





## Christmas Open House

9201 State Highway 17 • Elgin, OK 73538 • 580-492-4906

- Nov. 17th Friday 10-6
- Nov. 18th Saturday 10-4
- Nov. 19th Sunday 12-4

## SECTION SHOPPING SPREE!

Present this ad at checkout to be entered into the drawing.

## **Holiday Happenings**

Many Christmas parades and light displays are taking place across southwest Oklahoma this holiday season. We suggest checking local sources for adaptations before attending any event.

## **Christmas Parades**

Lawton – 6 p.m., Nov. 18. Theme is "Toyland." More information at https://lawtonfortsillchamber.com.

Duncan – 3 p.m., Dec. 2. The theme is "The 12 Days of Christmas." More information at mainstreetduncan.com.

Medicine Park -10 a.m., Dec. 16. Parade and carnival. More information at medicinepark.com/event-calendar.

## Holiday Events

• Holiday in the Park, Lawton: Lots of activities are happening this year at Lawton's Elmer Thomas Park. New for 2023 are more than 50 new light displays, a larger skating rink, new interactive displays, train rides, a petting zoo, food trucks and more. Viewings of holiday movies "Elf" and "The Grinch," concerts, and more will be available throughout the season.

Learn more at www.lawtonfortsillchamber.org and look for the Holiday in the Park tab.

- The 43rd annual Living Christmas Tree, Lawton: "Savior for All, a Multi-Generation Christmas Musical" will take place on Dec. 3 and Dec. 8-10 at First Baptist Church in Lawton. Several performances are scheduled. Visit www.fbclawton.org for more details.
- Festival of Light, Chickasha: Enjoy 43 acres of illuminated displays at Chickasha's Shannon Springs Park. Hours are 6-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday and 6-11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 18-Dec. 31. Ice skating, carriage rides, food trucks and amusement rides make for a fun family outing. Find out more at chickashafestivaloflight.org.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 🔨







### Day trips to entertain holiday guests

Travel tends to heat up as the weather begins to chill around the holiday season. With friends and family to see and holiday cheer to spread, it's no wonder why millions of people take to the roads and friendly skies to travel during the holiday season.

It's not uncommon for holiday hosts to open their homes to loved ones for days at a time. Holiday hosts who want to ensure that visitors enjoy their stay can plan certain excursions to make the most of their time together.

- Go see the lights. Holiday lighting displays are popular across the country. Treat guests to a visit to a nearby attraction. That could be an amusement park that drapes the center of the park in lights, Main Street storefronts and town centers that put on tree lighting ceremonies, urban centers where department stores showcase impressive windows, or other attractions where lights take center stage.
- See a show. From productions of "A Christmas Carol" to other holiday favorites, it's not difficult to find

entertainment that showcases some holiday spirit. Dance troupes may be showcasing "The Nutcracker" or a choral ensemble may be putting on a concert of Christmas carols. Enjoy a night or day out at one of these events.

- Visit a cathedral or temple. The holiday season brings many individuals closer to their faiths. Travelers may want to visit a house of worship during their stay. Many churches are dressed up for Christmas and some may even have live animals in their living nativity scenes.
- Cut down a Christmas tree. Save the tree cutting and trimming for when guests arrive. This way everyone can enjoy a day out at the tree farm as families select the perfect evergreen. Partake in refreshments such as hot chocolate or warm cider, then return home to decorate the tree together.

Day trips with overnight guests staying for the holidays can make for an entertaining way to get out of the house and enjoy time together.



Holiday hosts who want to ensure that visitors enjoy their stay can plan certain excursions to make the most of their time together. Photo courtesy of MetroCreative.



### Beat holiday stress: Tips for a calmer season

Old songs call it the most wonderful time of the year, but the holiday season carries a high degree of stress for many people. The final months of the year include added pressures that may affect well-being, relationships, finances and other factors that contribute to anything but a merry and bright time.

#### Common causes of holiday stress

Although it sounds obvious, the best way to manage stressors is to remove or avoid them as much as possible. (This is often easier said than done.) Are there holiday-related events or tasks that are daunting? If so, consider the cost of not doing them (if there is a cost) versus keeping them on your list of obligations.

An overbooked holiday schedule is not the only thing that can cause strife and discontent, however. Here are other seasonal but common causes of stress, anxiety or depression:

#### Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

As daylight hours shorten, rates of depression increase. If you are diagnosed with SAD, follow your doctor's advice. Options include light therapy, counseling and medication.

#### Unrealistic expectations

These anxiety-producing thoughts and feelings can either come from external sources or ruminate in our minds. Outside expectations from family members, children, bosses, friends and others can leave you feeling like you are not enough or that you are spread way too thin. Internal expectations can push you to do more than is healthy or reasonable. Consider reframing your thoughts and anticipating unreasonable expectations by:

- •Knowing your limits for work, budgets or patience with specific people or situations.
- Practicing or writing polite refusals that you can use with others who pile on the pressure.
- •Recognizing that it is okay to have negative thoughts and feelings sometimes.
- •Realizing that while others may put their best holiday foot forward, this does not mean that they will have a perfect holiday season (which is also unrealistic). Social media posts are not always as they appear.

#### Financial difficulties and debt

Financial stress is often paired with unrealistic expectations. According to a Magnify Money survey conducted in 2020, more than 30% of shoppers went into an average of \$1,380 of debt for holiday gift buying and other expenses. This type of strain on your budget lasts far longer than the celebrations. Consider:

- •Setting a limit before you begin to shop.
- •Tracking expenses.
- •Putting credit cards aside and using only cash for gift buying.
- Setting aside money each month as a Christmas or holiday fund.

#### Loneliness and family issues

Memories of pleasant holidays or comparisons between your life and others enjoying the season can exacerbate loneliness. With so much focus on sharing time with others, people without positive familial or social connections can experience more sadness during the holiday season. Consider:

- •Creating new traditions with friends.
- •Volunteering for an organization that helps others, such as serving food on Christmas Day.
- •Getting help if you need it by seeking out counseling.

#### Tips to alleviate stress

If you find yourself overstressed, you do not feel like yourself, or all the joy has been zapped from the most wonderful time of the year, try some of these stress-alleviating techniques.

- •Identify negative self-talk and immediately refocus on a more positive message.
- Maintain a healthy eating and exercise regimen to minimize physical stress.
- •Keep your distance from toxic or negative people. Focus on quality relationships.
- •Use positive affirmations and take the time to pamper yourself.

The holiday season may come with more stressors than at other times of the year, but self-care, tempering expectations, reaching out to positive people and sticking to budgets will help you avoid a blue Christmas and instead focus on the warmth of the season.



### Last-minute holiday shopping tips

Though devotees of early holiday shopping do not hesitate to point out how convenient it can be to get all their gifts long before the arrival of Chanukah and Christmas, scores of shoppers still wait until the last minute to begin checking names off their lists. It might be beneficial to shop early, but it's easy to procrastinate. Last-minute holiday shopping might not be as enjoyable a custom as family dinners or office parties, but scrambling to find the right gift in the waning days of the holiday season is a familiar situation for millions of shoppers. Shoppers who find themselves with some last-minute shopping on their to-do list can utilize these tips to make the frantic search for the right gift go smoothly.

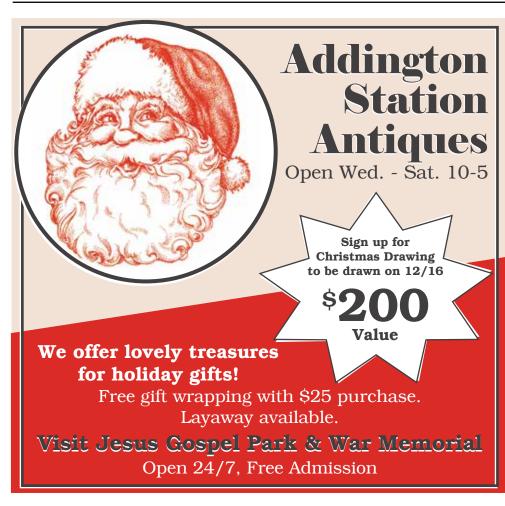
- Work with store personnel. If a shopping list is lengthy but the time before the holiday arrives is dwindling, speak directly with store personnel, who may offer suggestions but can also help shoppers find what they need. In-person shoppers can speak with a store clerk immediately upon entering a store, while online shoppers can utilize chat functions on retailers' websites for help finding something that's in stock and deliverable before the big day.
- Expect competition. Though online shopping would seemingly make last-minute shoppers relics of a bygone era, that was not really the case in 2022. A survey of more than 1,000 shoppers conducted by the retail industry publisher Best Black Friday found that just about 16 percent of consumers estimated they would finish their shopping during the week of Christmas. Last-minute shoppers who want to avoid crowds should consider shopping during off-peak hours, such as on weekday mornings and after-

noons when most people are working.

- •Shop local. Last-minute shoppers may be flocking to malls and busy downtown shopping districts as they hurry to get gifts for friends and family members with different interests. Shopping at small, local businesses can help last-minute shoppers avoid such crowds. And with less on their shelves and smaller storage rooms, small business owners and their staff also tend to know their inventories inside and out. That can ensure a shopping trip is not spent wandering numerous aisles in search of the right gift.
- Bag it, don't wrap it. Shoppers who wait until the very last minute likely won't have time to wrap all the gifts they pick up for loved ones. Gift bags conceal gifts just as well as wrapping paper, but it takes a fraction of the time to place a gift in a bag as it does to wrap it in paper. Quality gifts bags also are reusable, which can appeal to anyone looking to create less waste this holiday season.
- Don't forget food. If it's truly impossible to find something late in the season and a gift card feels too impersonal, give the gift of food. Adult recipients also can be gifted a bottle of wine or another spirit that can be enjoyed during a holiday meal. Shoppers skilled in the kitchen can whip up a homemade treat, while those without such talents can give a store-bought delicacy or even a subscription to a monthly food club or service. Lastminute shopping may look different than it used to, but scores of shoppers still wait to buy gifts for their loved ones. A handful of strategies can simplify last-minute shopping.



Shoppers who find themselves with some last-minute shopping on their to-do list can utilize these tips to make the frantic search for the right gift go smoothly. Photo courtesy of Metro Creative.



## PROUD TO BE LOCALLY OWNED IN LAWTON!

**BEST FRAME SHOP** 

BEST GIFT SHOP

**BEST MEN'S APPAREL** 







- Huge Frame Choices
- Photo Restoration
- In Business Over 35 Years

580.355.3303

- Gifts for All Ages
- Motion, Musical & Miniature Clocks
- Southwest Oklahoma Gourmet Foods
- And so much more!

580.357.4500

- Suits, Sport Coats & Shoes
- Custom Clothing & Shirts
- Casual Apparel
- Tuxedo Rentals











400 BLOCK OF "C", DOWNTOWN LAWTON





SHOP LOCAL



## Shop local and save with Co-op Connections

Gift wish lists are being made with haste and it's getting a little colder outside. That means the holiday shopping season is right around the corner. Speaking of 'around the corner,' there are plenty of locally owned businesses in our neck of the woods that can provide unique gifts and experiences for your loved ones. And Cotton Electric's Co-op Connections member benefit program can help you save while you keep dollars in the local economy.

This winter, let's power a Small Business Comeback and frequent the shops owned by our friends and neighbors. Visit www.Connections. coop to find all the ways to save locally or download the free Co-op Connections smartphone app in the App Store or on Google Play. Use the app's "Deals Near Me" option as you holiday shop at local merchants or anytime you are out running errands. And keep in mind, with many participating dining options, you can fill up on grub while you fill your trunk with toys, clothes, home goods and more!

If you have any questions about how the program works, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at 580-875-3351 or info@cottonelectric. com. And as you are busy stockpiling gifts for family and friends, keep our small business community in mind this holiday season!







#### Simple ways to involve kids in holiday decorating

Millions of people across the globe feel that the holiday season is a magical time of year. Though those people come from all walks of life, it's likely that no group is as taken by the unique spirit of the holiday season as much as children. Whether they're looking forward to Santa's arrival or preparing for a school holiday pageant, kids have much to be excited about come December. Parents can channel that enthusiasm by involving kids when decorating around the house this holiday season.

• Make homemade ornaments. The options are limitless when making holiday ornaments with children. From simple ornaments made from pine cones picked up outside to more complex projects designed for children nearing adolescence, parents can look to the internet to find design ideas and directions for hundreds of ornaments.

• Let kids lead the way when decorating the tree. Families that celebrate Christmas can let kids lead the way when decorating their Christmas tree. Kids are likely to spend the weeks leading up to Santa's arrival gazing in awe at the tree, and knowing they decided where to place the various ornaments on it might make the season even more special for youngsters.

• Take kids along when

choosing lawn ornaments. It's not safe to involve children when installing lighting displays, but kids will get a kick out of choosing inflatable lawn decorations and other items to place around the yard. Take kids along when buying new items and then seek their input when placing Frosty, Santa and his reindeer friends around the yard.

• Include kids in culinary decor. Many celebrants cannot imagine a holiday season without gingerbread houses and cookies. These traditions provide another great opportunity to involve children in holiday decorating. Set aside some time to make home-



Parents can channel kids' enthusiasm by involving kids when decorating around the house this holiday season. Photo courtesy of MetroCreative.

made gingerbread houses, which can be used as decorations before they're ultimately eaten. Cookies may not have the shelf life of a typical gingerbread house, but kids can pitch in and decorate cookies prior to a holiday party or family meal.

The spirit of the holiday season can be seen on the faces of children each December. Inviting kids to pitch in when decorating for the holidays can make the season even more special for its youngest celebrants.



## Warm and wow guests with homemade hot mulled apple cider

When hosting friends and family at home, it's understandable that hosts direct so much of their focus to the foods they plan to serve. The main course is often the focal point and most memorable aspect of a dinner party, and that's true whether the gettogether is a backyard barbecue, a holiday meal with the family or a formal affair with colleagues.

Food might be a focal point, but guests also will need something to drink. Traditional spirits like wine and cocktails are the standard, but hosts who want to get a little creative should not hesitate to do so. When choosing a spe-

cial beverage, timing is everything. Guests will want to cool down on warm summer evenings, so something cold and refreshing can make for the perfect signature cocktail. When hosting on nights when the mercury has dropped, a warm beverage can heat up guests in a matter of minutes. On such nights, hosts can serve this version of "Hot Mulled (Sherried) Apple Cider" courtesy of Laurey Masterton's "The Fresh Honey Cookbook" (Storey). One added benefit to Masterton's recipe is it can produce a welcoming winter aroma, helping hosts establish a warm ambiance for the festivities.

#### Hot Mulled (Sherried) Apple Cider

#### Serves 16

- 1 gallon apple cider
- 1 orange, unpeeled, cut into slices
  - 1/4 cup whole cloves
- 4 sticks cinnamon
- 1/4 cup honey, preferably cranberry honey
  - 1 cup sherry (optional)

Combine the cider, orange slices, cloves, cinnamon, and honey in a large pot over medium heat. If you are picky about things floating in your cider, make a little bundle out

of cheesecloth and place the cinnamon and cloves inside before adding to the cider. I like to chew on cloves, so I just toss everything in. Bring to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer over low heat for an hour or so to spread these lovely winter aromas around your home.

If you're serving it to adults, add the sherry. It might make everyone want to go sledding!



When hosting on nights when the mercury has dropped, a warm beverage can heat up guests in a matter of minutes. Photo courtesy of MetroCreative.

## Festive films that make for a perfect family movie night this season

A family movie night makes for a great way for families to bond and enjoy some relaxing time together. Such nights are a tradition in households across the globe, and they can even become a fun way for extended families to celebrate the holiday days together. When hosting overnight guests this holiday season, hosts can plan a family movie night and line up any of these family-friendly holiday movies.

#### "A Christmas Story" (1983)

This beloved classic based on the writings of author Jean Shepherd focuses on young Ralphie Parker and his humorous family. That family includes his father, played to much laughs by legendary actor Darren McGavin. All Ralphie wants for Christ-

mas is a coveted Red Ryder air rifle, and generations of fans have enjoyed watching this film to see if Ralphie's dream comes true.

#### "Home Alone" (1990)

Not unlike "A Christmas Story," this instant classic devotes much of its story to a young boy. Eight-year-old Kevin McAllister (Macaulay Culkin) awakens to an empty house after his parents forgetfully leave him behind as they depart on a holiday trip to Paris with their extended family. That proves to be bad news for bungling burglars Harry (Joe Pesci) and Marv (Daniel Stern), who are outwitted by Kevin at every turn.

#### "Elf" (2003)

Middle-aged Buddy (Will Ferrell) grew up in the North Pole believing

he is an elf, despite being significantly larger than the kind-hearted elves who raised him. Upon learning he is not an actual elf, Buddy is determined to reunite with the father (James Caan) he's never known. Hilarity ensues as the innocent Buddy ends up in the big city in search of his father.

#### "It's a Wonderful Life" (1946)

Among the most beloved holiday movies ever made, this classic stars Jimmy Stewart as George Bailey, a devoted family man who set aside his own big-city dreams to save the family business and, ultimately, his small hometown of Bedford Falls. Lamenting some bad luck that leaves him on the cusp of financial ruin, George wishes he'd never been born, only to be shown by an especially

kind and patient angel-in-training (Henry Travers) how much worse off Bedford Falls and its residents might have been had George Bailey never existed.

#### "Jingle All the Way" (1996)

Featuring a future Governor of California in the lead role, this hijinks-filled holiday classic follows the efforts of Howard Langston (Arnold Schwarzenegger) as he tries to secure the must-have gift of the season for his son, Jamie (Jake Lloyd). Howard soon finds himself competing against a father (Sinbad) who's equally devoted to find the coveted Turbo-Man action figure. A holiday movie night makes for a fun, family-friendly evening when hosting overnight guests during this special time of year.



When hosting overnight guests this holiday season, hosts can plan a family movie night and line up any of these family-friendly holiday movies. Photo courtesy of Metro-Creative.

## Think "smart" this holiday season and save money year-round

This holiday season, think "smart" and consider giving a loved one (or yourself) a gift that keeps on giving. Many smart devices reduce home energy use, which can put a little more jingle in your pocket.

Consider these five energy-saving smart gadgets while shopping this holiday season:

-Smart thermostats learn users' schedules and the temperatures they prefer to keep their home. It then remembers these temperatures while a home is occupied and adjusts to a more energy-saving setting when it's not occupied to avoid heating and cooling an empty home. Smart thermostats also feature apps that let family members change the temperature from anywhere in the world using a phone or other mobile device. Owners may also use the app to see how much energy is used and why, and then use that information to make appropriate adjustments to their home energy usage.

-Smart lighting saves energy in multiple ways. Smart lightbulbs last longer and use less power. Smart lighting systems also have scheduled timers and allow you to remotely turn the lights off (a great feature if you have loved ones who constantly leave the lights on).

-Virtual assistants, like Siri or Alexa, can connect to smart thermostats, smart lights, entertainment center devices and others. With a few spoken words, virtual assistants can turn lights, appliances and other devices off and on, activate and deactivate security systems, shut or open a garage door, and more. These home automation devices allow homeowners to control their appliances and create daily smart-home routines through smartphone apps, creating many new ways to save energy. For example, owners can schedule kitchen appliances, such as dishwashers and coffee makers, to run while they are out of the house or to operate at a specific time every day. Virtual assistants can even schedule smart appliances to start during off-peak hours, when energy demand is lower, to take advantage of lower kW per hour rates.

-Thermal Leak Detectors use infrared sensors to detect energy draining drafts so they can be repaired (filled) to make your home more energy efficient. Thermal imaging accessories now exist for smart phones as well, converting them into light-weight, portable thermal leak detectors. Repairing thermal leaks in a home can save up to 20% in heating and cooling costs. For more information about a home energy audit, contact us at 580-875-3351.

-Smart power strips and surge protectors are a less expensive option to gain some smart technology without upgrading all appliances and devices to smart models. Smarter devices that can be used independent of an all-smart home, the strips can detect when a device is in standby mode and cut its power supply. Using smart power strips can reduce a home's overall energy usage, which equates to savings on your energy bill.

For more information about energy-related smart home devices, call us at 580-875-3351. For more information about energy efficiency and safety around electricity, visit www.safeelectricity.org or www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency.



## How to pet proof your home when decking the halls

The holiday season is a special time of year. Many factors combine to make the holiday season so unique and festive, and that includes all the effort people put into decorating their homes. Much thought is given to holiday lighting arrangements and which tree to buy, but it's equally important to consider pets when you are decorating. Many common household pets are naturally curious, and that curiosity can make it difficult to decorate safely come the holiday season. But various pet-proofing strategies can ensure holiday decorations and displays aren't compromised by four-legged friends this season.

•Secure the Christmas tree. Much like other residents of the home, pets may be mesmerized by a glowing Christmas tree. Pets may sniff around the tree or investigate it closely, which can increase the chances that it tips over. That poses a significant safety hazard and underscores the importance of using a sturdy stand. Fastening the tree to a wall, much like one might do with a television that isn't mounted, adds a further layer of protection from tip-overs.

• Block off the base of a live tree. Live trees need water to stay green and keep their needles throughout the season. That water could prove enticing to thirsty pets. Drinking water from a tree stand could increase the risk of the tree tipping over and the water could upset the stomach of pets if the tree was treated with pesticides prior to being brought home. When decorating with a live tree, make sure the base of the tree where the water will be is blocked off. A small fence around the tree could keep curious pets away. The room where the tree is located should be locked or inaccessible when pets are home alone.

- Inspect and conceal light wires. Wires can become frayed over time, and that could pique pets' curiosity. Lighting wires should always be inspected prior to decorating and frayed or damaged wires should be thrown away, even if it means replacing lights. If wires are still sturdy, conceal them along the base of the wall using a cable concealer, which prevents pets from chewing on them.
- Avoid lighting candles. Candles should not be lit in homes with pets. Even candles on shelves that are seemingly beyond pets' reach can be hazardous, as pets, especially cats, have a way of accessing spaces they seemingly shouldn't be able to reach.

Use electric candles in lieu of traditional ones.

 Speak to a vet about seasonal plants and flowers before bringing them into the home. Pet owners can speak with their veterinarians before bringing poinsettias, holly and other seasonal plants and flowers into their homes. Some pets could suffer allergic reactions if they eat certain seasonal plants, so it's best to err on the side of caution and speak to a vet before including live plants and flowers in decorative displays. Decorating is part of the holiday season. Pet owners must exercise an extra bit of caution to keep their pets and homes safe when decorating during this special time of year.



Various pet-proofing strategies can ensure holiday decorations and displays aren't compromised by four-legged friends this season. Photo courtesy of MetroCreative.



#### The Naked Mermaid Soapery

HANDCRAFTED LUXURY SKINCARE made from organic ingredients

(580) 467-8724 1000 S 7th St, Walters, OK www.thenakedmermaidsoapery.com





We are honored to be Voted **#1 Furniture Store** 



## LARGEST SELECTION! **LOWEST PRICES!**

lawtonsfurnitureleader.com 1127 NW Cache Rd Hours: - Monday - Saturday 9:00 am - 6:00 pm











### Give holiday meals a flavorful twist

The holiday season is rife with tradition. Family and friends often gather together around the dining room table to share conversation, memories and good food, making the holidays a special time of year. Home chefs looking to expand their culinary horizons can

include this recipe for "Slow Cooker Spiced-Cranberry Pork," courtesy of The Ohio Pork Council, on their holiday menus. Pork is a versatile protein that pairs well with the tart, holidaycentric flavor of cranberries.

#### Slow Cooker Spiced-Cranberry Pork Serves 8

3 1/2 to 4 pound pork shoulder 1 6-oz can jellied cranberry sauce 2/3 cup sugar 3/4 cup cranberry juice 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves 1 teaspoon ground black pepper Salt to taste

Trim fat from pork roast, if necessary. Place roast in 4- to 6-quart slow

cooker. Use wire whisk to stir together cranberry sauce and sugar in medium bowl.

Stir in juice, mustard, cloves and pepper until well combined. Pour cranberry mixture over roast in slow cooker.

Cover slow cooker and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours or until pork roast is tender. Season roast to taste with salt; serve juices with roast.



# Rockin' H Steak House Serving up hearty cowboy-style dinners in a rustic, intimate atmosphere.



- •Steak
  •Prime Rib
- Tink
- •Fish
- ChickenBurgers
- •Pork Chops
- SaladsAppetizers



Mon & Tues-Closed Wed - Sat 5-9pm Open for lunch Thurs & Fri 11 - 2pm Open for lunch Sunday 11:30 - 2pm Lunch Specials!

## The BootJack

Reserve this awesome space for your Holiday get-togethers & special occasions!

OR just come down one night for some friendly service, a game of pool and dancing!





DUNCAN TOWER'S 18T ANNUAL

## TINSELTOWN MARKET

PICS + CANDY W/ SANTA CLAUS 5-8 PM

Crimson Cake Co., Rockin' Butterfly Boutique Simply Unique, Alive + Well, The Tower Salon Enlightenment Boutique, Crossed Arrows Ranch Joe Joe's Craft's, Slow Poppin Freeze Dried Goodies Hors d'oeuvres / Holiday Drinks TinselTown Takeaway 8pm, \$400-Drawing

> DEC 8th | 4-8 PM 45 N 9TH





Come see us for the Holiday Stroll on November 18th

All Duncan Tower Shoppes will be open!











