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# YOU WANT WHAT'S BEST! WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

**BY GRETCHEN HOOK**

*LITTLE ELM RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME*

Disclaimer: I am not a medical doctor. This article shares insights from my experience working with families and loved ones to help them choose the best options for those who need assistance.

As the owner and operator of a residential care home, I receive several referrals to place individuals with dementia in my home. I have a policy that these individuals must have managed behaviors because my home is also my residence, where my husband and I live. I genuinely love what I do and strive to maintain a peaceful, calm environment not only for myself but also for my patients. That being said, I invite those with dementia, as I find they can have a very fulfilling life in this peaceful place.

Over the past few weeks, I have received several referrals to care for their mom or husband in my home. All these individuals have dementia at different stages. All but one exhibited severe behavior, and they all experienced something called "sundowners." I'll talk more about sundowners later. I have a policy of assessing each patient individually and often request time with just the patient to see if they would be a good fit in my home. What I frequently find is that the dementia patient needs a memory care unit designed to meet their needs. These memory care units are locked for the patients' safety. They often resemble a

home and usually offer activities tailored for patients with dementia. Each memory care unit is unique and cares for patients in its own way.

After my thorough assessment, I will discuss my findings with the family members who are seeking placement. What I hear from these family members is, "I don't want to place mom there because the other residents are not like my mother," or "they (facility) do not have activities my husband would like." While these are legitimate concerns, I cannot accommodate such behaviors due to the peaceful nature of my home, and the facilities are designed to manage them. Behaviors like sundowners, which is defined as "a syndrome, also known as sundowning, is a condition characterized by increased confusion, agitation, and mood changes that occur in individuals with dementia during the late afternoon and evening hours. Symptoms include restlessness, irritability, anxiety, and sometimes paranoia, hallucinations, or delusions. The causes are not fully understood but are linked to factors like lower light levels, fatigue, and disruptions in the body's internal clock." Sometimes, sundowners occur in the mornings as well. Often, the patient will also exit-seek, become violent, or yell. Memory care facilities are best equipped to manage these behaviors and assist the patient.

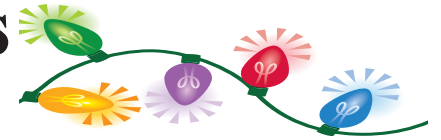
I will offer my services to help find placements for these patients,

See **LITTLE ELM,**

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# Unique Christmas traditions around the world



Christmas celebrations span the globe. According to a 2025 report from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, there are roughly 2.6 billion Christians worldwide, a figure that undoubtedly contributes to the popularity of Christmas. Christianity continues to have the most adherents of any religion in the world, and the Christian population is expected to top three billion before 2050.

Christians bring unique cultural touches to their Christmas celebrations each year. Celebrations vary widely, and here's a look at some notable Christmas traditions across the globe.

## Yule Goat

The Yule Goat is a Christmas tradition in Sweden. The goat is believed to be an invisible spirit that ensures that Yule preparations are done correctly. A popular theory connects the goat to the Norse god Thor, who rode a chariot pulled by two goats.

## Krampus

While many people celebrate the benevolence of Santa Claus, some celebrate a much grumpier alter-ego of sort. Krampus is a man-goat, half-demon monster who punishes misbehaving children at Christmastime, says Britannica. He is the evil companion of St. Nicholas, and is believed to have originated in Germany. His name comes from the German word 'krampen,' which means, 'claw.'

## Christmas chicken

Christmas Eve is a popular romantic occasion for couples and families in Japan. In addition to gift-giving and a romance, many people choose to feast on a meal of KFC fried chicken and strawberry shortcake for dessert.

## Roller-skating to Mass

In the city of Caracas, Venezuela, it's customary for Christmas Eve celebrants to roller skate to early morning Mass. Known as 'Misa de Aguinaldo,' these special church services take place on the days leading up to Christmas, with the most festive held on December 24. On this day, the streets of Caracas are closed to automobiles, enabling revelers to cheerfully skate to church.

## Mumming

In Newfoundland, Canada, celebrants known as mummers dress in elaborate disguises featuring mismatched clothing and whimsical accessories. The mummers obscure their identities and visit neighbors' homes during the 12 days of Christmas, performing songs, skits or dances while others attempt to guess their identities.

## Las Posadas

In some Hispanic regions, including Mexico, participants reenact Mary and Joseph's search for shelter in Bethlehem through vibrant processions. They travel from house to house, singing traditional songs and requesting shelter only to be turned away until they reach a final home or church that will symbolically welcome them in.

## Spiderweb decorations

Individuals in Ukraine decorate their Christmas trees with artificial spider webs. This tradition is inspired by a tale of a poor widow and her children who didn't have money for tree ornaments. Upon waking up on Christmas morning, they found their tree covered in sparkling, glimmering spider webs that resembled tinsel. A spider had spun the beautiful display as thanks for finding shelter and warmth in the family's humble abode. Today's spider webs symbolize unexpected blessings and gratitude.

Plenty of unique touches set Christmastime celebrations apart across the globe.



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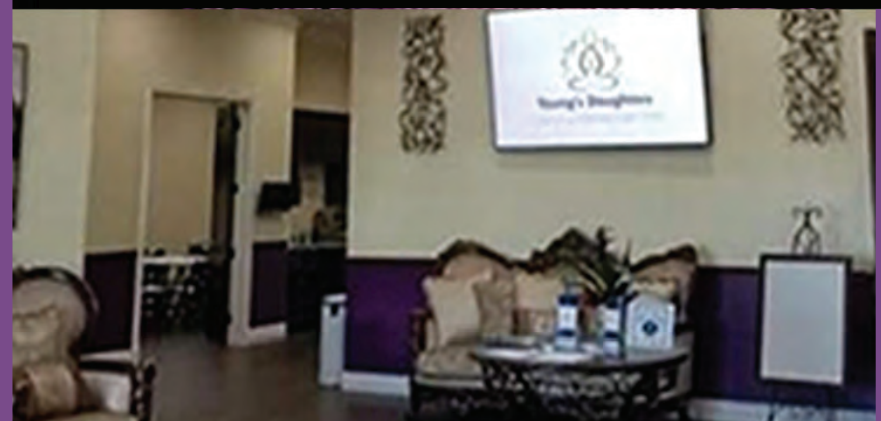
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# Snowbird survival guide

There are many reasons to welcome the arrival of winter each year. The holiday season, recreational activities like skiing and snowboarding, and the undeniable beauty of snow-covered landscapes are just some of the reasons to look forward to winter.

Winter certainly has its positive attributes, but some may shudder at the thought of colder temperatures and shorter hours of daylight. In fact, some people dislike the cold so much they take to the road each winter and make for locales noted for their mild temperatures. Snowbird is a term used to refer to individuals who depart their homes around the beginning of winter so they can spend the ensuing months in warm climates. Snowbirds often are retirees, but the flexibility of remote working has enabled more and more working professionals to become snowbirds, too. Those considering a pivot to the snowbird lifestyle can consider these tips to make that transition successful.

Find the right locale. Those new to the snowbird lifestyle might assume anywhere that isn't cold will fit the bill, but warm weather isn't the only variable to consider when choosing where to spend your winters. Many snowbirds spend several months at their winter destinations, so you will want somewhere that can accommodate the lifestyle you've grown accustomed to. First identify your priorities and then consider variables like the accessibility of nightlife, the availability of recreational activities and opportunities to socialize. A warm but especially remote location might appeal to some, but those who like to get out might do best spending their winters in a more vibrant locale.

Get a firm idea of the cost. Though there's ways to save on the snowbird lifestyle, it can be costly. Whether you plan to rent a winter home or purchase a second home, there's notable costs that come with each approach. The costs of renting might

seem more straightforward, as renters may think a deposit and monthly rent is all the added expense. But snowbirds who plan to work during the winter will need to consider the tax implications if they will be living and working in a different state or province. Buying a second home also comes with its own tax implications, so it might be best for aspiring snowbirds to work with a certified financial professional who can help them navigate those costs. Certain locales may be tax-friendly for retirees, who also can work with a financial professional to identify locations where the financial implications of snowbirding might not be too significant.

Don't forget your pets. Pets merit consideration when pondering the feasibility of the snowbird lifestyle. If you plan to rent lodgings for the winter, you must find a pet-friendly option, which can prove difficult depending on the type and size of your pet(s). Pets' comfort also merits consideration. If you have a dog, a winter residence with access to a yard or nearby dog park should be a priority. And some complexes that specialize in offering winter lodgings may restrict pets or charge hefty fees to allow them.

Don't forget your current home. Snowbirds also need to arrange for the homes they live in most of the year to be looked after. If you plan to rent your primary home over the winter, that might come with hefty tax implications. If not, someone will need to look after the home while you're gone. Snow removal and security are two notable components of winter home care that will need to be arranged before you head for warmer locales.

The snowbird lifestyle is tailor-made for people who prefer year-round warm weather. But several variables merit consideration before adults can commit to the snowbird lifestyle.



# Little Elm- From Page 2

but I often encounter resistance from the seeking family members because they want their loved ones with me, where they can find peace and comfort in a home environment. While I share that desire, it's not feasible to have these patients in my home. I must respect the family's decision to place or not to place their loved one in a memory care facility. Often, when the decision is not to place, families become frustrated and overwhelmed and tend to make poor emotional judgments about their loved one's care. I understand that a larger facility may not be the preferred choice, and I empathize. However, as a family member, I might suggest setting aside our own desires for a moment, considering what is truly best for our loved one right now. How can we best serve their needs? Dementia is a terribly unfair disease that takes our loved ones away from us. We long for the days before the diagnosis and often still refer to them as if they were the way they used to be. This brings me to my final point.

There are different types and subtypes of dementia. My advice is to learn as much as possible about the specific dementia your

loved one has—what symptoms might develop or what symptoms they are already showing. Many resources are available in book form, such as “The Itty-Bitty Dementia Book” and “The 36-Hour Day.” I have no financial ties to these books; I recommend them to families, and now to you. I aim to educate and support families as they navigate this complex disease, helping them find placement and other community resources. If you're having trouble finding answers for your loved one, it might be helpful to look inward and accept what is happening. We want to hold onto what was and grieve what is to come. It's okay to mourn the loss of our loved one while they are still alive, but we must accept that they are no longer the same and require a different kind of care. I hope this article helps you to find peace, resources, and some semblance of normalcy. Other services that can guide families with these difficult decisions include end-of-life doulas, Hospice care, palliative care, geriatric doctors, neurologists, and social workers.





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# 12 facts about Pearl Harbor

December 7 is a solemn day marked by remembrance of an event that lives on in the minds of many people particularly those who are old enough to remember the ravages of World War II. On December 7, 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, resulting in more

pand its empire into Southeast Asia for oil and other vital resources. Japan was threatened by U.S. opposition and the oil embargo placed on the nation by the United States.

2. Pearl Harbor is an American lagoon harbor on the island of Oahu, which is west of Honolulu. It often was visited by the Naval fleet of the Unit-

mined launch sector 230 miles north of the Hawaiian island of Oahu, according to the National World War II Museum. Planes lifted off at 6 a.m., followed by a second wave an hour later.

5. The first wave of planes arrived shortly before 8 a.m. that Sunday morning, with hundreds of Japanese fighters descending on the base.

6. Pearl Harbor Tours says many people do not know that Americans fired the first shot the morning of December 7. The Wickes-class destroyer USS Ward attacked and sank a Ko-hyoteki-class midget submarine near the entrance to Pearl Harbor. It was the first shot fired on that day.

7. Japan's plan was to destroy America's Pacific Fleet so the Americans would not be able to fight back. Radio silence only was broken once Captain Mitsuo Fuchida was perched above the American ships and shouted, 'Tora! Tora! Tora! (Tiger!, Tiger! Tiger!),' the coded message informing the Japanese fleet that Americans were caught by surprise.

8. All nine battleships in Pearl Harbor sustained significant damage. All but the USS Arizona, USS Oklahoma and the USS Utah were eventually salvaged and repaired.

9. Half of the 2,403 U.S. personnel who perished at Pearl Harbor were aboard the USS Arizona. The sunken battleship serves as a memorial to all who died in the attack.

10. The Japanese suffered casualties during the attack. One hundred twenty-nine Japanese soldiers were killed.

11. The attack on Pearl Harbor was the catalyst for the U.S. to enter World War Two. On December 8, 1941, Congress approved President Roosevelt's declaration of war on Japan. Three days later, Germany and Italy (Japan's allies) declared war against the United States.

12. Japan misjudged the American resolve and resilience, as well as the Americans' capacity to wage a protracted war. Nearly four years later, World War II would come to a close after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 7 and August 9. More than 100,000 Japanese were killed and thousands more injured by radiation sickness.

The attack on Pearl Harbor is a day that has lived in infamy, marking not only a reason for the U.S. to get involved in World War II, but showing the world that Americans would not be bullied into submission.



than 3,500 American troops and civilians being wounded or killed. The Japanese attack brought the war much closer to home, shocking the country and the world.

In honor of Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, here's a look at some interesting and surprising details about the attack and Pearl Harbor in general.

1. Japan attacked Pearl Harbor as part of a strategy to ex-

ed States.

3. Pearl Harbor lies approximately 3,800 to 4,000 miles from Tokyo, Japan. It is much closer to the U.S., at roughly 2,600 miles from Los Angeles, despite Hawaii often being described as centrally located in the Pacific.

4. To catch the Americans by surprise, Japanese ships maintained strict radio silence throughout their trek from Hitokappu Bay to a predeter-



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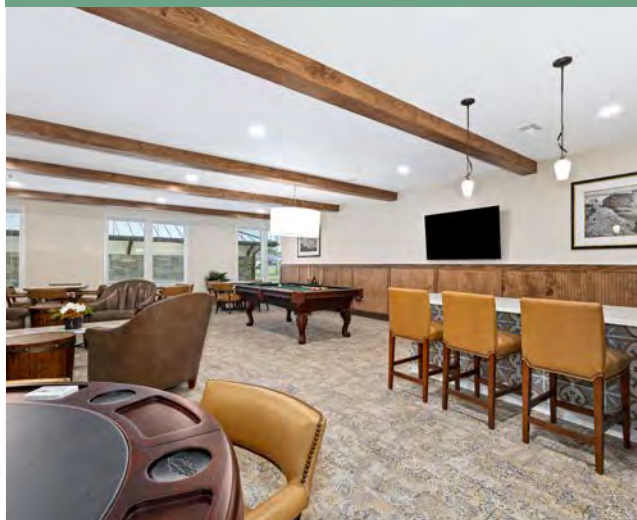
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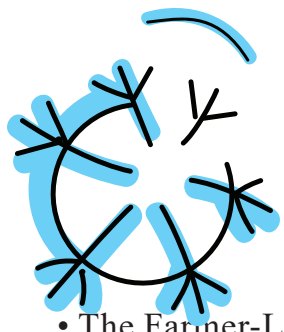
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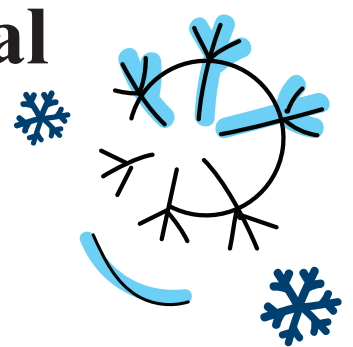
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# 100 Years Ago This Month: Historical events from December 1925

The month of December has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in December 1925.



- The Farmer-Labour Party is dissolved just two hours after its formation in Japan on December 1. The dissolution was ordered by the Japanese government, which accused the party of harboring a secret communist agenda.
- The border delineating Northern Ireland and Ireland is established on December 3 when representatives of both countries sign the Northern Irish Border Agreement.
- The George Gershwin composition 'Concerto in F' is performed for the first time on December 3. The performance in New York's Carnegie Hall is conducted by Walter Damrosch and features Gershwin on piano.
- A counterfeiting scheme is uncovered by the Banco de Portugal on December 4. An alert bank teller tips off the bank, which ultimately discovers that wealthy entrepreneur Arthur Virg'lio Alves Reis is the mastermind behind the scheme. Reis was eventually sentenced to 20 years in prison.
- The Pottsville Maroons defeat the Chicago Cardinals in front of 6,000 fans on December 6 in a game the press depicted as the championship of the National Football League.
- Russian Orthodox bishop Peter of Krutitsy is arrested on December 9. Peter is charged with conspiring with Russian emigres in the west. Peter is ultimately executed by shooting on October 10, 1937.
- George Bernard Shaw is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature on December 10.
- Karam Chand and Kartari Chand tie the knot in India on December 11. The Chand's marriage lasts 90 years and 291 days, and is the longest marriage recorded. Karam Chand passed away in 2016 and Kartari in 2019.
- Communist politician Benjamin Gitlow is pardoned by New York Governor Al Smith on December 11. Gitlow was convicted for publishing a manifesto calling for the overthrow of the U.S. government, which Governor Smith characterized as a 'political crime' upon issuing his pardon.
- The Qaja dynasty, which had ruled Iran since 1789, comes to an end on December 12 when the country's Parliament declares General Reza Khan Pahlavi Prime Minister and installs him as Shah of Iran.
- The Fascist government in Italy signs a secret pact with Britain on December 14. The pact is designed to reinforce Italian dominance in Ethiopia.
- The national service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega is founded at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania on December 16.
- U.S. Army Colonel Billy Mitchell is convicted on eight charges of insubordination on December 17. Mitchell was critical of military leaders for investing in battleships and had argued for greater investment in air-based defenses.
- Reichstag President Paul Lšbe speaks out in favor of partial prohibition in Germany on December 19.
- George Edwin Taylor passes away on December 23 at the age of 68. Taylor was the first African American presidential candidate, running for the highest office in the United States as nominee of the National Negro Liberty Party in 1904.
- Law No. 2263 is passed by the Italian parliament on December 24. The law states that the decisions of Prime Minister Benito Mussolini and his government were not subject to legislative review and could only be overruled by order of King Victor Emmanuel III.
- A Christmas story published in the London newspaper The Evening News on December 24 identifies a children's character as 'Winnie-the-Pooh' for the first time. The character had previously been referred to as 'Edward' in a poem published in Punch magazine in 1924.
- The Turkish government passes a law identifying the Gregorian calendar as the official calendar for all government affairs on December 26. The use of the Islamic calendar in government affairs also is banned.
- The Japan Sumo Association is founded on December 28.
- The first attempt at a global New Year's celebration is made via international radio on December 31. Musical entertainment and greetings from various consuls general from an assortment of foreign countries are sent from New York.

# How to care for winter birds that visit your yard

The pristine, white backdrop of a snowy winter day can be a wonder to behold. While fresh snow on the ground can make for awe-inspiring landscapes, the absence of greenery amid the starkness of winter poses challenges for animals that do not ride out winter in a state of hibernation.

Several bird species stay in colder climates over the winter. Red-winged crossbills, snow buntings, bohemian waxwings, evening grosbeaks, and cardinals are just some of the birds one may find while gazing outside on a chilly winter's day. Birding in the winter can be a rewarding hobby because, despite the chilly conditions, birds tend to be easy to find in bare trees. Furthermore, the colder temperatures may keep many people inside, meaning neighborhoods, trails and parks can be very quiet, making it easier for those who brave the cold to see birds.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds indicates that winter is a difficult time of year for birds due to the weather and the scarcity of food. Furthermore, birds must consume a lot of food in a short amount of

time to have the energy and body warmth to survive each day. Even birds that store food in caches or have developed special scavenging strategies to find as much food as possible can benefit from a little wintertime



help. Penn State Extension suggests providing a variety of foods to attract the greatest number of species. Small, black-oil sunflower seeds are preferred by many smaller species of bird and have a high oil content that is nutritionally important for birds. Other sunflower seeds will be appropriate for blue jays and cardinals. Some other popular foods include white proso millet, thistle seed, niger seed, and peanuts.

Consult a wild bird store, which likely sells a birdseed mix that enables you to place a variety of seed into one feeder. In addition to seed, suet, which is made from high-quality animal fat, is crucial for birds in the winter. Families can get crafty by spreading peanut butter onto pine cones and sprinkling seed on top. Hang the pine cones tied to pieces of string from tree branches for homemade feeders.

Birds likely need a little help surviving the winter, when conditions can be bleak. Offering food and observing backyard visitors can be a great way to unwind on winter afternoons.





# Unique New Year's celebrations across the globe



It is time to turn the page on one year and usher in another. Each December 31, people all over the world reminisce, celebrate, plan, and party in honor of the changing calendar.

Many are likely familiar with some of the common ways to ring in the new year, which include champagne toasts, fireworks and watching the ball drop in Times Square. Yet, there are many other ways to celebrate this occasion and welcome a new year with hope and good luck. Enjoy these ways to commemorate the start of 2025.



## **Make some noise.**

Although fireworks are commonplace on New Year's Eve in various locales around the world, in Thailand it once was traditional to fire guns to frighten off demons. National Thailand reports that it is no longer legal to fire weapons during New Year's Eve festivities, but other noisemakers can simulate the ancient tradition. Thailand also has its own New Year celebration in April called Songkran, a three-day event. It's customary to splash water and shoot colorful water guns, which is another idea for ringing in the new year.

## **Smash pomegranates for luck.**

Many have heard of smashing grapes to make wine, and the band Smashing Pumpkins has millions of devoted followers across the globe. The comic Gallagher used to smash watermel-

ons on stage. But in Turkey, smashing a pomegranate outside your front door is said to bring good luck. The fruit is seen as a symbol of prosperity, abundance and health.

## **Make some good luck 'Hoppin' John.' Hoppin'**

John is a traditional New Year's Day dish from regions of the southern United States. The dish is made with black-eyed peas and pork bacon and is said to bring good luck to those who consume it for the new year, according to the Old Farmers Almanac.

## **Choose honey-dipped apples.**

People can take a page from the Jewish New Year tradition, which sees celebrants dipping apples in honey for a sweet new year. Rosh Hashanah takes place in late summer or early fall because it follows the Hebrew lunisolar calendar. However, anyone can apply similar customs to the New Year's celebrations taking place each January 1.

## **Put on some polka dots.**

In the Philippines, wearing polka-dotted clothing on New Year's Eve is a tradition said to bring good fortune in the new year, according to Philstar Life.

## **Watch a sunrise.**

Chances are many revelers are staying up late on New Year's Eve and into the next day, so they'll have ample opportunity to catch the sunrise. In Japan, watching the first sunrise of the new year is called 'hatsuhinode,' and is a practice thought to bring good fortune.

## **Grab some cash.**

There's a perpetuating superstition that it's better to have some extra money in your wallet to enter the New Year full of financial prosperity. Also, it's best to wipe out any unpaid debts before December 31 disappears; otherwise, the months ahead might not be financially sound.

New Year's traditions have persisted throughout the years and are borne of customs from all over the world.

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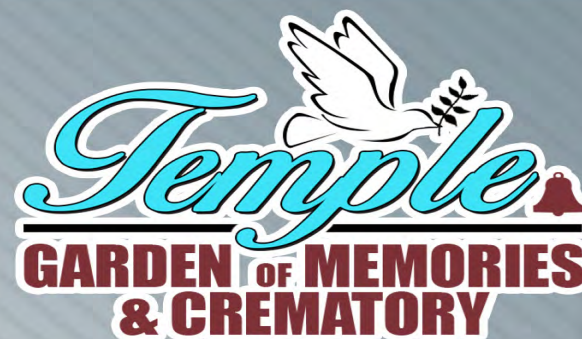


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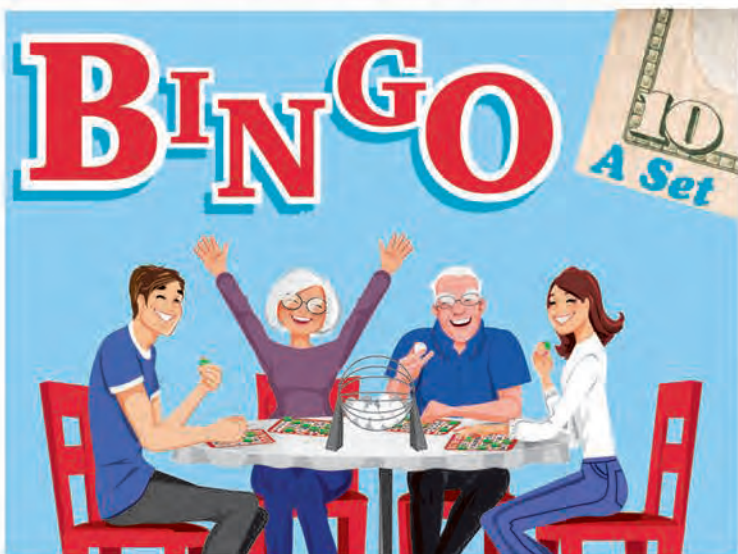
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# Renowned Neuroscientist A Beacon of Hope for

In an era where neurological health challenges increasingly dominate public discourse, Dr. Keith N. Darrow of MyTinnitusNumber.org, a distinguished neuroscientist, professor, clinical audiologist, and Certified Dementia Practitioner, has released his latest work, *TinnitusTreatable.com*. This publication marks his third dedicated volume on the subject of tinnitus, building upon a career spanning over two decades at the intersection of brain science and auditory health. As the author of previous acclaimed titles exploring similar themes, Dr. Darrow continues to establish himself as a leading authority, offering evidence-based insights that challenge longstanding misconceptions and provide actionable pathways to relief.

*TinnitusTreatable.com* arrives at a critical juncture. With an estimated 70 million Americans and over one billion individuals globally experiencing tinnitus—a persistent perception of sound without an external source—the condition has evolved from a niche concern to a widespread neurological epidemic. Dr. Darrow's book systematically dismantles the outdated narrative that tinnitus is an untreatable annoyance and people suffering need to learn to live with it, instead framing it as a treatable signal from the brain that demands prompt, comprehensive intervention. Through a blend of clinical expertise, patient narratives, and the latest advancements in neuroscience, the text serves as a roadmap for those who have been dismissed by traditional medical approaches.

Dr. Darrow's credentials lend unparalleled weight to this endeavor. Holding a Ph.D. focused in neuroscience from M.I.T. and Harvard Medical School, being a tenured professor at Worcester State Massachusetts, and certified as a clinical audiologist (CCC-A), he has treated thousands of patients while contributing to research on auditory neurology and cognitive decline. His prior books have educated professionals and lay audiences alike on the links between hearing health and overall brain function, emphasizing preventive strategies against conditions like dementia. In *TinnitusTreatable.com*, he extends this foundation, introducing readers to breakthroughs in NeuroTechnology™—a term he employs to describe technologies that interact directly with the nervous system to modulate brain activity and alleviate symptoms.

The book's introduction sets a tone of empathy and urgency, acknowledging the deeply personal nature of tinnitus. "Tinnitus is a deeply personal experience," Dr. Darrow writes. "For some, it's a faint ringing in the background. For others, it's a constant, overwhelming noise that hijacks daily life. No matter the form, one truth remains: tinnitus is real—and it is treatable." This statement encapsulates the book's core message, countering the frequent dismissal patients encounter, such as being told to "just live with it." Drawing from his clinical practice, Dr. Darrow shares stories of individuals who, after years of frustration, found relief through structured, science-backed protocols.

Right from the start, this book delves into the prevalence of tinnitus, explaining why it affects so many in modern society. Dr. Darrow attributes the rise to factors including aging populations, pervasive noise pollution, prolonged use of personal audio devices, and systemic issues like neuroinflammation

from conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. He likens the auditory system to a sound engineering setup: the ears as microphones capturing frequencies, and the brain as the engineer processing the input. When signals degrade—due to damaged hair cells or neural synapses—the brain compensates by "turning up the gain," resulting in phantom sounds. This analogy, grounded in neuroscience, demystifies tinnitus as a brain-based response rather than a mere ear problem.

Importantly, Dr. Darrow highlights that tinnitus is not "normal" even if common. He cites global statistics, noting that over one in four U.S. adults reports symptoms, with rates increasing among younger demographics due to noise exposure. "Tinnitus is often the first sign that your hearing loss journey has begun" he quotes from colleague Dr. Ross O'Neill, reinforcing the need for proactive care.

Transitioning to the impacts of untreated tinnitus, this neurological condition is framed as a "big deal"—a warning system with far-reaching consequences. Dr. Darrow draws on functional MRI and EEG studies showing altered brain activity in tinnitus sufferers, including hyperconnectivity between auditory and emotional centers like the amygdala. This leads to a distress cycle: perception triggers emotion, which amplifies stress, perpetuating the sound. He discusses links to mental health issues, with over 50% of patients experiencing anxiety or depression, and an elevated risk of cognitive decline, including dementia.

A poignant section recounts the tragic story of Kent Taylor, founder of Texas Roadhouse, whose post-COVID tinnitus escalated to unbearable levels, contributing to his suicide in 2021. Dr. Darrow uses this public case to illustrate tinnitus's potential lethality through sleep deprivation and emotional exhaustion. "Tinnitus is not merely a symptom to manage,"

# Unveils Third Book on Tinnitus: Millions Suffering in Silence

he asserts, "but a signal to act because it is a neurological disorder that warrants clinical attention." The chapter reframes tinnitus as a biomarker for broader brain health, urging readers to view it with the urgency afforded to precursors of heart disease or stroke.

For many living with tinnitus, the journey begins with frustration: being told their hearing is "normal," despite the very real challenges they face each day. Standard hearing tests (aka the audiogram), developed nearly a century ago, are limited. They measure volume thresholds up through only about half of the ear, but overlook the subtleties of neural degradation, clarity loss, and damage in the most sensitive part of our hearing range. Dr. Darrow explains how the real culprit is often cochlear synaptopathy, or "hidden hearing loss," where the connections between hair cells and auditory nerves deteriorate. These silent disruptions distort the way signals are delivered to the brain, explaining why a person can pass a hearing test yet still experience tinnitus, difficulty understanding speech in noise, and the exhausting fatigue that comes with it.

Research now supports what patients have known all along: relief is possible even when tests say otherwise. Studies such as Suzuki et al. (2021) demonstrate that individuals with near-normal hearing can experience significant reductions in tinnitus when fitted with specialized hearing technology. Waechter et al. (2023) confirmed that treatment can be effective regardless of traditional audiometric loss. A case that illustrates this well is Brandy, a 45-year-old clinic coordinator who had "normal" hearing scores yet lived with constant ringing. Her Tinnitus Handicap Inventory score revealed a measurable burden, which was alleviated after being fit with prescriptive NeuroTechnology™. Advanced diagnostics—extended high-frequency testing, otoacoustic emissions, and speech-in-noise

assessments—allow clinicians to uncover what the outdated tests miss and offer solutions that truly change lives.

Beyond diagnostics, Dr. Darrow presents practical strategies for patients to measure and track their progress. One such tool is "MyTinnitusNumber.org," a personalized scoring system that quantifies severity and offers a clear starting point for recovery. From there, he outlines a structured, seven-step treatment approach designed to retrain the brain, reduce neural strain, and restore quality of life. At the heart of this program is Prescription NeuroTechnology™—customized devices that deliver targeted stimulation to the auditory pathway. By encouraging adaptive neuroplasticity, these systems lower the intensity of tinnitus while strengthening the brain's processing of sound.

Other therapies play an important role as well. Cognitive behavioral strategies, biometric monitoring, mindfulness, regular movement, and improved sleep all reinforce recovery by calming the nervous system and building cognitive reserve. Together, these interventions reduce stress, promote resilience, and help restore a sense of control. The book also highlights how treating tinnitus protects long-term brain health, with evidence linking auditory enrichment to reduced risk of decline and dementia. Patient stories—like Mark, a 58-year-old firefighter whose "normal" test concealed significant auditory stress—show how the program brings relief that is practical, not miraculous.

What distinguishes this work is its balance of science and compassion. The recommendations are rooted in peer-reviewed research, yet presented in a way that empowers patients to take the next step. The book also critiques outdated protocols and systemic barriers that leave too many people dismissed or untreated, urging a shift toward modern, evidence-based care.

Ultimately, TinnitusIsTreatable.com is both a scientific guide and a message of hope. For those ready to take the first step, resources like MyTinnitusNumber.org provide a way to measure progress and begin the journey toward relief. It validates the lived experiences of millions while offering a pathway forward. In Dr. Darrow's words: "This book is for everyone living with tinnitus who deserves more than hollow reassurances. They deserve options. They deserve treatment. And above all, they deserve hope, rooted in evidence—not guesswork."

**Call (254) 735-2059 to get your questions answered, or book an appointment at one of our locations in Austin, Weatherford, Granbury, or Temple.**



# Belton Senior Activity Center December 2025

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Email: [activities@beltonseniorcenter.org](mailto:activities@beltonseniorcenter.org); Activity Director, Judy Owens: 254-770-7958;



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	6
Zumba Class on T/Th is from 6-7 \$5/class No class on 1st/3rd Thurs,	<b>1</b> 9 Exercise 9 Woodcarvers 10 Improver Line D 12 Dominos 42	<b>2</b> 8 Mex.Train Doms. 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9Quilting/12 Canasta 6 Zumba Class	<b>3</b> 9 Exercise 10:30 Bible Study 12 Bingo 1 Arts & Crafts	<b>4</b> 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting/12 Canasta 1-4 Carfit Event 6:30 Dance	<b>6</b> 9 Exercise 10 Improver Line D 12 Bridge 12 Dominos 42	<b>6</b> Dance is Thurs., Dec. 4 at 6:30 p.m. with Bobby Dean
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 9 Exercise 9 Woodcarvers 10 Improver Line D 12 Dominos 42	<b>9</b> 8 Mex.Train Doms. 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9Quilting/12 Canasta 6 Zumba Class	<b>10</b> 9 Exercise 10:30 Bible Study 12 Bingo 1 Art Painting	<b>11</b> 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting 12 Canasta 6 Zumba	<b>12</b> 9 Exercise 10 Improver Line D 12 Bridge 12 Dominos 42	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> Pot Luck Entertainment on Dec. 15 at 5:30 Jeff Hapke, Magician.	<b>15</b> 9 Exercise 9 Woodcarvers 10 Improver Line D 12 Dominos 42 5:30 Pot Luck	<b>16</b> 8 Mex.Train Doms. 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9Quilting/12 Canasta 6 Zumba Class	<b>17</b> 9 Exercise 10:30 Bible Study 12 Bingo 1 Arts & Crafts	<b>18</b> 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting 12 Canasta *Christmas Dance	<b>19</b> 9 Exercise 10 Improver Line D 12 Bridge 12 Dominos 42	<b>20</b> "Christmas Dance is Thurs., Dec. 18 at 6:30 p.m. with Backroads.
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> The Center will be closed for the holidays till Jan, 5	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Merry Christmas!	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1-Jan</b> Happy New Year!	<b>2-Jan</b>	<b>3-Jan</b>
<b>4-Jan</b>	<b>Jan. 5</b> Center resopens	<b>Upcoming Events:</b> 1. The Center is partnering with the City of Belton on offering a Zumba class on Tues. and Thurs. from 6-7 p.m., except for 1st and 3rd Thursdays when we have our regular dances. Cost is \$5 per class. 2. Dances - Thurs., Dec. 4, with Bobby Dean; and Thurs, Dec. 18, with Backroads. 3. Pot Luck is Monday, Dec. 15, at 5:30 p.m. with Jeff Hapke, Magician, entertaining. 4. We are in need of quilters who would be availalbe on Tues. and Thurs. mornings 9-12, or work from home! Call Judy at 254-770-7958 if interested. 5. We would also like new bridge players if interested in playing or learning - Fridays from 12-3.				