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DECEMBER 2016

## Cherishing Christmas

At Home With Mike  
and Marian Blowers

## Accidental Competitor

Ninja Warrior, Jared Bandy,  
shares his story

## 2016 Holiday Shopping Guide

Fostering Love

Creating a Winter Wonderland

Banking Flair

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# CONTENTS

December 2016 • Volume 6, Issue 12



## 8 Accidental Competitor

A rear-end collision leads to new heights and challenges for Jared Bandy.

## 18 Fostering Love

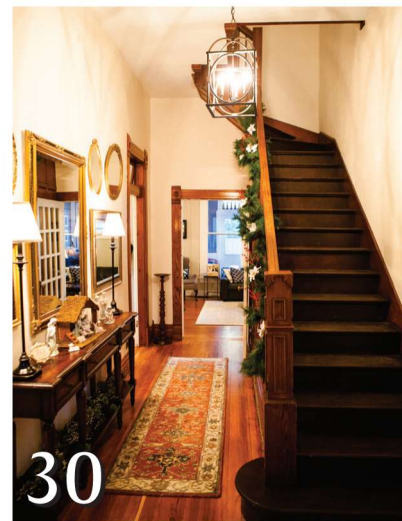
Jason and Marlin Whittington adopted their two girls earlier this year.

## 30 Cherishing Christmas

At Home With Mike and Marian Blowers.

## 36 Creating a Winter Wonderland

With a little planning, you can fill your yard with holiday cheer.



42 BusinessNOW

44 AroundTownNOW

46 FinanceNOW

52 CookingNOW

## ON THE COVER



Mike and Marian Blowers chose a great house for Christmas decorations and for their growing family.

Photo by Amanda Olson.

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (817) 613-1533 or visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

# Cherishing Christmas

— By Amber D. Browne



**At Home With Mike & Marian Blowers**

*The Candlelight Tour of Homes sponsored by the Parker County Heritage Society each December has featured dozens of homes since the event's inception 35 years ago. The home of Mike and Marian Blowers will share its history with tour participants this month. The young couple purchased the early 20th century Victorian near Historic Downtown Weatherford in July 2015. Remodeling and*



renovations have been ongoing since that time, but the work doesn't sway the Blowers' drive to keep the house true to its history. "We've always liked old houses. We just like the character of it," Marian shared. "We like projects where the emphasis is on our home. It's a lot of work, but it's rewarding."

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Much has been done to update the home since its first appearance on the Candlelight Tour of Homes last year. Although the new parents of now 2-year-old Elizabeth were busy with remodeling projects, creating a home for their family was a top priority. The most substantial project was the master bathroom, which is now complete. "We gutted it to the point where there was no floor," Marian explained. Mike removed some of the shiplap to reach the electrical and plumbing, which they updated. The master bathroom is bright and elegant with a marble countertop and colors of white and gray throughout the room. During the overall renovation process, they discovered about 15 different wallpaper designs added to the decor over the years. They closed in a door that led into a large office, now under construction. They plan to drywall and paint the office area and add floor-to-ceiling bookcases on one wall. With 12-foot ceilings, the shelves will host an extensive library.

The 12-foot ceilings found throughout the first level of the home

provide ample space for Christmas trees. "Last year, we moved from a house that's less than half this size. All the decorations looked really small, so we splurged and got a huge tree," she said. The 9-foot tree in the sitting room off the foyer is decorated with glass ornaments the couple purchased over the years. "Whenever we take a trip, we get an ornament," she said. Each one has its own story. One of their cherished favorites is the glass ornament purchased during their honeymoon to St. Lucia. Another is a peach ornament from Georgia.

Mike's toy train chugs along underneath the tree, sparking childhood memories. "Christmas is our favorite holiday. It makes you feel like a kid again," he shared. With Elizabeth celebrating her second Christmas this year and her little brother on the way, the young family will share traditions passed down through generations. Marian plans to get matching Christmas pajamas for the children each year, and, of course, hot chocolate is a must when searching neighborhoods for Christmas lights.

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Mike's family from Carrollton visits during Christmastime to watch Elizabeth's gleeful eyes as she opens gifts. "Last year, she was young, so she wanted to play more with the tissue and wrapping paper than the actual presents," Marian laughed. They all get comfortable on the tan tweed sofa and love seat near the tree and share meals on the sturdy wooden dining table in the adjoining room.

The Blowers painted the room a light gray and kept the white crown molding, doorframes and window frames. Modern light fixtures replaced polished brass fixtures throughout the connected rooms. "We like to pay homage to the character of the home, but freshen it up," Mike said. The oversized windows throughout the first level of the home sparked their interest. "When we walked into this house, we loved it," he said. The original wood floors have been refinished, and an antique, decorative mantel has been affixed to one wall in the dining area, adding to the historic feel of the home.

In the foyer, Marian spent hours removing four layers of paint from the doorframes and transom window frames, and then finishing with shellac. They added drywall to one wall in the foyer, which is now home to more than half a dozen mirrors of various sizes. They added push button light switches found at an online antique hardware store to the foyer. "We thought it was fun, for in here," she shared.

The foyer is Marian's favorite place to decorate for the holidays. She adds garland, berries, pinecones and ribbon along the staircase. Her color scheme changes each year, but the decor remains classic. Wreaths are hung with care on each exterior front window, and white lights brighten both inside and out. "I use as many lights as possible. Every year, I add to my collection," Mike grinned.

This year's decor for Elizabeth's small tree upstairs will change. Last year, the pink and silver tree featured baby socks and shoes as ornaments. Her room is on the Blowers' to-do list. They plan to take the walls down to the shiplap and add insulation, cutting down on energy costs. The same process was completed in the nursery, which awaits the arrival of the family's newest addition.

An upstairs room has been remodeled into a large bathroom for the children

and guests to share. The bathroom is light sage and features a claw foot tub that was once housed in the master bathroom. The adjacent guest bedroom provides ample space for rest and relaxation. Marian's family visits from Missouri over the Thanksgiving holiday. They get to participate in one of the Blowers' Christmas traditions of decorating the home the day after Thanksgiving.

Mike and Marian met in 2005, while in college in Missouri. Mike was hired at Lockheed Martin, and they moved



to Fort Worth in 2010. As their family grew, they needed more space and decided to move farther west. They had fallen in love with Weatherford during daytime trips to downtown and visits to the Parker County Peach Festival each summer. "We loved it — the people, the smaller town atmosphere," Mike said. Although Marian was raised in Missouri, Mike says she's converted to Texas quite nicely. "She can handle spicy foods now," he chuckled.

The Blowers travel to Missouri to visit family when they can. They still enjoy visiting downtown Weatherford, and now they live close enough to walk. Picnics at Cherry Park and playdates with a local mommy group keep Marian busy. "It's good to get her [Elizabeth] to socialize and for me to socialize with other moms."

Free time is a luxury, so when possible, Marian likes to sew dresses for Elizabeth. She also created her first quilt for Elizabeth's "big girl" bed. Mike plans to start home brewing beer again soon, but for now, he'll cherish time spent with his family. "We love Weatherford," he said. "We're staying here forever." **NOW**

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