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ON THE COVER



The festive Christmas spirit abounds in Midlothian.

Photo by Catalina Zaharescu Tiensuu Dreamstime.com.

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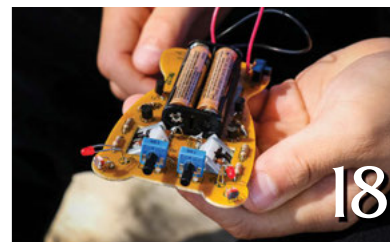
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Editor's Note

Well hello, new friends!

It's fitting that my first editor's note for *MidlothianNOW* comes in December, when we're prone to reflect on our fortunes and reach out to others. As a wife, mom and daughter, I am abundantly blessed, and the chance to return to NOW Magazines is another gift in my life.

I formerly spearheaded the North Ellis County version of NOW, and have advised student publications in area private schools. As a result, I already know some of you, but there are still many friends to make in this (no longer so little) town. Please introduce yourself and share names of the interesting people I've yet to meet.

As I follow in longtime editor Betty Tryon's footsteps, it may take a minute to get up to speed. Thank you in advance for your guidance, and may your kindness play out in the features of those who are a gift to this city.

I look forward to meeting you!

Angel

Angel Morris

MidlothianNOW Editor

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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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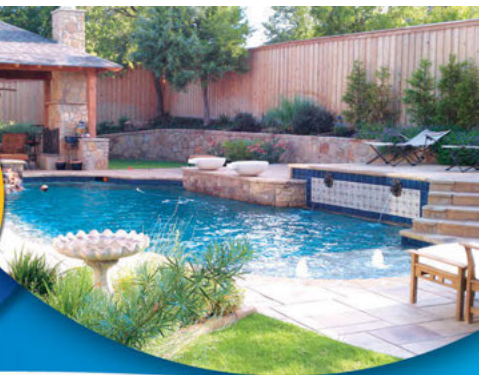


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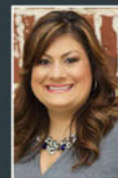
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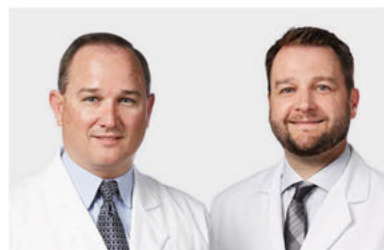


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In the Spotting

Almost 20 years ago, Albert Love found a new love — the stage. Now, at age 61, he's loving life more than ever as part of the Waxahachie Community Theatre. "It allows you to be somebody you're not, and that can be fun," Albert said of acting.

And what better time to have fun than the Christmas season? Albert's current project is playing Shermy in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. "I had to look up who Shermy is," Albert said with a laugh. "I like the way he dances. I can do that. He doesn't move much."

And, as usual, Albert is helping on the set for the show. Like acting, it's something he's loved doing for years, especially when it's something that's going to make the audience go "ooh!" and "aah!"

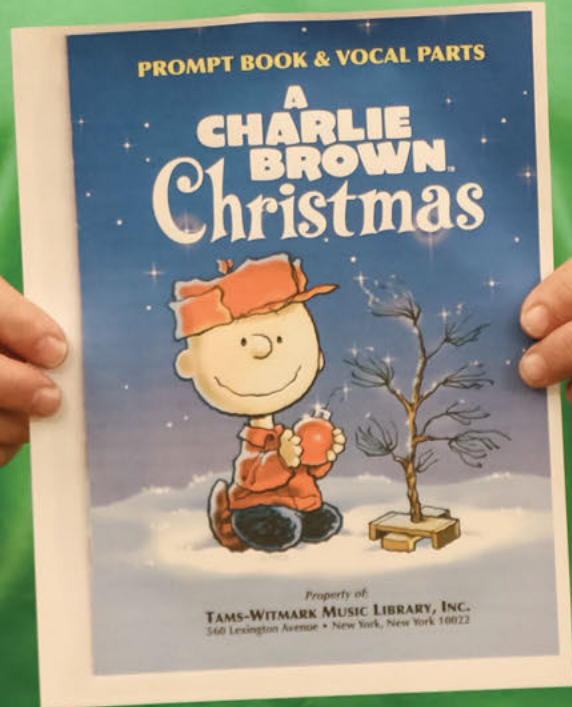
For the Christmas show, Albert and the set crew are constructing an ice skating rink. It's just part of the magic they do. "People won't actually be ice skating," he said, "but it's set in the winter, and ice skating just adds to the warm, holiday feeling."

As for the show itself, Albert indicated that the audience is in for a treat. He especially likes the unique approach taken in casting. "I think it's going to be



ght

— By Rick Mauch



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hilarious. The script is right along with the TV show," he said. "I think it's interesting that we're doing kids' roles using adult actors."

The show runs December 8-10 at the Chautauqua Auditorium. Times are 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, with a 2:30 p.m. Sunday matinee.

Albert's love of acting began shortly after he and his family moved to Midlothian. In 1999, he met now longtime friend Dr. Jerry Ellis, a local dentist, at church. Jerry asked him a question that would change his life. "He asked me if I acted," Albert recalled. "I

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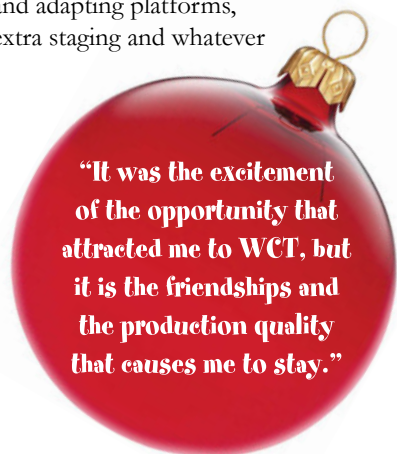
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said I was in *Oklahoma* in high school, but I really love to sing. [Albert is a worship leader at First Baptist Church in Midlothian.] I auditioned for *My Fair Lady*, had a blast with it and I've been acting ever since. It was my first time in 25 years to act, and I remember being nervous."

Jerry reflected on bringing Albert aboard and believes it was one of his finest decisions. He called Albert irreplaceable. "He is so well-prepared for his performances, whether in a lead role or in the chorus," Jerry said. "He acts as the treasurer for the WCT board, a position that requires several hours each month. He is one of two set construction leads for each show, whether he is performing or not, building and adapting platforms, extra staging and whatever



"It was the excitement of the opportunity that attracted me to WCT, but it is the friendships and the production quality that causes me to stay."

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is requested to create the desired stage appearance. And he is a very close, personal friend."

Albert jokes about dancing being his weak point, but he can actually do it all. He acts, sings, dances and even loves set construction. "I've always liked building things. I build some furniture on the side," he said. "I do a lot of stuff with earthen wood. I built my wife a desk."

He has also done a variety of work backstage. He's worked with props, and he's been a stagehand, moving set pieces around in the dark between scenes. And, as an actor, he's shown himself to be versatile. He even played four different characters in *Annie*.

Albert's most memorable role was playing Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls*, portrayed by Frank Sinatra in the original movie. "It was probably my biggest part. I really wanted it," Albert confessed.

Kasi Jones, WCT executive director, said, "He has an amazing voice and can croon 'Return to Me' better than Dean Martin ever did."

"Offstage, Albert is a master carpenter when it comes to building sets and props," she continued. "His expertise has helped us transform the Chautauqua stage into places, such as Vandergelder's Feed Store, the streets of River City, a mansion on the French Riviera, a nightclub in Havana, a mountain lodge in North Carolina and even the Land of Oz."

When he's not at the theater or church, or with his wife of 36 years, Charlene, Albert works as a vendor manager for Bank of America. He's



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the only one in his family in theater, though his son, Jonathan, also has a stage presence, being in the church band as a bass guitarist. Albert also plays guitar. Though he's never joined the theater's live orchestra (they're one of few who have one), he has played his guitar on stage in a show.

Albert and Charlene have three children. Jonathan is a plant manager in Grand Prairie. Matthew is a teacher in Garland, and their daughter, Ashley, does paralegal work in Red Oak. They also have one grandson, Eli, who is 6.

Like most performers, Albert has had his share of awkward moments on stage. Whether it's a forgotten line (by himself or a fellow actor) or a prop miscue, he's learned how to improvise — and sometimes the results are hilarious.

"We were doing *Annie Get Your Gun*, and it was the scene where Annie is going to prove what a good shot she is by shooting a bird off a lady's hat," he explained. "They rigged it (the bird) with a mousetrap device, and when Annie shoots, the bird falls off. Well, the bird fell off early and was behind a closed door. The lady was on one side, and the bird on the other. I was also behind the door. When I heard the shot, I decided to throw the bird onto the stage. It looked funny, but at least they had a bird onstage!"

Albert plans on enjoying memories for a long time with the theater. "It was the excitement of the opportunity that attracted me to WCT, but it is the friendships and the production quality that causes me to stay," he said. "I plan on staying active in theater for as long as I can." **NOW**

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ING STEM

— By Rick Mauch

When Jack Hammon began his summer attending a STEM workshop at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York, he was admittedly amazed at the knowledge held by many of those he met. Now, however, others are saying the same about him. "Everyone there was so smart. I learned so much," said Jack, a 13-year-old, seventh-grader at Midlothian's Walnut Grove Middle School.

But then, Jack is also very smart. He was one of only 120 students from across the nation selected to attend this prestigious camp for four days at the end of May. He was chosen after first writing an essay and submitting an application. He also had to get letters of recommendation from two teachers. "They wanted to know what grades he



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earned. The essay shared his words, and simply told them that he thought going to the camp would be a lot of fun," said his father, John, with a smile.

And it was. Jack said it was not only a great learning experience, but a very enjoyable one, as well. The adventure included learning about the history of West Point. He also took a tour, taking in all the historic buildings, with one in particular standing out to him. "The mess hall was humongous," Jack said. "The old buildings all looked really neat, and big. Thayer Hall, there's a bunch of history there."

Jack was referring to Colonel and Brevet Brigadier General Sylvanus Thayer, known as the Father of West

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Point. He was an early superintendent at the academy, and there is a picture of his statue on Jack's phone.

Among the many things he studied at the camp were science and human anatomy. He learned how to save a person's life with a tourniquet, for example. "We learned about blood clots, heart attacks and CPR," Jack explained.

Jack compared a mortar-firing exercise to one of his favorite video games. "It was Angry Birds, basically," he said, chuckling.

A GPS exercise took him around the different statues across the West Point campus. In the geographic mapping section, they created a map from coordinates they had to locate. But his favorite part of the camp was the robotics section. They made their own robots. "I liked the robots. It was fun seeing what it takes for them to work," Jack said. "It was a long process. They gave us a packet and a circuit board to practice on. Then, you had to put the pieces in the right place."

When the robot was finished, it was about the size of a toy action figure. While it operates on batteries, its functionality is based on how it reacts to light. "It was trial and error," he said. "When it was finished, you could change its sensitivity to light."

And yes, he brought it home with him, but it's still missing one important part. "I have to get new batteries for it," Jack said with a grin. "I keep forgetting."

In other activities, Jack learned about the solar system, and he also had the opportunity to build a virtual bridge by using a computer program he created. They studied the effects of pressure, such

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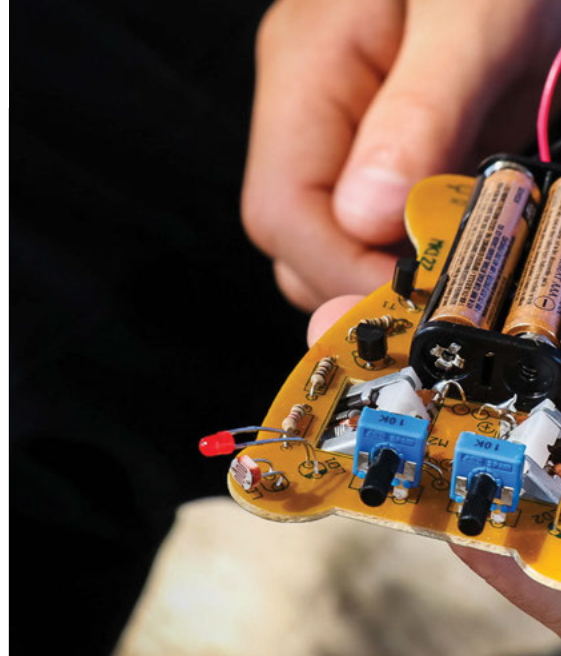


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as how much it takes to crush aluminum and how much is needed for steel. “Then we did concrete,” Jack said. “That was pretty cool.”

Jack flew as an unaccompanied minor from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport to Newark, New Jersey. There, he was met by military officials who drove him to the base where he stayed in the official West Point barracks. He also made good friends with a cadet named Michael Prestenberg. “I have his number and plan to stay in touch,” Jack said.

“He sent Jack a magnet and a postcard after Jack got back,” John said. “The magnet has a picture with an aerial view (of West Point). That was really nice. It’s on our refrigerator.”

Jack’s hobbies include, as with many youngsters, playing video games. His favorite is Tom Clancy’s Rainbow Six Siege on PlayStation 4. He has also recently become interested in theater arts.

And, he wants to compete on a robotics team in Midlothian. Currently, he is in a tech apps class as a tech support person helping fellow students. “I made



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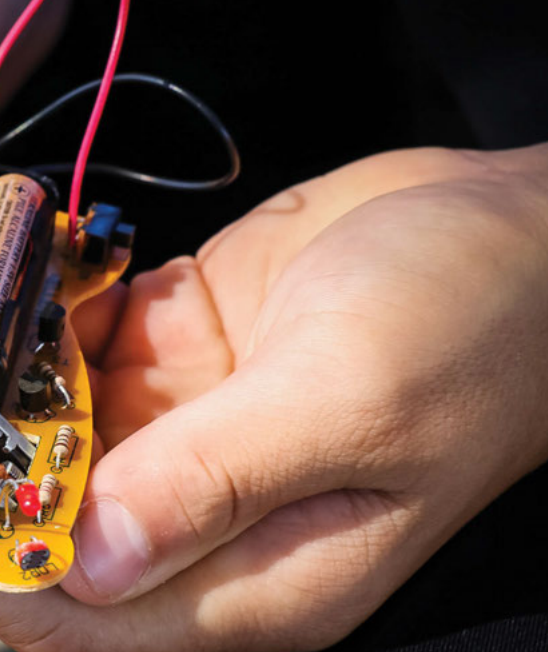
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a deal with my teacher if I got 100 (on an assignment) I could be tech support," he said.

"He impressed me with his passion for learning and for trying new things. With his hard work and curiosity, Jack's potential is limitless," said Walnut Grove sixth-grade math teacher Tamie Hofstad.

"Cooperative learning and problem solving were a huge focus in the classroom, and Jack excelled. His ability to give presentations and volunteer to speak in front of the class was beyond what most sixth-graders are willing to do," said Jeanette Arnold, Walnut Grove sixth-grade gifted and talented English/language arts teacher. "I have no doubt that Jack will be successful in the future if he continues on this same path."

Jack is already thinking about his long-term future. He'd like to return to West Point as a military student after high school. "It (the camp) made me think I might like to go there for college," he said. "It's just amazing."

That's just fine with Jack's mom and dad. John said the experience was a wonderful one for their son, including traveling and spending the time there all on his own. "If he wants to pursue becoming a cadet at West Point, we will definitely support him," John said. "It was a really neat experience. We're just so glad he got to do it."

"Jack is an outstanding young man, just an exceptional student and leader," said Brian Blackwell, principal at Walnut Grove. "He is going to do great things in high school, college, in the workforce and in life. I can't wait to see what he is doing 10-15 years from now." **NOW**



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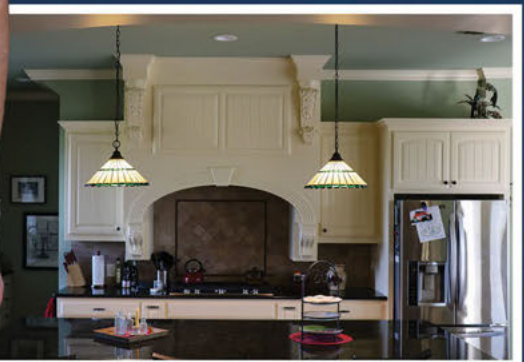
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Family Treasures

— By Zachary R. Urquhart



The holidays are a time for family. For some, that means relatives coming in from all corners of the globe. For others, it is a time to remember family events from years gone by. For Brent and Jan Johnson, a new house filled with kids, grandkids and heirlooms from previous generations makes the perfect home for the holidays.



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Jan moved around as a young child, eventually settling for a while in Missouri, before moving to Palestine,



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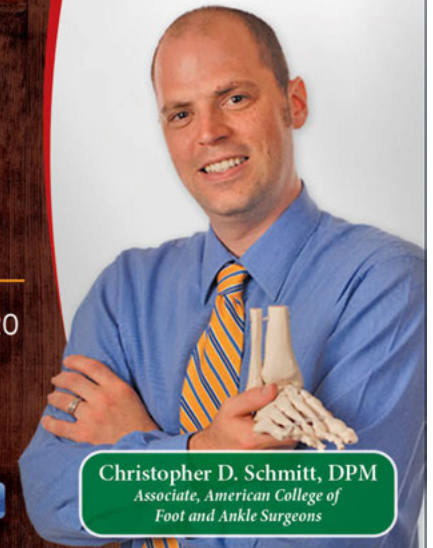
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Texas, in the first grade. Once she finished high school, she headed to College Station, too. "I didn't finish then though. I graduated with a degree in English from UTA in 2009, so my son joked I was a senior and a senior citizen," she laughed.

It was during the time when they were both in College Station that Brent and Jan

met. "We were two of several hundred freshmen at First Baptist before classes started," Brent recounted. "We happened to sit next to each other. I asked her out, and the rest is history." They got married in 1978. After school, they lived in Tulsa and later Phoenix, where they had two sons. "Eric is a captain in the Army. He



and his wife, Heather, have two kids," Brent said. "Greg graduated from UNT and lives in North Richland Hills."

Brent's job brought them to DeSoto in the early '90s. When the boys were in school, Brent and Jan decided to move again. "So many of our friends were coming this way," Jan said. They lived in Twin Creeks for about a decade before deciding to move a little farther out. They built a great house in the new Somercrest neighborhood on the south side of Midlothian. "Moving just a few



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miles saved Brent a lot of time on his morning commute. Plus, we love cycling, and being farther from town makes it easier to find good places to ride," Jan explained. Now, as some of the first residents in the subdivision, they get to help build a new neighborhood.

The home's cathedral windows are what most accentuate its curb appeal. Inside the oversized front door sits Brent's office. "I collect these 1/1200 scale ships," he said. "They're mostly replicas from WWII, mainly American and Japanese ships." His shelves display geodes and mineral samples, giving his office a unique look. The living room is a huge space with vaulted ceilings and cozy furniture. The irregular stone fireplace has a beautiful mantel highlighted by a large boat. Transitioning from one room to the next, the house has gently curved archways, each trimmed to give the whole house an elegant feel.

On the other side of the foyer sits the dining room, or as Jan calls it, the pretty room. "We have china and china cabinets from each of our grandparents," she said. "And in the corner, there's my great-great-grandmother's table from the 1870s. We were able to use family treasures like that throughout the house." Jan helped design the drapes that cover the cathedral windows. "That was one neat thing about building," she admitted. "We got to pick colors and styles throughout the house. In the kitchen, we started with this granite we loved and worked out from there."

The result is a handsome area with plenty of sitting space around a large island, a window over the sink for a classic look and a unique layout with the pantry in a corner under the staircase. The green hues lend themselves nicely to holiday decorating, offering a natural backdrop for the Christmas reds and whites. The eating nook features a simple table with a view of the backyard, lit by another family treasure. "My dad took up leaded glass, and he made the Tiffany-style shade," Jan detailed. "We had it transformed into a ceiling fixture." The breakfast nook has a perfect view of the natural stone pool in front of an expansive backyard.

There is a guest room with blue walls and photos of shore scenes, finished with driftwood-style bathroom floors.

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"We used a beach theme because we wanted it to have a restful feel," Brent said. Going upstairs, there are dozens of family photos that span as many decades as they do generations of the family. "We made this the grandkid room before they had even seen it," he laughed. "And with the view to the street, we thought this was a great place for a small tree in the window." There are Juliet balcony doors off the upstairs game/media room, offering a view to the ground floor and another great spot for unique holiday decorating.

"We think of this as a workout space, but we do come up here to watch movies sometimes," Jan said. The centerpiece of the upstairs is Jan's office, complete with its own fireplace and bathroom. "I like to think it's girly without being too blingy," she mused. Jan spends much of her days working on her latest blog or fiction project in her office.

Brent has his own special area in the home, an awesome bike garage. "I've been cycling since high school, so I've got a little collection," he acknowledged. In addition to bikes ranging in age and style, he has a workstation where he does most of his repairs himself. Adorning the walls are posters of pro cyclists and legendary races spanning the decades.

For some people, the holidays are a time for family. But for Brent and Jan, their home is a constant reminder of family, past and present, no matter the time of year. **NOW**

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With the holidays in full swing, it's easy to focus on decorating, buying presents and planning parties all the way through New Year's Day. But this is also the time to be thinking about some key end-of-the-year tasks, especially with regard to your finances. By following these tips, you can be sure to end your financial year with a flourish befitting the festive time of year.



MONEY CENTS


— By Zachary R. Urquhart

Helping Others the Financially Sound Way



• *Give before it's too late.* While waiting until after New Year's to give to charity just means you will have to wait to claim until next year's tax returns, it can be nice to use part of your holiday bonus to give one last time to the church or nonprofit of your choosing. Even if you cannot physically hand a donation over before January begins, getting your check postmarked by December 31 should



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ensure that you can use that last gift on this year's tax return. And if you work at a large company, ask if they have used all their charitable funds. Many businesses offer a charity matching program to incentivize employees to give. You could be doubling the contribution to a charity just by asking a simple question at the office.

- *Keep records of your giving.* The rattle of change hitting a red kettle at the mall or grocery store is as much a sound of the season as the bells the volunteers are ringing. If you are wanting to give more than just your pocket change to The Salvation Army, or any nonprofit for that matter, it is better to donate online or with a check, so you can keep track of your giving. Your taxes are nowhere near the most important part of giving to others, but it is nice to get a small break in April as a result.

- *Do not assume paperwork is coming.* If you are giving to a charity you have not previously supported, make sure they will send a letter you can use in case the IRS tries to disallow your exemption. Most large nonprofit organizations do this regularly, but you may want to double check before giving a large sum away. If you wait until the IRS has denied a return, it will probably be too late to avoid penalties.

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Prepare Now for Taxes Later

- *Start collecting paperwork.* You will not have all the forms you need to file your taxes for a few months, but you can still start consolidating papers and receipts now. Try to make it a goal to have a file with all the tax paperwork already in your possession before the new year begins. And if you moved into a new home this year, you will want to be sure you have your Homestead Exemption Form ready to file at the start of the year.

- *Check your accounts.* You may not need to do much between now and the flipping of the new calendar, but the

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end of the year is a good time to assess your accounts. Be sure you are paid up and ready for the next round on any property taxes or business taxes if you are self-employed. Make sure there are no changes you need to think about for any bank accounts or mutual funds.

- *Buy now to save later.* If you are already thinking about making any big purchases, it may make sense to buy them before the end of the year. You might forget to claim the exemptions or sales tax on a fridge if you buy it in January and have to wait until next year's tax return. Check if there are any energy-efficient tax credits for appliances you are looking for, as those are not guaranteed to remain next year.

A Penny Saved

- *Know your deadlines and limits.* When it comes to retirement accounts,



you have until the filing deadline, as opposed to the end of the year, to claim contributions on your taxes. The other thing to consider is your yearly limit. You can contribute thousands of dollars through your 401(k), if applicable, at your job. For individual retirement accounts, you can claim up to \$5,500 dollars each year, and you can double that if you are married and file jointly with your spouse. If you receive a large bonus, or anticipate a large raise next year, it might be in your best interest to maximize this year's contributions.

- *Find other ways to save.* Aside from typical mutual funds and retirement accounts, there are other options, especially if you are trying to save money for your children. There are multiple college savings accounts available, and they typically have more flexible limits than retirement funds.

- *Reflect on the year.* If you are taking advantage of an employer's 401(k) matching offer, there is a science involved in maximizing your contribution. You can top out too early or wait too long, so look at the end of the year to see if you did all you could.

This season, while you are staying warm by the fire or watching your favorite holiday movies, take some time to make sure you ring out the old year with as much financial stability as you can. **NOW**

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Tami Tobey and her niece, Kara, aim to please their customers with unique treasures.

Decorating With Vintage Charm

E.T. Tobey offers functional and comfortable furnishings and home decor. — By Virginia Riddle

Owner Tami Tobey loves welcoming her Midlothian neighbors and visitors from around the Metroplex to her “home away from home” at E.T. Tobey Company, both online or in person. “I treat everyone coming in the store as though this is my home, and they are coming to visit,” Tami said. She includes her design philosophy on every business card. “Purchase items that make you happy, and collect things that have sentiment or meaning. Then arrange them in a way that defines your unique style — it doesn’t have to fit a label. It should evolve. Enjoy the journey!”

Tami’s decorating golden rule is: “Live with what you love.” She strives to bring an eclectic mix of vintage-style furniture and home decor to meet the needs of all her customers. “I tell

people not to worry about knowing their exact style. If you see something you really like, find a way to weave it into your decor,” Tami explained.

The store offers home accents, kitchenware, lanterns and lighting, outdoor living, wall decor and wreaths, Little Billy Goat Paints, everything for entertaining, one-of-a-kind farm vintage and antique items, paint classes for DIY projects and vinyl rugs in many different patterns. “These rugs are perfect for any family, including ones with young children desiring easy clean up or older folks needing a lower profile rug,” Tami added.

“Our customers become like family. It’s important that we go above and beyond to serve them,” Tami stated. The company

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accepts all major credit cards, cash and checks; offers a local pick-up option; and ships purchased items anywhere in the United States.

E.T. Tobey Company has been a family-owned business since 1915. “My husband, Tim’s, father decided to retire at the same time my niece, Kara, moved back to Midlothian. I was able to keep the business open and follow the dream I had envisioned for the last five to 10 years — but with my own style,” Tami said. “And it gave me an opportunity to partner with Kara. She handles the online store and marketing.”

Previously known as an office supply and printing business that evolved into a business furniture store, Tami has infused her passion into the business and elevated E.T. Tobey Company to a home furnishings store. The business is a member of the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce. Still family oriented, she confesses using her four sons for manual labor. “Their favorite thing to do is move the heavy antique furniture,” she quipped.

“OUR CUSTOMERS BECOME LIKE FAMILY. IT’S IMPORTANT THAT WE GO ABOVE AND BEYOND TO SERVE THEM.”

A native of Waco, Texas, Tami confesses to being a “Baggie,” having attended Texas A&M University and then transferring to Baylor University where she earned her bachelor’s degree. She’s lived in Midlothian for 20 years, where she has raised her family. She helps run State Farm Insurance with Tim and spends time serving the community in organizations like Midlothian Community Development, American Business Women’s Association, PTOs and school booster clubs. Tami serves on the Midlothian ISD school board and is active in the Midlothian Education Foundation. “I love teachers and our great school district,” she said. Tami’s spare time is spent hanging out with Tim and their sons.

Travels to Round Top and estate sales occupy Tami’s weekdays as she searches for more treasures. “I have a good time doing this with friends and family,” she stated. “I love serving the Lord while creating happy places in people’s homes.” **NOW**



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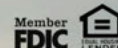


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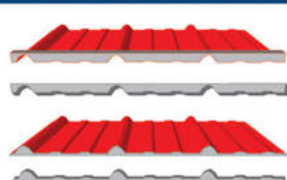
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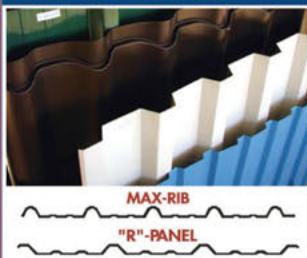
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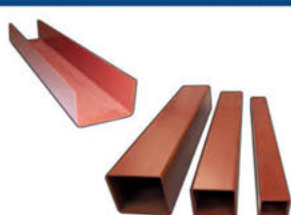


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December 1

Coffee with Cammy: 8:30-9:30 a.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th St. Learn how to market and grow your business through various opportunities offered by the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce.

All-City Elementary Choir Concerts: 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Midlothian High School Auditorium, 923 S. 9th St. Contact Matthew Fisk for more details at matthew_fisk@misd.gs.

December 1 — 13

Help to Heal Gifts for Seniors: Donations accepted for area elderly at the holidays, including gift cards, throw blankets, stuffed animals for dementia sufferers, gripper socks, etc. Volunteers needed through **December 21** to assist with delivery. Contact Linda Dean at ldean@helptohealtx.org for details and drop-off sites.

December 2

Mission Work Day: 7:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m., Mission Arlington, 210 W. South St., Arlington. Guidelines and registration are at fbcmidlo.com/event/mission-work-day/.

Southern Star Christmas Celebration: 1:00

-7:00 p.m., Historic Downtown Midlothian. Holiday entertainment, vendors, Santa and the Christmas Light-Up Parade beginning at 6:00 p.m. from the 8th Street bridge through downtown ending on Overlook Drive. Find updates at www.midlothian.tx.us/667/ Southern-Star-Christmas-Celebration or call (972) 775-7177.

December 6

Third Annual Christmas in Ovilla: 5:30-8:00 p.m., Ovilla Road Baptist Church, 3251 Ovilla Rd. Free community event including pictures with Santa, live music, food, bounce houses and more. Canned food donations encouraged. Visit www.orbc.org/christmasinovilla.

December 8 — 10

Waxahachie Community Theatre's *Charlie Brown Christmas* Production and Party: Dec. 8-9, 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 10, 2:30 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium in Getzender Park, 400 S Grand Ave, Waxahachie. Tickets may be purchased at www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com. (NOTE: A service charge is added for online purchases.) Preschool children get in free with a paid adult. Tickets available at the offices of Dr. Jerry Ellis, DDS, 404 W. Main St., Midlothian.

December 10

Kids Crew Crafts with Santa: 1:00-3:00 p.m. Dairy Queen, 1080 Hwy. 287 E. Kids Crew is preschool and elementary age focused. For more information, email Natalie Westfall at westfall.n@yahoo.com.

Native American Arts & Crafts Show: 5:00-11:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. For more information, call Toni Bowers at (903) 744-0305 or Alicia Alvarado at (214) 926-3995.

December 14

Midlothian High School Christmas Choir Concert: 6:30 p.m., Midlothian High School Auditorium, 923 S. 9th St. Contact Matthew Fisk for more information at matthew_fisk@misd.gs.

December 18

The Writers' Circle: 6:00 p.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Group is open to the public to provide support, motivation and writing tips. For more information, contact Ashley at meadowswriterscircle@gmail.com.

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In the Kitchen With Maxine Potter

— *By Virginia Riddle*

Maxine Potter learned to cook from her mother and through home economics classes. “We made breakfast, and all the students ate it. I’ve been in love with cooking ever since,” she recalled. Home-cooking is Maxine’s specialty. “I was a housewife and mother, so I guess you could say I was a professional cook. My husband, Vernon, and I always had a lot of company, and I loved cooking for everyone,” she said.

Special recipes and memories abound in a cookbook Maxine and her daughter-in-law compiled for family and friends. “Every holiday I cooked turkey and dressing,” Maxine said.

“A wonderful family tradition was preserving figs from our tree,” her son, Byron Potter, added. “It’s a lot of work, but there’s nothing like a fig in a warm, buttered biscuit!” **NOW**

Beef Stroganoff

Makes 4-5 servings.

2 Tbsp. flour
1 Tbsp. salt
1/4 Tbsp. pepper
1 lb. sirloin, rib or tenderloin steak,
1/4-inch thick
1 clove garlic, peeled and cut
1/4 cup butter or margarine
1/2 cup onion, minced
1/2 cup water
1 cup condensed, undiluted chicken
soup
1 lb. mushrooms, sliced
1 cup sour cream
Parsley, minced

1. Combine flour, salt and pepper. Trim fat from meat; rub both sides with garlic.
2. Pound flour mixture into both sides of the meat with the side of a saucer.
3. Cut meat into 1 1/2x1-inch-thick strips; melt butter in a Dutch oven or deep skillet. Lightly brown the onion in the butter.
4. Remove the onion and butter; set aside. Place the meat strips in the Dutch oven; brown well, turning often. Remove the meat.

5. Add water to the Dutch oven; stir to dissolve browned particles on the bottom. Return the onion, butter and meat to the Dutch oven; cover and simmer for 15 minutes.
6. Add soup and mushrooms; cover. Cook until the mushrooms are tender.
7. Uncover; cook mixture over low heat for about 1 to 1 1/4 hours, or until it thickens and the meat is tender. Stir occasionally.
8. Just before serving, stir in the sour cream; thicken the gravy with additional flour, if desired, and garnish with parsley.

Chicken Micheal

2 lbs. cold, boiled chicken breasts,
diced into large chunks
3 oz. butter
Pinch of paprika
1 heaping Tbsp. curry
1 pint cream
1 heaping Tbsp. cornstarch
2 oz. cooking sherry
1 cup boiled rice
Salt, to taste
Swiss cheese, grated or chopped, to taste

1. Sauté chicken in butter, paprika and curry. Remove the chicken; add cream. Bring the mixture to a boil.
2. Dissolve the cornstarch in sherry; add slowly to the hot cream, stirring constantly until the mixture thickens.
3. Fold in chicken and the rice; place mixture into a casserole dish. Add salt, to taste.
4. Sprinkle Swiss cheese on top; cover.
5. Bake at 375-400 F until the cheese bubbles.

Hummingbird Cake

Cake:

3 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups sugar
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
3 eggs, beaten
1 cup vegetable oil
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple,
undrained
1 cup pecans, chopped
2 cups bananas, chopped

Cream Cheese Frosting:

1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
1 16-oz. pkg. powdered sugar, sifted
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 cup pecans, chopped

1. For cake: In a large mixing bowl, combine the first five ingredients; add the eggs and oil, stirring until the dry ingredients are moistened. Don't beat.
2. Stir in the vanilla, pineapple, pecans and bananas.
3. Spoon batter into three greased and floured 9-inch round cake pans. Bake at 350 F for 25-30 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
4. Cool in pans for 10 minutes. Remove cakes from pans; let cool completely.
5. For frosting: Combine cream cheese and butter, beating until smooth. Add powdered sugar and vanilla; beat until frosting is light and fluffy.
6. Spread frosting between cake layers and on the top and sides of the cake; sprinkle pecans on top.

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