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November 2021

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Cookies
and Candy

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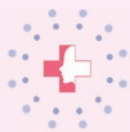
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Welcome

This year when planning our holiday edition making sure to bring some easy décor ideas to the table was a must. A few examples of table settings were easy to throw together because the options are literally endless when it comes to prepping for your holiday parties. Charcuterie boards are all the rage and more than just meats and cheeses seem to be getting the attention of hosts these days. Our smores board and fall board ideas made me hungry just thinking about them.

Fresh Christmas tree scents can come in anything from a candle to a spray, but nothing is more inviting and fills the air with the sense of Christmas than a real tree. Greg and Weeta Shell along with their family have created a place to start traditions on their Christmas tree farm in Colbert County. Tagging your tree early and picking it up before Dec. 1 is the idea lots of Shoals families already have started, but the Shells want to invite more families to be a part of what they have created on their farm. So, find out more about Shell's Christmas Tree Farm in the pages of this year's holiday edition.

Dr. Hillary delaRosa was fun to chat with and her knowledge base, and concern for wellness and beauty are unmatched here in the Shoals. She fell in love with "the beautiful side of medicine" in her early days in medical school and wanted to turn that into an extension of her services once she came back to the Shoals to practice. Kate Zills, who is also a Florence native and an Auburn University engineering graduate, took her professional knowledge base and wanted to take beauty a step further and has started her own business. She plans on her first product to hit the shelves in early 2022 and has named it after her hometown, Florence.

Sweets to eat and drink are always found around this time of year, so catching up with some friends who offered some of their favorite recipes was a must for this issue. An easy bow-tying tutorial is inside, too, for those of you who want to make a perfect wreath or to top that special gift.

I also want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the person who helped make this issue beautiful. Heather Sherrill of Create Portraiture can make cookies, cheese and gift items placed in the floor award-winning photography for this year's Shoals Woman Magazine Holiday Edition. Heather, we love you and appreciate you more than you know!

Like the holidays, this issue is one that brought people together, and we hope you enjoy it and have the happiest of times with the people in your life.

Cecilia Brumley - Magazine Writer and Event Planner

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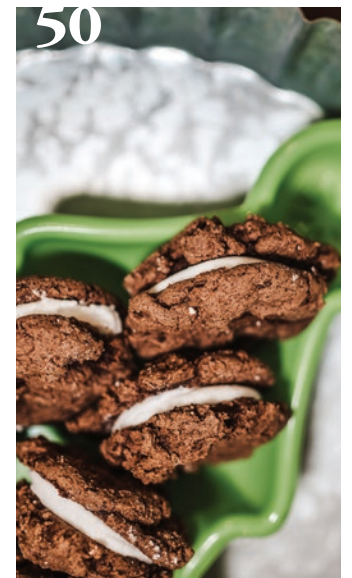
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HEATHER SHERRILL



Heather Bradford Sherrill is the owner of Create Portraiture and Bradford Farm & Venue. She has been a professional photographer for 15 years and specializes in wedding photography. Heather's creative talent, adaptability, and attention to detail make her one of the most successful photographers in northwest Alabama and have earned her the 2021 TimesDaily Reader's Choice Wedding Photographer Award. We have had the honor of working with Heather on this Shoals Woman Magazine as well as the past eight. Heather has brought our ideas to life through her photography, capturing the spirit of both the people and holidays featured each season. Furthermore, she is an absolute delight to work with. Check out more of Heather's work at createportraiture.com.

ON the COVER

Reclaimed Spirit is a Florence destination for upscale furnishings, home decor and gifts for everyday living.

Artist and Founder Stacey Hamner believes in making the everyday things beautiful, and inspired by that sentiment, she opened Reclaimed Spirit Home & Gift in downtown Florence in 2017. After one year, the shop moved south one block to expand and connect with a local boutique hotel and restaurant. The atmosphere is fun and lively.

In late July 2021, a sister store, Reclaimed Spirit HOME, opened on Florence Boulevard. This location offers designer furnishings, homewares and everyday gifts. Design services and by appointment shopping are also available.

Reclaimed Spirit offers items large and small to fit your budget. Mercury glass Christmas ornaments were popular in her store last year, so we were excited to see them back this year. These shiny glittery ornaments are perfect for every tree and the cover of this year's magazine.

Photo by Heather Sherrill of Create Portraiture



Photo by Julie Strickland Photography



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Fall Charcuterie

by CECILIA BRUMLEY
Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL
of CREATE PORTRAITURE

Charcuterie is having a moment right now, and not just regular meat and cheese boards. Crafty entertainers have gotten creative with new kinds of charcuterie to try. Dessert charcuterie, breakfast charcuterie, Mexican charcuterie, candy charcuterie and more. Whether you're entertaining for 2 or 10, charcuterie boards are a great option. They require minimal cooking (often none), and end up looking picture perfect. Not to mention, delicious!

Fall makes me think of crisp apples and a chilly fall night with smores roasting on an open fire. These two charcuterie boards cover sweet, salty and tart flavors and are perfect for fall.

Once you have done your shopping and have all of the treats on hand, assembling the platter takes little time, and the results are impressive.

Be sure to include both sweet and salty treats to your boards.

Include a mix of shapes, sizes, colors and textures for a beautiful board.

Garnishes can include fresh herbs, flowers, or in this case pumpkins.

Fresh fruit is always a beautiful addition to any board.





Caramel Toffee Dip


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- 8oz cream cheese, room temperature
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup white sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 8oz bag of Heath English Toffee Bits



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WHAT'S INSIDE MATTERS®

Set for the Season

Gatherings great and small deserve tables set with intention and a little Christmas flair. Live florals from Bradford Farms, mercury glass trees and beaded chargers set this dining room perfectly with furniture from Story and Lee Furniture.

Photos by Heather Sherrill of Create Portraiture

A casual Christmas brunch can be made even more special with colorful tableware like this set from Fiesta that can be purchased at the Emporium of the Shoals.



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Dr. George R. Jennings, MD

While in our 10th year in the Shoals, the staff of Shoals Plastic Surgery and Dr. Jennings strive to give compassionate and competent care on an individual basis. Being able to fulfill a need in this area, and giving patients an option to stay close to home is a great honor. Plastic Surgery is the work of transformation and renewal, and for many patients, this can be life-changing. This is one of the many reasons Dr. Jennings chose the specialty of Plastic Surgery.

Dr. Jennings takes patients' needs very seriously and works diligently to achieve success for his patients, whether it be cosmetic or reconstructive. He is Board Certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery and a standing member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. His goal for Shoals Plastic Surgery is to be the "go to" practice that serves the community in a way that has a positive and lasting impact on the Quad Cities and its people.



Pamela Varnagatas, LE

I'm licensed by the State of Alabama Managing Estheticians and Managing Cosmetologists, with 15 years of experience in the cosmetic and beauty industries.

I have advanced skills in the skin care industry, specializing in lasers in medical and plastic surgery practice for six years.

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Napkin rings, bronze chargers, linen napkins, and fall florals set a beautiful tablescape for a Thanksgiving feast.



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O Christmas Tree



Greg and Weeta Shell, owners of Shell's Christmas Tree Farm.

by CECILIA BRUMLEY

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

The tradition of decorating a Christmas tree started in the heavily forested regions of Northern Europe, where mature trees could be found easily.

They were chopped down and carried back to the village.

Choosing a tree would be part of the fun and festivities.

Today with bustling cities and suburban areas growing it is not as easy to go into the woods with an axe and return with a suitable spruce pine to decorate.

Forests are better protected today as well, urging the growth of businesses specializing in growing trees for

people to take home at Christmas time.

Greg Shell left Atlanta in 1973 and headed to the Shoals to attend what was then Florence State College.

Shortly after, Greg made friends with Steve Viall who eventually introduced him to his sister Weeta.

Greg and Weeta married and the former city boy from Georgia and his new bride purchased 44 acres that joined Weeta's parents' property in Colbert County.

"I had never been on a tractor before," Greg said.

With his limited experience and his new homestead surrounded

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by generational farmers, he quickly realized that wasn't something he could compete with.

He and his wife visited a Christmas tree farmer off the Trace and thought that would be something neat to bring to the area and would work around his full-time job as an educator.

The Shell Christmas Tree Farm started in 1987 and now has 20 acres of trees of different varieties which equals to about 8,000 trees arraying from seedling to maturity.

"It takes 4 to 5 years to grow a 6- to 8-foot tree here on the farm," Greg said. "Trees are like us, they grow at different speeds."

The Shells' heart and desire is to encourage others to "start a family tradition."



Shell's Christmas Tree Farm is a family owned and operated business. Greg and Weeta along with their two sons, Aaron and Chad, their wives Kim and Amber and grandchildren; Hunter, Colton, Hudson, and Kipton are all involved with the business, as well as numerous relatives and friends.

Shell's Christmas Tree Farm's motto is "Start a family tradition." The Lovelady family spent time on the farm this year selecting their tree and are looking forward to coming back next year as a family of five.



Greg recalled Christmas tree season a few years ago meeting a gentleman who was fourth generation coming to the farm to pick their own tree for the holiday season.

"That was special that this meant enough to continue visiting us each year," he said. "This is a joy and a ministry for my family."

The Shell Christmas Tree Farm opens the first weekend of November and invites families out to walk the grounds and tag their own tree.

Greg and wife schedule an early Thanksgiving lunch for their family and at 1 p.m. Shell Christmas Tree Farm is officially open for cutting.

"We invite any of our family who wants to work that day to get

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Back row from left: Emily Russell, DNP, FNP-C; Danielle Elliott, MSN, CRNP; Liz Davis, MSN, CRNP, NTP
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started with us after lunch,” he said. “My boys, Aaron and Chad, along with their wives keep this place running all season and I am thankful we get to work together because I don’t know what I would do without them.”

The Shell Christmas Tree Farm in Colbert County has grown from selling around 400 to 500 trees to selling around 1,400 trees in 2020.

They are eager to see what 2021 brings.

More than tree picking can be found at the farm, the Shells have created an experience they want for their guests that will encourage that family tradition they hope to spark.

Wagon rides, free hot apple cider, food trucks,



Greg Shell, a native of Atlanta, had never been on a tractor but found himself buying a farm and finding his niche in Christmas tree growing.



Big sister Jessi is helping Cooper as he inspects all the trees.



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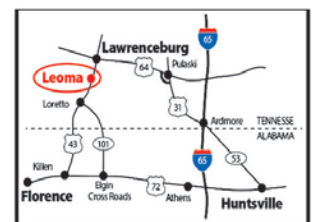
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wreath and garland making, and Santa is there to take requests from your little ones.

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A Christmas tree farm grows and sells trees specifically to retain needles and lasts through the holiday season.

Buying from an Alabama Christmas tree farms supports your local community and American businesses.



You can find Weeta busy making wreaths from tree clippings or serving her secret hot apple cider recipe to guests as they visit the farm this year.





Zach, Krystina, Jessi, and Cooper started the family tradition of tagging their Christmas tree early and are looking forward to bringing it to their home in late November.

Most artificial trees in the US (about 85% of them) come from China.

Buying a real Christmas tree supports American tree farms and American families.

There is no replacement for the smell of a fresh cut tree.

If you have ever cut your own Christmas tree, then you know what I'm saying.

The scent of the perfect tree fills your home and is the perfect signal for all that the Christmas season entails.

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Hillary delaRosa

Dr. Hillary delaRosa has a goal of overall wellness for her patients. Healthy people that look and feel good!

Dr. Hillary delaRosa is a native to the Shoals and a 2002 graduate of Central High School. She then went on to attend UAH and play basketball for the Lady Chargers.

It is there where she met her husband and started her studies for pre-med.

While attending the UAB School of Medicine in Birmingham, she worked for a dermatology group.

That experience led her to “love the beautiful side of medicine.”

delaRosa went on to complete her residency at Emory University in Atlanta.

To further her education and experience, she has since trained in aesthetic procedures with several different specialists in the field, including courses in Hollywood, California, and is licensed to practice by the Alabama State Board of Medicine.

“I had friends that studied all parts of medicine during my time at Emory, but I felt led to follow the integrative medicine route or internal medicine as it is most commonly referred to.

“Integrative medicine allows me to work on a patient inside and out



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and focus on overall wellness,” she said.

Upon completion of medical school delaRosa always had the desire to come back and serve the Shoals community and that is exactly what she did.

She filled her schedule with patients in her medical clinic and from time to time she spent her days going from one patient needing a flu shot to another coming in for their tox appointment.

When she started incorporating tox injections through her practice, she began seeing it grow so much she knew there was a need to open a new place.

delaRosa set out in 2019 to open a new business. She wanted to

create a place that was beautiful, and when you walked in you felt pretty.

Complete Aesthetics opened in February 2020.

After four to five days with the doors open, COVID restrictions shut her doors.

“I told myself and my staff, ‘If the Lord wants us to be successful, it will work out,’” she said.

During that time of closure and since her business was brand new, Complete Esthetics qualified for no government assistance during the shutdown.

delaRosa and her staff had to get creative, so they dove into social media live sessions and campaigns promoting their services and medical grade skincare.

Once things started to reopen, the schedule book at Complete Aesthetics started filling up with appointments for anything from its popular tox injections to medical grade ear piercing.

delaRosa finds her balance between her medical practice and her Complete Aesthetics all thanks to her own health and her awesome staff.

“You will find me in my clinic Monday thru Thursday, 8 to 5 every week and sometimes charting at midnight,” she said with a joyful laugh. “I really couldn’t do it with out my great nurse practitioner, Amberly Smith. She is the hardest working and the smartest CRNP I have ever worked with.”

Dr. delaRosa works to find balance between her general practice and her Complete Aesthetics clients. She does that with a great team and practicing what she preaches.



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Specializing in more than services at Complete Aesthetics, Dr. D. offers medical grade skincare and educates her clients on the healthiest ways to reach their goals.



Most Fridays, delaRosa has a full schedule at Complete Aesthetics.

“Fridays are tox days. We use Botox and Jeuneau. These are injectables that relax the muscles so the overlying skin can be smoother and must be administered by a medical doctor,” she said. “I also do derma filler, it is a little different than a tox treatment. With age we lose fat and bone mass in places we want to keep it and gravity happens so with derma filler I like to take time with those clients and make sure that we

achieve their goal.” delaRosa does not stop there.

Complete Aesthetics has a full lineup of medical-grade skincare.

The staff is educated in different areas to offer a wide variety of services from hair removal, lash lifts, brow tinting and nano blading to microneedling.

She believes that routine skincare sessions can give a client the overall look and skin health she desires.

delaRosa believes this so much that she offers a loyalty program.

“I wanted to offer our customers an

investment and something to encourage them to spend time for themselves,” she said. “I am a firm believer that you can not pour from an empty cup. If you look in the mirror and like what you see we have a joy that spills out and we are in better spirits to love and serve our families.”

When looking at goals for the future of her practice and Complete Aesthetics, delaRosa has a dream of “an overall wellness center where she can treat patients, and they can be greeted at the door with education and

prevention medicine to show ways to keep ourselves healthy inside and out and what internal medicine is all about.

“Larger cities are already embarking on this plan and that is where I hope we go. This area could use this health option.”

Complete Aesthetics

has a lot of pink going on, but they are open to men, too. “They like to look and feel good, too,” delaRosa said. “Although this is a place where you are coming to improve your outward physical appearance, we really pride ourselves in the overall patients mental, physical, emotional wellbeing. We want

everyone to leave feeling beautiful, confident and joyful.”

When creating your Christmas list this year make sure to make room for yourself and visit delaRosa and her team at Complete Aesthetics.

If you are in the need for a medical doctor, she is your gal, too.



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HOMEmade

by CECILIA BRUMLEY

Photos by KATE ZILLS



Professional engineer, Kate Zills, took her knowledge and started a quest for clean beauty and has created her first products.

Shoals native Kate Hughes Zills is doing big things in her quest for clean beauty and healthy skincare. Born and raised in Florence, Kate decided to name her first brand product after the place she called home for much of her life.

Find out more about Kate, her brand, and the big deal she is creating in beauty in our Q&A.

Cecilia: Tell me about your education and certifications.

Kate: Wilson High School '10, Auburn University Bachelor of Civil Engineering '14, Professional Engineer.

People often ask if I took any business classes in college, and I often forget that I actually have a Business-Engineering-Technology Minor that sparked my entrepreneurial mind long before I realized it. A few business and engineering professors decided to create this new minor as they

saw the need for interdisciplinary teams. The idea was to form a group of business and engineering students to work together to create a product and business plan. We took various business classes, geared specifically towards entrepreneurs, and the minor culminated in a day where we pitched our business plans to a panel of judges.

Cecilia: What sparked your interest for beauty and "clean" beauty?

Kate: I've always been interested in beauty. I remember my mom looking for an anti-aging skincare regimen when I was young, so when I saw an infomercial claiming to take away your wrinkles, I asked my dad if we could purchase it for my mom. He let me, and I gifted my mom a skincare set for Christmas. I read all of the beauty articles in magazines. I learned



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that I needed to wear a daily facial sunscreen in my early teens. I loved DIY skincare articles, and any at-home hacks that I devoured from magazines. There was something so interesting and powerful in being able to treat your skin from things you own in your home. The more I learned about ingredients, the less I had to rely on marketing claims, and the more I could rely on my knowledge.

I was introduced to clean beauty through Beautycounter in 2015. The idea of limiting my exposure to unnecessary and possibly harmful chemicals was appealing to me, but I did not have the time to really sift through all of the information

on ingredients in my products. In 2016, I began working on projects involving harmful chemicals in drinking water. The accepted “safe” level of these chemicals dropped drastically in 2016 as new information and new technology was available to assess the toxicity of the chemical. This very real example of how we are always learning new information on the toxicity and harm of chemicals really stuck with me.

From there, I wanted to arm myself with knowledge for my family and dove into all of my personal care products. I learned which ingredients I wanted in my products and which ingredients I did not.



made will hit retail shelves in the Shoals in early 2022.

Cecilia: What encouraged you to leave engineering and start your own skincare research and brand?

Kate: The desire for me to start a clean beauty store was so strong that I could not ignore it. I had so many different creative and entrepreneurial talents that I was not able to use in engineering, so I knew it was the right decision for me. I'm thankful for the foundation that engineering provided, but I knew that I was created for more.

Cecilia: What are your goals?

Kate: My goal is to educate others on skincare.

My goal is to carry the best products in clean, mindful, and green beauty.

My goal is to show others that plant-based skincare works.

My goal is to build a skincare brand.

Made is a mindful beauty and lifestyle brand with a passion for cultivating conscious products to support an effortlessly intentional way of life. We understand that building a conscious lifestyle can feel intimidating or complicated - which is why it is our mission to make quality and trusted resources easily accessible.

Cecilia: What is behind the name "made?"

Kate: Made stuck as a name because it's so simple, and I wanted simplicity for my store since the beauty market is the farthest thing from simplicity. I wanted a place where beauty and skincare and, in

particular, clean beauty was made simple. I understand that building a conscious lifestyle can feel intimidating or complicated - which is why I made it my mission to make quality and trusted resources easily accessible. So that you can live a beautiful life Made simple.

Cecilia: Any other bio or history information that got you to the point of producing a product.

Kate: A skincare line has always been a goal of mine. I decided to start by building my store and brands out online, then possibly open a storefront. On March 1, 2020, I signed a lease for my first small store front. Unfortunately, the building closed two weeks later due to the pandemic. I was thankfully allowed out of my lease, and went full speed ahead on my online store and started the process of making my first product. I knew early on that I wanted to have a cosmetic chemist and manufacturer involved in the making of my product. I wanted to ensure an effective, quality, and luxurious product and to be able to hold it to high standards, so having experts involved in the creation and production of my product was important. That being said, I came up with the product idea, ingredients, color, scent, etc. and the chemist and manufacturer made it come to life.

I wanted to start with a balm as my first product, because it is the ultimate slow beauty product (you've heard of slow fashion - think of the same concept,



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but with beauty). This product takes it back to the basics with no gimmicks or fads or fillers and is instead filled with so many hydrating, moisturizing, and soothing plant-based ingredients. Balms are typically thick and contain no water and have been used for centuries to create a protective barrier for the skin. This balm is suitable for all skin types, and was formulated specifically with dry, mature, sensitive skin types in mind. I wanted a hydrating balm made without pore-clogging ingredients and with vegan-friendly ingredients. I chose ingredients that are known for their moisturizing, antioxidant, soothing,

and calming properties that will work to keep a healthy skin barrier. I also wanted an enticing whipped texture (which proved much harder than I originally thought). An appealing scent was important to me, but without the use of synthetic fragrances, scent can be challenging. Blue tansy is my favorite essential oil, so I knew I wanted it to be the main note. Blue tansy also provides the color of the product and is a potent oil, so only a small amount is needed to create a fragrant product. Keeping the total essential oil content as low as possible was important to me in creating a product that is suitable for all skin types.

Zills named her first product after her hometown, Florence.



I also wanted to start with a balm as my first product, because it is a universal product that should be on everyone's skincare shelf. This product can be used under makeup if used sparingly and is perfect as the last step at night in your skincare routine. The balm also works on any area of skin that needs a little TLC like elbows, heels, hands, etc. and can be used after harsh actives or treatments to restore your skin barrier. This product makes the perfect gift.

I decided to name

my first product after my beloved hometown, Florence. Florence built me as a town, and I hope to build my skincare brand with my product, Florence. Florence means to blossom, prosper, and flourish, and I want all of those things for my customers and my company. Here's to Florence!

Florence will be available online at www.madesimpleliving.com on November 1st. Florence will be available at some of your favorite local retailers in 2022.



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Christmas Cookies and Candy

by CECILIA BRUMLEY
and A FEW SWEET LOVING FRIENDS

Red Velvet Cookies

by ANN MCGEE



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 box of red velvet cake mix
- 1 egg
- 4 ounces of whipped cream

DIRECTIONS:

Mix with hand, mixture will be sticky. Drop spoonful's into confectioner sugar. Place on cookie sheet. Bake at 350 for 7 to 10 minutes. Let stand for 1 minute and transfer to a cooling rack. Cookies will be chewy.

Any cake mix can be used to make these cookies.

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The BEST Oatmeal Cookies

by DONNA NIX



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ¼ cup butter
- ¾ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- 3 cups of Quaker Oats
(I use old fashioned uncooked)

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 375. Beat together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs and vanilla. In separate bowl combine flour, baking soda, salt, and spices. Add this to butter mixture, mixing well. Stir in oats. Drop by rounded spoonsful onto un-greased cookie sheet. Bake 8-9 minutes for a chewy cookie. 10-11 for a crisp cookie. Cool 1 minutes on cookie sheet. Remove to wire cooling rack. Store in a tightly covered container.

Variations: Add any one or combination of two of the following ingredients if desired.

- 1 cup raisins • 1 cup chopped nuts
 - 1 cup chocolate chips • 1 cup butterscotch chips
 - 1 cup peanut butter chips
- I prefer raisins and I use a little bit more than a cup.*

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Christmas Buttons

by PIPER CORLEY

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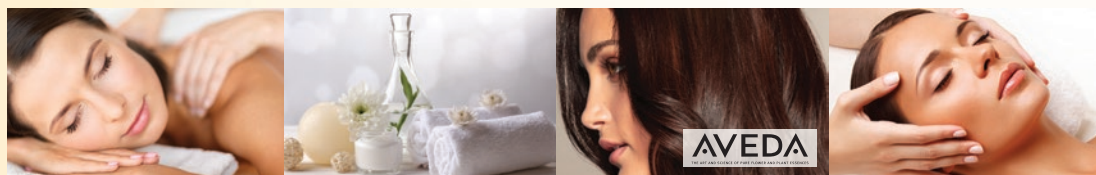
- Square grid pretzels
- Rolos
- M&M's

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350. Arrange pretzels on cookie sheet, place unwrapped Rolo on each pretzel.

Place in oven until shiny. Remove from oven and place M&M candy on top and gently press down. Let cool on cookie sheet. Don not overheat.

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Chocolate Oatmeal Cookies

by DONNA NIX



INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups sugar
- ½ cup of butter
- Pinch of salt
- ½ cup milk
- 4 Tbsp cocoa
- ½ cup of peanut butter
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 cups of old fashion oats (uncooked)
- ½ cup nuts (optional)

Mix all ingredients in saucepan: bring to a boil on medium heat and then boil together for 1 minute. Remove from burner and add:

Sir well and drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper-covered cookie sheet and let cool.

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Monster Cookies

by CELISTA DAVIS



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup white sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 ½ cup peanut butter
- 4 ½ cup oatmeal
- 6 oz pkg chocolate chips
- 6 oz M&M's

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven 350 degrees. Cream butter and sugars. Add eggs, vanilla, and peanut butter and mix well. Then add oatmeal, chocolate chips, and M&M's. Drop on greased cookie sheet and bake at 350 for 10 to 12 minutes. This recipe has no flour in it.



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Chocolate Sandwich Cookies

by CAROLINE FULKS

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 packages devil's food cake mix
- 1 cup canola oil
- 4 large eggs, room temperature

Filling

- 8oz cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 2-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS:

In a large bowl, combine the cake mixes, oil and eggs until well blended. Roll into 1-in balls. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Do not flatten.

Bake at 350 until set, 8-10 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes before moving to wire racks. (Cookies will flatten as they cool).

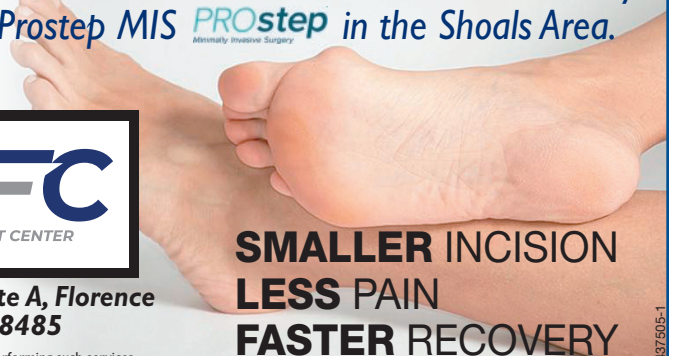
In a small bowl, beat cream cheese and butter until fluffy. Beat in sugar and vanilla until smooth. Spread or pipe filling onto the bottoms of half the cookies; top with remaining cookies. Store in the refrigerator.

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Bow-tiful

by CECILIA BRUMLEY

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

The perfect bow is the finishing touch on any DIY wreath! Here is a few super easy ways to make a bow for a wreath, plus a few extra tips and tricks.

Making a beautiful bow is not as scary as some people think, you don't need any crafty skills, promise! These simple bow techniques are also great for holiday decorating and gifting.

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RIBBON

Pretty important item for a bow! There are lots of different types of ribbon out there, wider is better. At least a 2-3 inch wide, wired or not. Wired ribbon does give you a little more control over the shape of the loops and any bends in the tails. Regular ribbon may be a little droopier or stiff, depending on the material.



STRING OR WIRE

You will need a piece of string or flexible wire to cinch the ribbon together. Floral wire that you can pick up at a craft store works great.

HOT GLUE GUN

A hot glue gun is needed for the finishing touch. Low or high temp is fin, nothing fancy.

There are a lot of different ways to make a beautiful bow, here are three different styles to choose from: classic single loop, double loop, triple loop, or as many loops as you like.



An advertisement for Woods Wholesale Flooring, L.L.C. The top part shows a living room with a sofa and coffee table. Below that is a yellow sign with the company name "WOODS" in large blue letters, followed by "WHOLESALE FLOORING, L.L.C." and the phone number "256-757-9600". Below the sign, it says "The ONE and ONLY Family Owned & Operated". At the bottom, it lists the location "Our ONLY Location is 7730 Hwy 72 E., Killen", email "woodswholesale11@gmail.com", and hours "Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 8am-5pm, Sat 8am-Noon, Closed, Thurs". It also lists the owners: "Jerry Woods, Owner • Nikki Woods-Fulmer & Leigh Woods, Sales".

An advertisement for Side Lines Unique Jewelry Creations. The top part shows a gold bracelet with a red ribbon bow and names engraved on it: "OLIVIA", "CARSON", and "COOPER". Below that is the text "The Family Bracelet" in a cursive font, followed by "The Family Bracelet is available in 2-tone (Sterling Silver & 14kt), all silver or all gold. The bracelet can hold up to 9 names. Must order by Saturday, December 4 for Christmas delivery." Below that is a yellow banner with "Merry Christmas" in a cursive font. The main text "Side Lines" is in a large, black, cursive font, followed by "Unique Jewelry Creations" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below that is the address "1611 Darby Drive • English Village, Florence" and phone number "256-767-0925". At the bottom, it lists the website "webstore: https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com?url=https://sidelinesjewelry.commentsold.com/store&c=E, I, PiMWxVjad5-OvmANoaiNf_RlmbIQ_y59ZPGdbCGW4Kbu5IDWjUJNmKTOSQVJrNEXbwNZUp-QshvsFP6slrqP_Sj20myMqIDV1-tdr7OkBQUzi_nxkbw.,&typo=1", the app name "APP: Side Lines Jewelry", and social media handles "IG: @sidelinesjewelry" and "FB: SideLines, Inc.". It also lists the hours "Mon.-Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-3". There are icons for Facebook and Instagram. A small number "437719-1" is in the bottom right corner.



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How to make a simple Single Loop Bow

1. Start by cutting a long piece of ribbon. 1.5-2 yards is a good length. The wider your ribbon is, the longer your ribbon will need to be.
2. Make a loop. The ribbon on the end will be the tails, so adjust the size of the loop accordingly.
3. Bring the middle of the loop down to where the ribbons cross, and cinch with your fingers.
4. Secure with string or wire.
5. Cut a small piece of ribbon for the "knot." You can fold or tie a knot in it, if desired.
6. Glue knot in place and secure ends on the back. It doesn't have to be pretty, no one will see the back. Leave the wire or string on to secure the bow to the wreath.





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Double Loop Bow

This technique builds on the single loop bow, but instead of leaving the tails out, you create two loops to get a little more fullness.

1. Cut your ribbon to desired length. Make two large loops as shown with the ends of the ribbon overlapping a little at the center.
2. Bring the center of one of the loops to the middle.
3. Repeat with the other side of the bow.
4. Scrunch the center of the bow together. If the bow seems lopsided, adjust the loops on each side. Secure with floral wire or string.
5. Add the tails by bringing the center of a long piece of ribbon up to the center of the bow, secure with wire or string.
6. Cut a short piece of ribbon for covering the center of the bow.
7. Fold the small piece in half (or tie in a knot) and glue to the back of the bow, then bring it around to the front and around to the back to cover the wire or strings to give the bow a finished look.



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Triple Loop Bow

This technique can be done with as many loops as you want. Loops can be the same size or you can have larger loops in the back and smaller loops in the front.

1. Decide how wide you want your bow and double the number to give you how long to cut your biggest loop. Cut two more lengths slightly shorter for the other loops. Cut a shorter piece for the center loop and a piece for the tails. Glue all the pieces (except the tail piece) into a loop shape as shown.
2. Layer the loops to create the bow. Largest loop in the back and cross the front loops to give it a little more volume.
3. Scrunch the center to create a bow shape. Add in the middle loop and scrunch. Make sure your bow is even. If one side seems longer or bigger than the other you may have to adjust your center.
4. Use a piece of wire or string to hold the bow shape.
5. Scrunch the center of the long ribbon (for the tails) and add it into the rest of the bow and secure with string or floral wire.
6. Lastly, twist and adjust the loops of the bow as needed.



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FESTIVE SIPPERS TO GET YOUR
GUEST IN THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

by CECILIA BRUMLEY

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

Eggnog

- ¾ cup sugar
- 8 large eggs yolks
- 4 cups whole milk
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise, seeds scraped and reserved
- ½ cup bourbon (or to taste)

Garnish with freshly grated nutmeg or cinnamon
In a medium bowl, stir together sugar and egg yolks until well combined.

In a large saucepan, combine milk, cream and reserved vanilla bean seeds. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Whisk half of hot milk mixture into egg yolk mixture. Whisk egg yolk mixture into remaining milk mixture in pan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until slightly thickened, about 8 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in bourbon. Serve warm or chilled.



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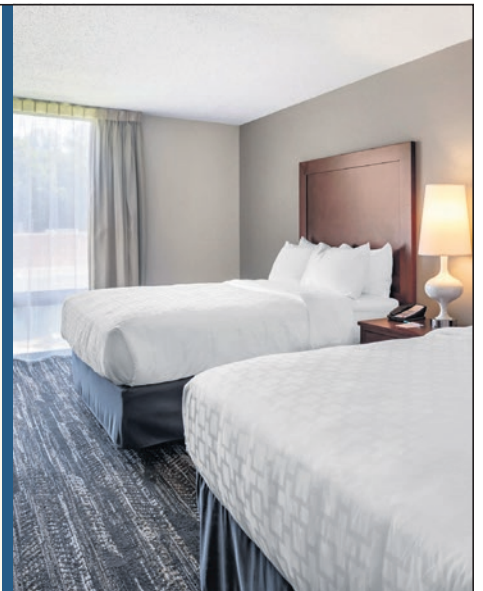
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Chocolate-Peppermint Punch

- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup natural unsweetened cocoa powder
- 4 cups half-and-half
- ¼ cup chocolate syrup
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract (or to taste)
- Vanilla ice cream

Garnish with crushed peppermint

In a large saucepan, whisk together brown sugar, cocoa, half and half, and chocolate syrup until combined. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves, about 10 minutes. Stir in peppermint extract. Serve hot or chilled over ice cream.



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CHRISTMAS PORCH PLANTERS

by CECILIA BRUMLEY
Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of
CREATE PORTRAITURE

Finding something pretty for my porch is always hard during the winter months, but this year I have found just the right thing to spruce up this area of my home. The bonus is it's easy on the budget since most of the materials will be live greens from my yard or local grocery store.

Gather your supplies

- Urn
- Birch branches
- Pine cones
- Berry stems
- Different colors and textures of greenery

First, fill the urn with gravel to make it not easy to overturn. Top with a few inches of dirt.

Next, secure birch branches, insert floral foam and secure it all with floral tape.

Now, insert cedar branches along the rim so some will cascade over the edge.

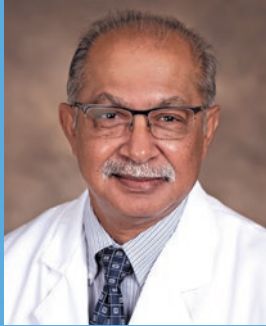
Then, fill with assorted greenery.

Finally, add the pine cones and berries for a beautiful finishing touch. If you don't have some on hand you can always pick these up at a local craft store.



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CHRISTMAS PARADES

- **Elgin** - Sunday, Dec. 5, 2p.m.
- **Lexington** - Sunday, Dec. 12, 2p.m.
- **Rogersville** - Thursday, Dec. 2, 7p.m.
- **Leighton** - Saturday, Dec. 18, 6p.m.
- **Florence** - Thursday, Dec. 9, 7p.m.
- **Muscle Shoals** - Monday, Dec. 13, 7p.m.
- **Tuscumbia** - Tuesday, Nov. 30, 6p.m.
- **Russellville** - Thursday, Dec. 2, 6p.m.
- **Red Bay** - Monday, Dec. 6, 6p.m.
- **Vina** - Tuesday, Dec. 7, 6p.m.
- **Phil Campbell** - Thursday, Dec. 9, 6p.m.
- **Sheffield** - Tuesday, Dec. 7, 6p.m.
- **Courtland** - Thursday, Dec. 2, 6p.m.
- **St, Florian** - Saturday, Dec. 4, 6p.m.

More information on parade routes and start times can be found by calling city hall or checking social media outlets for each city.

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Home for the Holidays

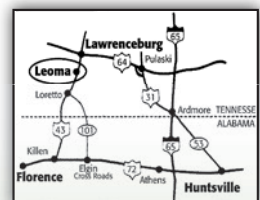


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