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SouthwestNOW

M A G A Z I N E

DECEMBER 2018

2018 Holiday Shopping Guide

Kids' Fun Pages
pp. 42 & 44



Crossword/Sudoku
pp. 46 & 47

Finding His Nick

Bill Dendy makes
Santa come to life

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Northwood University

In the Kitchen With
Carletta Gullory

A Time to Remember

At Home With Ken
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ACCELERATING EXPECTATIONS 2020

Magnet, Early College Enrollment set to Open December 1

Starting in Pre-kindergarten through grade 12, DeSoto Independent School District offers a program or opportunity for your student to dive into courses and curriculum that support his or her interests, goals and dreams.

December 1, 2018, visit
www.DeSotoISD.org/MagnetApplication to
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- Woodridge Fine Arts Magnet Academy
- The Meadows Business Magnet Academy
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- Cockrell Hill International Linguistics Magnet Academy
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- East Middle School Medical Magnet Academy
- McCowan Fine Arts Academy
- DHS iSTEAM Academy
- DHS Early College High School

DeSoto ISD Announces 2019 Pre-K Round-Up

DeSoto ISD gives its youngest scholars the advantage of pre-school educational opportunities through the district's early childhood educational programs supporting three- and four-year-old students. Though these programs are largely qualification-based, the district has designated allotments for tuition-based spots at \$5,600 per school year or \$560 per month.

Interested in taking advantage of DeSoto ISD's Early Childhood Education programs? Begin the enrollment process online at www.DeSotoISD.org, then make plans to attend the Jan. 12, 2019, Pre-K Enrollment event from 8 am to noon at Amber Terrace Discovery and Design Early Childhood Academy located at 224 Amber in DeSoto.

Parents or guardians will need to bring a parent/guardian photo ID and proof of residency, along with student social security card or tax ID number, birth certificate and shot record. For more info, contact DeSoto ISD Early Childhood Director Myla Wilson at 469.297.4556

CALENDAR

- Dec 3-7: STAAR Testing
- Dec. 10: Regular Board Meeting
- Dec. 21: Early Release
- Dec. 24-Jan. 7: Winter Break

WWW.DESOTOISD.ORG | 972.223.6666
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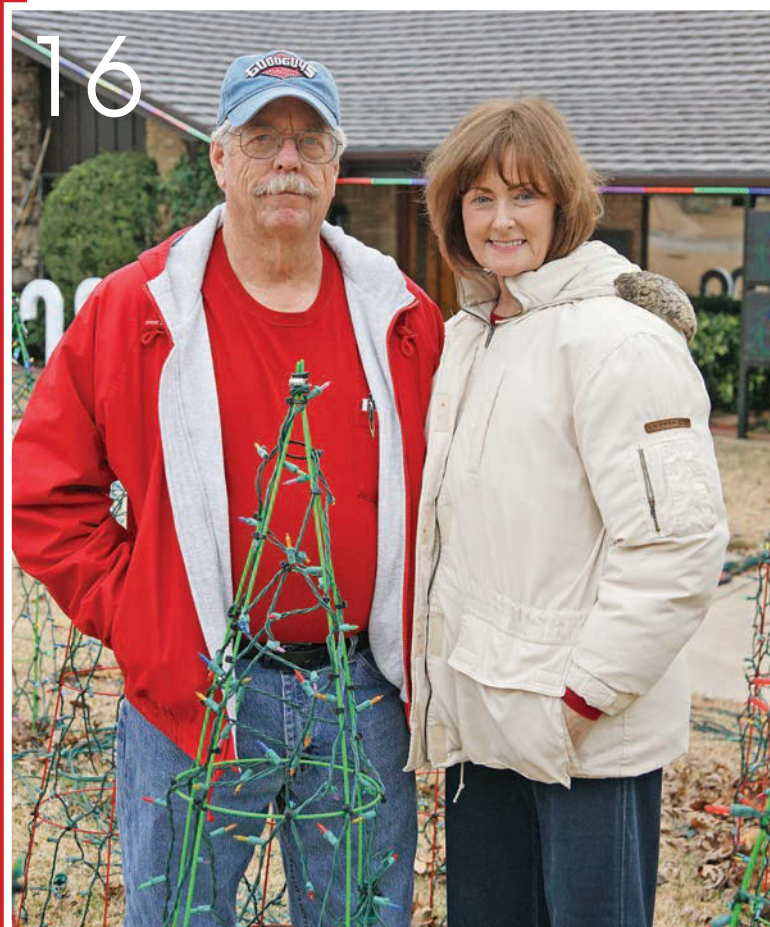
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ON THE COVER

Santa waits to spread joy for girls and boys.

Photo by
Shane Kirkpatrick.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Adam

Adam Walker
SouthwestNOW Editor
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(469) 285-2008

What does Christmas taste like?

When I was a child, my great-aunt, whom everyone simply called Auntie, had a tradition. Christmas was often held at her house. It wasn't a large house, but it was a large family — three generations of it, aunts, uncles and cousins galore. Auntie's tree was always in the front living room, which was much less used than the den in the back. The tree, spangled with tons of icicles, glimmered with those big, hot-burning strings of colored lights.

Auntie always made sure everyone had something to open under that tree, whether they brought anything with them or not. Her go-to gift was a box of a particular brand of chocolate covered cherries. Year after year, there was always a box of those cherries.

Auntie died in 1985, and I've missed her ever since. But the cherries have continued. Every year, when it gets close to Christmas, I search out a box of them, and remember her as I eat them. I don't even really like them all that much, but the connection is too strong. Christmas is not complete without that little tribute to someone who meant so much to me as a child. One bite, and I'm back in her house.

May your days be merry and bright!

P.S. The publisher and staff of NOW Magazines would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and the happiest of holiday seasons!

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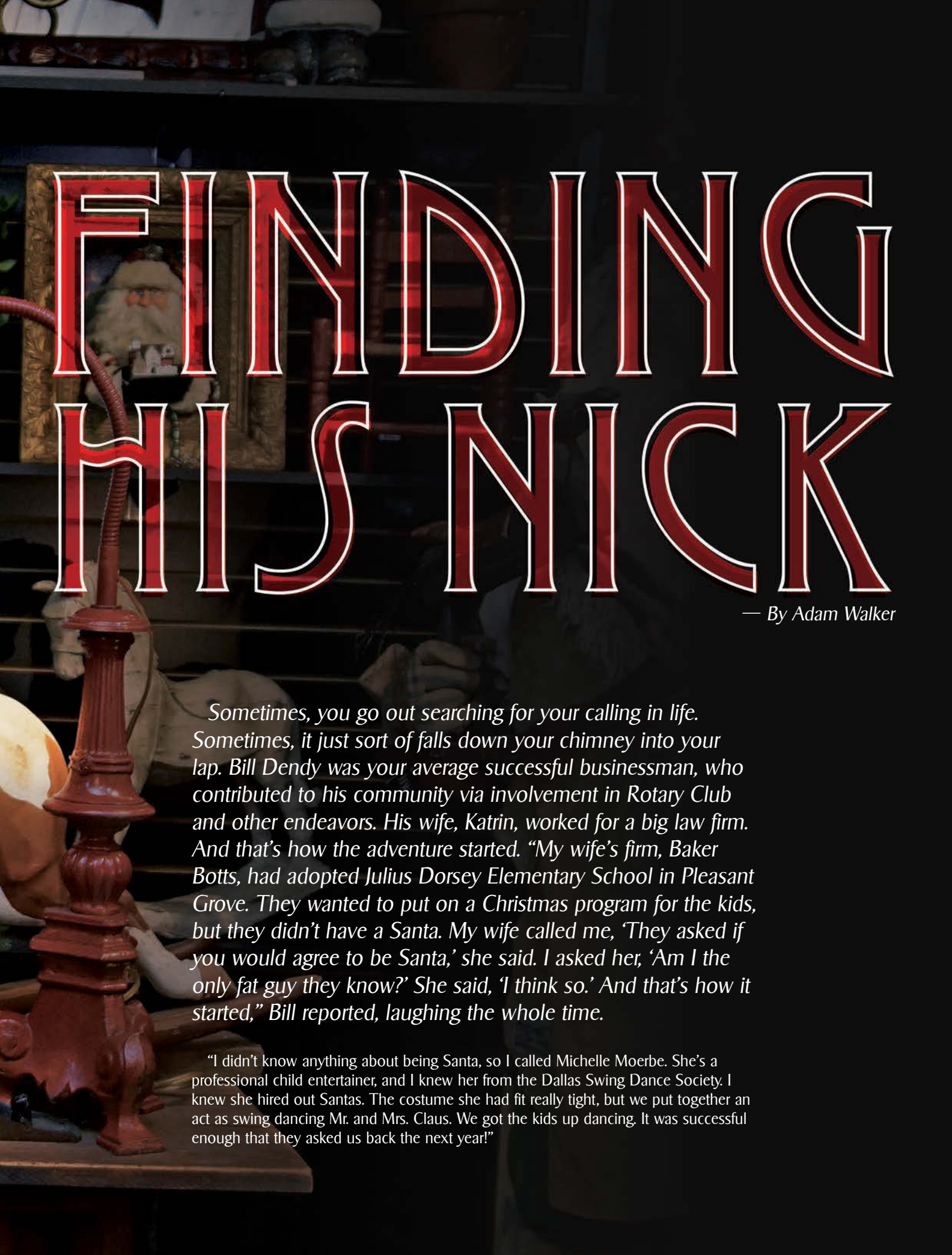


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FINDING HIS NICK

— By Adam Walker

Sometimes, you go out searching for your calling in life. Sometimes, it just sort of falls down your chimney into your lap. Bill Dendy was your average successful businessman, who contributed to his community via involvement in Rotary Club and other endeavors. His wife, Katrin, worked for a big law firm. And that's how the adventure started. "My wife's firm, Baker Botts, had adopted Julius Dorsey Elementary School in Pleasant Grove. They wanted to put on a Christmas program for the kids, but they didn't have a Santa. My wife called me, 'They asked if you would agree to be Santa,' she said. I asked her, 'Am I the only fat guy they know?' She said, 'I think so.' And that's how it started," Bill reported, laughing the whole time.

"I didn't know anything about being Santa, so I called Michelle Moerbe. She's a professional child entertainer, and I knew her from the Dallas Swing Dance Society. I knew she hired out Santas. The costume she had fit really tight, but we put together an act as swing dancing Mr. and Mrs. Claus. We got the kids up dancing. It was successful enough that they asked us back the next year!"

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For that second year, Bill got together with his friend, Michelle, and made a custom Santa suit. "It was as good as any department store Santa. But the industry kept upgrading, so I needed to as well," he said. "So, I sat down and started looking at things." Bill had much experience with period costuming as an avid historical re-enactor of the French and Indian War period. "I had learned a lot about fabrics and the breathability of natural fabrics. I was cooking in my Santa suit made of synthetics." With that background, Bill decided to go for not just realism, but reality. "What I ended up with was not a costume, but actual clothing. My Santa clothing has all the details of regular clothing, in the stitching, the linings, the buttons." And Bill is very proud to show his suit off when he gets together with other Santas at meetings of Lone Star Santas or the International Brotherhood of Real Bearded Santas.

Since Katrin is German, the Dendys often spend Christmas Day in Germany with her family. "I take my suit with me. My American-style Santa is a real hit with her family. I only know a handful of Santa phrases in German. I've spent years getting my wife to unravel the onion of mysteries that is Christmas in Germany! But the German version of Santa is actually pretty intimidating. The children line up in very orderly lines. One at a time, they perform for Santa — a song, a dance, a magic trick — in hopes that *maybe* they might get something from him. It's not like here

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where a friend in Palm Beach had a kid on his lap ask for a Rolex! And the kid's parents nodded yes!"

Much of the Santa action in Germany takes place on the feast day of St. Nicholas, December 6th, which just happens to be Bill's birthday. Another German touch to Bill's Santa story is the ring of keys he wears on his belt. "These keys are from my wife's great-great-grandfather's house that was built in 1842 in East Germany. A magic pocket watch, a fox-hunting horn, a compass and a magic bag and bell help fill out the look.

"I'm a performance-based Santa. I do magic tricks and tell stories. And I throw in a lot of Santa lore, like how the reindeer got their names. There's always a kid who will ask, 'How can you find my house?' I answer by asking them, 'Do you know where my house is?' The kids all shout, 'The North Pole!' Then I tell them, 'Well, from my house, I just go south, and there you are!'"

So, what turned a one-time, spur-of-the-moment gig into a calling? "When I talk to other professional Santas, they all seem to have the one incident that really impacted them, that moment when it became real to them how they could touch other people's lives. For me, it was when I went to the funeral of a lawyer in my wife's firm. It had been a tragic house fire. But during the slideshow, three of the pictures were of the mom and two kids with me in my suit at



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their elementary school. That's when I realized that this has an impact beyond just a suit, beyond just showing up."

Bill also does special "Catch Santa" visits to homes. "The best visits are after 10:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. I call the parents, and they meet me with the toys. I position myself with my back to wherever the kids will enter from. The parents wake them and tell them, 'We think we heard something. We think Santa's here!' Then the kid sneaks in and catches me in the act. I call the kids by name. I give them a bell that fell off the reindeer's harness and tell them the story of the white feather. If they ever catch me again, I'll leave a white feather, but they won't remember the conversation. That leaves an opening for the parents to create years of magic."

Bill also does something he calls "Stealth Santa" all year long. "It's a way of encouraging good behavior. For instance, I was at Arby's one day. There was a 7-year-old girl sitting at a table to my right with her mom and brothers at the next table. There were some soldiers in the restaurant. The little girl went over to them and said, 'Excuse me. I want to thank you for your service.' When the girl stepped over to her mom's table for a napkin, I slipped one of my *Santa caught you being good* cards onto her table. When she turned back around, there it was, with no explanation!"

Bill is still improving his Santa suit and selling them to others. But, the magic of dance and story and a clever reminder to just do good create Christmases to remember for years to come. **NOW**

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— By Virginia Riddle

A TIME TO REMEMBER

At Home With Ken and Chris Jacobs

Glowing red candy canes mark the pathway to Ken and Chris Jacobs' home. A taller-than-the-rooftop Christmas tree's RGB bright star guides the way to their home, much as those famed wise men of yore were guided to the manger.

Lit with strands of bright green and red lights, the tree is flanked by smaller white trees. The street out front provides guests from around the area a close-up view of Ken's 14,000 lights of holiday handiwork. "Little kids are so in awe as they drive by," Chris said. "It's a wonderful thing."






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It takes about two to four weeks every winter for Ken to set up the yard show, but he works on the figures, lights and music throughout the year. "The show is set to listen on the radio," Ken revealed. "People don't have to get out in the weather. Chris saw this type of show on TV, and she wanted it here. It takes a lot of time in designing, programming and coordinating the music to the lights."

"Ken tests everything every night, since little gremlins seem to come into the system," Chris added. "Families will

stop by and wait for a particular song. The Grinch song is the most popular, since the lights and music are bouncy. Kids see Santa in the window and think he lives here."

Additionally, Ken sets up a display of Halloween fun each October. "The kids love the flying witches and colorful cats," he remarked. "Gadget guys want to see how I set these displays up with the 20 controllers."

Their home, built in the 1970s, offers a beautiful natural rock background for all this Christmas cheer. "I wanted the Duncanville ISD, and this location was between our two jobs when we bought our home in 1996," Chris recalled. "I fell in love when I saw this house."

The home was very dated, so the couple set about remodeling it. "Nothing has been left untouched," Ken quipped.

The couple takes a full weekend to decorate their home's interior. "Ken's parents did extensive holiday decorating, and we inherited a lot," Chris said. Stockings are hung with care on the den's stone fireplace. Poinsettias brighten the room that Chris calls the front room, reflecting her Michigan roots.



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A dog porch/room is home to Tex, Bandit and Budget, so named because his adoption wasn't in the budget. Rescue cats, who rule the roost, include Charlie Brown, Lucy and Linus, a brother and two sisters.

Ken, a native Texan, met Chris through work. She had earned a bachelor's degree while in Michigan before employment brought her to Texas. Ken, now retired, managed several IT departments throughout his career, and both worked in telecommunications. Chris is the director of certification business for Cisco Systems, Inc. Chris' daughter, Megan, her husband, Coy, and granddaughter, Prezley, live in Fort Worth.

Walls were removed to open the home to views of the backyard with its wind chimes; fountains; bird baths, feeders and houses; and tall, mature trees on almost one acre. Ten Mile Creek meanders through the property, attracting the wild creatures. "The floor plan creates a circle, so half the circle has the views. We love working and relaxing in the yard," Chris said. "We feed the outside animals — foxes, possums, hawks, owls and feral cats. We've spent about seven years making this my haven."

Chris created a "study nook" from a former dining room. The former china cabinet now holds books. The remodeled kitchen has lit cabinets that display some of the couple's inherited pieces, as well as art and artifacts that Chris collects while on business trips. Megan and Coy's wedding portrait is a focal point in the barroom.



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The couple's master bedroom features an antler chandelier, art and garden-view-filled walls. "This is a very peaceful room," Chris said. "The cats love it."

Ken's office is joined by a Jack-and-Jill, retro bath with an exercise room that still has Megan's dancing barre ready for use. "The cats live with the birds peacefully while music plays for the birds," Chris said. Another bedroom is Chris' home office.

A full-length, built-in, floor-to-ceiling hallway cabinet features other treasured art and artifacts. A heart balloon with a bear theme is protected in a display box. "That balloon is still inflated and is 29 years old," Chris said. "Megan picked this out and gave it to me when she was 3."

Golf and restoring vintage cars also fill Ken's days. He owns three Camaros — a '67 Z28, '68 SS L78 and '69 Z28. The couple are members of the Red Oak Cruisers Club, Midlothian Classic Wheels Car Club and North Texas Camaro Club. "I love the muscle cars," Chris admitted. "We take a car to car shows each year. These cars have won a lot of events, and the clubs do a lot of good things for charities in the communities." A backyard shop and greenhouses give the couple places to enjoy their pastimes.

Chris serves on the Junior Achievement of Northern California board, and Ken enjoys helping neighbors. "He's called on quite a bit," Chris explained. "Neighbors bring him cookies and tamales."

"This home is where we became a family," Chris recalled. "It's where Megan grew up, was a cheerleader and met Coy. Everything's happened here. I've traveled the world to 40 countries collecting beautiful things, but there's no place like home." **NOW**

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Helping Dads Shine

— By Adam Walker

John Mays of All Pro Dads wants to help men step up and be the role models the children of Cedar Hill need. “We started in 2014 with four dads,” John said. “I came to the second meeting, where there were about 30 dads. By the end of the first year, we had more than 1,000 dads, about 70-100 at each of the 13 campuses. Four years later, we have more than 1,800 dads out there wearing our shirts, and the students now recognize the logo when they see it. They see the shirts and know that’s a dad who’s pulling for them, who wants them to succeed.

“I want the best for my kids. I want to be involved and be a good dad,” John explained. “School is a student’s job, and I want mine to do well. All Pro Dads is an opportunity for me to make education better. I can’t teach, but I can

greet students at the door of the school, have breakfast with them, show up at their games. If the education level of my community is better, my community is better. If students can get an education and become productive citizens, I don’t have to worry about them getting into trouble. They have the means to make something of their lives.”

John’s professional background is in large-scale program management. So, he started getting things organized on the large scale. He works as the focal point between the dads and the district. All Pro Dads works a lot with the district’s coordinator, Danyell Wells, campus principals and the superintendent to make this work at the district level. “We get great support from the district. Dr. Billy Snow, the new superintendent, is so forward thinking, he empowers All Pro Dads to become even more involved. He’s a great visionary and supporter.”

John takes a sort of lead-by-example philosophy. “You’d think it’s a challenge, but how do you get a lot of dads to work together? We have a lot of Type A personalities, all used to being the leader. I don’t tell the other dads what to do. I

let them see me doing it. New dads see other dads working, and they just join in. Some of our dads keep working with us even after their kids graduate, so we have an alumni chapter. This is your opportunity to change a generation. We're always just one step ahead of failure. If we stop, failure catches up."

**"I WANT THE
BEST FOR
MY KIDS. I
WANT TO BE
INVOLVED
AND BE A
GOOD DAD."**

What this Cedar Hill group is doing is working so well, All Pro Dad groups from other parts of the country have come here to see what they're doing differently. "We aren't set up quite the same way as other groups are," John explained. "We have a lot more involvement from our dads than other APD groups.

"Our dads really care about the kids in the community. We want them reading to their kids, involved with their own kids," John said. "We want them having daily contact at drop-off in the mornings, greeting kids at the doors of the schools, teaching kids things like meeting a person's eyes when you talk to them and answering out loud."

Cedar Hill All Pro Dads draws men from all walks of life and receives support from all segments of the community. "We dads keep in touch with each other through our monthly breakfasts, our weekly teleconferences and through social media," John said. "Businesses partner with us for our breakfasts. The city and the religious community work with us. Together we are making a difference. It really only takes about five committed dads to change a campus." **NOW**



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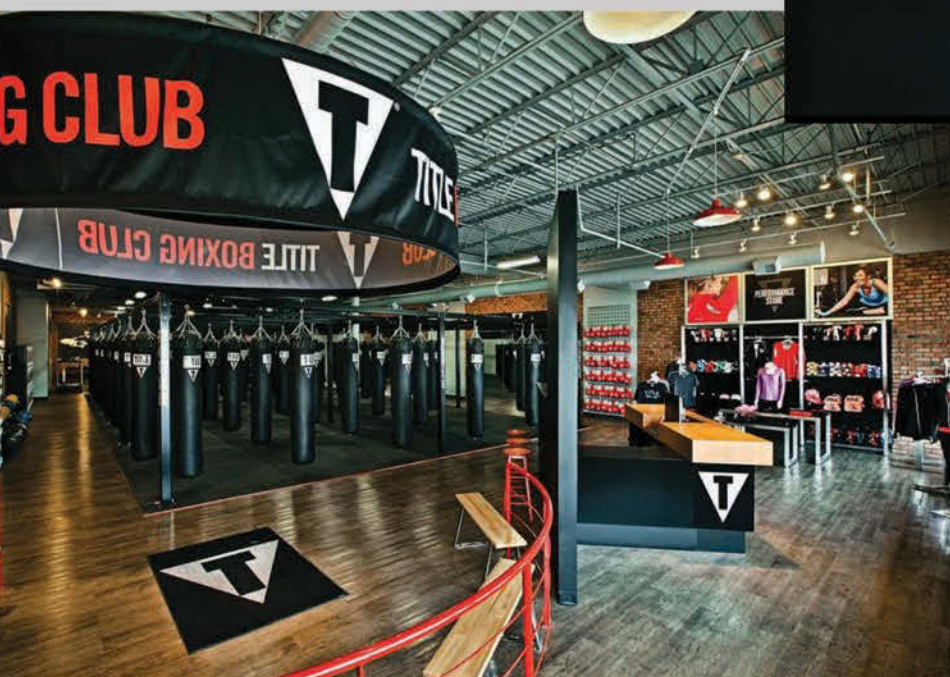


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A photograph of an elderly woman with short, wavy grey hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a black long-sleeved top with a small red Christmas tree patch on the left chest. She stands in a kitchen with light-colored cabinets and a granite countertop. In front of her is a white electric range with a white kettle on the burner. To her right, a white ceramic baking dish filled with a cheesy pasta or vegetable mixture sits on the counter. She is holding a small white bowl filled with the same mixture, pointing towards it with her right hand. The background shows a window with blinds and various kitchen items like a blue pitcher and white mugs.

CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With CARLETTA GULLORY

— By Lindsay L. Allen

Carletta Gullory and her late husband of 67 years were members of three separate supper clubs for more than 35 years, taking turns meeting at various friends' homes and bringing dishes to the monthly dinners. While her cooking skills improved greatly over the years, she remembers making an angel food cake early in her marriage and not having the waxed paper the recipe called for that was to line the tube pan.

"Back then, bread was wrapped in this heavy waxed paper that had blue, green, red and yellow dots in it," she recalled. "I cut that paper to fit in the tube pan and baked the angel food cake. The colors in the waxed paper melted into the cake, so I had to throw it away!" **NOW**

Shrimp Fettuccini

- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- 1 1/2 sticks butter
- 2 tsp. flour
- 2 tsp. parsley
- 1 large jalapeño, diced
- 1/2 lb. Velveeta cheese
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 2 lbs. shrimp tails, cooked and peeled
- 16 oz. fettuccini
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup almonds, toasted and slivered

1. In a large skillet, sauté onions, green pepper and celery in the butter. Add flour; mix well.

- 2. Add parsley, jalapeño, Velveeta cheese and half-and-half. Stir constantly to prevent it from sticking to the skillet. Add more half-and-half if too thick.
- 3. Add shrimp. Cook the fettuccini as directed on the box; add to the above ingredients.
- 4. Pour it all in a baking dish that has been sprayed with cooking spray; sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and almonds. Bake for 15 minutes at 350 F.

Baked Corn

- 1/2 stick butter
- 1/2 cup milk
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 2 20-oz. cans whole kernel corn, drained
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt, or to taste

- 1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Melt butter, milk and cream cheese together until it is well mixed.
- 2. Add corn and garlic salt to the mix; stir until combined.
- 3. Pour the mix into a baking dish; bake for 20-25 minutes.

Pineapple Sheet Cake

Cake:

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 20-oz. can crushed pineapple with juice

Icing:

- 2/3 cup PET milk
- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 cup coconut

- 1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
- 2. For cake: Mix all the cake ingredients to combine. Spray a 9x13-inch cake pan with cooking spray; pour the mix into the pan. Bake for 35-40 minutes.
- 3. For icing: Combine PET milk, butter

and sugar in a saucepan; slowly boil for 7 minutes. Stir the mix to keep it from sticking or burning.

4. Add brown sugar, pecans and coconut. Pour the mix over the warm cake.

Meat Loaf

Meat Loaf:

2 lbs. ground chuck
1 cup onions, diced
1 cup celery, diced
1/2 cup green peppers, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp. dry mustard
2 eggs
8 saltine crackers
1/2 cup milk

Topping:

1/2 cup ketchup
1 cup water
2 Tbsp. brown sugar
2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar

1. Preheat oven to 350 F

2. *For meat loaf:* Combine all the ingredients. Pour mixture into a baking dish; form into a loaf.

3. *For topping:* Mix all the topping ingredients. After piercing meat loaf with a fork, pour topping mixture over loaf mixture. Bake for 40 minutes.

One-pot Dinner

Serves 4.

8 chicken thighs, boneless and skinless
2 14-oz. cans whole green beans, drained
8-10 small new potatoes, quartered
1 stick butter, melted
1 pkg. Good Seasons Zesty Italian Dressing

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Spray a 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.

2. Line the thighs down the center of the dish. Line the green beans down one side of the chicken. Line the potatoes down the other side of the chicken.

3. Pour melted butter evenly over the whole baking dish. Sprinkle the dressing evenly over all of the ingredients. Bake for 1 hour.

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Let the Feast Begin

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

It seems like it gets here earlier and earlier each year, but the start of November means the start of the holiday season. While you are getting your decorations and trimmings ready, here are some ideas and tips to have the perfect feast for your next gathering.

Starting Off Right

• *Mix up your hors d'oeuvres.* Serving four different versions of cheese dips and chips might fill up a table, but your guests will appreciate more variety. Think of a food pyramid when you plan your appetizers, and include a little meat, some dairy and even a few grains to help people whet their appetite. If you want to make sure to include some healthier and even diet-friendly options, try a combo of vegetables with oil and lime as a dip.



• *Pick a theme, or not.* The days of a holiday meal having to include a turkey, a ham and several traditional sides has gone by the wayside. This year, choose a theme from a certain region, or forgo a theme for variety. If friends and family are each bringing something, think about telling them to bring an appetizer from a different culinary ethnicity to offer a unique and enlightening meal.

Don't Forget the Wine

• *Include red and white.* A sommelier might tell you the exact year and region



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that offers the best wine for the meal around your holiday table. Unless you or your guests have the most refined of palates, though, it is a good idea to have several options, and to vary between red and white, dry and sweet. If there is a large group, you can split guests in two groups and ask them to bring a bottle of one or the other.

• *Serve well.* White wine is typically served chilled, and red is often served at room temperature. In actuality, most restaurants keep their red wine in a cellar that is a good bit cooler than a typical room. A simple trick for your red wine is to put each bottle in the refrigerator for about 15 minutes before serving. That way the tannins of the wine are offset by the cool refreshment of the drink.

Finishing It Off

• *More than just pie.* When it comes to planning dessert, there really is not



THIS YEAR, CHOOSE A THEME FROM A CERTAIN REGION, OR FORGO A THEME FOR VARIETY.

a wrong choice. If you are looking for something beyond apple, pumpkin or pecan pies, a holiday feast is the perfect time to try a new recipe. If it does not turn out well, there will likely be tables full of other options. When it comes to healthy alternatives, there are numerous recipes for things like black bean brownies that are delicious and more nutritious than typical sugar-filled sweets.

· *Put the coffee on.* With the abundance of coffee varieties available, coffee is no longer just an afterthought. You can make a few pots of varying strength, as well as tailoring the final course with beans that have hints of anything from citrus to chocolate. Make sure you stop by a local coffee shop or a grocery store with a wide variety, so that each dessert gets the perfect complement.

If you have felt stuck in a rut during holiday seasons of the past, this can be the year to break out of the routine as you use the fancy dinnerware. With new ideas for food and drink, have fun celebrating with friends and family this holiday season. **NOW**

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— By Adam Walker

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Northwood University opened its Cedar Hill campus in 1966. They provide business-focused instruction for the busy professional. “What we’re really good at is focusing on adult learners and professionals who need to go back to school for their BBA, MBA or MS in business,” Dr. Tara Peters explained. “We are a very transfer-friendly school, and we want to see how

the credits you may have previously earned fit into the bachelor degree you want to pursue. We also evaluate your on-the-job training and other experiences, allowing you to earn up to 30 credit hours for your experience.”

Northwood University also prides itself on being military friendly. “We have a large population of students who are active duty military or veterans. We have support in place for these students and offer discounted tuition for our veterans.”

Flexible and convenient class schedules are part of what Northwood has to offer. “We have classes that meet one night a week for eight weeks, and courses that meet online, which helps busy professionals with families fit school into their lives with less disruption. We pride ourselves on being convenient.”

The focus of the course work is application. “We think it’s very important that our students be able to use what they learn. For example, students in our HR class will take what they

learn and use it in performance reviews at work. We provide a safe learning environment for trying new things. We believe in the importance of free markets, so our students need to understand the importance of risk taking in building a successful business. They also need to understand the importance of behaving ethically to achieve results, acting with integrity and taking responsibility for their own actions," Dr. Peters emphasized. "The process is important, not just the results. We strive for immediate exposure to business concepts and comprehend the need to understand theory. But we also know it's important to see how theory works in real-world situations. Case studies are an important part of our curriculum. We debate ideas, and critique each other's ideas, using critical thinking to challenge assumptions."

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"Our graduate students in our Master of Science in Organizational Leadership (MSOL) program produce a capstone project leveraging all their learning in the program, demonstrating mastery of their studies," Dr. Peters explained. "Our MBA students take that a step further to a simulation running a mock business."

As the new year approaches, Northwood University would like you to look at your future. "This is an opportunity to start the new year with a return to school. Our undergraduate and graduate classes start on January 14. We would love to talk to you about getting started. And our advising counselors will help you plan, so you're prudent with how you finance your education. It's important to be responsible with your finances while building for the future." **NOW**



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The City of Lights

— By Corey C. Poole

Natchitoches is known for many things — its culture, cuisine and hard to pronounce name (Nack-a-tish). Named after a Native American Indian tribe, Natchitoches translates to “pawpaw eaters,” a fruit tree once plentiful in the region.

From its roots as the oldest settlement in the Louisiana Purchase, Natchitoches was established in 1714 by French explorer Louis Juchereau de St. Denis as a French Outpost along the Red River. After the river changed its course in the late 1800s, Cane River Lake was created, a 33-mile long section of the Red River that is now landlocked. The downtown Historic District is nestled along the banks of this picturesque body of water.

“The City” is known as the filming location for *Steel Magnolias*, as the Bed and Breakfast Capital of Louisiana and as a popular tourism destination. Nicknamed “The City of Lights,” Natchitoches is best known for its six-week Christmas Festival of Lights, featuring more than 300,000 lights that make the town twinkle with magic. Starting the weekend before Thanksgiving with a “Turn on the Holidays” celebration, the festival continues through January 6. The official Natchitoches Christmas Festival Day is the first Saturday in December. A Christmas parade winds its way through downtown. Vendors sell fresh meat pies, and bands perform through the night. 2018 marks the 92nd annual celebration.

While this is the most popular festival, there’s a plethora of events to enjoy year-round. Enjoy a day of competition, and cheer on rowers at the Dragon Boat Races, held annually at the beginning of March. In April is the Melrose Arts and Crafts Festival, where more than 100 vendors sell

their wares beneath the canopy of oak trees at Melrose Plantation, just 17 miles south of Natchitoches. And the Natchitoches Jazz R&B Festival is held annually in May with four stages playing a variety of music from jazz to rock.

For 39 years, the Natchitoches/NSU Folk Festival has been held annually in July in the air-conditioned Prather Coliseum on the Northwestern State University Campus. Browse through vendors and demonstrations, and listen to an eclectic variety of musicians.

Both the Fall and Christmas Tour of Homes offer sneak peeks inside some of the town’s historic buildings, presented by the Natchitoches Historic Foundation and the Association for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches. Also in the fall, stroll the streets and look under the hoods of antique autos at the annual Natchitoches Classic Car Show.

Each October, prominent figures from Natchitoches’ history come to life at History Among the Tombstones: Stories from the American Cemetery. And the Grand Ecore Visitors Center, Los Adaes State Historic Site and Fort St. Jean Baptiste each offer unique programming throughout the year from lectures to demonstrations and re-enactments.

Stroll through downtown shops like Kaffie Frederick — Louisiana’s oldest general store. Bring a boat and cruise Cane River and Sibley Lake for some of the best fishing spots around, or grab a kayak and take it slow. Whatever adventure you have in mind, Natchitoches will welcome you with its true Southern charm and hospitality. **NOW**

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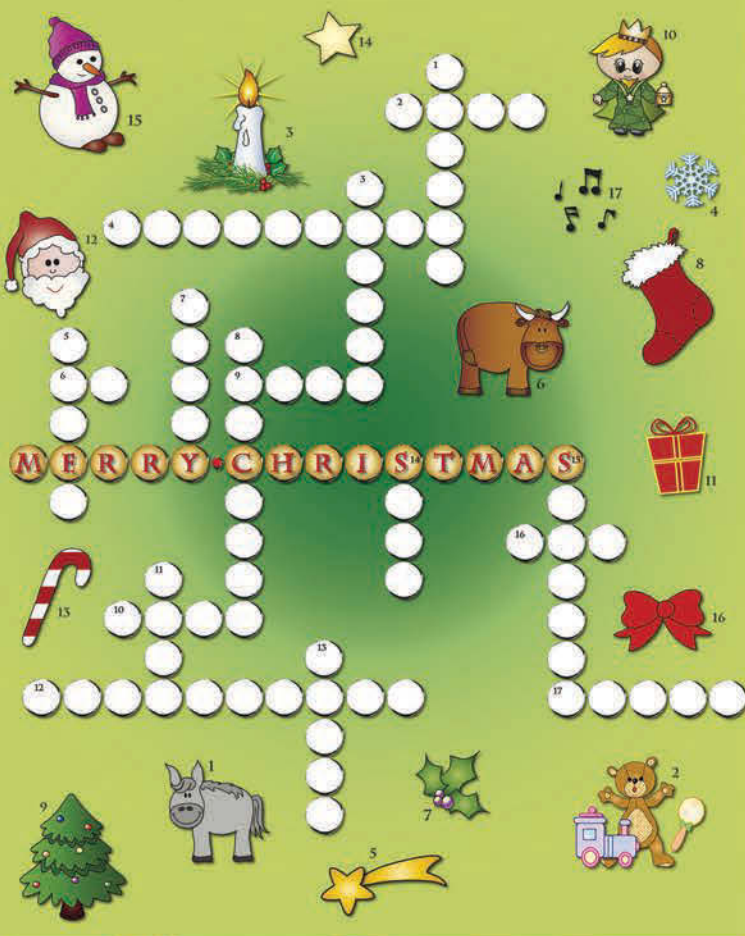
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Kids' Fun Pages

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD



Time for Presents

Can you spot the two identical pictures?

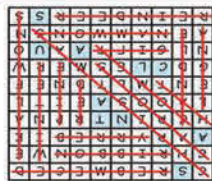


ANSWER: 9 2

MYSTERIOUS WORD:

C	S	R	E	B	M	E	C	E	D
C	H	R	I	B	B	O	N	W	E
A	A	R	Y	R	R	E	B	I	K
H	C	R	I	N	T	R	P	N	A
L	A	O	O	S	A	E	I	T	L
E	N	T	M	L	T	D	N	E	F
G	D	C	L	E	S	M	E	R	W
N	L	G	I	F	T	A	A	U	O
A	E	N	A	M	W	O	N	S	N
R	E	I	N	D	E	E	R	S	S

ANGEL
BERRY
CANDLE
CAROLS
CHRISTMAS
COMET
DECEMBER
GIFT
HAT
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RED
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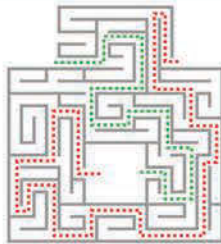
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Kids' Fun Pages

Help the little elves to find the way to Santa's sack.



ANSWER:



Draw a line from dot number 1 to dot number 2, then from dot number 2 to dot number 3, 3 to 4, and so on. Continue to join the dots until you have connected all the numbered dots. Then color the picture!



ANSWER:

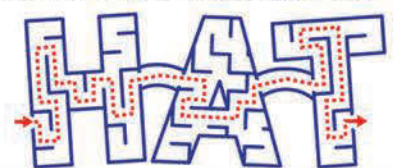


ANSWER:



Help Santa get through the HAT maze to catch up to his hat. It was blown away by the wind.

ANSWER:



12 Days of Christmas

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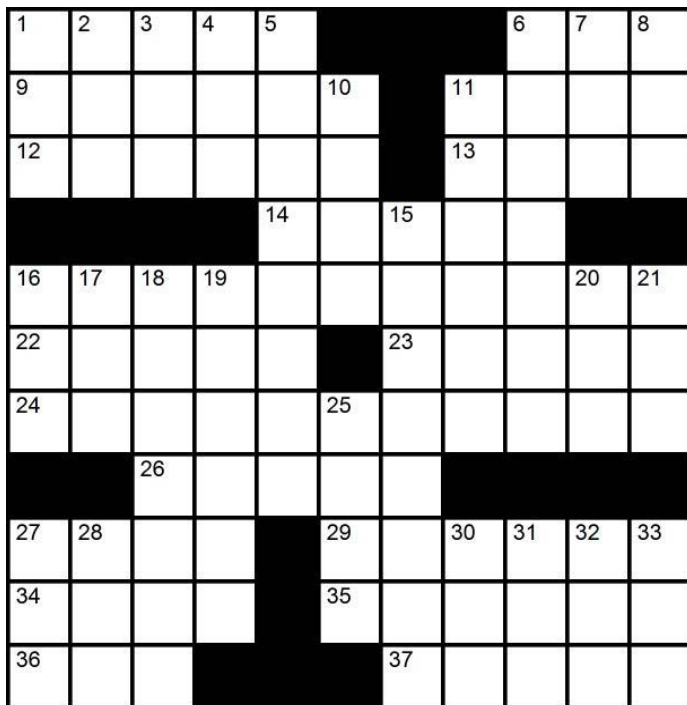
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Crossword Puzzle



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Across

- 1 Spud source
- 6 Short boxing punch
- 9 Roomy autos
- 11 Saintly symbol
- 12 Accident
- 13 "I suppose"
- 14 Match
- 16 Turnpike convenience
- 22 Solo numbers
- 23 Like certain organs
- 24 Multiply rapidly
- 26 Teacher
- 27 Gratis
- 29 Onetime Disney chief
- 34 Obstructs
- 35 How bodysuits fit
- 36 They go with outs
- 37 Pixie

Down

- 1 Doctrine
- 2 Agnus or Opus follower
- 3 Sales aids, for short
- 4 "Baloney!"
- 5 Stopping by
- 6 Capital of Indonesia
- 7 Cotton state
- 8 Early man?
- 10 Building detail, briefly
- 11 Type of balloon
- 15 Breaking off
- 16 Plant juice
- 17 Sin
- 18 Unruly mob
- 19 Appraises
- 20 Consume
- 21 Malt beverage
- 25 Hatfields and McCoys
- 27 Crime fighters
- 28 Hurried
- 30 Daystar
- 31 The Y is one
- 32 Horror street
- 33 Cereal grass

Solutions on page 49



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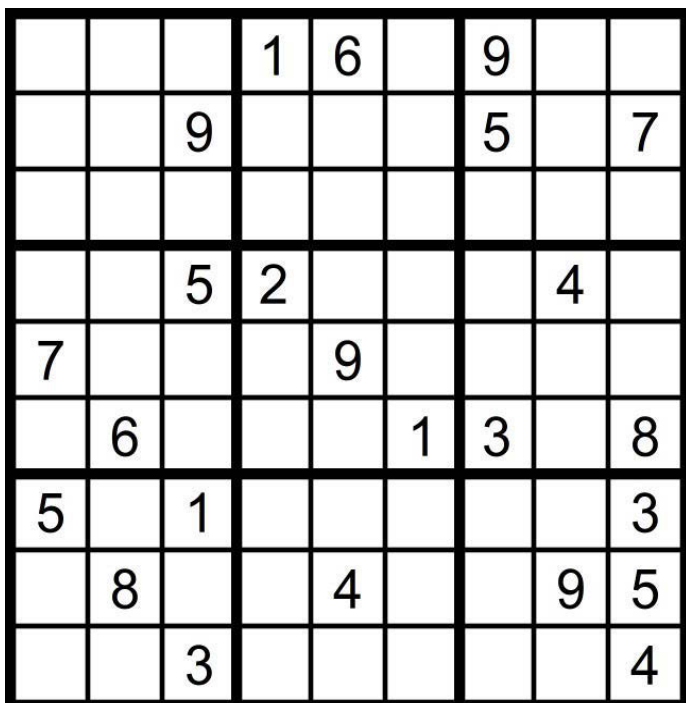
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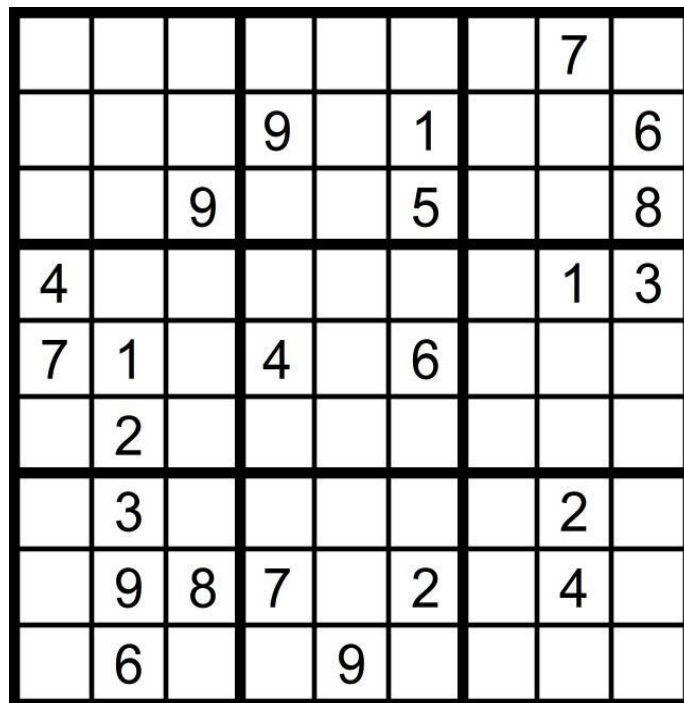


Sudoku Puzzle

Easy



Medium



Crosswordsite.com Ltd

[Solutions on page 49](#)

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Zoomed In: Fran Hilliard

By Adam Walker

Fran Hilliard loves entertaining at Christmastime. "In 2002, I was a widow. My first Christmas by myself was hard, so the next year I decided to host a tea and invite other widows. I made desserts for about 20 widows and other friends. One of the ladies said I should make it an annual event, so I did!"

She loves baking and decorating. After she remarried and moved to DeSoto, she kept the tradition going. "My husband supported continuing it. As we met new people, the guest list grew to include friends from DeSoto, Cedar Hill and Midlothian." Fran focuses on inviting people who need a bright spot at the beginning of the Christmas season, but includes friends from all parts of her life.



Mayor Pro Tem Rachel Proctor and DJ Alexx celebrate the grand opening of the Grow DeSoto Market Place.



DeSoto ISD welcomes new superintendent Dr. D'Andre Weaver.



David Truesdale works in the Good to Grow garden at the Zula B. Wylie Library.



Francisco Molina and his daughter, Elisabeth, play checkers at Hillside Village.



Scout Troop 520 and Venture Crew 628 pose after a flag presentation for a Duncanville Library event.

Crossword - Sudoku Solutions

1	I	D	A	H	O			6	J	A	B	
9	S	E	D	A	N	S		11	H	A	L	O
12	M	I	S	H	A	P		13	O	K	A	Y
				14	V	E	S	T	A			
16	S	E	R	V	I	C	E	A	R	E		21
22	A	R	I	A	S		23	V	I	T	A	L
24	P	R	O	L	I	F	E	R	A	T	E	
			26	T	U	T	O	R				
27	F	R	E	E		29	E	I	S	N	E	R
34	B	A	R	S		35	S	N	U	G	L	Y
36	I	N	S			37	G	N	O	M	E	

Easy

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

Medium

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

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12/3, 12/10

Santa Paws Pet Photos: Doggies and kitties get their turn with Santa. All pets must be leashed or caged while at Hillside Village. \$5 of each photo sale goes to Tri-Cities Animal Shelter. 5:00-8:00 p.m., Hillside Village, 305 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill.



12/4-12/5

Cedar Valley College Annual Christmas Ceramic Sale: 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., 3030 N. Dallas Ave., Lancaster.

12/4, 12/11, 12/18

Elf Academy: Kids from preschool through elementary can create holiday crafts at Santa's Corner. Free. 10:00 a.m.-noon. Hillside Village, 305 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill.

12/6

DFW Black Blogger Fall Meet Up: Meet fellow bloggers and media partners. Free. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Glo Hotel, 1215 N. N I-35, DeSoto.

Holiday on the Hill/Polar Express: Come out for games, crafts, train rides, tree lighting, local choirs and Santa. Free. 6:00 p.m., Historic Downtown Cedar Hill.

12/6-12/7, 12/10-12/11

Christmas Gift Wrapping: Bring your gifts to be wrapped by volunteers. Free, paper, bows, etc., included. 5:00-8:30 p.m. Duncanville's First Baptist Church/Primera Bautista de Duncanville, 323 W. Wheatland Rd., Duncanville. www.duncanvillefbc.org/events/.

12/7

Duncanville's Nightmare Before Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting: The parade extends from Freeman to Main and Carder. The tree lighting is at War Memorial Park, 101 Main St. Free. 7:00 p.m. Free shuttle service from the Costco parking lot.

12/8

Business 101 Workshop: Learn the basics of starting or growing a business. 11:00 a.m., Zula B. Wylie Public Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

Back to Bethlehem: Visit a live Nativity and enjoy interactive experiences of daily life in Jesus' time. 5:00-7:00 p.m., First Baptist Church, 602 W. Belt Line Rd., Cedar Hill.

12/9

Caring Santa: This is a sensory-friendly event exclusively for families with special-needs children and their siblings. 6:30-8:30 p.m., Hillside Village, 305 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill.

Worldwide Memorial Candlelight Service: Compassionate Friends of Southwest Dallas invite all who have lost a child of any age to a candlelight remembrance. 6:45 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 427 W. Ave. C, Duncanville. (469) 554-9474 or info@tcfswdallas.org.

12/14

Kwanzaa: Learn about the seven principles, enjoy harvest foods and entertainment. 6:30 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Public Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

12/15

Christmas with Girlfriends: Door prizes and live performances, DeSoto Mayor Curtistine McGowan, Transparent Church First Lady Patricia James. Wear red tops and blue jeans. \$45 at the door, reserve in advance on Eventbrite. 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, 800 N. Main St., Duncanville.

Lord, I Want to Come Home: This is a Gospel comedy stage play presented by Turnt Nation. \$25. 3:00-8:00 p.m., 1430 N. Polk St., DeSoto.

12/20

Family Pajama Storytime: Come in your PJ's to hear "The Night Before Christmas." 6:30 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Public Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

12/21

Pete and Patti: Seniors come out for some dancing fun. \$5. 7:00 p.m., Hopkins Senior Center, 206 James Collins Blvd., Duncanville.

12/23

Christmas Eve-Eve Candlelight Service: First Baptist Church Cedar Hill. 6:00 p.m., 602 W. Belt Line Rd., Cedar Hill.



12/31

Noon Year's Eve Party/Storytime: Countdown to the new year at noon. 11:00 a.m., Zula B. Wylie Public Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill. RSVP at (972) 291-7323 x1305.

Fridays and Saturdays
Snow in the Village Green: Experience the magic when faux snow falls every Friday and Saturday through **December 29**. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Hillside Village, 305 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill.

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

Christmas

AT HILLCREST

Christmas is the best time of the year, and at Hillcrest it is always a special time of year as we celebrate the birth of our Savior! The Hillcrest Baptist Church family wishes you a joyous Christmas season, and we invite you to celebrate with us throughout the month of December! Join us for Christmas at Hillcrest to hear about the greatest gift that is available to all, the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.



SUNDAYS • 9:00, 10:30 & 11:00 AM

Join us each Sunday morning in December for inspiring worship and our Christmas sermon series, *Christmas and the Gospel*, as we take a fresh look at the Christmas story.



MONDAY, DECEMBER 24 • 5:00 PM

Make a special family memory this year and join us for Christmas Eve. You'll experience a time of worship and prayer with family at Hillcrest Baptist Church celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Other Christmas Events

Shepherds & Kings // A Christmas Musical

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2 • 3:00 & 6:00 PM

Christmas Night of Worship

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9 • 5:00 PM

A Foto Sisters Christmas Concert

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16 • 5:00 PM

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hillcrestbc.com/christmas



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9AM, 10:45AM & 6PM**

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*See website for special December 23rd service times