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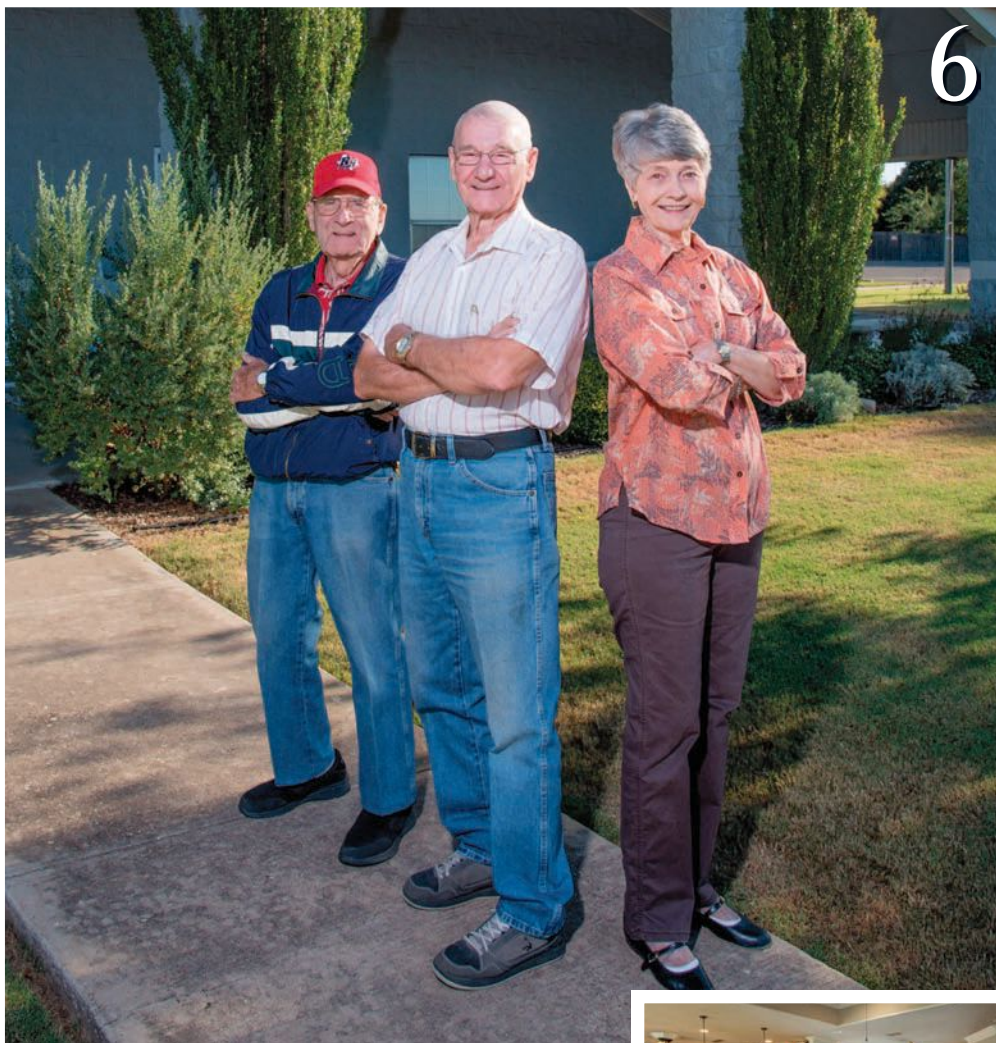
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Photo by SRC Photography.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Friends!

Won't it be nice when winter actually descends? We'll be surrounded by change more dramatic than in other seasons. We'll be able to see our environment in stark recognition of reality. The contrast between sunlight and darkness is much more moving when the backdrop is bare. Leafless trees might seem gray to some, but to me they're harbingers of progress, since each accomplishment is the productive result of restful meditation. And cold days inspire me to planning mode. What will change after these introspective days of strategizing? Only our Creator knows. But I'm following Him wherever He leads me and grateful that in this, my birthday month, my body and mind are fresh and alert for every possible transformation.

Melissa

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



From our family to yours this holiday season!



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A Good Trip

— By Melissa Rawlins



For Tommy Brisco, every moment is about quality. From his 81-year vantage point, he has no regrets. “If my life ended tomorrow,” he said, “it’s been a good trip.”

Making several drives each week on behalf of people who receive Meals on Wheels, Tommy sees roadrunners almost every day. As he travels, musing on the wonders nature exhibits, he gives thanks. “It’s easy to see God through nature. There are some things that couldn’t happen without somebody to create this,” Tommy said.

Tommy’s ready for good conversation when he carries meals provided by Hood County Committee on Aging, cooked fresh at the Hood County Senior Center. “I go away feeling great, because they want company,” he said. “The majority of the people I deliver to are having a meal delivered because they retired and then sat down.” Tommy’s plan is to stay active, and he works out at the fitness center at least three days per week to stay flexible and in shape.

When bad weather is forecasted, Tommy and the volunteers for Meals on Wheels take their clients a frozen meal the day before. “The old-timers can make do with a little sandwich or gravy. Sometimes, they even have good neighbors who will check on them,” Tommy said.

Tommy’s warm, caring hugs and honest sense of humor result in memorable friendships. He recalls Reba, who was crying one day when he brought her meal. “She asked if I had time to listen to her for a minute. I drug up a chair, and she started unloading all her problems on me. I don’t have medication money. I have

Meals on Wheels partners, Edna Myers and Tommy Brisco, also enjoy dancing together.



to pay people to take me to town and to get me food.' Everything had piled up on her. Then, in a sarcastic voice, she said, 'I'm getting so fat my legs won't hold me up.' I said, 'You're not fat. You're too short. If you were 6 feet 4 inches you'd feel fine.' She said, 'Have the doctors had it wrong all this time?' and started laughing."

On Tuesdays, Tommy volunteers as a chaplain at the hospital. "I've been fortunate in being able to help families, do the funeral for them, whatever they need," he said. "It's the same way on the route. I've had occasions to speak with people about faith."

As long as Tommy can stay active, he will do for himself and others. "If my health continues and I take care of my body like I'm supposed to, I think I'll keep on going quite awhile. When my wife passed away, I found a lot of things in the house I didn't know we had: a vacuum cleaner, a mop, a dishwasher," he joked.

In all seriousness, though, and with great care, he continued the work Bettie Brisco had started. Bettie married Tommy on April 12, 1952, when Tommy was 18 and Bettie was 30 days older. After four years of roughnecking across the country, Tommy was drafted into the Army and spent a year in Korea. Meanwhile, Bettie worked at some of the cafés in and around Granbury, getting to know all the old people in town. After the war, Tommy began a 34-year career with Bell Helicopter.

As a family, the Briscos visited older people. "Valley View Nursing Home was originally owned by the



Dick Juneau, Tommy Brisco and Brenda Barnes love the Hood County Senior Center.

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three doctors who were in town, and I started church services for them there years and years ago,” Tommy said. “Our kids were raised in the nursing home, and those people wanted to see our kids, not me and Bettie!”

When Bettie and Margo Johnson started the local Meals on Wheels, the Briscos were living on Cherry Lane, near the drive-in theater Margo owned. First, they cooked meals in their own kitchens and delivered them to people they knew who needed meals. Later, they got meals from the hospitals and delivered them. Around 1966, Hood County’s new home demonstration agent initiated organization of the two women’s efforts. Francis Burkes helped write up bylaws and became the first director of Meals on Wheels.

Forty-one years ago, they began operating as a senior center out of The Shanley House, using delivery vans that had been purchased from the Texas Highway Department. After about three years, the larger American Legion Hall became base of operations. Up to 110 people could fit in the dining hall, where many seniors came to eat lunch, play bridge and even dance a line dance. Volunteers like Joann Cooper and Esther Umphress joined with Bettie Brisco and Margo Johnson to recruit other givers to take phone calls, deliver meals and serve others.

By 1995, they were running out of room. Tommy retired in 1996 and joined

As long as Tommy can stay active, he will do for himself and others.



Tommy poses with Mindy Hodges and Joann Cooper.

the board. In addition to going out and working on people's houses, repairing their cars and helping do things they couldn't afford to do, the board found 7.5 acres and borrowed money from The First National Bank to build the Hood County Senior Center.

Fifteen years ago, Meals on Wheels moved with their amazing group of volunteers into their new building on East Moore St. Tommy lost Bettie in 2000 and still served four years as president. He rotated off the board after two terms and continued delivering meals. He helps with whatever Meals on Wheels needs, from fixing ice machines to making announcements during the



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How do varicose veins develop? Compared with other veins in the body, leg veins endure the most pressure and have the toughest job of carrying blood back to the heart. To counteract the forces of gravity, veins have valves that prevent blood from flowing backwards as it is pumped back toward the heart. Over time, these valves can weaken, allowing the blood to pool inside the vein.

This can cause the vein to distend, resulting in the "rope-like" appearance commonly associated with varicose veins. This condition can lead to a range of serious circulatory problems, including blood clots, leg ulcers and poor circulation. Many individuals exhibit symptoms of venous insufficiency that includes swelling, throbbing, cramping and restless legs.

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"Our board is doing a fantastic job of keeping the bills paid," Tommy said. "We're feeding anywhere from 75-150 up here per day, depending upon weather and a lot of things that vary with seniors. And on the 16 delivery routes, we serve 175-225 people each day."

Meanwhile, Tommy stays active. Although he had never danced in his life, he challenged himself to learn for the sake of his girlfriend, Edna Myers. "She had been my Meals on Wheels delivery partner, and we've been seeing each other nine years. She had danced all of her life, and I felt like a fool out there and had convinced myself I couldn't learn," Tommy said. In his woodworking shop, he'd take a break from turning beautifully polished pens, switch his radio on and practice with a broom handle. When a fellow dance student taught him to lay his hand on the amplifier, Tommy finally heard the beat.

That was five years ago. It's been easy for him ever since. Everyone enjoys watching Tommy dance. And his favorite thing is watching all the givers who support the Hood County Senior Center. **NOW**

Editors Note: For more information about the Hood County Senior Center, visit www.hoodcountyseniorcenter.org.

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Much like the NORTH POLE

Not only a geographic location, the North Pole is also an actual town with about 2,000 people near Fairbanks, Alaska. Silver lanes are aglow for nine months, making winter the longest season. Their motto is, "Where the spirit of Christmas lives all year 'round." Several white-bearded, jolly men take turns donning red and white furry suits, after their day jobs, for the tourists who come from all over the world. Candy cane-striped street lamps line Santa Claus Lane and St. Nicholas Drive. Lights, garland and wreaths are displayed 12 months out of the year. Community members even reply to every child's letter that makes it to their festive town. It's a magical place every day of the year. Finding time to travel to North Pole, Alaska, may be difficult, but closer to home, Ron and Carol Cotton's home is a magical place very much like the North Pole.





AT HOME WITH Ron and Carol Cotton





During the holiday season, all is bright on the street lined with twinkling lights and nutcrackers. “Everyone who lives on Nutcracker Drive puts them on their lawn,” Carol said. The 6-foot nutcracker displayed in front of Ron and Carol’s home has an engineer’s cap and denim overalls. It is a nostalgic icon that represents Ron’s 35 years of service with BNSF Railway. The house is decked with over 200 of the stately soldiers, most holding their pose in the office.

“There is an eclectic mix of nutcrackers,” Carol said. “If I see one that appeals to me, I get it. Our granddaughter, Olivia, gets to take one home every time she visits from Kansas.”

Ron’s exact train models are mounted in glass boxes on the wall. The office also holds mementos from Ron’s hobby — golf. He recently competed in the Myrtle Beach World Amateur Golf Tournament in September.

Ron and Carol’s house was selected to be on the Christmas Tour of Homes last year. To achieve a festive look worthy of the tour, Carol enlisted the help of Claudette Lewis. “There were four pickup loads of decorations brought to

my house,” Carol admitted. “Ron helped decorate and [trim] the house, too. We needed him to use the ladder and reach where we couldn’t.”

Claudette’s contributions turned Ron and Carol’s home into a visual wonderland. “Claudette handcrafted 14 Santas to display in our home,” Carol explained. “The faces are sculpted out of polymer clay. She sews real fur coats and knits hats and scarves.” Each Santa is a masterpiece surrounded by holiday-themed decorations. Claudette also donates handmade Santas for the raffle at the clubhouse.

Throughout the year, many fundraisers and raffles bring the community together. Carol is the Pecan Plantation Women’s Club president for 2014-2015 and enjoys planning. “I became involved in planning events almost immediately after we moved here in 2003,” she said. “We have a great group that works hard for charities.”

The activities and numerous donations allow the club to donate to seven local charities each year. They also awarded two scholarships to deserving high school graduates this last year.

“The proceeds from the Tour of Homes are used to purchase new Christmas decorations for the clubhouse, Pecan Activity Center, and the front and back entrance,” Carol said.

The front gates of Pecan Plantation drip with lights that twinkle blue, red and green. Beyond the lights of the entryway lies a magical wonderland and feast for the eyes. There is a thrill of hope as Christmas spirit abounds from each house.

The two dining tables in Carol and Ron’s home are set for a cozy Christmas feast with holiday dishes. One table includes holly berries and flocked greenery set on a red table runner. “The snow on all the decorations is created by using fake snow and Elmer’s glue,” Ron said. A whimsical Santa with polka dots, stripes, candy-striped peppermints and skinny arms and legs seems to be inviting guests to indulge in the mugs of hot chocolate and marshmallows displayed on the table. The sideboard depicts a Santa wielding a hammer and a list. He seems ready to create a child’s toy, much like the Santa at the North Pole would do.

The other dining area has arched windows surrounded by garland, with purple, gold and turquoise balls, beads and gold ribbon. Two large deer in the center of the table have candleholders anchored in their antlers.

The custom-built cabinetry in the living room flanks the fireplace. Carol designed them to include the big screen television Ron had already purchased. Sparkling lights intertwined in dark green garland outline the cabinets. Red and





gold balls dispersed in the garland glisten as the lights reflect on their surface. Deer sit among white trees on top of the built-ins and a slew of nutcrackers stand at attention in one corner. A large wreath above the fireplace is enhanced by two brass deer on the mantel. The coffee table is a focal point for a large Santa in a sleigh being pulled by reindeer donning silver bells. A snowy Christmas tree in the back of the sleigh awaits the perfect family living room.



The open concept gives way to another focal point in the kitchen. A Santa riding a polar bear and holiday goblets are displayed on the island. Ron liked this Santa so much, he bought it for Carol. Teddy bears and pencil-thin trees sit among colorful garland lining the tops of the cabinets.

Ron and Carol spend most mornings and evenings on the patio overlooking the lush vegetation through the row of windows. Animals aplenty gravitate to the dense grass and pecans that fall from mature trees. Wispy fountain grass is the only plant Carol has found that the deer do not eat. "It is not uncommon to see skunks, foxes, geese and bobcats," Ron

said. Deer and golf carts alike slowly travel through Nutcracker Golf Course, watching each other's movements.

For the holidays, Santas with flowing white beards, snowmen with carrot noses and bright stars sit in the flocked branches of an 8-foot tree. Wrapped gifts surround the tree waiting for the special day when loved ones open them. Another Santa, displayed on the coffee table, paddles in a canoe, while a fox in the canoe watches over a bag of gifts.

Soon, Ron and Carol will have to relocate their decorations to the huge attic atop the garage. For now, the spirit of the North Pole and Christmas lives in their home for the holidays. **NOW**



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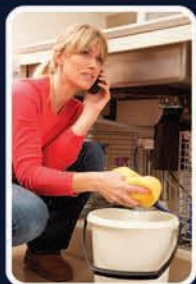
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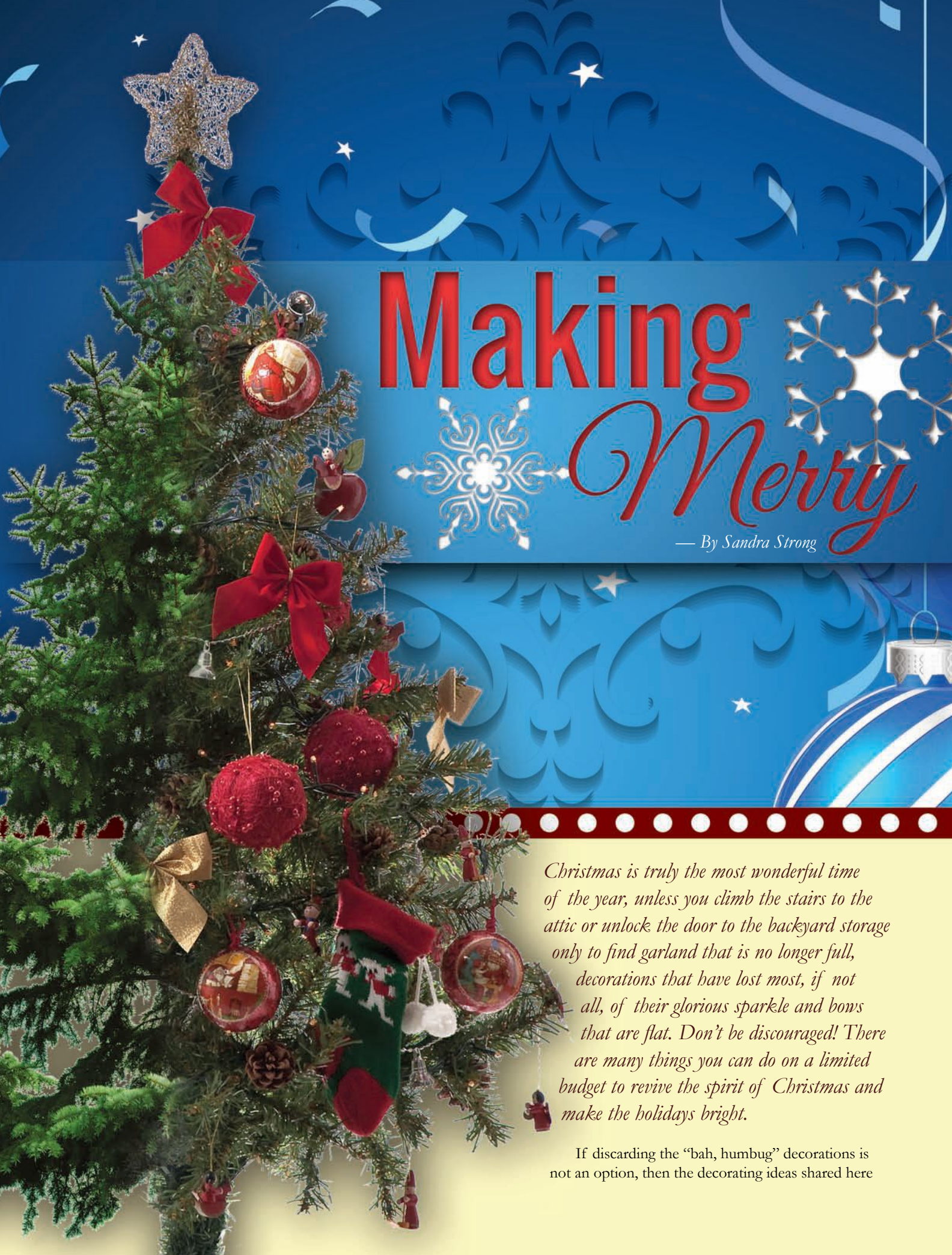


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Making Merry

— 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.

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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At Popcorn Diva, various sizes and designs of tins delight the eyes as much as the contents.

Tasty Therapy

Popcorn Diva's gourmet popcorn and fudge thrills taste buds. — By Melissa Rawlins

Little did Laurie Hesseltine know that opening a popcorn and fudge shop would fulfill her every need. Making any of her 50 gourmet popcorn recipes brings a smile to her face. And Popcorn Diva customers have become a source of inspiration. People come for popcorn or fudge and tend to stay awhile, munching on samples of both of Laurie's specialties while chatting.

She gives each customer her full attention and often glean nuggets of wisdom from people who encourage her. Fudge became one of Popcorn Diva's hot sellers only after customers insisted that her homemade fudge — always prepared with fresh cream, real butter and Imperial Pure Cane sugar — would be a delectable addition to the scrumptious popcorn recipes Laurie was already known for. With one fudge kettle, she makes up to

15 flavors of fudge, like cookies 'n' crème, vanilla chocolate swirl, maple or chocolate pecan.

She has experimented with flavors and technique since 1988, when her aunt invested in Laurie's future. After she graduated from Tarleton State University, Laurie's parents bought popcorn equipment for her, and she made popcorn out of her home. Corn popping helped Laurie relax amidst the busyness of days spent helping care for her parents, while rearing a family of her own, working as a substitute teacher and volunteering on the board of the PTO.

Friends and teachers encouraged her to share her popcorn with the public. That idea came into reality after Laurie's mother passed away. "I wish my mother were still here to enjoy this with

Business **NOW**

me,” said Laurie, whose father is still here. The two raise a few head of Red Brangus cattle together, and often, Laurie comes to Popcorn Diva at night, when she has time to indulge herself in her own form of therapy: making popcorn.

She opened the Acton storefront in 2014. Three corn poppers allow her to produce Mushroom popcorn, like you get when you buy caramel corn, or Butterfly popcorn, like you get when you go to the movies. Using real vanilla, pure coconut oil and real butter, Laurie never skimps on ingredients because she’s focused on giving her customers’ taste buds a thrill with every bite. For her caramel corn, for instance, she uses buttery oil for the base popcorn, and then adds a candy coat. “When they bite into it,” Laurie said, “they get a layer of sweet and then a layer of butter!”

Making any of her 50 gourmet popcorn recipes brings a smile to Laurie’s face.

During the holidays, Popcorn Diva offers seasonal flavors of fudge and playful colors of popcorn. This Christmas, it’s red and green. During football season, Laurie sells Pirate Corn in purple and gold in honor of Granbury High. Her children, Hailey, a sophomore at GHS, and Brody, an eighth-grader at AMS, are usually earning their allowance at the store.

Repeat customers buy a tin and bring it back for a discount refill. Those in the know buy a pound, and get a half pound free. Popcorn Diva ships 1-quart to 6.5-gallon tins and bags all over the United States, even internationally.

Whether people buy online, or come into the Acton store, Laurie’s goal is to give every one of her customers a smile. Those who do come into the store will see her face light up, too. “It’s about so much more than them just buying my product,” she said. “If I can, we sit and visit. Talking to them is good for me, too!” **NOW**

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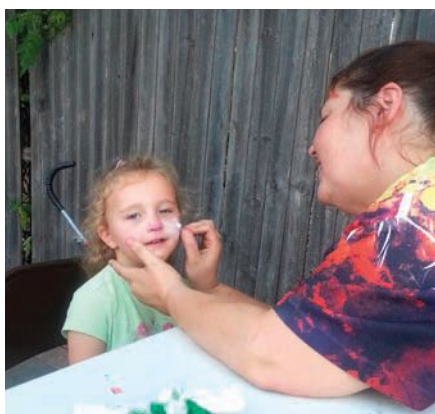
Santa and Mrs. Claus visit the Chamber of Commerce luncheon to promote Hood County Christmas for Children.



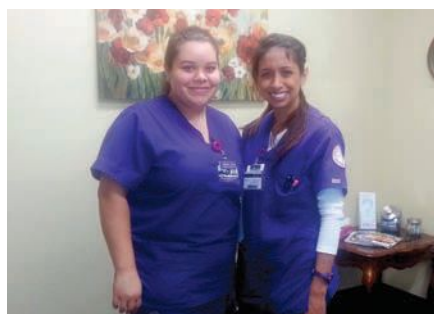
An attentive audience waits for instructions to paint with a twist.



Ryan Toth and Sarah Harvey celebrate life at the Brazos Pregnancy Center Gala.



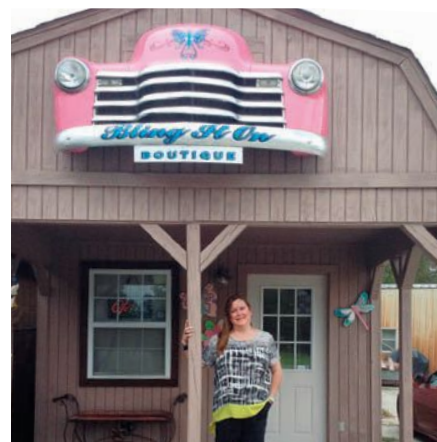
Teresa Potter transforms Aubrey W. into a cat at Head Start's 50th Anniversary Celebration.



Tarleton State's first year nursing students, Melisa Vega and Fabiola Soto, volunteer for the day during Ruth's Place Clinic ribbon cutting.



Although the signatures at the YMCA beam signing event are covered, they will remain a permanent part of the new building.



Tanya Clayton is the proud owner of Granbury's newest ladies boutique called Bling It On.



Wanda Strange works a booth at the Harvest Moon Arts Festival.



Jennifer Sauer, new member of Friends of the Library for Hood County, takes her little Liam into the book sale.

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Straighten Up

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

“Stand up straight!” How many times have you heard that in your lifetime? It could’ve been from your mom, your teacher, dance instructor or a friend. Depending upon who gave the order, you may or may not have tried to accommodate them. But who wants to stand straight when a good slouch seems to work just as well? And, what about that cozy curl into the big chair? Why sit up straight when the opposite feels so right and comfortable? Here is an inconvenient truth: Unless you have been taught and encouraged to practice good posture, you probably need some encouraging reminders.

The correct posture follows the natural curvature of the spine. A good standing posture starts with holding your head up, shoulders back, stomach tucked, knees relaxed, not locked, and your feet a shoulder’s width apart. A good sitting posture begins with your buttocks touching the back of the chair. Have your back and shoulders straight and feet planted on the floor. Your weight should be equally distributed. Use an arm rest. If you need to turn while sitting, do not twist. Turn your whole body. Practice good computer posture by sitting with good posture and keeping your arms and wrists parallel to the floor. Make sure the computer screen is at eye level.

Posture plays a big part in your overall health. One of the areas impacted is your breathing. There is a reason programs

such as yoga and Pilates place so much emphasis on breathing. For the brain to function properly, it is critical for it to receive the oxygen it needs. This improves your critical thinking. Proper posture facilitates that. When you use good posture, your muscles, ligaments and joints are aligned as they should be, and this alignment allows internal organs to be positioned properly inside the body. When your organs are compromised because of bad posture, they can’t function as they should, and that sets up other issues, such as digestion or respiratory problems.

There is less wear and tear on the skeletal system when you maintain good posture, thereby lessening the prospect of injury. Going against this can set you up for arthritis, back pain and body fatigue. Good posture equals a more efficient system. Other considerations would be to invest in a good mattress for the good of your spine at night and an orthopedic pillow. Wear quality footwear. Sit in a solid chair that gives your back the support it needs. There are good reasons for all of this attention to posture. In addition, you will look better and exude confidence when you stand and sit up straight! **NOW**

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

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December 3

Chick-fil-a hosts KLTY Christmas Wish: 6:00-10:00 a.m., 1011 E. Hwy 377. KLTY will broadcast live and provide lists of families who need help. The first 100 visitors will receive a free chicken biscuit. Visit www.klty.com/christmaswish.php for more information.

Granbury Newcomers Club monthly luncheon: 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Pecan Plantation Country Club. The Judge and Jury will dazzle and make attendees hum and sing along. \$14 includes lunch, dessert and entertainment. Checks only please. For more information, visit www.granburynewcomers.org or call Pat Hendricks (817) 579-2637.

Santa Cops, Kids Armor of Hope: 5:00-7:00 p.m., Chick-fil-a, 1011 E. Hwy 377. For more information, visit www.kidsarmorofhope.org or call (817) 894-2199.

December Painting Party: 5:30-7:30 p.m., Gym Kat Sports, 545 Holly Hills Cemetery Rd. Kids can enjoy a fun time of jumping and painting with a certified art teacher while parents have a few hours to themselves. \$30 fee includes jump time, snack and art supplies. Call (817) 573-2006 or visit www.gymkatsportscenter.com for more information.

December 4

Leaders in Government Christmas Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Granbury Resort Conference Center. The annual Christmas luncheon will have entertainment provided by the Granbury High School Choir. This year's guest speakers will be Senator Brian Birdwell and State Representative Jim Keffer. \$25 each for members and guests registered with them; \$30 non-members. Register online at the Granbury Chamber of Commerce website or call (817) 573-1622.

Melody Belles Singers of Granbury, Christmas Concert, "Sing Joy": 6:00 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 303 W. Bridge St. Part of Granbury's Candlelight Tour musical entertainment. Free to the public. Donations welcome. Call (817) 326-2687 for info.

Rio Brazos Star Party: 7:00-11:00 p.m., Acton Nature Center. (Backup date **Dec. 5**) Features a guest speaker at the twilight program under the pavilion adjacent to the parking lot, followed by a short walk down the path to the farmhouse where telescopes with guides await. Free admission. For more information, visit www.actonnaturecenter.org or call Mel at (817) 326-6005.

December 4, 5

32nd Annual Candlelight Tour: **Friday**, 5:00-9:00 p.m.; **Saturday**, Noon-9:00 p.m., Granbury Square. Tickets \$25. Available online at www.granburycandlelighttour.com or purchase at Red on the Square.

December 5

El Tesoro Breakfast with Santa: 8:00-11:00 a.m., 7710 Fall Creek Hwy. Events include digital photos with Santa, free holiday crafts, hayrides, archery and a hot breakfast. Free admission; breakfast costs \$8. For more information and to register, visit www.campfirefw.org/youth/camps/.

Stowaways Dance and Drill Team, Breakfast with Santa: 9:00-11:30 a.m., 217 N. Jones St. The event includes a photo with Santa, a pancake breakfast and a craft station. Admission: \$15/child with a \$5 discount for extra siblings. Adult breakfast \$10. For additional information, visit www.granburyisd.org/stowaways or send email to Diane Craig at diane.craig@granburyisd.org.

Granbury Area Blue Star Mother's annual Christmas social: 6:00 p.m., Spring Creek BBQ. Attendees will be packing Christmas gift boxes for our deployed military. The public is welcome. Contact Chapter President Rhonda Rogers at rhondabrownrogers@yahoo.com or (817) 578-4656.

December 8

Salvation Army Women's Service League Christmas Luncheon: 11:00 a.m., DeCordova Country Club. Please bring an unwrapped gift for either a boy or girl. Make reservations with Sharon Grindstaff by emailing shazza83@att.net or calling (817) 579-0144.

December 10

Pecan Plantation Women's Club 2015 Tour of Homes: 10:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., Pecan Plantation Clubhouse. Tour Packages: Brunch Tour \$29; Dinner Tour \$35. For reservations, send email to gertabear@gmail.com or call Gerta Howell at (817) 219-7089.

December 11

Melody Belles Singers of Granbury, Christmas Concert, "Sing Joy": 11:00 a.m., DeCordova Bend Estates Country Club. Concert followed by lunch. Public invited. Lunch \$15, all-inclusive. Call DCBE Club at (817) 326-2381 for reservations.

December 12

Stowaways Dance and Drill Team Dancer Dash: 8:30 a.m., Granbury High School Tidwell Field baseball complex. The 5K and

1-mile Fun Run certified race course will begin and end at the GHS Tidwell Field baseball complex and include the Granbury City Park and city's hike and bike trails. 5K, \$20 fee; 1-mile fun run, \$15 fee. Prices increase on race day. For more information, send email to Diane Craig at diane.craig@granburyisd.org or visit www.granburyisd.org/stowaways.

OSCAR (One Step Closer Animal Rescue) Fundraiser: 11:00 a.m., Saddle Bags BBQ, 3636 W. Hwy 377. The fundraiser supports awareness of fostering animals, education on sterilization and vaccines and to raise money to help pay for food and medical costs for rescues. To donate or for more information, email Cyndie at Ck62@hotmail.com.

December 13

Granbury FUMC Christmas Cantata: 11:00 a.m., 301 Loop 567. Free admission. Call (817) 573-5573 for more information.

December 14

Brazos Chamber Orchestra Performance: 7:30 p.m., 301 Loop 567. Free admission, no reservation or tickets required. For more information, call Granbury First United Methodist Church at (817) 573-5573.

December 24

Granbury First United Methodist Church Family Service: 5:00 p.m., 301 Loop 567. This service includes a brown bag for all children, containing a costume for a production of *The Christmas Story* during the service. A Traditional Candlelight Service will be held at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome. Call (817) 573-5573 for more information.

December 31

Hood County Senior Center New Year's Eve Dance: 7:00-9:30 p.m., 501 E. Moore St. Reservation only dance featuring Outlaw Run. Reserve your spot early. \$5 cover charge. Visit www.hoodcountyseniorcenter.org for more information or call (817) 573-5533.

January 7

Granbury Newcomers Club monthly luncheon: 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Pecan Plantation Country Club. Susie has performed in musicals, with the TCU A Cappella Choir, in the Southern Palace at Six Flags, at the Grapevine Opry and with several big named bands. RSVP by noon, **Jan. 4** at (817) 243-9831. Learn more at granburynewcomers.org or call Pat Hendricks (817) 579-2637.

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

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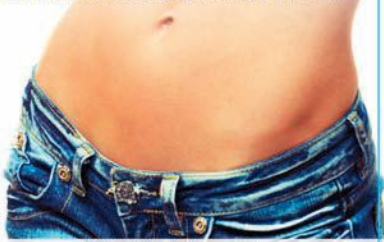
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In the Kitchen With Kristy McReynolds

— By *Melissa Rawlins*

Holiday preparations created Kristy McReynolds' first memory of cooking. She was 8, and her mom and Aunt MayMay brought her into her aunt's kitchen to bake goodies such as cookies and pies. "They are my favorite cooks, because I know they learned a lot from my grandma, whom I never got a chance to cook with or for," Kristy said. "I also have another grandma that God blessed me with. She still can bake at the age of 82, and I love to cook with her."

Here, Kristy shares recipes for a good comfort meal that could be a holiday dinner, along with an appetizer and candy that her family usually makes during Christmas. Members of The Way, Kristy's church, often enjoy these treats. **NOW**

Kristy's Fried Green Beans

- 1 8-oz. pkg. peppered bacon, cooked**
- 3 14.5-oz. cans French-style green beans, drained**
- 1/2 stick butter**
- 1 tsp. sea salt (or to taste)**

- 1.** Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium heat until crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove bacon to a plate lined with paper towels to drain.
- 2.** Add the green beans to the skillet with the bacon grease. Chop the bacon into pieces; add bacon to green beans, along with the butter.
- 3.** Bring the mixture to a boil and simmer until tender. Season with salt to taste.

Cheesy Peppered Bacon Mashed Potatoes

- 2 lbs. Yukon butter potatoes**
- 16 oz. water**
- 1 16-oz. carton chicken broth**

- 1 stick butter**
- 2 cups Colby Jack cheese, shredded**
- 1 3-oz. pkg. peppered real bacon bits**

- 1.** Place potatoes into a large pot and cover with water and chicken broth; bring to a boil.
- 2.** Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain.
- 3.** Transfer potatoes to a bowl; add butter and mash with a potato masher.
- 4.** Stir in cheese and peppered bacon bits.

Christmas Cream Cheese Ball

- 1 1/2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened**
- 1 2.5-oz. pkg. smoked ham, thinly chopped**
- 1 2.5-oz. can pimento-stuffed green olives, chopped**
- 1 small sweet onion, minced**
- 2 dashes Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 cup chopped pecans**

- 1.** Mix all but pecans together in a bowl until evenly blended. Keeping the mixture in the

bowl, scrape it into a semi-ball shape. Cover and refrigerate until firm, at least 2 hours.

- 2.** Place a large sheet of waxed paper on a flat surface. Sprinkle with pecans. Roll the cheese ball in the pecans until completely covered.
- 3.** Transfer the cheese ball to a serving plate, or rewrap with waxed paper and refrigerate until needed.

Kristy's Meatloaf

- 2 lbs. ground beef**
- 1 tsp. sea salt**
- 1/2 tsp. ground pepper**
- 1 pkg. French onion soup mix**
- 1 egg, slightly beaten**
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs, ranch-flavored**
- 1/2 cup ketchup**
- 2 Tbsp. spicy brown mustard**
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F
- 2.** Mix all but last three ingredients. Form into a loaf and place into a loaf pan.
- 3.** Mix ketchup, mustard and brown sugar together.
- 4.** Bake meatloaf for 30 minutes, and then pour some of the sauce on top of the meatloaf.
- 5.** Bake for an additional 30 minutes. The remaining sauce can be used on slices of the meatloaf.

Divinity

- 2 2/3 cups white sugar**
- 2/3 cup light corn syrup**
- 1/2 cup water**
- 2 egg whites**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- 2/3 cup chopped pecans (optional)**

- 1.** Cook sugar, corn syrup and water in a 2-quart pot over low heat, stirring constantly until sugar is dissolved. (On humid days, use 1 Tbsp. less water.) Cook, without stirring, to 260 F on a candy thermometer (or hardball stage).
- 2.** Beat egg whites in a 1 1/2-quart bowl until stiff peaks form. Continue to beat while pouring hot syrup in a thin stream into egg whites. Add vanilla. Beat until mixture holds its shape and becomes slightly dull. (Mixture may become too stiff for an electric mixer). Fold in nuts if desired.
- 3.** Drop from buttered spoon onto waxed paper. Let stand at room temperature, turning candy over once, until outside of candy is firm — at least 12 hours. Store in an airtight container.

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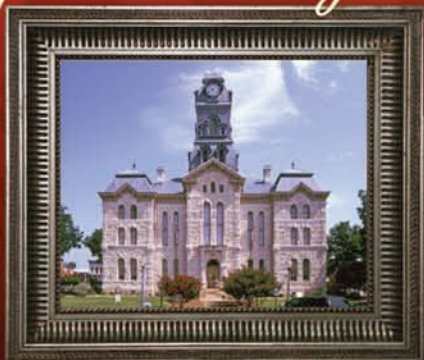


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