table underneath the painting. Jim has bought her a rose every year at renaissance festivals since they began dating. "My goal is to get a dozen," Liz said.

The couple met while living in San Antonio, where Liz's family moved from New York. Jim and Liz were friends for five





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Adding a touch of culture to the home, Jim's grandparents purchased the table in the couple's ceramic-tiled foyer in Mexico in the 1970s. Near the table, stands a small black knight. Jim and Liz also hung framed sets of their first matching T-shirts on the wall.

Jim's "man cave" is just off the foyer. He used the space to hang portraits, including one of Liz's pieces featuring the *Dungeons & Dragons* characters used by the couple and their friends and an autographed picture of Chewbacca from *Star Wars*. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the room sits in a dark, covered container near the full-wall bookshelf; it is an African Royal Python, a toothless snake.

The couple has decorated their guest bathroom with a Monopoly-themed motif, complete with a "Go to Jail" rug, game board shower curtain and a boot that doubles as a toothbrush holder. The Bennetts also have two guest rooms, painted white and gray respectively. The master suite is located at the end of the hallway. "We splurged on the bedroom



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furniture. It's simple, but sophisticated," Liz said of the king-sized Tempur-Pedic® bed and matching wooden dresser. "We take vacation cruises, so our room is inspired by our trips," Liz explained. "The bedroom represents the Caribbean, and the bathroom represents the Atlantic." Liz even chose paint colors to reflect the theme. She chose light blue hues reminiscent of the ocean for both rooms.



They did not think twice about accepting gifts from family members to fill the rooms of their home. "We lived in a small apartment, so we moved in and had extra space," Jim said.

Another recent change was the couple's ability to decorate the outside of their new home. With Liz handling the interior holiday decorating, Jim, with help from a friend, took on the difficult task of hanging icicle lights and arranging a lighted pathway for their first Christmas as homeowners, a memory the couple will not forget because it was done in freezing rain. "I always wanted to have icicle lights," Liz explained. "My family and I would always go look at Christmas lights, but we couldn't hang any because we lived in an apartment."

She took advantage of her family's Thanksgiving holiday visit to recreate a family tradition of decorating the Christmas tree. Liz and Jim also started their own holiday tradition of watching various versions of *A Christmas Carol*.

They are glad they were able to put a little of themselves into every room of the house and look forward to many more holidays in their new home. "We can see us here for a really long time," Jim said. They feel fortunate to have found a home that will fit their needs, both now and in the future.

Liz added, "I want our children to be able to come back and have a home they can associate memories with." **NOW**

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Bryan Keeton, representing the Chamber of Commerce, welcomes Becky Smith Interiors to bustling Mansfield.



Alice Grady, Cindy Heitzman and Anita Hughes chat while enjoying hors d'oeuvres at the Mansfield Women's Club Art Auction.



Darlene Stark of NuCerty International checks out a painting at the Mansfield Women's Club Art Auction.



Meredith Peebles, Anna Nguyen and Jessica Trujillo, representing the Mansfield Key Club, volunteer at the Mansfield Women's Club Art Auction.

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Physicians from left to right:
Dr. Phan, Dr. Fikkert, Dr. Meyer, Dr. Gibson-Hull and Dr. Wallace.



Wayne Simmons and Reverend Sheila Fiorella celebrate the grand opening of New Day United Methodist Church in Mansfield.



Patrick Bell poses on the slide with his partially blind dog, Tigger, at Serenity Gardens' Julian Field Park.



Teachers from Icenhower Intermediate School have lunch together at Napoli's Italian Restaurant.



Lucretia Mills, Angela Mobley, Elizabeth Lewis, Kim Marin and Phyllice Holly network at the Chamber Business After Hours at Mansfield Chiropractic.



Ambassadors from Mansfield Chamber of Commerce celebrate the opening of Pandora with a ribbon cutting.



Eva and Amelia Marcucci pick out their favorite pumpkins from the patch at First United Methodist Church of Mansfield.



Larry Dean, Associate Pastor at First Baptist Church in Mansfield, puts the finishing touches on the banner for KidFest 2010.



Ambassadors from Mansfield Chamber of Commerce celebrate the opening of Smokey's with a ribbon cutting.



Teens enjoy a day in the park as part of Summit High School's Teen Leadership Program, which helps kids realize that being a leader does not always mean you are the one out front!



Melisa R. Perez (left) and Susan Wong (right) celebrate Sylvia Truebitt's birthday over lunch at Taqueria Jalisco.

2010 Holiday Shopping Guide

A quick look at the gift items and discounts available locally.

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Well-rounded and Happy

— By *Alana Williamson*

at the Mansfield Arts Festival,” Annette remembered. “I thought Colin would enjoy it, because he likes art.”

After noticing that Colin was very interested in ceramic painting, Jeremy and Annette began returning to the studio for more family time. At the studio, the Agors pick their own pottery pieces from a wide assortment of objects including dishes, cups and novelties. The next step is to choose colors to decorate their choice. Colin prefers to paint his items blue. He enjoys picking “kid-friendly” items to paint and is excited he can do it by himself. “I have race cars and motorcycles,” Colin said. “My favorite is my blue and black jet ski.”

Both Jeremy and Annette acknowledge ceramic painting has helped them learn how to let Colin work independently and grow as an individual. He is able to decide how much effort to put into each piece, and since his parents enjoy working on their own projects, he is free to spend as little or as much time as he pleases. “It’s nice to let him figure it out on his own,” Annette said. “His pieces always look better than what I could do for him.”

Typically, it takes about one hour for the family to complete their projects. After waiting a few days for the pieces to be fired

Family time is a necessity for the Agors. The family of three has discovered a unique and rewarding hobby in ceramic painting. Jeremy, his wife, Annette and their 4-year-old son, Colin, make monthly visits to a Mansfield studio to explore their artistic side.

Last summer, Annette and Colin were the first visitors to the local studio. Annette had some experience with ceramic painting, but this was the first time they tried it as a family. “We saw a flyer

in the kiln, which helps protect the piece from damage, they return to the studio to pick up their finished works of art. Colin proudly displays his collection in his room. "I keep everything on my bookshelf," he smiled.

He also uses his new skills to create gifts for his family members. He painted a coffee mug as a gift for Annette. "I drink out of my coffee mug every morning," Annette said. Colin also used his handprints and painting techniques to create a platter to give to his grandparents for Christmas.

The Agors have created their own family holiday traditions with help from a little friend named Shando. Shando is an elf who visits their home each day, and Colin looks forward to finding him in a different location of their home each morning during the Christmas season. "He goes back to report to Santa every day," Colin explained. "You can't touch him, or it will take away his magic."

Colin also uses his imagination during hands-on trips to the Fort Worth Children's Museum. "They have an ambulance with flashing lights and sirens," Colin smiled as he described his visits.



Colin also likes to ride his bike, dance and color. He has his own art table to work on and explore his talents in addition to taking music and art classes several times a week at school.

Annette and Colin use their artistic talents to create unique cookie and cake designs. Cookie bouquets are her specialty, and she enjoys making them as gifts and letting Colin help her decorate the cookies.

Recently, Colin taught his classmates a song about another one of his pastimes. After attending several Texas Rangers

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baseball games and playing T-ball this past summer, Colin taught the song, "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," to his friends at school.

Colin attends preschool at First Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth, where Jeremy is the director of communications. Annette works nearby, so they commute as a family, beginning and ending their day together. "We spend a lot of time together as a family," Jeremy said. "It helps us to become better parents and get to know Colin better."

Jeremy and Annette met in high school in upstate New York. Both learned firsthand how important it is to



expose children to different activities and encourage them to explore their talents. "We were both involved in sports, music and the arts," Jeremy said. "Our parents let us try a lot of things, and I want Colin to understand that he can follow his own path."

That same family support is still evident today. Annette recently partnered with the local studio to host a fundraiser for the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure. Fifty percent of the sales for that day were donated on behalf of Annette's team, who raised more than \$11,000 total. "The 3-Day is challenging. I have participated in the 5k run for the past 12 years, but when my mom was diagnosed in May, I decided that if she can battle this, then I can do the 3-Day," Annette said.

"We want Colin to be a well-rounded person," Annette said. "If he is interested in something, we try and help him learn more about it." Jeremy and Annette look forward to more ceramic painting projects, seeing Colin's interests and talents grow and, most of all, having fun in the process. **NOW**

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times per week at the Mansfield Activity Center when she celebrated her 65th birthday and discovered that her AARP insurance would pay for a 24-Hour Fitness membership. "Now, I work out for one hour Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, early in the morning. I work on the elliptic machine for 20 minutes, the treadmill for another 20 minutes, on the crunch machine for your back and waist and on the machine that you lie on your back and lift weights with your feet. I can do 150 pounds at least!" Janice said. "I have a trainer there, and every six months he runs me through the gambit. It's a big help that he tells me how I'm doing and how to add more cardio with it."

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The Right Thing to DO

— By Melissa Rawlins

Janice Womble stays beautiful by living according to her motto: "Be good to your body, and it'll be good to you." She is a city girl who moved to the country — Mansfield — after she and her husband, Royce, bought a farm here nearly 30 years ago. They lived in North Arlington, where they owned and operated Arlington Sporting Goods for a grand total of 41 years. Coming to Mansfield for weekends, and staying in their cabin, Janice and Royce began to garden. Little did she know, she was being good to her body by digging in the dirt and eating the food they raised!

"I married my husband 37 years ago.

I had three children and so did he. At that time I did not consciously do things to take care of my body," Janice said. "When you're in your 20s, you're busy raising a family. You don't think about the fact that you can't sit down and watch television because that's the worst thing you could possibly do for your body. I think walking — anything like that — is very good for you. But when you reach our age, you need to do what you can to keep your body motivated and working."

Janice had already been walking three



be active. As you get older, it's not near as easy as you think it will be. You do it because it's the right thing to do. You don't ever want to give up. You do it anyway, whether it's rainy, it's 107 degrees or you just feel like staying in bed."

Her exercise-committed lifestyle has contributed to Janice's well-being, so she's

able to turn around and give back to the community. She goes to 24-Hour Fitness at 7:30 a.m. because that is what time her volunteer shifts begin on the other two days of the week. At Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, Janice performs activities that challenge her balance, flexibility and cardio strength. "Like all of us who volunteer, I deliver newspapers, wheeling them up stairs or to the doctors' offices in the professional building," said Janice,

"It's not about weight, nor shape; it's about the inside."



who this year is president of the medical auxiliary. "I also have board meetings, finance meetings, auxiliary meetings; but I do that after my workouts.

"This volunteer job is the greatest thing that's happened for me since I retired from Arlington Sporting Goods four years ago," Janice said. "I came to this hospital for my give-back time. It is one of the most gratifying things I do, because I see people every day — some are here for happy things, some for very sad things — and learn that when people come in they want to see a smiling face. It gives you a warm heart to know that you've done something good for somebody."

This month, Janice is giving a lot of time to her auxiliary's Holly Days event, encouraging women to get their checkups

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and wellness visits. "My doctor calls me her poster child," explained Janice, who sees her doctor once a year for a physical check-up. "I have my mammogram every year; I've had my bone density test; of course, I've had my colonoscopy, which is very important. Women today have got to take care of themselves — especially their hearts! More women have heart



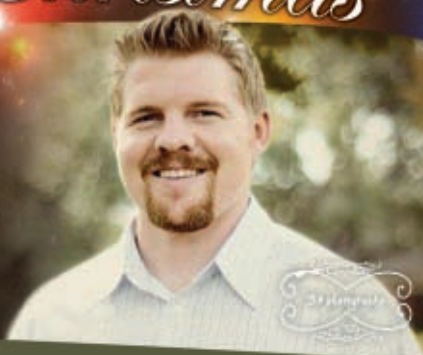
"I came to this hospital for my give-back time."

problems now than ever before. I know that because Dr. Taylor spoke at our auxiliary meeting and told us it's not a man's disease; heart disease can happen to anybody."

Prevention is best accomplished through practicing good habits, which in retirement has become Janice's lifestyle. "Royce and I work outside all the time. During the week, we eat big breakfasts. We have our big meal in the middle of the day, around 2:00 p.m., and then at night we snack," Janice said. "We eat fish, a lot of chicken and steak one time every two to four weeks. We still grow our own vegetables. He and I both do the weeding, which is exercise. When you get out there on your hands and knees pulling, planting and mowing at least twice a week, you always sweat. You do lots of cardio bending; every time you put an onion in the ground, you're bending over, using your legs, using your arms." This body of hers is only going to last so long; while Janice has charge over it, she is enjoying every moment! **NOW**

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From left:

The girls of Aspirations — Carol Blowers, Shelly Conallis and Lori Goree — are all set to get you ready for Christmas with fashion jeans and jewelry galore.

Step Into the Girly Zone

Aspirations, where women go to get great customer service and bargains — while shopping close to home!

— By *Melissa Rawlins*

Shelly Conallis always dreamed of hosting a little boutique where women could come and enjoy themselves while they shopped. “If you can dream it, you can do it!” Shelly said. Her favorite little place is now Mansfield’s — the boutique she called Aspirations has been open now for a couple of years. The boutique is very much the place for getting away from it all and stepping into the “girly zone.”

Bubbling out of every nook and cranny of Aspirations is bling: wine accessories, jewelry, seasonal decor, fashion — so the boutique is the perfect place to come for a session of unabashed primping, playing and dressing up. “All women have the desire to feel pretty, stand out and be complimented — and they can still be mature,” said Shelly. “Some who come in buy things that

surprise me. She might be an older lady, but she’s buying a huge, colorful, fun ring. It’s out of her element, but it’s fun! I think every woman’s a closet girly girl.”

Tuesdays and Fridays, Shelly works in her boutique and has enjoyed setting up the new Vintage Home section, where a clean line of textiles, collectibles and gifts is on display. “On the other days I’m working with vendors, going to market in Dallas, researching new products online or blinging up a candle holder or a piece of wall art with Swarovski crystals,” Shelly said, adding: “My angels, Lori Goree and Carol Blowers, have as much input in the selections as I do. They both love all things fashionable, and make a point to know each and every customer in the store so we can remember who they are and what they like

— so much so that we had a customer come in the store who bought an item to wear; her neighbor came in later that afternoon. We were able to say, ‘You know, so and so just bought the same thing. Are you OK wearing that around each other?’”

Still, Aspirations sells the items women all over Mansfield love to buy for themselves or as gifts. “Our line of Tyler Candles has been here since day one; we probably sell 10 every day,” Shelly said. “People come looking for our Wine Accessories by Wine-Arita and Lolita and bronze- or pewter-blinged wine toppers.” Customers can purchase unique gratitude boxes, Bible covers, monogrammed towel wraps and pillowcases, handbags and custom-made feathered headbands — plus candle charms, photo frames, wall art, colorful decanters, pewter serving pieces and bronze decorative pieces by a local artist.

“All women have the desire to feel pretty, stand out and be complimented — and they can still be mature.”

For clothes lovers, Shelly and the girls will help select the perfect outfit from Hip Together, a clothing designer from Mansfield who makes handcrafted T-shirts, baseball caps, dresses and infant clothing, too. They also offer a few lines from California: high-end vintage boots by Corral, Miss Me jeans, Cowgirl Jewels and Corky’s and Mud Pie for children. Shelly is proud of what she calls Aspirations’ Jewelry Bar, which houses their bling: earrings, bracelets, necklaces, charms, cuffs and watches for men and women. And Aspirations can always special-order exactly what a customer is looking for.

During the holidays, while the children are home from school, the girls at Aspirations will teach classes for younger girls in bottle cap pendant making, scrapbooking and jewelry making. And the creative trio always offers to make the gifts their customers buy look fun and pretty with custom gift-wrapping. In Aspirations’ girly zone, the fun does not stop at the cash register; it leaves with each happy customer! **NOW**



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In Character

— By Sydni Thomas

The bell rings and all of Mrs. Martinez's sixth-grade students at Mansfield's Mary Lillard Intermediate School wait in their seats for their teacher to arrive. As the door opens, Jane Austen greets the class and the students know Mrs. Martinez will not be back until tomorrow. She has traveled through time and brought back a special visitor to share tales of experience, culture and adventure for the day.

Each six weeks Lynn Martinez takes her students on a journey to a different land filled with new foods, people and history. To give them the full experience she dresses up as a person from their studies. Over the years, her students have met the writer Louisa May Alcott, a Mayan princess, Dolly Madison and different women from Mexico, China, Egypt, the Civil War and the Elizabethan age. "The main thing for me by dressing up is to get the kids' attention," Lynn



said. "I want to bring it to life for them. I explain everything about the costume, and it is very eye opening for them."

Each student reacts differently the first few times Lynn comes to class in costume. The beginning of the year is always the hardest. Some think they are too cool to participate, but once they see the rest of their classmates having a great time they cannot resist. Lynn

New Year, some of her students come in costume and others acknowledge the holiday by wearing red. While studying India, the students learn the importance of tea and move into a lesson about Queen Victoria. Lynn hosts a Victorian tea party and lets her students practice etiquette.

During her first year of teaching, Lynn got the idea to dress up as a character from the subject they were studying. She considers herself a shy person, but when she is around children she is in her element. Her stepmother began making her outfits, and each year she would add a new one. It will be a lot of work, but she hopes to add Queen Elizabeth to her closet next. "We do a large study on Queen Elizabeth every year because she was such an incredible woman," Lynn said. "We do a lot of studies on influential women throughout the year, and I believe in holding up good examples of these women for the students."

Lynn's hands-on approach of teaching has her students engaged in every activity. From the simulations she plans to the projects she has them create each six weeks, Lynn wants her students to feel as though they are in the shoes of those they are studying. Each year, she hosts



plans several events a year that allows the students to participate in costume. At the end of the year, Lynn throws a May Day celebration with scones, Maypoles and crowns of flowers. On the Chinese

cultural exchange where students and their parents bring foods from different countries. Lynn, a member of the First United Methodist Church Mansfield's choir, also uses cultural songs to educate her students. "During the first six weeks I come dressed up as an Indian chief, and we hold tribal council," Lynn said. "The point of the game is to reach adulthood. Every day the kids receive a card with a situation on it, and they have to show how they overcome it with industry, truth and honor. At the end of the project, we hold a tribal council to vote if they receive honor. By gaining honor they receive a feather in their headband and wear it to lunch. You'd be surprised at how much fun they have with this project! With this project my students go above and beyond anything I have ever expected."

Lynn is from Carthage, a small east Texas town. Fifteen years ago, Lynn began teaching her first bilingual class in Dallas. Since then she has taught in Grand Prairie and Arlington. Lynn has taught third, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Four years ago she moved to Mansfield with Rudy, her husband of 15 years, their 12-year-old daughter, Chloe, and their 7-year-old daughter, Jessie. She has been teaching in Mansfield ever since. "Mansfield is by far my favorite district," Lynn said. "We are treated as professionals here. Everywhere I have gone in the district I've been greeted with a smile. From the superintendent down everyone is so welcoming. There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation. Our principal is so supportive, and she allows me to teach with freedom."

Lynn cannot imagine doing anything else as a career. Nothing rewards Lynn more than learning one of her students has graduated from high school. "Some of the kids I have taught have had such daunting backgrounds," Lynn said. "It's a personal victory for me when each of them graduate. I taught a quadriplegic girl early in my career who taught me what kind of teacher and human being I wanted to be. Years later, I ran into her at a Disney On Ice performance where she told me she graduated. I know God put her in my class on purpose, and it shaped me into who I am today."

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In The Kitchen With Phyllis Weisheit

— By Adam Walker

Born in southern Indiana, Phyllis Weisheit began cooking meals and baking at the age of 9 since her parents were farmers and worked in the fields. Having moved to Texas in 1981, she has learned to enjoy many Texas dishes, but she continues to draw on her Indiana roots. "That had an influence on my taste buds," she said. "Many of the things I cook for family gatherings are dishes my

mother cooked over the years."

Christmas dinner is a special gathering for her far-flung family. Phyllis worked in school lunch programs for 28 years, 19 of those years here in Mansfield, where she even taught classes for school employees around the state. She loves teaching others to cook, and also traveling, camping, dancing and volunteering at church. **NOW**



CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS

1 whole chicken
2 cups flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1 egg
1 Tbsp. water
3 Tbsp. hot chicken broth
2 qts. chicken broth

1. Cook chicken; reserve broth. Let chicken cool; skin and debone. Dice 3 cups of chicken and set aside.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour and salt. Beat egg and water together and add to flour mixture. Add 3 Tbsp. broth. Mix until dough is the consistency of pie dough.
3. Roll out to thickness of newspaper. Cut into 1-inch squares.
4. In a large kettle, bring remaining broth to a boil. Drop in dumplings slowly, one at a time. Add diced chicken. Cover and simmer until done.

MIDWESTERN BREAD DRESSING

1 cup white onion, diced
1/2 cup (1 stick) margarine
1 loaf bread, cut into thumb-sized pieces
4 cups chicken broth
4 eggs, beaten
1 1/2 Tbsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper
1 Tbsp. sage
1 Tbsp. poultry seasoning

1. Sauté onions in margarine until lightly brown. Set aside.
2. Put bread and broth in bowl. Mix. Add eggs, salt, pepper, sage and poultry seasoning.
3. Add onion mixture and mix well.
4. Grease baking dish. Pour in dressing and bake at 350 F for 10 minutes. Stir and bake for another 20 minutes or until done.

GERMAN MACARONI SALAD

1 7-oz. pkg. macaroni
5 slices bacon
1/2 cup sugar
3 Tbsp. flour
1/2 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. pepper
1 3-oz. can sliced mushrooms
1/3 cup vinegar
1/2 cup white onions, diced
1/2 cup celery, diced

1. Cook macaroni according to package directions.
2. Fry bacon until crisp. Drain and reserve drippings. Crumble bacon and set aside.
3. Combine sugar, flour, salt and pepper. Blend into drippings.
4. Drain mushrooms reserving liquid. Add water to make 1 cup. Add vinegar and the cup of liquid to flour mixture. Cook until bubbly.
5. Toss macaroni with flour mixture. Add mushrooms, bacon, onions and celery.

GERMAN POTATO SALAD

10 lbs. white potatoes
1 lb. thick bacon
1 cup diced white onions
1 cup white sugar
1 cup cider vinegar

1. Cook potatoes until tender. Cool, peel and dice.
2. Cut bacon into half-inch pieces and cook until about half done, add onions. Continue cooking until onions are brown and bacon is very crisp.
3. Add sugar and vinegar. Cook until mixture is thick. Pour over potatoes. Mix well. Refrigerate overnight.
4. Warm in Crock-Pot or oven just before serving.

RED CABBAGE

1 qt. shredded, precooked red cabbage
1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 Tbsp. brown sugar
1 tsp. currant jelly
1 Tbsp. diced onions (optional)
1/4 cup diced red apple (optional)

1. Add vinegar, brown sugar and jelly to cabbage. Simmer about 10 minutes. Add optional items, if desired.
2. Serve from Crock-Pot to keep warm.

OLD-FASHIONED SOFT GINGERBREAD

This recipe is over 100 years old.

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup molasses
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. ginger
2 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. allspice
1/2 tsp. cloves
3 cups flour

1. Cream sugar and butter.
2. Add beaten eggs.
3. Add molasses.
4. Combine dry ingredients.
5. Alternate adding dry ingredients and buttermilk to sugar and egg mixture. Beat hard after each addition.
6. Bake at 325 F about 40 minutes in a 12 x 18-inch pan. Check with toothpick for doneness. Do not overbake.

BUTTERSCOTCH COOKIES

2 cups brown sugar
1/2 cup butter
1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs, beaten
3 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. cream of tartar
1/4 tsp. salt

1. Cream sugar and butter. Add vanilla and beaten eggs.
2. Sift together flour, baking soda, cream of tartar and salt. Add to first mixture.
3. Shape dough into 2-inch thick roll. Chill overnight.
4. Slice as desired and bake on greased cookie sheet for 10 minutes at 375 F.

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BREATHING EASIER

— By Betty Tryon R.N.

An elephant is not really sitting on your chest; pneumonia just makes you feel as if one is. The manifestations of pneumonia can indeed make breathing difficult. This infection resides in one or both lungs and usually owes its origin to a viral, fungi or bacterial invasion. Foreign substances such as aspirated vomit can also cause pneumonia. When the lungs are invaded, the air sacs or alveoli fill with mucus, pus and fluids. The exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide occur in the alveoli. If they are full of another substance, the alveoli's function is impaired, and it becomes more difficult for oxygen to reach the cells of the body.

Most of the time when the foreign matter enters the body through the nose, mouth or eyes, our immune system is strong enough to fight off an infection. However, if a person is in a weakened condition, the infection has the opportunity to grow and spread. That is why the elderly, children under the age of 2, a person with pulmonary disease, someone undergoing chemotherapy or anyone with an impaired immune system is at a greater risk for becoming ill. Having an upper respiratory infection, such as the flu or a cold may make you more susceptible to pneumonia. Chronic or long-term conditions, such as heart problems or cancer also make it easier for the pneumonia germs to take hold.

Several factors determine what symptoms an individual with pneumonia will experience. Some of the symptoms are chest pain, cough that produces mucus or a nonproductive (dry) cough, fever, chills, rapid breathing, racing pulse and extreme weakness. Often older adults experience milder symptoms.

Treatment will depend on the type of pneumonia one has and the severity of the condition. With bacterial pneumonia, your doctor will probably prescribe antibiotics. With viral

pneumonia, antibiotics are usually given if you develop a secondary infection. Other palliative treatments for pneumonia which address the symptoms are pain relievers and fever reducers.

Practicing good hygiene, such as washing your hands often can help you avoid getting an infection. Get an influenza and a pneumococcal vaccine on the advice of your health care provider. Try to avoid those who are ill with respiratory illnesses. If you smoke, please stop. Smoking makes you more susceptible to pneumonia. If you do get pneumonia, take care of yourself by drinking lots of fluids, eating properly and taking your medication responsibly. Make sure you keep your follow-up visit with your doctor. Get completely well so you can stay healthy. **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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Use Your Social Security Statement as a Guide

— By *Tim Bordelon*

Once you reach age 25, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will send an annual report on your individual account. This report will highlight potential benefits from your account and is a valuable tool for your use when considering ways to plan for your retirement and other financial needs.

Social Security should be only one of a number of sources for income during retirement. Other sources may include an employer pension and your personal retirement savings in the form of an individual retirement account (IRA).

When you receive your statement, take some time and go over its contents. Are the reported earnings correct? If not, report any errors to the SSA. It's much easier to do now than after you retire.

How do the projected benefits fit within your retirement needs? Will you have enough from other sources to fill any gaps?

These are important questions a financial professional can help you answer. A financial professional can also help you find ways to plan for a retirement that relies less on Social Security and more on options that are suitable to your needs and comfort level.

There are a number of products and services available to help you attain the retirement you desire. An early start at developing your personal plan will make your goals more attainable. **NOW**

Tim Bordelon is a State Farm agent based in Mansfield.



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Christmas Gifts for Your Gardener

— By Nancy Fenton



Another year has flown by and the holidays are almost upon us again! Years past have seen me with gloves, tarps, clippers, shovels, etc. high on my gift-giving list, and they are still good

choices. But there are some other fun ones I would like to mention, so I delved into the file of pictures, magazine articles and other advertisements I collected all year to find these fun, and sometimes useful, gifts.

The bottle tree is very popular this year and especially fun if you supply multicolored glass bottles to go on it — full or empty. They make charming additions to any garden area.

Of course, a gardener would love an actual tree. Texas-native trees will be cherished for years to come, and Christmastime is not too late to plant a container-grown tree. When selecting a tree, be sure to remember our alkaline clay soil, and stay away from the exotic ones advertised in the newspapers and catalogues if you want it to flourish outside.

My brother's favorite gift last year was a matching pair of "boot cleaners," one for the back door and one for the front door. I had a bit of trouble finding the ones with the brown brushes, but most farm and feed stores have these year-round.

I get bulb baskets for our children's families since they are pretty easy on busy moms around the holidays. The grandchildren can plant them in the yard after the holidays and see if they will come up year after year. I usually avoid tulips for the Texas families, since they are more of an annual here in the South. Star of Bethlehem and amaryllis are both good choices that will come back bigger and stronger year after year, as do narcissi and daffodils. You can even buy your own bulbs and make your own, just be sure to chill the bulbs first!

Last but not least are color-changing solar lights that add a bit of whimsy to your landscaping. Available at some local stores and online, they are a fun and welcome addition to the dreary days of winter.

Have a great holiday; be careful; and be ready to start another year. I'm going to try to look at some theme gardens for Texas next year, so stay tuned! **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

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Throughout the season, you can experience the holiday magic at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center's "ICE!" display. Part of the Gaylord Texan's Lone Star Christmas celebration, "ICE!" is an extraordinary and magical display of elaborate, life-sized ice sculptures, ice slides and ice monuments with dramatic lighting effects — all created from nearly 2 million pounds of ice. This year's exhibit will feature Charles Schulz's *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

Continuing the merriment of the holiday season, Grapevine's Palace Theatre will entertain audiences for weeks with a one-of-kind Broadway-style musical titled *Home for the Holidays*. The holiday revue combines live music, singing and dancing with beautiful costumes and sets to paint the picture of a classic American family Christmas.

In the Christmas Capital of Texas, children can make their holiday dreams come true as they climb aboard the magical North Pole Express® for an adventure-filled train ride. Snuggled up in their favorite holiday pajamas, passengers will experience the enchanting excursion, as well as participate in fun activities from ornament making and caroling to pictures with Santa and more. Regardless of age, this once-in-a-lifetime journey will make a believer out of anyone!

After the trek to the North Pole and back, be sure to stop and enjoy Christmas on Main in historic downtown Grapevine. The event features Santa, jolly Christmas characters and decorations adorning the mile-long stretch of road. Special guests include Ellie the Elf, Frosty the Snowman, Santa on stilts and children can play Reindeer Games. Hop aboard tractor-drawn wagon rides for only \$1 per person! The North Pole

Express and Christmas on Main run Dec. 3-5, 10-12 and 17-19.

Add a little holiday cheer into your Christmas celebration aboard the Christmas Wine Trains on Dec. 9, 16 and 23. The evening will kick off with a reception at the Grapevine Cotton Belt Depot District featuring entertaining live music. Each guest will receive one complimentary beverage in a commemorative Christmas wineglass. The relaxing evening excursion will include holiday music, caroling and a visit from Santa Claus.

If you want something more classic, take a break from the hustle and bustle of the holidays by enjoying your family's favorite Christmas films on the big screen at the Palace Theatre starting Dec. 4. Evening and matinee shows are available; tickets are \$5 per person.

Really want to celebrate Christmas in true Texan-style? All month long, the Grapevine Opry presents Christmas Spectacular providing high energy, holiday spirit and a spontaneous format with every show. Christmas Spectacular runs every weekend from Dec. 3 through Dec. 18, including a special encore performance on New Year's Eve.

In addition to all the holiday festivities in Grapevine, you cannot leave without experiencing shopping on Main Street! Shoppers can stroll through historic downtown Grapevine and marvel at the holiday lighting while checking off their holiday shopping list with all the charming gifts local stores have to offer.

For additional information contact the Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 457-6338 or (817) 410-3185 or visit www.GrapevineTexasUSA.com/Christmas. **NOW**

Photos courtesy of Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau.





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Metro Beekeepers meeting: 6:30-8:30 p.m., United Cooperative Services Building, 2601 South I-35 W., Burleson. Items of interest to both novice and expert beekeepers in Texas will be presented. Contact Terry Botkin at (214) 837-7256, or visit www.metrobeekeepers.net.

Second and Fourth Mondays

Kiwanis Mansfield Afternoon Club meeting: 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Fat Daddy's on Debbie Lane. For more information, contact Cheryl Litke, Secretary, at (817) 453-5106.

Mansfield City Council meetings: 7:00-9:00 p.m., City Hall, 1200 East Broad Street. Call Vicki Collins at (817) 276-4204.

First and Third Tuesdays

Senior Dance: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Mansfield Activity Center gymnasium, 106 S. Wisteria. A different live band plays every week. Snacks are served during the fun. For more information, please call Suzanne Newman at (817) 453-5420.

Every Tuesday

The Rotary Club of Mansfield meeting: noon-2:00 p.m., Springcreek BBQ, 1724 N. Hwy. 287. For more information, contact Danny Wilson, President, at (972) 595-1778.

First and Third Wednesdays

Mansfield Network Group meeting: 9:00-10:00 a.m., The Tuscan Executive Suites, 601 Strada Circle, Mansfield. Contact John Boguski at (817) 939-5884.

Second Wednesday

Common Ground Network meeting: 10:00-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Chamber of Commerce, 114 N. Main Street. Monthly meeting of hearts and minds to coordinate local benevolence programs. For more information, call Susan Luttrell at (817) 473-6650, ext. 204 or visit www.commongroundmansfield.com.

Third Wednesday

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East (Exit 401B). Cost is \$13, inclusive. Nursery vouchers available for young children. Reservations preferred, but walk-ins welcome. Contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or windchime423@yahoo.com.

Every Thursday

The Mansfield Sunrise Rotary meeting: 7:00-

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9:00 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 777 N. Walnut Creek Dr. For more information, contact Robert Putman, president, at (817) 453-1616.

Food Distribution: Devotional at 10:30 a.m.; serving from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Bisbee Baptist Church, 3001 Gertie Barrett Road (at Turner Warnell and Gertie Barrett Road). Accepting donations all through the month. For more information, contact Charletta Taylor at (817) 319-9341.

Every Friday

Kiwanis Club of Mansfield meeting: 6:45-8:00 a.m., Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. For more information, contact Todd Simmons, past president, at (817) 473-9645.

Every Saturday

Food Distribution: 9:00 a.m.-noon, St. Jude Catholic Church, 301 Graves Street, Mansfield. Accepting donations throughout the month. For more information, contact (682) 518-0366.

Improv Comedy Night: 8:00 p.m., After Hours Improv Theater, 100 N. College Street, Waxahachie. Local clubs are invited to utilize AHI Charity Nights to raise funds for their organization. Call (972) 937-9839 or visit www.AfterHoursImprov.com.

December 1-12

12 Days of Christmas Giving: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Town Square Toys, 215 N. Walnut Creek Drive, Suite 101, Mansfield. Everyone is invited to come with their Angel Tree tag and receive 25 percent off their entire purchase. Contact Steph at (817) 453-TOYS or steph@townsquaretoys.com.

December 3

Methodist Mansfield Auxiliary's Annual Holly Days: 8:30 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. Holly Days is the annual fundraising event sponsored by the Methodist Mansfield Auxiliary, benefiting the hospital. Dozens of vendors will turn the hospital's lobby and gift shop into a holiday shopping extravaganza. Proceeds from Holly Days benefit women's health. With the proceeds, the Auxiliary will purchase equipment for the OB-GYN doctors who deliver and operate at the hospital. For more information, call (682) 622-2085.

December 5

Remembrance Service: 4:00 p.m. in the Chapel of First Methodist Mansfield. This special service is a time for families



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December 7

Cowboy Church Ball: 7:00-10:00 p.m., Bar Cross Ranch Cowboy Church. Come as you are and celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus. Call (817) 783-3100 for more information.

December 12

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: 4:00 p.m. and again at 6:00 p.m., sanctuary of First United Methodist Church of Mansfield. Mansfield Community Theater will present this funny, kid-friendly play about a church Christmas pageant whose cast includes some of the worst kids in town. The performances are free and open to the whole community. For more information, contact Cindy Brown at FUMCM at (817) 477-2287.

December 14

Board Meeting for Mansfield Independent School District: 7:00-9:00 p.m., 605 E. Broad Street, Mansfield. Call Julie Moye at (817) 299-6382 for more information.

December 18

Saturday Night Christmas Music Showcase: 7:00-10:00 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main Street, downtown historic Mansfield. Enjoy a variety of your favorite Christmas songs, from Country to Pop to Oldies, performed by talented singers. Bring your family to see this wonderful Christmas show, even a surprise visit from Santa Claus. Contact Rhonda at (817) 453-1700 or rhonda@farrbest.com or visit www.farrbest.com.

December 20-31

Winter holiday for Mansfield Independent School District: Classes resume January 3, 2011. Call Julie Moye at (817) 299-6382 for more information.

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