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MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2015

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At Home

With Bonnie Gary

Seeing Beyond Ordinary

Santa's Breakfast grew out of
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Managing Editor, Becky Walker
Burlson Editor, Melissa Rawlins
Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong
Editorial Assistant, Rachel Smith
Writers, Sonja Aker, Lisa Bell
Mark Jameson, Carolyn Wills
Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla
Artists, Kristin Bato . Morgan Christensen
Martha Macias . Brande Morgan
Shannon Pfaff . Anthony Sarmienta

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rose
Photography Coordinator, Amy Ramirez
Photographer, SRC Photography

ADVERTISING

Advertising Representatives,
Melissa McCoy . John Powell . Teresa Banks
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ON THE COVER



Every inch of every room in Bonnie Gary's home is holiday-ready.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Friends!

My dictionary says that the origin of the name of our 12th month comes from the Latin word for 10, since the end of fall, beginning of winter, was originally the 10th month of the Roman year. That's a lot for one dictionary entry to say!

Meanings behind words can really change your thinking. I'll never forget the spelling bee I entered in sixth grade,

when we gave the spelling with proper pronunciation and the definition. I was asked to spell soldier, and for some reason spelled shoulder and did not realize my mistake until I defined S-H-O-U-L-D-E-R as a fighting man.

Words are such fun. It is my hope that every word *BurlesonNOW Magazine* prints will shine light on your horizon.

Melissa

Melissa Rawlins
BurlesonNOW Editor
melissa.rawlins@nowmagazines.com
(817) 629-3888

P.S. The publisher and staff of NOW Magazines wish you and your family a very merry Christmas and a happy holiday season!

Our family would like to take this opportunity to wish our many customers, friends and neighbors Season's Greetings. Wishing you a happy heart, home and many new reasons for us all to be thankful. Thanks to everyone for the trust and confidence you have shown us over the years. May Peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through!

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Seeing Beyond Ordinary

— By Melissa Rawlins

Whether she's elbow-deep in Styrofoam or playing Ping-Pong with 88-year-olds, Paula Benjamin is smiling. This world traveler learned the value of positivity early in life, and people who know her well catch her enthusiasm for making things happen. A self-taught artist with a can-do attitude, Paula has served the city of Burleson for 18 years, ever since Peter Krause, director of parks and recreation, hired her to be recreation supervisor. Her role has included athletics and special events. In fact, it is Paula who has coordinated Santa's Breakfast from its inception. As recreation supervisor senior division, she also directs ever-evolving activities at the city's senior center.

She was prepared for this service through her work with the Department of Defense, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (M.W.R.), in exotic places like Iceland and Hawaii. She saw the world, partly because opportunities came her way, but mostly because she decided to walk forward and be happy. Born in Detroit, Michigan, Paula was the eldest girl in her family and grew up in North Carolina. "I was taught at an early age to go out there, work hard, persevere and put a smile on my face. It is a whole lot better to be happy and move forward in life," she said.

A planner by nature, she knew it would be important to choose a good husband. As it turns out, the choice she made for Mark Benjamin opened doors to her career in recreation. Mark served in the Marine Corps, which took them to Keflavik, Iceland. That's when she started working for M.W.R. When they transferred to Hawaii, she worked for M.W.R.'s visual art department on the Marine Corps base in Kaneohe Bay.

The only





disability in life is a bad attitude.



Paula Benjamin helps Earl and Dorothy Walker prepare for this month's craft fair.

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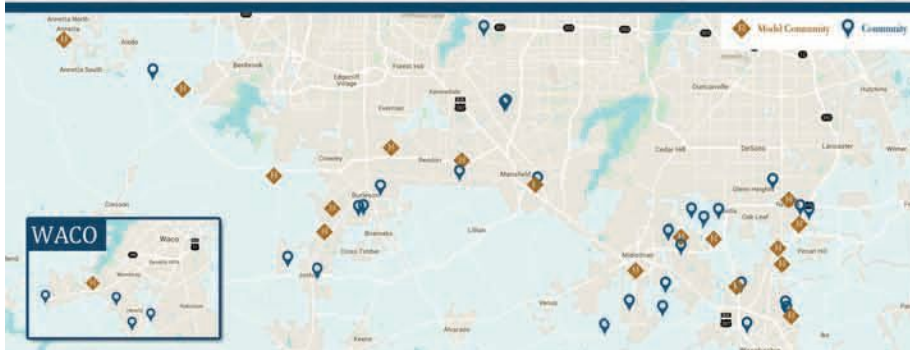


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"The director, who was an engineer, could actually build a mechanical bear from scratch," Paula said. "That director taught me how to look at things in a different way, and take ordinary things and create extraordinary things."

This opened up worlds of fun for Paula. "Because I always loved art and painting, those jobs requiring my creativity also developed it," she said. Since 1997, when her husband's final transfer to Carswell brought the Benjamins to Fort Worth, Burleson citizens have benefited from the on-the-job training Paula earned — especially at this time of year, when hundreds come to Santa's Breakfast and tour the tiny town that Paula discovered how to make from bargain-priced construction foam.

Peter Krause and David McDowell, Paula's immediate boss, brainstormed early on with Paula about how to produce more fun, family events in Burleson. "Peter wanted me to be able to create things inexpensively, while David, an extremely creative person, has helped me come up with creative and successful ideas," she said. "I'm very blessed to have bosses who give me the freedom to create."

Santa's Breakfast grew out of their vision to give children a chance to sit on Santa's lap and have their photos made with their parents. The wait is enjoyable, as the long line wraps around and through a dozen snow-flecked displays of a fantastical Christmas town at the BRICK. All this is created year-after-year by a team of volunteers and city



Stacy Singleton and his church make pancakes for Santa's Breakfast at the BRiCK.

employees from the Parks Department and Recreation Department, who help Paula bring it to life.

Beginning the first Tuesday in December, the Parks Department brings to the BRiCK gymnasium the framework of the Winter Wonderland. After its installation, Paula, Jessica Mack and Recreation Department staff put final touches on the Winter Wonderland and Santa's Workshop. The finished product owes much to Paula's skill in seeing beyond the ordinary. The gingerbread house is built of Styrofoam that is transformed with paint and glitter to create the image of an edible house. The train is also Styrofoam, and boxes create the resemblance of miniature train cars engineered by Santa himself. "The edible-looking candy lights are made of clear sandwich containers, cellophane and clear lights to give them the appearance of lighted candy. Lollipop row is made out of PVC pipe and Styrofoam," Paula explained.

The team's creativity helps the city keep costs down while still serving

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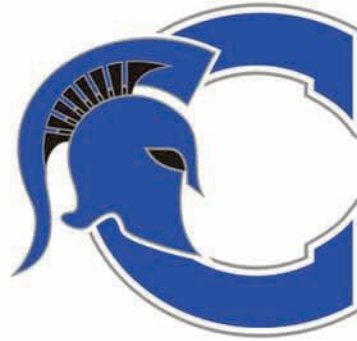
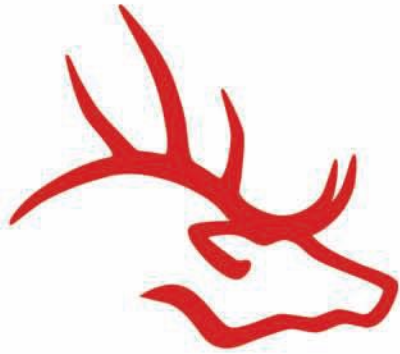
breakfast for kids and their families. On Saturday morning, while Santa interviews the children, Peter whips up pancake mix, David and volunteers cook them, and other staff and volunteers serve the breakfast.

Meanwhile at Paula's office, December is one of the Senior Center's lighter months. After the holidays, the center hosts programs and activities daily. "Most of the Senior Center's special events happen toward the spring," said Paula, who is already looking forward to the spring fashion show. But this month, she and volunteers are producing two special events.

The annual Christmas Luncheon is a day when choirs come to sing for the seniors. And on December 12, their doors swing wide to the public during a huge craft fair.

"The reason the Senior Center does so well is because most of our programs and activities are led by the seniors. Bingo, as well as all of our classes, from quilting to crochet, knitting, line dance and exercise classes — all of those are done by volunteer seniors," Paula said.

Dorothy and Earl Walker conduct karaoke at the Senior Center on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. They also produce the craft fair every December. "Without creative volunteers, events like these would not



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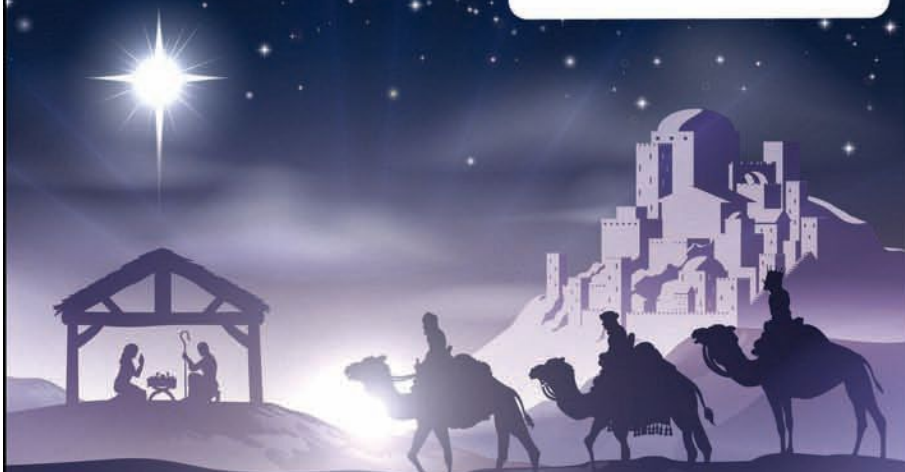
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be possible. Dorothy is a very creative person in her own right," Paula said. "I came to this position at the Senior Center about three years ago and inherited this craft fair, which Dorothy invented about five years ago. She and I expanded it to almost 70 vendors." Handmade crafts from artwork to quilts to paper crafts and even jewelry adorn the Senior Center. "The vendors and audience are mostly seniors. However, more families are becoming vendors and also participating in shopping opportunities at the event. Earl and Dorothy work hard as a team with full support from the Senior Center staff."

These patrons are in the golden years of their lives. "They tell you their life stories, the happy and sad. They're just happy that we have a place they can come to every day to participate and have a good time," Paula said. "We have a woman who is 88 years young, walks with a cane and is one tough cookie. She was one of the first ladies I met here, and she is still as sharp as a tack. She has a dry sense of humor that makes me laugh. She is just one of the attendees who has made this job a joy."

The seniors she works with encourage Paula, often giving her new ideas. One who appreciates Paula's philosophy for success brought her the sign she displays on her office wall: *The only disability in life is a bad attitude.* In Paula's world, inspiration is inevitably mutual. **NOW**



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Beauty From a BOX

— By Lisa Bell

A fresh box of crayons, a new coloring book and hours of uninterrupted work led to amazing works of art. As a child, Tana Mueller drew and colored frequently, especially when she spent time on her grandma's farm. She loved spending time at the farm. They only went to town once a month, and they didn't have electronic games or all-day cartoons on the television. In the

heat of the day or evenings, she turned to crayons and paper for entertainment. She never grew tired of creating small works of art.

Tana also learned quilting from her grandma. "I worshiped the ground she walked on," Tana said. Poor and uneducated, her grandma made quilts from old clothing. She sold the quilts to buy chicken feed, and then sold eggs to buy more quilt supplies. Although she couldn't read or write, she taught Tana the best creative techniques. But never in her wildest dreams did Tana



imagine the two loves coming together as an actual job.

Originally, Tana planned to become an investigator, producing crime scene drawings. But, when she went to take a DPS test, she learned she was six months too young. She then began looking at different departments and options. She attended the police academy and became a police officer and instructor.

In 1995, Tana moved to Crowley for her last law enforcement position as a DARE officer. After 25 years of law enforcement service, she retired and opened a tanning salon. Unfortunately, so

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did a dozen other people. One year later, she closed the business.

In 2004, she and the father of her two sons entered into a joint investment. A downturn in the economy forced Tana to supplement her income. Because of her grandma's influence, she had a marketable skill. However, at the time, women wanted to make quilts instead of buying them. Tana turned to teaching quilting. Before long, she decided to draw her own appliqué patterns. Tana used appliqué techniques to create unique quilts. This led to incorporating her love for crayons. She added depth and color directly to the fabric.

While coloring on fabric wasn't a new technique, Tana believed she could make it better. "There are a lot of crayon artists and colored pencil artists, but my hot-blend crayon technique is my own," she said.

Her friend, Pam, supports Tana and is her biggest fan. "The coloring technique is hers. You won't see it anywhere else," Pam said.

Tana completed her first quilt project using crayons as a family heirloom. Using a very western style, she included a map of Texas depicting places her family was



born. The project instantly drew attention and a desire from others to learn the process. Before long, her friends and students convinced her to draw a series of snowman patterns. She started with a western-style snowman and the series grew. So did Tana's popularity.

Through an unexpected series of events, she also became a designer for a major fabric company. At the 2014 International Quilt Market Houston, her original western artwork was on debut, introducing her as a new fabric designer. She has won several awards for her original artworks and quilts.

In Tana's studio, she has a framed display of crayon remains from the "Krayon Kountry Kiddo Kollection." When working on a project, Tana prefers to separate crayons by colors. She uses jars to keep them close and ready to



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use. She relishes everything about using this medium to create her works of art. According to Pam, if anyone created a crayon-scented perfume, Tana would wear it daily.

"Designs by Tana" grew into a business where she teaches classes on her crayon art hot-blend techniques and also does programs, shows and lectures. Her studio isn't open daily and is not a quilt shop, although she carries her fabric line, patterns and other supplies for classes. She sells patterns with full instructions for creating a quilt — unique because of her copyrighted and licensed designs, but also because each person's coloring adds their special touch, making any project truly one of a kind.

For Tana, coloring is a form of relaxation. "Crayons are therapy," she said. "Studies document the ability of coloring to reduce blood pressure." Creating an entire series destined for fabric takes about a month to complete, but she enjoys every moment of the process.

Childhood memories influence many of her designs. Since her grandma lived on a farm, her work carries a western theme. In her studio, a series of crosses line one wall. Each cross has different elements, from boots to bluebonnets. Another series includes country kids. In this series, she captures scenes reminiscent of a more simple time depicting details from days on the farm, including bathing in a big

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washtub. She even has a portrait of her father. She created brands for all of her students and friends, incorporating them into her fabric line.

One of her favorite pieces contains a western Santa, complete with jeans and boots to complement his red shirt. And as a true Texan, she depicts Santa with a faithful horse, instead of eight tiny reindeer. Expanding her artwork, Tana drew a Native American series. A tribute to the tribes in America, the original artwork will take its place on her studio wall.

"Anyone can color," Tana said. "If you love to color and try it one time, you're addicted." From her perspective, creating with crayons makes treasured memories. A grandmother who works on a quilt with a child leaves an heirloom and memory that lasts long after she passes.

Although quilts started the coloring craze, the idea caught on quickly, and now, other projects using this technique are gaining acceptance. Crayon art works well for framed art or quilts. When you're talking about coloring, why not let your imagination run wild to different ways to use this fun craft? And in the process, imagine how something you love doing can become larger than you ever dreamed.

Tana never dreamed she would see her personal designs on quilting material. "I used to say in beginner quilting classes, 'I sure wish we had this kind of fabric,' so we looked for ways to create our own," she said.

Not long ago, one of Tana's friends asked her, "Remember the day you said you wished you had your own fabric so you could create whatever? Well, you have your own fabric. Now, what are you gonna create with all that?" The answer — whatever she and her friends want to create! **NOW**

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Ready for the Holidays

— By Carolyn Wills



AT HOME WITH

Bonnie Gary



During the holidays, Bonnie Gary's sophisticated and classy, slightly quirky and always charming 1,800-square-foot home is a glorious expression of someone who celebrates life. "I'm a very content person," she smiled. "It's the best way to live!"

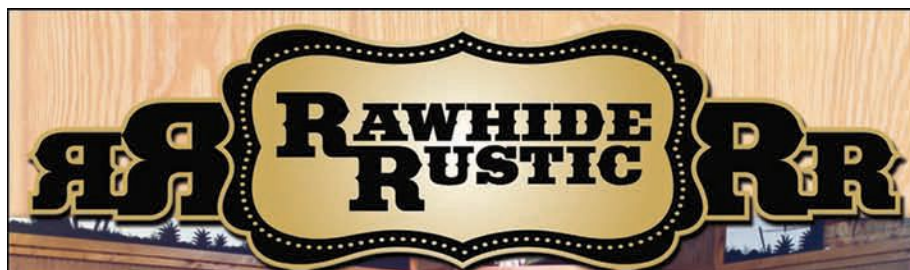
Before her Christmas lollipops line the walkway, though, and zillions of twinkling lights are strung, there's plenty to marvel at in her three-bedroom, variegated redbrick home. In 2001, after living in Forest Hill and, for a time, serving on its city council, Bonnie



built the home and moved to her new neighborhood in what was then the outskirts of Crowley. Her youngest son, who ended up building in Burleson, had graduated from college, and she wanted to stay close to family, friends and church. "Crowley is close to Burleson and not too far from my church in south Fort Worth or downtown where I work," she said. She admits to also becoming a huge fan of the new Chisholm Trail Parkway. "It's made the commute so much easier," she smiled.

"This house was my first experience at home-building, and I'm still so pleased," she added. "I picked the floorplan and designed many of the features, and there's really nothing major that I would change." The lovely single-story traditional offers a covered entrance, peaked roof, wide curved driveway and a neatly trimmed lawn with shrubs.

The entry opens to a small tile-floored foyer and, to its left, a formal



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swimming pool, Bonnie's home is easily admired. That's its classy side. The charming side comes from a myriad of whimsical details, like the weather vane light fixture above the table in the breakfast nook, its shades stamped with images of roosters and the decorative

tray-ceilinged dining room leading to the kitchen and breakfast areas. The foyer faces a spacious living room with richly draped windows, soft oatmeal-colored carpeting and a tile-clad fireplace. From the living room, double doors present a stunning master suite with views to the backyard on one side and access to a huge spa-like bath on the other. To the right of the foyer is the bedroom/office that Bonnie calls the Fort Worth Room and, off the hallway, beyond the guest bath is a third bedroom she refers to as the Texas Room.

With its wonderful floorplan and amenities like the gorgeous backyard and



metal brackets in the corners of a wide doorway between the breakfast nook and living room with designs shaped like roosters. There's also the parade of roosters and hens aligning a colorful kitchen border and the big stuffed rooster atop a shelf above the pantry whose legs hang over the edge. Roosters

are everywhere, and that's not all. There are salt and pepper shaker cows, a wind chime made of tiny dangling milk bottles, Cows on Parade figurines and stuffed cows by the fireplace.

"I collect roosters and cows," Bonnie grinned. While roosters have been her favorite for a long time, the cows arrived with the house. "Initially, my backyard bordered a pasture, and I would come home from work and watch cows grazing," she said. Porcelain, fine crystal, ceramic, metal, wood, painted and stuffed roosters, cows and the occasional pig are elements of balance and, clearly, the endearing, fun side of Bonnie's beautiful home.

Her kitchen features golden oak cabinetry, rust-colored counters flecked with black and gold, light-colored tiled flooring, plus a functional peninsula/bar and self-lighting pantry. "When I have the cooking bug, I invite people over," she said. "I make chicken cordon bleu and family specialties like ranch chicken tortilla casserole."

Her cooking talents really shine at Christmastime. "That's when the kitchen



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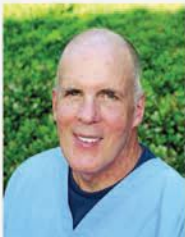


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becomes 'party central,'" she grinned. "I make sugar cookies and fudge to share as care packages and reindeer mix with cereal, nuts, cranberries, white chocolate, pretzels and pistachios." She also hosts gingerbread parties for her grandkids and recalls the year they created a gingerbread train.

When the kitchen fills with the aroma of goodies, Bonnie has already completed her holiday decorating. "It's Christmas inside and out," she confirmed. "I do the outdoor lights myself and add lots of bows, a wreath and lollipop guys that light up along the curved driveway." Hers is one holiday yard that looks equally good night and day.

Every inch of every room is holiday-ready. Surrounded by chairs with "Santa hat" covers, the formal dining table is set with Christmas china, placemats and a red tablecloth. A large china cabinet displays cranberry glassware and an ivory goose-shaped tureen, "12 days of Christmas" plates hang on the wall and a curio cabinet shares an amazing collection of Swarovski crystal.

The living room becomes the picture of Christmas with holiday pillows, stockings, a wreath over the fireplace and a tree filled with ornaments and happy memories. "Even the stuffed cows have bows," she smiled.

Bonnie's priorities are family and church. Her oldest son, Bryan, is a preacher. He and his wife, Emily, live in Dumas, Texas, with sons, 5-year-old Bryan Allen and 1-year-old Harmon. Bonnie's youngest son, Jeff, is an engineer with Lockheed Martin. He and his wife, Sandy, live in Burleson with their sons, 8-year-old Brayton, 6-year-old Tennyson and 3-year-old twins, Kipling and Kepler.

"For me, holidays are about faith and family," she said. Each year, her family chooses a day at her house to sit in a circle and open 12 stacked boxes

representing the 12 days of Christmas. "We open them one-by-one," she explained. "The game is to figure out who should receive each gift, and the last box is always books." This special day ends with a family dinner. "The boys smoke a turkey, so it's easier for me," she smiled.



To her six grandsons, Bonnie is known as "Granby." When she was a volunteer clown, she was called "Aunt Banana." To her church girlfriends, she's host to summer's Friday Night Splash and, from fall through spring, she hosts Monday evenings' Ladies Bible Study. For the Bass Companies, she has served as assistant risk manager for the past 29 years, commuting daily to Fort Worth and remaining on call at all times. All this, and each year she turns her home into a magical holiday wonderland.

"I'm blessed with a loving family, beautiful home and great job," she smiled. She plans to retire next summer and looks forward to spending more time with family and, especially, helping her daughter-in-law with four little boys. "My dream is to take all of the family to Walt Disney World," she smiled.

Celebrating the holidays is something this amazing woman does well. Celebrating faith, family and friends, though, is most important. As Bonnie will say, "It's the best way to live!" **NOW**

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Dr. Hoang is a board-certified dermatologist who graduated Summa cum laude from the University of Texas at Austin and received her doctor of medicine from Baylor College of medicine. She completed her internship in Internal Medicine at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas and her residency in Dermatology at the University of Louisville in Kentucky.



Uyen Mimi Phan is a Physician Assistant certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistant and the Texas State Board of Physician Assistant Examiners. She is a graduate of Eastern Virginia Medical School where she received her Master of Physician Assistant and joined Dr. Hoang's practice in the summer of 2015.

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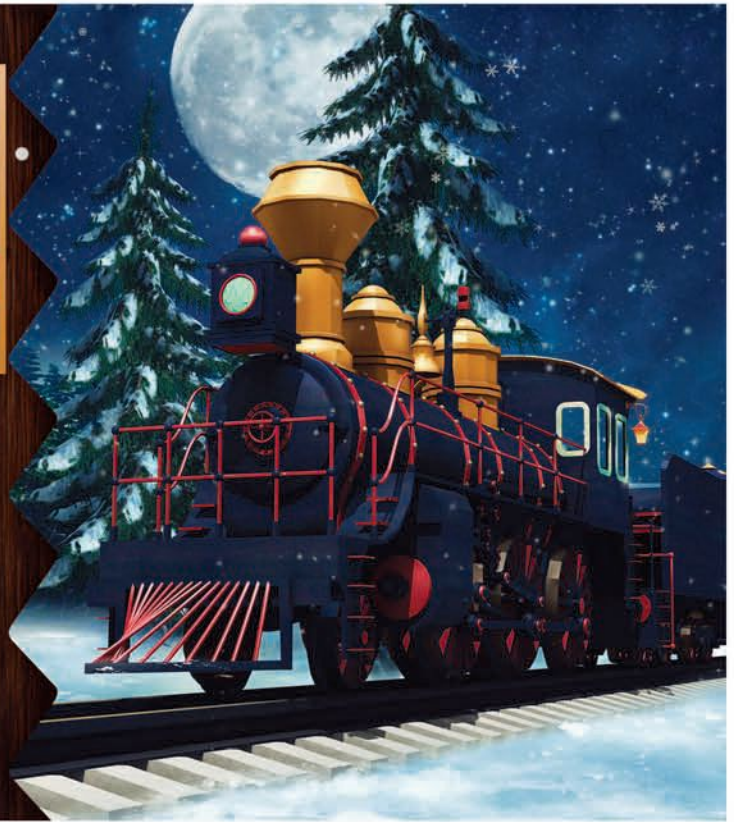


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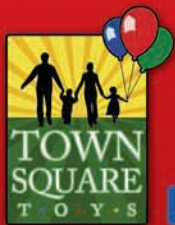
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Need TO SERVE

— By Melissa Rawlins



Catch Sheriff Bob Alford in the right mood, and he might tell you war stories. More than 45 years in law enforcement have given him a never-ending supply to go along with the myriad plaques on his office walls. As a skinny, 23-year-old Texas Department of Public Safety Trooper, Bob once envied those with experience. Now the Johnson County sheriff looks back on a life that's been about helping people.

"Every cop down this hall has stories," he said, pointing to the two 80-foot-long walls on which he has hung memorials to the service of every sheriff in Johnson County's history. There are intriguing artifacts, such as two framed receipts showing that in one century, the price of a month's electricity for the Johnson County jail increased from \$1.75 to \$7,500. There is also art created by inmates. Unless it was gifted particularly to Bob, what's in the hallway museum will stay in the hall when he retires January 1, 2017.

Until then, this man's got work to do. "If something happens at 11:50 p.m. on December 31, 2016, I'll be taking that call," he



said. "My wife is an ex-officer, and she's used to those late-night phone calls."

Marty and Bob married 30 years ago, after serving together on an undercover narcotics task force and realizing they had each other's backs in every sense. "I thought anyone that pretty and smart, I better hang on to," Bob said. He married Marty before starting the multiagency narcotics taskforce, in cooperation with all the cities in Johnson,

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Hood and Somervell counties. He ran that taskforce from 1989 to 1996, while a DPS lieutenant.

In 1996, Bob retired from DPS to serve as Johnson County's 31st sheriff since 1854. After 20 years, Bob is the most tenured. "Some of those guys in the Chisholm Trail days lasted one month. It was rough and wooly," he said. These days, a deputy sheriff might be taking a cat out of a tree or working a capital murder, and the sheriff sets the tone for how any and all of it is handled.



Trying to treat everyone the way he or she deserves to be treated, the sheriff has written his own deputies tickets and, on his bulletin board, he keeps a speeding ticket a deputy wrote him. He advises new hires to operate fairly: "Say you pull over three teenage boys with a six-pack of beer. If they say, 'Yes sir,' and, 'No sir,' pour the beer out and send them on their way with a warning. If they have an attitude, I've got a bed."

The jail is the sheriff's biggest burden. "You have to worry about keeping those 750 in, safe and healthy, and then that

you have the right staff,” Bob said. He requires administrators call him for anything worthy of his attention, no matter the time of night. He started the nondenominational chaplaincy program in the jail, providing lay ministers and discipleship programs for the offenders. “You have to treat the inmates fair and firm, and don’t let yourself think they’re below you. God doesn’t make anyone bad. We change. We choose,” he said. “But they can also choose again.”

Always hands on, he gains satisfaction out of interacting with people at major and minor crime scenes. Often acting as a sounding board, Bob takes every opportunity to give counsel to a child or



talk to a husband or wife who is having some issues. “I can tell what I did wrong, or witnessed, and it keeps them from going down the same path,” Bob said. “I’ve been shot, stabbed, whooped, cussed and worst off, I’ve been spit on. I’ve arrested some bad people. There have been contracts out on my life. I’ve had some big cases in my career. In the process, I cheated my kids out of a father. I thought the world wanted to be saved. Several years later, I figured out the world didn’t want to be saved. They wanted me when they wanted me.”

The case he’ll remember most is helping save the life of Kevin Brown. When he was 2 1/2 years old, the baby boy wandered from home. “That could have been my child or grandchild,” said Bob, who refused to give up until, finally, a DPS helicopter made one more pass at Sheriff Alford’s request. “They found him, asleep at a stock tank. He was 2 miles from home, and it was 69 hours and 16 minutes from the time we got the report.” Bob saw the now 11-year-old boy this year, when the Chisholm Trail 100 Club hosted a meeting where

Extraordinary



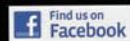
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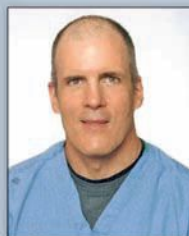


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Kevin presented the sheriff with a gun and a crystallized rock. Bob cherishes the rock, the boy and the memory. "That's what keeps you going and makes the job worthwhile," he added.

As he enters his last year before retirement, Bob is serving his third one-year term as director for the Texas Sheriff's Association. In addition, he chairs the Cold Case Team, a statewide think tank hearing about 10 cases at a time. He serves as an adviser to the Chisholm Trail 100 Club, which assists families of first responders killed or seriously injured in the line of duty. He'll help, for the 18th year, to raise funds for the Children's Advocacy Center.

Come January 2017, Bob hopes to continue helping CAC. He also intends to become more active in other ways. "I'll be roping steers or hauling hay until I die," he said. Planning to spend more time with his 11 grandkids and 1 great-grandchild and Marty, he'll also write a book about the woman he so admires. Bob will assist in a movie or television show here and there. He has already premiered a faith-based rodeo movie, *Nail 32*, based on the life of the founder of Shepherd Valley Cowboy



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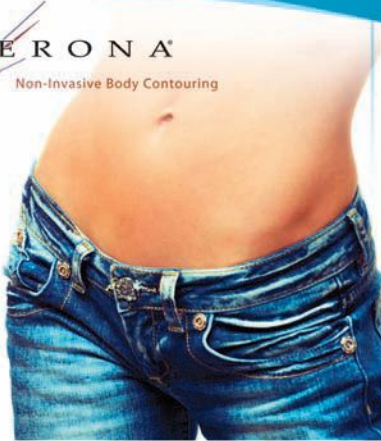
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Church, Jasper Weaver. Bob's dog, Red, was featured in the movie with actor Brad Johnson, who drove Bob's truck while he hid in the back and called the dog to follow the truck.

The movie business adds extra excitement to Bob's already dramatic life. Working undercover involved a lot of acting, and all the door-kicking provided him regular adrenaline rushes. "Through it all," he said, "you've got to have the heart to serve people."

All the shadow-boxed pistols and most of the plaques that he'll have to box up when he leaves office came as a result of that high-adrenaline work performed with teams of people who also felt the same calling, to help people. "I've had my wife covering my back, plus city police officers, jailers, administrators and deputies," Bob said. "Without God, the other officers and a good wife to keep me straight, I couldn't accomplish anything." **NOW**

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The crooks how they get you ever so fast,
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With one little ring to the CNB Call Center,
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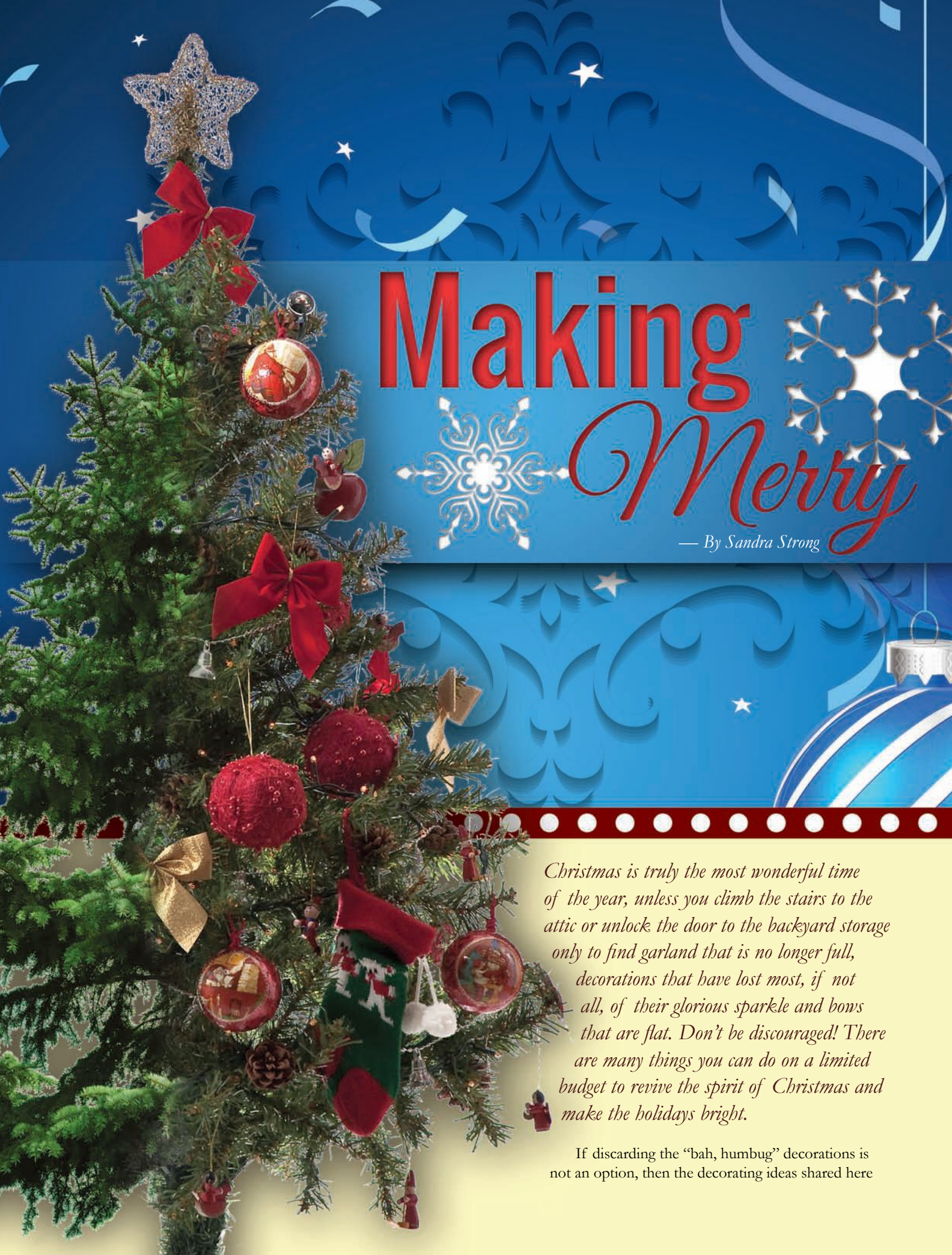
As I thanked my banker for making it right, I heard him exclaim,
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Making Merry

— By Sandra Strong

Christmas is truly the most wonderful time of the year, unless you climb the stairs to the attic or unlock the door to the backyard storage only to find garland that is no longer full, decorations that have lost most, if not all, of their glorious sparkle and bows that are flat. Don't be discouraged! There are many things you can do on a limited budget to revive the spirit of Christmas and make the holidays bright.

If discarding the “bah, humbug” decorations is not an option, then the decorating ideas shared here



will, hopefully, be the help you need to restore your holiday favorites to their original glory. Each suggestion can be accomplished alone, but why not get everyone together for some good, old-fashioned family time. You might even start a new Christmas tradition.

Decking the Halls

Here are a few ways you can revive your garland. The easiest option is to take two strands of old garland and twist them together from one end to the next, securing both ends with floral wire. Once secured, the two strands will need

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to be entwined, one with the other. This process calls for patience and plenty of time to do it properly. As you entwine the two, you will touch each small limb on the garland strands, merging them together as you work from one end to the next.

To further fill out the garland, you can also add a string of twinkling lights and some holiday ribbon. These options can be added and removed from season-to-season in order to give the decorations a new punch each year. You might use white lights with blue ribbons one year and decide to go all out with red lights and Scotch plaid bows the next. One year, you may even decide to forgo the ribbons and bows and tie themed ornaments and festive greenery to the garland. As your taste in holiday decorating changes from year-to-year, now, so can your fluffy strands of garland.



Trimming the Tree

Some homes boast one tall, regally standing, fresh cut tree, while other homes have trees of varying shapes and sizes in every room. Regardless of how many trees you display, there are some easy guidelines you can follow to ensure the tree-decorating process is one that lends to good memories, instead of huge holiday headaches. Patience will, once again, be important as you plug in the pre-lit tree or the string of lights to begin wrapping the tree in their warm



glow. Last year, the pre-lit tree worked. You may find that it doesn't this year. The process to find the one bulb that has caused the lights to go out is difficult and, many times, impossible. In this case, you have three options — throw the tree out the backdoor, string working lights over nonworking lights or grab a trusty pair of scissors and start cutting the lights from the tree.


For those who opt for a tree that is not pre-lit, your struggles could be just as great, especially if the light Grinch somehow got into the lights that were organized and working when you stored them neatly away the year before! If you find this is the case, get a large cup of hot cocoa, have a seat and let the untangling begin.





Ornamental Revitalization


Ornaments on a Christmas tree are what keep the memories alive within the branches each year. The engraved spoon commemorating baby's first Christmas, the paper star those same little hands made once they got to kindergarten and vintage glass decorations that have been passed down through the generations evoke emotions each time the tree is trimmed. Sometimes, these same decorations need to be rejuvenated to bring back their original beauty.

Silver polish and a buffing cloth will shine up the spoon in no time. All it takes to add a button or some glitter back to the paper star is a few small dots of Elmer's glue. The vintage decorations will



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need something altogether different — something called TLC. Vintage and antique ornaments need to be stored in a dry, climate-controlled area. Hot temperatures have a tendency to tarnish and fade the colors, while colder temperatures cause these same ornaments to become brittle. The way these family heirlooms are stored is quite important in ensuring their holiday lasting power. Wrapping them in white tissue paper before placing them gently in their storage container helps keep them in one piece until you are ready to enjoy them again.



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Outside the Box

Decorating outside the box takes on new meaning as children marry and have children of their own. Although it sounds like something Scrooge would do, some may choose to not put a tree up until children understand that the tree is to look at and not to touch. One unique idea, which has been passed down through the generations, is to take the baby out of the playpen and add the tree in his or her place. This allows the child to still be mesmerized by the tree's beauty, while keeping them safely away from breakable ornaments and the "no-no's" that will surely come with each touch. Another option is to simply downsize the tree, so it can be displayed on a tabletop or the fireplace mantel.

Regardless of what you decide to do, the main focus should be on having family fun. Garland, decorations and bows will come and go, but your Christmas memories can last a lifetime, if they are preserved and cared for properly. **NOW**

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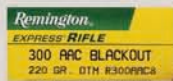
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Caryl and Bobby Woolard proudly offer custom jewelry design, often a collaboration with customers in front of a flat-screen monitor displaying ideas created on CounterSketch CAD.



High-tech Heirlooms

Woolard's Custom Jewelers uses new technologies to produce your shining glories. — By Melissa Rawlins

Amazing things keep happening inside Woolard's Custom Jewelers. Since 1973, Woolard's jewelers have produced fine pieces inside a very friendly Burleson store fronting a workshop buzzing with creativity. This year, owners Bobby and Caryl Woolard expanded their services. They welcome people to experience the potential offered by modern technology.

The summary of their growth into a 2,200-square-foot design center is memorialized in a 3x5-inch framed copy of the Prayer of Jabez, quietly resting on a credenza under the microscope the owner uses sometimes when evaluating precious gems or gold coins. Like the biblical character, Jabez, Bobby and Caryl prayed for the opportunity to impact the community.

Woolard's Custom Jewelers can now do more than the intricate wax carving that established Bobby's reputation as an artist. To

his company's repertoire, he added computer engraving, computer aided design (CAD), 3-D printing, laser welding, diamond setting and even gold coin sales. The scope of the special order work offered at Woolard's has multiplied, yet all work is still done on the premises.

This is how it always was for Bobby's father, Bill, who entered the jewelry business in 1948 at the age of 18. In 1973, Bill opened his own store in downtown Fort Worth. "It was 8 feet wide, 20 feet deep, and contained one showcase, two jewelers' benches, a sink, a stove and a polisher," recalled Bobby, who worked with his father creating wholesale pieces for retailers in Fort Worth.

In 1979, the Woolards moved their shop to Burleson. Bill has since fully retired, and Woolard's Custom Jewelers has four jewelers: Mickey Brooks, Kenneth Seleski, Rob Soria and Bobby.

Now 18 times its original size, Woolard's Custom Jewelers holds all of Bobby's dreams for his family business. Surrounded by artifacts and heirloom photos of both Caryl's and Bobby's dads, the custom-built rustic wood credenzas and display cases stand out against blue-and-black checkered carpeting and robins-egg-blue walls.

In the southwest corner of the new design room, Bobby placed a handmade, dark-wood bar with two leather-seated bar stools. In this artsy atmosphere, people browsing for jewelry ideas also see sculptural pieces made of pecan wood, which were carved by Pete McCaskill. *El Camino* is the name of the roadrunner gracing the bar.

Here, Bobby or Kenneth design custom jewelry, while customers watch the flat-screen monitor hanging above the jeweler. The consultation could range from 30 minutes to five hours. The beginning of Bobby's process often involves letting customers try on a variety of cubic zirconia and sterling silver prototypes, which are on display near the bar.

Bobby excels in hand carvings. Yet most of his design work is done by computer. Details of the customer's favored model can be tweaked on site using the CounterSketch CAD program. "We will prepare the image in color, and then invite the customer to return and view the image from all angles. Together, we refine important details of the custom design," Bobby said.

After making requested adjustments and receiving customer permission to move forward, Woolard's sends the CAD file to their 3-D printer. An intricate 3-D pattern of the jewelry is "printed" in wax, and that pattern will be cast into metal. "It's an amazing process," Caryl said.

She and Bobby collaborated on everything about Woolard's expansion, so their foremost mission hasn't changed. As always, visitors feel a sense of belonging. Caryl and Bobby and their assistants, Mari Ramirez, Mel Salas and Amanda Bransom, learn every customer's name and maintain relationships across the years. And through the generations, people treasure the sentimental pieces custom designed by Woolard's. **NOW**



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Lindsey Douglas, Centennial High's Character Essay Winner, celebrates her hero and teacher, Chris Hopper.



Christopher Van Ry washes the company truck at Circus Carwash.



Angmar owners, Southern Golf Course staff and Burleson Chamber members dig in for the Oaks Event Center groundbreaking.



Ashley Wayne gives Dairy Queen ice cream to little Outlaw and John Wayne behind Wall Farm & Garden Supply.



Nancy Clothier refreshes herself with a sniff of her favorite oil, lemon eucalyptus, while helping people at Herbal Health Stop in Crowley.



Katie Bug's furniture refinishers, Katie Wesson and Sarah Smith, are busy at work at Recycling Time Thrift Shop.



Shannan Sutter, Baylee Shields, Amanda Young and Hannah Douglass, some of the members of Burleson's Dog Park Planning Committee, meet with rescued Montana about what he looks for in a dog park.



Crowley ISD Retirees shop till they dropped on their 5th annual No First Day of School.

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Prepare for the Elements and Protect Your Home From Winter Damage

Is your home winter-proofed? By preparing for winter storms and the deep freeze ahead of time, you can avoid winter-related disasters from wreaking havoc on the home front.

Damage caused by heavy snow, bitter cold, ice buildups and powerful winds accounts for a high percentage of homeowners' insurance claims. In fact, the Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.) reports that:

- Winter storms account for nearly 8 percent of catastrophe losses.
- Losses average more than \$1 billion a year.
- The average claim for water damage and freezing is \$5,095.

But before the thermometer drops, you can take simple steps to safeguard your home from winter's wrath and head off a cold weather catastrophe. While it's hard to start thinking about winter while temperatures remain well

above freezing, now is the time to plan ahead and take care of all the things in and around your home you will wish you had done when the weather was still nice.

Outside Your Home

- *Clean out gutters.* Remove leaves, sticks and other debris from gutters, so melting snow and ice can flow freely. This can prevent ice damming — a condition where water is unable to drain through the gutters and instead seeps into the house, causing water to drip from the ceiling and walls.
- *Trim trees and remove dead branches.* Ice, snow and wind can make weak trees or branches break, causing damage to your home or car, as well as injury to people on your property.
- *Repair steps and handrails.* This may prevent someone from falling and being seriously injured. Broken stairs and banisters can become lethal when covered with snow and ice.



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



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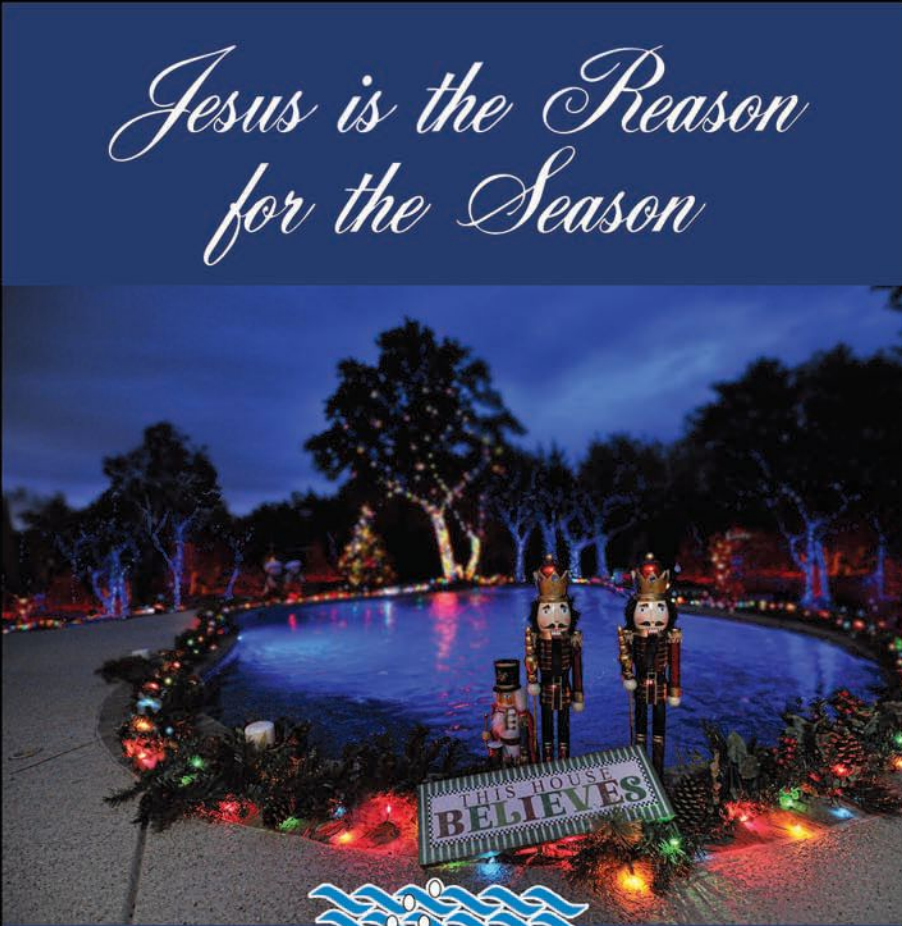
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- *Seal cracks and holes in outside walls and foundations.* Use caulking to protect water pipes and make sure that skylights and other roof openings have proper weather stripping to prevent snowmelt from seeping in.

Inside Your Home

- *Keep the house warm.* Set the thermostat for at least 65 degrees, since the temperature inside the walls, where the pipes are located, is substantially colder. A lower temperature will not keep the pipes from freezing.
- *Have the heating system serviced.* Furnaces, boilers and chimneys should be serviced at least once a year to prevent fire and smoke damage.
- *Check pipes.* Look closely for cracks and leaks and have the pipes repaired immediately. Wrap exposed pipes with pipe insulation or heating tape. Allow your faucets to drip lukewarm water to minimize the chances of a pipe freeze.
- *Make sure that smoke and fire alarms are working properly.* Residential fires increase in the winter, so it is important to protect your family with working alarm systems. Also, consider installing a carbon dioxide detector, since a well-sealed home can trap this toxic gas.
- *Learn how to shut the water off and know where your pipes are located.* If your pipes freeze, time is of the essence. The quicker you can shut off the water or direct your plumber to the problem, the better chance you have to prevent pipes from bursting. **NOW**

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



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for the Season*

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'Tis the Season to Practice Safe Toy Giving

With Thanksgiving celebrations behind us, many are already planning Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa celebrations. And for most children, the month of December is equated with an abundance of holiday gifts. But before you present your little one with the toy he's begged for all year long, it's important to practice safe toy giving.

In case you didn't know, December happens to be National Safe Toys and Gifts Month. Created by Prevent Blindness America, the organization is committed to educating adults through safety awareness.

The safety campaign began more than five years ago, in an effort to lessen the number of toy-related deaths and injuries to American children. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), in 2013, there were an estimated 256,700 toy-related injuries treated in emergency departments across the nation. Ninety-six percent of those emergency department visits resulted in children being treated and released.

Unfortunately, the CPSC also reported nine deaths during that same time period — most of which were caused by asphyxiation. Those nine deaths involved four girls and five boys ranging from 8 months old to 11 years of age. We don't want your family to suffer from a tragic situation that involves dangerous toys. With that in mind, there are numerous ways to keep your little ones safe. Some suggested practices include:

- *Checking for safety labels that say the toy is nontoxic.* You should avoid lead products and toys with chipped or peeling paint.
- *Selecting games that meet your child's abilities, age and interest.* Keep deflated and broken balloons away from children younger than 8 years old, as they may choke or suffocate

on the material. On another note, riding toys can be dangerous, so it is imperative that helmets and other safety gear are worn properly at all times and be sized to fit.

- *Searching for products with the American Society for Testing and Materials tag.* The specific labeling means that the toy has passed a stringent safety inspection.
- *Keeping up to date with recent toy recalls.*
- *Reminding your child to clean up after playing to prevent accidents.* To avoid risks or falls, toys should be stored properly. It is also important to throw away plastic wrapping and other toy packaging before they become dangerous play items.
- *Avoiding toys with small parts, if your child is under the age of 3.* You should avoid magnets and "button" batteries. A rule of thumb — if it can fit inside a toilet paper roll, it is not appropriate for children younger than 3 years old.
- *Examining toys for safety hazards, pointed edges and broken pieces.* You should avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off, and toys with ropes and cords or heating elements should be avoided as well.

This holiday season, and each day of the year for that matter, make safety a top priority, especially for those entrusted in your care. May 2015 end on a healthy (and safe) note as you look forward to a prosperous new year. Happy holidays to you and yours! **NOW**

Sonja Aker, R.N., B.S.N.
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December 4

Crowley Christmas Tree Lighting: 5:30-7:30 p.m., City Hall. Tree lighting at 6:00 p.m. with a visit from Santa, children's crafts and activities, cookies and hot cocoa and more! Contact (817) 297-2201, ext. 4300.

December 5

Joshua Christmas Parade of Lights: 6:00 p.m., Joshua High School. American Steel Carports, Joshua Area Chamber of Commerce and The City of Joshua invite you to the community parade, which starts in the parking lot by softball fields, and ends in football stadium parking lot. (817) 556-2480.

Breakfast with Santa: 7:00-11:00 a.m., Burleson Recreation Center, 550 N.W. Summercrest Blvd. Children through 12 years old, accompanied by their parents, will enjoy pancakes, sausage and orange juice. Santa will be in the Winter Wonderland to hear Christmas wishes. Bring your camera. Stop by Santa's workshop to make holiday crafts. On the day of the event, Breakfast with Santa tickets are \$5 for children and \$7 for adults. (817) 426-9104.

Burleson Parade of Lights, Tree Lighting and Fireworks: 6:00 p.m., Old Town Burleson. The

Burleson Rotary Club hosts the Parade of Lights, which kicks off from Kerr Middle School. Two children will ride with Santa Claus in the parade, and then help turn on the lights at the City's Christmas tree lighting at 7:00 p.m. at the corner of Johnson Ave. and Ellison St.

December 8

Business After Hours: 5:30-7:00p.m., Jellystone Park at Rustic Creek Ranch, 2301 S. I-35W. Free to Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce members. For more information, call (817) 295-6121.

December 10

Crowley Chamber Quarterly Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Crowley First United Methodist Church, 509 Peach St. Call (817) 297-4211.

December 12

Christmas Craft Fair: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Burleson Senior Center, 216 S.W. Johnson Ave. Shop for one-of-a-kind handmade items from quilts to art, jewelry and more made by locals. Call (817) 295-6611.

14th annual Heart for the Kids benefit game: 1:00 p.m., BISD Stadium on Elk Dr. Burleson police officers and firefighters face off for flag football.

Admission for the game is one unwrapped toy for a child. Diapers for the babies are also welcome. (817) 447-2923 or www.heartforthekids.org.

December 14

Family Night: 7:00-8:00 p.m., Joshua Community YMCA, 1009 Joshua Station Blvd. Always free, Family Activity Nights are open to everyone 3 years old to adults. Call (817) 645-9622. www.joshuacommunityymca.org.

December 17

Breast Cancer Care Support Group: 6:00-7:00 p.m., Pathway Church, 250 N.W. Tarrant Ave., Suite L. Call Nedra Lamar, (817) 915-5529.

December 19

Christmas at Russell Farm: Noon-8:00 p.m., 405 W. CR 714. Free. Bring your own camera for pictures with Joey the rein-donkey. Christmas trees, hayrides, handmade crafts and tours of the farm.

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

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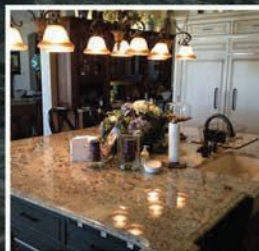
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In the Kitchen With Denise Feigum

— *By Melissa Rawlins*

As a child in Wisconsin, Denise Feigum joined her mom and relatives in the seasonal Christmas tradition of making candies, such as Seafoam and 5-pound Light Fudge. She really started cooking after marriage, as she wanted to serve her young family home-cooked meals, quickly prepared, so her boys could eat nutritious foods prior to sports, piano lessons and other activities. Kyle and Jake graduated from Burleson High School, and Denise's family changed. A clinical research manager at Alcon Labs, she now cooks for her fiancé. Since they eat at least nine daily servings of fruits and vegetables, she added a cutting-edge aeroponic vertical growing system to her patio for growing herbs and leafy greens. Here, she shares simple, healthy family favorites — including her mom's Banana Nut Bread. **NOW**

Banana Nut Bread

Great for gifts!

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 Tbsp. milk
- 3 bananas, mashed
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 cup nuts, chopped

1. Cream sugar and butter.
2. Add beaten eggs, salt, milk and bananas.
3. Add flour, soda and nuts.
4. Bake at 325 F for approximately 55-60 minutes. (Mini-loaves bake 45-50 minutes.) Don't pull out of the oven when wet in the middle of the loaf.

Marinated Rosemary Grilled Turkey

- 1 14- to 16-lb. turkey
- 2/3 cup soy sauce
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 Tbsp. fresh rosemary, minced

1. Defrost turkey so it is thawed the night prior to cooking. Mix remaining ingredients.
2. Clean the turkey. Place it in an oven bag; pour half of the marinade over the turkey and secure the bag with a twist tie, saving the rest of the marinade for later.
3. Squish marinade around the turkey and refrigerate overnight.
4. Flip turkey over once or twice to ensure marinade penetrates the bird.

5. The next day, the turkey will be grilled using the indirect method, by preparing a charcoal grill with 2 piles of charcoal banked to the sides of the grill.
6. Discard marinade. Place turkey in an aluminum pan in between the 2 piles of hot coals.
7. Every 30 minutes, add 2-3 coals to each side of grill to keep the fire going. Baste turkey with the remaining half of the marinade.
8. Cook about 3-4 hours, or until the pop-up timer or meat thermometer indicates the turkey is done. Allow the bird to sit for 10 minutes prior to carving.

Christmas Kale Salad

- 1 bunch kale, stems removed and leaves chopped
- 1/4 red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 small red apples, chopped
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 1/2 cup sweetened dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1/2 cup shelled roasted sunflower seeds
- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 3 Tbsp. white sugar

1. Toss kale, onion, apples, carrots, cranberries, almonds and sunflower seeds together in a bowl.
2. Whisk together remaining ingredients in a separate bowl and mix well with the greens. Refrigerate 4-8 hours.

Game Day Chili

- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1/2 each red, yellow, orange and green pepper, chopped
- 2-4 garlic cloves
- 1 lb. hamburger
- 1 lb. ground turkey
- 1 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes
- 1 15-oz. can Ranch Style Beans (with jalapeños)
- 1 15-oz. can Ranch Style Beans (without jalapeños)
- 2 8-oz. cans tomato sauce
- 24 oz. water
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 1/2 tsp. cumin

1. Brown vegetables, hamburger and turkey. Drain and discard liquid.
2. Add meat mixture to the rest of ingredients in a Crock-Pot and cook most of the day on low setting (4-10 hours).

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