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JUNE 2023

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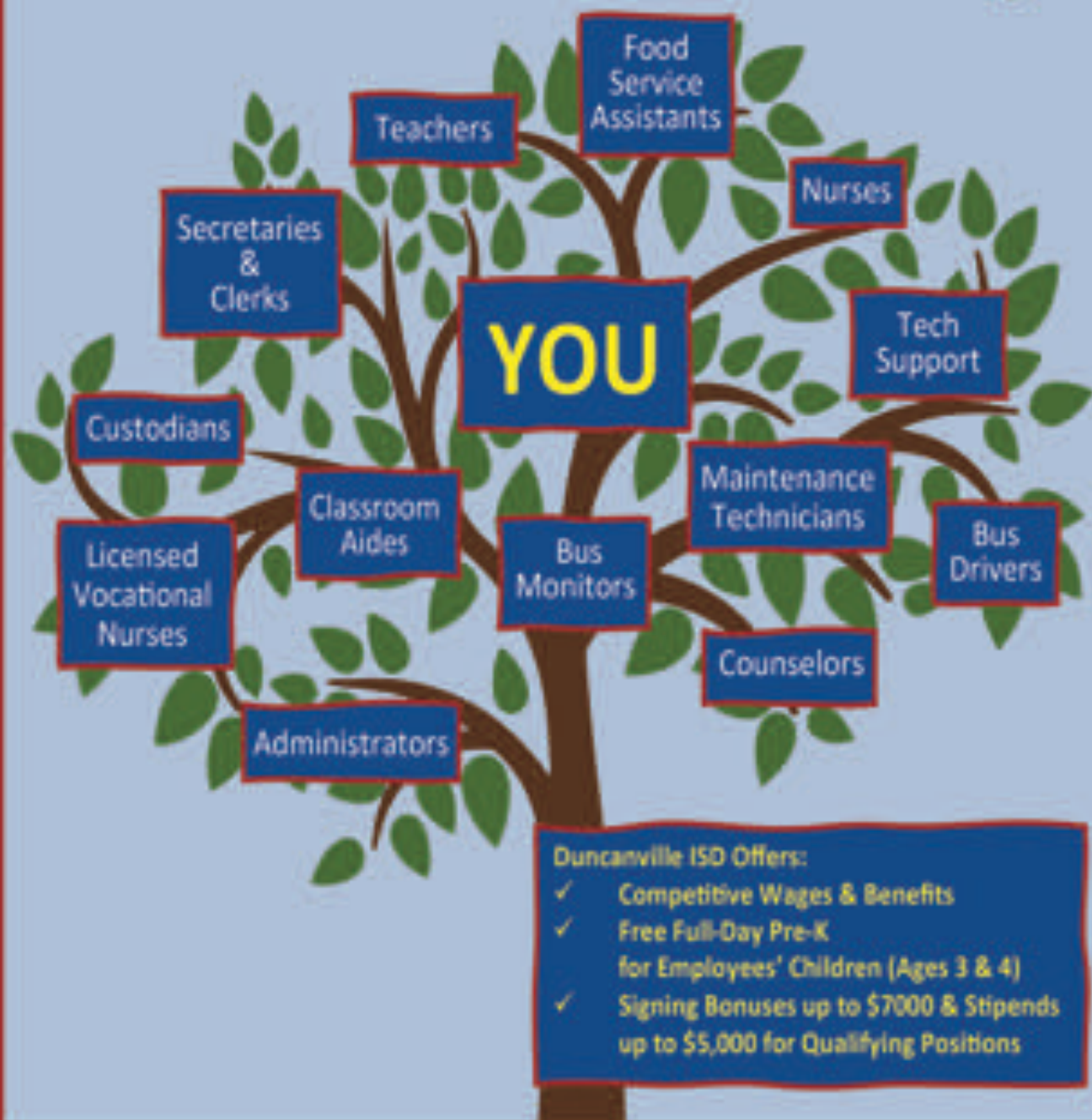
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

*Creepie crawlies ...*

Remember all the bugs when you were a kid? Some of them are still everywhere you look, but some of them don't seem to be as plentiful as they once were.

When I was a kid, we had two kinds of ants, little black ones and big ole red ants. Then the fire ants moved in from South America, and the locals just about disappeared. In the last few years, I've started seeing some red ants again.

Doodle bugs were always fun. You could poke at them and watch them roll up into balls. Then you could argue with your friends about whether they were called doodle bugs (the only correct name!) or roly-polies or pill bugs. Turns out they're *actually* wood lice — ew!

June bugs filled the summer nights with their buzzing flight as they *tink-tink-tinked* against the porch light and *boinged* off the screen door. And those prickly legs crawling over your skin were a great way to test your ability to not yelp.

Daddy longlegs is one you don't see much anymore. But I remember masses of the weird little spider-like things huddled up in a corner of the porch or a flower bed or under a windowsill throbbing on those thread-thin legs. Some of the meaner kids liked to pull their legs off to see if they could still walk, but I never cared for the stench that made. They were almost as bad as stink bugs!

Locusts, which are really cicadas, let you know when dark was coming. And they left those mysterious husks behind on all the trees. You still find them everywhere, if you look.

*What's bugging you?*



*Adam*

Adam Walker  
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# DISPATCHIN

— By Adam Walker

*You may not know they're there, but the Southwest Regional Communications Center may have already saved your life, or the life of someone you love. When you call 9-1-1, in DeSoto, Duncanville or Cedar Hill, these are the people who answer the phone and send the police, firefighters and ambulance speeding your way. In a life and death emergency, they stay on the line and fight on the side of life.*

Michelle Shepperd, Kennetra Dixon and Jacob Walker are the Public Education and Engagement Team, who work to get the word out about who they are and what they do. "We go out in the communities to educate citizens on what 9-1-1 actually does," Kennetra explained. "People think it's like on TV or in the movies, but it's not. We're not in the police station, with a cop standing over our shoulder, listening to the call. We're not in the squad car. And we can't unplug, like Halle Berry in *The Call*, to go save the kid ourselves. We spend a lot of time trying to clear up myths about what we do."

"We do programs at a lot of schools," Michelle explained. "The K through second grade students, their brains are

still growing. We try to teach them that it's important to memorize their mom and dad's phone numbers, know the name of the store they're in, know what street they're on, stay calm while we ask them questions. The middle school and high school students have some idea of what we do, so we talk to them on career days, about career opportunities, and tell them what it's like to work in a 9-1-1 communication center. We got to meet a lot of teens and their parents at the Everything Teen Expo in DeSoto."

The SWRCC handles 9-1-1 dispatch for the cities of Cedar Hill, DeSoto and Duncanville as well as Cedar Hill State Park and the south campus of UNT. But they also handle the after-hours calls for the water departments and streets departments of all three cities and Tri-City Animal Shelter. "You'd be surprised how many vicious animal calls we get," Jacob reported. "Sometimes, it's a person trapped in their vehicle by a threatening dog. If you have a water main break, after hours, the call comes to us, and we let the emergency crews know where the problem is."

All three dispatchers work 12-hour shifts, answering emergency calls and sending the appropriate aid your way. But they also work hard to engage with our three communities. "I'm a people person," Kennetra declared. "I like to go out and meet people. I always volunteer. When they sent an email asking for people to join the P.E.E.T. team, I jumped on board. I've been a dispatcher for two years. I'm still new to the team, but I'm learning a lot."





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"I'm the same way," Michelle agreed. "I've been a dispatcher for 29 years. I enjoy making contact with the public. I give tours to all the citizens police academy and fire academy classes. There's always something new to teach the public about, like text to 9-1-1. That started a few years ago, but a lot of people don't know about it."

"I had 20 years in hospitality and auctions before I started this career. I traveled all over the country to events, but I wanted to stay closer to home and have more impact on my community. My father was a firefighter. He did a short stint in dispatch. I thought that sounded intriguing! I was working on a nursing degree when I got the offer to work dispatch. I've been at it six years now. Like my previous careers, it fits with my ADD. I think they asked me to do public relations because of my voice," Jacob explained. "They sent me to a public educators conference for training. Then COVID hit and all that was out the window. As first responders, there was a four-week

10:24

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period when we had no days off. We worked around-the-clock.”

The P.E.E.T. team also shows up at community events to reach both kids and their parents and grandparents with lifesaving information. “We have attended Country Day on the Hill. We go to National Night Out in all three cities. We do angel trees for the Salvation Army, the Bridges Safehouse diaper drive, food boxes for the needy and appreciation buckets for Police Week. Last year, we hosted our first Trunk or Treat at Halloween. We

decorated our cars, had bounce houses and games,” they listed in rapid-fire succession. “It was a lot of fun,” Michelle declared. “We look forward to doing that again.”

“It’s important to let people know that we’re trained professionals. We’re not secretaries. We have to be able to talk people through a crisis. We get calls from suicidal people with knives in their hands. There’s a lot of emotion on the other end of the line. We have to be calm and professional. What we say, and how we say it, is

important,” Kennetra explained. “It’s not a call center job. It requires a lot of commitment, but I stay at it because I’m passionate about saving lives.”

We want people to be aware of our physical existence,” Jacob added. “But also to think about this as a career. We always need new people. This is an admirable expenditure of time and energy. There’s a lot of change coming to how this job works in the next 10 years. There will be new technology and changing skills to do the job. But we do this job because of a sense of purpose.” **NOW**

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Zyra Washington, from the Duncanville class of 2019, graduates from Grambling State University with a Cybersecurity Degree with honors.

## Zoomed In: Jillian Lewis

By Adam Walker

When Jillian Lewis heard about the *Star Wars* Day cosplay contest at the Duncanville Library, she had the perfect costume already in her closet. “I came as a Stormtrooper because it’s a cool outfit, and I already had the costume from a dance we did at RAQAD Dance Studio.”

Jillian is a real *Star Wars* fan, even when she isn’t wielding her lightsaber. “Princess Leia is my favorite character. I’ve seen most of the movies. I decided to enter the contest because I thought it would be fun.”

Jillian took first place in the children’s division and came away with a goodie bag emblazoned with a big comic-book-style *Wham!* Her mom and brother seemed interested in her loot, especially the bookstore gift card!



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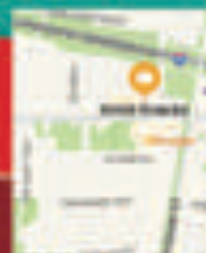
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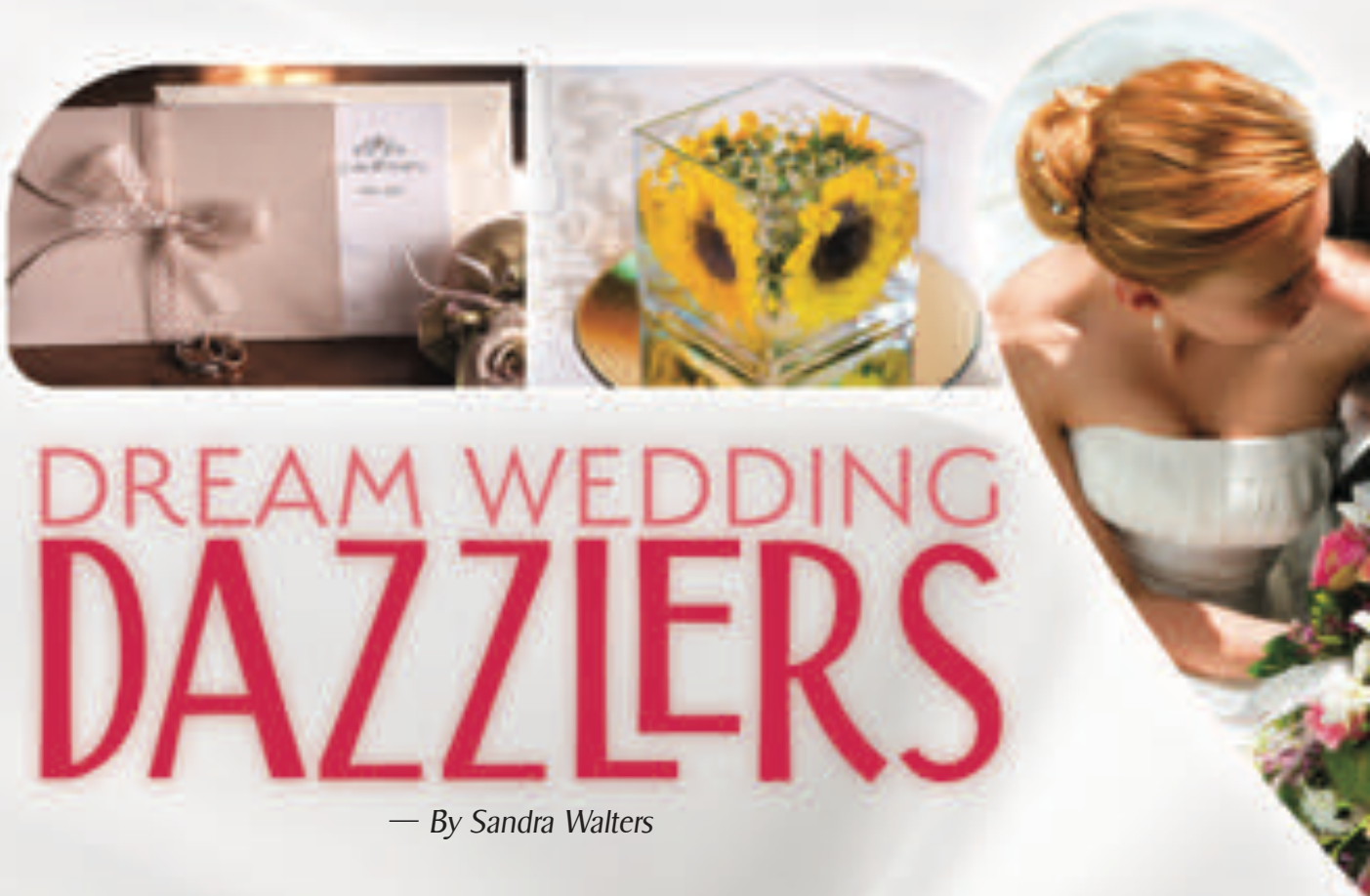
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# DREAM WEDDING DAZZLERS

— By Sandra Walters

*It has become more and more common to personalize wedding details with a do-it-yourself flair. As you prepare for your nuptials or finalize last minute touches, choose projects that fit your skill set. Not everyone has the ability or drive to be crafty, so, if necessary, locate a bridesmaid or family member who is an expert craftsperson. Include friends and family members who might enjoy helping you finish a DIY project. It may be a good time to interact with others and cultivate new relationships. These individuals should be dependable for completing the job on schedule and committed to helping accomplish your goals. Select assignments that best reflect you and your soon-to-be-mate's personalities. Make it fun!*

If you're at the beginning stages, start by making wedding invitations. Create your own unique design using Canva. Use the free or paid version to develop your original wedding invitation. If you're somewhat techie, this can be exciting. First, set up a Canva account at [www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com). Type "invitations" in the search bar, and play around with different invitations to begin to create. Add the desired information, and after you've completed your masterpiece, make the decision to send digital invitations or printed ones. A digital invitation will cost less money because printing and postage aren't required. However, if you wish to print them through Canva, notice the savings compared to the average cost of invitations.

Wedding favors are another distinctive DIY item that can be made. Mason jars can be utilized in a variety of ways to create a unique parting gift. It's as easy as buying Mason jars and filling them with your preferred flavored popcorn, either homemade or purchased. Additionally, as a wedding favor, you might buy bath salts in bulk in colors that go well with your theme. Next, you may make candles as presents. Finally, make a sticker with your names and the date of your wedding to attach on the jars. They can be as ornate or plain as you wish.

For the simple, yet elegant centerpiece, purchase a square glass vase. Place a single flower facing outward on each side. Then, fill the vase with iridescent clear glass marbles until the flowers stand upright. You might opt to exclude the flowers and just use a vase to display the lovely, enchanting marbles that nearly resemble diamonds. Finally, set a circular mirror on a runner that highlights the center of the table. Place the vase on the mirror, and you've finished making your DIY centerpiece. You can adorn the centerpiece by putting flowers around it or adding more sparkling components.

Constructing your very own photo booth is another fun DIY project. Select a location, and make sure you know the area's





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dimensions. After designating a spot, design a backdrop. It may be eccentric or refined, depending on your style. You can purchase one and hang it in the location, or use some rustic doors that exist in the reception area. Add curtains and other items to decorate the space. Decide on the type of camera and whether to add your guestbook to this area. Buy or make playful photo props, including hats, wigs, glasses, signs, masks and jewelry. Add lighting because your reception will possibly continue into the night. Your guests can take pictures with an instant camera, write a short note with marriage advice and then place the photo in a box along with the note. Encourage guests to take pictures and post them with the hashtag #meetthe\_\_\_\_\_ on social media. Fill in the blank with the new couple's last name.

Do your projects as soon as possible to eliminate stress. Planning a wedding can be exciting, yet overwhelming. However, it's possible to manage the stress by simply establishing a plan. This can help you make an authentic, memorable experience with family and friends. Consider your DIY ideas today and get started! **NOW**



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# CookingNOW *In the Kitchen With*

— By Adam Walker



When Will Forster, now 5, was a little boy, he told his mother that a roasted marshmallow tasted like Jesus loved him. It's no wonder he likes to cook! "I like trying new things that I've never tried before. I wanted to start cooking, so my mom, dad, Juji and Papa taught me." He also likes to cut things up with his special knife.

Jane, 7, is also a budding chef. "I started looking at cookbooks when I was little. I wanted to make some of the food, so when I got bigger, I started cooking with Juji. I like to make breads and things where we have to measure and mix. A lot of my recipes that I make were passed down from my grandparents." **NOW**

## Juji's Molasses Cookies

*These disappear so fast, that I usually make a double batch!*

- 3/4 cup Crisco All-Vegetable Shortening
- 1 cup Imperial Dark Brown Sugar (Be generous on the brown sugar.)
- 1/4 cup Grandma's Molasses
- 1 egg
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour (Skimp a little on the flour.)

- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. cloves, plus a little extra
- 1 tsp. cinnamon, plus a little extra
- 1 tsp. ginger, plus a little extra
- Granulated sugar, enough to coat the cookie dough balls

1. With a mixer, mix together the shortening, brown sugar, molasses and egg; set aside.
2. In another bowl, blend the flour, baking

soda, salt, cloves, cinnamon and ginger with a whisk.

3. Gradually add the dry mix to the wet ingredients, in the mixer; mix until all is well blended.
4. Place the cookie dough in the refrigerator until chilled, about 35 minutes.
5. Heat the oven to 375 F.
6. Form the dough into 1-inch balls; roll the balls in the granulated sugar. Place them 2-3 inches apart on a greased cookie sheet.
7. With your fingers, sprinkle each ball with two to three drops of water.
8. Bake 10-12 minutes until set, but not hard. Do not overbake. The cookies should remain soft even after cooling.

## Mugga's Corn Casserole

- 3 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 can corn
- 1 can creamed corn
- 1 box Jiffy Corn Muffin Mix
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/3 cup sugar
- Sliced jalapeños (optional)



1. Put all the ingredients, except the jalapeños, in a greased 9x13-inch cake pan; combine well.
2. Place the sliced jalapeños on the top of part of the casserole, as desired, for a sweet and spicy combination.
3. Bake at 350 F for 40 minutes, or until the casserole is just brown around the edges and a fork comes out clean.
4. Let cool for 10-15 minutes; serve warm.

## Papa's Crazy Cake

No eggs needed!

- 3 cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 6 Tbsp. cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. vinegar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 cups water

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
2. In a bowl, add the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, salt and baking soda; mix well.
3. In another bowl, mix together the vegetable oil, vinegar, vanilla and water.
4. Pour the dry ingredients into a 9x13-inch cake pan.
5. Drizzle the wet ingredients into the pan.
6. Immediately, stir well; bake for 45 minutes.

## Will's Potatoes 'n' Tomatoes

Kid-friendly recipe to get kids to try tomatoes.

- 4 large potatoes
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- Olive oil, to taste
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste

1. Get all the ingredients and tools out first.
2. Clean and cut up the potatoes into small wedges, with a child-safe knife; place them on a foil-lined baking sheet.
3. Cut the cherry tomatoes in half; add them to the baking sheet.
4. Cover the vegetables in olive oil, salt and pepper, to taste; combine well.
5. Have a grown-up help you bake them at 350 F for about 35 to 40 minutes, or until crisp.
6. Let cool for about 10 minutes; enjoy a healthy snack!

To search for more  
great recipes  
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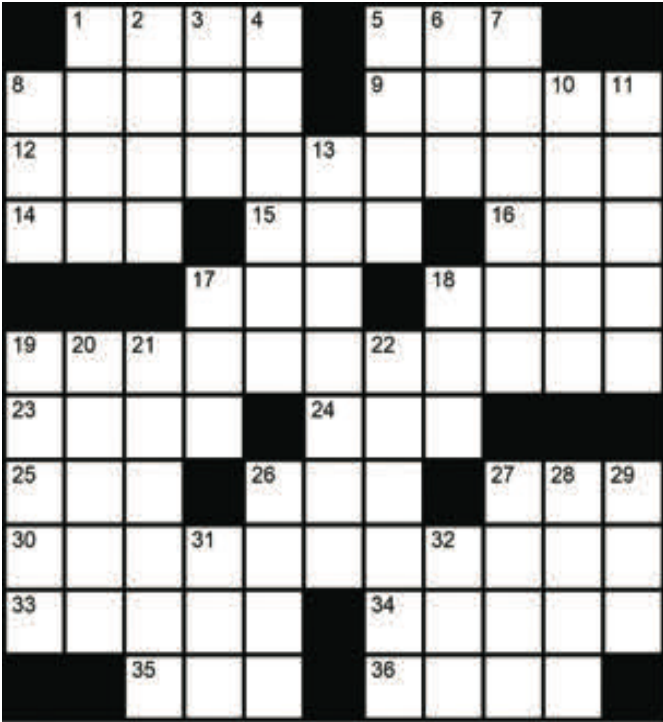
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# Crossword Puzzle



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## Across

- 1 Doorframe part
- 5 Hog thigh
- 8 Vehicle on Mars or the Moon
- 9 Nearing the end?
- 12 Hell arranged scooter bash for a potential killer
- 14 --- Arbor, MI
- 15 Network which created "Cribs"
- 16 Tina's former partner
- 17 Meadow
- 18 Parade wrecker
- 19 First pair in the first garden
- 23 Comply
- 24 Anger
- 25 The mailman's busy this month
- 26 Regret
- 27 Rocky pinnacle
- 30 Blue super-soldier?
- 33 Thick slices
- 34 Classified
- 35 Cut along the grain
- 36 Spandau's last inmate

## Down

- 1 Fourth Gospel
- 2 "Calling" Co.
- 3 Director --- Brooks
- 4 German city on the Weser River
- 5 Man cave centerpiece
- 6 Affirmative vote
- 7 Moses' sister
- 8 First U.S. color TV maker
- 10 Cell brand
- 11 First orbital American
- 13 Game venue
- 17 Narrative song
- 18 "Dizzy" singer Tommy ---
- 19 Operandi or vivendi
- 20 "That rings ---"
- 21 Sweet secretion of flowers
- 22 Christmas decoration
- 26 Coarse file
- 27 Waiters wait for them
- 28 They might feature in 27 Down
- 29 "Something in ---" (Lorrie Morgan hit)
- 31 A sac fly collects one
- 32 Cereal grass

Online versions and solutions available at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com). From our Homepage, click on the Crossword-Sudoku tab. Click on a puzzle. Click on the See All button to view solutions.

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# HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

## JUNE

Some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press. Check with individual organizations or your city or Chamber websites to verify dates and times.

6/3

### Summer Reading Kickoff:

Carnival games, crafts, reading logs and more. 2:00-4:00 p.m., Duncanville Public Library, 201 James Collins Blvd.

### Summer Reading Kickoff:

Bandan Koro African Drums, activities and giveaways. Free. 5:00-7:00 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Public Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

6/5

### Mayor's Summer Reading Club Kickoff Party:

5:00-7:00 p.m., in the breezeway between the library and the rec center,

211 E. Pleasant Run Rd.  
www.desototexas.gov/library.

6/10

### Situational Awareness:

Presented by BOSI Teen Girl Mentoring. Cheryl Washington and Officer Jessica Ryan with the DeSoto Police Dept. share hidden signs to consider in dating, human trafficking, cyber bullying, etc. Free. Noon-2:00 p.m., DeSoto Public Library, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd. (972) 230-9663.

6/17

### Best Southwest Juneteenth Celebration:

Live music, Cultural Expo,

Author's Expo, Wellness Expo, vendor booths and bounce houses. Free. 3:00-10:00 p.m., Armstrong Park, 100 James Collins Blvd., Duncanville. (972) 780-5070.

6/21

### Celebrate Juneteenth With Ms. Opal Lee:

A community talk with the "Grandmother of Juneteenth." Reception following. Free. 6:30 p.m., Cedar Hill Government Center, 285 Uptown Blvd., Cedar Hill.

6/24

### Zoe Ladies Brunch:

Food, shopping, entertainment

and giveaways. Raise money for Cancer research. 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Point of Light Church, 1599 Kingswood Dr., CH. Tickets can be purchased at Eventbrite.com.

6/24-6/25

### ARRL Annual North American Field Day:

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