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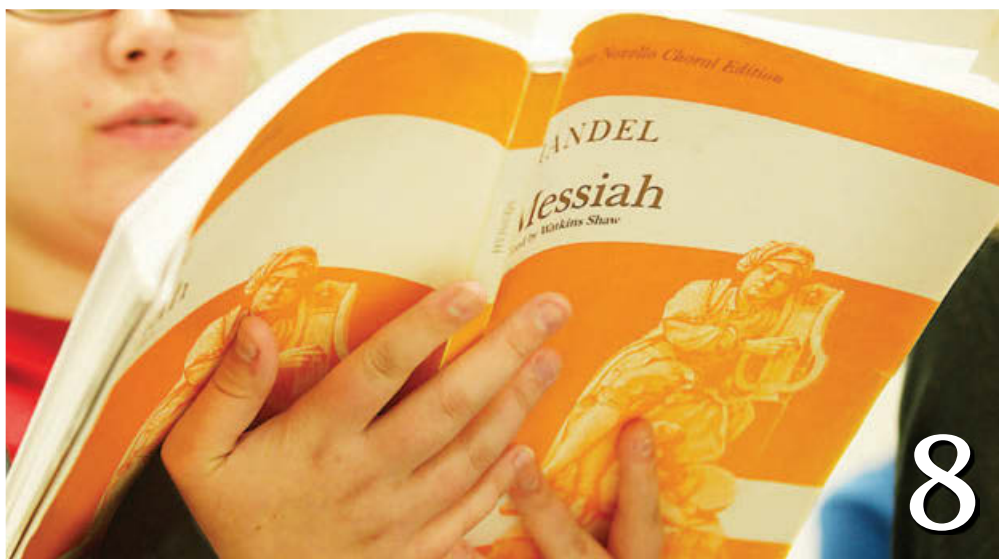


Gary and Lee Ann Gillespie mix Americana decor into their Victorian home.

Photo by Amanda Rooney.

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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) 613-1533 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



Editor's Note

Hello Friends,

Since its launch in February 2011, I've served as the community editor for *WeatherfordNOW Magazine*, and I've enjoyed writing stories about good people in Parker County. I appreciate every person I've met — whether in person, via e-mail or telephone — and the wisdom they've imparted to me and to our readers.

I'm off now to delve deeper into NOW Magazines' mission. We publish magazines in nine other markets, and I will be focusing on two of them: Burleson and Granbury. I will miss you, but I

know you are in good hands. Many of you have already had the pleasure of meeting the new *WeatherfordNOW* community editor. Amber Browne has written many of the articles you have enjoyed for the last year-and-a-half. She is looking forward to meeting more of you and telling your stories. Send your story ideas to Amber at amber.browne@nowmagazines.com.

Enjoy your winter!

Melissa

Melissa Rawlins

WeatherfordNOW Editor

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"You feel like the Christmas season has begun once that performance happens."



Gift Music

— By Amber D. Browne

Many are filled with the Christmas spirit once they see the first Christmas display of the year, while others catch it the moment they embrace a visiting relative. For Rob Laney, the spirit of Christmas comes when the Parker County community gathers at Weatherford College for the annual performance of Handel's Messiah. "I think they feel like it's really a part of their Christmas tradition," he said. Rob directs the free concert inside the Marjorie Black Alkek Fine Arts Center each year, with this year's performance set for December 3.

Rob began teaching music part-time at the college 12 years ago. The following year when Rob had just started teaching full-time, then-president, Jim Boyd, asked him to form and lead the Parker County Community Choir. The choir started with about 40 singers and now boasts nearly 60 members. "We kept doing it every year, and people really look forward to participating," he explained. Rob always makes it a point to have the concert after Thanksgiving. "It's a real holiday event. You feel like the

Christmas season has begun once that performance happens."

Auditions are held about three months before the performance. Dozens try out for a spot on stage. The college choir makes up about one third of the group, and local community members make up the rest. "When choir started, I would take any and all comers," Rob stated. Once it was established, Rob started auditioning more strictly. Singers must pass a sight-reading test and have a certain amount of training. "As a result, the choir has gotten a little bit smaller, but the musicianship of the ensemble has greatly increased. So, they're able to do more, make more music and have more fun," Rob explained. The choir has no age restriction. If the singers can sight-read and have voices that can contribute, they're in.

New and returning members must audition every year. "They understand where I'm coming from. I'm a teacher who believes you set the standards high, and people will rise to them," he said. "They really appreciate being told, 'Here is the standard, and I know you don't want to be in the choir when you won't maintain that standard.'" Most of those who at first do not make the choir often return to audition the following year after gaining some musical education, including how to sight-read. "Give them a goal to meet, and they normally do," Rob rationalized.

One thing Rob enjoys about directing the choir is getting to know those involved and their families. Community members



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usually return to auditions each year with a family member in tow. "They'll bring their spouse. And, the next year, they'll bring their cousin. Then the next year, their uncle and grandparents," Rob said.

Rob sometimes has a challenge finding a balance in high singers to low singers. Many more women than men audition for choir. Rob believes men may choose to stay out of choir because they do not



see it as stereotypically masculine. He always gets excited when a man with a big, low voice auditions for the choir.

The volunteer choir members take the annual Christmas performance very seriously. "A camaraderie forms in a group like this, because you're working so hard at some really difficult music," Rob said. "When you do a really good job at it, there's a sense of pride that goes along

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with it to continue every year.”

For Rob, the music in *Handel's Messiah* never gets old. “The music itself is a masterpiece. One of the things about great art is you can re-experience that same piece of art over and over again and find something new to enjoy in it each time,” he said. “It withstands the test of time, because there are so many layers of enjoyment.”

A string quartet, including a cello, viola and two violins, and a grand piano accompany the choir during the hour-long performance. “It tells the chronological story of the life of Jesus. The prophecy, the birth story and the preaching, as well as the passion story and the resurrection,” Rob explained.

“The Hallelujah Chorus” is one of the instantly recognizable songs of the popular classical piece. “Everybody hears that piece of music annually, all over the globe,” Rob said. “It’s a reliable source of joy.” Rob tries to change up the performance each year to keep things fresh, but he always includes the pieces the people expect to hear. The choir members want to learn something new, but they still want to sing something they know. “They get something out of the sacred nature of the music. They appreciate that,” he said. “And, people just really enjoy working together as a team.”



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Rob appreciates the support from the college and the local community. "The culture comes at a price, and it comes with a lot of hard work. We wouldn't be able to put together what we do if it were not from the support of the college, the community and the volunteers," he admitted.

Rob has been involved in music since he was a little boy. From church choir to marching band, Rob knew it was



his calling to become a music teacher. "Both my parents were teachers. Both my father's parents were teachers," he said. His grandfather, Bob Laney, was a choir director in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. Rob graduated from Texas Christian University with a bachelor's degree and master's degree in music education and enjoys teaching at Weatherford College. "I guess I'm carrying on that tradition."

Although Rob's wife, Emily, is not involved in the Parker County Community Choir, the audience may catch a glimpse of his toddler son, Weston, during the performance. Weston enjoys directing alongside his daddy.

Rob is happy to share his passion for music both with his son and the local community. "I think people appreciate that we've got something we can be proud of here at Weatherford College. We don't have to drive into the Metroplex in order to get quality like this. I think the community appreciates that aspect of it," Rob said. "It's like the college's gift to the community." **NOW**

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— By Erin McEndree



Gary and Lee Ann Gillespie loved their Victorian-style home even before they owned it. The relic was in disrepair, but they saw the potential in the crumbling walls and uneven floors. "We looked at other houses," Lee Ann said, "but nothing compared to this house." Originally the stately house on the corner lot took five long years to build, but was finally completed in 1881, older than the court house in Weatherford by five years. The Gillespies bought the lackluster jewel in 2001 and immediately began polishing. It continues to be a major labor of love to reclaim and

AT HOME WITH Gary & Lee Ann Gillespie

preserve the surviving historical elements. Several more projects are envisioned, and the Gillespies are the do-it-yourself team to tackle the undertaking.





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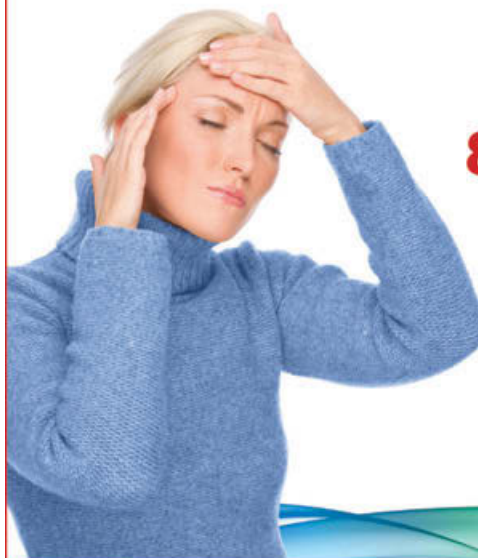
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during WWII. Mr. and Mrs. William A. Bass registered the home as a historical landmark in 1975.

Gary and Lee Ann fell in love and planned to marry. On their house hunt, they fell in love with the arches leading to the porch and the identical arches mimicked on doorways inside the house. During the Christmas season, twinkling lights and garland laced with pearls accent the arches. The same twinkle winds up the circular staircase. Incidentally, both



stairways in the Gillespie home are remarkably narrow. "We had to [hoist] some furniture, including our king-sized mattress, through an upstairs window with a heavy rope," Lee Ann laughed. "Our neighbors watched from across the street." The elegant 10-foot tall his-and-hers armoires in the master bedroom had

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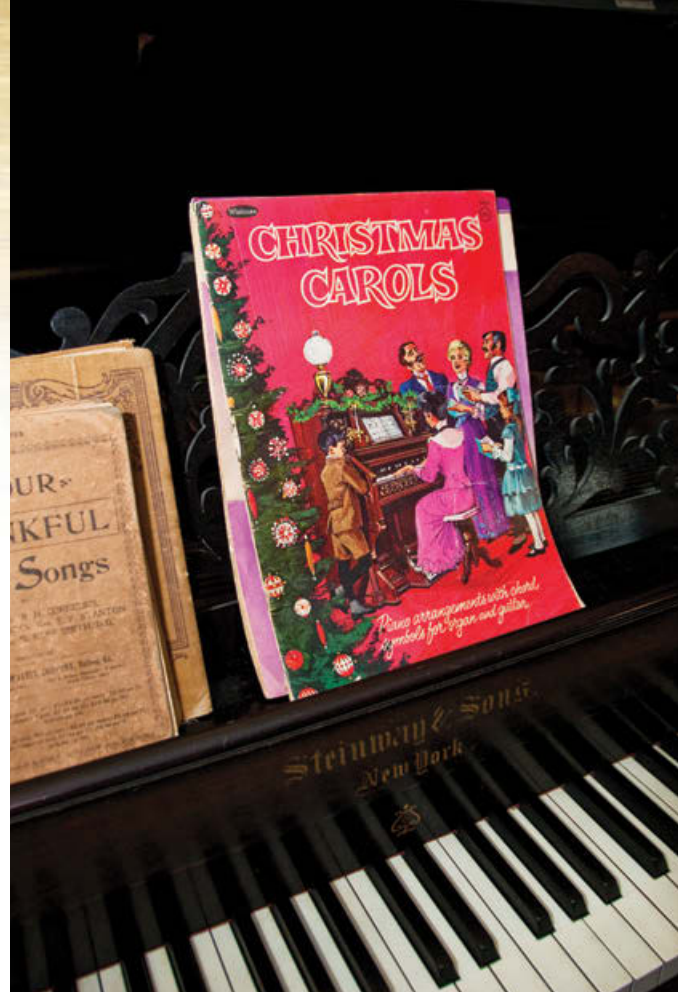
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to be constructed, erected and stained in the room. Now there is adequate storage where there were no closets at all.

The master bedroom had the most damage. "You could see the rafters in the ceiling. Holes filled the floor, and the plaster was falling down. Piles of plaster were everywhere," Lee Ann said. "We had to level the floors and replaster the entire room." Now a couple of monkeys look down from the armoires, adding a touch of whimsy. Two antique, leather wing back chairs make up a sitting area. A large settee sits at the end of their four poster bed that Lee Ann admitted, "we bought for our six dogs to sleep on, but they don't."

Next to the master bedroom are two more rooms. One is filled with Lee Ann's mom's furniture. It is decorated with old photographs and perfume bottles. Timeworn baseball mitts and baseballs are in a basket on the floor. The other room belongs to their son Ethan. One wall is covered with vintage alphabet letters. A shelf, hung above an antique bed from Germany, displays old trains, an antique duck pull toy and aged Bibles. Ethan pointed to a two-foot letter *E*. He already knows it is the first letter in his name. For the holidays, Lee Ann decorates a small tree in Ethan's room with vintage cars and the letter *E* hangs from branches.

On the roof above all the rooms is a widow's walk. Lee Ann heard it was used as an Indian lookout. A wooden ladder from a telephone truck leads to the access panel. The ladder came from Lee Ann's dad. Under the ladder is a small Christmas tree surrounded by nutcrackers and lace.

A cheery, yellow living room greets frequent visitors on the main floor. "Sometimes people find the house because their grandparents lived here years ago," Gary said. "We give them tours. One lady said she rented a room here during the 1960s."

One of the previous owners, Mrs. Bowden, came by to look at the house. She was in her 80s. She gave Gary and Lee Ann a black and white photo of the home before the porch was added. A little girl is in the front yard. That little girl is Mrs. Bowden. The photo is displayed above the 1878 square Steinway & Sons baby grand piano.

The couple found the Steinway online and had it shipped from New York. At present, two carolers are perched on the piano singing Christmas songs. Sterling silver candelabras with red tapered candles flank the singers. The fireplace close by is adorned with stockings and a Christmas bear next to the 1850's Hohner accordion.

The couple combined their antiques when they got married. "People say our house is like a museum," Gary said. "There is something different to look at every time." Lee Ann has a booth in Fort Worth and owns a bed-and-breakfast in Weatherford. They are full of furnishings of times gone by. One of the couple's fondest memories was shopping for period pieces in San Francisco, California. Their honeymoon to Greece was cancelled in September 2001 when the Twin Towers were attacked. With the money they set aside for the excursion, they took a trip to the Golden Gate City and Hawaii. They purchased beautiful time-honored pieces, including silk rugs and the chandelier that hangs over the dining room table.

The dining room has vibrant dark red walls, and the dining table is decked in a red tablecloth with greenery and candles. Lee Ann's grandmother's silver tea set sits beside crystal candlesticks on a buffet. Another red room is the den. Gary and one his friends replaced the ceiling, textured the walls and added wainscoting. During the holidays, a patriotic theme emerges as snowmen sport red, white and blue.

Just steps away a large French desk anchors the office. It has a wood inlaid pattern and ornate metal corners. The word *JOY* is spelled in two-foot tall letters over an armoire used for storage. Joy is also used as ornaments on the 10-foot tree in the living room. "I think this house has had a lot of joy in it over the years," Lee Ann said. "Even Mrs. Bowden expressed that feeling when she visited."

Gary and Lee Ann added color to their house, including cheery purple trim around the deep-set doors and windows. They feel blessed to have a home with so much history, and they work hard to preserve the integrity of their home while making it a joyful place to rear a family. **NOW**

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FOREVER FRIENDS

— By Amber D. Browne

*Long-term friendships
can be hard to come by.
But, that is not the case with
Juanita Pennington and Barb
Cotton, who have known the
women in their Red Hat Society
group for the past six decades.*

Most of the women have known each other since first or second grade at Castleberry Elementary School in River Oaks. Through the years, many of them kept in touch and decided to join the Red Hat Society in 2003. Although some in the group are a couple of years younger than Juanita, she was acquainted with them at school





through her younger sister. "I'm sort of a come-lately," Juanita said. One of the women in the original group invited Juanita to join several years back. "My husband was dying, and I told them I wasn't interested." The group's Queen Mother, Carol Ann Chauncy Baker, contacted Juanita one day and invited her to lunch. "She called and said, 'We're having lunch down here, and if you don't get down here, we're coming to your house!'" So, I went ahead, got dressed and went down there. That's been my story ever since."

Over the years, the forever friends have helped each other through good times and bad. "I would not trade for these girls," Juanita said, lovingly. "We laugh. We cry. We've been through deaths. We've been through marriages. We've been through kids dying, and that's not a good feeling ever. Your children are not supposed to die before you do." Juanita has lost one child, while Barb has lost three over the years.



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Juanita and Barb consider the women in their group like family. "We've been through a whole lot of a life. Life is not so devastating when you have sisters," Juanita said. Two sets of sisters are in the group: Carol Ann and Jerry Lloyd, and Deloris Morgan and Luretta Kitchens. The rest of the group is made up of Billie Bennett, Judy Marlin, Jane Parke, Jeanette Stubbs and Margaret Walker. "We care so much about each other. We can criticize one another, and we always know it's with love, concern and care." The group has lost three members, but they often reminisce about the good times they have had over the years.

They meet once a month to eat and chat. "Sometimes we do crafts at home, and sometimes we go out to eat. Sometimes we go to somebody's house and eat and gossip," Juanita said, grinning. They've traveled to the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, as well as the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Fort Worth. They have taken a road trip to Salado, where they rented a house and shopped at the local boutiques. They even got all fancy for Glamour Shots at one of their monthly get-togethers. "You get all dolled up anyway. When you go to the meeting, you wear your red hat. Always, always wear your red hat!"

The Red Hats also volunteer their time in the local community. They make pillows for cancer and heart patients, and hand craft bibs for local nursing homes. "We try to do mission projects. Juanita and I always take our sewing machines, and the rest of them do the cutting," Barb said.

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Spending time with their friends is mostly about having fun, though. They have plenty of laughs when they dress up in purple and put on that red hat for parties. They even had lingerie showers for the Queen Mother and for Barb when they remarried. "You talk about something being fun. It was!" Barb exclaimed.

When Juanita hosts her annual get-together at her home in Willow Park, it's a pool party. "I usually have mine in the summer time with a chunky dunk party," Juanita laughed. "Some of them swim, and some of them sit with their feet in the water." Others just choose to sit inside her home and catch up with the ladies.

At one of Juanita's swimming parties, her friends got their first glimpse of her boyfriend, Ken Knoppel. Juanita told the ladies she had ordered pizza. "None of us had met him. Here comes this man carrying this pizza. And, she comes out of the pool and goes up to him and starts kissing on him!" Barb laughed. It surprised the ladies, but they welcomed Ken with open arms.

"It's not easy getting into the dating scene at this age," Juanita chuckled. "Times have changed. Our whole society is different now. I finally decided after six years that I was awful lonely." So, she jumped back into the dating scene. Juanita met Ken through each other's daughters. Juanita was not interested at first, but she went with her daughter to Ken's son's 40th birthday party. "He was very attentive," she said. She found out he was a handy man, so she handed over a long to-do list. He started working for her, and the two got better acquainted.



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He asked her to go wild flower hunting and surprised her with a motorcycle ride to see the colorful landscape. When Juanita is not busy with the Red Hat Society, she and Ken often take road trips on the back of his motorcycle.

Barb's husband, Lee Roy Cotton, is very supportive of her being part of the group of friends with the Red Hat Society. "My husband loves for me to do it. He's like me. He loves to entertain," Barb said. She is hosting the Red Hat group's Christmas party this December. "A lot of eating and visiting," Barb said about the party. Each member will bring a nice present for a gift exchange. The women will also make a little handmade craft for each member. They have collected the crafts over the years, including pin cushions and even a light bulb snowman.

And the women look forward to many more Christmases and lunch dates over the years. "Having a group, even if you don't feel good, even if we go somewhere, and you don't want to drive that far, you will make an effort," Juanita said. "When you get this old, any effort you make to make contact with somebody else is a plus," she explained. "It would be easy to sit up on this hill and not get in the car and not put myself out there. I would probably just shrivel up and die. Well, maybe not shrivel up. I would go ahead and eat," she laughed.

They are content with their close-knit group of eleven friends. "We've just been together forever," Barb said. She considers her long-time relationships very precious and believes losing these friendships would leave a void in her life. "We put effort in it. Desire and effort," Barb said. "All these girls have meant so much to us over the years. We just have such a good time being together." **NOW**

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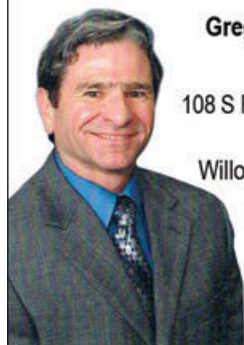


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One of the local residents, Mildred Carlile, sent a copy of the paper's editorial





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to a school friend, Wendy Russell Reves, who had left Marshall to become one of New York's top models in the 1930s. At the time the editorial was written, Ms. Reves, living in France, was the widow of a wealthy publisher and art collector. Ms. Reves responded to her friend with a check for \$25,000 to help her childhood community have "its holiday wish." With that check as a start, members of the community eventually raised more than \$70,000 to start illuminating the town.

Today, Marshall's Wonderland of Lights Festival rivals the best Christmas lighting events in the country. More than 10 million lights creatively caress homes and businesses with extravagant, elegant and simple displays. With expanded activities and events, the simple lighting of buildings and trees now incorporates light and sound shows, an evening music show, as well as attractions for young children, teens and adults. The display of lights has evolved to creating a fun and exciting evening of adventure.

The Historic Harrison County Courthouse in downtown Marshall is at the center of events, harboring 150,000 glorious multicolored lights that dance each evening to some of the most spirited holiday music classics. The lights are synchronized with pulsating and throbbing music to raise the spirits of the young and young at heart. The shows begin at 6:00 p.m. each evening and can be viewed from the entire center square area.

Festival activities are conveniently



located in the Washington Square District surrounding the courthouse, which carries a sparkling atmosphere on every night. Visitors can enjoy the Wonderland Village where activities abound for the shopper, attraction rider and children wishing to visit the North Pole Play Land.

A free variety music show is performed on the courthouse steps each evening at 7:00 p.m. The show features local Marshall singers in a newly written production. The performance recalls the memories of past holidays with the hopes of creating new traditions for the entire family.

The Samsung Ice Skating Rink is the only outdoor ice skating rink where skaters can enjoy being under the stars while watching the fascinating courthouse light and sound show. Thousands enjoy the evening glide across the ice with special exhibition performances scheduled during the festival. Occasionally, special events, like a marriage proposal, occur on the ice.

Young children can see the elves hard at work (or taking a nap) in their workshop in the North Pole Play Land. Just for children under age 10, an exciting experience includes the snowball hut, giant bounce house package and, of course, the Marshall Express train.

One of last year's most visited attractions was the Wonderland Mountain — a 32-foot tall slide with an exhilarating 10-second ride from top to bottom. Adjacent to the mountain is the Polar



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Until he prepares to leave for the North Pole, Santa, along with Mrs. Claus, welcomes children to his workshop. Each child can make their train, decorate a cookie and, of course, tell Santa all of their dreams and wishes.

To enjoy seeing the millions of lights that Marshall has, visitors can enjoy a light tour on the old English double decker bus. Decked out with its own lights, a tour guide welcomes each guest aboard to experience not only the brilliance of the community but to learn more about Marshall's 170-year history. Maps for drivers who want to do their own driving are provided in several locations throughout the Wonderland Village.

Several special events occur during the festival. Celebrity Chef, sponsored by Get Healthy Marshall, explores a healthy food menu. Participants can view the specialty foods as created by invited chefs and then actually enjoy them.

For artists or want-to-be artists, the Holiday Art Party is a fun-filled afternoon of painting one's own masterpiece. Even if you've never painted before, each person will finish with their own holiday masterpiece ready for display. Marshall is also becoming known for its resident artists, and during the festival local artists display their favorite holiday painting or other art form at the Visitors Center located at 301 N. Washington, in the Washington Square District. The art show is free and open daily during the festival. **NOW**

For a complete operating schedule, contact the Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau at (903) 702-7777 or at www.VisitMarshallTexas.org. Photos by Ron Munden, EastTexasTowns.com.

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Rusty Cox and his wife, Circe, opened Shootist Arms in Weatherford three years ago. Originally, the history of guns drew Rusty into gunsmithing, so his store feels more like a museum.



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— By Melissa Rawlins

Inspired by a John Wayne movie called *The Shootist*, Rusty Cox and his wife, Circe, opened Shootist Arms Company three years ago to serve local first responders, military enthusiasts, ranchers and hunters. Their Web site gives a great overall view of what Rusty does at the unassuming building on the Mineral Wells Highway, just two miles west of the Parker County Courthouse. But you must make an in-person visit to feel Rusty's passion.

Rusty does more than sell, build and rebuild guns — he happily shares the history of his guns. "Some of these guns were used in the Indian Wars. We have one that was used in a shoot out at Fort Worth's White Elephant Saloon," Rusty said. "We have combat guns from World War II and from the Civil War, and I've got one back there from 1849!" He has refurbished

many guns during his lifetime, including one for The Winchester Historic Firearms Museum.

Shootist Arms has become a bit of a tourist attraction. "I've got the neat stuff on my wall you don't see in any other place," said Rusty, who started working on his own 1850 Sharp when he was a 13-year-old in Decatur. "I let people touch my guns. How do they know they are going to want it if they can't pick it up and play with it?"

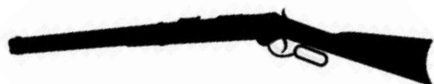
Everywhere you look inside Shootist Arms, there are displays of rifles, handguns, gun parts, patriotism and heroics. In the open space in the far reaches of the 60x40 foot store stands a large vertical mill and a lathe. Some weeks, Rusty spends 100 percent of his time smithing guns. "I do stuff in batches,

trying to do certain types of gun one day, another type another day,” Rusty revealed. “All my DuraCoating, for instance, is done on Fridays because it’s a stinky job, so we can leave the shop alone for the weekends.”

In a vault installed in the center of the store, Rusty displays guns he is repairing or which are on consignment. Shootist Arms is also known for buying specific guns a customer wants help finding. Lately, they have done business with people preparing for three-gun competition, which is a scenario-type shooting sport done with present-day weapons.

“We do a huge amount of Class 3 business, involving suppressors, machine guns, short barrel rifles and short barrel shotguns,” Rusty said. Relying on Circe to precisely prepare all necessary paperwork, Shootist Arms complies with all regulations from The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for selling or recording a gun.

Every morning, Rusty and Circe hang examples of custom-build configurations on the front walls of their store. “Customers come in, and I give them an à la carte menu, so they can tell me exactly what they want, or if they see



**“I’LL BUILD
THEIR GUN THE WAY
THEY LIKE IT”**

a configuration they like here, I’ll build their gun the way they like it,” said Rusty, who started shooting around the age of 6.

Restoration of old guns is mostly done in-house at Rusty’s workbench. He has been known to joke with his customers that he’d like to sit down and talk to the gun to learn their stories. Instead, Rusty builds guns for shooting hogs, varmints and coyotes. And then, he trades stories with the ranchers and farmers who just need their guns to shoot straight. **NOW**



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Alecia Ellis and her children, Cayden and Khylla, check out books at the East Parker County Library.



Cathy Schwartz picks Lily up from Bella's Pet Grooming.



Andrew Carter, from Aledo, spends a morning at the Acton Nature Center collecting and tagging Monarch butterflies.



Tommy Creel spends the morning fishing at Lake Weatherford.



Jackie Collins stands by his 1933 Plymouth coupe. He was elected president of Parker County Cruisers. In October, PCC held a classic car show sponsored by Southwest Ford and raised over \$1,000.



Local community leaders attend the Celebration for Education fundraiser at Doss Heritage and Cultural Center.



Pam Powell and her son, Patrick, pick out the perfect pumpkin for fall at the Hudson Oaks Walmart.



Lisa Miller and Steve Randle showcase NOW Magazines at the East Parker County Chamber Business Expo.



Several local community members support breast cancer awareness at the Pink Luncheon.



Tony and Glondene Resendez of Glen Rose grab a quick lunch in Hudson Oaks while waiting to pick up their new truck.



The Aledo Bearcats get ready for a softball game.

Special Gifts for Special Gardeners

— By Nancy Fenton

It's time to think about those special gifts for your favorite gardener friends. Generally, it's always easy to find gloves and tarps, but special things take some planning ahead! Tools for special tasks must be found and often require ordering. Let's face facts: most large stores put away their gardening things to make room for Christmas items. I use the Internet and garden catalogues for very special gifts. Some of my favorite gifts are hand gardening tools with cushioned, large handles. An easy place to find them is: www.radiusgarden.com, where you can also find long-handled, sharp spades with lots of soft handles. Those little benches on which you can kneel or sit would look good under my tree, since I am still recovering from my back surgery. These can be found on www.gardeners.com, as well as the very light weight, collapsible bags that will hold up to three gallons of leaves or other items. Nearly every gardener I know would love to have some plant stakes of their very own. Kids can personalize plastic knives on a cold dreary day, or you can go the extra mile and snip some metal ones from tin or aluminum. A decent selection can be viewed at www.gardeners.com, and sometimes they can be found at the garden stores.

One of the things on my list is a pair of gloves with extra-long cuffs or gauntlets to protect my arms as I dig and prune. Various pieces of clothing are also available with built-in mosquito repellent. For a quick, easier-to-find gift consider repellent wipes. If the stores no longer carry the summer sprays, try the sporting goods or the hunting sections for the wipes.

Plants and gift certificates are always great, as are books. Books should probably be specific to the area, since each area has things that grow better in them than others. For suggestions and list of books for Texas, try the Texas A&M bookstore online or your local bookstore. Have a great holiday and tune in next month for more plant discussions. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.



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What Should You Do With 401(k) After a Layoff?

As you're no doubt aware, the long and deep recession has resulted in the highest unemployment rate in decades. But if you've been laid off, or if you fear a layoff may soon be coming, you're less interested in statistics than in your immediate financial future. How will you get by until you land a new job?

This is a scary question, of course. And it can cause you to look at all your available financial resources — including your 401(k), which may well be the largest single financial resource you have.

But before you cash out your 401(k), make sure you understand what's involved. Your former employer is required to withhold 20 percent of your account balance to prepay federal taxes. Also, all your 401(k) proceeds will be taxed as ordinary income. And if you're under age 59 1/2 when you liquidate your 401(k), you may also be subject to a 10-percent penalty. And worst of all, the money may not be available to you when you retire.

Obviously, if you have no other financial resources, you may have no choice but to tap into your 401(k) plan. However, if you can find an alternative way to tide yourself over until you're working again, you may be better off in the long run by not cashing in your plan.

If you decide against the "cash-out" option, what can you do with your 401(k)? Here are two possibilities:

- Keep the money in your former employer's plan. If your former employer permits it, you may be able to leave your money in your 401(k). You won't have to pay any immediate taxes, and your money can continue to grow tax deferred. But you may no longer be able to add funds to your account.

- Roll your money over to an IRA. If you roll over your 401(k) assets to an IRA, you'll avoid paying immediate taxes, and your money can continue to grow tax deferred. Furthermore, you can fund your IRA with many types of investments, as opposed to a 401(k), which may offer only a handful of choices. And when you can afford it, you can make additional contributions to your IRA. Also, when you retire, you may find that an IRA gives you more flexibility in making withdrawals than a 401(k).

While there are some clear benefits to keeping your 401(k) with your former employer or moving it to an IRA, neither choice helps you answer the question of how you'll make it, financially speaking, until you're working again. If you've built up a cash cushion in the preceding years, you can turn to it now, of course. And if you've created an investment portfolio outside your 401(k), take a close look at it. You can consider adjusting your investment mix to add more income-producing investments, if appropriate. Keep in mind that your portfolio should reflect your risk tolerance, long-term goals and time horizon.

A layoff is never easy — and it can force you to make some tough choices. But if you can help protect your 401(k) today, you'll be helping yourself tomorrow. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Gregg Davis is an Edward Jones representative based in Willow Park.

December 3

Messiah Concert: 7:30 p.m., Weatherford College, Alkek Fine Arts Center, 225 College Park Dr. Kick off the holiday season with this annual concert presented by the Parker County Community Choir. For more information, visit www.wc.edu or call Sheila Kinkead at (817) 598-6458.

December 4

Tree of Angels: 6:30 p.m., Freedom House, 1149 Fort Worth Hwy. Residents are encouraged to honor victims and survivors of crime at the annual ceremony by placing a personalized ornament on the tree. Call (817) 598-6124 for more information.

December 6

Girls Night Out: 5:00-8:00 p.m., historic downtown Weatherford. Local ladies are invited to shop for the holidays as stores stay open late. For more information, call (817) 304-5946.

December 8

Breakfast with Santa: 8:00 a.m.-noon., Central Christian Church, 1602 S. Main St. Bring the children out for breakfast with Santa! You must purchase tickets in advance by contacting (817) 599-6224 or by going online at www.casaofparkercounty.com.

Holiday Craft Fair: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Goodson Golf Cars, 1804 Ft. Worth Hwy. Come on out to shop for holiday gifts including jewelry, blankets, handbags and ornaments. Door prizes will be given out, and concessions will also be available. Call Sharry Jones at (817) 565-2980 or e-mail sharryjones@ymail.com for more information.

All Aboard: Experience the Magic of Christmas: Noon, Clark Gardens, 567 Maddux Rd. Santa will be on hand with live reindeer. Families can also enjoy horse drawn hayrides and arts and crafts. Call (940) 682-4856 or visit www.clarkgardens.org for more information.

31st Annual Candlelight Tour of Homes: 1:00-7:00 p.m., various locations across Weatherford. Tickets are available for \$12 for adults and \$6 for children ages 12 and under at the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce and the Doss Heritage and Culture Center. Visit www.parkercountyheritagesociety.com for more information.

December 14

Christmas Open House: 4:00-6:00 p.m., First National Bank, 220 Palo Pinto St. Come on out and get a free picture with Santa. Contact Evon Marcum at (817) 598-4900 for more information.

Parker County Women's and Newcomers Club Monthly Luncheon: 10:00 a.m., Weatherford College, Alkek Fine Arts Center, 225 College Park Dr. The Joyful Sound Ladies Quartet will perform. Lunch will be served following the program. Guests are welcome, and any Parker County residents are invited to attend. Tickets are \$10, and you must make reservations by calling (817) 594-0125 by **Sunday, December 9**. For more information, visit www.pcwnc.org.

December 14 and 15

Dinner Theater *Christmas Comes to Clarksnewell Canyon*: 7:30 p.m., Clark Gardens, 567 Maddux Rd. This adaptation of *A Christmas Carole* by Charles Dickens will be presented by the Peach Capital Community Theater. Tickets are \$25 for the play and dinner. Please call (940) 682-4856 for reservations or visit www.clarkgardens.org.

December 20

Guys Night Out: 5:00-8:00 p.m., Leesha's Boutique, 303 N. Main St. Local gentlemen are invited to shop for the holidays as stores stay open late. For more information, call (817) 304-5946.

December 22

Supper with Santa: 5:00 p.m., Clark Gardens, 567 Maddux Rd. Families are encouraged to come out to enjoy a catered dinner and holiday music, as Santa makes a surprise appearance. Reservations are required and include admission to the park, which will be decorated for the holidays with thousands of sparkling lights, dinner and all other Holiday Festival activities. You can get more information and pricing at by calling (940) 682-4856 or by visiting www.clarkgardens.org.

December 24-January 4

Weatherford ISD and Aledo ISD Winter Break. **December 21** is an early release day for Weatherford ISD students. Classes will resume on **January 7** for both school districts.

January 4-6

First Monday Trade Days: 9:00 a.m.-4:00

p.m., Historical District on Santa Fe Dr. Dozens of vendors will sell homemade crafts, tools, food and other items. Please visit www.ci.weatherford.tx.us or call (817) 598-4351 for more information.

December through February

Expressions from the Soul: **Tuesday-Saturday**, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.;

Sunday, 1:00-5:00 p.m., The Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Dr. Works in watercolor, bronze, glass, leather, wood and more will be on display, ending **February 3, 2013**. Visit www.dosscenter.org or call (817) 599-6168.

Every Saturday through December 22nd

Fall Artisan Market: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; The Neighborhood, 922 S. Main St. The market gives community members a chance to meet local artisans and experiences their talents. They will be showcasing locally grown and hand-made goods for the fall season. For more information, visit www.theneighborhoodonline.com or call (817) 304-2414.

Every Sunday through December

Annetta Valley Farmers Market: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. or until the farmers sell out of their fresh produce, 2655 W. FM 5, Annetta. Bring the children to enjoy some fresh air and fresh produce out at the farm. Please contact Lynne Carpenter at (817) 992-5691 for more information.

December through March

Weatherford College Student Photography Show: Texas Hall, Alkek Fine Arts Center, 225 College Park Dr. Artistic pieces created by students line the walls of the hall. Contact Sheila Kinkead at (817) 598-6458 for more information.

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



In The Kitchen With Kelli Hamilton

— By *Melissa Rawlins*

Scrambled eggs or chicken potato casserole were the only two choices Kelli Hamilton offered when she first started cooking as a teen. Once she married, she honestly became interested in cooking, learning through trial and error and many phone calls to her mother, mother-in-law and two sisters-in-law. Kelli — a true artist and an accomplished painter — found it was fun to express her creativity through food, and her skills developed easily. While she now cooks mostly for catering clients, Kelli enjoys researching new recipes and fine-tuning them until they are her own. She reserves certain recipes for the holidays so that they remain special. “I wouldn’t dare serve a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner without my pistachio pudding salad or my mother’s cornbread dressing.” **NOW**

Simply Delicious Ham

- 1 ham, bone still in it**
- 1 16-oz. Coca-Cola**
- 3 Tbsp. all purpose flour**

- 1.** Place the bone-in ham in a cooking dish. Pour Coca-Cola over the top, covering tightly with foil or seal in a cooking bag.
- 2.** Cook at 325 F for 45 minutes to an hour.
- 3.** Pour 3/4 of the drippings into a frying pan (preferably an iron skillet); heat to low boil. In a small bowl, mix together flour with the remaining 1/4 of the drippings. When flour is well blended, whisk into the heated drippings. Stir over low heat to just boiling. Add more flour to gain thickness if the ham gravy is too thin.

- 4.** Refrigerate or freeze the ham bone for use in Red Hambone Beans (recipe below).

Red Hambone Beans

- 1 small bag (14-16 oz.) dry red beans**
- Hambone**
- 2 cups picante sauce**
- 3 Tbsp. chili powder**
- 3 tsp. ground cumin**
- 1 Tbsp. garlic salt**
- 1 tsp. pepper**
- Ham chunks or sliced sausage (optional)**

- 1.** Soak beans in a Crock-Pot filled half way with water at room temperature for 8-12 hours.
- 2.** Drain water; nestle the hambone into the

beans and refill Crock-Pot with fresh water approximately 3/4 full.

- 3.** Stir seasonings into beans until blended. Cook on high for 8 hours.
- 4.** Add ham or sausage, if desired.

Pistachio Pudding Salad

- 1 small box (3.4 oz.) of pistachio pudding mix**
- 1 8-oz. container of whip cream**
- 1 8-oz. can of crushed pineapple**
- 3-4 drops of green food coloring (optional)**

Mix all ingredients together in a medium bowl.

Wreyford Family Cornbread Dressing

- 2 6-oz. pkgs. Martha White non-sweet cornbread mix**
- 6 eggs (divided use)**
- 1/3 cup milk**
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream mushroom soup**
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream chicken soup**
- 2 cups chicken broth**
- 2 cups celery, chopped**
- 2 tsp. celery seed**
- 2 tsp. sage**
- 1 tsp. salt or to taste**
- 1 tsp. pepper**

- 1.** Prepare cornbread according to the package directions, using 1 egg and 1/3 cup milk; set aside to cool.
- 2.** Hard boil 5 eggs. Cool.
- 3.** Crumble cornbread into a large mixing bowl; add final 8 ingredients.
- 4.** After mixing well, add the peeled and sliced boiled eggs.
- 5.** Spread in a 9x13-inch baking dish, treated with nonstick spray.
- 6.** Bake at 350 F for 30-40 minutes. Check the center with a toothpick. It should be moist, not mushy.
- 7.** Serve topped with whatever gravy you are serving with that meal.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



Left to right: Corey Tucker, VP; John Hinton, SVP; Bob Glenn, EVP; Cindy Vaszauskas, SVP; Martin Talley, SVP; and Pat Hamilton, PlainsCapital Bank Weatherford president

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