

COMPLIMENTARY

Ascension

MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2023, VOL. 21 ISSUE 12

A photograph of a man, Terrance Ealey, smiling and standing in front of a decorated Christmas tree. He is wearing a dark blue and light blue Carolina Panthers jacket. The tree is decorated with lights, ornaments, and a sign that says "Merry Christmas". The background shows a restaurant interior with a "WELCOME" sign and a table with decorations.

Terrance Ealey

**Celebrates 20 Years at Country Kitchen
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SEE PAGE 24



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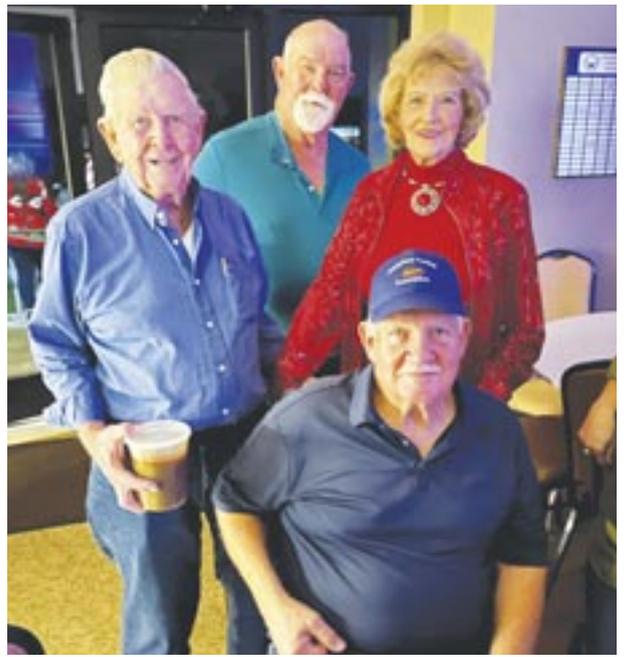
On the Cover: Terrance Ealey, Country Kitchen Page 24

*Like Santa,
We are letting
it Ride on
Christmas!*

Tags & Title wishes our friends, families and customers a happy holiday season and hope that the new year brings you many blessings. We thank you for your business & look forward to serving you in 2024 with the same Fast, Efficient, Friendly, Service that we have in the past. We continue to strive to be YOUR '1' STOP SHOP for all your DMV, DL, Wildlife & Fisheries & Notary needs.

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Jambalaya Festival

JFA Christmas Party

Jambalaya Festival Association hosted their Annual Christmas Party. The event was full of friends and food and a few cold beverages. Each year the members vote for a member to receive the Nora Lee Ricca Award.

This year the members of the JFA awarded this honor to Bart Himel. Congratulation Bart.

The following is a Facebook post by Selena Himel.

Last night was our annual Jambalaya Festival Association Christmas party which we always enjoy. This years party was especially great though because they honored Bart Himel with the Nora Lee Ricca award for community service. In 2011, when we were so blessed by Gabbys benefit we made a promise within our family that

we would pay that love and support back to the Ascension parish community. Bart tirelessly donates his time to the JFA, Boucherie Festival association and the Life IV Louis organization along with many other benefits, cookoffs and fundraisers throughout our parish. He does it not for the recognition but to help and share his love of cooking the traditional jambalaya that Ascension parish is so well known for and to pay the love

our family once received forward. Thank you to the JFA members that voted for him to receive the award it is truly an honor for him to be given an award that so many greats ahead of him have been honored by.

As we danced into the night the spirit of Christmas was present as this organization that is built on volunteers shared a good time and laughs. Merry Christmas!





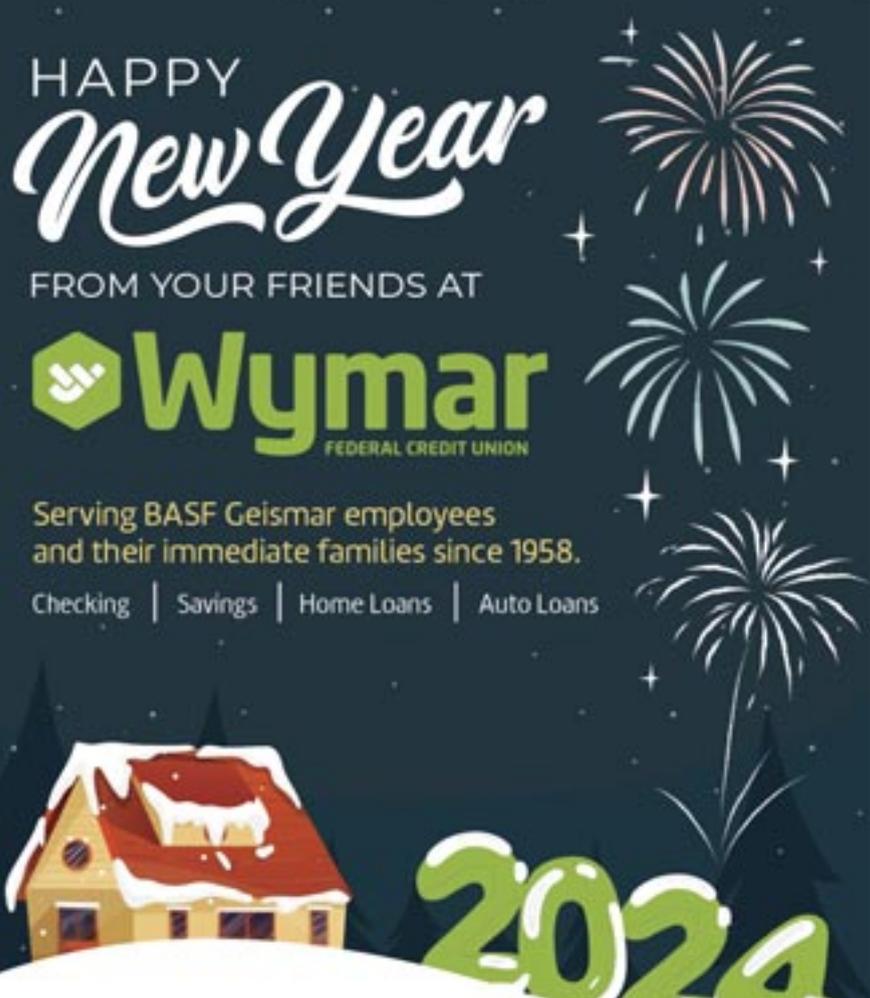
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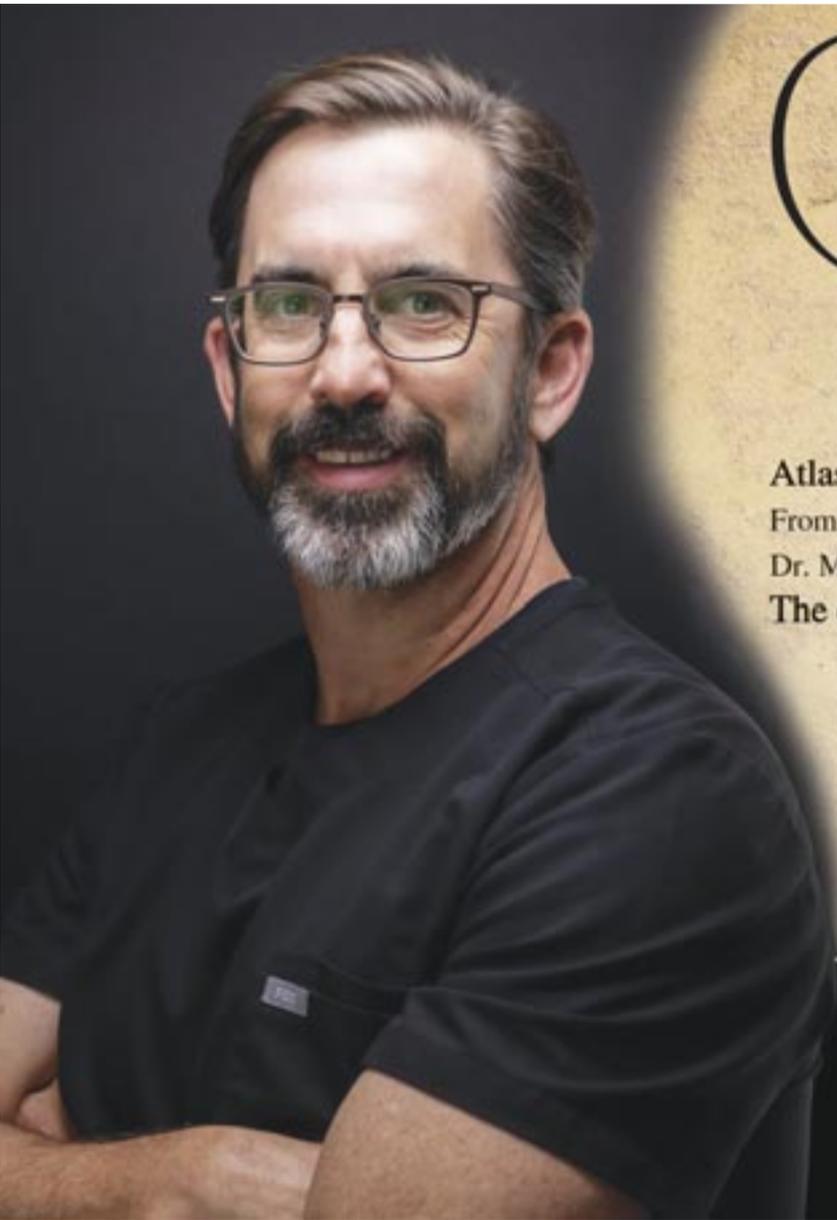
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'Tis the Season

The Gonzales Garden Club started the season of holiday parties on December 6. It clung to the core basics of its annual Christmas celebration but polished it up with a few new details for their traditional pot luck meal, gift exchange and food bank effort. The club met at a new home with a class of new members with updated ideas for the activities.

Member Cynthia Stafford graciously opened her spacious home for the gathering. Janis D'Benedetto, Jamie Trisler, Flo Hernandez and Katherine Stagg helped



Merry Christmas from the Gonzales Garden Club.



New Members Flo Hernandez, Paola DiNatale, Zanna Brewer and Raakhee Malani received their club tote bags. Member Ellen Posey uniquely embroidered each one.

her host the occasion. Twenty-three members came. One by one, each arrived with a side dish for the kitchen buffet, a garden-related



Member Conchita Richey read " 'Twas the Night Before Christmas" to guide the members through the gift opening activity.



Jade Thibodeaux, Jamie Trisler, Cynthia Stafford, Janis D'Benedetto and Katherine Stagg hosted the Christmas party at Cynthia's home.

present for the exchange and grocery items for the food bank stash. A unique gifting twist

of attaching homegrown evergreenery to the package decorations, a brainchild of Katherine Stagg. The use of handy reusable totes in lieu of cumbersome cardboard boxes for the collection and transport of food bank items.

Chapel United Methodist Church food pantry. Ladies wished each other a joyous holiday season and aspired to invite other local garden associations to an educational collaboration in January.

*Happy Holidays to all.
Be in good cheer and stay safe.*

The Gonzales Garden Club is federated by National Garden Clubs, Inc.



Janis Poche embellished her wrap with alstroemeria, variegated holly and Arizona cedar.



Marilyn Rice tucked magnolia leaves and Savannah holly twigs into the ribbon knot.



Mable Savoy used Japanese Yew to complement a bright red bow.

By the end of the day, club members had loaded their cars with empty casserole dishes, paper plates of leftovers for supper and new items to feed their garden hobbies. President Jamie Trisler had a trunkload of nonperishables destined for the Carpenter's

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Letting Go and Looking Ahead

2023 says goodbye but leaves us with many precious memories; some good, some not so good perhaps...

2024 opens the door and provides with it hope for the future and an invitation to step into some dreams we've held onto but haven't seen in the physical realm...

...and yet both are useful, and none are of value without love.

One of the reasons for the optimism surrounding letting go of the old year and embracing the new year lies in our ability to learn from the past. The challenges faced in the preceding year often serve as valuable lessons, which hopefully, give us resilience, perseverance and ultimately... hope. With each passing year, we gain wisdom, learn to enjoy the simple things in life: waking up each day, taking a hot shower, having food in the pantry, and enjoying the sun on our face.

Also, the end of 2023 and the anticipation of 2024 encourages us to set new goals and embrace personal growth, all of course, while trusting God's plan for our lives. Perhaps it's a career change, adopting healthier habits, or working on personal relationships, this time of year allows us reflection time to ponder the new year as a blank canvas.

And yes, setbacks occurred this past year, we've experienced pain, we may have had loved ones leave this earth, but we made it all

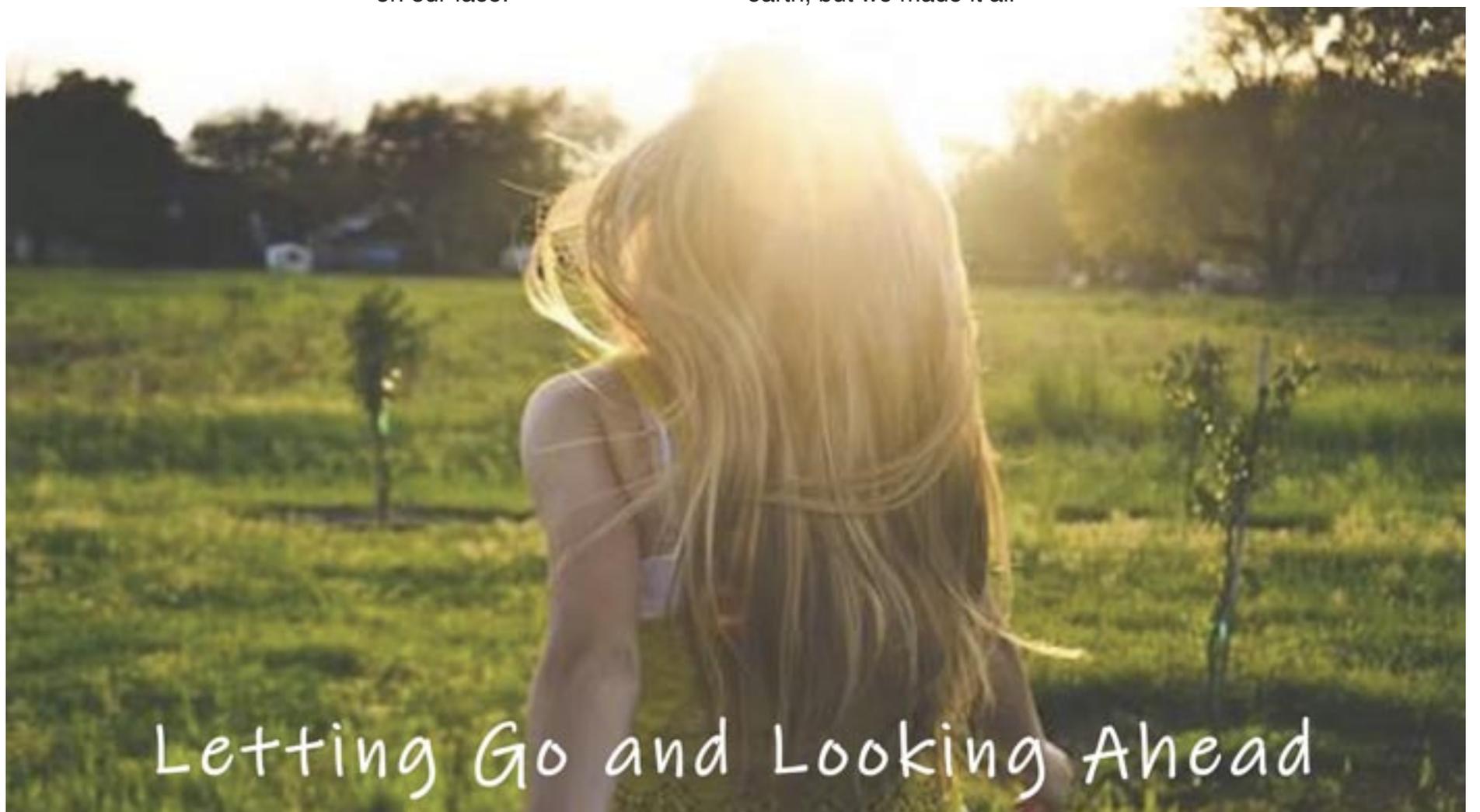
through by the grace of God. This is His invitation to let go of those things that are behind and press forward to those things that are ahead. Leaving behind what no longer serves its purpose allows us to grow.

So, as the calendar turns, we are reminded that we serve a God of second (and third and fourth...) chance. Since we serve a God who offers new mercies each morning, how much more does He offer us at the start of a new year?

So, let's celebrate our Lord who offers the gift of eternal hope as we embark on the journey ahead, confident that with God, all things are possible.

Wishing you a Blessed end of 2023 and favor, health, hope and joy in 2024.

XOXO,
Sweet Eyes



Get Growing, Ascension!

Sweet Potato Seed Potatoes Available

Sweet potatoes have a long history in Louisiana and have been grown commercially since the early 1900's. As a service to the residents of Louisiana, the LSU AgCenter's Sweet Potato Research Station produces foundation sweet potato seed annually. The Sweet Potato Research Station is located in Northeast Louisiana, near Chase, and is



Mariah Simoneaux

Potato Research Station website - www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/our_offices/research_stations/sweetpotato/.

Potatoes are available to purchase in 20 and 40 boxes. Prices range from \$16.00 to \$30.00 per box, depending on the variety selected. Please contact LSU AgCenter Agent



the only facility of its kind devoted solely to sweet potato research. These seed potatoes are to be bedded in the row to produce "slips" or cuttings, which are then transplanted to the field to produce the crop. All varieties are certified to be free of viruses. The seed potato varieties available for purchase this year are Beauregard B-63, Beauregard B-14, Orleans, Bayou Belle, Bonita, Muraski, Porto Rico, Sakura, and Burgundy. The top variety recommended for our area is Beauregard B-63. Additional variety information can be found on the Sweet

Mariah Simoneaux at MJSimoneaux@agcenter.LSU.edu or (225) 621-5799 for more information or to place an order. All orders should be placed no later than January 10, 2024. Potatoes will be ready for pick up in February/March.

Thinking about adding sweet potatoes to your holiday menu? Try this sweet potato pie recipe from the LSU AgCenter.

Sweet Potato Pie (serves 8)
2 cups mashed cooked or canned sweet potatoes
1 teaspoon allspice

2 tablespoons low-fat margarine
2 eggs, slightly beaten
3/4 cup sugar (if canned in syrup, use 1/2 cup sugar)
1 cup skim milk
2/3 cup evaporated skim milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 plain pastry shell
1/2 teaspoon ginger
3 tablespoons chopped pecans, optional

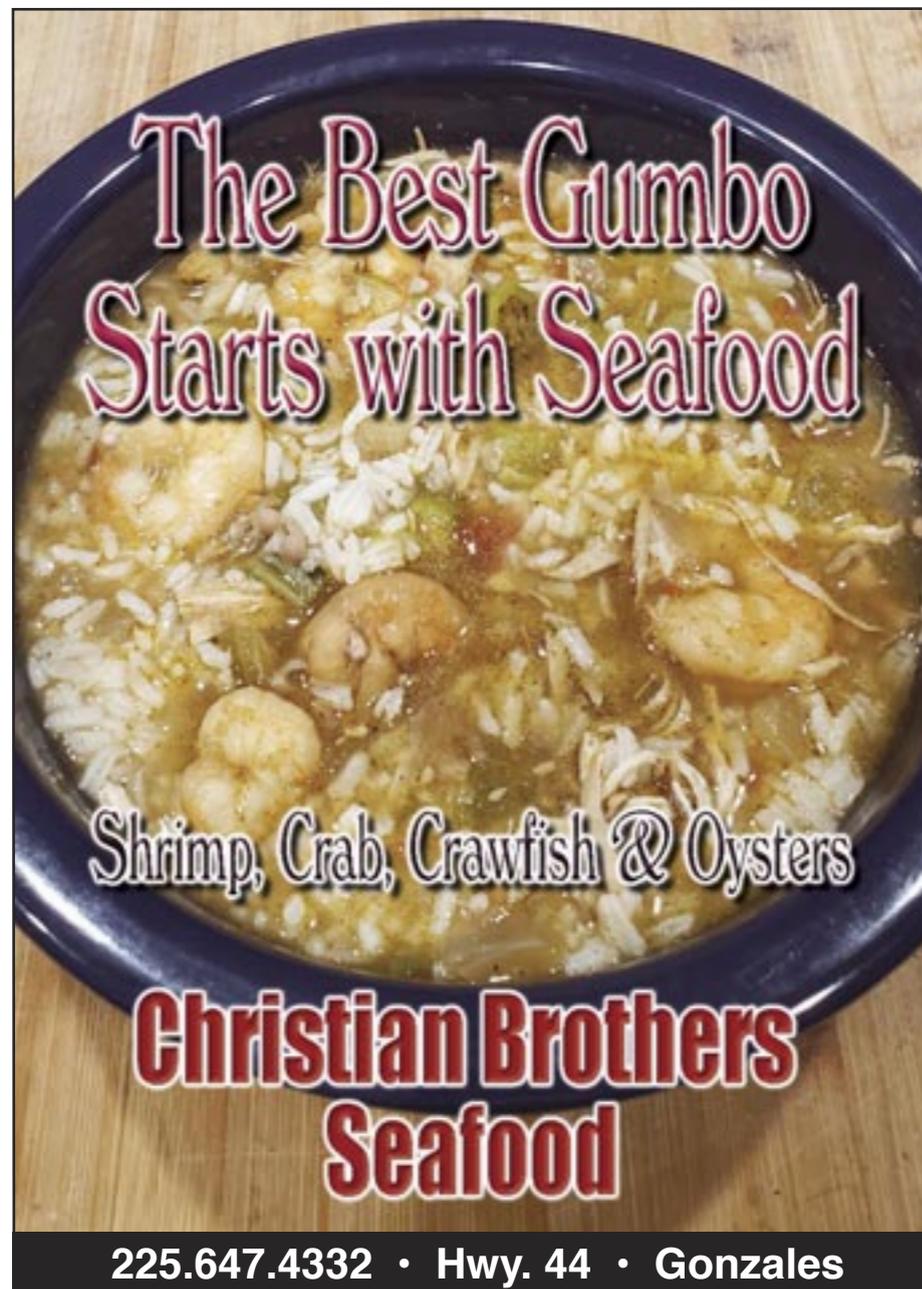
Cook sweet potatoes, or heat canned potatoes in syrup until most of the liquid has evaporated. Beat potatoes with mixer, if available. Thoroughly mix in margarine, sugar, salt and spices. Add eggs, milk, evaporated milk and vanilla; mix well. Do not scrape beaters; the fibers have matted together on the beater. Pour into 9-inch pastry-lined pie pan (have edges crimped high). Sprinkle pecans on top. Bake in hot oven at 425 degrees F for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350 degrees F

and bake 25-30 minutes longer or until firm around edges but still a little soft in center. Center will get firm as pie cools. Especially good with pecans.

Each serving provides: 319 calories, 13.5 grams fat, 3.1 grams saturated fat, 87 milligrams cholesterol, 49.9 grams carbohydrates, 1.3 grams fiber, 296 milligrams sodium, 4,885 IU vitamin A and 9 milligrams vitamin C.

Variation: Place pie mixture in a casserole dish or in orange cups and bake at 350 degrees F. Top with marshmallows and run under broiler.

Mariah Simoneaux is the Horticulture Agent serving Ascension and Assumption Parishes. For more information visit www.LSUAgCenter.com or contact Mariah at MJSimoneaux@agcenter.LSU.edu.



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Flag Retirement Ceremony Performed by VFW Post 3693 and Boy Scouts of America

VFW Post 3693 and Boy Scouts of America held a Flag Retirement Ceremony on Sunday, 26 November 2023 at our Post Home. The Scouts were represented by Pack 226, Crew 219, Troop 76, Troop 1848, and Troop 65. There were 17 Scouts and Leaders that participated. The VFW and Auxiliary had 10 members participate in this Ceremony, led by our Sr. Vice Commander, Joey Cernich,

and our Honor Guard Chairman, Chad Lynch. The Ceremony began with Crew Committee Member, David Karns reading the importance, rich history and tradition of respectfully retiring the American Flag once it has become worn and tattered. As he did so, veterans and scouts alike proceeded to place those worn and tattered flags into a fire prepared by the scouts and then rendered a salute in

appreciation of the service that the flag provided. Crew Advisor, Alan Berthelot, assisted throughout the afternoon keeping the flame going and advising members of each group on placing the flag in the flame. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Chad Lynch, provided thanks to all who attended and participated in the Ceremony. Additionally, Joey Cernich, showed his appreciation and

placed emphasis on the importance of conducting this Ceremony alongside the Scouts to ensure that the respect shown here today for the American Flag will last well into the future. The event was closed with the Committee Chair of Pack 226 and Scoutmaster to Troop 76, Rob Bourgeois, expressing his gratitude, as well.





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YOUR ESTATE MATTERS



By Linda Melancon

Ornaments and Legacies: A Guide to Holiday-Inspired Estate Planning for Young Families

As the holiday season approaches, families are gathering to celebrate traditions, create memories, and exchange

gifts. For young families, the holidays take on an added layer of magic as they navigate the joy of building traditions with each other and sometimes their little ones. It's a time of excitement, but it's also an opportune moment to reflect on the future and take steps to protect the growing assets of your budding family.

Just as we hang ornaments on the tree, starting with a few cherished pieces and gradually expanding our collection over the years, young families can view estate planning as a way to build a foundation that grows with time. At this stage, your young family may have fewer assets compared to more established households, but it's precisely the right time to start considering and protecting what you have and those you love. The core elements of estate planning lay the groundwork for your family's financial security and well-being.

Families in the newer generation navigate a unique set of challenges. Below is a

non-exhaustive list of scenarios this generation must consider when thinking about estate planning:

- **Limited financial resources compared to more established families.** A lack of excess resources can make it challenging to prioritize estate planning when immediate needs, such as housing, student loans, and childcare, demand attention.

- **Decisions about guardianship of young children.** This decision is emotionally charged and can be particularly challenging as it involves envisioning scenarios where both parents are unable to care for their children – a concern not shared by those with adult children.

- **Managing student loan debt.** Many young couples carry significant student loan debt. In the event of the death of a spouse, the responsibility for this debt can be transferred to the surviving spouse. Estate planning should consider how to manage and mitigate this financial burden.

- **Digital assets and online presence.** The younger generation tends to have a significant online presence with digital assets such as social media accounts, blogs, and cryptocurrency. A good estate plan needs to account for the management and distribution of these digital assets, which may require specific instructions and access details.

- **Changing financial goals.** Young couples may experience significant changes in their financial goals over a short period. Career advancements, property acquisitions, and growing family needs can alter the financial landscape, requiring adjustments to the estate plan to align with evolving objectives.

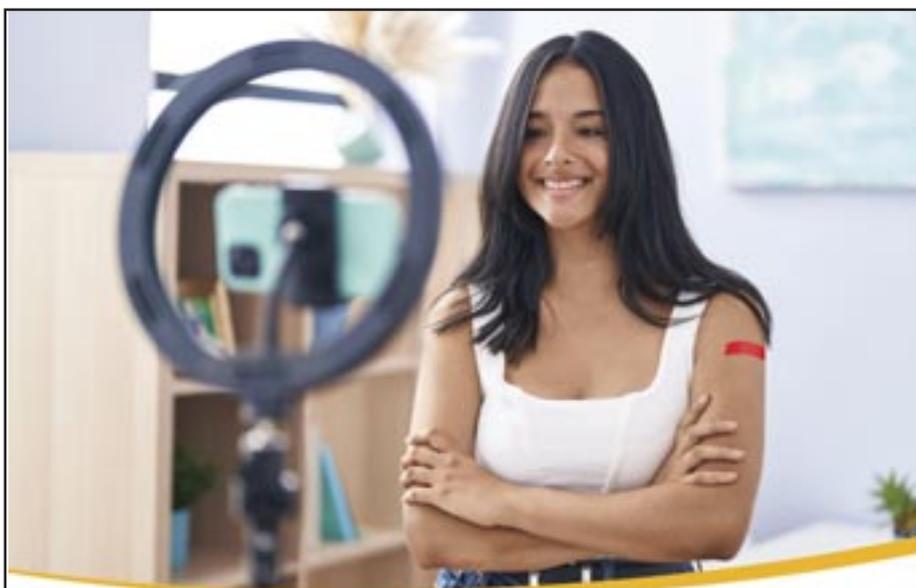
Much like the ornament collection that starts small and accumulates over the years, the beauty of estate planning for young families lies in its scalability. Begin with the essentials – a will, powers of attorney, and healthcare directives – and as your family grows, revisit and expand your plan to accommodate changing needs.

One of the most fundamental aspects of estate planning is creating a will. This document outlines your wishes regarding the distribution of assets and, more importantly, allows you to name a guardian for your children. As young parents, the thought of someone else caring for your children may be daunting, but it's a necessary consideration for their future in the event you or your spouse cannot. A will's instructions are like the ornaments hanging from your tree, guiding the overall direction of your décor.

In the spirit of the holidays, consider powers of attorney and healthcare directives like the lights on your tree. They add depth to your estate planning tree that ornaments can't provide alone. A power of attorney designates someone to handle your financial affairs if you're unable to do so, while healthcare directives specify your medical preferences. These documents ensure that your wishes are known and respected, providing a foundation for your family's well-being.

As you celebrate the holidays with family gatherings and festive decorations, consider estate planning as a practical and meaningful gift for your loved ones—a way to prioritize their well-being and ensure a secure future. Just as families and traditions evolve, so should our estate plans. Take a moment to revisit and update your estate plan, allowing it to adapt, similar to the growth of your family. If you're thinking about estate planning, consider seeking guidance from an estate planning specialist that can be by your side as your family changes to navigate the process effectively. It's a straightforward way to build a legacy of security and prosperity for your young family.

Ms. Melancon is an attorney with Legacy Estate & Elder Law of Louisiana, LLC with offices in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Lake Charles, LA. The primary focus of her practice is estate planning, probate, special needs planning, and elder law. For more information or to attend an upcoming estate planning seminar, call her office at (225) 744-0027.



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New Year's financial resolutions

Now that we've reached 2024, you might be thinking about your goals and hopes for the new year. But in addition to whatever personal resolutions you might make — volunteering, going to the gym more, learning a new language and others — why not make some *financial* resolutions, too?

Here are a few to consider:

- **Boost your retirement savings.**

If you can afford it, try to increase your contributions to your IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan. The more you put away in these accounts, the greater your chances of reaching your retirement goals. At a minimum, contribute enough to your 401(k) to earn your employer's match, if one is offered. And whenever your salary goes up, consider raising the amount you put in to your 401(k).

- **Reduce your debts.** It's not always easy to reduce your debts — but it's worth the effort. The lower your debt load, the greater your monthly cash flow. So, look for ways to consolidate debts or find other, possibly more productive, ways of using credit. And if you truly can't afford something that's nonessential, don't go into debt for it. "Live within your means" is an old piece of advice, but it's just as valid now as ever.

- **Build an emergency fund.** If you suddenly needed a major home or car repair, or received a large medical bill not fully covered by insurance, would you have the funds available? If not, you might be forced to dip into your

retirement accounts or other long-term investments. To avoid this possibility, try to build an emergency fund containing several months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account that's separate from the ones you use to meet your daily expenses. It can take a while to build such a fund, but if you make it a priority and contribute regular amounts each month, you can make good progress.

- **Avoid emotional decisions.**

Too many people overreact to events in the financial markets because they let their emotions get the better of them. If the market is temporarily down, it doesn't mean you need to sell investments to "cut your losses" — especially if these investments still have good fundamentals and are still appropriate for your portfolio. It can be hard to ignore market volatility, but you'll be better off if you focus on the long term and continue following an investment strategy that's designed to meet your needs.

- **Review your goals.** Over time, your goals may have changed. For example, while you once might have wanted to retire early, and planned for it, you may now find that you'd like to work a few more years. If that's the case, you may also need to adjust your financial and investment strategies.

- **Revisit your estate plans.** If you've married, divorced, remarried or added children to your family within the past few years, you may need to review the account titling and beneficiary designations on your 401(k) and other retirement assets, along with your estate-planning documents, such as your will or living trust. You might also need to revise these documents in other ways.

Of course, you may not be able to tackle all these resolutions at one time, but if you can work at them throughout the year, you can potentially brighten your financial outlook in 2024 — and beyond.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC.



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Toys to Support Play and Language.

With the gift giving season well on its way, one of the biggest questions of the year is on all of our minds... What should I get my child, grandchild, or nephew for the holidays? Toys aren't meant to just keep your child busy. Playing supports language skills, social skills, problem solving, emotional awareness, and more! So, what toys do I need to buy? Recommended toys are going to vary based on play type. There are three main play types.

The first is cause and effect play. This is when a child learns their actions cause something to happen. I'm sure we can all remember our first encounter with a jack-in-the-box. It was then that we quickly realized that the action of turning a lever was going to lead us to an exciting fright! This is what cause and effect play is all about. Other examples include dumping things out of containers, pushing a button to make a toy light up, or pushing a car down a ramp.



*Alexandra Freeman M.C.D., CF-SLP
 Clinical Fellow – Speech Language Pathologist*

Therefore, suggested toys for this stage include pop up toys, car slide sets, nesting/stacking toys, ball mazes, wind-up toys, etc.

The second is pretend play. Oh, how we hated when our younger siblings would copy everything we do! Little did we know they were engaging in pretend play! This play stage is characterized by children mimicking daily activities or scenarios they see or experience. Examples of this include feeding a doll with a bottle, putting a toy phone to their ear, stirring a pot with a spoon, or flying an airplane. To encourage this type of play, you can purchase toys

that come in "sets" such as farm/zoo animals, car washing station, cooking/cleaning sets, construction/train sets, doctor/vet sets, and more.

The third is imaginative play, which takes play to the next level. Remember those lemonade stands you hosted as a kid every summer? Or the mud pies you sold from the backyard? You guessed it! You were engaging in imaginative play. This play is characterized by make-believe scenarios. A cardboard box becomes a spaceship, suddenly the dinosaurs are taking over the Lego city, and the kitchen becomes a fancy restaurant... To stimulate this play stage, I encourage parents to use the same toy sets, but do some combining. For example, the farm animals can join us for the tea party or dinosaurs can be the guardians to the princess castle.



Of course, there are thousands of toys that I could recommend for your child to support their developmental milestones. However, it is important to remember that it's not always about WHAT toy you buy but HOW you play with the toy. I always encourage parents to spend time playing with their child and modeling age-appropriate sentences. As speech therapists, we generally say that for each year of life, your child should be including that many words in their sentences. For example, with a one-year-old I can push a car and model the word "go" or "beep", but with a 4-year-old I could cook up a spicy meal and model 4-word sentences: "My food is hot!". Overall, whatever the age, whatever the toy, just have fun and know that you are helping your child develop by playing.



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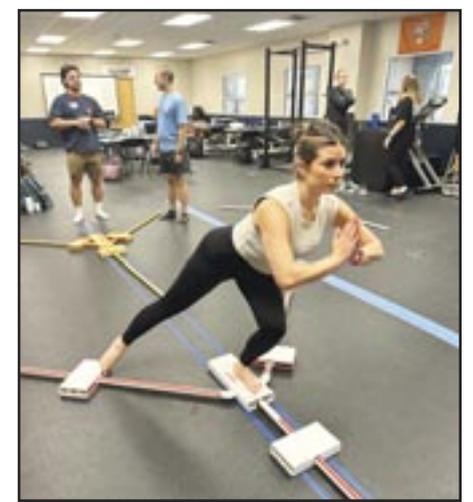
effective techniques to alleviate discomfort and enhance mobility. Whether you're recovering from an injury, managing a chronic condition, or seeking relief from day-to-day aches and pains, the skilled therapists at Action Therapy & Wellness are committed to helping you regain control over your life.

Our Prevention and Long-Term Wellness:

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risk of injuries and chronic conditions. By investing in physical therapy now, you're investing in a healthier, more resilient future.

As the new year unfolds, make a commitment to take control of your health, and what better way to start than with physical therapy at Action Therapy & Wellness? Their commitment to personalized care, pain management, improved mobility, preventive strategies, and holistic well-being makes them a standout choice for those seeking transformative changes in their health journey. Embrace the opportunity to live a healthier, more vibrant life in the coming year and beyond.



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Restore Youthful Eyes: Nonsurgical Solutions for Eye Tightening

Dr. Z reveals the secrets to reviving tired eyes.

One of the most telling signs of aging is often found in the eyes, where fine lines, under-eye puffiness, and the dreaded “jelly roll” can make an appearance all too soon. The good news? You don’t need to go under the knife to turn back the clock. A range of cutting-edge nonsurgical treatments now available, offering women in this age group the opportunity to tighten and rejuvenate the delicate skin around their eyes. Baton Rouge, LA dermatologist Ann Zedlitz, MD says the latest nonsurgical treatments can help rejuvenate and enhance the delicate eye area to preserve their natural beauty.

Understanding Common Concerns and Causes

Dr. Zedlitz explains, “Fine lines and the muscular ridge beneath the eyes are known as the ‘jelly roll’ or ‘under-eye bunching.’ We usually notice this concern in our 30s as dark circles, puffy bags, and the beginning of the skin thinning around the eye area.” For some individuals, this aging process can manifest even earlier due to



factors like wearing contact lenses or suffering from allergies, which can lead to excess rubbing of the eyes and skin thinning.

Genetics also play a significant role in how our eyes age, making it essential to consider your family’s eye-aging patterns. Furthermore, sun damage can accelerate the breakdown of collagen and elastin fibers in the skin around the eyes, hastening the aging process.

Upneeq: A Quick Fix

Upneeq is a prescription eye drop that offers a quick and easy solution for droopy eyelids. Dr. Zedlitz explains, “It works by stimulating an involuntary eyelid muscle called the Muller’s Muscle to contract, providing a 1mm lift.” While the lift may seem minor, it can make a significant difference in the appearance of your eyes, particularly in photographs. It’s an ideal option when you need to look your best for special occasions.

Botox and Filler: Smooth and Soften

Neurotoxin treatments like Botox Cosmetic or Dysport are recommended by Dr. Zedlitz to lift the brows and open the eyes, reducing the appearance of fine lines. Additionally, fillers such as the new Restylane Eyelight, FDA-approved for the under-eye area, can replace lost volume in the tear trough area. Dr. Zedlitz points out that “fillers under the eyes should be done every 8 months to a year, but it’s better to perform skin-tightening procedures like Morpheus8 or Plasma Pen first.”

Plasma Pen: Precision and Collagen Boost

Dr. Zedlitz introduces the Plasma Pen, a precision plasma arc that creates micro-trauma on the skin’s surface. This micro-trauma engages the body’s natural wound-healing process, resulting in increased collagen production and firmer, smoother skin. However, it’s crucial to pre-treat the skin. “With any

heat-based procedure, if the skin is not pre-treated with hydroquinone, the risk of pigmentation of the skin is higher,” says Dr. Zedlitz. “I pre-treat all my patients two weeks prior to plasma pen with a hydroquinone prescription cream.”

Morpheus8: Minimal Downtime, Maximum Results

Morpheus8 is a minimally invasive, bipolar, radio frequency tissue treatment known for its minimal downtime and impressive results. Dr. Zedlitz recommends a series of three treatments spaced one month apart, with the frequency determined by age. “Morpheus8 is excellent for treating under-eye festoons and dark circles,” she notes. “Festoons are fluid-filled pouches that occur in the midface. They can often be attributed to genetics, sun damage, and the natural aging process.” Patients may experience some redness and swelling on the day of the procedure, which typically fades within 24 hours.

CO2 Laser: Gold Standard for Wrinkle Reduction

While CO2 laser resurfacing requires more downtime, it remains a powerful tool for addressing lax skin around the eyes. Dr. Zedlitz explains that this procedure uses laser beams to vaporize the epidermis while heating the dermis, stimulating collagen production. “Make sure you are in the hands of a board-certified dermatologist or plastic surgeon when receiving CO2 laser,” she advises. “The skin around the eyes is thin, so a series of three light CO2 laser treatments is recommended spaced out four to six weeks. Your skin will take about 10 to 14 days to heal.”

Ann Zedlitz, M.D.
Board Certified Dermatologist
"Skin Boss"

These nonsurgical treatments offer a range of options for individuals looking to rejuvenate their eye area without undergoing surgery. Dr. Zedlitz emphasizes that the choice of treatment should be based on individual needs and concerns, and consulting with a qualified dermatologist is crucial for achieving the best results. Trusting your dermatologist’s expertise ensures that you choose the most suitable treatment for your unique needs, helping you put your best face forward.

Call today to schedule your Cosmetic Consultation 225-778-7540.



CHC Closet and Pantry

“Seeking to Glorify God by Helping People”

Follow us on FB @ CHC Closet and Pantry. Thank you and God bless.

The holidays are upon us and at CHC Closet and Pantry we are full of the holiday spirit and busier than ever. We have so many people to thank this month. At Thanksgiving, we were able to bless seventeen families with turkey dinners thanks to the people at The Haven and Volunteer Ascension.



Several of the Middle school Beta Clubs are getting together and having drives for us. Their slogan is “Community over



New Song Church blesses us often with paper products and diapers. Today we received a much needed shelf from them.



freezer.

We also received a very large food donation from an individual who wishes to remain anonymous. Since we can't thank this person publicly, I hope they see this and realize how grateful we are.

We were blessed with a very large food donation from the Rotary Club. They even delivered it to us and unloaded it. They are a great group of people.

competition”. We have already received food from Gonzales Middle School and socks from Carr Academy. These children are being taught to help others. With these kids in our community, our future looks a little brighter.

The Bayou Ballers football league has gifted us with a large food donation.

Raising Canes held a fundraiser for the closet and pantry. We don't have a total yet but I'm sure it will be great. We will use the cash donation to purchase meats for our

As always, we are grateful for the people who provide our building and Christ Healing Community Church. We thank the community for the support. A special thank you goes to our volunteers. These ladies work hard and we couldn't do this without them.



The ladies clubs at St. Mark and Holy Rosary Catholic churches brought us hygiene items and a cash donation. Someone promised to match what her family donated. The kids in the family were doing chores to raise money to help out.



St. Theresa food bank blessed us with a donation of many beans and rice.



Jambalaya Festival

Kylie Trosclair

Jambalaya Festival Queen 2023

Jammin' with Friends

Hey everyone, my name is Kylie Anna Trosclair and I was crowned the 2023 Miss Gonzales Jambalaya Queen on June 10th, 2023. I've been pretty busy traveling the state promoting a festival that's so close to my heart. Here's part of my journey:



St. James Parish Day Events
July 9th, 2023

My first event as Miss Gonzales Jambalaya was an eventful one. I traveled just 20 minutes down Airline Highway to St. James Parish for their Day Events. My day began at the Welcome Center where the visiting queens presented their Zapp's chips bags, decorated based on their festival, to be judged. Next, we journeyed to LSR and played in the sugar mountain where we learned about how significant the sugar industry is to our great state. Afterwards, we shopped til we dropped at Roussel's Antiques. I even found a little jambalaya mug! My favorite part of the day was our visit to the Perique Tobacco Farm. Our day continued at the Fast Food Farm with a delicious meal that was meant for me "jambalaya" of course! Lastly, we ended our day across the

Mighty Mississippi River to tour the beautiful Oak Alley Plantation.



St. James Sugar Pageant
August 12th, 2023

On August the 12th, I headed over to Lutchter High School for the 70th Anniversary of the St. James Pageant. Kami Hymel and Briley Holley joined our festival queen family. I recalled one of my favorite childhood memories when my Granny took me to the St. James pageant when I was just a little girl. It was a full circle moment attending the pageant this year as a festival queen. What made the night even more memorable was that I wore my cousin, Davi Weber's, dress to the event to commemorate the anniversary and celebrate her, the 2015 Miss St. James Sugar Queen.

Gueydan Duck Festival Senior Pageant
August, 26th, 2023

My next unforgettable weekend was



when I flew on down to Gueydan, Louisiana to attend the Gueydan Duck Festival Pageant. Despite it being a hot day, I had some of the best lemonade from around! We welcomed the new Gueydan Duck Festival Queen, Alaina Barras, to our queen family.



Orange Met Gala, Sleepover, Day Events, and Pageant
September 8th-9th, 2023

A few weekends later, we drove down to Plaquemines Parish for their Met Gala, sleepover, day events, and queens' selection. I had such a great time making new friends, meeting old and new queens, and learning more about the importance of citrus farming to our state. Orange pepper jelly should be a staple in every household. My Met Gala outfit was the perfect depiction of the festival that I represent, a jambalaya pot with flames. Thanks to my pageant directors for making my Met Gala outfit, guiding and supporting me every step of the way.

Sugarcane Festival Weekend
September 23rd-24th, 2023

Sugarcane Festival Weekend was nothing short of sweet. Personally, this was one my favorite weekends! The event began



at the festival, where we listened and danced to some great music. Then we ventured on over to a sugarcane farm where we learned how sugarcane was harvested. The pageant, coronation, and ball were amazing unforgettable events. The weekend ended with mass and a parade throughout the beautiful town of New Iberia. I was able to learn so much about the sugarcane industry, an industry so significant to my grandparents who live in St. James Parish. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to Avery, but we welcomed Kami Hymel as she competed and won the 80th Queen Sugar title!



Gumbo Weekend
September 30th-October 1st, 2023

At the end of September, I traveled to Bridge City for Gumbo Weekend. The day began with an airboat tour where I got to hold my highschool mascot, a gator! Later that evening we were presented in train and mantle at the ball. At the event I introduced myself as the 2023 Jambalaya queen. How proud I am to represent my hometown, Gonzales, LA, and the festival that I adore.

Tangipahoa Parish Fair Day Events and Festival
October 7th, 2023

On October 7th, as a Louisiana Fairs & Festivals Queen, I journeyed to Tangipahoa Parish for



Tangipahoa Parish Fair Day Events and Festival



Talent After Dark, Holy Rosary Church

the Tangipahoa Parish Fair. We celebrated Faith Liuzza's reign all whilst touring the new fairgrounds. We made crafts, got our faces painted, walked around Pioneer Town, and bobbed for apples with a twist (with our feet and blindfolded). Laughter and love for our festivals continues to bring the festival queens together.



Cotton Weekend
October 14th-15th, 2023

I was so grateful to be invited to attend Cotton Weekend. We celebrated Amber Borne's reign, and watched Amelia Mickal be crowned as the 69th Cotton Queen! During the weekend, I visited the Acadian Cotton Farm where I picked cotton, learned about the growing process, attended the pageant, walked around the festival, and attended mass. I even won a prize where my estimation skills came in handy. I guessed the weight of a bundle of cotton and tied for 2nd place with Alexandra Workman.



Rice Festival and Pageant
October 21st, 2023

Another significant event that I attended involved an industry that is extremely important to my festival-RICE! Jambalaya can be cooked with beef, sausage, pork, or even oysters,



yet it cannot be complete without rice! The Rice Festival was one of the biggest festivals I attended. I loved being able to see people come together over a crop that runs their city. We gave a warm welcome to the 86th Rice Queen, Isabella Hardy. During our day, we attended the pageant, a reception with the new queen for lunch, watched a rice mill in action, and rode in the parade (the biggest parade I have ever seen).



Boucherie Festival
October 22nd, 2023

I was up bright and early the next morning for Sorrento's Boucherie Festival! I learned how cracklin is made and judged. We were able to taste the top 3 winners' cracklin. I even learned a lot about jambalaya, including the small details such as; picking out the right grains of rice and the tenderness of meat to present to the judges. We were also introduced to my sweet friend, Lily Pritchard, as the 2023 Miss Boucherie Queen!

Talent After Dark, Holy Rosary Church
October 26th, 2023

At my church's festival, I had the honor of presenting awards to the contestants at the "2023 Talent After Dark." All of the contestants blew me away! There was so much talent.



Sicilian Ball
October 28th, 2023

Continuing my queen travels, I went to Independence for the Sicilian Heritage Festival Ball. We celebrated my sweet friend who always makes everyone laugh and smile, Olivia Lee! The

Sicilians really know how to cook delicious food!



St. James Sugar Reception
October 29th, 2023

That same weekend, I headed to the Felicity Plantation to watch the new St. James Sugar Queen, Elaina Ruiz, be crowned, and celebrate our 80th Sugar Queen, Kami Hymel, in her own parish. I was so blessed to have been invited to such a beautiful event!



My 20th Birthday!
November 10th, 2023

On November 10th, I celebrated my 20th birthday with family and friends. This day also marked 5 months into my reign. On that day I reflected on all of the great opportunities and blessing that I have been given.

Amite Oyster Baby Pageant
November 11th, 2023

This was my first event where I was a judge and not a contestant. I never realized how difficult both jobs could be. Judging the Amite Oyster Baby Pageant with two of



my rhinestone sisters, Zharia Lemar and Kami Hymel was extremely fun and challenging. I saw beauty and personality in every little girl that walked across the stage. Following the pageant, the Amite Oyster Board took us out to lunch at The Boston. I tried oysters for the first time, and they are now my favorite food!



Gonzales Veterans Day Parade
November 12th, 2023

I was extremely grateful to represent the Jambalaya Festival Association during the Gonzales Veterans Day Parade. It was such an honor to thank them for their service. Meeting a 104 year old veteran will be a memory that I will never forget.



Kansas City Christmas Train
November 30th, 2023

Most recently, my teen queen, Addie, and I stayed close to home to sell sweets at a Christmas event. The Kansas City Christmas Train came to Gonzales! It was so much fun spending time with all of the JFA members, meeting so many kids, riding on the police golf cart, and seeing the Christmas spirit be brought to my hometown!

I'm gonna be Jammin' with friends around the state and I will give you an update real soon.

Anyone who is interested in becoming the next Teen or Miss Gonzales Jambalaya Queen, contact Katie Battaglia at gonzalesjambalayadirector@gmail.com

Country Kitchen in Gonzales Celebrates Its Dedicated Staff

The Country Kitchen in Gonzales has been a local favorite for many years and as this year comes to a close, Skipper McInnis reflects on the incredible success of this southern food restaurant. Skipper bought the place in 2001 and has seen exponential growth in the past several years. Skipper and his wife, Ginger, are hard working owners and you will often see them both doing their part to

ensure every customer is well fed and taken care of. Ginger retired from teaching from the Ascension Parish School system over 12 years ago and you can now find her at the restaurant almost daily working the cash register or carting stacks of dishes from the back. She has been keeping the facebook page updated over the last few years with the daily menu as well as pictures of the larger groups that dine with them throughout the week. While Skipper is very much a hands-on owner, he will be the first to tell you that he could not open the doors without the incredible, hard working staff that is employed there.

As an all you can eat buffet every dish has to be prepared that morning in abundance; cooked from scratch, with the love and attention that is needed for that "like grandma makes it" flavor that the customers rave about. It's not an easy feat with such variety and an increasing number of patrons coming through those doors. The head cook, Phylliss Morris, has been with the restaurant for over 20 years and knows a thing or two about southern food. Her son, Raymond Morris, started working in the kitchen years ago as the



Skipper & Ginger



Terrance Ealey celebrating his 20 years of dedicated service with an award from the Sheriff's office of Ascension

main fry cook and now helps to manage the kitchen staff and bring that consistency to the daily buffet that customers expect. It's all hands on deck during lunch and every one on the kitchen staff knows how to move and work hard; keeping the buffett stocked, dishes replenished, and those fryers going non stop. You'd be

hard pressed to find a staff more dedicated and proud of the work they do everyday.

Quite a few of the staff at the Country Kitchen have been with the company for a very long time. One very recognizable face is Terrance Ealey (as seen on the cover). Terrance will be



Head Cook Phylliss Morris and Kitchen Manager Raymond Morris



Bussers; Corbin, Terrance, and Anthony



Skipper & Ginger McInnis with Terrance, Amy Shamburger and Sheriff Bobby Webre



Owners Skipper & Ginger McInnis with manager, Amy Shamburger

Carolina Panthers fan, Terrance, was forced to go to the Superdome vs Saints. He didn't want to mess up his perfect attendance.

celebrating 20 years in January 2024, as the busser. In that time he has never missed a single day of work! Well, there was that one time they had to insist he take a Sunday to attend a Panther's vs Saints game. Terrance is a huge Carolina Panthers fan and a customer invited him to join them in their suite at the superdome to

watch the game. He initially turned the offer down as he didn't want to miss work, but Skipper insisted that he go and told him he would clock him in and out so that he was still working his shift, but that his job that day was to represent the Country Kitchen in the Superdome. Terrance reluctantly accepted that offer. Customers adore Terrance's genuine smile and love for the work that he does. The Gonzales Sheriff's Department came out to recognize his hard work and dedication with a certificate of appreciation as he celebrates his 20 years of service on staff. Terrance is an essential member of the Country Kitchen family and a beloved member of the Ascension community.

task finding reliable and friendly staff who can take care of the needs of hundreds of customers within the short time frame that the doors are open. The



Wait Staff Sunday Crew: Hayleigh, Mandy, Kenzie, Carlie, Kathleen

Getting customers seated quickly and efficiently has always been Skipper's top priority. It's no easy



50's themed dining room



Back Row: Terrance, Corbin, Anthony, Skipper, Akeam, Raymond, Middle Row: Brittany, Robert, Mandy, Katie, Ginger, LaToya, Front Row: Kenzie, Amy, Kim, Alexis, Phylliss



The Moran Sisters have all been on the staff over the last two decades. Kacey, Kellie, Kim, Kristy, Katie



The Louisiana Room

restaurant has always operated as a “family” operation. If you have dined with them over the last three decades you likely know the faces of many of the wait staff. You may even think many of them are related.

You would be correct on a few. Over the years many have joined the staff; adding more wait staff and even a second busser to keep up their reputation of fast and friendly service. Sundays have offered a great opportunity for highschool students to gain great on the job training and have been a wonderful addition to the

staff according to Skipper.

Skipper and Ginger have been tasked the past year with creating new spaces to add more tables to keep up with the influx of customers. A once dark and closed off storage room has become the now spacious “Louisiana Room” that can seat up to 25 people. It has become a favorite meeting spot for larger groups to all sit together, especially on Sundays. Ginger has reluctantly given up more of her antique shop, which at one time covered the majority of the front of the store. Recently she

cleared out space to create the now 50’s themed room, where the McInnis’ showcase their old Frostop jukebox and many of the memorabilia from their days as owner of that restaurant franchise. Adjacent to that is the “Travel Room” where Skipper likes to display photographs from his various travels, a passion of his. These areas that were once not even part of the restaurant have now become filled with customers enjoying a quick and hearty meal in the middle of the day. As the business continues to grow more renovations are in the works to allow for better flow throughout. Skipper has recently brought back his eldest daughter, Amy Shamburger, as general manager to help facilitate this growth. Skipper takes a lot of pride in being able to keep prices low during a time when everything else has increased, he says that due to the increase in customers he’s able to operate at the same low cost and hopes that this will continue.

this past year they sponsored many school activities at Dutchtown, East Ascension, St. Amant, and Carr’s Academy as well as the Big Dreams Theatre Program and The Danse Difference Competition Team. This Christmas they will once again be helping to host the “Ascension Community Christmas Dinner” where local community members will be cooking and serving dishes to anyone who wants to attend on Christmas Day for a complimentary meal. The restaurant helped to host this event from 2011 - 2019, each year serving upwards of 400 people. You can find more info on this event, as well as daily menu options on the Country Kitchen Gonzales fb page. The Country Kitchen in Gonzales is serving customers for lunch between 10:30am to 2pm on Sundays through Friday at 615 E. Ascension St. Ginger and Skipper McInnis look forward to many more years serving this community.

The McInnis’ are always looking for opportunities to help serve their community. The Country Kitchen likes to sponsor local programs throughout the year;



Skipper’s Travel Room



Wait Staff Week Day Crew: Mandy, Kenzie, Alexis, Kim, Katie



East Ascension Sportsman's League

Letter from president -
Mike Lambert

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The years go by quicker and quicker as time goes on. This year is a special one for me. At

the end of this year, I will retire. I've been a metal worker all my life. Now I will have more time to fish and enjoy the outdoors. I am also retiring as president of the Sportsman's League, so this will be my last article. I really want to thank all of you who have read my articles and have commented about them to me. Anyone who knows me, knows I am not a writer. I enjoyed telling y'all about the events of the Sportsman's League and the activities my family and I had fishing around the waters of our state. I hope you enjoy the next president as well.

I have one last fishing story. It has been a tradition of mine since my son Robert was a little kid to go fishing on Black Friday instead of shopping. This year was no different. The weather wasn't great. It was cloudy and windy and we didn't catch much so we went back Saturday too. We did better. The wind was down a little bit compared to Friday. We caught some nice trout. The new limit went into effect on November 20th. Now trout must be thirteen inches long and only fifteen fish per person. It's not a bad deal though. There is a lot of good filets on a limit of thirteen and above fish, We ate

good! Be on the lookout for the new limits on red fish coming soon. I know some people don't care for the new limits, but remember it's good for the future of our great fishery.

Again, I'd like to thank Ascension Magazine and all of their readers. I look forward to continuing my support of the Sportsman's League in another position besides president. Join us at our next meeting.

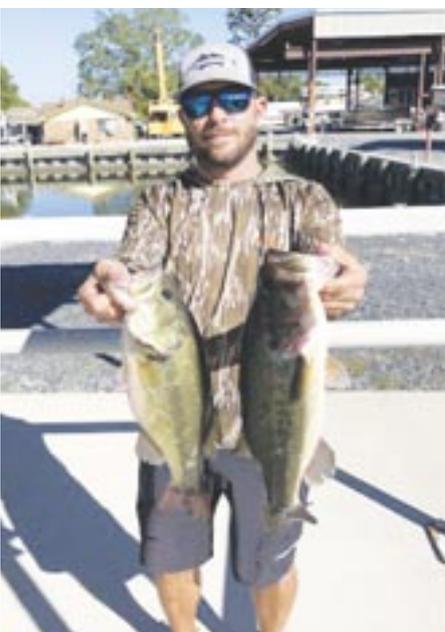
Thanks for your time,

Mike Lambert

EASL Bass Club News

The EASL Bass Club met in November at Dirk Anderson's home to close out the 2023 season.

During the meeting, the Club held elections for Officers and Board members.



Jason Beck ... Angler of the Year

Dirk Anderson was elected for a second term as President. George Valentine was elected for another term as Secretary/Treasurer.

Board members for 2024 are Tim Fatheree, Corey Guitreau, Julien Day and Jim Hebert.

The members also voted to have our 2024 "two-day away tournament" at Caney Lake. The Officers and Board members will set the dates for the Tournaments in early January. That information will be communicated as soon as it is available.

The Club fishes a monthly tournament schedule. Anyone interested in joining the club for 2024 can contact an Officer on Board member for information. Congratulations to Jason Beck for winning "Angler of the Year" for 2023.




Eric Lambert
Owner

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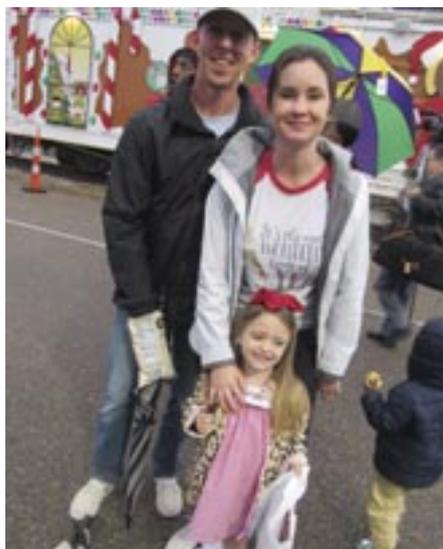
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We Feature Chevron Lubricants

ASL Meeting December 18th at 7:00PM upstairs at Cabela's.

The Christmas Train Rides Again!





Ascension Parish Chemical Industry



Community Awareness and Emergency Response

- Air Liquide
- Air Products
- BASF
- Carline Fleet
- CF Industries
- CN Railroad
- Veolia
- Eastman Chemical
- Enlink Midstream
- Enterprise Pipeline
- Hexion
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- Nova Chemicals
- Oxychem
- Nutrien
- Pipeline Technology
- Linde
- Chevron (REG)
- Rubicon
- Shell Geismar
- Syngenta
- TotalEnergies
- Univar
- Westlake
- Carville Energy
- Exxon Mobile Pipeline



City of Gonzales Tree Lighting





The Arizona Kid Saves Christmas or Jayden Daniels, If You Please

by Bill Delaune

“Jack Daniels, if you please-Knock me to my knees. You can kill the pain-It’s driving me insane..”

David Allan Coe.

Scene-A

South Louisiana living room on Christmas Eve.

Characters- The Kids-all ages from 1-92-in all shapes and sizes.

Uncle Bill- A disillusioned dreamer who has grown so old and confused that the last porn he saw was “Debby Does Dialysis”.

Act I

Kids (excitedly)-Uncle Bill’s here! Uncle Bill’s here! Come and tell us one of your famous Christmas stories, Uncle Bill!

Kid 1- But how did you get here, Uncle Bill? I didn’t hear your noisy ’49 Manure Truck pull up.

Bill- Well, in the spirit of the season, I came by sled this year. A Sainly man named Dennis Allen said he needed to get out of town and he did have experience handling a dog team. Come to think about it-he did seem to be leading a parade of rather angry people with bags on their heads.

Kid 1- Are you going to tell us about the time you and Aunt Diane and Aunt Liz took the family car to Moonlight Inn on Christmas Eve and didn’t get home until the next morning and all the younger siblings’ gifts were in the trunk?

Kid 2- No, tell us about the Great Bottle Rocket War when y’all set the pasture on fire and the fire department had to come out on Christmas Day.

Kid 3- I want to hear the one



about when y’all stole all the neighbors’ reindeer and put them in compromising positions by Highway 73.

Bill- Now, boys and girls, those are some oldies but goodies to be sure, but this year’s story has a more current theme-including a young man who suddenly develops super powers.

Kid 1- Does he come from another planet like Superman?

Bill- No, that was Joe Burrow. But Joe does show up later in this tale. So if you let me spice up my egg nog with a little Jayden-oops, foreshadowing-Jack Daniels, we’ll get started. Once upon a time out in the Arizona desert, there was a young football player who called himself “That Kid” on social media. Because of his cool demeanor and his rambling , gambling style of play, everyone just called him “The Arizona Kid”.

Kid 2- Wasn’t that an old Western movie?

Bill- It sure was and this Kid was every bit as fearless as

his gunslinger namesake.

Soon the Kid grew tired of the lack of challenges out west and decided to move to the Southeast where the Big Guns hung out.

Kid 3- Who were some of the Big Guns, Uncle Bill?

Bill- Well, there was “Night Train Lane” from Mississippi, “Get Smart” from Georgia and the notorious “Slick Nick” from Alabama-just to name a few. But Arizona settled right here in Louisiana because he had some pretty fast guys around him to help him get even better. That and he liked the food.

And in his very first year, he gunned down “Night Train” and the nefarious “Slick Nick” to win favor with even the most fickle members of the hard-to-please fan base. But some were still not impressed mumbling, “He runs too much” and, “He can’t hit any long shots”.

So after losing to “Get Smart” in the big showdown, The Kid went to work-day and

night-to improve on his weaknesses.

Kid 1- Is this where he gets bit by a radioactive spider or something?

Bill- Not quite. But it was like a bomb had gone off when he returned the following year. The Kid was firing bombs from all over the place with an accuracy few could remember. The only gunslinger folks from that part of the country that even compared was “Ohio Joe” who had blasted his way to a National Championship in 2019.

Kid 2- Did the Arizona Kid take his team to the Promised Land, Uncle Bill.

Bill- Well, he certainly was good enough to. But alas, the defense around him seemed to be rehearsing for jobs as Walmart greeters as they just waved as people passed by. Still, the Kid kept his team in every contest with an arm of Thor and the speed of Mercury. He was even staying even with “Slick Nick’s” band of barbarians before one targeted his only weak spot-his chin, which his mother had neglected to dip in the magical Colorado River when he was a boy.

Kid 3- Uncle Bill, I think you’re drifting off into mythology a bit. Maybe you need to put a little nectar and ambrosia-the so called drink of the gods-in that egg nog.

Bill- Maybe I am mixing some metaphors here but the hyperbole was real when-despite three losses caused by his matador defense-the Arizona Kid was still voted “Gunslinger of the Year” and given a huge trophy. One of the previous winners-a Texan

who once went by the name of “Rolling Ricky” but had since hung up his guns and gone into-well, let’s just call it farming-congratulated the Kid and left him with a cryptic message.

“If you rub that trophy before you go to bed, you will be visited by three ghosts tonight who have a message for you,” Ricky whispered.

Kid 1- Is that Ricky Williams that the Saints traded all their draft picks for in 1999?

Kid 2- The one who took a picture in a wedding dress?

Kid 3- The one who left the NFL and went off to India to meet the Maharishi?

Bill- Well, Ricky was always a little different. Anyway, the Arizona Kid said, “What the heck” and rubbed the trophy when he went to bed. At midnight he was awakened by two men in LSU uniforms and a cowboy in a white hat.

“Who are you?” the Kid stammered.

“Why don’t you recognize us?” said the large man in the number 20 uniform. “I’m Billy Cannon and this is Joe Burrow-the other two trophy winners from LSU. We’re here to give you some advice.”

Kid 1- Wait a minute-Burrow isn’t dead.

Bill- No, but his arm is-at least for this year. Cannon sat down on the bed and began. “You’re a great football player and a wonderful human being, Kid. And we’re here to make sure you use your fame to help out others. For example, after I made a terrible mistake, I became the dentist at Angola and treated prisoners who would have gone without any dental care.”

Burrow stepped out of the shadows. “And I raised more money for the food bank in my home town than they’d ever thought possible. Lots of folks had a Merry Christmas and no one went hungry.”

“I’ll do my best,” promised the Kid. “But who’s the cowboy?”

“Why I’m Roy Rogers-King of the Cowboys. I was the original Arizona Kid in an old Western many years ago. For almost five decades I was a wholesome role model for kids all over the country.”

“All noble causes, for sure,” admitted Arizona. “But what can I do?”

“Ease their pain,” droned the three visitors in unison. And then they were gone.”

Kid 2- Uncle Bill, by my count, you have mixed elements of mythology, “Aladdin’s Lamp”, “A Christmas Carol” and maybe “Field of Dreams” into one rambling monologue. Are you sure you haven’t been sampling “Rolling Rickey’s” herbal treatments?

Bill- Well, I guess the story did take some strange twists. But there is a happy ending. After much thought the Arizona Kid decided to stay in his adopted state and rescue their professional team who had fallen on hard times. The New Orleans Saints drafted him in the first round and the fans felt their town had been saved just like Gary Cooper in “High Noon” or Cleavon Little in “Blazing Saddles”.

They even named a drink after him on Bourbon Street-the “Jayden Daniels”-made with Jack Daniels and Arizona mescal-guaranteed to make the Saints look good-no matter what.

Kid 3- That must be some potent drink!

Bill- Indeed it is, my talented young friends. But now, let’s all lift a glass to the Arizona Kid and to all our faithful readers and wish them...

All- Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



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Useless Random Facts with Kellie

The word "Decem" is Latin for tenth. The month of December was originally 10th in the Roman Calendar until January and February were added.

'Jingle Bells' was originally a Thanksgiving song. "Jingle Bells" was written by James Lord Piermont in 1857 for his church's Thanksgiving concert. However, over the years, it became more closely associated with Christmas and is now one of the most popular holiday songs!

In Japan, it's tradition for people to enjoy a Kentucky fried Christmas. What started as a marketing campaign by KFC in the 1970s has evolved into a widely adopted tradition of eating a bucket of KFC chicken to celebrate Christmas. Many people even place their KFC orders well in advance to secure their Christmas chicken dinner.

Candy canes date back to 1670. According to History.com, the choirmaster at the Cologne Cathedral in Germany gave the red and white sugar sticks to young singers to keep them quiet during the Living Creche tradition on Christmas Eve.

Tom Hanks played six different roles in 'The Polar Express.' In addition to voicing the conductor, Hanks also played Hero Boy, Father, Hobo, Scrooge, and Santa Claus.

The original Elf on the Shelf was named Fisbee. The Elf on the Shelf was inspired by the creators' own toy elf, Fisbee, who they grew up with in the 1970s. They told HuffPost that Fisbee "would report to Santa Claus at night and be back in a different position in our house the next day."

'It's a Wonderful Life' was a box-office flop. Believe it or not, the enduring Christmas classic initially bombed at the box office. It wasn't until 1974, when its copyright expired and television networks could air it for free, that it cemented its place as one of the most beloved Christmas movies of all time.

An estimated 85% of American kids believe in Santa Claus. The average age when children stop believing is eight, according to the 2018 international Exeter Santa Survey. Bonus fact: During the months of November and December, Santa receives around 32,000 letters daily from these believers!

The tradition of lighting a colossal Christmas tree at New York City's Rockefeller Center dates back to 1931 when workers at the center pooled their money to buy a 20-foot balsam fir they decorated with garlands handmade by their families. The largest tree in its history came in 1999 with a 100-foot-tall tree.

Thoughts from Bully

Santa is Always Watching!!!!



I spent some time at the Feed the Needy of Ascension event a week ago. My good friend Tommy, aka. Bama, organized this event 18 years ago. Now he is feeding the parish families in need from the kindness of his heart still today.

Santa's Elves are everywhere!

It was Christmas time 1974 when I dressed as Santa and greeted kids at school. Bama was my helper with an elf hat and all. Kid after kid sat in my lap asking for bikes, trucks and dolls. Then a young man sat and with a shy smile. He whispered, "Santa, can I get a Christmas tree this year?" I looked at Bama, he nodded his head yes. Ho Ho Ho came out of Santa with a Big Yes and the young man left with a smile.

When the Santa greeting was over we set out to get a tree. We had gotten the address from his teacher so we knew where to deliver.

With in an hour we had a tree and lights and knocking on the door of a home on Coontrap road. The Mom answered and we told her the story. We stood the tree up and left the decorations and when he got off the bus, Santa had been there already. I'm sure he had a Happy Christmas.

Listen to your parents!

The closer it gets to Christmas the more memories that pop up. I've been taking my son, Michael, to the hunting camp for over 30 years. As a robust 4 year old he was the favorite among camp members. When he lost his front teeth he was called Bat Boy. The club president called

him, 'Chief Dirty Butt of the No Wipe Tribe'. He was pretty much everyone's play toy.

This particular year he brought his favorite Tonka flatbed truck. It was a big truck and perfect for a 4 year old to play in the dirt. For hours he would haul rocks and sticks from one place to another and then back again.

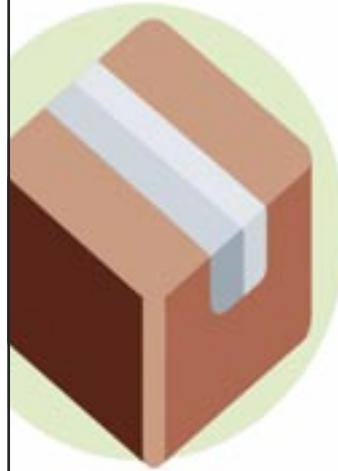
It was lunch and he left it in the road. I told to go pick it up before someone ran over it. Like most kids he procrastinated. And yes it happened. I backed my car up and bent the back side of truck down and now it wouldn't roll straight. He was heart broken. Tears and tears broke my heart but you have made it a teaching moment. "You were told 10 times to pick up the truck." I said. I believe I was trying to relieve my grief because I was the one who wrecked his world.

This event happened around Thanksgiving and when we headed home he sat silent with his truck in his lap. That's when I had a great idea. I reminded him Christmas was just around the corner. A small smile appeared. He grabbed his book sack and with pencil and paper he started his letter to Santa. Hope filled the car and his mood improved looking clearly to the future of Christmas.

He woke from his bed on Christmas morning and ran to the tree. There it was, a big Tonka Wrecker truck with his wrecked truck attached. Santa had saved the day. That boy played with those trucks all day.

My son now operates heavy equipment for a living driving bulldozers and excavators. He now has a new nickname these days. Merry Christmas 'Tonka Boy'.

HOLIDAY THEFT PREVENTION

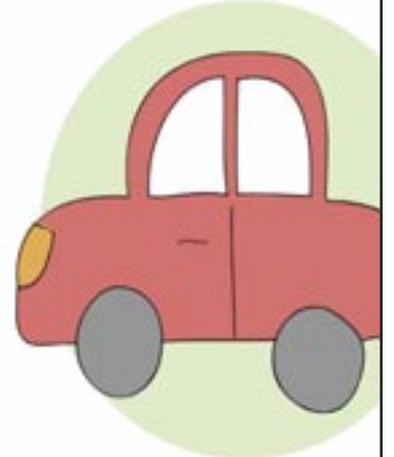


PROTECT FROM PACKAGE THIEVES

Monitor when your packages are expected to arrive and don't leave them on your porch or in your mailbox. Sign up for delivery notifications. If possible, ship your packages to your workplace or have a neighbor who is home during the day collect your packages for safekeeping.

PROTECT FROM CAR BURGLARS

Keep the interior of your vehicle clean. Never leave gifts or shopping bags in plain sight. Lock valuables in your trunk or remove them before exiting your vehicle. Remove all gifts and items of value from the vehicle when leaving it overnight.



PROTECT FROM HOME BURGLARS

A Christmas tree in your front window is an invitation to a burglar. Set up your tree in a location not easily seen by passersby or cover your windows with blinds/curtains overnight and while you are away from your home. Another option is to wait to put presents under the tree until it's time to unwrap them.

PROTECT FROM HOME BURGLARS

After presents are opened, break down all boxes and place in the garbage or recycling. If packaging is too big to fit in the receptacles, drop it off at the dump. Do not leave packaging materials outside your home for garbage collection. Leaving a box for a brand new TV, or other gifts, outside your home alerts thieves to high-dollar items inside and puts you at an increased risk of a home burglary.



WISHING YOU A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM SHERIFF BOBBY WEBRE AND THE ASCENSION PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE!

Making Memories!

By: Robin Stevens
Off the Grid Photography

I remember when my children were growing up, each time I pulled out the camera, they groaned “UGH... Mom” and rolled their eyes. I understood how they felt. My parents always had a camera pointed at us. On vacation, Christmas morning and just random Sunday dinners at Maw Maws house. I knew I was documenting their lives but didn't truly understand how important those photos would become to all of us. Their father died when they were teenagers, and those photos became priceless memories. And to be honest, we all wish that we would have taken more.

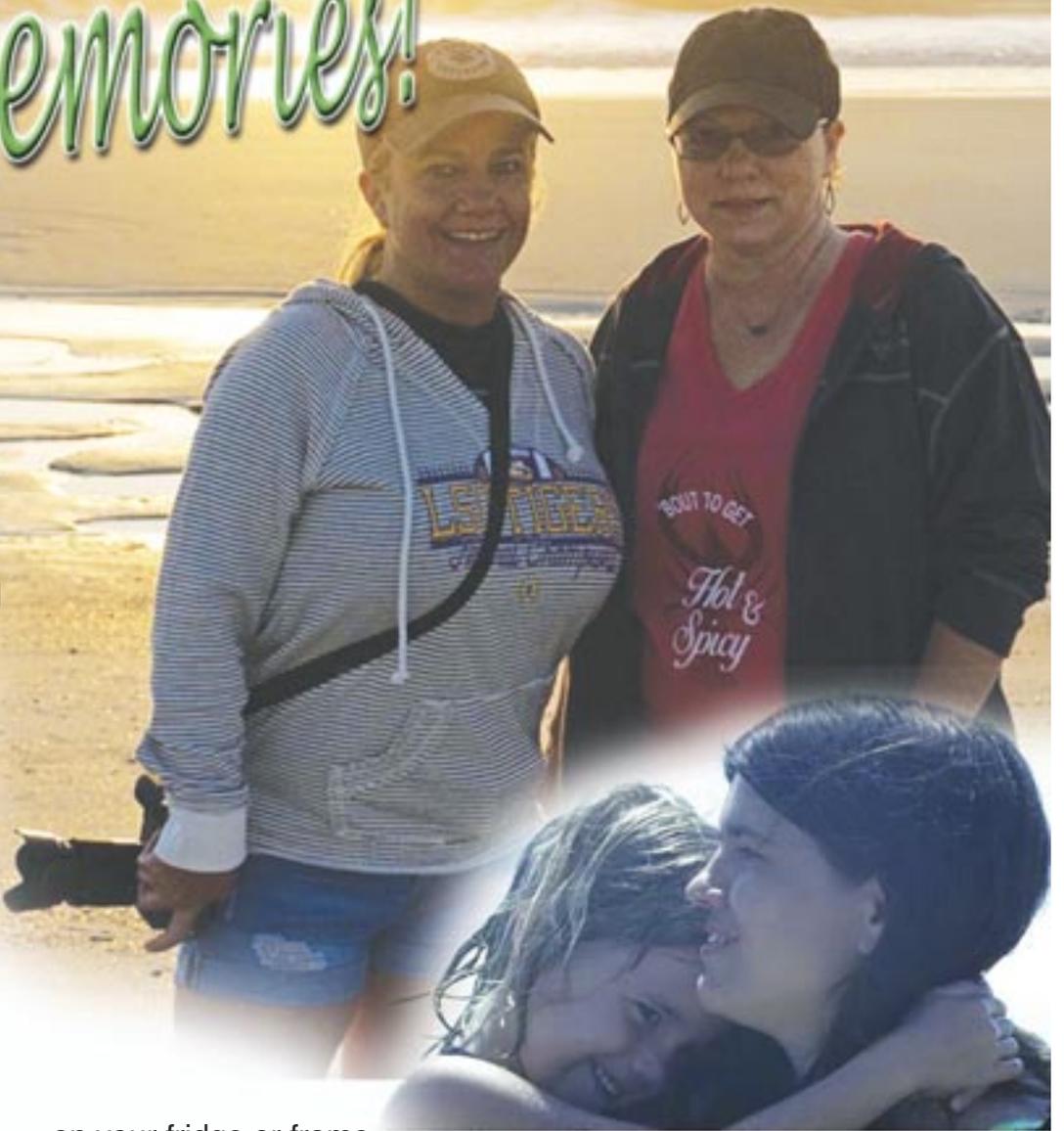
As a Mom, I was always the one taking the photo and wasn't in enough of them when my kids were small. And as a Mom, I was tired and there were days when I didn't fix my hair or makeup or I thought I didn't look good enough to be in the picture. I make sure to be in the photos now, with my grown children and my grandchildren. After losing my own mother, I look back at photos of me and my

Mom and I don't see how tired she was or if her hair was fixed. The only thing that I think when I look at those photos is how beautiful my Mom was and how much she loved me. To all the Moms out there, BE in the photo. Don't wait until you think you look perfect or until you lose weight or whatever the reason is that you aren't in the photo.

Those moments fuel me as a professional photographer. Because I know what all those moments mean to me and I want to capture that for others. I take tons of “posed” photos. But my favorites are always the candid photos I catch when people don't even realize I am taking them. Those are the moments that are real. I encourage you to take the photo. Be IN the picture. Take the photo of Mom with her kids on Christmas morning or the kids snuggled up with Dad taking a nap on the couch. Capture the moments on a random day when they are riding their bikes or running in the yard. Don't forget to take photos of your grandparents and WITH your grandparents. Share them on social media AND print them out! Hang them

on your fridge or frame them for the wall, so each time you see them, you relive that perfect moment. And sometimes for Mom, get dressed up and go take family photos because she wants you to and try not to complain too much about it.

Moments matter and each photograph tells a story. A story of a time and place where our world was perfect, even if we didn't realize it. They take us back to a place and time that we might have otherwise forgotten about if it weren't for that photo. Don't let those memories fade away.

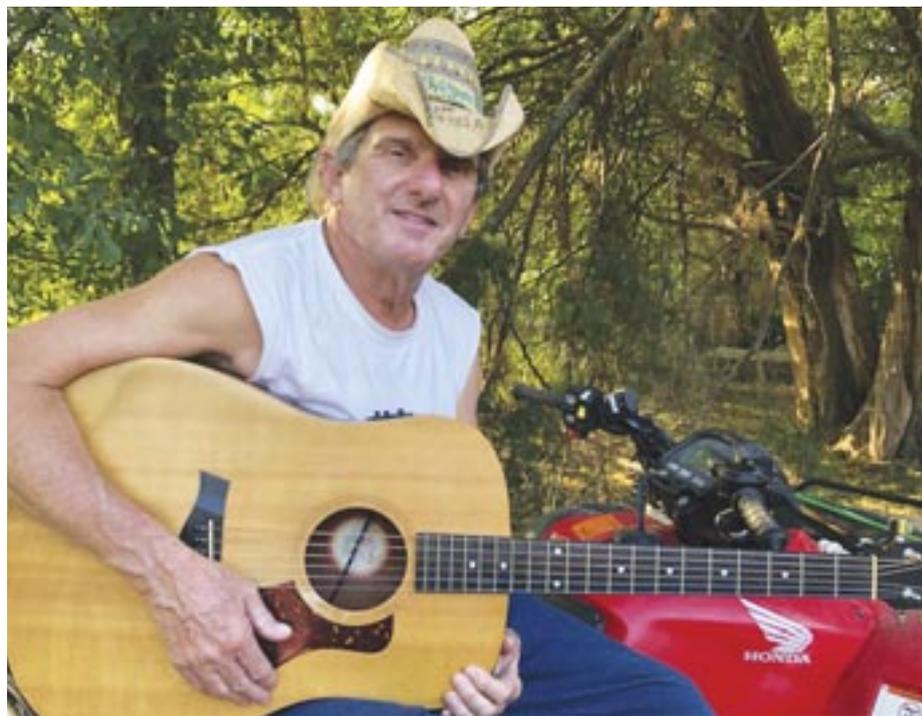


Jammin' with Goosie

Thousands Just Like You

It was football playoff time and I had decided to go down to a local watering hole to take in a game or two with some of my old friends. As I approached my chosen seat one of the group asked me how my hunting season was going at the time. I answered back saying that my small game hunting had been ok but my deer hunts had not fared so well although I had seen several bucks that were not considered shooters per our club rules. I then told him that

my granddaughter had taken a deer and two very large female pigs that had given us a fair amount of delicious wild game. Most of all and more important than anything else we'd had a very safe season. The girl and I had spent some great moments in the outdoors in which many exciting things had taken place during that duration of time with more small game hunting and a turkey season yet to come. At that time I then asked my friend if he had done any hunting that fall. He replied. "No, I kinda quit hunting back several years ago because I don't really have anywhere to go anymore. I once had a patch of woods off the side of the road where I would go to hunt squirrels, rabbits, woodcock, etc. We don't have any land of such in



our parish any more to speak of so I kinda just gave it up."

I can't say that the means of leasing large tracts of land for hunting clubs was a bad thing for the game itself. But I do believe that the average small game hunter that may hunt every now and then has been taken away from the hunter ranks because of that kind of activity. That's a bad thing considering that many of those types of hunters' offspring probably will never be introduced to the great sport of hunting.

Hunter numbers are declining. Recent surveys indicate that approximately 6% of Americans hunt. The Baby Boomer generation has represented a high percentage of the hunting population for the past half century. The oldest of the Boomers are now 77, while the youngest are 59. Studies have shown that hunters begin to drop out or to put it in another perspective, age out of the sport around the age of 70. That situation coupled with the fact that fewer younger citizens are being introduced to the sport of hunting is an alarming problem for the future of hunting. The more people in any group of society will make a stronger group and voice to be heard. Access to available land, cost, and regulations along with a changing society have driven many away from hunting.

Throughout my years I've belonged to several, so to say, conservation groups that actually saw this problem on the horizon. Many clubs will not allow any small game hunting during the open deer season.

The problem here is that the deer season will last for four and a half months in some areas. That fact basically took the hunters of other game out of the picture all together. If you care only to hunt whitetails you may think that this is cool but by losing that large number of others that would support the act of hunting will surely have a negative impact on the sport into the future.

I belong to two hunting clubs. One allows small game hunting to some degree during the deer season and the other does not. Although I am a member of those clubs and given the fact that I am a fairly dedicated hunter of different species of game, I often hunt in some of our state's Wildlife Management Areas. These parcels of land are available to all but they are not on every street corner and it does take a bit of effort to make a trip to one of the many WMA's that our great state has to offer. Many of those who may have stowed their hunting arms away in the closet might not care to put forth the effort involved to continue their hunting career. To those who have given up on what is probably the oldest sport on earth I can only say to you that you are not alone because there's thousands just like you and that's a shame.

Till next time
Please don't quit
James "Goosie" Guice

Hey Dr. Rob!
Can I bark at
Santa or steal his
cookies???

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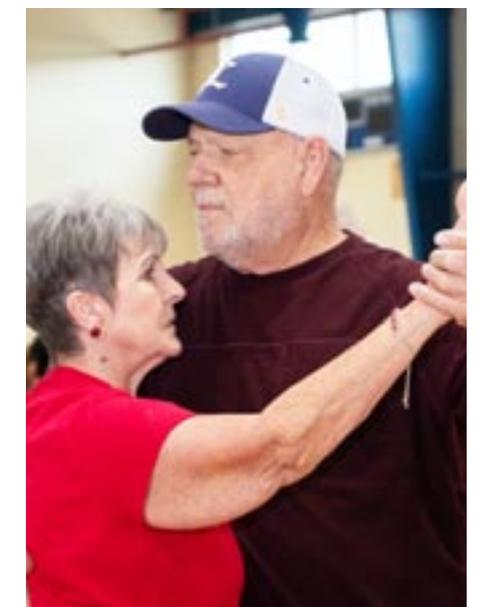
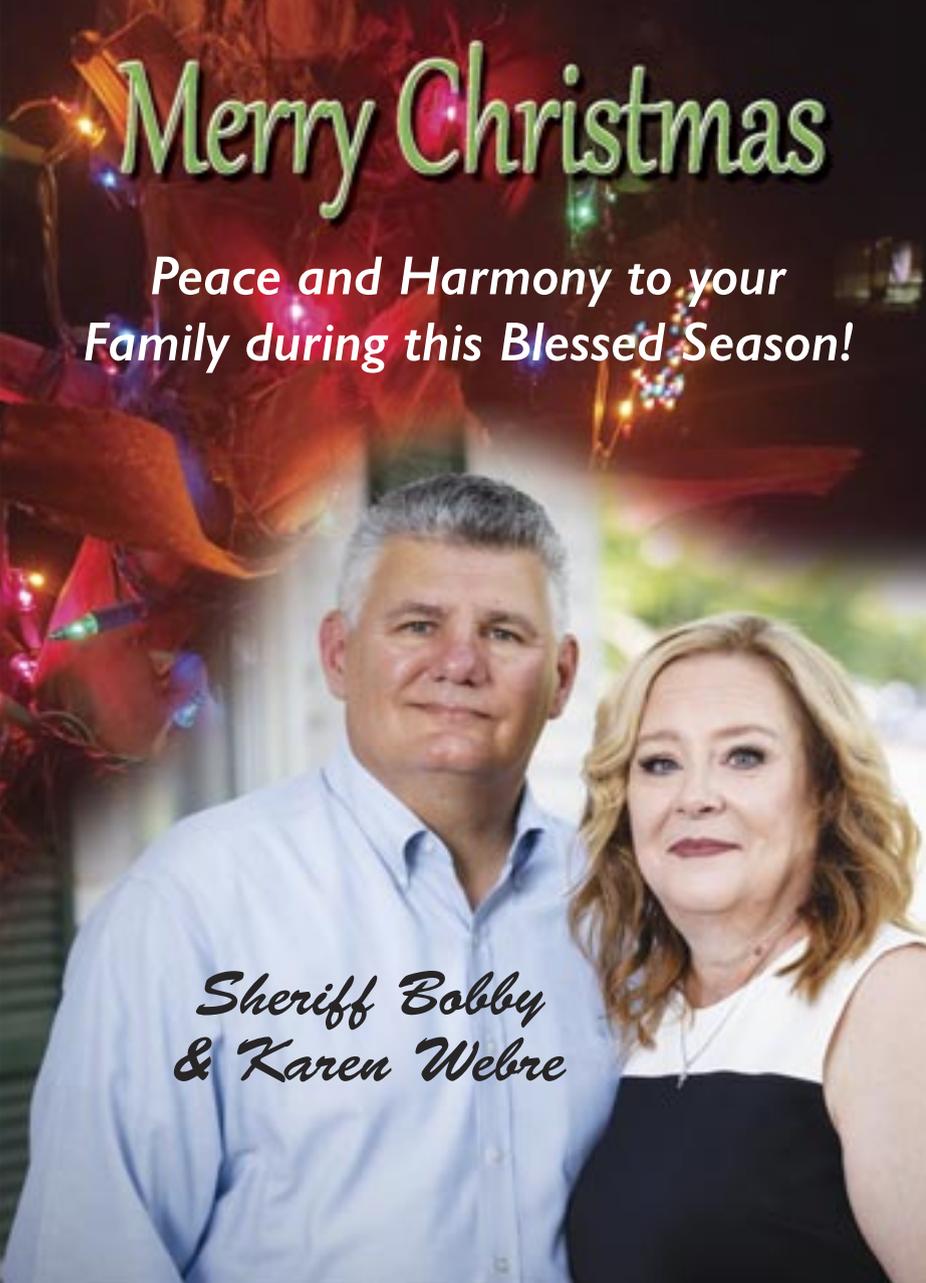
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w/ Jalapeno & Cream Cheese

Bacon Wrapped Boneless Chicken Thighs
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Boudin & Jalapeno
Jalapeno & Cream Cheese

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Alligator Green Onion
Alligator Jalapeno

Bacon Wrapped Stuffed Duck Breast
stuffing choices:
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Jalapeno & Cream Cheese
Brisket & Pepper Jack Cheese
Boudin & Pepper Jack Cheese

Boneless Pork chops
Stuffed with Boudin

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Duck

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(quart)
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(quart)
Chicken Sauce Picante
(quart)
Pork Sauce Picante
(quart)
Crawfish Stew
(quart/seasonal)

Cooking Instructions

Bacon Wrapped Chicken Thighs
Completely thaw and place on a sheet pan. Do not cover. Preheat oven to 350. Cook for approximately 60-90 min or until internal temperature is at 155.

Boneless Stuffed Pork Chops
Completely thaw and place on a sheet pan. Do not cover. Preheat oven to 350. Cook for approximately 45 min or until internal temperature is at 155.

Crawfish Cornbread
Completely thaw and place in oven. Do not cover. Preheat oven to 350. Cook for approximately 30-45 min or until golden brown.

Bacon Wrapped Tenderloins
Bacon Wrapped Duck Breast
Completely thaw and place on a sheet pan. Do not cover. Preheat oven to 350. Cook for approximately 60-90 min or until internal temperature is at 155.

Partial De-boned Stuffed Chicken
Completely thaw and place on a sheet pan. Do not cover. Preheat oven to 350. Cook for approximately 60-90 min or until internal temperature is at 155.

Bacon Wrapped Chicken Thighs
Completely thaw and place on a sheet pan. Do not cover. Preheat oven to 350. Cook for approximately 60-90 min or until internal temperature is at 155.





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Prep Time:
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Cook Time:
5 minutes

Servings:
4 servings

Ingredients:

(1) Brie Wheel	8 oz
Pecan Pieces	½ oz
Golden Raisins	½ oz
Purple Raisins.	½ oz
Honey	1 oz
Steen's Cane Syrup	1 oz
Butter	14 oz

Instructions:

First remove the white film from the brie by scraping it with the back of a butter knife. Score the brie wheel with a chef knife four times diagonally. Preheat oven to 500 degrees. In a large sauté pan over medium heat melt the butter until slightly brown, then add pecan pieces and sauté for a minute, then add both raisins and sauté another minute. Add both honey and Steen's to the pan and allow to simmer over low heat about five minutes. Remove from heat and season with salt and pepper to taste. Pour raisin and pecan topping over brie wheel and place in oven for ten minutes on a baking sheet. Remove from oven and serve over warm bread or crackers.

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