MidlothianNoW

JANUARY 2021

Taking Note

Deanna Lariz reaches students through music

Also inside:

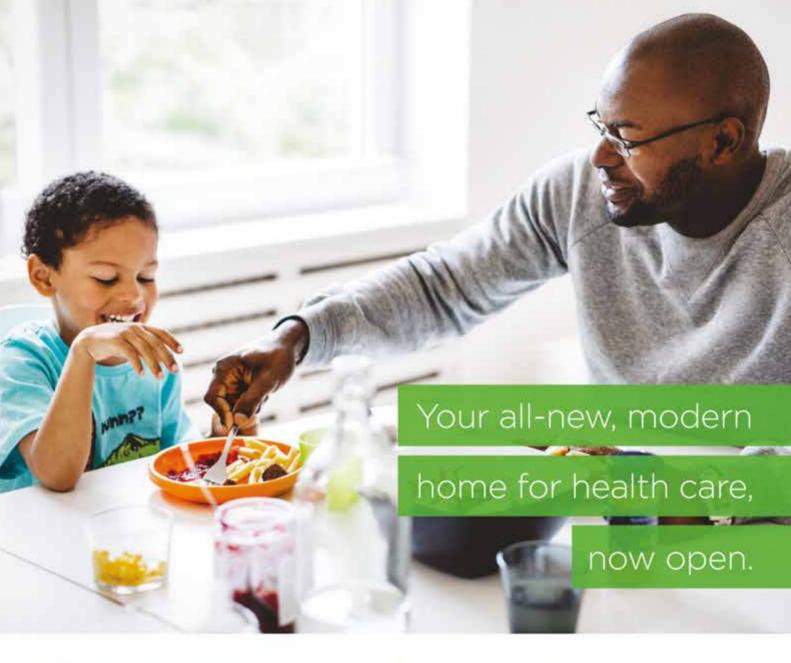
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Featured Business: Midtowne Assisted Living and Memory Care

In the Kitchen With Melissa Sible





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TAKING NOTE Music and life intertwine for Deanna Lariz.

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ON THE COVER

A pianist shares her talent as therapy for local youth.

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Angel Morris

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Let's begin again ...

Did you know January wasn't always the official beginning of the calendar year? Romans made the change in part to honor the month's namesake, Janus — the god of beginnings — whose two faces allowed him to look back into the past and forward into the future. Whether intentional or not, many of us still pay tribute to Janus by considering what we want to change or do better, as we move on from our own past.

Fittingly, as well, January is on record as the month gold was discovered in California back in 1848, and the "rush" was on. The proclamation, "There's gold in them there hills!" brought some 300,000 folks to the state in search of their fortune. Today, January still holds golden promise, when we set out to find ourselves anew.

Perhaps we make grandiose resolutions or simply appreciate the opportunity for a fresh start. This year, it may be especially poignant to decide where we need to make improvement and of what we should let go. If nothing else, it's a chance to realize what is of real importance — and what we really don't need to live well, after all. However you choose to begin again, may there be promising things in "these here hills" for you. Go for the gold!

Have a safe and prosperous New Year!



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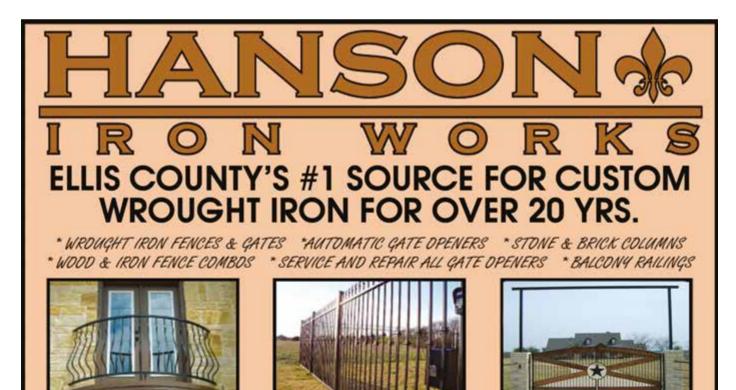
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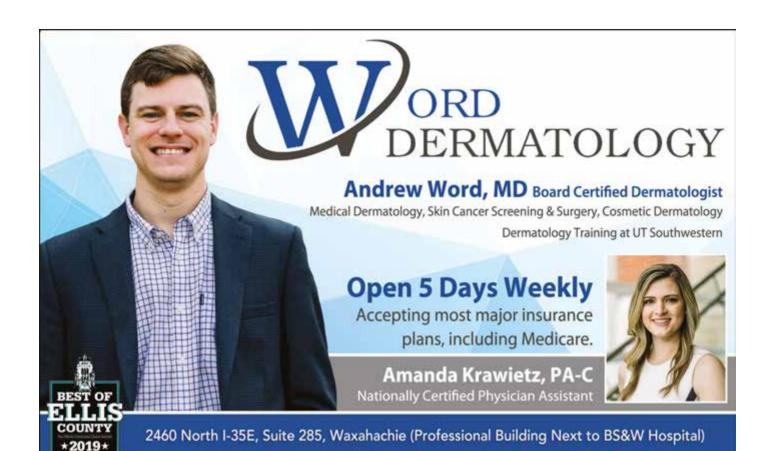
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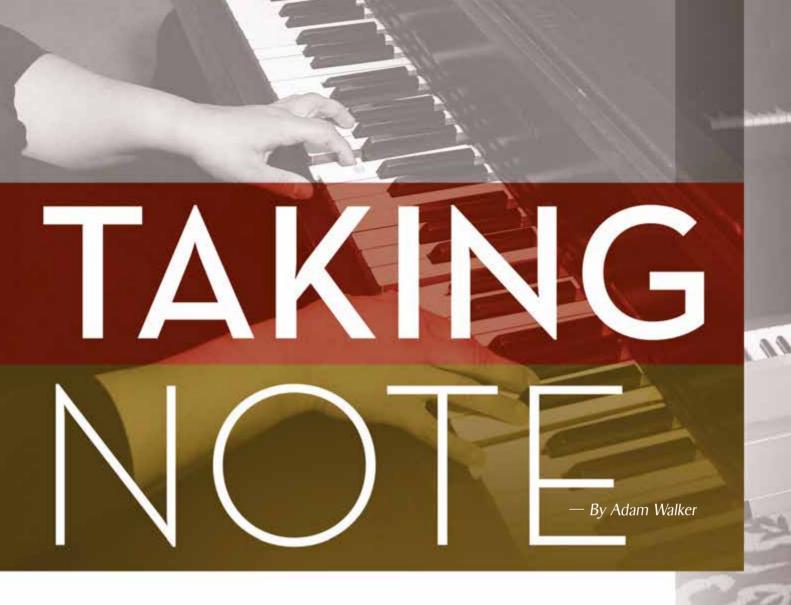
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Team Leader

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Music has always been a part of life for Deanna Lariz. "In my earliest memories, I was on a keyboard. I was always drawn to music. It kept me connected to my emotions and God," Deanna recalled. "It was an easy escape from my childhood. Music always made sense. I didn't have to work at it. The more I played, the more I wanted to play."

While Deanna grew up poor, she always had her faith and her music. And that got her through some hard times. "Piano was a way to escape the adversity and poverty I faced growing up. Playing music took me to a whole other place," she remembered. "I would see pictures in my head, in my imagination. It was a way to express my emotions, which I couldn't express any other way at the time."

Although there are no other musicians in her family, her parents both sang. "But no one else plays *anything*. The Lord brought a piano to me. I don't know if I would have survived my childhood without it, without music. Now, it's the essence of who I am," Deanna admitted. "I love to improv at the keyboard. It brings me back to my roots. Any time life becomes stressful, it breathes life back into me."

As she grew up, music continued to be at the center of Deanna's life. She became a music teacher, tried out some other instruments like guitar, drums and violin, and she continues to study music herself. "Some people wait their whole lives trying to figure out what they want to do. I knew at an early age piano would be my life. As I grew up, my ability and skill with the piano grew, too. Teaching music has become a big part of my passion and calling in life."

Deanna uses music to help children connect to their emotions. "I realized that I could take my talent and skills and teach children how to use music as a tool to get through tragedies. Music becomes stress management, an antianxiety technique, a way to calm down and focus. A lot of kids need that today," Deanna





Fresh Beginnings

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explained. "A student may come in with the weight of the world on their shoulders, but then that kid connects to a piece of music, and they find balance."

In addition to individual students. Deanna has taught and offered training and mentorship for several organizations across the DFW area. She has led worship at many different churches across the U.S. since she was a 13-year-old girl. "I also coach, train and mentor church worship bands on the various skills and tools needed to be a successful, productive worship team, and I help young musicians prepare for local and national competitions."

As for herself, Deanna is studying at Tarleton State University for a graduate degree in music education. "I love to learn. No matter how old you are, you should never stop learning and growing. The skills I'm learning are tools that will enable me to better serve my students. And the community of people pursuing the same goal is very valuable."

The types of music that speak to Deanna vary from time to time. "For the last 6 months, it's been Beethoven's "Pathétique." I think my daughter is tired of hearing me play the same song. This piece has such beautiful, sad elements to it, and I really like music that is beautiful and sad. If I don't connect to a piece, I'm not going to play it."

Emotion is what most attracts Deanna to a piece. "I look for sounds of beauty, something that pulls at my heart, full of emotion, with various dynamics. I don't care who the composer is, if it resonates with my emotions."



That experience is what Deanna believes unites people through music. "Music is universal. It connects to your soul, to your spirit. It doesn't just affect you physically. It goes past every wall or defense mechanism," she said. "It's entwined with culture. In Africa, traditions are transferred through music. Community values are shared through chants and songs. We do the same here. 'The Star-Spangled Banner' unifies us as Americans. We experience our culture and express ourselves through music."

Deanna wants to build a legacy through her music. "I want to leave something behind when I die. What story do I want people to remember about me? Music has been the constant factor in my life. I want to use it to the best of my ability to pour into others, so they can be impacted and changed."

To that end, teaching is Deanna's way of paying it forward. "It helped me when I was a girl, and it helped me and my girls when I went through a divorce and became a single mom. I knew I had to do something, and I felt like the Lord was saying, 'Teach. Teach them how to find My peace through music," she recalled. "I had lost almost everything and walked away from the piano. I thought I'd never play again. But I felt like He was saying, 'Play Deanna,' and as I played, I found relief. Music saved me. So, now I show kids how to use this life-saving tool. I know what it's like to have a gift you can't afford to develop. I never want that to be the reason a child doesn't experience music like I have." NOW













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BusinessNOW

Midtowne Assisted Living and Memory Care

- By Angel Morris

Midtowne Assisted Living and Memory Care 910 S. 9th St. Midlothian, TX 76065

Hours: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (469) 672-1400

Established in 2015, Midtowne Assisted Living and Memory Care is a boutique-style community with five-star services in the heart of Midlothian. Midtowne offers care and companionship for seniors over the age of 55 in its Assisted

Living and Memory Care facility. "We are engaged in every aspect of the community and are here to serve our schools, first responders, Chambers and the community as a whole," reported Community Relations Director Landy Blackmore.

Midtowne services begin with assisted living and advance to memory care. Residents of private, pet-friendly apartments enjoy resort-like amenities, such as an activity center, exercise room, full-service salon, walking paths and fine dining. "We want to empower our residents to be as independent as possible while living their lives to the fullest," Landy noted.

Alzheimer's and dementia care residents are made to feel at home in The Cottage, by employees with required certifications and ongoing training. Personal assistance with daily needs, such as bathing, dressing, grooming and more, is based on individualized care plans. "Also, we maintain higher staff-perresident ratios to ensure the kind of personalized assistance residents need," Landy underscored.

What else makes Midtowne stand out? "It's our team. Executive Director Matt Johnson won the Leadership Award in our company. This is a huge accomplishment because we have more than 40 operating communities with Civitas Senior Living," Landy explained.

Midtowne was the first ever Civitas building, expanding exponentially while maintaining a family environment. "The CEO. Wayne Powell, visits all the communities and knows various staff members by name!" Landy enthused.

With the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, employees took this personal touch to the next level. "One of my favorite memories is a resident who wandered into my office one day looking for her husband. I decided to take the opportunity to connect," Landy recalled.

The dementia-diagnosed resident's room is filled with paintings from her earlier days, and Landy had art supplies on hand. "As I gave her the supplies, she asked what she should do, and I encouraged her to do whatever she would like," Landy reflected. "I watched creativity come out of her, as she sat for 30 minutes and talked with me. She began to reminisce about her art days and for those moments, she was back in her prime. I'm sure she doesn't remember that day, but I will hold on to that moment the rest of my life. Serving seniors is a passion for our entire team."

Stories like this underscore Midtowne's goal of being known as a community within a community. "We want to be the place that friends and families refer their loved ones to, not just now, but it would be an honor to serve the generations to come," Landy admitted. "The biggest compliment to any small business is referrals."

Midtowne Assisted Living and Memory Care workers have a heart for providing residents a measure of independence that encourages engagement, while giving their loved ones peace of mind. "We consider ourselves blessed to be in this community of Ellis County and our surrounding neighbors," Landy admitted. "We thank you for all the support and encouragement we receive on a daily basis." NOW





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Around Town



A Paint Bucket & Boutique visitor discovers a lost lamb from First United

Methodist Church's Sheep Trail activity.

Zoomed In:

By Angel Morris

Tiffany Carra and Matt Morris

Tiffany Carra and Matt Morris have, again, donated to local charities through a fundraiser calendar. In 2018, Matt was asked to make a calendar of his popular online photos. "My involvement with nonprofits and print projects prompted me to help Matt with this," Tiffany noted.

Calendars have benefited Manna House, the city animal shelter and Fostering Hope Animal Rescue. Printing costs were offset by business ads, but that support — and taking photos — was hampered by COVID-19. "We re-ran last year's ads for free to support small businesses in 2021," Tiffany explained.

This year's theme is Dogs of Cement City. "I hope to come up with fresh ideas yearly and really see this project grow!" Matt admitted.



City Councilman Justin Coffman and his family cap off 2020 by attending the city's year-end holiday events.



Midlothian High School Panther Regiment's Class of 2021 poses after their final march at the MISD stadium.



William Wallace receives the motorcycle he won in the fundraiser raffle hosted by American Legion Riders Chris Kyle Chapter 388.



Guests meet artist Bala Thiagarajan (center) during a recent open house at Garden Gallery in Midlothian.

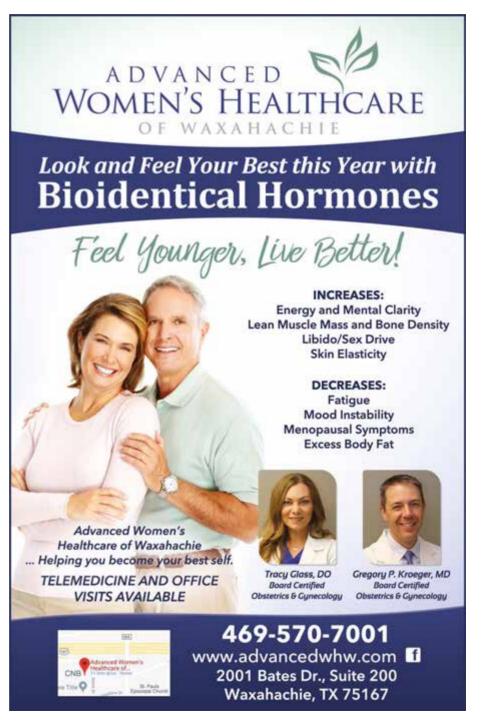


Ken Rowland volunteers with Creekside Church's mobile food pantry, which occurs every third Saturday of the month.



Khristine Van Heiizen and her daughters. Evelyn and Charlotte, enjoy In-N-Out Burgers and a movie at the city's Parktopia event.









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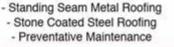
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Since childhood, Melissa Sible has had a passion for baking. "I've always had a creative soul; baking lets me express my creativity and is a great stress reliever. Not only do I enjoy creating new recipes but also decorating and creating new flavor components," Melissa noted. "Holidays are my absolute favorite time to bake!"

Melissa has worked her way through the industry as a baker, decorator, pastry cook and pastry chef. With the support from her partner, Richard, and two sons, she started an online bakery last fall, now known as Frosted Cakes and Pastries. Outside the kitchen, she enjoys "spending time with [her] tribe, repurposing furniture, crafting and listening to music." Now

Chocolate Peanut Butter Bark

- 1 16-oz. pkg. chocolate almond bark
- 2 cups creamy peanut butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- **I.** Melt the chocolate according to the package directions. Pour half of the melted
- chocolate onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Using a spatula, spread the chocolate to create a large chocolate slab. Place in the freezer for 10 minutes to solidify.
- 2. Mix peanut butter and vanilla; stir in the powdered sugar until smooth and creamy. Spread the peanut butter mixture over the chilled chocolate slab, covering entirely.
- 3. Pour the remaining melted chocolate over

the top of the peanut butter layer. Carefully spread to the edges, completely covering the peanut butter. Return to the freezer for 5-10 minutes to set top layer of chocolate. Cut into pieces of desired size and enjoy. Store in an airtight container. No need to refrigerate unless it is warm out!

Rum Balls

- 1 11-oz. box vanilla wafer cookies
- 1 1/4 cups toasted pecans
- I pinch salt
- I cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 cup dark rum
- 2 Tbsp. bourbon
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- I cup granulated sugar
- **1.** Process the cookies, pecans and salt in a food processor until finely ground. Transfer to a large bowl.
- 2. Stir in the powdered sugar, rum, bourbon

and corn syrup; mix well. Scoop the dough into balls with a tablespoon-sized measuring spoon.

3. Place the granulated sugar in a bowl; use it to coat the rum balls. Refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving.

Pecan Snowball Cookies

- I cup butter, room temperature
- 1 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar (divided use)
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup pecans, finely chopped
- **I.** Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper, or use a greased cookie sheet. Using an electric mixer, cream together the butter and 1/2 cup sugar until light and fluffy.
- **2.** Beat in the vanilla extract. Add the flour and salt; beat until well combined. Stir in the nuts.
- **3.** Form the dough into 1-inch balls (about 1 Tbsp. per ball). Place the balls 2 inches apart on the cookie sheet. Bake 12-15 minutes, or until the edges just start to brown.
- **4.** While the cookies are still hot, roll them in the remaining confectioners' sugar. Cool; roll in the sugar a second time, or sift the sugar over the tops using a strainer. Cool completely before storing.

Gingerbread Crinkle Cookie

3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

3/4 cup dark brown sugar, packed

3/4 tsp. baking soda

I tsp. ground cinnamon

1 tsp. ground ginger

1/2 tsp. ground cloves

1/2 tsp. salt

1 1/2 sticks unsalted butter, softened, but still cool, cut into 1/2-inch cubes

3/4 cup molasses

2 Tbsp. milk

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1/2 cup confectioners' sugar

- **1.** With an electric mixer, either hand or stand, stir together the flour, brown sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and salt at a low speed until combined, about 20 seconds.
- **2.** Stop the mixer; add the butter pieces. Mix at medium-low speed until the mixture is sandy and resembles fine meal, about 1 1/2 minutes. Reduce the speed to low. With the mixer running, gradually add the molasses and milk.
- **3.** Mix until the dough is evenly moistened, about 20 seconds. Increase the speed to





medium; mix until thoroughly combined, about 10 seconds.

- **4.** Scrape the dough onto a work surface; divide it in half. Working with one portion at a time, shape the dough into two round disks. Cover them in plastic wrap; freeze until firm, 20-30 minutes. Refrigerate the dough for 2 hours or overnight.
- **5.** Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Take the cookie dough out of the refrigerator; scoop a heaping tablespoon. Roll into a ball; be careful not to overwork the dough, as it will lose its chill and get too warm.
- **6.** Roll each dough ball in the granulated sugar until coated. Transfer the ball to the confectioners' sugar; roll again until coated evenly. Place the coated dough balls 1 inch apart from each other on the prepared baking sheet.
- **7.** Bake until set in the centers, about 12 minutes. Do not overbake. Cool 2 minutes; remove to a wire rack to cool to room temperature.

Mixed Berry Cobbler

3 cups assorted berries 1/2 Tbsp. lemon juice 1 cup all-purpose flour 1/2 tsp. baking powder



1/2 tsp. salt

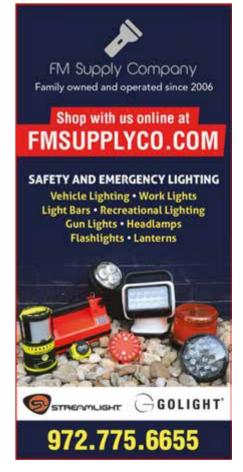
1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened 3/4 cup light brown sugar, packed 1 tsp. vanilla extract

- **I.** Preheat oven to 375 F. Grease a 9x6-inch rectangular, 8-inch round or any baking dish with 1- to 1 1/2-qt. capacity. Place the berries in the prepared pan. Drizzle with the lemon juice.
- **2.** Whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt; set aside.
- **3.** In a medium bowl, beat butter, brown sugar and vanilla until well-blended. Mix in the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles crumbs. Drop the dough evenly on top of the berries.

4. Bake for 30 minutes, or until the top is lightly browned and the fruit is bubbly. Serve topped with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or whipped topping.

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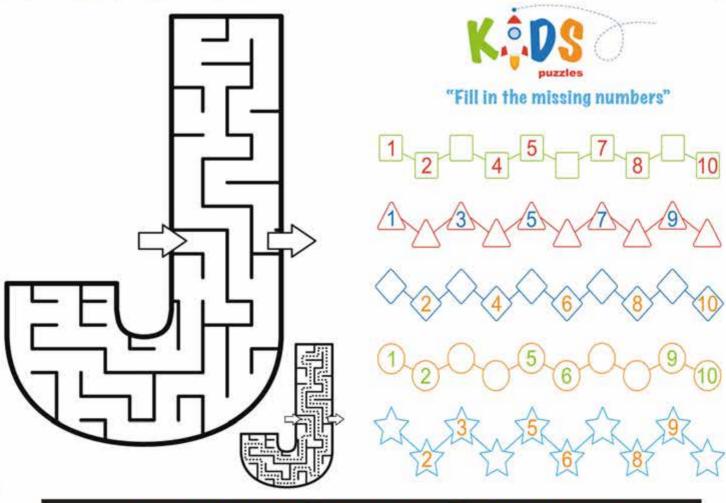
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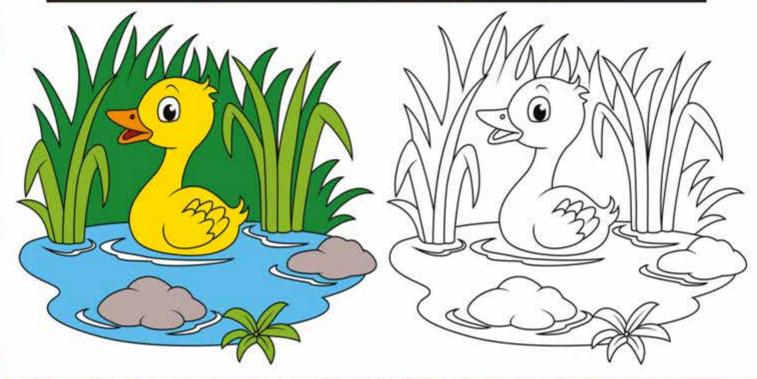




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1/13

State of the District Luncheon:

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1/22

Parents Night Out:

Bricks 4 Kidz event. 6:00-8:30 p.m., Creekside Church, 540l

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Wednesdays

DivorceCare:

Group sharing for those who have gone through or are going through divorce. DivorceCare for Kids ages 5-12 meets at the same time. Care for younger children available. 6:30-8:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 800 S. 9th St. Call (972) 775-3993 for details.

Third Wednesdays

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection Meeting:

Reservations due Sunday before the meeting. Cost is \$13. 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club. Contact Barb at (214) 463-5064 or barb.jacobs 19@yahoo.com.

Thursdays

Celebrate Recovery Meeting:

A Christ-centered recovery program designed to help those struggling with hurts, habits and hang-ups. 7:00-9:00 p.m., Lighthouse Church, 1400 N. 9th St. Email CR@dfwlighthouse.org.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to angel.morris@nowmagazines.com.





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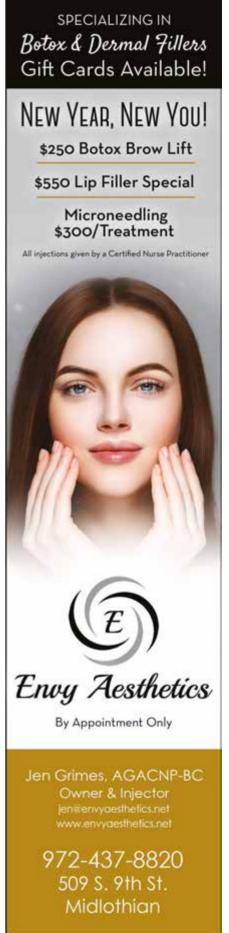
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BACKYARD ORPHANS

Backyard Orphans works to see a day where there are more families waiting for children than children waiting for families. They train church leaders to develop a foster care, adoption and support ministry. 702 Champlain Ct., Midlothian, TX 76065 (972) 638-0117, http://backyardorphans.org/

CHRIS KYLE FROG FOUNDATION

The Chris Kyle Frog Foundation is focused on changing the world for this generation and the next by recognizing and strengthening military and first responder marriages through unique programs and powerful partnerships.

PO. Box 1337, Midlothian, TX 76065 (844) 336-CKFF (2533) www.chriskylefrogfoundation.org/

HELP TO HEAL, Sharing Christ's Love

Help to Heal strives to connect people and businesses to serve those who need them most, focusing on seniors, single parents and those who do not qualify for services from the government. They assist people in need with a variety of free services and resources. 670 Primrose Dr. Midlothian, TX 76065, (469) 222-1490 www.helptohealtx.org

MANNA HOUSE

Manna House gives families a helping hand, empowering them to rise above the immediate crisis with a sense of dignity. They are dedicated to serving the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of people in crisis, and bring hope, encouragement and stability while building a stronger community. 3241A Robinson St. Midlothian, TX 76065, (972) 775-1800 www.mannahousemidlothian.org

MENTORS CARE

Mentors Care is a mentoring program that encourages action, hope and a future using volunteer mentors from the community to reach 'at-risk' youth in our schools. 661 E. Main St., #200-170, Midlothian, TX 76065 http://mentors.care/

Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	
10			+		11	1	\vdash	T	\vdash	12
13	1	T	t		14	T	1	T	t	1
15	1	T	T	16			17	T	t	†
18	T	T		19	t	20				
21	1	\vdash	22			23	T	24	25	26
			27	\vdash	28	T		29	T	
30	31	32			33	t	34			
35	T		T	36			37			
38		\vdash	t	T	\vdash		39			T
	40	1	+	\vdash	1		41		$^{+}$	1

Solutions on page 36

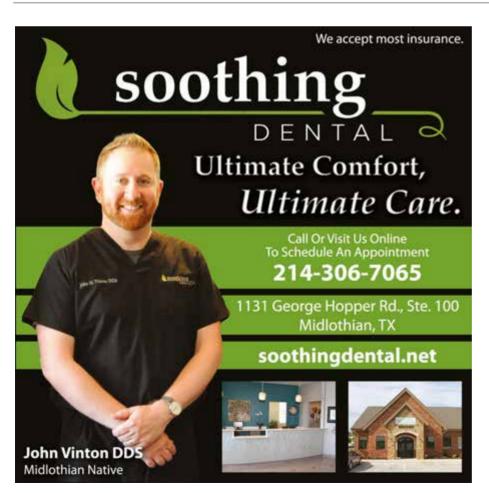
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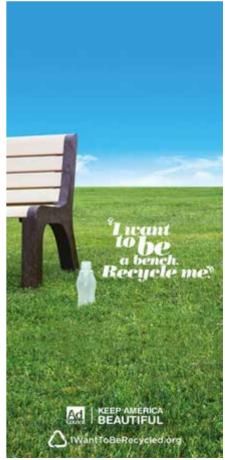
Across

- 1 Got graver
- 5 Catch you later
- 10 Hint
- 11 Most Kurds
- 13 Popular type of party, often at universities
- 14 Horn of Africa resident
- 15 Spain and Portugal
- 17 Above
- 18 Indian flatbread
- 19 Speck of soot
- 21 First US orbiter
- 23 Leading soap actor Anthony ---
- 27 "And the rest," in short
- 29 Aviation regulator
- 30 What a soufflé should do
- 33 Recurrent
- 35 Said by a confessor
- 37 Mary Jane
- 38 Calibre
- 39 Skip over
- 40 "Grab --- of the life preserver"
- 41 Coolers

- Down
- 1 Job for a thespian
- 2 All over the world
- 3 Seat of the University of Oregon
- 4 Costly
- 5 Indian tea state
- 6 Laurel and Hardy, for example
- 7 Mean it about a con
- 8 The show comes --- 9
- 9 Missile housing
- 12 Drink daintily
- 16 "--- it romantic?" (Rodgers & Hart)
- 20 Hard on the eyes
- 22 ... on a --- know basis
- 24 Burning
- 25 Dried grape
- 26 Regatta entrants
- 28 Portrayed
- 30 Edge
- 31 Concept
- 32 Darth Sidious's group
- 34 Karate blow
- 36 Off-color

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Sudoku Puzzle

Easy Medium

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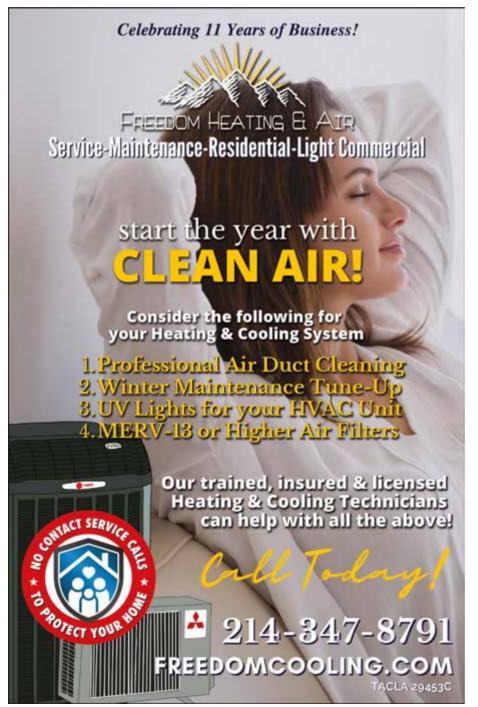
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Solutions on page 36









Crossword - Sudoku Solutions



Easy

1	5	8	6	3	4	9	7	2
2	6	9	1	7	5	4	3	8
4								
9	1	5	4	6	3	2	8	7
8	4	2	7	5	1	3	9	6
6								
3	8	4	5	1	6	7	2	9
7	2	6	3	4	9	8	1	5
5								

Medium

4	6	9	1	5	8	2	7	3
3	5	2	9	4	7	1	8	6
				3				
8	9	7	6	1	3	4	5	2
2	1	3	5	7	4	6	9	8
5	4	6	8	2	9	7	3	1
1	7	4	3	9	2	8	6	5
6	3	5	4	8	1	9	2	7
9	2	8	7	6	5	3	1	4



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