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MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2011

BEADED  
ARTISTRY

Also Inside

A New Journey

Running Down His Dreams

Perking Up the Mundane

In the Kitchen  
With Militza Metz

THE  
GENTLE  
LIFE

The Reilings  
enjoy the  
family farm  
they had  
always  
dreamed of.

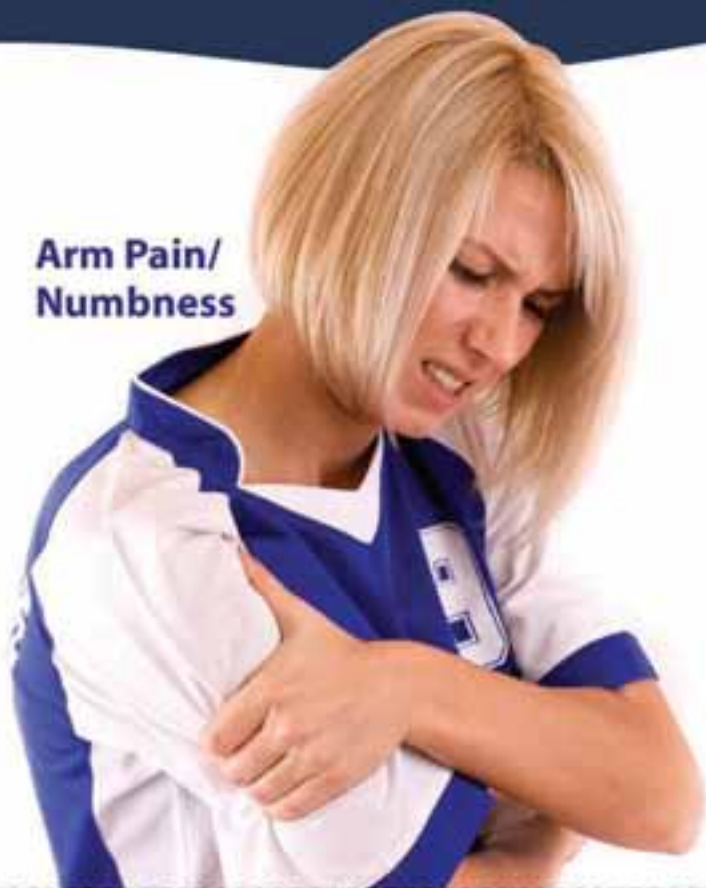
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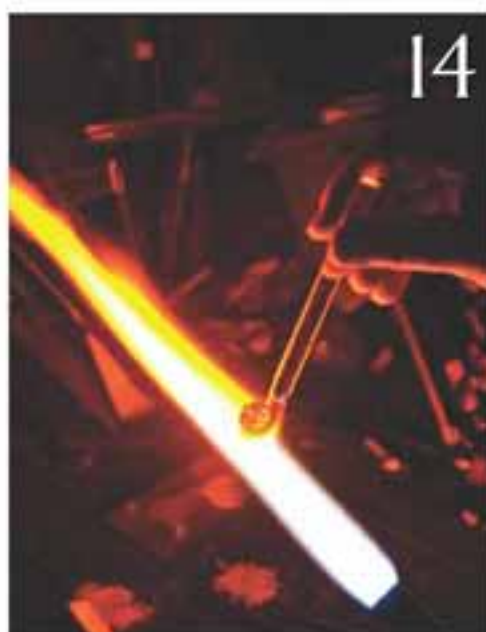
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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (817) 477-0990 or visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

## Editor's Note

*Hello Burleson, Crowley and Joshua!*

All around us are happy people having a good time — we just have to seek them out and join their fun. If you enjoy festivals of lights, then on the first Saturday of this month, you can join folks in Burleson, Crowley and Joshua for their big Christmas celebrations for everyone in the community. At 4:30 that afternoon, the Burleson Rotary Club hosts its annual Christmas parade, with a theme of “Old-fashioned Family Christmas,” followed by the tree lighting. Crowley’s parade starts at 5:00 p.m. from Crowley High School and ends at City Hall, where for the last couple weeks they have hosted the Fantasy Forest. In Joshua, they’re doing it a little differently. Starting at 6:00 p.m., the Christmas parade theme is “Polar Express” and — surprise! — the movie, *Polar Express*, will be shown in the park after the parade.

No matter what you do this month, have fun making happy memories!

### Melissa

Melissa Rawlins  
*BurlesonNOW* Editor  
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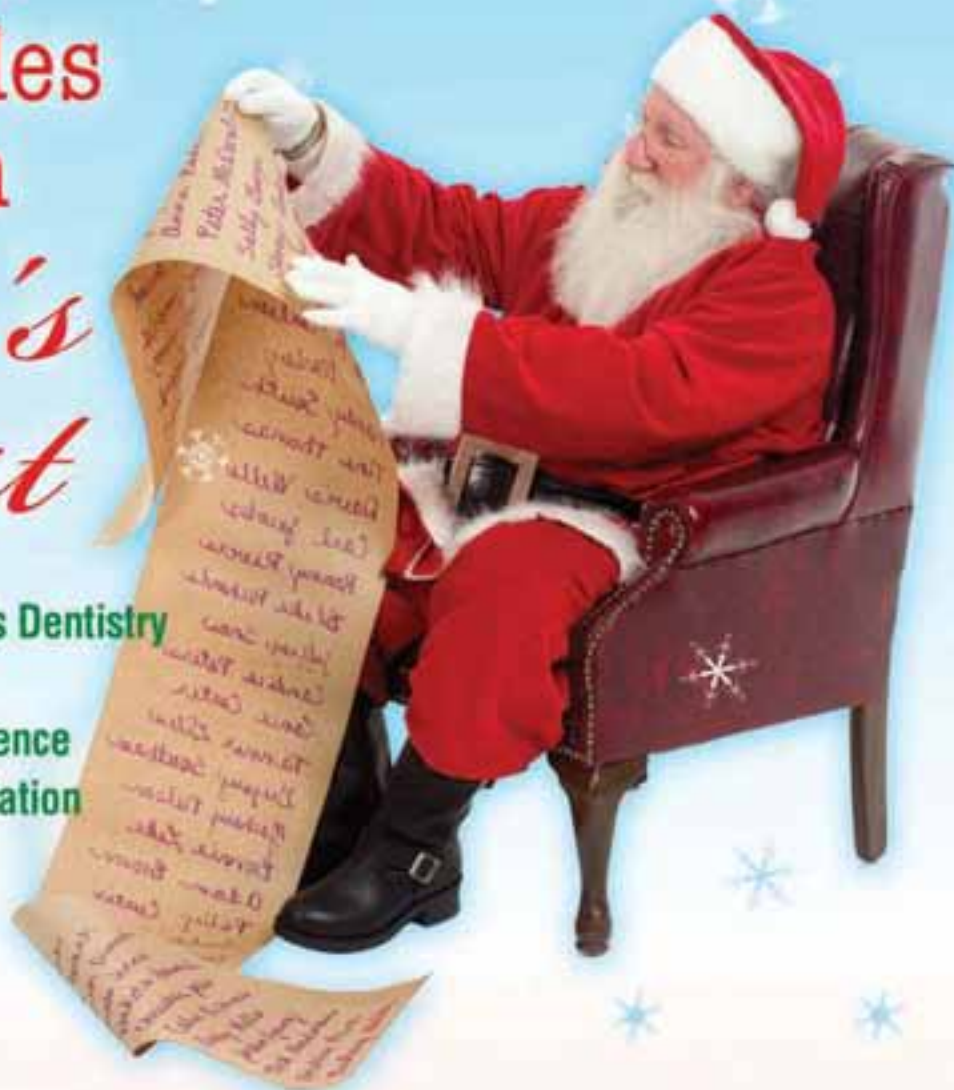
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# *The Gentle Life*

— By Melissa Rawlins





*Davis Reiling and his folks, Ron and Denise, moved to Burleson shortly after Denise received a breast cancer diagnosis. They decided to give up the city and fancy Dallas job to live somewhere peaceful and do something they love: raise alpacas. Since 2003, Davis has gone to Holy Cross Christian Academy. For the school's float in the Burleson Rotary Club Christmas Parade, Davis and his mother escorted their pet alpacas, which remind a lot of people of camels or llamas. In fact, while Davis was a fifth-grader, his alpacas played the Three Wise Men's camels in the HCCA Live Nativity. But Davis knows the difference between a camel, known to spit and hiss, and an alpaca, which makes a soft, pretty humming sound.*

"I enjoy working with the alpacas because they're so nice. And it's fun to watch them grow up.

You can see how their changes come," said Davis, whose family breeds and sells the animals and markets wearable products made from their fleece. He still remembers when one of his favorite alpacas, Eve, was born three Christmas Eves ago. "My great-grandmother said, 'I don't think your present has come in the mail yet, you might want to go check.' When I opened the front door, my dad was holding Eve with a big bow around her, and that's when I said, 'Thank you.' Now,

I like to show her, and play with her." Davis used to give Eve peppermint treats, but she no longer eats them. Now she just likes Davis.

It is for such sweetness that Denise and Ron, who have just celebrated their 16th wedding anniversary, came to the countryside near Burleson. Originally from the mid-cities area, Denise married a man from a 1,000-acre pig and corn farm in Illinois. "I'm just a city girl. That's why he thinks it's so funny to see me out here," said Denise, who admits that once she and Davis brought Eve into the laundry room to keep her warm during the winter. "Eve got so cold and had gotten a little skinny because she was depressed, since we'd sold her best friend. Davis would walk her outside to take her out, and she never made a mess in the laundry room!"

Such a kind soul, when faced with a year of painful medical therapies for breast cancer, Denise responded better thanks to the healing she found through caring for alpacas. "Right when I got my diagnosis, in May, 2002, I didn't know what to think. You don't think, *I'm gonna go through a tough year and get over it*. You think, *I'm gonna die*. I was thinking I would not be able to have the family farm I had dreamed of," remembered Denise, who at the time sold advertising for corporate television — leaving early for work and returning home when little Davis was already in bed.

She and Ron had recently visited the Fort Worth Stock Show, and had been enamored by the alpacas they saw. "Right after the diagnosis, I sat up in bed in the middle of the night and said, 'I wanna do the alpacas.' The very next day we went to look at them, and I bought three right then," Denise said. "It helped me because I would sit online going through alpaca stuff instead of cancer stuff." Initially, the Reilings kept their small herd in their backyard in Colleyville. Ron traveled with his work in private jet aviation, so no matter how bad Denise felt on the chemotherapy,

**"Sometimes, I just go out there and have fun with them. I went out once with my Nerf gun and discovered Velcro bullets stick!"**







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she had to get up and care for 2-year-old Davis and for the alpacas. "One of the girls knew I was feeling miserable and would come put her head on my shoulder. It was so relaxing to watch the alpacas graze. They hum to each other, so they know where each other are. I would just sit out there in my little plastic chair and listen to them hum."







Still on chemotherapy when they moved to Burleson, Denise believes the breast cancer was, in a weird way, a blessing. "I feel like it was God's way of saying, 'Wake up; your life is flying past you.' Ron and I figured out that even though it was scary to think we'd be on one income, by the time we calculated all the lunches I was having out, all the

clothes and the gas and other expenses, it really wasn't that bad," Denise said. Now, she is able to help Davis with his homework and work with the alpacas. If Holy Cross Christian Academy wants her to bring the animals to the school for a science field day, Denise can show the kids what alpaca teeth and toes look and feel like. "I went from wearing fancy suits in fancy board rooms to scooping poop and delivering babies!"

Next year, the Reilings will celebrate their 10th year in the alpaca business and Denise's 10th year without breast cancer. Ron wanted Davis to learn that playing video games comes after chores, since that is how he was reared. And Davis has grown up learning every detail of what is happening



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out in the barn. "I normally take care of alpacas during the summer. Sometimes, I just go out there and have fun with them. I went out once with my Nerf gun and discovered Velcro bullets stick! And I used to try to see if they would flinch or not when I flicked the rake around in the air. They stopped flinching after awhile," recalled Davis, who has matured and now prefers to train them for the alpaca shows.

Familiar with little boys' pranks, the alpacas have been polite hosts when Holy Cross Christian Academy brought their students to the Reilings for field trips. "When we felted soap with alpaca fleece, as a fundraiser for the Fall Craft Fair and Carnival, it was so hard to keep the kids in the shop because they wanted to go out and jump off the hay piles and chase the alpacas through the pasture," Denise said. "People comment that the alpacas are calm, and I'm like, 'You don't understand what they go through at our house.'"

The animals get a lot of love, too. "I love going out there and hugging them during the winter. They almost look like they do nothing, but when you go out there you see that the babies love to play," said Davis, who also loves to play — basketball, with his father, and all varieties of team sports with his peers at Holy Cross. Along with all his other activities, Davis hopes that this year the weather cooperates so the fifth-graders can sing Christmas carols and perform the live nativity out under the stars, with his three alpacas humming along with the children. **SCM**

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# BEADED ARTISTRY

—By Carolyn Willis

*Amber French grew up in a '40s-style neighborhood in Long Beach, California, to the sounds of big band, opera and jazz; the laughter of her brother and three sisters; and the encouragement of a family who valued faith and self-expression. "There was nothing normal about us," she smiled. "My mother's great-aunt was a songbird, an opera singer in the early 1900s." Her mother is a cousin to the late actor, Dennis Hopper, and niece to the famous actress and gossip columnist, Hedda Hopper. "We also have a great-aunt who worked for the Tiffany Glass Company in New York and is a great color pencil artist." The creative legacy extends to Amber's father's side also,*



**"I like to create focal beads and my color preferences are blues, greens and purples, although I also do a lot of customized designs."**



where there are many musicians and artists plus a significant politician. "My dad is related to John White Bower who was a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836."

From such a beginning, it's not surprising that Amber would live an artist's life. "I drew pictures before I could talk," she said. "By the age of 3, I was drawing with and on anything I could find. My mother tells me there were times when she would wake up in the morning and find a new mural on a wall. I still love to work with color pencils and pen and ink." Maybe not so predictable is her love for science and the path that led Amber down, combining artistic talent with a very real and practical application of chemistry and artisanship.

"I began making glass beads in 1996," she said. "My sister and I had discovered a book about the process and, since she and the author both lived in Chicago, my



sister enrolled in a workshop, became convinced that I would love the work and encouraged me to try it. At the time, there were only two glass bead artists in this area, but I decided I'd learn the art on my own." Today, Amber creates signature glass beads, stunning jewelry and selective accessories. She conducts

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workshops, exhibits her work in galleries and specialty shops and is a featured artist in a beautifully produced book entitled *Beads of Glass – The Art and the Artists* by Cindy Jenkins.

She has managed to meld a keen design sense with her passion for chemistry and the courage to tackle painstakingly delicate crafting. "When I'm having an 'artist's day,'" Amber said, "I start by mapping out everything that I want to accomplish that day. I set things up in my studio and usually work there from about 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. The torches and kiln make it too hot to be in the studio beyond the morning hours, so I bring the beads into the house to finalize the pieces." She enjoys impressionistic art and the work of Russian painter and theorist, Wassily Kandinsky. "I like to create focal beads and my color preferences are blues, greens and purples, although I also do a lot of customized designs."

Transforming raw glass into art takes meticulous handwork and knowing the effects of time, intensity and duration of fire. For material, Amber uses mostly borosilicate and Moretti glass, lots of silver and copper wire, as well as enamels and other metals, and her process ranges from torching and pulling the glass to hand blowing it through a tube. "I studied chemistry in college and love how this works," she said.

Amber's beads are extraordinary, and to take them a step farther, she creates unique jewelry and accessories like cups, candleholders, pens and decorative





objects, such as fan pulls and knobs. "One of my sisters is an interior decorator in New Jersey," she said. "I have customized many decorative pieces for her."

There is a whimsical side to Amber's work, too. "I like to create little glass frogs and attach them to geodes," she smiled. "I also make cowboy fish!"

In 1996, Amber met friend and fellow artist, Kerri Martinez from Mansfield. "Kerri asked if I would show her how to make glass beads," she said. "I showed her once, and she took off



like a rocket. She is a 5-foot, blue-eyed, talented, fireball, and we've become great friends."

Texas came into her life when Amber was 16 and her father was transferred. "He worked with a union oil company," she said. "We settled in Burleson, and while he thought Texas was too hot and eventually moved back to California, I loved it. I've been here since 1980. This is where I met and married my husband, went to college, had three sons and 10 grandchildren, and became part of Burleson's growing art community."

Twenty-nine years ago, Amber met James French. "We were in the same church congregation. Jim has worked for American Airlines for 27 years and is also a very talented artist." Together, the two are renovating their vintage home, which they purchased and had moved onto their property. "We've redone everything from top to bottom," Amber said. "Jim also built my studio and a train room for his HO scale trains. He builds model trains."

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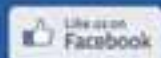
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Amber and James are united in their devotion to faith and family. When, at birth, it was feared their granddaughter, Makayla, would have many special needs, they embraced her as their own. Today, Makayla is a healthy and spritely 3-year-old who loves to dance and twirl in her pink and white tutu and create her own art. Makayla also helps care for the family rabbit named Niblet, Brodie the Dachshund and the two cats, Murphy and Gilbert. "We have two grandsons and eight granddaughters, and it's a joy to spend time with them," Amber smiled.

In the tradition of her family, Amber sings. "I sang in rock bands in the late '70s," Amber said. "Just for fun, I recently decided to join some friends who sing rock 'n' roll and country. I also enjoy singing with my sisters and mother. We get together once a year for a 'girl family vacation' and, as fans of Celine Dion, we love to sing her songs!" Not surprisingly, Amber's favorite movie is *Little Women*. "It reminds me of my family," she said. "I'm the oldest of four sisters, and we're all very close."

James and Amber enjoy traveling and look forward to visiting artist communities for a month or two at a time during retirement. "James and I love being around people and our faith is very strong," she said. Faith is most important in Amber's life. **SON**



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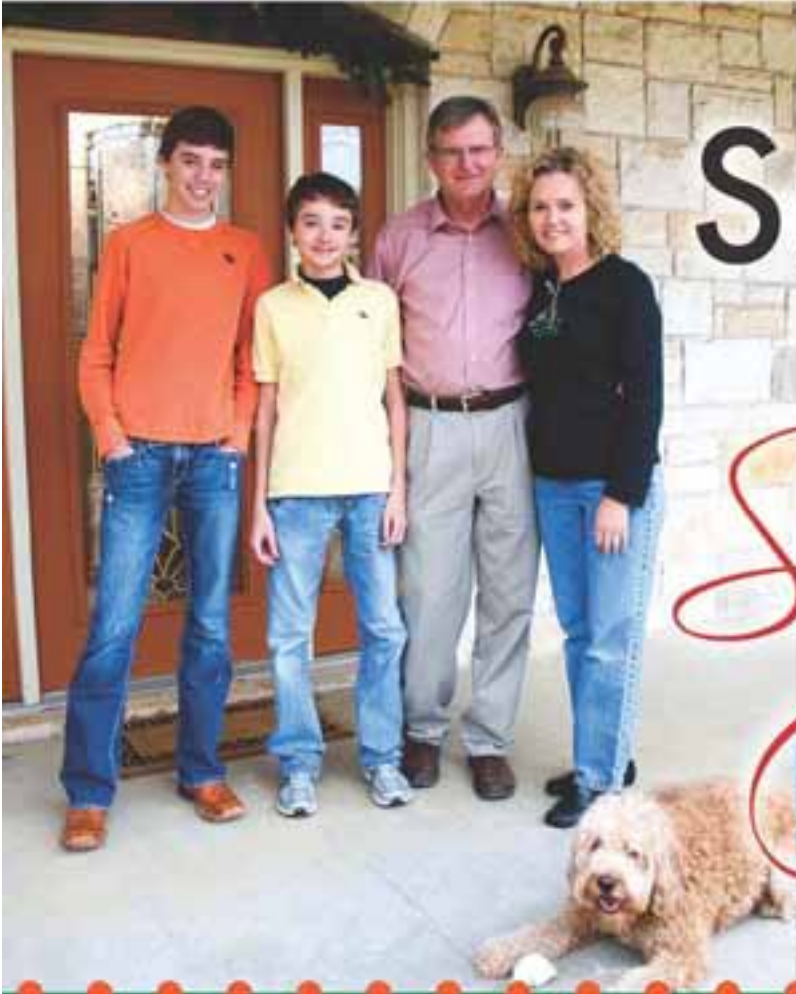
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# Substance and

# Simplicity

## AT HOME WITH Dr. Randall and Anita Bentley

— By Carolyn Wills

*Dr. Randall and Anita Bentley's home is beautiful in any season, but especially in December. During the holidays, the nearly 4,000 square-foot home evokes a time when people built their own homes, farmed the land and ensured their houses faced south. The commanding two-story stone structure is positioned horizontally in the middle of a 10-acre field and, when dressed for the holidays, it is by all measures a grand interpretation of the little house on the prairie.*

"I grew up in Orange, Texas," Anita said. "As a teenager, I knew a lady who decorated all of her rooms for the holidays and held an open house each year. I loved it and, when I met Randy,



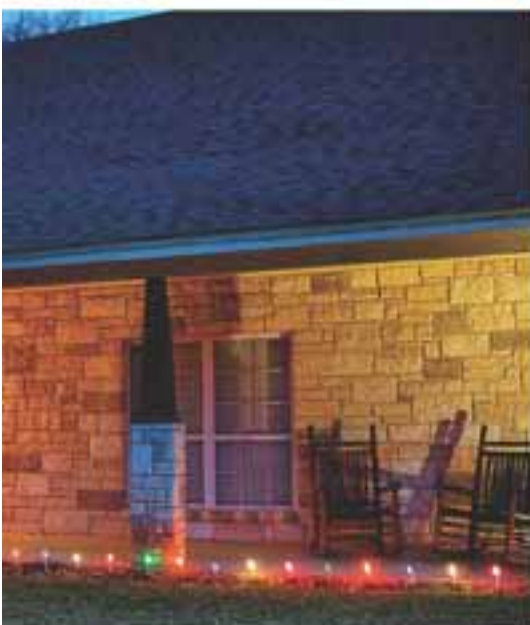
I told him that's what I've always wanted to do."

Nearly 20 years and two sons later, the Bentleys continue honoring her wish. "We start decorating right after Thanksgiving," she smiled. "Randy puts the lights up outside. Last year, he made a full-size outdoor Christmas tree of old barbed wire." It is also tradition to decorate Anita's winter potting shed, the little blue rustic shed built by Randy, complete with old license plates tacked to the outside and a seating area of weathered metal lawn chairs.

Randy's childhood home is a short block from old town Joshua, and he is a third-generation Joshua resident. He grew up enjoying his grandparents' farm and helping his father build homes and churches. "I love listening to Randy's and his dad's stories about how tiny this place was when he was growing up," Anita said.

Before he and Anita met, Randy had purchased 50 acres from a ranching family in Joshua. "My dad and I developed most of it, and I kept 10 acres," Randy said. He left Joshua to attend Baylor University in Waco to begin his study in medicine and,





while completing a hospital internship in Groves, Texas, he met Anita. With his degree in internal medicine, he moved his family to Meridian, Texas, and spent the next few years practicing and answering house calls. "It seems that we grow up wanting to leave home," he smiled. "Then, after a while, we dream of returning." He currently practices locally with a focus on wound care and hyperbaric medicine.

Fifteen years ago, the Bentleys decided to move back to Joshua while their sons, Kyle and Bryce, were still young. They moved into the original frame house on the acreage Randy had purchased. "We designed our home and Randy's dad built it," Anita said. "The exterior is faced with four different stones, three are from

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Texas quarries and the gray stone is from an Oklahoma quarry."

"Anita actually drew the plans," Randy said. "She's the decorator and has a really good eye for design."

The home is a balance of substance and simplicity. "We wanted a home to live in," Anita said. As much as she delivered comfort and function, Anita's decor also has the look of a professional designer. The front foyer opens to a great room centered by an enormous rectangular dining table. Beyond the dining area

are two leather chairs in front of a commanding stone fireplace. On one end of the long great room is a living area with leather and upholstered couches and chairs. On the other end is an open kitchen with tall, white cabinets, dark brown granite counters and antique bronze fixtures. "The great room is our 'everything' room," she smiled. "It's where everyone gathers during the holidays. Randy's dad's birthday is December 21, and this is where we celebrate."



Except for the master suite and the boys' bedrooms, the downstairs floor is tiled in a light-colored ceramic and the walls are painted a soft cream. Upstairs is divided into Randy's study and the boys' den.

Thanksgiving signals the start of the holidays at the Bentleys and the time to decorate, not one, but at least three Christmas trees. "I used to move the trees around each year, but I think they've found their homes," Anita said. "I hope to add a living tree in the kitchen for our gingerbread ornaments and then after Christmas, replant it along our fence line and add a new tree each year."

The front entry features a 1960s silver tree covered with a collection of

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colored ornaments passed down by Anita's grandmother. The table beside the tree once belonged to Anita's great-grandmother. Another tree by the fireplace in the great room represents a Texas Christmas. The third and most important tree is in the living room area and is decorated with ornaments made by Kyle and Bryce throughout their school years, as well as ornaments collected by the family. "It's our family tree," Anita said, "and the one we gather around on Christmas morning."

Each year, the Bentleys' mantel displays four handmade stockings. "My mother made one for each of us," Anita said. "Then, we added a fifth for Bevo, our Labradoodle." Named for his University of Texas orange coat, there is no mistaking that 5-year-old Bevo is part of the family.

The Bentleys have lived in their home since 2001. Kyle is now 18 and a senior in high school, and 15-year-old Bryce is in the ninth grade. Both boys are involved in Future Farmers of America (FFA) and have shown lambs, goats and chickens. "Kyle became interested in FFA when he was in the fifth grade, and that's when we became FFA parents," Anita explained. "I am involved with the Joshua FFA Alumni, and I volunteer a lot."

When Randy is not practicing medicine in Fort Worth or Weatherford, he is often at his drafting table or roll top desk in his study, or outside building and fixing. Anita's hobby is working in the yard. "I tend to live in the kitchen, but I would rather be doing anything outside," she said.

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The family enjoys summer fishing off the coast of Corpus Christi or Galveston and winter skiing in Durango, Colorado. They also enjoy shopping for antiques in Canton and searching through old tools at flea markets.

Above the Benteleys' fireplace, high up on the stone facing, is a large cow skull and horns that speak of Texas and the basics of life in the West. Beneath it is a painting by Texas artist, George Hallmark, titled *Honor Calls on the Prairie*. The painting depicts a time and scene when a medical doctor would travel to patients. The honesty and artistic simplicity of the cow skull and painting lend the perfect statement for this multigenerational Joshua family. **NOW**



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# A New Journey

—By Carolyn Willis

*Within minutes of the accident on FM 1902, cell phones, texts and Facebook alerted the news that stunned the community of Joshua. It was a little after 9:00 on Monday evening, June 6, 2011. Dusk had settled, and 16-year-old Jordyn, the Mitchell and her best friend, Tanner Matthews, were on their way home from a basketball game at Joshua Middle School.*





Jaci was looking down at her cell phone when the truck started to skid. Tanner had lost control, swerved to miss an oncoming car and travelled across lanes into a deep ditch. The truck flipped six times before coming to rest on a pile of barbed wire. He was bruised and battered, his legs cut from the barbed wire, but Tanner's greatest pain was the terror of not immediately finding Jaci.

Cars pulled over and people scrambled to help. Jaci's and Tanner's mothers arrived about 10 minutes later. A Good Samaritan found Jaci lying in the grassy pasture about 25 feet away from the vehicle. She had been ejected through a window. She was flown by CareFlight, and Tanner was driven by ambulance to Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Fort Worth, and family and friends hurried behind.

"Everything from that night until the following Thursday is a blur," Jaci said. Gradually, she learned the extent of her injuries. She heard from doctors and her parents that she had suffered a broken neck between the areas of the vertebrae described as C6 and C7 and, as a result, her spinal cord was severed. She was told she was paralyzed from the chest down, and she endured a lengthy surgery to implant a titanium brace in order to stabilize her vertebrae.

After a week and four days in the hospital, she spent six weeks in inpatient therapy at Our Children's House at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas. Throughout her stay, she processed the





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dramatic change in her life, experiencing the support of family, friends and the entire community of Joshua and surprised the medical staff with her strength and determination.

Jaci approached her recovery with the same discipline and fortitude that made her a valuable player on her varsity softball team at Joshua High School and with the strong spirit that came through family and faith. "God is in charge," she said. "What is in His will is what will happen."

Jaci has lived in Joshua all of her life and is sister to 20-year-old Brittany and 13-year-old Rylee. While their parents, Leisha and Brad, are just recently divorced after a 19-year marriage, they are both committed to their family and remain involved. "Everyone knows everyone in Joshua," Leisha Mitchell smiled. "Our family is very close, and the girls have tons of friends. While Jaci



was in the hospital, there were 25 to 100 people in the waiting room at any given time."

"Tanner and I are like brother and sister," Jaci explained. Their mothers, Leisha and Tracey, are best friends and Tanner's sister, Madison, and Jaci are also best friends. "Tanner never left the hospital while I was there," Jaci explained. "Now he pretty much eats, sleeps and goes to school and then comes to our house."

There was no question in the hearts of family and friends that they would be travelling Jaci's new journey with her.



So many people were concerned for Jaci that a Web site was created through the Caring Bridge Organization and Tracey posted updates. To help defray medical costs, various clubs and organizations donated funds and helped tirelessly with fundraisers. An event, entitled "Jerseys for Jaci," raised over \$13,000.

When news circulated the family needed a place to live with wheelchair accessibility, local residents, Lana and Rob Davis, and property owner, Mary Horton, offered the use of an apartment. "Volunteers updated the apartment," Leisha said. "They ripped out the carpet, painted, added a wall, lowered sinks, redid the closet and widened doors."

When word got out that a new mattress was needed, a donor contributed over \$5,000. "We are overwhelmed by people's generosity," Leisha shared. "Two months before the accident, I became a receptionist/secretary for the Swindell

family at their company in Fort Worth. They have arranged to pay my salary and hold my position for a year so I can care for Jaci."

Jaci came home on August 13, in time for her junior year at Joshua High School. She could raise her arms and, although it was not easy, she had figured out how to put on a shirt, wash her face, brush her teeth and, most

importantly, use her cell phone. "So I can have a private life again," she smiled. Amazingly, her phone was found lying side by side in the field with Tanner's and nothing was wrong with either.

Before the accident, at 5 feet 3 inches, Jaci weighed 117 pounds. She is closer to 110 pounds now but still the beautiful young woman whose smile lights up a room. She likes *Sponge Bob* and *Family Guy*; the color of lime green; Texas Country music; the movie *Moulin Rouge*; the colors and decorations of Halloween; her cat, Lily; and the beloved family dog, Austin. But most of all, she enjoys having



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the freedom and ability to do things on her own.

Her determination continues to stir everyone around her, including Alton Anderson and John Henderson, two Shriners who have stepped up to facilitate an opportunity for Jaci to be treated at the Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago. “The trip is fully funded with a promise of 100-percent independence at the end of the stay,” she smiled. “There are no specific places for spinal cord rehabilitation in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, so I’m really excited because this will be the top of the top.”



Because she has not yet regained the use of her hands, Jaci is classified as a quadriplegic. “This is a very long and hard process,” she said. “I believe there is life outside of learning to adapt, and there is still the chance to be up there with the best. I want to be able to transfer myself and to drive so I can do things on my own. My plan is to be in and out of Chicago inside of three months.”

Jaci has the will and the creativity to find her own way on this new journey. She has stirred the admiration of many and deepened the love with those who have shown to be her true friends. With faith, all things are possible and this young woman will find her way to the “top of the top.” **NOW**



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# RUNNING DOWN HIS DREAMS

— By Julie B. Corgrove



*Tryston Joseph Archer, known as TJ, is not your average ninth-grader. He is extraordinarily fast on the track. So fast, he won the silver medal in the 4x800 track competition at the Junior Olympics held in New Orleans last summer. His parents, Matt and Cherie Archer, along with his sister, Tatum, were there to cheer him on. But so was a new friend, a foreign exchange student from Aarhus, Denmark, named Hjalte Jakobsen, who goes by Jakob at home and Denmark at school. "We picked Jakob up at the airport, then two days later headed for New Orleans for a week," Cherie explained.*

The Archers chose to sponsor Jakob long before TJ qualified to run in the Junior Olympic Games. Jakob had been in communication with the Archer family for months via Skype, a computer program that lets you speak with and see another person over the Internet. Jakob received permission from the exchange program to arrive early so he could attend TJ's events in the Crescent City.

One of the reasons the family bonded with Jakob was his enthusiasm, positive attitude and love of sports, especially American football. "He's a walking encyclopedia when it comes to football," Cherie said. "We'll be watching a game, and he'll let us know who the players are for each team, their stats, everything."

Jakob, an 11th-grade student who is an avid sports participant in trick skiing and soccer back in Denmark, was thrilled when he made the football team at Centennial High School as kicker. When asked how he liked being in the United States, Jakob grinned widely. "It's really cool." He also enjoys



being involved with the Archer family in supporting TJ's efforts.

TJ has always been into sports. Like Jakob, he loved soccer. His father helped coach him from the age of 4 until he was 10. "I always wanted him to play soccer," Matt stated, "but in junior high, TJ chose basketball. I supported that choice. Then he began to run with his mother in local races. He just took off and won."

"He ran in the 5K run at the zoo when he was in sixth grade," Cherie explained. "He won first place. He was only 10!" He later ran in the Burleson 1K Harvest Run and won there as well. "We always knew he was fast, just not *how* fast."

TJ began competing in track meets and was recruited by the Dallas Blaze. "The coach said he was one of the fastest, and his speed would encourage the others," Matt proudly reported. As part of the USA Track and Field organization, the Dallas Blaze helped TJ qualify in regional meets, then district. His time qualified him to compete at the Junior Olympics. The qualification process is strictly governed by the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU).

"It was so much fun. There must have been 20,000 students there, and they each wore wrist bands to identify them,"



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Cherie said. "We walked around all over the city touring. Our friends were so supportive. They made magnetic signs for our car, sent messages and everything." One sign was white with blue letters. It read "Run TJ Run." The family, including Tatum and Jakob, wore T-shirts that read "Don't Just Chase After Your Dreams, Run Them Down," on the front and TJ's name on the back.

Jakob admitted the high humidity and heat last summer wasn't his favorite thing about New Orleans. He is used to temperatures in the high 60s in Denmark, but he couldn't complain. TJ had it much worse on the track.

"In the summer, tracks can get so hot they melt your shoes," TJ quipped. "That happened at a meet at The University of Texas at Arlington." But when asked how he handles it, TJ shrugged. "You just do."

TJ doesn't practice during the off season. He plays basketball instead. "He isn't one who loves to run just for the

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sake of running. He won't get up early and run for miles every morning or anything like that," Cherie admitted. "Just think how fast he'd be if he did!" She shot her son a smirk, and TJ smiled back.

"I don't like running as much as I love winning. I just found that I could win at running," TJ admitted. However, if he does lose he doesn't beat himself up about it. The experience simply motivates him to do better. "I did learn a lot from my coach last year: How to breathe, when to pace myself, when to push it."

TJ plans to go to college at a school known for its track program. "I'd love for him to go to the University of Oklahoma," Matt confessed, "but if he ends up at The University of Texas and that is the best fit for him, I will proudly wear orange. I believe you should encourage your kids in whatever they are comfortable doing, no matter what it is. You've got to stay involved."

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parents contributes to their children's success. Tatum is an athlete in her own right. She likes dance, especially tap and jazz. Her jazz team took second place double platinum in a national competition this year. She also plays volleyball.

For other students who may wish to take up track, TJ offered this advice, "Find a good coach. That's 50 percent of the fight right there. Then find an event you can win in. Compete in high jump, long jump and relays like the 4x200, 4x400 and 4x800. I do them all, but the 800 is my best." In each of the relay events, there are teams of four. Each of the team members runs the same distance, either 200, 400 or 800 meters, and then they pass the baton to their teammate. The team with the fastest time wins.

Jakob grinned with pride for his new friend. The two get along well, and if Jakob has his way, when this year of living with the Archer family is complete, he will make plans to return to the United States for college. He wants to go to Texas Christian University and be on its new men's soccer team, which is in the planning stages. "We'd love to have him back near us," Cherie said.

TJ nodded. "Yeah, that would be cool."

Two students from a world apart have bonded through a love for sports. Both are exceptional young men who excel in what they love to do, and Matt, Cherie and Tatum will be there to help cheer them both along the way. **NOW**



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Kathryn Bankston and Ashlie Freeman make shopping a breeze for men and women looking for dreamy gifts for dreamy girls.



## Perking Up the Mundane

*Pink Chandelier Boutique brings you trendy clothing and accessories for everyday life.*

—By Melissa Ratulins

If you're anything like Ashlie Freeman, you dream of an affordable, classy boutique where the racks are full of outfits that will help you look your best, every day. And oh, by the way, you can bring your child shopping, too. Enter Pink Chandelier Boutique, the little house in Old Town brimming with personality — not to mention trendy clothing and accessories.

Expect denim and lace when you walk into Ashlie's store. Painted in silver and black — with splashes of Ashlie's favorite color, pink — the walls create a celebratory atmosphere while the blouses, dresses and jeans set the tone. In case you're going to a wedding, Pink Chandelier provides several dresses from which to choose. But for the most part, Ashlie wanted to offer fashion that perks up the mundane. "In Burleson, we aren't

always doing something requiring fancy clothes," Ashlie said. "I'm a mom, so I wanted to be able to run errands and still look cute while I'm doing it."

She and her mother go far and wide to bring the most unusual boutique items back to Burleson. Traveling to the Dallas Market, the LA fashion district, and recently to the Las Vegas Market, the two come back with vintage-looking items. That is a reflection both of Ashlie's taste, as well as the fact that she understands her Burleson clientele. She especially favors the elegant, trendy and reasonably priced Freeway brand, which is always romantic.

Women in Burleson can count on the ladies at Pink Chandelier to help them stay in their price range while discovering just the right fashion. "If people are looking for



a certain something, I definitely look into getting it for the store," Ashlie said. "Kathryn Bankston and I want to know what people want. Anytime they want to ask, we try to fulfill their custom orders as soon as possible." The two customer

**"One mom told me when she pulls up in our parking lot, her son is excited because he enjoys our Pink Chandelier play area."**

service specialists talk to each customer, getting to know them a little bit, finding out what they're looking for and locating the perfect something that will fit their personality.

Pink Chandelier offers all kinds of options for fulfilling your Christmas gift list. From highly unusual jewelry to stocking stuffers like magnets and notepads, you can find something that fits your taste or that of the people on your list. Men will want to visit the boutique and ask for their special someone's Christmas Wish List, which Ashlie and Kathryn have designed to make Christmas shopping a breeze for husbands and boyfriends. Women can shop for well-known brands — like LA Idol Jeans, which are similar to Miss Me, yet not as expensive, or boutique lines like Tiara Fits and Annette's Touch of Class, which makes a stunning Deer Lease Diva T-shirt.

Children's fashions, from newborn girls to 4T girls, can also be added to that Christmas Wish List. Men need not be surprised that Pink Chandelier is a girlie place, where mothers come with their children. "I have a little play area in the kids' room," said Ashlie, whose dream of opening a boutique came true when her daughter, Lyndie, was 6 months old. "One mom told me when she pulls up in our parking lot, her son is excited because he enjoys our Pink Chandelier play area." In the baby room, Ashlie offers wonderful children's fashions handmade by two local ladies who fulfill custom orders for bows, onesies, blankets, burp cloths and bibs. It takes about a week to complete the custom orders. And don't forget to ask creative Kathryn to wrap each of the gifts you select, giving them that special Pink Chandelier touch. **NOW**



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Todd and Rachel Kauffman pose with their 16-month-old daughter, Piper, at the 2011 Boo Bash.



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## Why Should I Buy Life Insurance?

— By Mark Jameson

Many financial experts consider life insurance to be the cornerstone of sound financial planning. While not only providing peace of mind and security in the event of the sudden loss of a loved one, it can be an important tool in the following situations:

- **Replace income for dependents**

If people depend on your income, life insurance can replace that income for them if you die. The most commonly recognized case of this is parents with young children. However, it can also apply to couples in which the survivor would be financially stricken by the income lost through the death of a partner, and to dependent adults, such as parents, siblings or adult children who continue to rely on you financially. Insurance to replace your income can be especially useful if the government- or employer-sponsored benefits of your surviving spouse or domestic partner will be reduced after your death.



## MERRY CHRISTMAS



During this holiday season and every day of the year, we wish you all the best



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• **Final expenses**

Life insurance can pay your funeral and burial costs, probate and other estate administration costs, debts and medical expenses not covered by health insurance.

• **Create an inheritance for your heirs**

Even if you have no other assets to pass to your heirs, you can create an inheritance by buying a life insurance policy and naming them as beneficiaries.

• **Pay federal "death" taxes**

Life insurance benefits can pay estate taxes so that your heirs will not have to liquidate other assets or take a smaller inheritance. Changes in the federal "death" tax rules occur often, so please consult your financial advisor for the newest details.

• **Make significant charitable contributions**

By making a charity the beneficiary of your life insurance, you can make a much larger contribution than if you donated the cash equivalent of the policy's premiums.

• **Create a source of savings**

Some types of life insurance create a cash value that, if not paid out as a death benefit, can be borrowed or withdrawn on the owner's request. Since most people make paying their life insurance policy premiums a high priority, buying a cash-value type policy can create a kind of "forced" savings plan. Furthermore, the interest credited is tax deferred (and tax exempt if the money is paid as a death claim).

Many people wonder about the correct amount of life insurance coverage. Experts recommend carrying 10 times your current income as a rule of thumb.

Finally, even if you have life insurance through your employer, that coverage often ends upon your exit from that company. Even when your policy is "portable" the cost to do so is very expensive. In this instance, you should always have a policy that you personally own and of which you have total control. **NOW**

*Mark Jameson is a licensed Allstate sales associate based in Burleson.*

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## Blue for Christmas

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Elvis Presley's rendition of "Blue Christmas" touches many people in December. It may seem to be an anomaly to think of being blue or depressed when everything external overflows with color, lights and good cheer, but some people look at the red and green lights and still feel blue. They suffer from a very real disorder called seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

SAD is a depression disorder that is sometimes called the winter blues. It makes its appearance usually in the fall and lasts through the winter. A rare form of SAD can occur in the summer. This discussion is for the winter version. People who have this are miserable and exhibit many symptoms that interfere with the quality of their lives. SAD may be affected by geographical location according to the availability of light in that region. For example, it is estimated that 1 percent of Floridians are affected whereas 10 percent of residents in Alaska are affected.

Some of the symptoms are a feeling of depression, hopelessness, a tendency to eat too much that results in weight gain, lethargy, a decreased interest in doing activities previously enjoyed and increasing isolation from others. It is important that a physician diagnose this disorder because the symptoms may point to a different psychiatric problem. However, if SAD is the disorder, appropriate treatment is available. The cause is unknown but the

correlation between the availability of sunlight and timing of the season cannot be ignored.

Since lack of sunlight may trigger this, it makes sense to utilize light therapy to increase exposure to light. Light therapy, sometimes called phototherapy or bright light therapy is the exposure of affected persons to a special lamp under controlled situations to mimic sunlight. During treatment, you merely sit under a lamp for a time period determined by your health care professional once or twice a day. Eyes are open with the body turned toward the light. Common thought supports the belief that light triggers chemicals in the brain that affect a person's mood and makes them feel better by lessening the symptoms of SAD. In some cases, antidepressants are prescribed.

If you think you are susceptible to seasonal depression and are having thoughts of suicide, please seek help immediately. Even if thoughts of suicide are not an issue with you, do not sit alone in a darkened room feeling blue. There is light and help a phone call away. **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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# Calendar

DECEMBER 2011

## December 3

Breakfast with Santa: 7:00-11:00 a.m., Senior Activity Center, 216 S.W. Johnson Avenue. Pancakes, sausage, orange juice and coffee. Santa will be in the center's Winter Wonderland until 11:00 a.m. to hear Christmas wishes. Bring your camera to take those memory-making pictures with Santa. Call (817) 426-9600.

Burleson Rotary Club Christmas Parade: 4:30 p.m., Kerr Middle School and following Johnson Street. The theme is "Old-fashioned Family Christmas." Followed by the tree lighting. Call (817) 426-9600.

The Reindeer Run: 8:00 a.m., Crowley Recreation Center, 405 S. Oak Street, Crowley. The course will be a fun route through neighborhoods. Only the top three male and female runners will be timed. There will be an open house at the Recreation Center after the race. Water, hot chocolate, refreshments, vendors. Contact Patricia Godwin at (817) 297-2201, ext. 7000.

Crowley Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting: 5:00 p.m. Starting at Crowley High School and going to the Crowley City Hall, this Christmas Parade ends on Main Street at the Fantasy Forest, "Where the Treetops Glisten," and culminates in the Tree Lighting. Call (817) 297-2201, ext. 4000.

Joshua Parade of Lights, Tree Lighting and Movie: 6:00 p.m. Starting at Staples Elementary School and ending in the Joshua City Park, the Christmas parade theme is "Polar Express." Bring blankets and lawn chairs. Enjoy caroling in the park and pictures with Santa, food and drink and, after dark, the movie *Polar Express* sponsored by Devon Energy and Joshua Public Library, and produced by city of Joshua and Joshua Chamber of Commerce. Call (817) 558-2821.

## December 20-21

Food For the Holidays: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. The Harvest House, 349 N.W. Renfro Street. For Christmas, volunteers are providing a variety of recipe cards that

clients can pick and choose from to help them prepare meals from the items in the Harvest House store. Volunteers are always welcome! Please call (817) 295-6252.

## December 19-January 2

BISD Winter Break. For information, call (817) 245-1000.

## December 23-26 and January 2

Christmas and New Year's Holidays at city of Burleson: City offices will be closed for the Christmas holidays on **December 23** and **December 26, 2011**. City facilities will also be closed **Monday, Jan. 2**, for the New Year's holiday. Residential trash and curbside recycling will be collected on all holidays. Call (817) 426-9600 for details.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to [melissa.nowmag@sbcbglobal.net](mailto:melissa.nowmag@sbcbglobal.net).*



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## In The Kitchen With Militza Metz

— By Melissa Rawlins

At the Crowley Recreation Center, Militza Metz is planning cooking classes, which will show people how easy it is to cook nutritious meals from scratch. Her husband of 16 years and their four kids enjoy Militza's efforts at home, too. This time of year, she bakes with pecan, pumpkin and ingredients that fill the home with classic flavors and smells of the holidays. Memories of her mother, an inventive cook who taught by example, make this time special. "She worked hard to support my brother, sister and me, and then would come home and cook a meal from scratch," Militza said. "I love cooking real food with lots of chopping and stuff going on. It doesn't take much more time, and it's so much better for your body." **NOW**

### Black Forest Cake

#### Cake:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 3/4 cups flour
- 3/4 cup cocoa
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup boiling water

#### Icing:

- 1 cup shortening
- 1 cup butter
- 7 Tbsp. water (more if icing is too thick)
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 9 Tbsp. cocoa
- 1 bag powdered sugar
- 1 15-oz. can cherry pie filling

1. Mix first 10 ingredients together; add boiling water. Mix until incorporated (batter will be very thin).
2. Pour batter into 2 greased, 8-inch pans. Bake at 350 F for 35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.
3. To make icing, mix shortening, butter, water, vanilla and cocoa. Slowly add sugar until all is incorporated.
4. Top one cake with some of the pie filling. Put other cake on top, then ice cakes.
5. Decorate by piping a border of icing on top and filling the center with cherry pie filling.

### Flan

- 5 eggs
- 1 15-oz. can evaporated milk
- 1 15-oz. can condensed milk
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 5 Tbsp. sugar

1. Beat eggs; mix in evaporated and condensed milk. Add whole milk and vanilla.
2. Cook sugar in saucepan on low until clear.
3. Put cooked sugar in pan; add custard mix.
4. Cook in water bath at 350 F for 1 hour.
5. Cool completely before inverting on serving dish.

### Marshmallows

- 3 envelopes gelatin
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 2 cups sugar
- 2/3 cup syrup
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 Tbsp. flavor (maple, vanilla or peppermint)
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 cup cocoa

1. Sprinkle gelatin in 1/2 cup cold water. Soak for 10 minutes.
2. Cook sugar, syrup and 1/4 cup water. Boil hard for 1 minute.
3. Pour into gelatin while mixing at high speed. Add salt and your choice of flavoring. Beat for 12 minutes.
4. Put into greased pan and let set for a few hours. Cut into squares and dredge in powdered sugar or cocoa.

### Christmas Snowball Cookies

- 1 lb. butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tsp. vanilla
- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1 1/2 cups chopped pecans
- 1 cup powdered sugar

1. Beat butter and sugar. Add vanilla.
2. Fold in flour; add pecans.
3. Bake in rounded spoonfuls at 250 F for 45 minutes. Remove and toss in powdered sugar to coat cookies.

### Hot Chocolate

serves one person

- 1/4 cup hot chocolate mix
- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. vanilla

1. In a large saucepan, whisk all ingredients over low heat until ready to serve. Best with homemade marshmallows floating on top.



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