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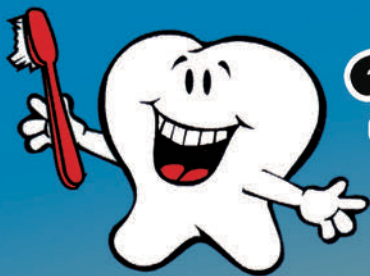
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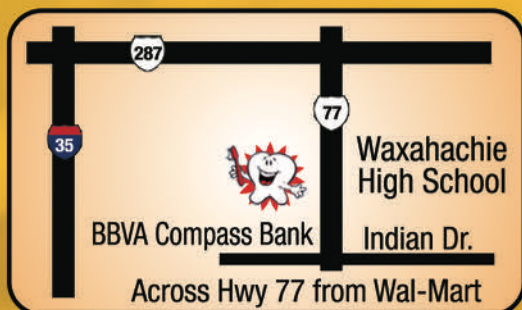
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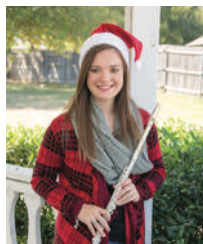
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ON THE COVER



*Hannah Duke cherishes
her Macy's Day
Parade memories.*

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!

As a child, I don't recall my favorite gift, but I'll never forget the Chrissy doll I got one year. I disliked her so much that I cut her long, red hair off, thus leaving a big hole in her head. Needless to say, that was the last doll "Santa Claus" brought me, and that was OK with me since I was a tomboy sandwiched in between two brothers. And I got a good scolding from my parents, which I can admit

today I rightfully deserved.

Christmas has a much deeper meaning to me now as an adult. "Santa" still comes to visit, and the grandchildren still rip and roar through their gifts, but Jesus is now the reason for the season at the Strong house. GiGi, Poppy and I share the story of Jesus' birth, as the little ones touch the Nativity figurines. They're learning that Jesus is still the greatest gift of all!

Celebrate your gifts with family and friends!

Sandra

Sandra Strong
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P.S. The publisher and staff of NOW Magazines wish you and your family a very merry Christmas and the happiest of holiday seasons!




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REPEAT PERFORMANCE

— By Sandra Strong

Learning to play the flute came at an early age for Hannah Duke. As a fourth-grader, she watched her cousin, Stephanie Colburn, play. After Hannah showed a real interest in learning, Stephanie took Hannah under her wing and started teaching her. Over the years, Hannah has worked diligently to hone her talent. “By the time I got to sixth grade and tried out for the school band in Corsicana, I was the most experienced flute player,” she shared. “I’d already had two years of practice.” She is currently a senior at Waxahachie High School and a member of the Spirit of Waxahachie Indian Band.

Hannah just recently returned from a very special trip to New York City. This year was her repeat performance as a member of the Macy’s Great American Marching Band. Once again, she, along with almost 300 other high school band students from across the United States, marched in the annual Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade that has been kicking the holiday shopping season off since 1924. “I saw the

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band while watching the parade on TV my sophomore year," Hannah remembered. "I knew I wanted to be part of it!"

Her parents, Ralph and Laurie Duke, told her to do the research and see what she could find out. "She is headstrong and very determined," Laurie said. Once Hannah learned the audition process, she had three short months to create a video solo of herself that she sent in as her audition. Three weeks later, on April 18, Hannah received the news that she had been chosen. She was ecstatic. She had made the band! "There was no one more surprised than her father and I, and there was also no way we were going to tell her no, especially since she'd put in so much work," Laurie said. Waxahachie band directors Rich Armstrong, Justin Bell and Paul Jaso were also excited to hear of Hannah's accomplishment.

Once the OK was given, grandmothers and aunts came together that first year to help her achieve the funding goals she needed to make the weeklong trip. "Family members had garage sales and numerous bake sales," Laurie said. "They were the fundraisers."

"Mimi's airline miles paid for my flight," Hannah said, referring to her maternal grandmother. "I flew there

alone, but my parents came a few days later, and we flew home together.”

Hannah arrived on the Saturday prior to Thanksgiving Day 2015. The week consisted of daily rehearsals; shopping trips to Time Square; and a viewing of the Broadway musical, *Les Misérables*. Hannah finally met up with her parents that memorable week, on Tuesday, at the Disney Store in Times Square.

“Parade day was grueling,” Hannah said, “but the excitement of it all kept the adrenaline pumping.” Band members got ready to board the bus by 1:30 a.m. They departed from New Jersey headed for an early morning rehearsal in Herald Square. Then it was on to the Hard Rock Café for some much-needed breakfast and some “chill time” before the marching got underway.

The parade begins on 77th Street and ends around the corner from Herald Square on famous 34th Street. After marching the 2.65-mile parade route, the band members arrived in front of Macy’s where they performed “New York Medley” for millions of people, both in attendance at the parade and those watching from home. “I had very little sleep before the parade,” she said. “I went to bed early, but the excitement I felt made it hard to sleep.”

Later that same night, after getting some much-needed rest, a final, semiformal dinner and dance ceremony was held in honor of the band. “I learned some great news at the dinner,” Hannah stated. “I found out that once you make the band, you are a member for life, and you don’t have to re-audition.”



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Hannah shared with her parents that she wanted to march her senior year. Her parents were all for it, but they encouraged Hannah to raise the money to pay for the second trip herself. Once again, Ralph and Laurie were pleasantly surprised when Hannah came home to share the news that she had gotten a job at Cici's Pizza. She began working the week of Spring Break 2016. She was determined to get back to New York City to march and catch up with the new friends she'd made that first year.

"I sent my final payment in early October," she said. "This trip, my PawPaw paid for my flight with airline miles he'd accumulated."

Her repeat performance was just as magical as the first. The schedule was almost identical and just as grueling as the year prior, except for the Broadway selection, *Something Rotten*, and her visit to Ground Zero. "The Broadway show was amazing," she said. "Although I had looked forward to seeing the 9/11 Memorial, I had no idea I would be so emotional. It was surreal."

Thanksgiving morning, they marched the parade route playing "Can't Stop the Feeling." Once in Herald Square, they performed the Tom Jones hit, "It's Not Unusual." It proved to be a long day, but

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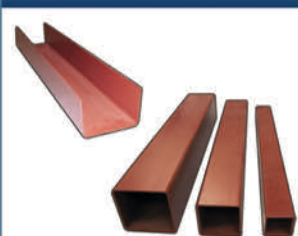


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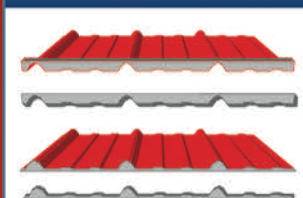


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it's one that she will always remember fondly. "I knew she would appreciate the trip her senior year just as much, if not more, because she earned the funds and worked the long hours to get there," Ralph said.

Hannah comes from a family of music lovers. Ralph also marched in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade 29 years prior to his daughter. He was a member of the Trinity Valley Community College Marching Band drumline at that time. A special memory shared by father and daughter are the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade patches they both received after their performances. Although they are different in appearance, they hold very special meaning for Ralph and Hannah.

Laurie is the choir/musical theater accompanist for WHS and has been for the past four years. She instilled the love of music in Hannah and her three younger siblings at very early ages by starting them on the piano. As Hannah begins making plans to go to college, music is a must. "I want to continue with my music," she explained, "but I think I will major in photo journalism. I love digital media." Her dream is to march in the Baylor University Golden Wave Band, but she's also realistically looking at Tyler Junior College and Tarleton State University.

As she puts money aside for the next trip on her agenda — the Waxahachie Indian Band trip to Disney — she will always remember her time as a member of the Macy's Great American Marching Band. "I worked hard to get there this second time," she said, "but it was so worth it. I had a great time, and I made some lifelong friendships." **NOW**

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A Heart for the Community

— By Stephanie Marchbanks

It's hard to imagine the magnitude of Baylor Scott & White Medical Center's passionate corps of volunteers, and current president Tamie Davis glows as she talks about them and the hospital she loves. Strolling through the gleaming building, she points out one innovative feature after another. And she can't say enough about the selfless people who man the volunteer posts. "Our organization is so many things," Tamie explained. "But essentially, it's a volunteer team made up of committed individuals with stewards' hearts. Their No. 1 goal is to support the hospital, as they offer a patient-centered environment in health care, and accomplish their mission statement."

Volunteer First Vice President Don Goodenough seconds that notion. "We're volunteers at Baylor, but we're giving back to the community as a whole," Don emphasized. He interviews volunteer applicants, in a process begun by him and finished by the hospital's human resources department. He's also known as "King of Popcorn" for his help with the throwback, red-accented lobby popcorn machine.

Founded in 1966, the Auxiliary (renamed the Volunteer Department in 2014) has 250 members, both men





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And if the financial contributions are not impressive enough, the jobs done by the volunteers, with a smile and genuine care, go even further. The list is almost endless. There are 22 committees overseeing every kind of job imaginable. In general, the enlistees provide comfort and encouragement to patients in any way possible; assist staff, as needed; deliver patient flowers; escort patients and visitors; perform general office duties; sponsor and carry out fundraisers; and support staff with continuing education. Specifically, members do so many things that it is impossible to accurately list the work. "We have people all over this hospital," Tamie noted.

But as an example, consider Marie Munguia, who charmingly mans the second floor, ambulatory, day-surgery center. She greets patients and their families and explains the electronic board system, where families can visually follow their loved one's progress via color codes on large monitors. Marie stays close at

hand, providing any and all support, comfort and help possible. That's the power of a caring volunteer.

And consider the "super cookie-bakers," who bake and deliver fresh cookies and milk from the third floor kitchen to families of newborns. One recent month, over 90 babies were born. Each time a new life arrives, the hospital plays "Brahm's Lullaby" over the speakers. "It puts a smile on everyone's face when we hear that lullaby, knowing another beautiful soul has entered the world," Tamie added.



Julie Martin, director of marketing, gushes about the volunteers. "I will tell you, from the standpoint of an employee, how wonderful they are," Julie said. "Every penny they generate goes back into the hospital. We love them." As an example of their dedication, Julie explained how the volunteers funded the purchase of Bessie, the Tele-robot. Bessie, a life-size strike robot, allows Dallas area neurologists to see the patient in Waxahachie. The doctors can control Bessie, who has two-way communication capabilities.

Technology has serious "wow" factors, and a visitor to the campus struggles not to be completely dazzled by sweeping views from sparkling windows in every room and pleasing, modern decor. But it is people that really make this place tick, especially the perfect combination of quality staff and volunteer hours. From her position as volunteer president, Tamie sees that. "There is a mutual respect between the staff and the auxiliary," she pointed out.

In September, the volunteer department celebrated its 50-year anniversary, bringing past and present

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

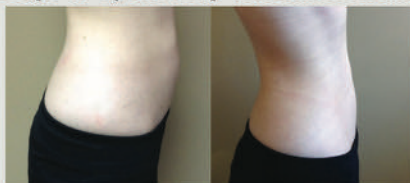
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volunteers together to share stories and fellowship. Sandy Goodenough, co-chairperson for the celebration and past president, said, "Recognition was given to the organization as well as individuals who have exemplified their dedication of volunteerism in number of years and hours of community service. It was a wonderful way to say, 'Thank You,' to everyone who has been a part of this organization." The 50-year anniversary celebration honored that rich history. The luncheon was held at the Waxahachie Civic Center and recognized all current members, past presidents and even one remaining charter member, Charlene Pitts. Many representatives of the community and hospital staff were in attendance to enjoy the festivities. Another separate celebration involved the hospital staff and employees, and it was an able volunteer committee that worked diligently to make all these events happen.

Sherry Dicks, the chairperson over day surgery and recovery, was the co-chairperson for the celebration. Like many of the volunteers, she is also driven by a giving heart. "I can tell you personally," she related, "I have been given so much on this earth, I feel driven to give back."

As past president of the Auxiliary, Sherry is a walking history lesson. When the group was founded in 1966, most members were doctors' wives with social standing in the community,



and they generally performed clerical duties. Fundraisers included style shows. In the early '80s, Baylor took over the hospital, and volunteers had more hands-on duties that involved patient participation. But a real progression, both physical and financial, began sometime after the year 2000. There was a climate and culture change that focused on inclusion. Volunteers were soon involved in every facet of the hospital. And since the opening of the new



Charleene Pitts, remaining charter member, receives the prestigious Emeritus Award at the Auxiliary 50-year celebration.

facility in December 2014, the number of volunteers and committees has increased dramatically. "Here, it has just exploded," Sherry admitted.

As for Tamie, she retired four years ago, after 28 years as an employee with Baylor Hospital. "The day I retired, Sherry brought me an application and a pink jacket. She said she'd give me six months, and then she wanted me to join the volunteers. I tell people I walked out the front door and snuck in the back," Tamie laughed.

The jackets are now blue, and anyone interested in volunteering can pick up an application at the hospital. The minimum age is 18, and the maximum is 100-plus. A one-year commitment is required. "We love what we do," Tamie enthused. "And we want to continue doing it. We are looking forward to the next 50 years of service to this community." **NOW**



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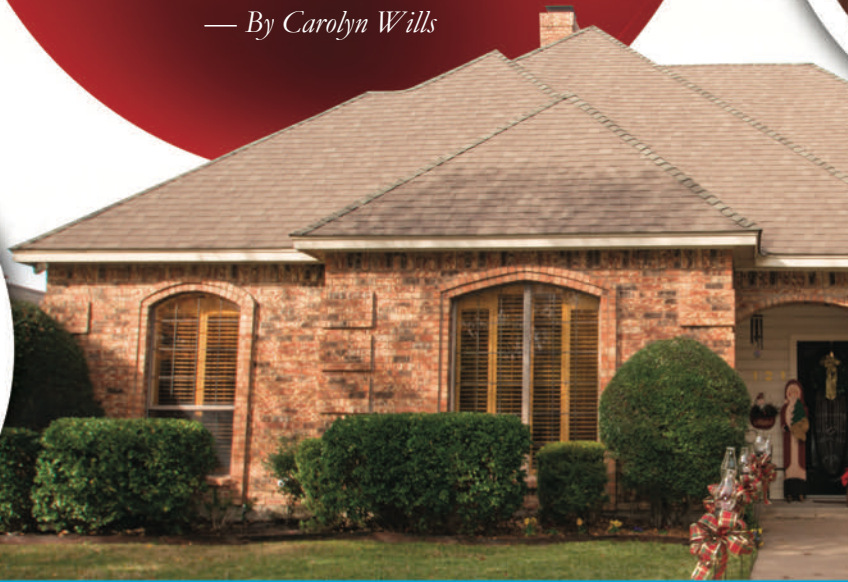
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At Home With JoAnn Ranton



Here Comes Santa

— By Carolyn Wills



Each year, when JoAnn Ranton's fall decorations return to their seven boxes, a Christmas tradition begins. Box after box, 30 in all, Santa after Santa is unwrapped, and at last, when each jolly man is positioned, JoAnn's 2,000-square-foot home is marvelously, magically, delightfully transformed. "I love decorating for the holidays," she beamed. "Years ago, I started collecting Santas, and now there are over 500. Many were from students and teachers from my 33 years with the Waxahachie Independent School District, and many are gifts from dear friends."

JoAnn's beautiful home is all about warmth and elegance, a life well-lived and the pure joy of a little black and white 1-year-old Shih Tzu named Bella. A visit to JoAnn's three-bedroom, variegated brick on its tree-lined street is a treat on any day, but a holiday visit, well, that's a trip to wonderland, a happy gift and a whisper in Santa's ear all at once. And with JoAnn's time and effort, it happens every year.

From late November through January, her home is truly a gathering of Santas. They stand at guard in the foyer, with its beautiful chandelier. To the right, the formal dining room is home to a magnificent Christmas tree trimmed totally with the jolly old elf. "The



dining room, with its turret shape, floor-to-ceiling windows and vaulted ceiling, is my favorite room," she smiled. "It faces the front of the house, so I think it's also best for the tree."

JoAnn enjoys traditional style with touches of French country. Her colors are mostly deep red or wine (versus Christmas red), black and tan. For her favorite room, and as the perfect backdrop for the perfect Christmas tree, not to mention lovely antique British furniture, she selected a cranberry and cream-



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colored toile wallpaper. The dining room features a gorgeous table and chairs and a buffet displaying a collection of Carnival glassware. There are also two very special tea carts. "One belonged to our son, and the other was a 33rd anniversary gift from my husband, James," she shared.

With JoAnn's exquisite eye for display and design, the main living areas, with or without Santas, present breathtaking pictures. Wide-planked wood floors; area rugs; rich-stained, picture-frame paneling; antique furnishings; family photos; and beautifully patterned quilts are just some of the features. "Some of the antiques are

family heirlooms," she explained. "Most, though, were purchased by James and me on our many day trips to antique sales."

The stunning living room, anchored by a glazed brick fireplace, is arranged with comfortable furnishings and plantation-shuttered windows. A lovely closed-in porch serving as an office is home to a



whimsical goat cart, a child's antique desk, a view of the backyard and, of course, Santas for the holidays. "There are three bald cypress trees in the backyard," JoAnn pointed out. Her home is embraced by a number of trees, front and back, including the red maple that turns fiery-red in the

fall, crepe myrtle and a big oak in the front. Bushes, greenery and a lush bed of red dianthus planted by JoAnn form the welcoming committee for visitors.

The kitchen, accessed from both the dining and living rooms, features black, tan and white granite counters, a small island, natural stone backsplash and black appliances. The kitchen opens to a breakfast area with rose-taupe walls, oak chair railings, an antique Hoosier cabinet once belonging to JoAnn's parents, an antique pine farm table, mismatched



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chairs and a delightful “wall of chickens” art collection, a rooster lamp and a wonderful clock given to JoAnn from James as a Christmas present. Of course, for the holidays, chickens and roosters are joined by many, many Santas.

Three bedrooms, located on the far left of the house, feature soft, wonderfully thick light-colored carpeting. “The bedrooms have antique oak and Eastlake furnishings with tall 6-foot headboards and piles of pillows and quilts,” JoAnn noted.

The home was purchased in 1994 as a gift to JoAnn from her beloved and late husband, James. “He chose and purchased it for us, after I had become smitten with the idea of living in town for the first time in my life,” she smiled. “I was born in Waxahachie and have lived here all of my life, but mostly in the country.”

JoAnn married James, her Waxahachie High School sweetheart, in 1963, and for many years, their lives centered on family and their 135-acre farm in the Sardis community next to JoAnn’s parents’ farm. They raised cattle and hay while James maintained a 40-year career as a systems analyst in downtown Dallas and JoAnn experienced 33 years with the Waxahachie ISD. After she and James were retired and had moved into town, James continued to work the farm.

Their only son, Jason, was born in 1970. He passed away in 2002, at the age of 32, from diabetic complications. “Jason graduated from Baylor University with undergraduate degrees in music and journalism and a master’s degree in journalism,” JoAnn said. High-achiever, talented organist and proven reporter/



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writer, Jason's love for music and travel are represented in the bedroom JoAnn has named "Jason's Room."

Today, in addition to having one of the most beautiful holiday homes, JoAnn is an active member of Waxahachie's First United Methodist Church and Covenant Sunday School class. She serves as chaplain of the Rebecca Boyce Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, president of Waxahachie's Century Club, member of Ellis County Republican Women and treasurer of Sardis United Methodist Women. "I also serve on the board of the Oak Branch Cemetery Association and Sardis Cemetery, where many of my ancestors are buried," she said. "I'm fortunate to have many lifelong friendships in this charming city, which is so full of history."



When JoAnn is home, she loves spending time with Bella. "We putter in the yard and take daily walks through the neighborhood," she said. "Bella is a delightful companion but, sometimes, a handful!" Yet, for all her puppy energy, Bella is a good girl when it comes to Santas — the whole lot of them. "She hasn't shown interest in even the Christmas tree," JoAnn grinned. Fortunately and apparently, Bella prefers her own big basket of toys in the master bedroom.

Among JoAnn's Santas is a sign that reads, *Blessings are all around us. We just feel them more at Christmas.* This remarkable woman has known great love and loss. She is a blessing to her friends, church and beloved community. A doer and a giver with the energy of a child who believes in Santa, she measures all that's good about Waxahachie and is truly a treasure. **NOW**

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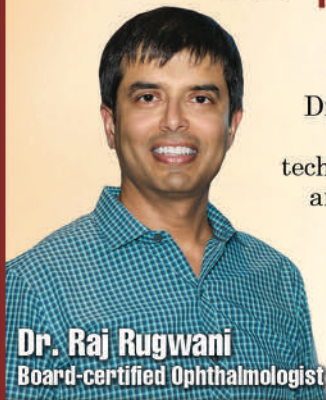


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Don's life.

A 5-year-old boy found his way to the black and white keys of a piano, and the melody that little tyke produced was colorful and delightful. That was Don Jones' first step into the world of music that now includes piano and organ performances, music directorial responsibilities with the Waxahachie Community Theatre and ministry in music at Living Hope Church of the Nazarene. "I came from a musical family. My granddad was a minister for more than 50 years and could play any instrument he picked up," Don recalled. "My mom played the organ in church, and I would sing with her and my sisters."

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Don grew up in the musical environment of Memphis, Tennessee, but he played mostly by ear rather than by reading music. "I've played piano by ear in churches my whole life and even took a youth choir on tour when I was still too

young to drive!" He played piano in a high school jazz band, which was "more Barry Manilow's style than true jazz," he explained.

Don attended Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, where he learned to read music and graduated

ious ions

— By Virginia Riddle

with a Bachelor of Arts degree in sacred music. “CBC was an Assemblies of God school, and I studied music theory, piano and organ under some excellent teachers, including Winnie Swaim and Paul Cope.”

Don met his wife, Kasi, at CBC, and they married in 1979. Being a musician usually means traveling, and that’s been true for Don and Kasi. “I’ve served churches in Boca Raton, Florida; St. Louis, Missouri; and Germantown, Tennessee. We moved to Texas in 1992, and since then, I’ve been on staff at churches in Oak Cliff and Duncanville and now Waxahachie,” Don said.

His favorite place in their Waxahachie residence is the music room that is home to Don’s Kawai 7-foot grand piano. “We designed this house, and I designed the music room before we bought the piano. I’d been looking for the right piano



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Lola lived a long life but it was not an easy life. She had a lot of trials and tribulations including losing three of her four children as well as her husband. Although she experienced a lot of heartbreak she also experienced a lot of joy. She never lost her faith in God and read through the entire bible 30 times. She's left a big hole in many hearts and we will all miss her.

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since I was 15, and this is it! The wood on the inside of the piano matches the hardwood flooring, and the gold in the piano frame matches the gold in the wallpaper design," he explained. It's from this music room that Don has produced two CD albums, *Reflections* and *Embrace the Cross*. He also records piano videos for his YouTube channel.

With his instrumental, vocal and music theory expertise, Don has taught elementary music, private lessons at home and was an adjunct piano instructor at SAGU in Waxahachie. "One of my biggest teaching challenges was a student who was legally blind. Since reading music wasn't an option, I taught him to play by ear. He plays really well," Don stated.

Don also loves to play the pipe organ. "People are intimidated when they see all the buttons and pedals, but I love it — especially those big endings on hymns when I pull out all the stops and shake the building." His favorite genres of music, besides Christian, are jazz and the blues.

Don and Kasi have three sons — Donovan, Brady and Cameron — and Don has passed his musical talents on to them. "Donovan plays keys and the bass guitar. Brady is a drummer, and Cameron plays trombone and the bass guitar," Don said proudly. The couple also has three grandchildren.

Being a minister of music brings joy to Don's life. "I enjoy directing the

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worship band, praise team, choir and orchestra. I've played in many different denominational churches, which has been an eye-opening experience."

One of his memorable church music experiences was producing a passion play depicting scenes from Christ's life. "I arranged the choral and orchestral music for the production. We rehearsed for three months with 70 actors, a 20-voice ensemble and an orchestra — all volunteers. The presentation brought the church together as a community, and it was an amazing experience," he remembered.

However, not all the best-laid plans come to fruition as anticipated. Don recounts one performance in which "the lepers in rags looked like zombies.

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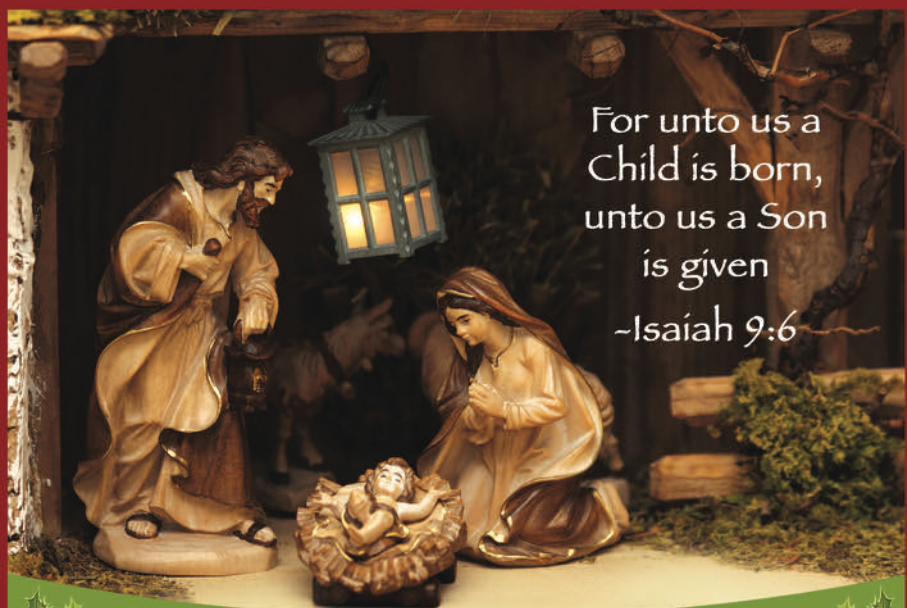
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As music director of the Waxahachie Community Theatre, Don assists in bringing classic Broadway musicals to the Chautauqua stage. His favorite shows have been *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Once Upon a Mattress* and *Smoke on the Mountain*. “I was on stage once in *My Fair Lady* as the guy who fainted during the Ascot scene. The person who was supposed to catch me didn’t. The horrified look on my face when I



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popped on my rear was totally genuine. I decided then that my role in theater is behind the scenes, not on stage!"

Working with all volunteers — whether at church or with WCT — can be challenging but, also, rewarding. "There's a core group of people who participate regularly," he said. "We've built relationships with them and invest in and care for them." Don works closely with Kasi, who is the WCT executive director. "We divide our duties between music and acting and have a system that works for us and for the productions. I was honored to receive the WCT Director's Choice Spotlight Award in 2014," he laughed. "They call me 'The Maestro.'"



With a fall schedule that took Don from *Fiddler on the Roof* straight into the WCT and church Christmas rehearsals and performances, one would think he has enough to do, but these are Don's part-time avocations. He works full time as quality assurance manager for Americase in Waxahachie. "We typically have a two-week break between WCT shows," Don said. "That's when we travel, visit our kids and grandkids, or just stay home watching movies."

Music has afforded Don and Kasi the opportunity to build lifelong friendships. "We have friends, literally, around the world from college days, ministry positions and other travels. When we return to places we've lived, we reconnect, and it's like we never left. My life and ministry Scripture is 2 Samuel 24:24, 'I will not offer to the Lord anything that costs me nothing.' God deserves our very best from every aspect of our lives." **NOW**



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Christmastime is near, and you may already see adornment and trimming on your neighbors' houses. Many people have family heirlooms or other sentimental pieces inside their homes, but they are typically more open to trying something new on the outside of the house. Be creative, and let your house front be your pallet. If you are ready to change up how you dress your house for the holidays, here are some ideas to win your neighborhood decorating contest!

Lights, Decor, Action!

- *Know your options.* There are dozens of styles of light strings, with slight variations along the way. While regular





ND

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

indoor lighting has been moving away from traditional incandescent bulbs in favor of more eco-friendly models, Christmas lights are still offered in any number of styles. You can buy strands relatively cheap that will have the same yellow “soft-white” you have seen for decades, or you may opt for new light-emitting diode styles that will cost more up front but save money on electricity for years to come.

- *Bulbs are not created equal.* The other side of having plenty of options is that you have to be careful when buying new strands. When it comes to LED’s, especially, every company will have slightly different hues, so buy enough strands. Lights are categorized by size,

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but even sizes can fluctuate between brands. When you find the color and style you want, consider buying several extra strands. Spending a little now will outweigh having to start over in a few years just because a few strands are dead.

• *Plan before you hang.* When decorating, it is a major source of frustration to reach the end of your last

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strand just before you get to the edge of your house. Measure your edge, and factor in losing a few inches per strand for the slack you will inevitably have and the inches you lose at each strand connection spot. If you end up with extra lights, you can either hide them in the gutter, or you can take out a bulb to cut the power to the excess lights. A professional Christmas light installation company can assist you in creating the look you are dreaming of.

Use the Yard

- *Less is more, sometimes.* Somewhere between an empty front yard and a Griswold-style Christmas, there is a happy medium, displaying just the right amount of holiday cheer. You want to avoid crowding too much outside, but think about adding lights to your trees or bushes. Companies even make light nets that make it easier than ever to cover your shrubs and small trees.

- *Include a statement piece.* There is much more than lights available for decorating your yard. There is an ever-growing list of variety in inflatable decorations, so you can be the first on your block with the latest trends.

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- *"Spruce" it up.* Most people put either an artificial tree or a cut-down real tree in their house for the season. One fun option is to plant a Christmas tree in your front yard. There are many varieties of pine trees, especially, that will grow well, and their increasing size lets each year be a new decorating experience. This is especially great if you have young children who grow older as the tree gets bigger each year.

- *Plan your power.* If you are adding lights to your trees, make sure to start the chord at the bottom, otherwise, you will have to run power up into your branches. Also, have an idea of where you will plug each chord running into your yard. You want to avoid too many possible tripping hazards, and if you can, try to hide the cords so as not to detract from the yard's beauty in the daylight hours.



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Themes Bring Everything Together

• *Take it "light-ly."* There is no specific right combination of lights, especially when decorating the outside. You can go all white, colored or settle on a blend of the two. But, symmetry is usually more visually appealing, so try to have a pattern to your light and ornament setup. The key is to avoid one strand or section that looks out of place among the rest.

• *Your lawn needs focus.* If you have a hunting Santa next to a newborn Jesus, all behind a skeleton from *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, your display may be sending mixed signals. Pick a genre and fit your decorations within that theme. Some great options include: gingerbread men, toy soldiers, Santa and his elves or religious themes. You can also get creative and add lights, red hats and jingle bells to any lawn motif to make a theme of your own.

• *Plan with the neighbors.* If you can get people on your block to agree, consider having an entire neighborhood theme. One option is to do something simple like coordinating your light color and placement. For something really special, work together to put on the 12 Days of Christmas, or you can even create an entire Dickens' Christmas village.

Whether you want a simple yard with well-placed, coordinated lights, or you want to transform your entire neighborhood into a white winter wonderland, use these tips and start with a solid plan to ensure your yard is full of holiday cheer! **NOW**

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Sharing What They Love

Scentsy by Debi offers an array of fragrances for better tomorrows. — By Sandra Strong

Different scents evoke many different memories, as well as emotions. The smell of linen mixed with lemon may be a subtle reminder of your most recent beach vacation, while the mild scent of pumpkin spice mixed with orange can take you back to the Thanksgiving gathering you just shared with family and friends. Making memories and celebrating special times are what Scentsy by Debi is all about. "Scentsy offers over 80 fragrances that can be mixed to create many more," Debi Mangan, owner of Scentsy by Debi, said. "Everyone is reminded of something different, as they sample the scents available."

Little boys and the men they mirror smell one thing, while little girls and their older counterparts smell something totally

different. Debi loves the smell of the grape Scentsy cubes, but it quickly takes others back in time. "I've been told that it reminds them of the grape medicine they used to take as a child," she explained, with a smile. "Scentsy brings out the fun, while also allowing memories to resurface."

The fragrant fun is only enhanced by the products Scentsy by Debi offers. Scentsy bars, car bars, natural and essential oils, room sprays, scent circles, scent paks and travel tins offer a large selection of ways in which Scentsy can be utilized and shared with others. Fragrances tell a lot about people, as do the diffusers and warmers available. The diffusers, which are works of art in and of themselves, can work three ways. They can serve as a

soft light, a diffuser or both. The diffuser comes with a base and a shade. The beauty of the base is that it can be the foundation for all shades available.

The assortment of warmers Scentsy Fragrance offers is vast and, no doubt, includes something for every style. Seasonal warmer choices include an acorn, a fall leaf, a Happy Holiday cup and a jolly Santa, to list only a few. There are sports-related warmers that include team logos, sport balls and ball caps. Warmers range in choices from modern and artsy to whimsical and vintage-unique. Scentsy by Debi also has items for the home, the kids, the men and all those on your Christmas list.

"Scentsy brings out the fun, while also allowing memories to resurface."

"Scentsy Sidekicks are the perfect scented gift for the newborn," her executive assistant, Alex Shegda, added. "We also offer one-of-a-kind customer service, as we are able to ship anywhere in the United States. If we have it, they will get it."

Debi and Alex share what they love in a much bigger way than just through product sales. "I love to help others get started in their own business," Debi shared. "One \$99 kit gets the business going." In 10 years, Scentsy by Debi has grown to include a myriad of convention awards and the "shelf of history" that took hard work and dedication to achieve. "How you invest in your business will dictate how your business grows," Debi stated. "The backbone of my business has always been about relationships."

For others who would like to earn free and half-price items, Debi has an offering just for you. Hosting a qualifying Scentsy party in your home or choosing to have a Purse Party or a "Party to Go" can earn a great deal in Scentsy products, depending on the size of the party. With Scentsy products, Debi will continue to bless those around her with fragrances that evoke memories and emotions, while filling their sense of smell with clean, safe fragrances of their choosing. **NOW**



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Consider This When Starting a Small Business



According to *Forbes*, more than 500,000 small businesses open each month. If you're looking to join the entrepreneurial club, consider this planning guide for starting a small business.

Laying the Groundwork

It's important to have a well-developed business proposal that meets an untapped need. Follow these steps to think yours through:

1. *Decide on a business idea.* Think about your strengths and interests: What could you do forever? What could you never do? How do you feel about interacting with people or spending your time at a desk? Ask yourself these questions to narrow down your business ideas and options.

2. *Research market demand and competition.* You should feel confident that your product or service will have a hungry audience and that you can offer it in a better way than your competitors.

3. *Write your business plan.* You'll need the following components:

- Executive summary
- Organization and management

- Funding requests
- Company description
- Service or product line
- Financial projections
- Market analysis
- Marketing and sales plan

Setting Up Shop

Before getting your small business up and running, you'll need to complete the following legal requirements. Consult an attorney and/or accountant for guidance relevant to your specific situation.

1. Decide your business structure. Is your business a sole proprietorship or a partnership? The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) can provide more information on types of business structures.
2. Most states require you to apply for one or more licenses, permits or identification numbers. Learn more about the small business requirements for your state.
3. If you plan to employ people to help run your small business, you'll need to apply for employee identification numbers through the IRS.
4. Determine whether you will use the calendar year or a fiscal year for taxes.

Also, talk to your insurance agent about special small business insurance needs. You'll want to do your best to protect the investments you've made, and important coverage can vary by business. **NOW**

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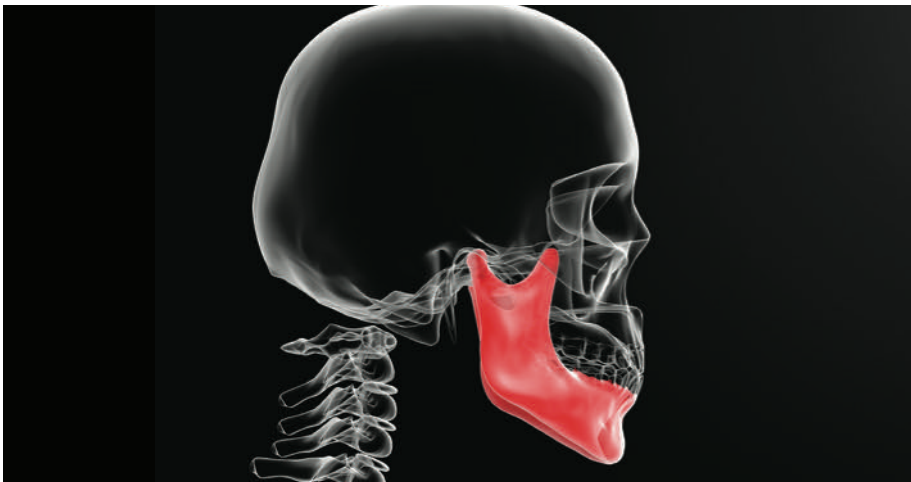
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A Multifaceted Jaw Problem

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Do you ever think about your chewing mechanism? Probably not, because it is as natural and automatic as breathing. However, if something interferes with it, you will think about it a lot! The action that makes all this activity possible begins in the temporomandibular joint. Think of it as a hinge that connects the lower jaw, called the mandible, to the skull. Put your fingers in front of your ears and open your mouth. Now move your jaw up and down and side to side. This is what gives you the ability to chew on whatever you want. Because this joint is so multifaceted and complex, its actions can create challenges if there are problems.

When these problems occur, they are known as temporomandibular joint disorders, or TMD. These disorders are characterized by an aching pain and tenderness in the joint and surrounding area. Or, there may be no discomfort at all. Chewing, talking or opening the mouth widely can cause distress. Along with those symptoms, one might experience persistent headaches, limited function in the jaw, noises of clicking, popping and grating in the area or a feeling that your bite is off. Sometimes, the jaw area can lock or feel as if it's stuck when the mouth is open.

These symptoms are difficult to treat because the cause of TMD has not been established. However, there are factors that can increase your risk or exacerbate

the condition. Someone with arthritis may experience the affliction in that joint. Extended periods where the mouth is open wide for a significant amount of time, such as a long dental procedure, can precipitate the discomfort. Other possible causes are autoimmune diseases, injuries to the area and stress, which may cause grinding of the teeth or jaw clenching.

One of the goals for treatment is to alleviate the pain. Over-the-counter pain medications and, sometimes, prescription medications may be used. Eat soft foods that won't aggravate the condition. Try to consciously rest the jaw area and become aware of grinding or clenching episodes when awake. Bite guards at night may be a good option, if you tend to grind or clench in your sleep. If the muscles in your face feel especially tense, a massage of that area and a warm pack may provide some relief.

For some, the discomfort from TMD is temporary and not very severe. It may come and go as factors that affect it present themselves. For those experiencing significant discomfort that doesn't go away with home treatments, it may be necessary to see a health care professional for help. **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 2, 3

Christmas Market & Gift Show: 6:00-9:00 p.m., **Friday**, preview party; 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., **Saturday**, Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln. The annual event is sponsored by the Waxahachie Junior Service League.

December 2 — 4, 9 — 11

Bethlehem Revisited: 6:00-9:00 p.m., 402 N. College St. directly behind Central Presbyterian Church. Free admission. Donations welcome.

December 3

Lucky's C.C. Car Show & Toy Drive: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., downtown Ennis. Awards will be presented at 3:30 p.m. Registration: \$10 and one unwrapped toy. All vehicles including trucks, hot rods, rat rods, customs, lowriders and bikes. For more information, contact Chubby at (469) 774-5692.

December 3, 4, 10, 11

Candlelight Home Tour: 2:00-8:00 p.m., residential locations in Waxahachie. Tickets: \$15 per weekend, children under 12 are free. Tickets may be purchased at the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce, 102 YMCA Dr.; Ellis County Museum, 201 S. College St.; and at participating downtown merchants.

December 3, 10

Christmas Hay Ride & Photos With Santa: 4:00-8:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie.

December 8

2nd Thursday Ladies Night Out: 5:00-8:00 p.m., downtown participating merchants.

December 9 — 11

You Better Watch Out Christmas Showcase/

Waxahachie Community Theatre:

Chautauqua Auditorium in Getzender Park. Tickets are available online at www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com.

December 10

YMCA Santa Run, 10:00 a.m., downtown Waxahachie.

An English Christmas Tea: tickets required. For more information, visit downtownwaxahachie.com

Cocoa Stroll: 4:00-8:00 p.m., participating downtown merchants.

December 15

Waxahachie Auction: 7:00 p.m., 212 S. Rogers St. For more information, visit www.waxauction.com.

December 30 — January 1

Waxahachie Gun & Knife Show: Waxahachie Civic Center.

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In the Kitchen With Robin Dougherty

— By Rachel Smith

With Christmas feasts on the horizon, Robin Dougherty is prepared for anything. Previous hosting memories involving crab manicotti and family jokes flood her mind. “The evening was perfect. I was the ultimate hostess that night!” she smiled, “until the crab came to the table. As soon as everyone took a bite, they couldn’t stop teasing. They weren’t even pretending to like it!”

She has had good luck in the kitchen, too. Having a family of six, Robin has her hands full with cooking. She loves trying new recipes with the family gathered around the dinner table. “On those occasions when you get it just right and your daughters say things like, ‘Mama, you are the best cook ever!’” she exclaimed, “it really is something special.” **NOW**

Quiche Lorraine

Crust:

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 1 stick cold, unsalted butter, sliced into tablespoon-size pieces**
- 1/2 cup Crisco**
- 6 Tbsp. ice cold water**

Filling:

- 6 eggs**
- 2 cups heavy cream or whole milk**
- 1/2 to 1 lb. bacon, cooked**
- 8 oz. Swiss cheese, grated (for fancier cheese, try Gruyere)**
- Pinch kosher salt**
- Pepper, to taste**

1. For crust: (Dough makes enough for two pies, but only one is needed for this recipe.)

Put all ingredients into a food processor, except water (or you can use a pastry blender); pulse until butter and Crisco are evenly distributed throughout dry ingredients. Fat and flour should clump together when pinched.

2. Sprinkle water slowly into processor while pulsing until well mixed; remove. Place on a floured pastry board or solid surface. Split dough into two even halves. Roll each half into a ball; place each ball onto its own piece of Saran Wrap; flatten into a disc shape. Refrigerate 1–2 hours before rolling out. (You can freeze it up to 6 months.)

3. Remove one dough ball from fridge; on a floured surface, roll it out into a round shape. Place in a standard pie dish. (Some dough should hang over the edges, so roll it under itself and push down with your thumbs.)

4. For filling: Whisk all ingredients together and pour into pie crust. Bake at 375 F for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until filling no longer

jiggles. Let sit 30–45 minutes before serving. (It’s best served at room temperature.)

Caesar Salad

Salad:

- 1 head romaine lettuce, rinsed and chopped**
- Croutons, to taste**
- Parmesan cheese, freshly grated**

Dressing:

- 1 small clove garlic**
- 4–6 anchovies**
- 4 Tbsp. mayonnaise**
- 1/2 small lemon, juiced**
- 1 Tbsp. Kikkoman soy sauce**
- Ground pepper, to taste**
- 1/4 cup olive oil**

1. For salad: Place lettuce in a large salad bowl; add croutons. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top.

2. For dressing: Chop garlic and anchovies; place mixture in a bowl. Add remaining ingredients. Combine dressing and salad.

Gravlox Served on Lavasch Bread

It takes 3 days to prepare this Scandinavian dish. Consuming raw fish may increase risk of foodborne illness, so plan accordingly.

1/2 freshest salmon filet (It shouldn’t smell “fishy.”)

1 part sugar to 1 1/2 part salt, mixed (enough to generously cover filet)

Dry dill, to taste

Cream cheese, to taste (optional)

Red onions, sliced, to taste (optional)

Capers, to taste (optional)

Lavasch bread, to taste

1. Rinse and dry fish; cover filet with salt and sugar mixture. Cover filet with dill. Wrap with Saran Wrap; refrigerate 24 hours. Remove, unwrap and rewrap in fresh Saran Wrap to remove moisture; refrigerate another 24 hours.

2. Remove and unwrap filets; rinse off seasoning with cold water. Dry by dabbing with paper towels. Place in refrigerator unwrapped on a rack for 24 hours to fully dry. Thinly slice filets.

3. Serve with cream cheese, onions and capers as garnishes on Lavasch bread.

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



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