



# THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

SATURDAY | Dec. 4, 2021

75¢

SERVING CORYELL COUNTY SINCE 1881 | VOLUME 120, No. 136, ISSN No. 0894-4954



## County leaders to consider speed limit changes

BY JEFF OSBORNE  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Coryell County leaders will discuss possible speed limit changes during an upcoming meeting of the Coryell County Commissioners Court and will schedule a public hearing to gather input from area residents.

Members of the commissioners court and other county employees have heard from several community members about concerns they have about vehicles trav-

eling at high rates of speed on multiple county roads, and plan to address those concerns this month.

"We've had citizens turn in requests for a review of speed limits on county roads," said County Judge Roger Miller. He added that recommendations and proposals for the county's four precincts will be considered, and a public hearing will be set "in accordance with specifics of the transportation code."

County Attorney Brandon Belt noted that for the speed limit to be reduced below 30

miles per hour, a traffic study will be needed to meet Texas Department of Transportation requirements.

In a public forum, Jerry Segraves expressed his concerns about what he described as dangerous conditions on County Road 142 in the Pidcoke area.

"Residents along County Road 142 will request speed limit changes," he said. "I have been run off the road a dozen times. I am not the only one who has been run off the road, and there have been some bad accidents there."

"We will ask the sheriff's department to patrol there at least two days a week if we get the speed limit changed. If we don't do something about it, somebody's going to get killed."

Miller thanked Segraves for talking about his concerns.

"I appreciate you bringing that to the court's attention," he said.

The commissioners court will discuss possible speed limit changes, and possibly take action on proposals by the end of the month, or at upcoming meetings.

## Decked out for the holidays



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Harold Alexander recently traveled back to Gatesville to give Lurch a make-over for the holiday season.

## Lurch ready for Christmas thanks to change of outfit

BY DAVID SCOTT  
STAFF WRITER

Harold Alexander, the previous owner of Lurch, recently made the trek from his home in Waco to the Coryell Museum in Gatesville to dress the animatronic figure into his holiday attire.

The museum decided to give Lurch his own window facing Main Street so that the public could see the iconic figure that captured the hearts of many of the citizens. Several years ago, Alexander purchased Lurch for \$18.99 at a Goodwill store in Waco. While living in Gatesville, Alexander placed Lurch on the

front steps of his home at the corner of Luterloh and Main streets and would dress him in costumes appropriate for each season.

Motorists waiting at the light would always glance over to see what Lurch was wearing. After Alexander moved to Waco, the public noticed Lurch's absence from his usual perch. It was then that Coryell Museum board member Rhonda Mohler contacted Alexander in Waco and he suggested donating Lurch to the museum. Lurch made his triumphant return to Gatesville this year just in time for Halloween. Alexander had collected many seasonal costumes for Lurch relating to Christmas,

Easter, and Thanksgiving - also including a Storm Trooper, Cat in the Hat (for the beginning of school), and a Gatesville Hornet. "I guess he has seven or eight costumes in all," Alexander said. "None of the costumes cost over \$10 - usually from \$6.99 to \$8.99. That's the fun part about finding the bargains that can be re-used and enjoyed," Alexander said. Alexander plans to travel back to Gatesville and change Lurch's costume to fit each season or event. The next wardrobe change will be for New Years. "I am so thankful that Lurch has brought so much joy to the Gatesville community," Alexander said.

## Candidates filing for upcoming election

BY JEFF OSBORNE  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Those who are considering running for one of the six Coryell County offices on the March 1, 2022 primary ballot will have until Dec. 13 to file for the election.

People interested in seeking election can pick up binders with election information at the county tax office-elections office from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Those filing to run as a member of the Democratic or Republican parties can file with the local chairman of each of those parties until 6 p.m. Dec. 13.

The chairman of the Coryell County Republican Party, Jack Barcroft, can be reached at 254-216-9017. The chairman of the Coryell County Democratic Party, Gene Whittle, can be reached at 254-223-0710.

As of Dec. 2, two candidates have filed to run for Coryell County judge - Joey Acfalle of Copperas Cove and Roger Miller of Gatesville, the current county judge. Both are retired from the military.

Miller was elected county judge in 2018, succeeding John Firth, who did not seek re-election that year.

Jennifer Newton, the Coryell County clerk, said she filed to seek election to that post on Nov. 13, the first day of filing. Newton resides in Copperas Cove.

Precinct 2 will have a new county commissioner, as incumbent Daren Moore, who has held office for 15 years, announced he will not seek re-election. Gatesville Fire Chief

PLEASE SEE FILING | A2

## J&M Hill Country BBQ continues longstanding local tradition

BY JEFF OSBORNE  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

For more than 26 years, J&M's Hill Country BBQ has served up top quality food, establishing itself as a Gatesville tradition.

Although the word barbecue is in the restaurant's name, a variety of items ranging from hand-cut steaks, catfish, loaded baked potatoes, chicken fried steak, burgers and chicken are served.

The restaurant was opened back in the mid 1990s by Benjie and Marsha Johnson, who still own the restaurant today. Eric Klecka, the manager, has worked for J&M for 22 of the 26 years it has been open. "I started working here when I

was 15 years old," Klecka said. "My first job here was washing dishes." The restaurant has been family-owned (by the Johnson's) the whole time.

If one does an internet search for J&M barbecue, two options appear. The Gatesville restaurant is the one with "Hill Country" in the name. The other restaurant, which is not connected to the Gatesville establishment, is in Lubbock.

"We get calls sometimes for the Lubbock restaurant and they get calls for people wanting to reach us," Klecka said. "It's quite comical."

The Johnsons are still frequently at the restaurant today. Klecka said Marsha still makes the des-

serts, which are \$3.25 per slice. Those wanting to order a whole pie or cake can do so (and can get the price when they order it). Klecka said they appreciate customers giving two days notice on those special requests.

A quick look at the dessert cooler shows a considerable variety of options.

"There are probably 18 different (dessert choices)," Klecka said.

Barbecue is always a popular choice, with brisket, sausage, ribs, chicken and pulled pork among the options. Klecka said catfish is another top seller, and the chicken fried steak, which is hand-cut,

PLEASE SEE J&M | A2



JEFF OSBORNE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Numerous dessert options are available at J&M Hill Country BBQ.

### QUESTION & ANSWER CORNER

Q: When is the Gatesville Christmas parade?

A: 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 11 on Main Street from H-E-B to Lovers Lane.

Send us your questions:

editor@gatesvillemessenger.com  
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Write: P.O. Box 799, Gatesville, TX 76528

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**J&M**  
FROM PAGE A1

hand-tenderized and hand-battered, with gravy made from scratch, is another frequently ordered item.

The baked potatoes on the menu offer a considerable amount of food.

"They are definitely a whole meal, sometimes two," Klecka said.

Providing plenty of options is a hallmark of the restaurant.

"We have a big variety of choices, and just about any side somebody would want," Klecka said. "I also try to keep things like chicken and dumplings and soup on the menu, especially during the winter. A lot of people really like those."

Asked his favorite menu item, Klecka said, "I'm a burger fan. I'm a meat and potatoes guy, and a good burger and order of fries is hard to beat."

J&M has six different varieties of burgers on the menu, along with several different sandwiches. There are also four different salads on the menu, including the popular brisket salad.

Daily lunch specials, available Sunday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. are always popular.

On Saturday, the specials include all you can eat fish or barbecue for \$16.95, along with ribeye and sirloin specials (two steaks that are at least 8 ounces, four sides and two drinks for \$28).

The restaurant had a special Thanksgiving option available for pick up with turkey, ham, desserts and sides, and they will have the same option for those wanting to order Christmas meals. The small order comes with one pie and the large order will include two pies.

Those who want to reserve a Christmas meal order will need to call the restaurant by Sunday, Dec. 19, and will be able to pick up the food on Wednesday, Dec. 22 or Thursday, Dec. 23.

Although J&M was open on Thanksgiving day, it will not be open on Christmas.

"We're open about every day except for Christmas," Klecka said.

While the restaurant may close early

on some holidays, it is usually open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

J&M isn't just open for dine-in and takeout - customers can also have meals catered for special events.

"We can cater for things for 20 people to 2,500 people," Klecka said. "We can do just about any event someone would want. Catering is pretty big for us, and I enjoy getting out and doing all the events."

One thing customers will appreciate is that the items served at J&M are homemade on site.

"Everything we have is homemade," Klecka said. "That includes the potato salad, onion rings, you name it, except for the ketchup. We haven't figured out how to make that yet. We also try to make sure nobody goes home hungry."

Live music is sometimes featured on select Friday and Saturday nights. Anyone interested in visiting J&M when music is offered can get information from the J&M Hill Country BBQ Facebook page or by calling the restaurant at 254-865-8706.



JEFF OSBORNE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Eric Klecka and Heather Gribble are two of the J&M Hill Country BBQ employees who do their best to provide great food and a quality dining experience for those visiting the restaurant, which has been open for 26 years.

**FILING**  
FROM PAGE A1

Billy Vaden has filed for election to that office.

For Precinct 4 on the commissioners court, Ray Ashby Jr. has filed for re-election.

District Clerk Becky Moore said she filed the first day to seek re-election to that office.

County Treasurer Randi McFarlin of Jonesboro has filed for re-election to that position.

County Court at Law John Lee has filed for re-election to that office.

Justice of the Peace, Pct. 1 John Guinn, Justice of the Peace,

Pct. 2 F.W. "Bill" Price, Justice of the Peace Pct. 3 Jim Caldwell and Justice of the Peace Pct. 4 Coy Latham have each filed for re-election.

All of the candidates are members of the Republican Party. According to the secretary of state website, no Democratic candidates have filed to seek election to Coryell County offices.

# Christmas Celebration Open House

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Submit all news articles, classifieds and display advertising by noon Friday for the Wednesday issue and noon Wednesday for the Saturday issue.

Articles about events that have occurred 30 days prior to submission will not be accepted. However, they will be accepted as paid advertisements. All articles and advertisements must meet our standards and

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**OUR MISSION:** The Gatesville Messenger shall provide news and insights to our readers through the independent and impartial presentation of information that educates, enriches and entertains. We are proud to be a community newspaper committed to the people we serve.



COURTESY PHOTO

**VFW SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:** Pictured left to right, 1st place winner, Juan Torres, Junior Vice Commander Lisa Hunter of the Copperas Cove VFW Post 8577, and Jeff Morse, the 2nd place winner in Voice of Democracy.

## Locals win scholarships in V.F.W. essay contest

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Copperas Cove Post 8577, recently awarded scholarship checks to the winners of a recent essay competition. The Voice of Democracy and the Patriot's Pen essays were judged, and Juan Torres came in first place in the Voice of Democracy while Jeff Morse came in second

place. Adalyne Andrade was named first place winner of the Patriot's Pen essay contest while Hunter Beaty came in second. All the students attend school in Jonesboro.

The day the winners were announced, Copperas Cove Post 8577 presented a \$1,200 check to Jonesboro ISD for a project the students are

going to take part in during the Spring semester. The project wasn't included in the school's budget, so the VFW stepped in to help.

Since the Gatesville VFW burned down, Copperas Cove Post 8577 considers it their duty and obligation to take care of the Gatesville community.

## Gatesville added over 5,000 more pounds to Food for Families total

Food for Families turned out to be another great success this year far surpassing all previous years. At the end of the evening on Friday, Nov. 19, it was determined that Gatesville had collected an amazing 612,140 pounds of food. The final count was not determined until the last

day of the month, Nov. 30, when it was announced that the actual count for Gatesville was 617,368 pounds.

Donations came through both non-perishable food products and monetary donations. Monetary donations were converted to food pounds through a formula

where one dollar equals 2.5 pounds of food, based on the cost the local Care Center pays for food through the Capital Area Food Bank.

Those needing assistance can go by the Gatesville Care Center which is located at 105 N. 7th Street.

## Winter Choir Concert to be held at GHS auditorium

Gatesville ISD will have their Winter Choir Concert on Tuesday, Dec. 7, at 6:30 p.m. at the Gatesville High School Auditorium. Admission will be free.

The Varsity and Junior Varsity Choir will be performing "To Those Who Serve" followed by the Sixth Grade Choir who will perform "Solfege Santa" and "Hip-Hop Reindeer." The third period junior high girls will be singing "Illumina Oc-

ulos Meos" and "Skatin' and Sleighin'." The eighth period Boys2Men choir will be performing "The Coventry Carol" and "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch."

The concert will continue with the seventh period high school women who will sing "Mary, Did You Know?" The Junior Varsity and Women's Choir will perform "A Cold in My Nose" followed by the Junior Varsity Treble Choir singing "Gloria."

The Junior High Advanced choir will perform "Carol of the Bells" and "Gonna Catch that Santa." The Varsity Choir will sing three different melodies including "Santa's Job is a Snap! (Elf Rap)," "Walking in the Air from the Snowman," and "Still, Still, Still."

The public is invited to attend and join in the holiday cheer provided by the choirs of GISD.

## Corks & Kegs event scheduled for downtown square

The Gatesville Chamber of Commerce will host Corks & Kegs on the Courthouse Square on Saturday, Dec. 11 from 5-9 p.m.

Sample wine and beer offerings from area wineries and brew pubs, shop with local vendors,

and enjoy food and music in the shadows of the beautiful Coryell County Courthouse.

Corks & Kegs on the Square cost is \$25, Dec. 1-10, and \$30 on the day of the event.

Admission includes a souvenir



beer mug or wine glass and tastings with each winery or brewery.

Additional glasses, bottles or cases of wine or beer can be purchased directly from the vendor. They cannot guarantee glasses on same day purchases to the event.

For more information, please contact the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce at 254-865-2617 or visit their office located at 2607 S. TX-36.

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# OBITUARIES

## MARTHA ANN POWELL YOWS

Mar. 29, 1922 - Nov. 27, 2021



Martha Ann Powell Yows, age 99, passed away peacefully in her sleep Nov. 27, 2021. A Celebration of Life will be held 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021, at Ranchers' Steakhouse, Gatesville, and guests are invited to stay after the Celebration for a Mexican food meal. There will be a visitation from 3 to 4 p.m. at Ranchers.

Martha Ann was born March 29, 1922, on the Powell family farm to Samuel Jones Powell and Agnes Duncan McCrocklin Powell. The first sixteen years of her life were spent living and working on the farm with her younger brother, Sam, and cousin Gene Rennert. This was during the Great Depression. They were years of "make-do" and "do-without." Lessons of "waste-not, want-not" were carried through the rest of her life.

At age 17, she graduated from Gatesville High School as a Charter member of the Class of 1939, and until her death served as class historian, letter writer, and reunion planner. With money she borrowed personally from Lady Faunt LeRoy, she started college in 1939 at Texas State College for Women (now Texas Woman's University, TWU). On Dec. 24, 1942, she married James Thomas Yows who was a high school classmate. James was in ROTC at Texas A & M University and went into the Army in January 1943. While he was in Europe during World War II, Martha lived with her parents. Their first child, James Thomas Yows, Jr., was 15 months old when James came home from the war. They later welcomed the birth of two daughters, Sue Ann and Sara Jane. Martha and James purchased his great-grandfather's home which was built in 1883 on the Yows Ranch north of Gatesville. Over the years they renovated and remodeled the home, and it was the only home in which the family lived.

After the children started school, Martha Ann finished her B.S. Degree in Home Economics at TWU. She taught home economics at Flat High School 1955-56. She earned

a M.S. Degree from Baylor University 1956-57, and from 1957 to 1977, taught sixth grade science at Gatesville Junior High School. James worked as Superintendent of MATES at North Fort Hood.

For recreation during their working years, the family enjoyed fishing and water skiing on Lake Buchanan where they owned a waterfront cottage at Paradise Point. James and Martha both retired in 1977 and spent several years restoring fences and improving pastures on the ranch. In 1983, they leased the ranch and bought their first fifth-wheel travel trailer. Over a period of eleven years (and several more trailers) they toured every state in the contiguous United States, nine Provinces of Canada and nine states in Mexico. They took three conducted tours through England and 11 countries in Europe. In 1988, they started spending every winter at Fun N Sun RV Resort in San Benito, Texas. They took country, polka, and ballroom dance lessons, and became very accomplished dancers. They traveled several times to mid-west states for polka festivals. In 2003, they took a trip to Hawaii, celebrating their 60th anniversary. Soon after that trip, James passed away. Martha continued spending the winters at Fun N Sun where she joined the Writer's Workshop and the Texas Valley By-liners. That is when she started writing stories about "bits and pieces" of her life which started in horse and buggy days and ended in the space age. Her family cherishes a collection of about 600 stories she wrote.

Martha Ann's roots in Texas go deep. She is a member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) through her great-great-grandfather, John Prince Coles, who was head of one of the 300 families that came to Texas with Stephen F. Austin's first Anglo Colony. Two other great-great grandfathers Stephen Williamson and Jesse McCrocklin, came to Texas when it was a Republic. Martha Ann enjoyed giving programs about Texas to many different organizations.

Martha Ann served her community. For many years she visited weekly with friends and acquaintances confined to nursing homes. She took them her stories to read, listened to them tell their stories, and loved them. She was a member of Coryell Retired School Personnel, Gamma Alpha Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma (women teachers society), Coryell Hospital Auxiliary, and American Red Cross (was blood drive coordinator many years, taught Red Cross swimming lessons). In 1984, she received the Norris Graves GHS Outstanding Stu-

dent award. She was named Lady of the Year by Beta Sigma Phi 1985-86. She was a Methodist. She was a Democrat. She contributed her time and financial support to worthy causes.

Martha Ann was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, infant brother Charles, brother Sam J. Powell, Jr., grandson Stephen Maxwell, step-granddaughter Carlie Odum, sisters-in-law Roberta Powell and June Yows Sanders, and brother-in-law John Ben Yows.

She is survived by her children, James T. "Tom" Yows, Jr. (Joani), Sue Ann Vernon (Glenn), Sara Jane Maxwell (Ronald); grandchildren, James Justin Yows (Mary), Jocelyn Yows (Heath Grimes), Jennifer Kirby (Justin), April Farney (Jamie Ament), Sam Hix (Tera), Michael Maxwell (Emily); great-grandchildren, Jazz Mason, Lexi Reid (Conrad), Alyssa Angelo, Evelyn and Wade Kirby, Randi Farney (Zak Koehler), Riley Register (Reese), Lucas Farney, Riot and Ruckus Hix, Sophie and Sam Maxwell; step grandchildren Bryon Cunningham (Lara), Cristy Cunningham, Sharon Vickerson (Rich), step great-grandchildren, Gilbert, Adrian, and Tony Arriaga, Sabrina Delorosa (Dan), Lati-sha Arriaga (Britney Martinez), Grant Cunningham (Melanie), Reid Cunningham, Lilli Snyder (Andrew), Patrick Cunningham, Rachel Brosig (Blake), Spencer Odum (De-serae), Nick Vickerson (Hannah), Jake Vickerson (Kelby); step great-great grandchildren, Gibby, Gabby, Tony, Jr., Adahalia, Arial, Martin, Serenity, Dimitri, Luciano, and Nicholai Arriaga, Jasmine Kultgen, Wade Martinez, Hannah and Gavin Snyder, Blair, Dallas and Walker Brosig, Olivia Cunningham, Aubree and Hudson Odum and Shepp Vickerson. Also left to cherish her memory are nephews Bobby Jake Sanders, John Kevin Yows (Lee); niece, Kristina Yows (John Shields) and cousin Gene Rennert.

Per their wishes, James' and Martha's ashes will be "joined together" and buried in the Yows plot at the Masonic Cemetery, Gatesville, during a private family gathering.

A special "thank you" goes to ALL the staff at Coryell Health Independent and Assisted Living at The Oaks for the love and care they have given Martha Ann, and to Bluebonnet Hospice for their care and compassion.

Memorials may be made to a charity or organization of your choice, or to the Agnes Powell Gamma Alpha Recruitment Grant (a grant Martha Ann established for aspiring teachers in honor of her mother) c/o Tammy Browning, 304 Sioux Dr., Gatesville, TX. 76528.

## JEFFREY BLAKE LEWIS

July 31, 2021 - Nov. 24, 2021



Jeffrey Blake Lewis, age 3 1/2 months, passed away

Wednesday, November 24, 2021, in Gatesville. A memorial service will be held, Sunday, January 2, 2022, at a relative's home.

Jeffrey was born July 31, 2021, in Waco, to James Lewis and Natalie Coleman.

He is survived by his parents, James and Natalie; siblings, Raymond, Scarlett and Liliana; grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, great-aunts, great-uncles, and numerous cousins.

## JOYCE HOPKINS

June 4, 1940 - Nov. 26, 2021



Joyce Hopkins, age 81, of Evant, took her new residence in heaven on the morning of Nov. 26, 2021, surrounded by her family at her home.

Joyce was born on June 4, 1940, in Lawrenceburg, IN to the late William and Ruth Mary (Schwing) Hopper. She grew up and attended school in Manchester, IN. She married James Hopkins on August 27, 1960. They spent 57 wonderful years together before he preceded her in death in May of 2018. Moved to the Gatesville area in 1986 and to Evant in the early 90's.

Over the course of her life, she was a CNA and did multiple tasks at Leon River in Gatesville. She retired as a Headstart teacher of 25 years. She loved and is loved by every child she taught. To them as well as many in the Gatesville community, she was known as Ms. Joyce.

Joyce was a member of the Faith Freewill Baptist Church in Moose Hill, IN where she taught Sunday School, Youth group and played the piano.

She enjoyed teaching, playing piano and accordion, crocheting, and doing crafts. She loved to laugh, have fun, and play pranks. She loved and enjoyed her family and grandchildren more than anything. Most

of all she loved reading her Bible and listening to gospel music. Her favorites were the Gaithers and the Goodmans.

Joyce passed on the greatest legacy anyone can pass on to her children and family. It isn't money or material things but a legacy of Christian character and faith. The precious gift of faith is something that will forever enrich our lives more than we can ever imagine. We are truly blessed! One thing is for sure, those who truly die in the Lord will have eternal rest in heaven. Psalm 116:15 "Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of His saints."

She was preceded in death by her husband, parents, 1 brother, 1 grandson, and 2 great-grandchildren.

Joyce is survived by her four children, Melody (Jerry) Rutherford, Missy (Marty) Hobbs, Melinda Rogers, and Timothy (Gina) Hopkins; 7 grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren with a host of nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

Prayer: Gracious Lord, hear our prayer during our time of mourning. We look to you with faith that all who trust in you will share in your resurrection. We thank you that our mother is now in your presence, free from pain, suffering and tears. Help us to continue to love and follow you in anticipation of the hope of heaven. May we cherish the memory of our mother as a testimony of your grace and mercy. May we persevere to the day when Jesus will return, and we will enjoy the fullness of your promises for eternity. In Jesus name, Amen.

II Timothy 4:7-8 "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

## Life beyond braces, casts and crutches

By Tumbleweed Smith

"In 1937 my dad hitched a team to a wagon, and we went down the road a couple of miles to a neighbor's house for Sunday dinner," said Dewain Collins, who was living in Weatherford at the time. "I was 11 months old and just learning to walk. Sometime that afternoon I began to get sick. We went on back home and I laid around sick for a couple of days. My parents decided I needed to go see a doctor because I was paralyzed from the waist down."

He was taken to the Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas where he was diagnosed with infantile paralysis, later called polio.

"Doctors at the hospital said they were going to keep me and told my parents they could see me from 2 to 4 on Sunday afternoons, but because of my young age they said it would be best if they didn't come to see me at all. I was at the hospital off and on for 10 or 12 years."

Because not much was known about the disease then, his sister, 2 years older than Dewain, was not allowed to attend school. Later both kids were admitted, but Dewain had trouble maneuvering.

"An old janitor met me at the school bus, took me to classes, the restroom and to recess where I could sit on a rock fence and watch the other children play. Then after school he put me back on the school bus. He did that for 6 or 8 weeks."

Initially, Dewain was strapped to a board to keep his spine straight. Then he went to braces, casts, and crutches.

"I got pretty good on the crutches and could keep up with the other kids. Without them I was limited in what I could do. The doctors had wanted me to get rid of the crutches, but I was reluctant to give them up. Finally, after 10 or 12 years I gave up the crutches and started walking without them. I did that for 60-plus years. Every once in a while, if I was going to be walking for some time, I used the crutches. Most of the time I didn't need them."

After college, Dewain wanted three things: a job, a car, and a girl. So, he hitchhiked to the oil patch.

"I ended up in Eunice, New Mexico working for Halliburton dispatching trucks and all kinds of drilling rigs. Later I got a job with the Department of Public Safety and was a dispatcher 40 years. I worked at other jobs for another 20 years. In addition to a job, I got a car and a girl who has been my wife for 63 years. We have a wonderful family and overall, I would say I've had a good life so far."

Dewain, who now lives in Lubbock, credits his happy life to the Masons, who founded the Scottish Rite Hospital 100 years ago. He is a Mason.

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 6:30 p.m. Drive-thru Live Nativity Scene

Sunday, Dec. 19  
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*In the spirit of Christmas*

## How to give this season

### Hometown Angels is collecting gifts for kids

The 20th annual Hometown Angels Christmas gift program is underway to help make some local children's Christmas a little more special.

If you would like to purchase gifts for children in need, stop by Ranchers Steakhouse and pull a tag from the Christmas tree which contains a child's wish list. The gifts need to be brought back to Ranchers by Monday, Dec. 6.

For more information, contact Michele Holden at 254-206-0634 or Lorri McDaniel at 254-223-1361.

### Oglesby ISD to host Tiger Angel Christmas

The Oglesby Independent School District will be hosting a "Tiger Angel Christmas." This will be an opportunity for the Oglesby community to come together and help each other provide gifts for those in need.

Beginning Tuesday, Dec. 7, there will be a tree located in Misti Sander's office at Oglesby ISD from which those interested can pick an angel paw that will have a list of specific wants and needs (names will not be provided). If you want to donate money instead of adopting a child, you may drop off monetary donations at the Oglesby ISD front office.

All gifts purchased should be delivered to Mrs. Sander's office by Wednesday, Dec. 15.

### Righteous Roots prepares for Christmas

Righteous Roots hopes to bless 10 to 12 single mothers with some giveaways at a special event planned for December. They are asking the public to consider picking up a gift or two and donating them to their cause. There will be no limit on gifts that can be donated including towel sets, picture frames, sound bars, televisions, and gift cards.

Gifts can be dropped off at their office located at 503 E. Main Street, Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Gifts can also be shipped to: Righteous Roots, 462 CR 327, Gatesville, TX, 76528.

### Santa for Seniors at Hillside Medical Lodge

Hillside Medical Lodge is looking for people to be Santa for their seniors. Hillside's "Wish List" of gift ideas for their residents can be found by visiting: [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1GZVN04R6A2ZB?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1GZVN04R6A2ZB?ref_=wl_share)

Some of the items included on the Wish List include sleeping pants, body mist, slippers, coin purses, drawing backpacks, hand cream, candy assortments, and women's Christmas socks.

Gifts can be shipped directly to the facility or delivered unwrapped by December 13. Hillside Medical Lodge is located at 300 S. Highway 36 Bypass in Gatesville.

Those interested in participating can contact their Wellness Department for more information. Hillside can be reached by calling 254-865-7575.

## Christmas events at Mountain Baptist

Mountain Baptist Church will be hosting several Christmas programs this year. On Sunday, Dec. 12, the church will have a holiday musical beginning at 11 a.m.

Also on Sunday, Dec. 12, at 6:30 p.m., the church will have a drive-through live nativity event featuring Biblical characters in costume, as well

as live animals depicting the story of Christmas.

On Sunday, Dec. 19, the church will have a candlelight service.

Mountain Baptist Church is located at 6319 E. U.S. Highway 84 in South Mountain.

For more information about these holiday events, call 254-383-2634.

## Gatesville Fire Dept continues Santa Run

The Gatesville Fire Department will have neighborhood drive-by visits on the evenings of Dec. 4 and 10 starting at 6 p.m.

Santa Claus and his elves will make plenty of noise entering each neighborhood.

Each Sunday from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m., until Dec. 19, Santa Claus will be sitting at

the fire station for photo opportunities.

The neighborhood drive-by visits are scheduled in separate areas of town.

For more information or to see when Santa will visit your neighborhood, check the Gatesville Fire Department's Facebook page.

### NEWS FROM PEARL

## Choosing better in the season of life

BY BETSY CLARK

**W**e hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving! And just like that, we are now in the Christmas season. Soon, and very soon, we will say goodbye to 2021 and hello to 2022.

It's probably just my age, but it seems that the years are going by much more quickly. During this season of life, in which things seem to be passing at warp speed, most of us have learned to choose better, not bitter. Dr. David Jeremiah has a series of "life lessons" on that if reading about how to make the better choice tickles your fancy as it did mine. Life surely is more rewarding when one chooses better, as most of you already know. Read on to find out some of the "better" things going on in Pearl.

Kaye Schmitz, award-winning author and a relative of Jimmy Williamson, will be autographing copies of her new novel, "The Road Remembered," a story cen-

tered around World War II, at The Pearl Cottage Bookstore during the Dec. 1 Pearl Bluegrass event. Mrs. Schmitz will arrive around 2 p.m. to begin signing. The book has mention of Mr. Erwin Davis, a Pearl native and World War II hero. You will be able to purchase copies of her books that day. All are invited to attend.

Other good news is that Mr. Olson has returned to Pearl and has already begun completion of the Pearl Cemetery fence. We appreciate all the work he has done to save the pillars and the fence. We believe that fence was originally built by Hardy Nabors, most likely in the 1950s. It is also thought that the gate was built by Glenn Conner around



Betsy Clark

that time. When you look at that rock fence, you are seeing a piece of Pearl history.

Pearl Church of Christ distributed more than 70 Thanksgiving baskets in the community last week. We thank Linda Ray for the hours she spent making those beautiful baskets and the members for getting those goodies out to the community.

Speaking of Linda Ray, I was recently told a funny story about a time one of the Pearl residents went on a "ride-a-long" with her to hand out baskets to those living in the far reaches of Pearl. She said it was quite an adventure in that before she could get both feet back into the car after a delivery, Linda was already taking off — al-

most at full speed. That's our Linda — she does not let any grass grow under her feet (or wheels). She has things to do and places to go, always for others. There's no place like Pearl and not another soul like Linda. When God made Linda, He surely broke the mold. Pearl is truly blessed to have Linda Ray.

The next two Pearl Bluegrass events and Pearl Cottage Bookstore days will be Dec. 4 and Jan. 1. What great ways to celebrate the holiday season than right here in Pearl, Texas. Everyone is invited to attend and to bring your friends and family.

The closing Bible verses for this week come from Colossians 14b,15: ...put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ESV

To keep up with the latest Pearl news online, you can go to the "Pearl Cottage Bookstore" Facebook page or the "Pearl Church of Christ" Facebook page. Or you can contact me at [betsyclark47@yahoo.com](mailto:betsyclark47@yahoo.com) for more information or to submit any Pearl news that you might have.



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# The DISPATCH

The following is a breakdown of activity reported through dispatchers during the period of November 28 - December 1. While there were many calls to the dispatcher, this is a partial list of more significant activity. Persons are reminded that only emergency calls should be made to 9-1-1, while all other calls to the police department should be made to 865-2226 or to the Sheriff's office at 865-7201.

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**CITY OF GATESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Nov. 28**  
 5:52 a.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 1200 block of E. Main Street.  
 10:32 a.m., reckless conduct was reported in the 2800 block of S. State Hwy. 36.  
 11:01 a.m., a disturbance was reported in the 2500 block of Powell Drive.  
 3:22 p.m., a reckless driver was reported in the 2300 block of E. Main Street.  
 10:27 p.m., a noise disturbance was reported in the 500 block of Fieldstone Drive.

**Nov. 29**  
 1:09 a.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 400 block of Pidcoke Street.  
 10:15 a.m., a welfare concern was reported in the 2800 block of S. State Hwy. 36.  
 10:16 a.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 100 block of Elm Street.

12:40 p.m., harassment was reported in the 2700 block of S. State Hwy. 36.  
 5:53 p.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 300 block of Old Waco Road.  
 7:07 p.m., a disturbance was reported in the 100 block of Elm Street.

**Nov. 30**  
 12:39 a.m., a disturbance was reported in the 2300 block of Business Hwy. 36.  
 12:46 a.m., a theft was reported in the 2200 block of E. Main Street.  
 7:44 a.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 600 block of N. 19th Street.  
 12:08 p.m., a vehicle fire was reported in the 6000 block of W. Hwy. 84.  
 1:43 p.m., a welfare concern was reported in the 200 block of Old Osage Road.  
 3:32 p.m., a noise disturbance was reported in the 1500 block of W. Main Street.

**Dec. 1**  
 10:39 a.m., a threat was reported in the 2300 block of Business Hwy. 36.  
 4:49 p.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 2400 block Oak Drive.  
 5:20 p.m., a disturbance was reported in the 2300 block of Business Hwy. 36.  
 6:12 p.m., an accident was reported in the 2300 block of E. Main Street.  
 7:18 p.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 200 block of S. Lovers Lane.

11:08 p.m., a noise disturbance was reported in the 2500 block of Jackson Drive.

**CORYELL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**Nov. 28**  
 2:13 p.m., the burglary of a habitation was reported in the 2700 block of S. FM 116.  
 3:33 p.m., a livestock complaint was reported on Harmon Road near Tablerock.  
 3:40 p.m., criminal mischief was reported in the 8500 block of FM 182.  
 4:21 p.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 5400 block of CR 188.  
 5:15 p.m., shots being fired was reported in the 100 block of CR 334.  
 5:42 p.m., a livestock complaint was reported on Fort Panic Road.

**Nov. 29**  
 6:00 a.m., a stranded motorist was reported on E. Hwy. 84 at the first rest stop eastbound.  
 12:26 p.m., a child locked in a car was reported on FM 1690 and CR 155.  
 12:51 p.m., harassment was reported in the 300 block of Geronimo.  
 2:01 p.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 1900 block of CR 299.  
 6:50 p.m., a missing person was reported in the 1000 block of Spring Road.  
 8:20 p.m., a minor accident was reported on FM

1783 and CR 137.

**Nov. 30**  
 7:20 a.m., an out-of-control child was reported in the 4300 block of E. Hwy. 84.  
 11:38 a.m., a civil matter was reported on Lutheran Church Road.  
 11:42 a.m., a neighbor dispute was reported in the 80 block of Boone Road.  
 12:24 p.m., a vehicle fire was reported on Hwy. 84 and CR 130.  
 3:45 p.m., an animal complaint was reported in the 100 block of Sarah Lane.  
 8:00 p.m., a suspicious vehicle was reported in the 3600 block of FM 1829.

**Dec. 1**  
 8:22 a.m., a scam was reported in the 700 block of Old Georgetown Road.  
 8:25 a.m., the burglary of a habitation was reported in the 700 block of CR 161.  
 8:50 a.m., an out-of-control child was reported in the 4300 block of E. Hwy. 84.  
 10:56 a.m., a minor accident was reported in the 700 block of CR 145.  
 1:30 p.m., a grass fire was reported in the 6600 block of Mother Neff Parkway.  
 5:28 p.m., missing property was reported in the 400 block of Apache Road.

## Local author addresses Morris Federation

Local author, Carrie Burrows, was the guest speaker at a recent meeting of The Morris Federation. Burrows spoke to the group about one of her latest books, "The Fields We Called Home." Her World War II novel, based on true events, tell of families who lost their homes, communities, and land during the time Fort Hood was being built. Copies of her book, along with books by other local authors, are available at the gift shop at the Coryell Museum and Historical Center.



CARRIE BURROWS

## Morris Federation to have December meeting

The December meeting of The Morris Federation will be a Dutch treat luncheon at Prima Pasta Italian Restaurant on Saturday, Dec. 11, beginning at 11:30 a.m. If anyone is in the Christmas Parade earlier that morning, they can join the rest of the members at Prima Pasta when the parade is over. The program will be provided by Craig Pender, who

will accompany himself on guitar, and will include Christmas music. Members are encouraged to bring "stocking stuffer" type items and toys for children ages 12 and under. These will be given to the Gatesville Care Center to help provide Christmas gifts for children of families that they may serve.

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## TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE AREA FISHING REPORTS

**Belton**  
GOOD. Water lightly stained; 60 degrees; 1.91 feet low. Catfish is good, drifting main lake flats and channel ledges on fresh cut baits such as shad and perch. White bass and hybrid bass in the main lake. Report by Jason "SPUD" Barton, Cattin' Around Adventure's Professional Guide Service.

**Stillhouse**  
GOOD. Water lightly stained; 57 degrees; 1.24 feet low. The fall patterns continue. White bass are schooling in 45-53 feet of water. When the bite is aggressive, drop MAL Heavy Lures with silver blades and whitetails to fish vertically, and when the bite is holding to the bottom, allow the MAL Heavy Lure with a white blade and chartreuse tail to fish horizontally. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs in brush piles and timber. Blue catfish are

good with fresh-cut bait and live bait.

**Waco**  
GOOD. Water lightly stained; 63 degrees; 2.13 feet low. Catfish is good, drifting main lake flats and channel ledges on fresh cut baits such as shad and perch. White bass and hybrid bass in the main lake. Report by Jason "SPUD" Barton, Cattin' Around Adventure's Professional Guide Service.

**Whitney**  
GOOD. Water lightly stained; 72 degrees; 2.06 feet low. Striped bass are good on live bait, and down rigged jigs from the Island to Bear Creek. Follow the bird actions to locate schooling fish. Report by Michael Acosta, Unfair Advantage Charters.

**Brownwood**  
GOOD. Water lightly stained; 48 degrees; 1.17 feet low. Largemouth

bass are good with perch like crankbaits, brown or green Texas-rigged plastic worms, chartreuse bladed spinners, and shaky head jigs near timber, rocky shorelines, and docks. Crappie are good on minnows and jigs in brush piles and near bridge pilings. White bass and hybrids are good on slabs, swimbaits, and live bait along the main lake channels, humps, and ridges. Look for birds diving over feeding schools of white bass. Catfish are good on shrimp, chicken liver, and live bait.

**Buchanan**  
GOOD. Water lightly stained; 61 degrees; 4.77 feet low. Fishing is holding true, until the cold fronts roll in more consistently. The wind will influence the bite by pushing the baitfish, so look to windblown points to find fish chasing their food source. Largemouth bass are

very good, throwing spinnerbaits, chatterbaits, topwaters, and soft plastics on rocky banks. Crappie are good brush piles using live minnows. Striper, hybrid, and white bass are schooling early morning on topwaters and later in the day drifting live shad. Channel, blue and yellow catfish are fair to good using chicken liver and cut live shad. Report by Lee Benton, Fishing Guide Austin.

**Travis**  
GOOD. Slightly stained; 65 degrees; 18.33 feet low. Steady water levels over the past year has given time for the grass to grow, and fish have taken notice. Bass are good in the grass lines using soft jerkbaits and weighted wacky rigs. They are also relating to main lake bluffs and points using imitation crawfish. Report by Captain Randal Frisbie, Central Texas Fishing Guide.

**Granbury**  
GOOD. Water lightly stained; 62 degrees; 0.43 feet low. Granbury water temperatures are around the middle 60's. Striped bass and sand bass are fair to good under the birds from Decordova to near downtown. Black bass action is good on top water early and soft plastics later in the day. Black bass up to six-pounds are possible near main lake points and near creek channel entrances. Black bass in the river near Tin-Top continue to be fair to good near laydowns on small crankbaits. Crappies are excellent near submerged structure on the upper ends on small minnows and small jigs. Catfish of all species are also excellent on cut shad fished on feeding flats from Indian harbor to the Peninsula. Report by Michael Acosta.

## LADY ELK LEADER



Harley Weeks looks down court for an offensive scoring opportunity during an Evant basketball game earlier this year. **MARK GOODSON** | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

## Brazos River Authority joins regional conservation plan

The Brazos River Authority will join Bell County and other entities in creating the Karst Coalition to collectively develop and fund a regional habitat conservation plan in Bell and Coryell counties.

The move comes after the Board of Directors, in its regular bi-monthly meeting Nov. 14, approved an interlocal agreement with Bell County and other local entities.

**Habitat Conservation**  
In early 2021, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service issued a report identifying the possible habitat of endangered karst invertebrates in Bell County. In response, Bell County is leading a joint regional coalition to develop a habitat conservation plan for the area, said Brad Brunett, BRA central and lower basin regional manager. The coalition intends to apply for a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to fund the plan. A 25% local match is required of the grant, and as part of the interlocal agreement, the BRA agreed to contribute \$35,000.

Currently, 12 entities are expected to participate financially in the study, including the BRA, Bell and Coryell counties, Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District, Middle Trinity Groundwater Conservation District, and the cities of Gatesville, Copperas Cove, Killeen, Harker Heights, Belton, Temple, and the Village of Salado. That list could change as things are finalized, Brunett said.

Seasonal changes bring lake odors. It's not just you. That lake may smell a little strange.

But that's actually a good thing! It means nature is doing her job. Often referred to as seasonal turnover, lake de-stratification usually occurs each fall and spring. The process is harmless to people, minus the assault on the senses. However, it can affect the health of the fish.

Turnover is essentially the process of a lake's water turning over from top (epilimnion) to bottom (hypolimnion), according to National Geographic. During the summer, the surface layer is the warmest as it's heated by the sun. The deeper layer is cold as the sun's radiation doesn't reach that dark layer. Once fall arrives, the warm surface water begins to cool, and as it does, it becomes denser, which causes the layer to sink. That dense water forces the layer of water at the bottom to rise or turnover.

The process allows for oxygen to be replenished and nutrients to be distributed throughout the lake.

The process typically happens fairly quickly, said Jenna Olson, Brazos River Authority environmental programs coordinator. Often just over a matter of days. Shallow lakes, such as those less than 20 feet deep, stay well mixed throughout the year, preventing it from needing to turnover, Olson said.

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## Lady Hornets defeat Whitney, 45-44

BY MARK GOODSON  
STAFF WRITER

The Gatesville High School Lady Hornets picked up where they left off to start the post-Thanksgiving break with 45-44 basketball road victory over the Whitney Lady Wildcats on Nov. 30.

The young Lady Hornet squad stood at 2-8 on the season going into the Lorena Tournament, Dec. 2-4.

On Tuesday, Kamryn Higginbotham hit the game-winning shot from 15 feet out with two seconds left. She finished with 10 points.

The shot completed a big rally. The Lady Hornets were down seven points with 2:30

left in the game.

Gatesville cut the lead to one with 16 seconds left and were able to pressure the in-bound pass and forced the Lady Wildcats to lose the ball out of bounds. "The inbounds play did not go as planned and since I did not have any timeouts we just had to play it out," Gatesville coach Ryan Ocheskey said. "They had pretty tough defense on us but we were able to protect the possession and Kamryn got the shot up with about three seconds left on the clock. Their coach also did not have any timeouts left and was unable to stop the clock after the shot went in with two seconds left so they were not able to get the ball in-bounds before the buzzer went off."

Taylor Coward had 15 points to lead in scoring. Higginbotham and Kagen Hunt both had 10. Aliyah Trotter added six points, and McKenzie Feldman and Laura Trejo had two points each.

Gatesville trailed 18-11 at halftime. Whitney led 28-23 entering the fourth quarter.

"It was a pretty exciting finish and showed more of what this team is capable of once we start playing a little more consistently," Ocheskey said. "I told the girls the best part about that game is that we continued to fight despite how the first half went for us. We played pretty well all game but we could not get the ball to drop for us in the first half. "The message in the locker room at half-

time was keep doing what you're doing, shoot the ball with confidence and we are going to win this game. The girls believed it and even kept saying it through timeouts in the second half including when we were down seven with under three minutes to go. Having that mindset definitely helped us down the stretch in the game."

Teams in the Lorena Tournament were Gatesville, Boerne Champion, Marble Falls, Robinson, Lubbock Coronado, Leander, Fairfield and Brownwood.

The Hornets opened on Thursday with pool-play games against Lorena and Boerne Champion.

## Jonesboro girls' rally falls short against Moody

BY MARK GOODSON  
STAFF WRITER

Jonesboro High School's Alissa Shumate got some practice on her game-winning shooting when she launched a 3-pointer from the top of the key Tuesday in the final seconds of the Lady Eagles' non-district basketball game against the Moody Lady Bearcats. It was a nice swish, and something the point guard said she'd like to repeat in upcoming key moments for the Lady Eagles.

The junior finished the game with nine points, including the 3-pointer for part of a late rally.

The Lady Eagles scored 19 points in the fourth quarter, but fell 41-36 to Moody, at Jonesboro. Moody used some hot outside shooting to take control with a big third quarter.

Katie Snoddy had eight of her team-high 13 points in the fourth quarter.

Jonesboro coach Billy Wayne Massingill said he'll stick with the seven girls on the varsity as the team works toward stressing defense, plus ball movement on offense.

They played well when veterans Snoddy and Shumate ignited the tempo.

Jonesboro trailed 37-17 entering the fourth quarter. Shumate's slashing jump-stop move with 4:14 remaining in the game cut the lead to 37-31.

Moody was able to hold off the rally with some outside shooting.

"I thought we did a good job with our man defense to get us going," Massingill said.

McKenzie Coble and Paiton Green added five points each. Emma Rodriguez and Kylie Deason had two points each for the Lady Eagles.

The team will carry a 1-7 record into the Walnut Springs Tournament.

Two of the Lady Eagles losses have been by five points or less, 50-46 at home against Priddy on Nov. 6 and 50-45 against Clifton on Nov. 9, according to information provided by MaxPreps.

Meanwhile, the Jonesboro boys had a 7 p.m. game slated against Bluff Dale on Dec. 2.



Alissa Shumate brings the ball down court for Jonesboro in a Dec. 1 contest against the Moody Lady Bearcats.

MARK GOODSON | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER



MARK GOODSON | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Katie Snoddy protects the ball against a Moody defender in the Lady Eagles' home game on Dec. 1.

## Gatesville's Williams scores 26

BY MARK GOODSON  
STAFF WRITER

Gatesville High School's Carter Williams got a hot hand in the second half Tuesday en route to a season-high 26 points in a 63-55 boys basketball loss to the Little River Academy Bees.

After scoring six points in the first half, Williams poured in 10 points each in the third and fourth quar-

ters.

Williams has been a solid rebounder all season for the Hornets. Gatesville was 1-5 overall heading into the Salado Tournament Thursday through Saturday.

Tyler Shea scored 13 points against Little River.

Other scorers for Gatesville were Trea Miller with six, Rayshon Smith with three, Xander Botkin with two, and Jaiden Gomez with one.

## Evant boys outscore Moody JV

Evant High School's boys varsity basketball squad broke into the win column with a 27-21 triumph over the Moody junior varsity on Nov. 30. Edgar Morales scored 13 points to lead the Elks.

Other scorers in the win over the Moody squad were: Matthew Padgett with five, Cason Ingram and Hunter White with four each, and Christian Dominguez with two. Evant stands at 1-3 on the season.

The Evant Lady Elks are 1-2 headed into the Walnut Springs Tournament.

The Lady Elks open district play Dec. 7 versus Blanket.

"We were unable to convert several point-blank shots that would have been the difference in the (Morgan) game," Evant

coach Chad Baker said. "We got the looks we wanted offensively, we just could not convert them into points. Ultimately I feel like we beat ourselves more than they beat us because of the mistakes we made with missed shots and turnovers. Right now we are young and still developing, so some of those mistakes are expected, we just have to find a way to reduce those as the season progresses."

The game was tied at halftime at 19 points apiece. Morgan carried a 30-25 lead into the fourth quarter.

Evant's scorers were Ludwika Rodriguez with 16 points, Molly Waldrum with five, Izzy Gandy with four, Bree Ramirez with three and Caeligh Burkham with two.

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# Seven Holiday Shopping Safety Tips

**By: Mison Riggins**  
Cybersecurity expert

More and more consumers are turning to online shopping to meet their gift giving needs. Although this may be significantly more convenient than fighting the crowds, it can also make you significantly more susceptible to identity theft and other unfortunate cyber-crimes.

Here are some tips to stay safe while taking advantage of online shopping:

**1. Shop from a secure computer and secure connection.**

Be sure your operating system (OS), browsers, and antivirus/anti-malware suite are up to date with the most current patches. When accessing a store's website, be sure to check whether it is HTTPS so that your transactions are encrypted.

If you're on your mobile device, be sure you're using a secure Wi-Fi connection. In short, don't shop while sipping your latte at Starbucks.

**2. Use trusted vendors and**

*their apps, rather than a link.*

Hackers have become very adept at spoofing vendor webpages. Always shop with trusted vendors and type in the web address whenever possible instead of following a link.

If you're on your phone, download the vendor's app from Google Play Store or Apple's App Store, and use the app instead of a link out to a browser window.

**3. Don't fall for "too-good-to-be-true" deals.**

Watch out especially for email and text messages promising fantastic savings during the holiday rush. For every legitimate ad, there are a plethora of fake ads laced with malware or other cyber-crippling attacks. Avoid clicking on ad links. Go to the site directly.

**4. Details, Details, Details.**

It's important to stay organized when shopping and keep track of the details of your order. After you make your online purchase, file your receipt, order confir-

mation number, and postal tracking number in a safe place. This information could come in handy should you have an issue with your order.

**5. Review credit card and bank statements regularly during the shopping season.**

Infected credit card readers, unscrupulous cashiers, Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) and Man-in-the-Middle attacks can gain access to your credit card information and sell it to

the highest bidder. It's a best practice to review your statements regularly. If you find a discrepancy, contact your bank or card issuer immediately.

If you're using your bank app on your mobile device, be sure it is up-to-date with necessary security patches and that you only access the app on a secure connection. DON'T use public Wi-Fi - transactions submitted on unsecured Wi-Fi pretty much

travel across thin air with no encryption. Which means anyone can pluck your data by eavesdropping on your public Wi-Fi connection.

**6. Use unique passwords and logon information for every site you visit.**

Tedious? Yes. Worth it? Yes, in the long run. Because if your login credentials are stolen for one site, a cyber crook will more than likely try using it on other websites. If they're all the same, that crook now has access to your Target, Walmart, Amazon, and Twitter accounts. If you have registered a credit card or one-click shopping with any of those accounts, the cyber crook can go to town maxing out your limits. Then, they can tweet about all their cool purchases bought using your account.

Passwords should never be reused, recycled, or words found in a dictionary, even the urban dictionary. It is best to use a "passphrase" of at least 9 to 11 characters long. The longer the better. It should also contain a mix of

upper- and lowercase characters, numbers, punctuation, and symbols that do not spell out a particular word. If you have trouble handling them all, use a password manager. Most password managers also have a "generate password" function to help you come up with unique ones.

**7. If you don't receive your order, take action immediately.**

If you're having issues with your tracking number, or simply don't receive the items you've purchased, call the store's customer service number and provide as much information as possible (see tip #4). If you find that the store turned out to be fake altogether, then file a complaint with the following organizations:

- **The Federal Trade Commission at [www.ftc.gov/complaint](http://www.ftc.gov/complaint)**
- **Your state Attorney General, using contact information at [naag.org](http://naag.org)**
- **Your county or state consumer protection agency. Visit [consumeraction.gov](http://consumeraction.gov) and look under "Where to File a Complaint."**
- **The Better Business Bureau**



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# Simple ways to save on heating costs this winter

Comfort takes center stage each winter. As people look to stay warm, many may be quick to turn up the thermostat so their entire home is toasty warm. But much like cranking air conditioners during the dog days of summer, turning up the thermostat each time the winter winds begin blowing can prove costly for homeowners.

According to estimates from the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, homeowners spent an average of \$911 on home heating costs in the winter of 2019-20.

Finding ways to save on heating costs will no doubt prove a priority for many homeowners this winter, and

the following are some ways to do just that.

- Add insulation. Extra insulation throughout the house can dramatically reduce home heating (and cooling) costs. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, adding insulation in attics, crawl spaces and basement rim joists can help homeowners save as much as 15 percent on heating costs.

- Lower the temperature on your water heater. Another way to trim your energy bill this winter is to lower the temperature on your water heater. The U.S. Department of Energy notes that, for every 10 degrees Fahrenheit

reduction in temperature on their water heaters, homeowners can save between 3 and 5 percent on their water heating costs.

- Close the flue on your fireplace. Fireplaces can keep a home's inhabitants warm in winter, but only when they're in use. When they're not being used, fireplaces can allow heat to escape a home. When the fireplace is not being used, close the flue to prevent heat from escaping the house. Keeping all windows and doors closed throughout the day is another way to prevent unnecessary heat loss.

- Have your HVAC system serviced. Inefficient HVAC

systems cost homeowners considerable amounts of money each year. Annual maintenance performed by a certified HVAC professional can ensure filters are clean and operating at peak efficiency, saving homeowners the costly trouble of having to turn up the thermostat to overcome dirty systems.

Home heating costs figure to increase this winter as people spend more time at home. Various simple strategies can help homeowners stay warm without overpaying to heat their homes this winter.



COURTESY PHOTO

Finding ways to save on heating costs will no doubt prove a priority for many homeowners

## Steps for hanging holiday lights outdoors

It begins to look a lot like Christmas when twinkling lights brighten up homes inside and out. Few things liven up the season more than holiday decorations, particularly clear and colored lights.

Prior to taking out the lights, ladder and thermos of coffee to get you through the job, it's important to note that there are right and wrong ways to hang holiday lights.

- Sketch out your plan. Start by taking a few photos of your home from various

vantage points. Print out the photos on regular paper so that you can draw your lighting arrangement and decoration placement right on the photos to see how things will look.

- Measure the area. Use a measuring tape to roughly measure the width and height of eaves or other areas of the home where you plan to hang light strands. Calculate how much overall footage you will need so you can purchase all of the lights in one shopping trip.

- Test the lights first. Plug in the lights to be sure all strands are operational.

- Begin where the lights will be plugged in. Start where the lights will be plugged in and then work your way around the house.

- Add to shrubs and trees. Lights also can adorn shrubs and trees. Lowes Home Improvement says a good rule of thumb is 100 lights for every 1 1/2-feet of tree or shrub to cover. A 6-foot evergreen needs at least 400 lights for a

basic level of lighting.

- Exercise extreme caution. Accidents can happen when stringing lights. While many professionals use harnesses, homeowners are not always so cautious. Utilize a spotter to hold the ladder and make sure things are safe. Never set foot on a wet or icy roof. Do not attempt to string lights in inclement weather.

- Know the wattage. Each outlet can generally hold about 17 amps or 1,870 watts if the lights are not sharing

a circuit with another outlet, says Parrish. Plan accordingly to ensure you have enough power to handle your lights.

- Use plastic clips. Plastic light clips hang strands along eaves and gables. They're specially designed for hanging lights over the gutters. Some slip under the edges of roof shingles. Lights can be hung without staples or nails, which can damage exterior surfaces. Plastic zip-ties or deck clips also can attach lights along a handrail.

- Use only outdoor extension cords. Be sure the extension cords you use are designed specifically for outdoor use.

- Use a timer. Timers can make sure the lights turn on and off even if homeowners forget.

Once lights have been safely strung, sit back and enjoy the splendor of a well-decorated house.

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## Thrifty & Fritter Budgeting for the Holidays

Fritter, we're NOT going to go totally crazy during holiday shopping. We need to ...

Oh, Thrifty! Just LOOK at all the sparkly lights and decorations!

WAHOOOO!!! I'm gonna get THIS and THAT and THOSE and THESE and ...

Fritter, you really need a BUDGET!

Okay, but can you carry the budget? My arms are full!

**A budget is a plan that helps you to spend only the amount of money you can afford.**

### Shopping On A Budget

Look at the things Jodi would like to buy for her family. She has \$50 budgeted for her holiday shopping. Make a list of the things she could buy on her budget.

INCOME	
Allowance .....	\$15
Shovel Snow .....	\$20
Run Errands for Elves .....	\$15
<b>TOTAL:</b>	

EXPENSES	
Carrot Sticks .....	\$10
Flying Lessons .....	\$12
Reindeer Games Entry Fee .....	\$10
<b>TOTAL:</b>	

How much money does Thrifty have left over each month?



**Standards Link:** Number Sense: Solve real-world problems involving computation with dollars and cents.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** What could Thrifty do to save more money each month?

**Standards Link:** Economics: Students understand basic concepts of managing money.

### Extra! Extra!

#### Holiday Party Time!

Thrifty and Fritter are planning a holiday bash for family and friends. They have budgeted \$500 for the party!

They will need food, decorations and gifts. These are called **goods**.

They also need entertainment and perhaps folks to help set up and clean up. These are called **services**.

Look through today's newspaper and help Thrifty and Fritter find what they need. Stay within their \$500 budget!

<b>GOODS:</b>	<b>SERVICES:</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Standards Link:** Economics: Understand the differences between goods and services.




How many silly things can you find at this holiday party?

**Standards Link:** Investigation: Identify objects that fit into a category and those that do not belong.


### Kid Scoop Puzzler

**Who bought what?** An ice cream cone costs \$1.50. A comic book is \$1.65. A deck of cards is \$1.10. Count each person's money to see what they bought.


**Deb**



**Vanessa**



**Theresa**



**Standards Link:** Mathematical Reasoning: Problem solving using money.

### Kid Scoop Together: Count Your Cash!

Fritter wants to buy each of the items below. Look at each item and its price. Figure out how he would pay for it. The first one is done for you.

Item: **Pack of Cards**

Price: **\$2.50**

To pay for it, I would use:

# of dollar bills: 2

# of pennies: \_\_\_\_\_

# of nickels: 1

# of dimes: 2

# of quarters: 1

### Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

T	S	Y	E	N	O	M	M	A	S
R	E	T	A	S	D	N	E	P	S
S	H	G	T	D	S	M	A	R	T
O	P	F	D	A	I	R	P	E	R
C	I	F	V	U	K	L	S	U	Y
G	I	E	E	L	B	S	O	T	E
A	B	M	Y	T	F	I	R	H	T
U	I	D	O	E	L	A	S	G	E
T	N	U	O	C	P	L	A	N	T

**Standards Link:** Letter sequencing: Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

Item: **Crayons**

Price: **\$3.59**

To pay for it, I would use:

# of dollar bills: \_\_\_\_\_

# of pennies: \_\_\_\_\_

# of nickels: \_\_\_\_\_

# of dimes: \_\_\_\_\_

# of quarters: \_\_\_\_\_

### FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

#### New and Used

Find five new items for sale in the newspaper. Chart the items and their prices. Can you find similar used items for sale? What is the difference in price? What are the advantages and disadvantages of buying new versus used?

**Standards Link:** Economics: Students demonstrate basic economic reasoning in terms of how individual economic choices involve trade-offs and the evaluation of costs and benefits.

Item: **Scarf**

Price: **\$3.90**

To pay for it, I would use:

# of dollar bills: \_\_\_\_\_

# of pennies: \_\_\_\_\_

# of nickels: \_\_\_\_\_

# of dimes: \_\_\_\_\_

# of quarters: \_\_\_\_\_


### Write On!

## A penny saved is a penny ...

How would you finish this sentence?

### What a Character!

**Responsibility is ...**



... not spending more than you can afford on gifts.



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IN THIS TOGETHER!

## Double Chocolate Chip Cookies

Makes about 12 large cookies

5 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

5 tablespoons granulated sugar

5 tablespoons light brown sugar, sifted

1 large egg, beaten

1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla essence or chocolate extract

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons self-rising flour

3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa

1/4 teaspoon salt

2/3 cup (or more) dark and white (or milk) chocolate chips

A heavy, nonstick baking sheet

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Using an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugars together until pale and fluffy. Beat in the egg and vanilla essence.

Sift the flour with the cocoa and salt in a small bowl. Fold into the egg mixture with the chocolate chips.

Place 4 heaping tablespoonsfuls of the mixture on the prepared baking sheet, spacing them well apart.

Press down and spread out to about 1/4-inch thick with the back of a wet spoon or with dampened fingers. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool on the baking sheet for 1 minute, then transfer to a wire rack. When cool, store in an airtight container. Repeat with the remaining mixture.



DEAR FRANKIE

### Is it the meal or the tradition that counts?

**GENEVA WOODRUFF**

Frankie is a rescue dog and an emotional support animal for Geneva Woodruff. Woodruff is a retired educator.



Dear Frankie

This fall, a family of turkeys walked through the neighborhood every afternoon. I loved seeing them

strut and their beautiful shiny feathers. After a while, I was able to tell them apart and gave them each a name. Not all the neighbors felt as kindly toward them as I did. Some of them would yell and throw rocks at the turkeys if they stepped on their property. I told my friends at the park about my horrible neighbors and Vicki said it wouldn't be an issue much longer as Thanksgiving was just around the corner. I didn't understand what she meant so Lily explained that a turkey dinner was the traditional meal for Thanksgiving. Ever since then, I feel so sad when I see the turkeys. Do you think they know what is going to happen to them?

I don't think if I were a human I would eat a turkey. Linette

Dear Linette,

You need not worry about not seeing your fine feathered friends in the future. Wild turkeys are not the chosen fowl for the Thanksgiving meal. The turkeys eaten on Thanksgiving are raised on farms specifically for the holiday. If it is any comfort to you some humans don't eat meat, fish, or fowl. They eat grains and vegetables and are called vegetarians. Some of them choose to be a vegetarian because they are opposed to harming animals for food. They also celebrate Thanksgiving for the same reason the meat-eaters do, which is to take a day to be thankful for being an American and for the many blessings they received throughout the year.

Wishing you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving, however your family chooses to celebrate the holiday.

Best,  
Frankie

BOOK REVIEW

### Season readings: Titles your little ones cannot resist

The tree is up in your house already and it sure is twinkly.

It's colorful, too, and you love to lay next to it and just look at it. Wouldn't that be a great place to take one of these wonderful Holiday books?

Santa is here. He's there. He's at the mall and on Christmas cards and on TV. When a young Santa fan notices all the Clauses, he wonders which one is the guy who brings presents? In "The Real Santa" by Nancy Redd, illustrated by Charnelle Pinkney Barlow (Random House), the truth is exactly what he'd hoped...

Everybody knows that Santa comes down the chimney, right? But what if you don't have a chimney? In "Santa in the City" by Tiffany D. Jackson, illustrated by Reggie Brown (Dial Books), there are just two weeks to go before Christmas and Deja is concerned that Santa won't be able to find her. Everybody has a different answer to her questions - so how does Santa know what to do?

How do you find just the right gift? In "The Perfect Gift" by Lyn Sisson-Talbert and David L. Talbert (Razorbill), inventors Journey, Jessica, and Jeronicus create their best invention yet: it's a robot they call Buddy 3000. So what do you give a robot on Christmas Day? Inspired by the Netflix show, look for this book before turning on your television.

Bah. Jim Panzee is not impressed. The entire jungle is lit up for Christmas but Jim hates it all and in "Grumpy Monkey: Oh, No, Christmas!" by Suzanne Lang, illustrated by Max Lang, (Random House) it's up to the other animals to change his mind. Is there any good way to bring jingle to the jungle?

For the kid who longs for a White Christmas - a really

white one - "We Want Snow! A Wintry Chant" by Jamie A. Swenson, illustrated by Emilie Boon (Sleeping Bear Press) helps call in the snowflakes before it's time to snuggle under blankets.

Clausie always was unique. His grandmother said that was okay, that he's special. Not until it's almost Christmas does Clausie find out just how special he is and in "Just Be Claus: A Christmas Story" by Barbara Joesse, illustrated by Kim Barnes (Sleeping Bear Press) you should be very glad that's so!

Tradition is important at every holiday, so treat your child to the wonder of "Jan Brett's The Nutcracker" (Putnam). This lush picture book updates a classic story with Marie and her brother, Fritz, and a gift that takes her on

an adventure, that's perfect for tradition-making in your house.

And finally, "Good Dogs in Bad Sweaters" by Rachel Wenitsky & David Sidorov, illustrated by Tor Freeman (Putnam) is about a doggy day-care and Hanukkah and Christmas and a visit from Santadoodle. What 8-to-12-year-old kid could resist?

None. That's it. No kid could resist these great holiday books, and if you need more titles, then check with your librarian or bookseller. They'll have lots of ideas to put beneath your tree!

Season's Readings!

*Christmas Books for Children c.2021, various publishers various cover prices various page counts*





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# How to create a durable gingerbread house

Gingerbread cookies and houses are one of the many symbols of the holiday season, alongside Christmas trees and twinkling lights. In fact, few confections symbolize the holidays more so than gingerbread.

Many a child (or a child at heart) has spent hours carefully trying to create decorative gingerbread houses. Although gingerbread recipes span various cultures, gingerbread houses originated in 16th century Germany.

The fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel" helped solidify the popularity of gingerbread, which became part of Christmas traditions.

Even though gingerbread houses can be fun to make, there's no denying it can be exacting work - especially for those who strive for perfection.

Prepackaged kits attempt to take some of the guesswork out of the equation, but those who are crafting from scratch can employ these tips as they build their gingerbread houses.

\* Go for form and not flavor. Few gingerbread houses ever get eaten, so focus on finding a dough that will bake up rock hard as opposed to one that tastes good.

\* Get the right icing texture. Pastry artist Catherine Beddall says royal icing is the preferred "glue" to adhere gingerbread pieces. Beddall says icing should be thick

like peanut butter and not runny.

\* Mind the dough. Do not roll out the gingerbread dough too thin or it may become brittle after being cooked. Always cut out shapes before the gingerbread is baked. Let the baked pieces sit overnight to cool completely before using them to build.

\* Patience is key. Allow the icing to dry for at least a couple of hours after adhering each piece and before moving and handling the house, says Beddall. Work in stages so that individual items can be decorated and allowed to dry. Then the walls can be put together, followed by the roof pieces.

\* Kids likely will need help. Children may not have the patience or steadiness to handle complete gingerbread construction. They can decorate the separate pieces of the house while the components are laying flat, which is easier for kids. Adults can do the main assembly later on.

\* Utilize a template. Free-handing may not be easy. Cut out templates using cardboard or posterboard for various gingerbread pieces.

One of the most important tips is to have fun.

Don't take gingerbread house making too seriously as a novice. Rather, enjoy the experience and the centuries-old tradition.



COURTESY PHOTO

Building gingerbread houses is a cherished holiday tradition for many families.

# Looking for a new hobby? Here are a few things to consider

During the pandemic, millions of people found themselves with more leisure time than ever before. Many made the most of that newfound free time by exploring new hobbies and interests.

Hobbies are beneficial in various ways. According to Psychology Today, hobbies help structure time; promote flow, a sort of meditative state; foster new social connections; and give people interesting traits and things to talk about. A study at San Francisco State University found that employees who had creative outlets outside of the office were better at creative problem-solving on the job as well.

Anyone looking to add a new pastime to their lives can consider these tips as they begin their pursuits.

Consider cost  
Consider financial constraints or even the potential to make money

when seeking new hobbies. For example a person who likes to fish may want to expand that hobby by buying a boat and selling deep-water fishing trips. Such individuals must consider factors like the cost of the vessel, fuel, licensing fees, and fishing bait/supplies, among others.

Learning to play an instrument involves the rental or purchase of an instrument and possibly a tutor. An individual's hobbies may be limited by what he or she can or cannot afford.

Explore goals  
People should investigate what they want to get out of a hobby. Certain hobbies may help individuals get in shape while others may teach them new skills. Some people may simply want to make friends, which is possible with any joint activity.

Investment of time

Individuals should determine how much time they need to pursue a given hobby and then consider if they have the time to do so. Some hobbies can start to feel like second jobs if they consume too much of an individual's free time. Individuals should carefully consider the overall time commitment they're willing to make to a hobby.

Don't forget interests  
No one should do a hobby just for the sake of having something to do. A person should carefully consider any and all interests, then pursue hobbies that align with their interests. A person enamored with animals may want to join a bird-watching club. Someone who is an avid baker may want to push that interest to another level by taking a cake decorating class.

Hobbies are worthwhile endeavors that can expand knowledge and build new friendships.



COURTESY PHOTO

Exploring a new hobby can spark creativity as well as offer entertainment.

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# Tips & tricks for cutting out cookies

Baking is a holiday tradition in many households. The aroma of freshly baked cakes, pies and cookies wafts through the air of many homes this time of year, and that makes the holiday season even more special.

Cookies are a tradition passed down through the ages. In medieval Europe, small, spiced cookies were exchanged as treats, and people still bake and share gingerbread cookies today.

Cut cookies are some of the most popular cookies to make during the holiday season. Some families may have their share of favorite cookie cutter shapes and dough recipes. Certain techniques can make holiday baking sessions easier and ensure consistent results.

\* Work on a lightly floured, cool surface, such as a cutting board or stone counter top. Never work on a warm surface, which can cause dough to spread and stick.

\* Roll out the dough between two sheets of baking or parchment paper. Betty Crocker recommends a thickness of about 1/8 inch, unless noted in the recipe. This prevents the dough from sticking, and parchment enables you to easily transfer rolled-out dough to a refrigerator or elsewhere.

\* When rolling out dough, portion it out into a few smaller amounts to roll out more easily. This will also help it to chill more

readily.

\* Cookies cut most easily when the dough is chilled. Refrigerate the dough for as long as possible, ideally an hour or more - even overnight. The more chilled, the firmer the dough will be.

\* Rubber rolling pin rings that slip onto each side of the rolling pin can help ensure that the dough is being rolled out to a uniform thickness.

\* Dip cookie cutters into flour with each cut. Work from the center and move out to the edges when cutting out your designs.

Try to maximize space and avoid scraps and rerolling.

\* Some expert bakers say that metal cookie cutters cut cleaner than plastic ones.

Whichever cutter you use, cut the cookie by pressing straight down; try not to twist or jiggle the cookie cutter when using it. Doughs with a high butter content can help, as the extra grease helps separate the dough from the cutters.

\* If cut cookies have gotten warmer, place them in the freezer for a few minutes to firm up again and then cook. This will guarantee the cookies will not spread or distort while baking.

Extra steps may seem like they will take a lot of time. However, the extra effort and attention to detail will help produce cookies that win rave reviews.



COURTESY PHOTO

Holiday baking offers plenty of fun, and there are several tips that can make it even more enjoyable.

## Prepare your favorite foods with nutrition in mind

Beloved dishes and comfort foods share some common elements, notably their flavor and ability to quell hunger pangs. However, those creamy mac-and-cheese recipes or buffalo wings also may share some less savory characteristics, including a lack of nutrition.

Various popular dishes are made from ingredients that are high in saturated fats and calories. In fact, Nutritionix, a nutritional information reporting company, indicates the average one-

cup serving of homemade macaroni and cheese measures in at 510 calories, with 29 grams of total fat and 16 grams, or 80 percent of the total daily recommended value, of saturated fat.

Certain foods also may be cooked through less healthy techniques, such as frying. But rest assured that being fit and healthy doesn't mean having to give up on tasty comfort foods. Just about any recipe can get a healthy makeover. Consider these cooking tips that can make

popular dishes a little more nutritious

### Use an air fryer

Frying makes everything from chicken to fries to sliced vegetables more delectable. But with that crispy coating and juicy interior comes the addition of fat and calories from the oil. Healthline says a small baking potato contains 93 calories and 0 grams of fat. The same amount of French fries contains 319 calories and 17 grams of fat when fried.

Air fryers can simulate the

benefits of deep frying without the negative side effects.

### Ditch the cream

Thick and tasty dishes like fettuccine alfredo involve the use of cream. Using low-fat milk that's thickened with flour or cornstarch instead of cream can make such dishes a little healthier. Thickened low-fat milk trims more than 680 calories and 53 grams of saturated fat per cup off of recipes that call for heavy cream, according to EatingWell.com.

Swap mayonnaise or sour

cream for Greek yogurt

Potato salads and cole slaws are prized for their creamy and tangy flavors. These sides can be made more nutritious by replacing mayonnaise with a thick Greek yogurt as the base of the dressings. Greek yogurt adds live and active cultures that can improve gut health, and the yogurt also will cut down on the calories and fat in the recipe. Greek yogurt also can be used in onion or vegetable dips for snack platters.

Cook with the right pans

Cast-iron, nonstick or enamel-coated pans and skillets require less oil or butter while cooking to prevent foods from sticking. That translates into roughly 120 fewer calories per tablespoon of oil.

Taste before seasoning

Replace salt with other herbs and spices that can add flavor without extra sodium. In addition, always taste the recipe before adding more salt, as it very well may be fine without it.

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# Toy buying tips when shopping for kids

Shopping for gifts for kids makes many shoppers nostalgic for their own childhoods. Few adults can forget the joy of finding the perfect gift under the tree on Christmas morning. Recreating that magic for a youngster can be as joyous for gift givers as it is for kids. That's especially so when shoppers make it a point to give safe, age-appropriate gifts.

Whether shopping for their own children or their grandkids, nieces or nephews, shoppers can keep these tips in mind to ensure they give toys that are as safe as they are fun.

**\* Speak to Mom and Dad first.** When buying for a grandchild, niece or nephew, shoppers should first ask Mom or Dad for suggestions. Parents will know which types of toys their children like, and they'll also know the child's level of maturity. Some kids may not be mature enough to play with otherwise age-appropriate toys, while others may be mature beyond their years and enjoy more complex toys than their age would

suggest. Parents will know what makes a good toy and what doesn't.

**\* Learn what to look for on labels.** Toy labels are great sources of information, but shoppers must know what to look for. The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that toy labels include information about age-appropriateness (i.e., "Ages 3 & Up") as well as directions regarding how to use the toy. If the instructions seem a bit complex for the child the item will be for, look for something else.

Children's toy labels also include additional information that consumers may not be familiar with. For example, toys labeled "ASTM F963" meet the latest safety standards from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. An "ASTM D4236" label indicates the materials associated with the art toy have been reviewed and deemed safe by a toxicologist. More information about toy label requirements can be found at cpsc.gov. The AAP advises that electric toys should only be given to kids if they include the UL label. That

means the toy has been certified by the global safety certification company UL, LLC.

**\* Avoid certain features.** The AAP notes that toys that are loud, shoot objects into the air or contain small pieces pose a threat to children. Especially loud toys can damage children's hearing, while projectiles can increase the risk of eye injuries or choking. Toys with small pieces also pose a choking risk to young children who may try to put the pieces into their mouths.

**\* Err on the side of caution.** Consumers who are uncertain about the safety of a given toy, even after reading its label, should err on the side of caution and only give toys they're confident won't pose a safety risk. Even toys that may seem safe could be dangerous to kids who might otherwise seem old enough. For example, the AAP advises against giving kids under 12 hobby kits and chemistry sets. That's because such kits may contain dangerous chemicals that even pre-adolescents are not old enough to handle safely.



COURTESY PHOTO

Safety is an important factor when considering toys for children.

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