

COMPLIMENTARY

# Ascension

## M A G A Z I N E

DECEMBER 2024, VOL. 22 ISSUE 12

# Merry Christmas



Peace on Earth to My Community and Our Home.



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## ON THE COVER .. Ascension Magazine.. Photo by Robin Stevens

**We Wish You a Merry 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 2025 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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# Thank You!! Ascension *Bama's*



## Feed the Needy

### OF ASCENSION

By Mike Strong

Nineteen Years ago 3 local families were down on their luck and had little for their family for Christmas. Not necessarily for toys but for food. Tommy 'Bama' Aldridge grabbed his black iron pot and cooked a sauce picaunte and sold plates at the Gonzales Country Club and raised \$800 plus dollars. He divided it up and delivered it to these families.

Here Nineteen years later he has fed thousands of families. Now it takes a village to restore hope to raise funds through jambalaya sales and donations.

This year the Feed the Needy of Ascension operation sold 640 plates. The final tally is not in yet but it is \$27,000 plus. Here are the audited numbers for 2023.

**Grand total collected 2023: \$32,718.33**

\$10,500.00 disbursed to 5 Ascension Parish Church Food Banks

\$ 8,800.00 disbursed to 11 local Ascension Parish schools

\$ 1,000.00 disbursed to OTOW

\$ 1,000.00 disbursed to CHC Closet

\$ 1,000.00 disbursed to EDANB

\$ 1,500.00 disbursed to Courts of St. Anne & Anthony

\$7,750.00 disbursed to







### 16 individual families in need

I looked around the KC Hall and there were 30 plus volunteers helping with this noble cause. Bama's small gesture 19 years ago has made us all better people.

I don't know how long Tommy can keep this up but I can guarantee I'll be there to help. When he started this salvation operation we all were 40lbs lighter and our golf swings were sweet. No matter when it comes to an end remember how one browned roux and some browned meat that saved a community.

Bama, there are wings waiting for you my friend. However I hope many years pass before you get them.







# Jambalaya Festival

# JFA Christmas Party

*Publisher Notice: Photos with a red dot are provided by Rhett Bourgeois*

The 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 coveted Nora Lee Ricca Award for outstanding volunteers.

This year the members of the JFA awarded this honor to Mike Strong.

***The following is a testimony from Mike and the publisher of the Ascension Magazine.***

*Last night I was given a great honor- the Nora Lee Ricca award. It was a surprise and humbling at the same time.*

*My family moved to Gonzales in 1968 from Vicksburg, Mississippi and I was 12 years old. It just so happened that the festival began that year.*

*I can tell you the cultural change had me feeling like a*

*fish out of water. I have a last name, that is in most cases an adjective, and starting school with Boudreauxs, Fontenots, Gautreaus did not help my adjustment. And don't get me started on how to pronounce Robert.*

*With in 2 weeks of arriving to Gonzales I rode my bike on pavement to witness 100,000 cajuns dancing and drinking and walking back and forth on main street Burnside while having the time of their life. Wow that was a lot to take in for a young boy.*

*Now 56 years later the organization that produces the Annual Jambalaya Festival gives me an award for helping and being a part of the magnificent festival.*

*In 1968 all I ever really wanted was to be accepted and a part of this community. Now I have hundreds of friends with 'x's' in their names and they have a friend who's last name is still an 'adjective'.*

*Thank You from the bottom of my heart.*

*Mike Strong*







HAPPY  
*New Year*

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## A Christmas Gathering

The Gonzales Garden Club met for a Christmas gathering at Cynthia Stafford's home in Dutchtown on December 11. Zanna Brewer, Jamie Trisler, Janis D'Benedetto and Flo Hernandez assisted Cynthia with hosting the event. Adding to Cynthia's brown sugar glazed ham, members brought side dishes and desserts to round out the holiday meal. Canned good donations were collected for the Carpenter's Chapel food bank. The club's traditional anonymous blind gift swap was tethered to Conchita Richey's reading of "Twas the Night Before Christmas".

Wrapped presents were embellished with horticulture cuttings to compliment the ribbon and bows. Pittosporum, cedar, cypress, holly, ferns, loropetalum, camellia, gardenia, lavender, rosemary, ornamental peppers,

yew, nandina and even lantana were some of the greenery attached to the package decorations. Most sprigs were tied in place; some were hot glued.

This month's horticulture hint is to pick green tomatoes before a freeze and let them ripen indoors in a sunny window. The floral design tip is to cut stems of plant material at a slant (for greater water absorption) with clean, sharp scissors (to prevent damage and contamination to the stem) while holding them under cool water in the sink (to keep air from entering the stem's vascular system).

The GGC anticipates meeting next month with other local garden associations for an educational presentation in the club's ongoing mission to gain and share knowledge with fellow members and the community. In the meantime, the Gonzales Garden Club wishes everyone a joyous holiday season and success in the new year.



Members gathered on the Stafford stairway are (front three) Rita Bourque, Janis Poche and Pat Mouton, (second row) Janis D'Benedetto, Flo Hernandez, Barbara McCormick, Katherine Stagg, Razzie Cagnolatti, and Conchita Richey, (up the steps) Jamie Trisler, Raakhee Malani, Dale Bowman, Zanna Brewer, Paola DiNatale, Kathy Guidry, Cynthia Stafford



Hosting the house party were (L to R) Zanna Brewer, Jamie Trisler, Janis D'Benedetto, Cynthia Stafford, Kathy Guidry and Flo Hernandez.







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



## Yard of the Month • RESIDENTIAL



November's Residential Yard of the Month was awarded to Terri Lynn Lambert on N. Coolidge Avenue in Gonzales. Directly in front of her house are Adirondack chairs and a sugar kettle water fountain. In the forefront is a silver maple ringed with zinnias. The surrounding yard has crepe myrtles, a live oak and a large palm with foundation azaleas, variegated ginger, lantana, garden mums, cannas and daylilies.

## Yard of the Month • COMMERCIAL



November's Commercial Landscape of the Month was presented to Ascension Oaks Nursing and Rehabilitation Center located at 711 West Cornerview Street in Gonzales. It is encircled with heavily budded camellias and trimmed azaleas with flowering blue liriop groundcover. The beds are currently offset with rows of assorted colors of dianthus and Sweet William. The boundaries are encased with dozens of large Natchez white crepe myrtles. Ascension Oaks Administrator Matthew Walton appreciated the recognition.





## 2024 EA VS St. Amant Red Beans and T-Bone Steak Dinner

Thirty Six years the East Ascension Spartans and the St. Amant Gators have hosted the long outstanding rivalry Red Beans and T-Bone Steak dinner.

The winner of the football game eats a nice T-bone steak and the losers eat red beans and rice.

A long outstanding tradition that started 36 years ago with Jay Patterson (EA) and Fritz Engle Sr. (St. Amant).

Even though the Coaches, Administration and players







have changed over the past 36 years, the long outstanding tradition still remains.

The Gators on now on a roll with three years in a row eating steak.

The 2024 event was held this week in the St. Amant community with East Ascension providing the steaks to the Gators.

Thanks  
**James E. LeBlanc**  
St. Amant Booster Club President



*Shopping at Delaune's is Like being Home!*

Merry Christmas

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## From Loss to Light: The True Meaning of the Season

The holiday season is often associated with joy, celebration, and togetherness. But for many, this time of year can also bring a wave of emotional challenges. Whether it's the ache of losing a loved one, the end of a relationship, or the pressures that the holidays can place on fragile connections, this season often intensifies feelings of loss.

For those grieving a family member or close friend, the holidays can revive memories of happier times, amplifying a longing for the past. Loss, in all its forms—whether it's the loss of a person, a dream, financial security, or hope—can feel especially heavy during this time.

While Christmas remains my favorite time of year, it's important to acknowledge that not everyone feels the same way. Being mindful of those who are struggling allows us to offer

kindness and support when it's most needed.

If you or someone you know is navigating loss this holiday season, here are some strategies to help manage the emotional stress:

### ***Tips for Coping with Loss During the Holidays***

**Prepare:** Understand that emotions may arise unexpectedly. Planning ahead can help you feel more equipped to handle them.

**Accept:** Acknowledge the difficulties of this time and your feelings of loss. It's okay to grieve and to feel sad.

**Socialize:** Resist the urge to isolate yourself. Even a brief outing can lift your spirits.

**Avoid Numbing the Pain:** Substances like drugs or alcohol might temporarily dull emotional distress but often lead to deeper feelings of sadness.

**Stay Active:** Engage in physical activity, even if it's just a walk. Prioritize nutritious foods, as unhealthy eating can exacerbate depression.

**Shop Online:** If bustling malls feel overwhelming, consider doing your holiday shopping from the comfort of home.

**Build a Support System:** Keep the contact information of trusted friends, counselors, or hotlines handy. Reach out if negative thoughts become too much to bear.

**Visit with Understanding Friends:** Spend time with someone who empathizes with your feelings. Watch a movie, share a meal, or decorate together.

**Set Boundaries:** Clearly communicate to family and friends what you can and cannot handle this year. Avoid taking on more than you can manage, and don't feel obligated to mask your emotions.

**Help Others:** If you have the energy, consider volunteering or assisting someone in need. Helping others can bring perspective and even comfort.

### ***The True Spirit of Giving***

John 3:16 reminds us: "For God so loved the world that He gave

His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Giving is at the heart of this season. When we give—whether it's our time, resources, or love—we experience the deeper joy that comes from blessing others.

Helping those in need isn't just an act of generosity; it's a gift to ourselves. It allows us to connect with others and cultivate gratitude. A wise mentor once told me, "Your worst day could be someone else's best day." That perspective helps us appreciate what we have and motivates us to share it.

### ***Here are some meaningful ways to give back this holiday season:***

- *Donate to your local food bank.*
- *Visit residents at a nursing home.*
- *Volunteer at a soup kitchen.*
- *Reach out to local churches to see how you can help.*
- *Provide warm clothing or meals to the homeless.*

Making a personal connection with someone in need can be transformative. The joy of helping others often sparks a desire to keep giving. Try it; you may be surprised at how deeply it enriches your holiday experience.

This season, let's honor the spirit of giving by being mindful of those facing challenges and by finding ways to spread light in their lives. Through kindness, compassion, and generosity, we can make the holidays meaningful for everyone.

Merry Christmas Ascension. Blessings and Peace to you all.

XOXO,

*Sweet Eyes*







# Everything you need to know about Laser Hair Removal.

Laser hair removal offers a long-term solution for those seeking to reduce or eliminate unwanted hair. Unlike traditional methods like shaving or waxing, it targets hair follicles directly, providing smoother skin with fewer ingrown hairs. The procedure is precise, effective on various skin types, and requires minimal recovery time. With consistent treatments, laser hair removal can result in permanent hair reduction, saving time and effort in the long run, while leaving you with more confidence and convenience in your daily routine.

## How It Works

The INMODE Optimas Max is a cutting-edge laser hair removal device that offers versatility, safety, and comfort. Whether you're looking to treat a small or large area, it's an excellent choice for individuals seeking long-term hair reduction with minimal discomfort and downtime.

**Targeting Hair Follicles:** During the treatment, the laser energy is absorbed by the melanin (pigment) in the hair follicles. This light energy is converted into heat, which damages the follicle and inhibits

future hair growth without affecting the surrounding skin.

**Multiple Sessions:** Laser hair removal typically requires multiple sessions (usually 6-8) to achieve optimal results. Hair grows in cycles, and the laser is most effective during the active growth (anagen) phase. Therefore, sessions are spaced about 4-6 weeks apart to ensure the hair is in the correct phase for treatment.



**Treatable Areas:** The INMODE Optimas Max is effective on many areas of the body, including the face (upper lip, chin, sideburns), arms, legs, underarms, back, bikini line, and even sensitive areas like the Brazilian bikini region.



**Ann Zedlitz, M.D.**  
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## Benefits & Post Treatment Care

**Minimal Downtime:** Most patients experience little to no downtime after the procedure, with only slight redness or mild swelling at the treatment site.

**Long-Term Results:** Laser hair removal can offer long-lasting or permanent hair reduction with maintenance treatments as needed.

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# Get Growing, Ascension!

## Ascension Gardeners Complete Master Gardener Training

The Ascension Master Gardener Association and Ascension LSU AgCenter are happy to announce the completion of their recent



Louisiana Master Gardener Training Course. A graduation ceremony was held to celebrate and welcome the twenty-seven new Louisiana Master Gardeners on



Mariah Simoneaux

November 20 in conjunction with the Ascension Master Gardener Harvest Social. Congratulations to Tabitha Adams, Keith Beaucoudray, Carlos Bell, Mark Cavalier, Tracie Cavalier, Debi Coffman, Matthew Davidson, Rachel Davidson, Paula Dunn, Amber Franta, Stephanie Gardner, Flo Hernandez, Stacey Jackson, Hellen Kabati, Michael Latiolas, Jacqueline Lea, Cynthia Mahony, Linda Marchand, Gary Marchand, Patrick Nerney, Kay'd Odland, Ugomma Joy Okolie, Diane Roark, Charlotte Sanchez, Chandan Sharma, Francelia Smith, and Wendell Smith on completing this year's course.

Held August 6 – November 5, classes were conducted each Tuesday at the Lamar Dixon Expo Center from 9:00 a.m.



until noon. The curriculum was composed of approximately forty hours of coursework. Students also enjoyed two field trips during the course. The first to the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station, where they were joined by members of the Livingston, Tangipahoa, and Feliciana classes, and the second to LSU Hilltop Arboretum in Baton Rouge. Lectures and labs were presented by LSU AgCenter agents and specialists and a few very knowledgeable Ascension Master Gardeners. Dale Bowman, Richard Babin and Marilyn Rice taught the highly anticipated and hands-on plant propagation class, and Craig Roussel shared his knowledge and experience teaching the vegetable class.

AgCenter Cooperative Extension Service. Master Gardener volunteers are highly trained and provide proven, research-based educational programs and outreach. The volunteer aspect of the Louisiana Master Gardener Program allows individuals to dedicate their time and talents to the citizens of their community by applying the science and art of horticulture. When the recent graduates complete their initial forty hours of volunteer service they will earn the official title of Certified Louisiana Master Gardener.

*Mariah Simoneaux is the Horticulture Extension Agent serving Ascension Parish. For more information visit [www.LSUAgCenter.com](http://www.LSUAgCenter.com) or contact Mariah at (225) 621-5799 or [MJSimoneaux@agcenter.LSU.edu](mailto:MJSimoneaux@agcenter.LSU.edu).*



Louisiana Master Gardener is a volunteer development program offered by the LSU







**Age-Appropriate  
Gifts for Children:  
A Physical Therapy  
Perspective**

When selecting gifts for children, it's important to consider their stage of physical development to encourage healthy growth and motor skills. Age-appropriate gifts not only provide entertainment but also help foster physical abilities in ways that support their overall development. From a physical therapy standpoint, the right gift can enhance gross and fine motor skills, balance, coordination, and strength, setting a strong foundation for later physical activities.

**Infants (0-12 months)**

For infants, focus on gifts that promote early motor milestones like reaching, grasping, and rolling. Soft, textured toys that



encourage tactile exploration are ideal. Rattles, soft balls, and toys with handles support grasp and hand-eye coordination.



Taylor Terrio, PTA • Hailey Leindecker, DPT

Tummy time mats with bright, contrasting colors or attached toys help infants strengthen their neck, shoulder, and back muscles, which are essential for rolling over and later crawling.

**Toddlers (1-3 years)**

At this age, toddlers are refining their basic movement skills like walking, climbing, and balancing. Gifts that encourage walking or climbing are excellent for promoting strength and coordination. Push toys, such as walkers or toy strollers, encourage stability and improve gait. Soft balls or large building blocks help toddlers practice bending, squatting, and throwing,



which enhance gross motor skills. Toys that encourage fine motor development, like shape sorters or simple puzzles, also support dexterity and hand-eye coordination.

**Preschoolers (3-5 years)**

Preschoolers are refining their coordination and balance, making it a great time to introduce gifts that involve more complex movements. Gifts like balance boards, tricycles, or scooter boards help improve balance and motor planning. Playsets with climbing structures, swings, and slides are also great for developing strength and agility. For fine motor skills, art supplies, construction sets, and toys that involve threading or stacking can improve hand-eye coordination and finger dexterity.



**School-Age Children (6-10 years)**

School-age children are gaining greater control over their movement patterns and developing skills like running, jumping, and throwing. Active toys like jump ropes, hula hoops, or sports equipment (balls, bats, etc.) encourage both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities. Bicycles and skateboards help improve coordination, balance, and leg strength. Board games or puzzles that involve building or assembling can enhance fine motor skills and spatial awareness.



**Preteens (11-12 years)**

At this stage, children are refining their physical abilities and increasing endurance. Gifts that support more complex physical activities, like skateboards, sports gear, or tools for dance, gymnastics, or swimming, promote strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular fitness. Balance or stability equipment, like a balance ball or resistance bands, can also be beneficial for core strength and injury prevention.



**Conclusion**

Choosing age-appropriate gifts for children with a focus on physical development helps support their motor skills and physical health. From tummy-time toys for infants to balance boards for school-age children, thoughtful gifts encourage movement, strength, and coordination, laying the groundwork for lifelong physical activity. Always consider a child's individual developmental needs and preferences to ensure the gift supports their unique growth and abilities.

If you have any questions about choosing the best gifts for your child's physical development or would like more gift ideas, feel free to reach out to Action Therapy & Wellness at 225-644-7044. We're here to help you make informed choices that support your child's physical well-being!

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# YOUR ESTATE MATTERS



By Linda Melancon

## Reflecting on your Legacy with an Ethical Will

Most attorneys can write a list a mile long about why it's important to get your estate planning completed. The reasons range from the legal to the practical. However, when we ask our clients why they think it's important to do

their estate planning, their answer is almost always the same and more sentimental than you might think. What is it? *I want to make sure my family will be okay after I pass away.*

In order to make sure we understand your wishes for your family, lawyers have to ask you a lot of questions about things you probably would rather not think about. How do you want to divide your money and property after you die? Who do you want to be in charge of your estate? Are there specific items you'd like to go to specific people? When asked these practical questions, it's natural for broader questions to arise: What do I want my legacy to be? What knowledge do

I want to pass down to the next generation? How will I be remembered?

Once the ink dries on your signature and you leave the lawyer's office with your new will in hand, you may be left feeling that something is still missing. Sure, your documents direct your assets after you pass away, but, what about those bigger questions?

Legally, your will requires certain language to make it valid. While this language will ensure your assets are distributed how you choose, those larger questions about your legacy and what you want loved ones to remember about you aren't addressed. However, an ethical will can help you bridge that gap. Unlike your legal will, your ethical will has no legal effect—meaning, nothing you put in an ethical will can be enforced through the legal system. The purpose of an ethical will is to provide a means of communicating your non-legal wishes to your friends and loved ones.

Unlike your legal will, there are no rules about what can or cannot be included in your ethical will. However, here are some common examples of things people like to write about in an ethical will:

- Experiences that shaped you
- What you believe in
- Your family stories and memories
- Advice for future generations
- Blessings or apologies
- Photographs, recipes, and other items with sentimental value
- Explanations about how you chose to divide assets

Sharing values, addressing past issues, and seeking forgiveness are common results of creating and sharing your ethical will. Past conflicts and misunderstandings often spiral out of control due to a lack of communication. In our experience, one of the biggest reasons estate plans fail is because of lack of communication.

When the people in your family do not understand your motivations for why you gave someone a particular item, or why you chose one person over another to be in charge of your estate, the result can be contentious. In the worst cases, this can result in years of litigation and complete estrangement.

Going through the process of creating an ethical will in tandem with your legal estate planning is a healing exercise for many and can allow you to identify areas of potential discontent among your family members and address it directly. It forces you to think beyond the four walls of the attorney's office and ask yourself: What do I really want to pass along to the next generation? How do I want my family and friends to remember me? Estate planning is a great opportunity to reflect on your relationships and mend fences, and an ethical will is a powerful tool which could inspire personal growth and solidify your lasting legacy.

The information provided is not intended to be legal or tax advice and does not constitute any attorney/client relationship. You should consult with an attorney for individual advice regarding your own situation.

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.

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

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# Learning to Read with the SLP

**Christina Young, M.C.D., L-SLP,  
CCC-SLP Speech-Language  
Pathologist**

Many people are familiar with speech therapists and the ways they can help children. They are best known for teaching a toddler to talk, helping a child who stutters speak more fluently, and correcting how a child pronounces their “r” sound. Lesser-known areas that speech-language pathologists are uniquely adept in targeting are reading and writing. The same sounds that SLPs correct in a child’s speech are used to blend letters into words. Those words and their associated grammar are often taught during language sessions. Reading is receptive language, and writing is expressive language only through the modality of text. These skills are a special blend of sound production and language which means they are right up an SLP’s alley!

Before a child learns to read, there are sets of skills referred to as phonological and phonemic awareness that help with learning to read. These are prereading skills that help a child understand the units of language – sounds, syllables, words, and sentences. SLPs often start by teaching these skills, some of which include rhyming, segmenting, and blending. Then graphemes, or letters, are built into lessons to help with letter-sound correspondence. The same skills that are practiced orally are then practiced within reading and writing activities. Once a child starts to write in



**Christina Young, M.C.D., L-SLP, CCC-SLP  
Speech-Language Pathologist**

sentences SLPs also help with vocabulary, grammar, and organization in their writing. From when a child is first learning letters and sounds



all the way to writing complex sentences and paragraphs, SLPs have the tools to help children succeed!

Children with speech and language delays are more

likely to demonstrate difficulties with reading and writing at school. By ensuring that these children are monitored while learning to read and write, we are able to identify challenging areas and provide the support needed to overcome these difficulties. If your child struggles with speech sound production, expressing themselves, rhyming, or sounding out words to read, they may benefit from an evaluation with one of our speech-language pathologists. We utilize a systematic and multi-sensory approach to teaching reading and writing skills in order to allow the child to see, hear, and feel everything as they learn.



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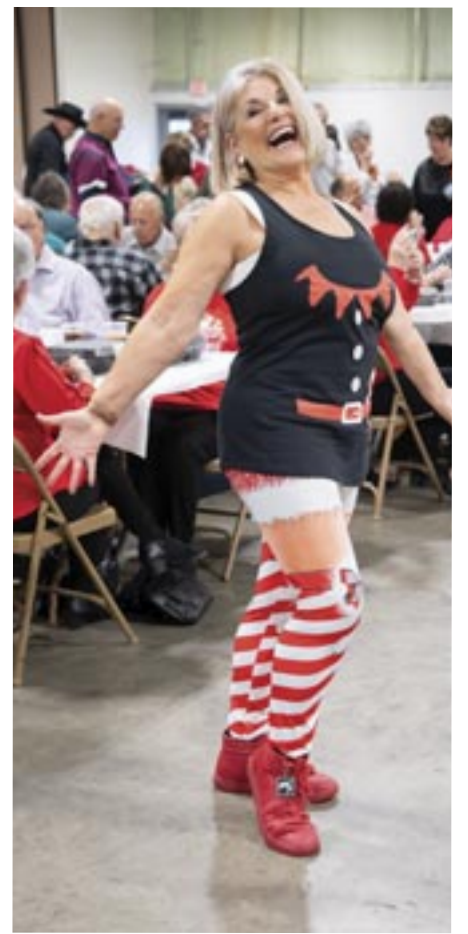


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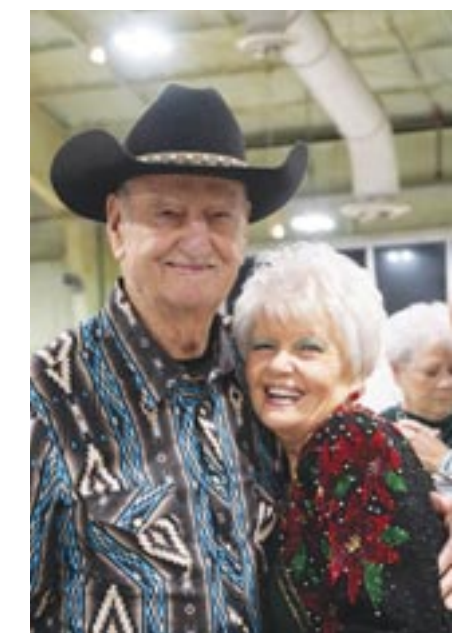
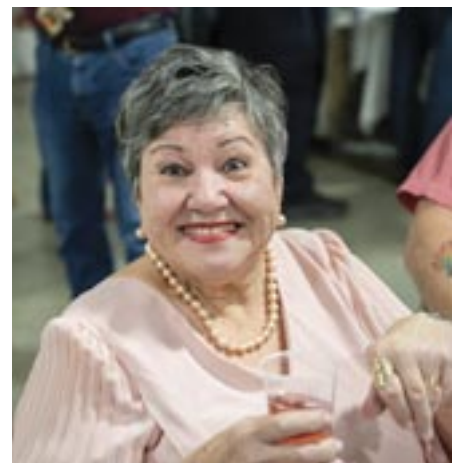




Photos by Robin Stevens

# Senior Citizen

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION









# 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.



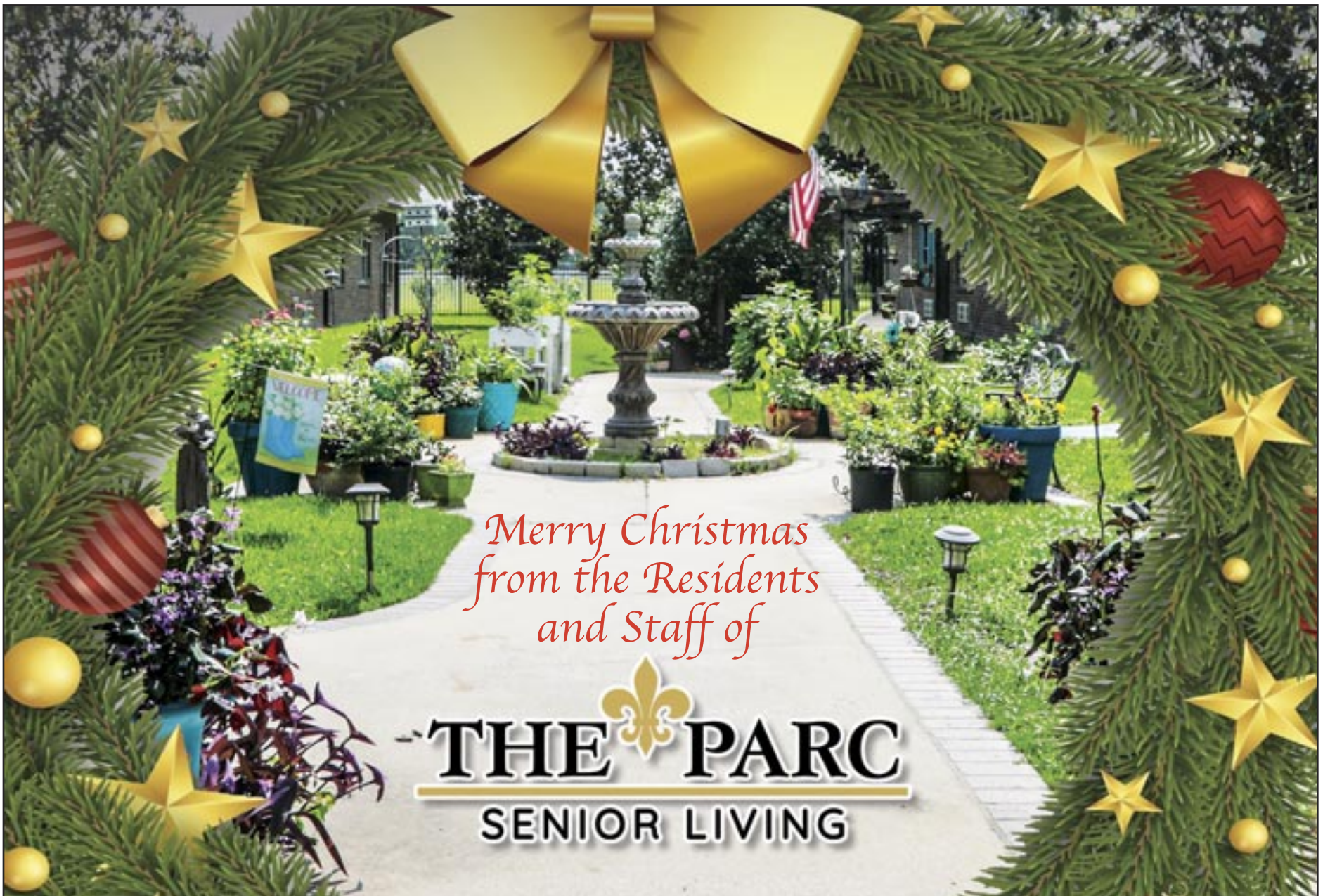


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# FINANCIAL FOCUS

## Time for New Year's resolutions

Now that the calendar has flipped, it's time for some New Year's resolutions. You could decide you're going to exercise more, lose weight, learn a new skill, reconnect with old friends — the possibilities are almost limitless. This year, why not add a few financial resolutions to your list?

Here are a few to consider:

- **Reduce your debts.** It may be easier said than done, but if you can cut down on your debt load, you'll increase your cash flow and have more money available to invest for your future. So, look for ways to lower your expenses and spending. You might find it helpful to use one of the budgeting apps available online.
- **Boost your retirement savings.** Try to put in as much as you can afford to your IRA and your 401(k) or other

employer-sponsored retirement plan. If your salary goes up this year, you've got a good opportunity to increase your contributions to these retirement accounts. And once you turn 50, you can make pre-tax catch-up contributions for your 401(k) and traditional IRA. You might also want to review the investment mix within your 401(k) or similar plan to determine whether it's still providing the growth potential you need, given your risk tolerance and time horizon.

- **Build an emergency fund.** It's generally a good idea to maintain an emergency fund containing up to six months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account. Without such a fund, you might be forced to dip into your long-term investments to pay for short-term needs, such as an expensive auto or home repair.
- **Keep funding your non-retirement goals.** Your traditional IRA and 401(k) are good ways to save for retirement — but you likely have other goals, too, and you'll need to save and invest for them. So, for example, if you want your

children to go to college or receive some other type of post-secondary training, you might want to invest in a tax-advantaged 529 education savings plan. And if you have short-term goals, such as saving for a wedding or taking an overseas vacation, you might want to put some money away in a liquid account. For a short-term goal, you don't necessarily need to invest aggressively for growth — you just want the money to be there for you when you need it.

- **Review your estate plans.** If you haven't already created your estate plans, you may want to do so in 2025. Of course, if

you're relatively young, you might not think you need to have estate plans in place just yet, but life is unpredictable, and the future is not ours to see. If you have already drawn up estate plans, you may want to review them, especially if you've recently experienced changes in your life and family situation, such as marriage, remarriage or the addition of a new child. Because estate planning can be complex, you'll want to work with a qualified legal professional. You may not be able to tackle all these resolutions in 2025. But by addressing as many of them as you can, you may find that, by the end of the year, you have made progress toward your goals and set yourself on a positive course for all the years to come.

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



**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING  
**Jamie Lavigne,**  
Financial Advisor

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CITY OF GONZALES

# *Tree Lighting Ceremony*

*Merry Christmas to All  
and to All a Goodnight!!*









# An Average Joe Christmas- A True Underdog Story

by Bill Delaune

**"It's a story-of a man  
named Brady..."**

## **Scene-A**

Louisiana living room on  
Christmas Eve.

## **Characters-**

### **The Kids-**

all ages from 1-92-in all  
shapes and sizes.

### **Uncle Bill-**

A disillusioned dreamer whose  
memory is so bad he knows  
he's "Been there, done that,"  
but he can't remember when or  
where he was there or what is  
was he did.

## **Act 1**

Kids (excitedly)-Uncle Bill's  
here! Uncle Bill's here! Come  
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 '68 Dodge with the broken  
muffler pull up?

**Uncle Bill-** No, I thought I'd  
go with a more seasonal  
transport this year so I came in  
a sleigh pulled by some "deer  
friends" of mine.

**Kid 2-** Are you saying you  
flew in with some reindeer like  
Santa Claus? Check that  
pipe to see what he's  
been smoking.

**Bill-** Not 4-legged reindeer,  
kids. I got a lift from some  
2-legged dears from Just  
Wingin' It just across Bayou  
Manchac. Help me call them  
out by name-"On Haley and  
Heather and Shel and Renee!  
On Jayce and Ryleigh and  
Leigha and Jade!"

**Kid 3-** Can they really fly?

**Bill-** Why do you think they  
call the place Wingin' It?



**Kid 1-** Uncle Bill, we have a  
special request for a story this  
year. Since the news these  
days always seems to be bad,  
we'd like a "feel good" story  
with a happy ending to help get  
us into the Christmas spirit.

**Bill-** Don't my Christmas  
stories always have happy  
endings?

**Kid 2-** Well-there was that  
year you gave us those bowl  
predictions based on which  
mascot would win the fight and  
we lost all our piggy bank  
money when Nebraska's  
Cornhuskers shucked Florida's  
Gators.

**Kid 3-** And the one about the  
little boy whose rocking horse  
died.

**Bill-** Hold on-that was the  
year I came straight from the  
track and I was still moping  
about one of my losing nags

falling apart in the stretch. I just  
got confused. But I get your  
point. So how about one where  
a white football coach at an  
all-black high school becomes  
mayor of the second largest  
city in the state?

**Kids** (all)-No more politics!

**Bill-** Okay-what about an  
Arizona school that only won  
two games the year before and  
coached by some 34-year old  
trash talker that not only  
makes the playoff but gets one  
of the coveted top-4 byes?

**Kid 1-** Not realistic-not that  
your stories are anyway.

**Bill-** Well, let me get a hit of  
this Gentleman Jack-because  
the letter "J" is going to figure  
prominently in this year's  
Christmas story.

**Kid 2-** Because it stands for  
"joy" and Christmas is a time

of joy?

**Kid 3-** Because it stands  
for Jesus-the reason for  
the season?

**Kid 4-** Because it's shaped  
like a Christmas candy cane?

**Bill-** Now those all are good  
guesses but listen up and  
you'll see what I mean. Once  
upon a time there was a family  
called the Brady Bunch...

**Kid 1-** You're not going back  
to those 60's classic TV shows  
again are you, Uncle Bill?

**Bill-** Patience, my child. Just  
let the story unfold. Now one  
of the boys was an average  
student and an average high  
school football player named  
Joe. Joe Brady could never be  
confused with Tom Brady  
because one was the greatest  
quarterback ever and the other  
was-well-just an Average Joe.

Joe went to a small school  
called William and Mary which  
was mainly known for the bad  
football joke-"In other scores, it  
was Clemson 14, William 7  
and Mary 3." He had an  
average career there and  
following the old axiom about  
"Those that can't play any  
longer-coach,"-he took a  
coaching job at his alma mater.

But there was something  
about Joe that indicated he  
might be more than just an  
average coach and an NFL  
mentor named Sean Payton  
hired him to work as an  
offensive assistant. There Joe  
learned volumes about the  
passing game while working  
closely with Hall of Famer  
Drew Brees and became a  
hot, young prospect in the  
coaching ranks.



**Kid 2-** Did he open up “Average Joe’s Gym” and start an underdog dodge ball team because I’ve seen this movie if he did.

**Bill-** No, but he did catch the eye of LSU coach Ed Orgeron who hired him to spice up the Tigers’ offense. There Joe Brady met Joe Burrow and along with a couple of other “J’s”-namely, Justin Jefferson and Ja’marr Chase-devised an offense that was unstoppable.

**Kid 1-** And they won the National Championship and the Heisman Trophy and they all lived happily ever after.

**Bill-** That part’s true all right, but this story’s just getting started. Despite his spectacular success, Joe still longed for the bright lights of the NFL and he was quickly scooped up by the Carolina Panthers to serve as offensive coordinator. But alas, without his magic “J’s”-and a severe lack of talent-he was fired in mid-season.

**Kid 2-** I guess it’s true what they say about coaching-that it’s only six inches from having a crown on your head to a noose around your neck.

**Bill-** How well I know. But Joe was not one to feel sorry for himself. He took a job with the Buffalo Bills who ironically had another “J” quarterback- Josh Allen.

When the Bills’ offense struggled, Average Joe suggested something to Josh that he had to Joe Burrow-throw in a run every now and then with the pass-happy offense. All of a sudden, everything began to click and Joe was promoted to offensive coordinator.

**Kid 3-** Was Josh a good runner, Uncle Bill?

**Bill-** He didn’t have blazing speed but he was a beast near the goal line because he was too fast for the defensive linemen and too big for the

defensive backs to tackle. In fact, in one game Josh passed for three touchdowns and ran for three more which hadn’t happened in the NFL for over 50 years.

Now, kids, we’re going to need a little Christmas magic to look into the future for the next step in Average Joe’s career.

**Kid 1-** Is this going to be like “A Miracle on 34th Street”?

**Bill-** Sorta. But it’s more like “Back to Bourbon and Baton Rouge”. Because after the Bills went on to win the 2025 Super Bowl, Joe was offered the head coaching job of the New Orleans Saints. Then in a surprise move, LSU Coach Brian Kelly asked Joe if he could also assist with the Tigers’ offense since he was in the neighborhood.

Joe readily agreed but admitted some changes would have to be made. “First, Garrett Nussmeier will now be

known as ‘Jarrett’ and will run move in my offense. Look at what the last two running ‘J’s’ did at LSU (Joe Burrow and Jayden Daniels). As far as the Saints, Jake Haener (Another ‘J’) will be my version of Drew Brees.”

**Kid 2-** That was better than the old TV shows I thought we were going to get.

**Bill-** And Average Joe brought “Happy Days” back to LSU, “Wonder Years” back to the Saints and both teams were “Saved by the Bell”.

**Kid 1-** Ugh. I knew he’d sneak that in there. Not bad Uncle Bill but your future gazing sounds like you had a couple of J’s to go with your Jack.

**Bill-** Oh well, let’s do our versions of “Jingle Bells” and “Joy to the World” and wish everyone...

**All-** Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!



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experiences we get are once in a lifetime and being able to have this honor is a dream come true. One of the best things about my reign so far is the friendships I've made while traveling. All of us queens put our lives on hold for a year to represent the titles we care so deeply about and it's really amazing to see and even better to be apart of. I couldn't imagine a better group of queens to spend my weekends with.



The weekend after I was crowned I was able to attend the Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival Pageant.

In July, I traveled to the Washington Parish Watermelon Festival, St. James Parish Queen Events, and the Delcambre Shrimp Festival Pageant.

In August, I made my way to New Iberia for Queen Events, the Harvest Festival Pageant, "Gatorganza" hosted by the



# Jambalaya Festival

A MESSAGE FROM

*Gracie Guillot*  
*Jammin' with Friends*

I'm halfway through my reign and I can definitely say the time has been flying by. Ever since I was crowned back in June 2024, I've traveled the state of Louisiana going to different fairs, festivals, pageants, balls, and queen

events...all while representing and promoting the Jambalaya Festival and the City of Gonzales. I've made so many memories already and have learned so much about our state and the industries within it. The opportunities and







Alligator Festival and St. Charles Rotary Club, and a Queen and princess tea in Ville Platte hosted by The Acosta Foundation.

In September, I attended the Plaquemines Parish Orange Festival Queen Selection in Belle Chasse, the Alligator Festival Pageant in Luling, and the Celtic Heritage Festival in Ponchatoula. At the end of September, I was able to experience the Louisiana



Sugar Cane Festival Queen's Weekend. From visiting sugar cane fields, watching the coronation to see who would be the next Queen Sugar, attending the coronation ball, and riding in the Louisiana Sugar Cane Royalty Parade, it was such a memorable weekend.

Moving onto October, I was able to attend the New Iberia



Spanish Festival Ball, the Louisiana Cattle Festival in Abbeville, the La Fete Des Vieux Temps Festival in Raceland, the International Rice Festival in Crowley, and the Boucherie and Balloon Festival in Sorrento where I was able to announce the Jambalaya finalists.

During the month of November, I had the honor of emceeing the Boucherie Pageant in Sorrento all day and quickly hopped in the car to attend the Independence



Sicilian Heritage Festival Ball that night. I was also able to attend the Plaquemines Parish Orange Festival coronation ball in Buras. I stayed right here in Gonzales that same weekend to celebrate and honor our veterans by riding in the 2024 Gonzales Veterans Day Parade.

Later that month, I had the privilege of attending the Fur & Wildlife Queens Weekend in Cameron Parish. We got to learn so much about the Fur & Wildlife Festival and the industries they honor from visiting the Rockefeller Wildlife



Refuge to trying raw oysters. I also got the chance to visit Lake Elementary right here in Ascension Parish with a few of my fellow queens to teach them all about Louisiana Fairs and Festivals and share a little more history and information about the Jambalaya Festival and what makes it so special. They were so excited to learn that they were so close to the Jambalaya Capital of the World! I finished that month by attending the Bonfire Festival Queen's Day right down the road in Lutcher.



From riding in parades, exploring different towns, and even getting to tour the Louisiana Sugar Refinery and Avery Island. I get a new field trip every weekend and I'm cherishing every moment and every ounce of information I learn about our great state. I can't wait to see what else is in store for me throughout the next 6 months.

**Merry Christmas my Friends!**

**Gracie**

"If you or someone you know would like to become the next Jambalaya Queens please reach out to Katie Battaglia at [gonzalesjambalayadirector@gmail.com](mailto:gonzalesjambalayadirector@gmail.com)





# Another great Ascension Parish CAER - Industry gathering today with our Ascension Parish Government, State and Local partners.

*We continue to be blessed with our Industry Partners here in Ascension Parish.*

**Our Ascension Parish Government administration team proudly joined the annual CAER (Community Awareness and Emergency Response) Luncheon.**

It was great to see our industry partners, business and

community leaders, and first responders together today. This collaboration underscores why Ascension Parish consistently ranks number one in so many areas—we are committed to working as one group to make our community safer and stronger. Today’s luncheon was led by our very own Governmental Affairs Director, James E. LeBlanc,

who also serves as CAER Chairman. Special thanks to the chemical industry and CAER members for their ongoing dedication to educating and protecting our community. From its humble beginnings in 1985 with just 16 members, CAER has grown to include over 40 industry representatives and public

safety agencies working together to ensure the well-being of Ascension Parish. We are proud of the countless hours devoted to community outreach, mutual aid, and emergency preparedness. Thank you, industry leaders, for all that you do! The following agencies were present today for the Industry

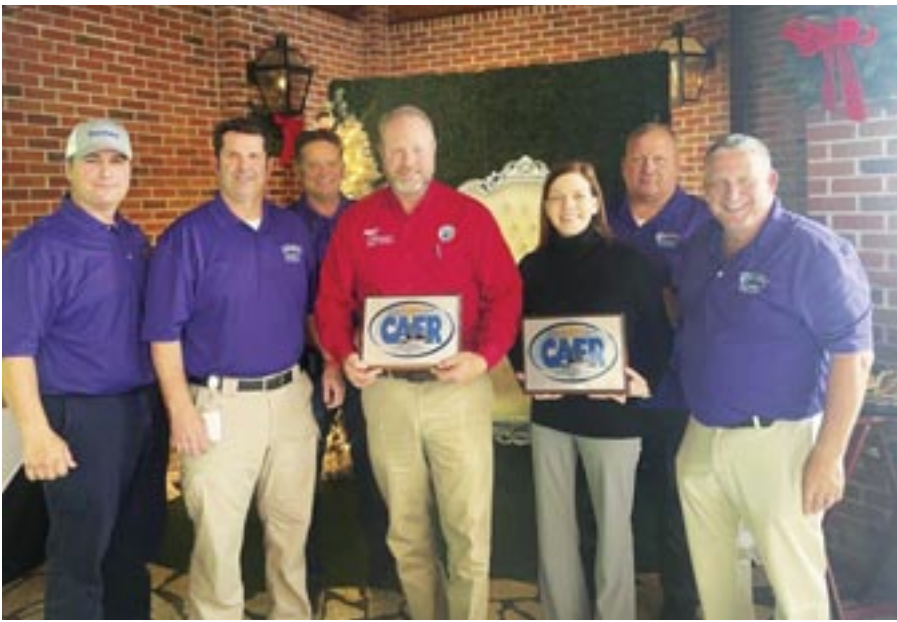





gathering, APGOV, APSO, APSO Haz-Mat Team, Louisiana State Police, Ascension OEP, GOHSEP, USCG, State Fire Marshal Office, FETA Training, Ascension Parish Fire Dist. #1, Gonzales Fire Department, Kinder Morgan, Oxy Chem., Rubicon, Methanex, CF Industries, Exxon Mobil Pipeline, SkyFall Biologicals, ALGUS, Air Products, Air Liquide, EnLink Midstream,

Honeywell, IMTT, Ascension Clean Energy, BASF, Linde, Nutrien, Lion Elastomers, Mitsubishi Chemicals, NOVA Chemicals, Carville Energy, Syngenta, Westlake Chemicals, Total Energies, Shell Geismar, Nexpera and Chevron REG.

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Ascension Parish Chemical Industry



Community Awareness and Emergency Response

- Air Liquide
- Air Products
- Ascension Clean Energy
- BASF
- Carline Fleet
- CF Industries
- CN Railroad

- Nexpera
- Eastman Chemical
- Enlink Midstream
- Enterprise Pipeline
- Hexion
- Honeywell
- IMTT
- Innophos

- Mitsubishi Chemicals
- Kinder Morgan
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- Momentive
- Nova Chemicals
- Oxychem

- Nutrien
- Pipeline Technology
- Linde
- Chevron (REG)
- Rubicon
- Shell Geismar
- Syngenta

- TotalEnergies
- Univar
- Westlake
- Carville Energy
- Exxon Mobile Pipeline
- SkyFall Biologicals



# Happy Holidays



## Enjoy Our Outdoor Patio



### Lunch Specials

- Monday • red beans and rice
- Tuesday • chicken fried steak
- Wednesday • hamburger steak
- Thursday • spaghetti and meatballs
- Friday • fried fish platter.



## Holiday Hours

*Dec. 16th closing at 4pm • Employee Christmas Party*  
*Christmas Eve closing at 4pm*  
*Closed Christmas Day*  
*New Years Eve closing at 4pm*  
*Closed New Years Day*

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# Jammin' with Goosie

## Do It Yourself Verses Guided Outings

There once was a time that I was willing and able to do whatever was necessary to be a successful outdoorsman. Those were the days. Believe me I surely loved them. Each and every minute of them and I thank God everyday for giving me the opportunity and the ability to have done so. But as we age our thoughts of how much trouble we are willing to go through to do some of the

things that we do begins to change. Some of us adhere to the saying "I ain't as mad at 'em as I used to be". Well I was never mad at 'em but I sure took some chances back then that I would not find so appealing at this day and time. Things such as risky nighttime boat rides, long tracks into the woods to avoid other people and dealing with unfit weather for a human to be out in are to some degree a thing of the past for me. With many of those adventures in the rear view mirror that doesn't mean that you now have to sit home and stay on the couch. I know a group of my old working buddies that get together each season of the year (winter, spring, summer, and fall) to enjoy a guided fishing trip. Think about it.



No boat. No fish cleaning. No back breaking work. Pay up and enjoy yourself for a few dollars more than doing it yourself would cost.

I do understand that depending on what stage of life you're presently in, those few extra dollars needed for a guided outing may be what is needed to support your family at that time. Believe me I've been there, done

outfitters it should be a much less strenuous event. Always do some research and questioning to determine which of your needs are at hand.

Unless I win the lottery or acquire some unknown fortune my guided hunting and fishing trips will be limited. To be honest with you I would really rather do things my way than have to listen to someone else. But the hands of time have clicked past my ability to do so. I'm alright with that and a guided trip can be just what the doctor ordered. Think about it. It's sure nice to be able to turn your back to the wind on a cold morning boat ride to the duck blind and then watch someone else place the decoys out. Then sit back as a lab retrieves your downed birds. Watching someone skin your deer, fillet your fish or pluck your ducks while you enjoy a cold drink are things worth paying for every now and then. Another plus is you don't have to worry about repairing broken equipment and cleaning dirty boats etc. when you arrive home. In many ways it's worth the bucks you pay and it is also a source of employment for others. Guided adventures can also be very exciting comfortable experiences for a youngster to enjoy. Give it a try. You deserve it and after it's over go back to doing it your way.



that, got the hat and all the other stuff. But even back in those days I would always try to save a few dollars toward an adventure now and then that was more relaxing and much less work. Those outings were surely something to look forward to as the date of the event grew closer to becoming reality.

Now don't get caught up in the idea that just because you are paying someone that you are going to limit out each and every time. It's still hunting and fishing and there are plenty of variables involved that can depend on your success or failure. Remember that these people are guides. They are not Gods. One way or another depending on your choice of

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Till next time

Give yourself a break  
James "Goosie" Guice





## East Ascension Sportsmans League

Letter from president -

**Greg Cedotal**

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

EASL's next regular meeting is December 16th in the second-floor meeting room at Cabela's, starting at 7:00 PM. Come out and enjoy some time with friends and

share some good hunting and fishing stories.

We are at the time of year when we elect officers and board members for EASL. I look at the state of the organization and wonder how much longer it will exist if younger members do not step up to serve as officers and board members. If you are interested in serving and making a difference in our community and state, please consider serving. If you have questions about serving, feel free to contact me.

I am entertaining the idea of several events next year and would like some input from the community.

*1) 1st is to have the parish president declare an EASL Day to commemorate the estimated 75 years of EASL being a part of Ascension Parish.*

*2) A Casting Competition with challenges like distance casting, accuracy events like, casting, pitching, punching, casting under low hanging object and if we can figure out where to do it, skipping. Categories could be child, teenagers, high school fishing team member, non-professional adult, and if we can interest the group of professional fishermen in the area, a professional category. Give me some feedback.*

Now for a little bit about EASL events. You must be a member to participate in these events. EASL Bass Club will not fish a tournament in December. If you are interested in fishing with the bass club, contact Jim Hebert at 225-717-6037. The December 22 Rifle Silhouette Match will be December 28th at the Sheriff Shooting Range starting at 8:30 AM.

Members don't forget to weigh your bass for the Monthly Big Bass contest and weigh your specs for the Monthly Big Speckled Trout contest. The Big Buck contest has officially started. Get that rack or racks measured by the contest chairman to be eligible for a free mount and prizes. See EASLONLINE.org, Annual & Monthly Contest, Big Buck Contest for contest rules.

Time to go outdoors with family and or friends and enjoy nature. Remember to be safe and conserve our resources for future use. Questions or comments you can email me at [gdc1@gmail.com](mailto:gdc1@gmail.com).

**EASL's next regular meeting is December 16th in the second-floor meeting room at Cabela's, starting at 7:00 PM.**

# EASL Bass Club News

The EASL Bass Club recently held their annual Classic Tournament on November 9th. The members could launch anywhere between Amelia and Bayou Pigeon. The weigh in was held at the Belle River Public Launch in the Atchafalaya Spillway at 3:00PM.

There were 20 boats participating in the tournament. Since this was the last tournament of the year, most of the members did not weigh their fish if they had just caught a few small ones.

Seven members brought a limit to the scales and two other boats had 3 or 4 fish to weigh.

When the weigh in was over the winners were announced.

First place went to Tim Braud with a limit that weighed 12.90 lbs. Second place was Gary Christian with a limit that weighed in at 10.00 lbs.

Third place was BoJack Anderson with a limit that weighed 9.24 lbs.

Fourth place went to Chris Delatte with his limit that weighed 8.68 lbs.

Big Bass winner was Wilson Molina with his lunker that weighed in at 4.56 lbs.

Second place Big Bass winner was Tim Braud with a Bass that weighed 4.08 lbs. Congratulations to the winners of the annual Classic Tournament.

The Board will meet to set the schedule for 2025 at a later date before the start of the new year in January.



Wilson Molina with big bass.



L-R. Gary Christian, Tim Braud, Bojack Anderson, Wilson Molina



# As Hunting Season Approaches Tee Wayne's Restaurant is Gearing Up to Turn Your Game Harvest into a Specialty Meat

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## Specialty Meats & More



**Bacon Wrapped Stuffed Tenderloins**  
stuffing choices:  
Brisket & Pepper Jack Cheese  
Brisket, Jalapeno & Cheese  
Mac n' Cheese  
Jalapeno & Cream Cheese  
Boudin & Pepper Jack Cheese  
Pulled Pork & Pepper Jack Cheese  
Glazed w/ Pepper Jelly & Brown Sugar  
w/ Jalapeno & Cream Cheese

**Bacon Wrapped Boneless Chicken Thighs**  
stuffing choices:  
Boudin & Pepper Jack Cheese  
Boudin & Jalapeno  
Jalapeno & Cream Cheese

**Fresh Sausage**  
Pepper Jack Cheese  
Jalapeno & Cheese  
Green Onion  
Cajun Green Onion  
Regular  
Italian  
Alligator  
Jalapeno & Cane Syrup  
Green Onion Chicken  
Crawfish  
Alligator Green Onion  
Alligator Jalapeno

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

**Boneless Pork chops**  
Stuffed with Boudin

**Partial De-boned Stuffed Chicken**  
stuffing choices:  
Brisket & Pepper Jack Cheese  
Rice Dressing  
Red Beans & Rice  
Mac n' Cheese  
Pulled Pork & Pepper Jack Cheese  
Loaded Mashed Potatoes

**Smoked Sausage**  
Pepper Jack Cheese  
Jalapeno & Cheese  
Green Onion  
Cajun Green Onion  
Regular  
Andouille  
Pineapple & Brown Sugar  
Alligator  
Crawfish  
Duck

**Lagniappe**  
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Jalapeno Chicken Patties  
Green Onion Chicken Patties  
Boneless Chicken Tenders  
Boneless Skinless Chicken Thighs  
80/20 Ground Beef  
Pre Cut Jambalaya Pork  
Meatloaf  
Hamburger Patties  
Pepper Jack Hamburger Patties  
Crawfish Cornbread

**Gumbos & Stews**  
Seafood Gumbo (gallon or quart)  
Chicken & Sausage Gumbo (gallon or quart)  
Shrimp Stew (quart)  
Shrimp Etouffee (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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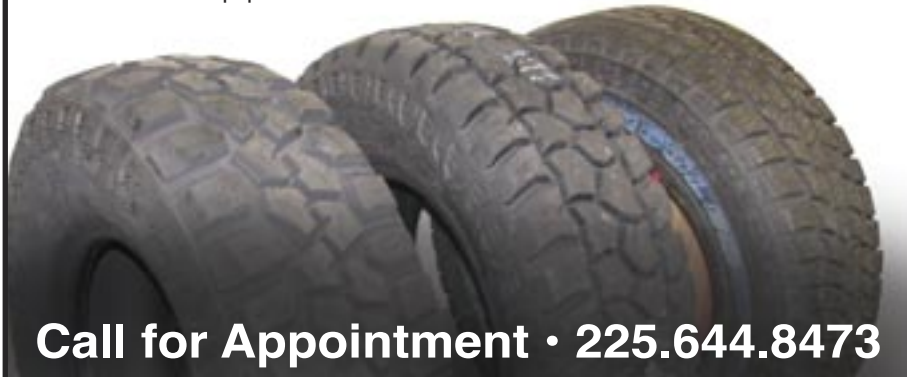


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## ***Useless Random Facts with Kellie***

*Ulysses S. Grant had the boyhood nickname "useless"*

*Andrew Johnson was the only self-educated tailor. He is the only president to make his own clothes and those of his cabinet.*

*Playing card in India are round*

*The first coins issued by the United States government were minted in 1787. Theses pennies were inscribed with the plainspoken motto, "mind your own business."*

*The sale of vodka makes up 10 percent of Russian government income.*

*Children between the ages of two and seven color, on average, twenty-eight minutes every day.*

*The average person spends about two years on the phone in a lifetime.*

*Astronauts in orbit around the earth can see the wakes of ships.*

*The Eiffel tower was built for the 1889 World's Fair. The blueprints covered more than fourteen thousand square feet of drafting paper. The Eiffel tower has 2.5 million rivets, and its height varies as much as six inches, depending on the temperature.*

*Trivial Pursuit was invented by Canadians Scott Abbott and Chris Haney. They didn't want to pay the price for Scrabble, so they made up their own game.*

*The royal house of Saudi Arabia has close to ten thousand princes and princesses.*



## Thoughts from Bully

### A Christmas Morning Only A Step Brother Can Remember

Christmas is here again. The season that sends many adults into depression but all the kids seem to need valium waiting for that magical morning. I remember the Christmas days when Mighty Mouse was the number one cartoon.

We were six kids and I don't know how Mom and Dad did it but each kid seemed to feel as if they had the best Christmas ever each year. I remember the year I received the very first G. I. Joe ever manufactured. It was the package deal including a military backpack, a M-1 rifle, helmet, boots etc.

He was my favorite gift that year. I played with him all



morning and moved on to another toy in the afternoon.

My stepbrother Ronny came to me and wanted to show me something. We walked in the front yard and there was my G. I. Joe set up perfect in a fox hole. There was a small log for him to prop his rifle on. His legs were positioned as a real soldier would. It looked like a perfect war scene. G. I. Joe had all his supplies within grasp for immediate use.

In the early 60's children used their imagination for fun. I was examining the scene

very close. I was looking from all angles. It seemed that Ronny had taken care of every little detail. I remember enjoying how real the setting seemed.

While I was looking I noticed that Ronny had backed up and I heard the sizzle of a fuse on a cherry bomb. The cherry bomb flew right by my head. He yelled, "In coming!!" It landed in the fox hole and exploded. Kaboom, the explosion happened and a big fire started. He had placed a mayonnaise lid filled with gasoline in the bottom of the fox hole.

One leg was blown off and his face was on fire. My G. I. Joe was a casualty on Christmas Day. So much for the season to be jolly.

The Next Year ...

The following Christmas was great. A pool table was left by Santa for all of us. The piles of toys seemed larger that year and everyone was very happy with what they received.

My stepbrothers Ronny and George Jr. received a cool,

electric figure 8 race track with red and blue Corvette cars. For the next month I tried to play with the race track over and over but they wouldn't let me play. One day I got frustrated and went whining to Mom to tell her they wouldn't let me play with their race track. She looked at me and said, "Their race track?" "That track is yours!"

At that moment I knew they had gotten up early and moved the race track from my pile of Christmas toys and placed it in theirs before any of the adults woke up.

I went in and snatched those cars up. The bumpers and fenders may have been cracked from the abuse but they were mine and they never were to play with them again.

I am sure every family has stories about Christmas to share.

I hope they are more pleasant than these but the key word is, family. Merry Christmas to all of you and please have a safe Holiday and get up early.



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# CHC Closet and Pantry

## “Seeking to Glorify God by Helping People”

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

Big things are happening at CHC Closet and Pantry. We have a lot of people to thank this month but first we have some news! We have a phone thanks to the kind people at REV (formerly EATEL). They were able to install a phone line and give a generous donation to cover the bill and lots of other expenses. Our phone # is 225/647-8612. If we don't answer, please leave a message. We check messages each day we are open and we will get back with you as soon as we can.

A couple of times lately, I have been worried about finances. God is teaching me as He is blessing us, that we just need to depend on Him. ATMOS Energy just made a large donation that will really help us out a lot.

A sweet couple from Christ Healing Community made a great donation from a small business that they have. We have a special donor who has helped us a lot in the past and he has brought us lots of deer meat and sausage. A lady who helps homeless people often gives us food. None of these people want me to use their names but they



know who they are and hopefully they know how much their donations help and how much they are appreciated.

Ms. Connie and Mr. Gregory bring us donations from Chick-fil-A, Olive Garden and Thee Heavenly Donut. Thanks to these restaurants and to Connie and Gregory.

The Rotary club brought us lots of food donations just before Thanksgiving. Gonzales Middle Beta Club had a collection and brought a lot of stuff also.

Wal-Mart in Donaldsonville donated \$250 which was used to buy food from Wal-Mart.

We can't go without thanking the people at New Song Community Church for their generous and ongoing support. They have been so kind to us and our community.



A special thank you goes to the ladies Bible group at Ascension Baptist Church for the check they brought to us. It was used to purchase food for our clients.

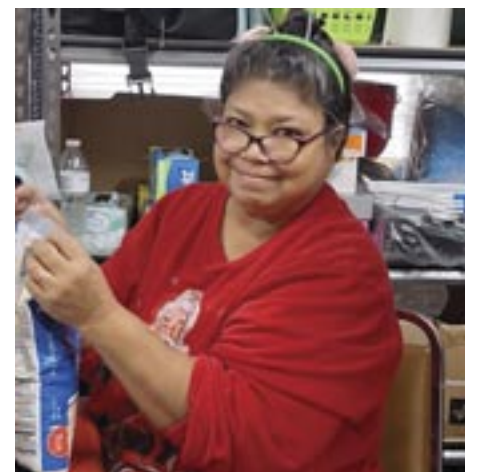
I would like to thank the owner of Cut-Rite Tree Service for our office space and all of the other things he provides for us.

We have been blessed with so many great volunteers, our regulars and those who give a few hours when they can. We had some young people from RPCC who really helped a lot. If you have some extra time please give us a call and we will put you to work.

I am sure that I have forgotten to mention someone and for that, I apologize. Everyone who helps us is valued and appreciated. We couldn't do what we do with all of you. Our donors and volunteers are simply the best.



If you would like to help, we have an Amazon wish list on our FB page. We can accept financial help through PayPal, or checks can be mailed to 209 E. Railroad St. Gonzales, LA 70737. Donations of food, cash, clean clothing, blankets, small toys and kitchen items can be dropped off on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thurs-



day from 9-12 in the back of the Cut Rite building. If we are closed you may drop off at the Cut Rite office Monday-Friday from 9-3.

Thank you again and God bless you.

Janell Brent







## *The Garney Gautreau* **Monster Mash Soc Hop**

PHOTOS BY ROBIN STEVENS, OFF THE GRID PHOTOGRAPHY







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### Baked Brie Louisianne



Executive Chef, John Donaldson

**Prep Time:**  
20 minutes

**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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***Tuesday, December 31st***



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