# TEXARKANA

NOV/DEC 2023

723

#### WAYS TO GIVE BACK

Tis the season to help others *p .10* 

#### CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

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Local dad shares his Christmas Traditions *p. 12* 

### CREATING MEMORIES

Gift ideas that create an experience *p. 18* 

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remember the holidays were not always bright for me as a kid. So many Thanksgiving dinners spent with others becase we didn't have much. During Christmas we would get a gift delivery from Salvation Armywrapped presents to put under the tree for Christmas morning. So many of



those holidays hav emade me so proud of where I am today. To go from being gifted to being the giver is a wonderful feeling. I am so grateful for all those experiences. When I give back to my community, I am always reminded of the differenc eit made in my life when my community gave to me. I hope to pass that down to my daughter, Sophie, as she grows into an adult. Sometimes it is the smallest gesture that can make the biggest impact. Happy Holiday to all of our readers! -Katie Stone

> e are now in the midst of my favorite time of year. The Thanksgiving and

Christmas seasons bring us an opportunity to be with friends and family, and also the opportunity to make a difference in others' lives during this special time of year. God does not guarantee any of us a perfect life, but he certainly does bless us with an abundance of blessings. This is a great time of year to share and bless others.



It is so easy to get caught up in all of the hustle and bustle that these holiday seasons bring, and it is so important for us to keep the meaning and purpose behind these upcoming holidays in mind. I would be lying if I said. I did not like to receive gifts, but there is also much blessing in giving. And as we celebrate this time of year, where God provided us with the greatest gift of all, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I hope you take advantage of the many opportunities that will present themselves to bless others with what may be even be a small gesture. -Ben King

hristmas time is often called the best time of the year by many. It definitely is because it gives us a chance to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. I love the fact that more people come to church this time of the year than any other and but also gather with family and focus on what is important. Giving is also the center of this holiday, which we need more of in our self-centered world. Christmas is magical, not just to children, but to parents who get to watch their children grow with anticipation as Christmas Eve gets closer. Hopefully this season brings you much joy with your family! Whether you celebrate with many or a few, young children awaiting Santa's arrival, teens, kids coming home from college, or traveling, May the Lord bless you this holiday season. We certainly hope you stop and enjoy the true reason for Christmas, and give many thanks for our abundance of blessings!

#### **Publisher's Page**

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# November & December Events

#### FRIDAY, NOV. 10 Downtown Live

6 p.m.-9 p.m., Historic Downtown Texarkana.

The beloved Downtown Live is a community event that takes place from 6-9pm on the second Friday of every month. Come and enjoy artists producing unique art live, meet the artists behind the masterpieces hanging in the galleries, enjoy live music and entertainment, do some shopping and stop at one of our downtown restaurants for dinner before or after. This event is family friendly and free to the public.

#### NOV. 9-12 Mistletoe Market

Arkansas Convention Center. Kick off the holiday season at the Junior League of Texarkana's Annual Mistletoe Market. Shop unique vendors, sample delicious foods, and enjoy events for the whole family. Breakfast, workshops and pictures with Santa are available. Learn more at jltexarkana.org.



#### saturday, nov. 12 Veterans Day Parade

11 a.m., East Broad and Hazel Streets, Downtown Texarkana. The theme this year is "Honoring the Medal of Honor & Purple Heart Recipients." Hosted by Texarkana Area Veterans Council. For more information, call 870-773-8279 or email usmcgreg@aol.com.

#### SUNDAY, NOV. 12 Atlanta Holiday Open House & Christmas Tree Lighting

*1-5 p.m., Atlanta, Texas.* Even Santa shops Atlanta! The Atlanta community will kick off its holiday shopping season with this annual event, with the open house from 1-6 p.m. and tree lighting beginning at 5:30 p.m.

#### FRIDAY, NOV. 17 Season of Lights Opening Night

6-9 p.m., 275 PR 98002, New Boston. Experience Bowie County's own drive-through Christmas light display this season! Featuring a Christmas tree maze, tons of family photo opportunities, food truck and concession stand. Follow them on Facebook for hours and updates: <u>facebook.com/</u> seasonoflightsnewboston.

#### saturday, nov. 18 Home Alone Live in Concert

7 p.m., Perot Theatre. A true holiday favorite, this beloved comedy classic features renowned composer John Williams' charming and delightful score performed live to picture by the Texarkana Symphony Orchestra. Hilarious and heart-warming, Home Alone is holiday fun for the entire family! Purchase tickets at <u>perottheatre.org</u>.

#### thursday, nov. 23 Turkey Trot

7:30 a.m., Spring Lake Park. "Huffin' and Puffin' for the Gravy and Stuffin"

Join us for our 10th Annual Community HealthCORE Foundation Turkey Trot 5K on Thanksgiving morning in Texarkana.

#### saturday, nov. 25 Small Business Saturday

This is a day to celebrate and support small businesses and all they do for their communities. Be sure to shop small for this holiday season's gifts!

Looking for more fun things to do in the area? Check out Texarkana's community calendar at <u>gotxk.org/calendar</u>!

# TXK150 Sesquicentennal:



Celebrate Texarkana's story (YOUR story), on Texarkana's 150th Birthday, Friday, 12/8/2023, in a multimedia experience anchored by the Texarkana Symphony Orchestra and involving Candice Taylor vocals, Two Pianos stylings, live narration, cameo actors, and sights and sounds from our past. Honor our forerunners, witness the birth of our twin cities, learn how we developed, marvel at our many creative sons and daughters, look forward to our bright future, and be the first to hear a newly commissioned Texarkana composition.

Experience Your Story

Happy Birthday. T-Town!

#### MONDAY, NOV. 27 Mixed Media Ornament Class

6 p.m. -9 p. m., Texarkana College Come have a cup of cocoa and make some handmade ornaments for your tree or for gifts. You will be taking home five handmade ornaments to keep or give as gifts. We will be using paint, glitter, glue, collage papers, yarn, and ribbon. All supplies included! Register here: https://cbe.texarkanacollege.edu/.../christmas-ornament

#### december 1-2 TRAHC Open House & Arts Market

*Regional Arts Center, Downtown Texarkana.* Shop with regional artists and foodies, with products including woodmaking, pottery, jewelry, leather goods, goat cheese and more. Hosted by the Texarkana Regional Arts & Humanities Council and the For Arts' Sake Gift Shop.

#### december 2-4 The Nutcracker

Multiple performances; see website for details. Perot Theatre. The Texarkana Community Ballet brings the timeless classic The Nutcracker back to the Perot Theatre stage. This annual performance showcases top ballet talent from dance schools across the area. Buy tickets at perottheatre.org.

#### monday, nov. 27 Downtown Texarkana Christmas Parade

*7 p.m.* This year's Main Street Texarkana Christmas Parade is themed '150 of Texarkana' in a nod to Texarkana's incredible journey through 150 years.



#### saturday, dec. 2 Atlanta Christmas Parade

*5:30 p.m., Downtown Atlanta, Texas.* So many call Cass County 'home.' The 2023 Atlanta Area Christmas Parade will feature reasons why Cass County is a great place to live. This year's theme is "A Cass County Christmas."

#### sunday, dec. 10 Christmas at the Perot

*4-6 p.m., Perot Theatre.* A Texarkana tradition! Join the Texarkana Symphony Orchestra, Texarkana Jazz Orchestra, and the TSO Chamber Singers for this holiday concert for the whole family. Plus, don't miss seeing the winner of TSO's 12th Annual Celebrity Conductor Competition.

#### MONDAY, DEC. 11 Lonestar: Christmas & Hits

#### 7 p.m., Perot.

Stop by and see one of country's finest groups! Join Lonestar as they perform some of their biggest hits and give the Christmas spirit a country twist! For more information visit: https://www. perottheatre.org/events

#### saturday, dec. 16 Jingle Jog 5K Run

9 a.m., Springlake Park This event benefits We are Washington non-profit. It will begin at 9am, and there will be food, games, prizes, and more. Get ready to lace up and join us. For more information/registration, please visit our race site. Santa and some of his helpers might make an appearance on race day!

#### saturday, dec. 16 Christmas On Main

Perot Theatre & Main Street. Enjoy your favorite holiday movies all day at the Perot Theatre, then step outside for a turn in the ice skating rink, plus vendors, food trucks and kids' crafts. Movies include *Frozen*, *The Grinch* and *It's a Wonderful Life*. Movie tickets available at perottheatre.org.





### Join us at the Historic Perot Theatre

Performance Dates: Friday, December 1, 2023 7:00 pm Saturday, December 2, 2023 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm Sunday, December 3, 2023 2:00 pm

MEDICAL CLINIC

Dr. Rachel King, M.D., F.A.A.P INTERNAL MEDICINE & PEDIATRICS

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Ticket prices: \$17, \$15, \$13 www.perottheatre.org/cvents



# Warm wishes for the holiday season

My team and I want to extend our warmest wishes to you and yours for a joyous and peaceful holiday season.



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# GIVING BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

BY KATIE STONE

his time of year brings up so many reasons for us to be thankful. We teach our kids to always list things to be thankful for at the Thanksgiving table. We donate money or food during this time of year for those who are not as prepared for the holidays as we may be. Although those acts of kindness make a big impact, I am always looking for other ways to give back to my community. I love a 'hands-on' type of community involvement, so I decided to compile a list of ways to volunteer in any community, regardless of location.

#### 1) Nursing Facilities

So many residents in nursing facilities, assisted living homes, and independent senior living apartments love getting visitors. Simply volunteering your time to help call a BINGO game or stop by during lunch time to have a conversation with a resident can go a long way. I enjoy taking my daughter to help serve Thanksgiving lunch/dinner when the residents' families are there. It is really a treat to hear them introduce their families and they beam with joy to see my daughter helping out.

#### 2) School VIPS Programs

No matter where your kids go to school, I can almost GUARANTEE they could use some extra help during the holidays! Whether its office help or being a part of their family night festivals for Thanksgiving and Christmas, your time would mean so much to them!

#### 3) Homeless Shelters

It's not an easy thing to see, but there is a homeless community among every town. The holidays typically bring opportunities to help serve that community. Some host soup dinners, or Thanksgiving meals where having additional hands to help serve or clean up is very beneficial.

#### 4) Yard Work

Sometimes when I am driving, I notice that there are yards in serious need of attention. Often the people who live there cannot physically do the work, nor can they afford to pay for it. Find a way to help out your neighbor. Bring your kids along and they will see the good that bagging leaves can do.

#### 5) Community Gardens

Community gardens need a lot of work. Just because the colder season is here does not mean gardening is done! There are all sorts of maintence for plants to help keep them healthy and thriving during the winter months. If you have a green thumb, take some time to lend it to a community garden.

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?" -Martin Luther King JR

# Advertise with us in our next issue!

## Jan/Feb

#### Whole Family Wellness

Spotlight on health & wellness for the whole family. Information from local physicians, health coaches, & therapists.

**Family Favorite Awards are BACK!** Did you get your vote in? Will your family favorites take home the award??

#### Showing Love in Unexpected Ways

For those who are non verbal, showing affection can be a difficult task. Learn from local parents on how to show you care for those who can not express their love or gratitude.



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# **Christmas Traditions**

chocolate, cloves, and leaves crunching. It's that time of the year again. Sweet spices linger in the air as the cool weather dips in and splashes vibrant fall colors all around.

As the season changes, we approach the holidays. It is a time not only for family and our loved ones, but a time to celebrate holiday traditions. Whether starting a new tradition of your own or continuing an old one, the most important thing is that you find something that fits you and yours.

I'll tell you about some of my absolute favorites. It's a wonderful time of the year for Christmas lights. Whether putting up your own or admiring others, it's a tradition that will stick around for years to come. My children's favorite tradition is



ing the house with Christmas lights while drinking egg nogg. We always use special holiday glasses and have accompanying music. Holiday pajamas are a must.

My favorite season traditions reach back further than I can remember. The ones we carry on from grandparents, the ones they got from theirs. Food recipes and holiday dishes is a favorite way of doing this. My favorite holiday dessert is something I make every vear as the weather starts to turn. It's called date loaf and is a recipe from my great-grandfather of whom I never had the privilege of meeting. My grandmother passed it on to me and I'll pass it on to my children. In a lovely way he joins us every year, and I'm thankful to carry that on. One of my friends makes green bean bundles out of their family cookbook each year from a recipe her grandmother left behind twenty years ago. Not only a family favorite, but it's a beautiful way of celebrating her as well.

Our newest favorite tradition is an arts and crafts project each year. My children and I love making holiday wreaths, so we design a new one each go around. Our latest is a coffee filter wreath that's easy

BY ANTHONY JAMES

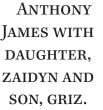
enough for almost everyone. You simply buy a foam ring from your local craft store and a package of coffee filters. Dip the edges of the filters in dye to give your wreath pops of color. You can add lights if you want and simply hot glue the filters around the entire front and sides after rolling them into cone shapes. You can add flowers, ribbons, and bows but make sure to pack the filters in tight to ensure it looks full. Your craft store will also sale vine and twine if you want to go for a more traditional looking wreath. Customizing your own is fun for the kids and adds personal touches to any decoration you choose.



If you want to get the family out of the house instead, our area has a lot of different options to try. In New Boston, less than 20 minutes away, they have Season of Lights which is a drive-thru Christmas light park. My family always makes it a point to visit the Harris family in Doddridge. Their decorated home is award winning and bolsters over 65,000 lights, not to mention they are one of the sweetest families you will ever meet. Christmas on Caddo Fireworks Festival offers fun for the whole family and is less than an hour away located just south of Cass County. Jefferson, Texas, also less than an hour away, offers the EnchantedForest at Lions Park which promises fun for any age group. If you are willing to drive a little further, Tyler, Texas is renowned for their Tyler Lights Christmas drive-thru park. Santa Land in Tyler is a 24-acre park boasting almost 2.5 million lights. Don't forget to take lots of pictures!

Whether something old or something new, something you make or something you do, the main ingredient to it all is always the same; Love.







New Bostone, TX.-275 PR 98002

Longview, TX.-Carmela's Magical Santa Land-6085 Hwy 259

Tyler, TX.-Tyler Lights Christmas Drive Thru- Light Park- 12880 County Road 192

Santa Land-11518 Interstate 20 W

Hot Springs, AR.-Garven Gardens Wonderland-550 Arkridge Rd November 1 starts the enrollment period for health insurance at a very low cost.

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# **Charitable Giving**

BY BEN KING

hether you have considerable assets or just a little bit to give, if supporting a charity during your lifetime or after you are gone is important to you, an Estate Planning attorney can help. There are many ways to donate to a cause—both now and in your Will—and it's important to understand the tax implications and Medicaid eligibility considerations before you do anything.

If you think you will need to qualify for Medicaid to pay for long-term care in the future, then donating to charity could impact your eligibility. Charitable giving is not exempt from the five-year period Medicaid will look at to determine the value of your assets. In other words, if you donate money to a charity and then apply for Medicaid to pay for your nursing home within five years, the amount of the donation will likely count against you. The only exception would be if you put the money into a Special Needs Trust to care for a disabled child. If you think Medicaid is in your future, talk to an Elder Law attorney before you give any assets away.

#### Options for Charitable Giving Now and in Your Estate Plan

Writing a check to an organization or cause during an annual fund drive is one way to donate to charity, but there are other ways that could allow you to give more and benefit from tax breaks. Smart options include:



Once you turn 72, you will be required to start withdrawing from and paying taxes on your tax-deferred retirement accounts, whether you need the money or not. For many people, these **Required Minimum Distri**butions (RMD) put them in a higher tax bracket. If you are planning to support a charity anyway, you could choose to donate up to \$100,000 of your RMD directly to a non-profit charity. You will meet your RMD, and the money will not be counted in your taxable income.

#### Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT).

This type of Trust holds and invests your money and pays you in installments during your lifetime. It is taxable income, but upon your death, the remainder of the funds will go directly to the charity you named when you established the Trust. You can name the Trust as the beneficiary of retirement accounts and other assets. The CRT will receive the funds upon your death and will not owe income tax on the money, increasing the



By creating your own charitable fund within an established community foundation, you can establish a financial legacy, take a tax deduction, and retain control over who gets your donation. In a Donor Advised Fund such as a community foundation, your money will grow tax-free, allowing you to increase the value of your donation.

#### **Private Family Foundation.**

If you have significant assets to donate and wish to leave a lasting legacy, you might consider establishing a Private Family Foundation. The foundation would be managed by a board of directors and can last for generations.

The simplest way to include charitable giving in your Estate Plan is to name a charity in your Will or trust. Once your Estate is probated, your **Executor or Trustee will** make the donation in your name. You can also name charities as beneficiaries of life insurance policies and other accounts. It is always a good idea to discuss your plans with the charity you plan to support to find out the best way to make your donation.

Whether you have a lot or a little to give, you can get peace of mind that your wish to support a meaningful cause will be honored after your death by incorporating charitable giving into your Estate Plan. Our Estate Planning team will be able to explain all of your options and help you choose the giving option that will protect your Medicaid eligibility, provide you with the greatest tax advantage, and maximize the value of your legacy.

If you would like charitable giving to be part of your legacy, find out how to make it happen and what to consider when choosing among your many options. For specific questions about your goals, schedule an appointment with an Estate Plan advisor sooner rather than later.



Ben King, Elder Law Attorney Estate Planning • Asset Protection Power of Attorney Medicaid Planning Trusts & Wills • Probate Gaurdianships <sup>Scar</sup> Special Needs Trusts

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# **Creating Memories**

BY KATIE STONE

Does anyone else feel so overwhelmed with the amount of toys that our kids collect? Seeing the absolute joy on their faces when they open the gifts are priceless moments, but I could use a little less clutter in my life! A few years ago, I started asking my daughter what kind of experiences she would like to have. She listed so many things that she wants to try! I was blown away by her response. I had no idea that she had so many places she wanted to go and things she wanted to try! Now, I find myself telling our family members that she needs experiences for birthday and Christmas gifts and she has enjoyed it so much. The memories we have created from these experiences over the years will surely stick with her for a long time. In the end, the memories will mean so much more.

ere are some ideas for experience gifts that you can find within 100 miles of the Texarkana area:

## 1 POTTERY CLASS

Ken the Potter and his wife, Ann, teach pottery classes in The Mud Room. Fun for kids & adults. Call for more information 903-701-0010.





Texarkana's movie theatre is Cinemark 14 located at 4230 St. Michael Dr, Texarkana, TX. They offer gift cards at their ticket box office or e-gift cards on their website. www.cinemark.com/theatres/ texarkana

## 3 INDOOR TRAMPOLINE PARK

G-Jump is located at 4212 St. Michael Dr, Texarkana, Texas and offers so many jumping options for several ages! Check out their website for pricing and hours. www.gjumpusa.com



Starlite Arcade & Indoor Mini Golf- Located inside Central Mall on Richmond Road. Call (903) 838-4158 for hours and pricing.





### BOWLING

Texarkana has two bowling alleys offering unique atmospheres. Holiday Bowl on Stateline Ave. offers laser tag, arcade games, and bowling while College Bowl has a more classic bowling alley feel and provides a fun atmosphere for the family. www.holidayec.com www.collegebowltexarkana.com



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## **STATE PARKS**

There are so many State Parks in our area that offer a wonderful experience for the family, even in the winter months. Crater of Diamonds State Park is located at 209 State Park Rd, Murfreesboro, AR. Call 870-285-3113 for gift card and hours of operation.



## 7 GLASS BLOWING

Sanctuary Glass Studio is located at 423 Lake Street, Shreveport, LA. They offer classes and even allow you to create your own glass. Find out more by calling (504) 390-4377 or visiting their website at https://sanctuaryartsschool. org/create-your-own-glass/

## 8 SKATING RINK

Hot Wheel Skating Palace is located at 3000 Old Minden Road, Bossier City, Louisiana. Talk about a retro feel! This skating rink has the old school feeling that we, as parents, enjoyed growing up! Definitely a great place to take the kids for nostalgic fun for the whole family. Call (318) 747-5095 or visit their website at https://www.sbhotwheels.com/ for more information!



The Museum of the Red River is located in Idabel, Oklahoma. About 70 miles from Texarkana and full of incredible information.Find out more on their website at https://museumoftheredriver.org/



# **10** ART CLASSES

The 1894 Gallery at 105 Olive Street in Historic Downtown Texarkana offers art classes to all ages! Call (870) 330-5003 for

more information!



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50% Off Bowling and Shoes 7 PM-10 PM. Not valid with any other offer.

#### **TUESDAY SPECIAL \$2 TUESDAY**

\$2 per person/per game \$2 shoe rental \$2 laser tag per person/per session 4 PM-Close. Tax not included.

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#### THURSDAY SPECIAL **BUCK AND A HALF** HAPPY HOUR

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#### FRIDAY & SATURDAY SPECIAL-LATE NIGHT **ROCK-N-BOWL**

Friday & Saturday 10 PM-12 AM 6 person max. \$70 per lane. \$20 per person. Shoe rental included.

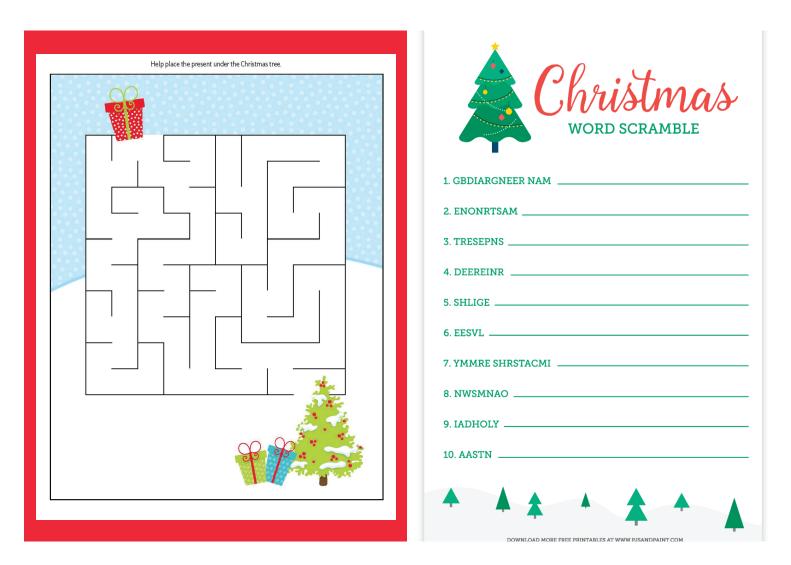
#### SUNDAY SPECIAL THE FLAT 10

\$10 per person, shoes and tax included, bowl for 2 hours. 7 PM-Close. Add laser tag session for only \$5 per person.

#### LASER TAG & GAME ROOM SPECIAL

Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays \$75.00 for 4 people 2 (5-minute) sessions of Laser Tag each \$10 game card for the arcade for each person Add a large one topping pizza and a pitcher of soda for only \$15 more! Add extra people at only \$20 each! Tax not included.

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