

SouthwestNOW

MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2025



Riding for Life

Mark D. Cooks and
Karen Hodges-Cooks
support cancer survivors

Featured Business:
Destination Wellness
Holistic Healing Center

Also inside:
Scavenger Hunt
Sudoku

Best of In the Kitchen:
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REVIEW



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EDITOR'S NOTE

October ...

This has always been my favorite month. It was birthday season, which is probably part of it. Mine, Mom's and my youngest brother's fell within nine days. I loved celebrating her with opals. And I love fall. I can't wait for the leaves to change colors and the fall flowers, like chrysanthemums, to bloom. Sweater weather is coming. And tea, of whatever kind, is just better when the weather is cooler. Fall foods, like stuffed squash and soups and baked goods, start sounding more and more inviting. I'm not a pumpkin spice fanatic, but I do like the smell.

I sometimes wonder why I like this time of year so much. As a kid I was sick nearly every October. I'm allergic to a lot of things, but the mold that grows on the bottom of the oak leaves as they pile

on the ground was a special trigger for asthma attacks that required doctor or even ER visits. You'd think I would hate October — bad weather, illness and ruined birthdays.

But I don't. I love it. It's the perfect time for reflection, a cozy sweater, some tea, Robert Frost's poems and maybe some oil painting.

Here we come!



Adam

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SouthwestNOW Editor
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BEFORE 
AFTER 

October 2025
Volume 19, Issue 10

ON THE COVER



Mark Cooks and Karen Hodges-Cooks found a way to use an activity they love to help a cause close to their hearts.

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David Espinoza of Shepherd Roofing and Renovations wants to see your roof done right. "We offer roofing services for both residential and commercial customers. We can do everything from small roof tune-ups to full replacements. We do asphalt shingle roofs, tile, slate, standing seam metal roofs, synthetic wood shake, TPO. You don't see many tar and gravel roofs anymore, so we don't do those, and real wood shake isn't even legal in Texas anymore," David informed.

"Our roof tune-ups are \$199 with the coupon in the magazine. But pricing is on a case-by-case basis. So contact us for a free quote. We do free inspections. We use drones to see your whole roof. We even have a thermal imaging drone, to show where you have heat loss. We use the most up-to-date inspection equipment. We like to use advanced technology to provide the best answers to our clients."

Renovations are the other part of what they do. "We do a lot of storm restoration. We also renovate after plumbing breaks and fires. We are the preferred renovation company for several insurance companies when you have flood damage. We replace flooring, baseboards and cabinets. We do drywall, painting. We also install, replace and clean gutters and install leaf guards. We also do repair and replacement for wood and fiber cement siding, also called Hardie board."

David is proud of his team's years of experience in the industry. "Together, we

have more than 100 years of experience. My dad and my uncles were all roofers. I worked summers with my dad since I was a teenager, but I got into this full time in 2012. I think we have some of the best communication in the business. We email you our estimate, so you have it to look at. We text you, to let you know when we're on our way to your house or business. We send you pictures and videos of the job in progress, so you know what's happening, and so there's evidence of the work that's being done. We have one of the best workmanship guarantees out there. Most companies guarantee their work for three to five years. We guarantee for 10 years. We have a lot of quality control and check on our crews to be sure the work is done right. When we speak to you, we aren't giving you a sales pitch. We have a conversation about your roofing issues. We don't up-sell. We make recommendations, but then it's up to you. My philosophy is to treat our customers like as if it was my grandmother's roof. We find and diagnose issues and share what we know from our experience. We give you options, and let you make the decisions."

"Together, we have more than 100 years of experience. My dad and my uncles were all roofers. I worked summers with my dad since I was a teenager, but I got into this full time in 2012."

David looks at his business differently. "We're a small business with Christian values. I set out to always do the right thing. I have given free roofs to people in real need, like an elderly lady who had holes in her roof. She didn't have the money to fix it, so she just wanted us to tarp it. I decided to re-roof her house for free. We're a business, and we're about making money, but we're also here to help. I want to help my family, but also the community."

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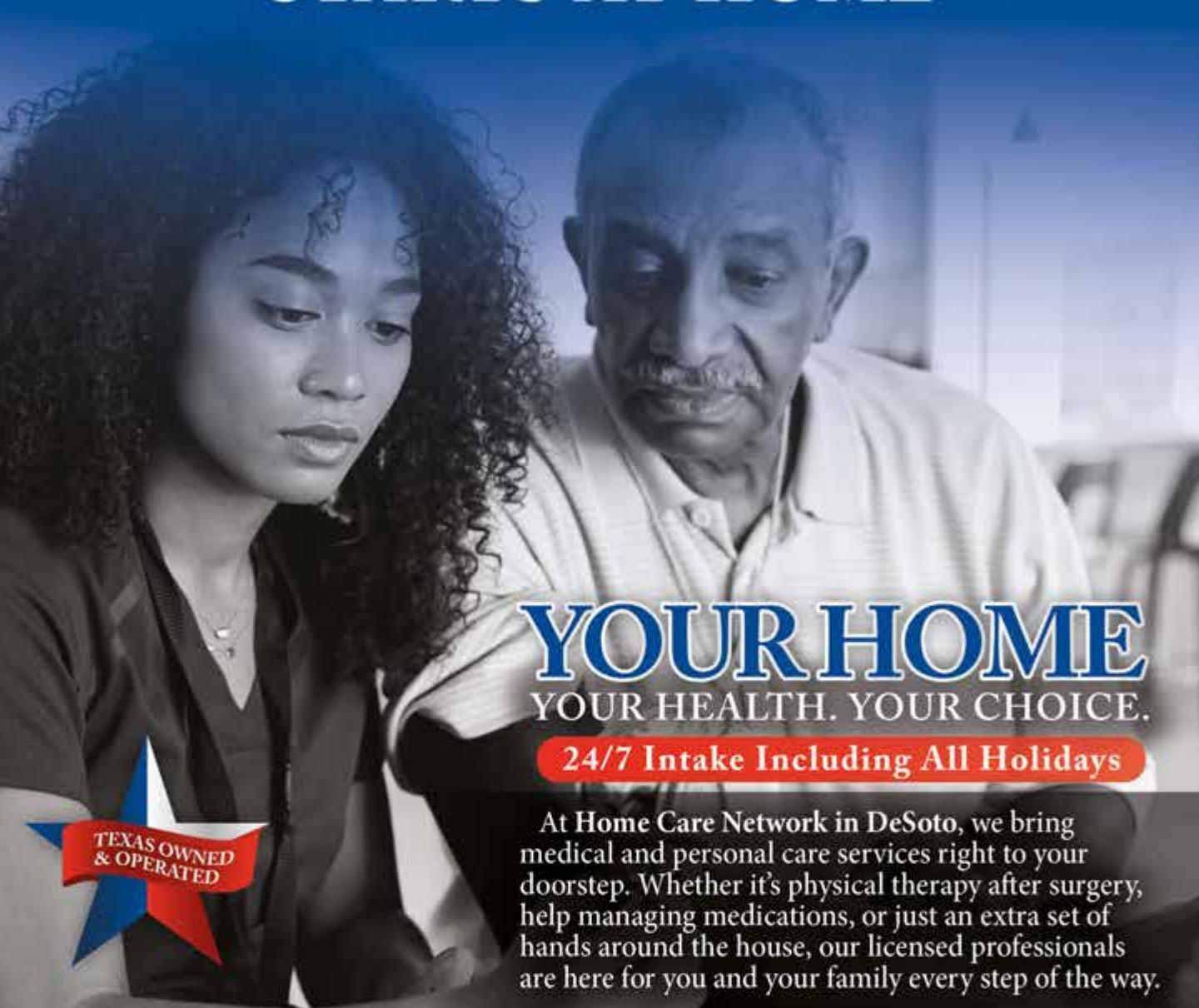


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Riding FOR LIFE

— By Adam Walker



There are so many needs out there. Every month has not one but several awareness emphases. Even if you want to help, it can be overwhelming. For Mark D. Cooks and Karen Hodges-Cooks, it was easy. They combined their love of cycling with the need to help breast cancer survivors. They connected with Pink Diamonds Survivors of Cancer, Inc., a local organization that supports breast cancer survivors, and with the blessing of the founder, Linda Lydia, they organized a bike ride as a way to raise funds and awareness.



There's a verse in the Bible that says not to despise the day of small beginnings. Mark and Karen's idea couldn't have started smaller. "That first year, we had three registered riders," Mark remembered. "Only me and my wife showed up. I rode the route, and she spotted me in the car." From that, the ride, now in its fifth year, has experienced amazing growth. "The next year, we had 35 cyclists and rode one route. We just rode and came back." The following year, they had 75 cyclists, and last year, it exploded to over 200. This year they're expecting at least 300, but they're shooting for 500. "Karen and I travel all over DFW and beyond to rides in Rockwall, Wichita Falls, Waco ... we spread the word about the Pink Diamonds Breast Cancer Awareness Ride and invite riders to participate. The longest route covers seven neighboring cities now, including Duncanville, Cedar Hill and DeSoto, and riders love the elevations in Cedar Hill. Karen's the one who's more athletic. She just finished a triathlon."

"I prefer to work behind the scenes," Karen explained. "As one of the race directors, I take care of all the technology, the website and the marketing. I've been cycling for about 20 years. I'll take every opportunity to get on my bike and ride. It's a different perspective from being in a car, and you get the fitness piece as well. This is a great opportunity to tie something I love to do for fitness with a great cause. And it's a cause that's close to my heart because I have family members who have battled breast cancer."

The bike ride now includes several routes, all of which start at Duncanville High School. There's a family fun ride, a 5-mile route inside Duncanville that returns to the DHS parking lot, where a bike rodeo for kids is set up, with an obstacle course to ride through cones. The 15-mile route goes to Cedar Hill, and the 30-mile route continues on to Glenn Heights. Those are for more seasoned riders. Then there's the 50-mile route that goes as far as Midlothian and loops through seven towns. "Riders come from as far away as Lubbock because they love the elevations," Mark reported.

The bike ride is paired with a health fair put on by Pink Diamonds Survivors of Cancer, Inc. The health



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fair will include mammograms and other health screenings, vaccinations, healthy cooking demos, representatives from local hospitals and other health care providers as well as insurance companies, and information about how to access treatment if you are uninsured or underinsured.

"Linda Lydia wasn't able to join us that first year, because she was in treatment," Mark remembered. "But the health fair started the second year we held the ride. While we were setting up for the ride, a woman came up and asked what we were doing. We explained and invited her to come back for the health fair. She did, and got a mammogram. She learned she had breast cancer and was able to start treatment early because of Pink Diamonds." So, this health fair has been saving lives since before it even opened.

The bike ride raises money for the Pink Diamonds' mission in three ways. First, there are the registration fees for the riders. Second, many riders make an additional donation to the cause. And third, there are the sponsors. "Duncanville ISD, the city

of Duncanville, corporations like Frost Bank, H-E-B, Sam's Club, Walmart and Linebarger, lots of local small businesses and the vendors who set up booths all contribute," Mark said. "Local law enforcement helps keep the routes safe for riders. We have 15 to 20 officers supporting the event. TxDOT donates free helmets for the kids and safety vests. Mayor Contreras of Duncanville has driven a SAG vehicle in the past. Mayor Mason of Cedar Hill rode with us one year. We raised \$3,000 last year. Our goal this year is \$8,000."

And they aren't done yet. They have plans for the future. "We want to continue growing the ridership and promote the health fair even more to encourage wellness throughout the community," Mark said. "We want it to be bigger every year. We're working with Crunch Fitness to organize a virtual ride on the same day for those who can't be here in person. So, hopefully, that will come together."

Mark and Karen hope anyone who enjoys cycling will sign up and come join them in raising awareness of the need for early detection and treatment of



breast cancer and help support survivors and thrivers. Linda Lydia and the Pink Diamonds Survivors of Cancer, Inc. hope everyone, riders or not, will come learn more about living a healthy life. **NOW**

Editor's Note: To sign up for one of the Pink Diamonds Breast Cancer Awareness Ride routes, visit pinkdiamondbikeride.com. To make a reservation for a free mammogram contact pinkdiamondssoc@gmail.com. The fair will be 8:00 a.m.-noon, October 11, at Duncanville High School, 900 W. Camp Wisdom Rd., Duncanville, TX 75116.



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Zoomed In: Joseph and Liliana Zachary

By Adam Walker

Joseph Zachary of DeSoto took his daughter, Liliana, shopping before dropping her off for an afternoon at her grandparents' house. They wore their matching daddy-daughter outfits for their outing in the sunshine.

Liliana had quite a few opinions about their shopping trip. "I be walking around. I wanted to play in the water, but the water don't work," she complained, having prepared for the splash pad. "I ate ice cream. It was good. I ate vanilla and strawberry with sprinkles and wiggly worms," she reported. Hopefully, her grandparents were prepared for a granddaughter with that much sugar energy. But Liliana was just enjoying life and having daddy along to carry all the bags and parcels. He seemed more than pleased to oblige.



Frances Villagran and Abel Castro welcome foodies to their Xela Bistro, which opened in Duncanville this summer.



Winston Hutchinson has a lunch meeting at Chili's.



Students from High Pointe Elementary showed their Longhorn pride by packing trucks for Cedar Hill Shares.



Deshun Gray and Jazz Vickers play checkers at Hillside Village because somebody doesn't know how to play chess!

NOW



Priscilla Witcher enjoys her seventh day as a volunteer at Thrifty Station in Duncanville.



DeSoto ISD's Dr. Usamah Rodgers welcomes students on the first day of school.



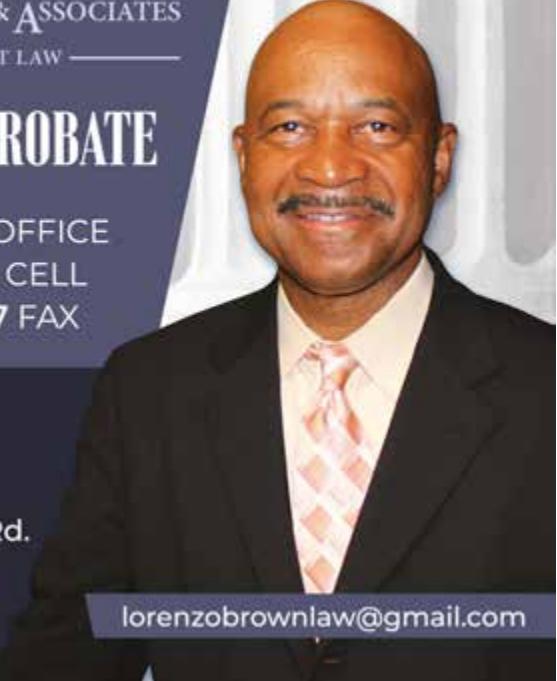
Willie Bradford enjoys driving a bus for CHISD.



Celeste Beavers and Erika Browning help the Friends of the Duncanville Library get ready for their big book sale.


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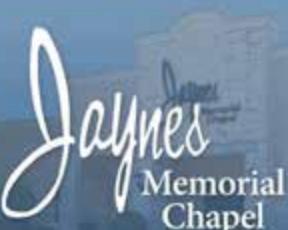
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— By Adam Walker

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medicine and holistic Western techniques to help you attain your best life.

"I studied Western allopathic medicine in England, but when I returned to the U.S., I decided to follow a holistic path," Dr. Kailash said. He obtained his medical degree from the University of Exeter in the UK and is a board certified doctor of natural health (BCDNH), a certified holistic health practitioner (CHHP) and certified traditional naturopath (CTN).

Sanjay is a board certified natural wellness practitioner (BCNWP) as well as a certified holistic fitness specialist (CHFS) and certified natural health professional (CNHP). "We are bringing together the best modalities of natural health," he explained, "and combining it all with the ministry of healing through our Ultimate Healer, Jesus Christ!"

They offer everything from Chinese cupping, to a German invention called ONDAMED, which uses pulsed electromagnetic fields. Flowpresso combines compression and heat therapy. Infrared therapy, ionic foot spas and herbal tinctures are among the therapies they use to help with everything from daily stress to sports performance and

recovery to serious health conditions affecting your organs.

"We use a holistic approach to triangulating what is going on in your body," Sanjay explained. "We look at your emotional health, what is going on in your life. We take into account environmental factors like toxins. We also address spiritual health. We are Christians and believe that true healing comes from above. We look at all of it together for true healing. Your body wants to heal. Your immune system is doing a lot on a daily basis. We've seen so many successes."

Dr. Kailash agreed. "We want to see you graduate out of here. We want to see you healed and move on. We want you to enjoy life and have positive experiences. Some people come just to maintain their health. We want you to have access to what other parts of the world have. This is another option, another way to health."

"We are bringing together the best modalities of natural health, and combining it all with the ministry of healing through our Ultimate Healer, Jesus Christ!"

They also carry a line of skincare products developed by their mother, Sandhya's Radiance. "The products are all-natural and organic," Sanjay reported.

A further feature is the on-site DW Café, which features yummy organic treats and light meals, with customizable spice levels, as well as smoothies, coffees and teas. Their desserts are made without sugar or corn syrup, and they have gluten-free and vegan options. There is seating in the expansive lobby, where a quiet meal can be enjoyed while taking in the artwork displayed on the walls.

"We're from a multicultural family," Dr. Kailash explained. "Our dad is from Texas. Our mom is from India and spent part of her life in Nigeria and England. I was born in Scotland. My wife is Colombian. We have members from all backgrounds. We welcome everyone. We want the principles of healing to remain in your life. We want you to enjoy your life and go home healed." **NOW**

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Find 5 hidden Ghosts

in 5 different ads in this issue
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Email the page numbers and specific ads where they are found, plus your phone number, by October 15th. To ensure your Scavenger Hunt answers go in the drawing, you must use the

Scavenger Hunt Email

scavenger.swn@nowmagazines.com

One entry per person.



\$50 Cash Prize

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Acorns were found on
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Jennifer's Potato Soup

CookingNOW BEST OF ... SOUP RECIPES

Soups are versatile. Whether they are fall comfort foods or light summer sides, there's a soup for everybody and every time of year. Here's a selection of soup recipes we have printed through the years for you to try! **NOW**

Jennifer's Potato Soup

Provided by Jennifer Berger for the March 2016 issue of SouthwestNOW Magazine.

8 medium russet potatoes
1 lb. applewood smoked bacon (or your favorite thick-cut bacon)
1/4 cup white onion, finely chopped
1 16-oz. carton heavy whipping cream
1 32-oz. box turkey stock (divided use)
1/4 cup white flour
2 Tbsp. celery salt
1/2 Tbsp. ground black pepper
1 Tbsp. garlic powder
1/2 cup shredded cheddar

1. Peel potatoes, and cut them into 2-inch cubes. Cover them with water in a 5-qt. pot. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Turn to low and simmer until tender (about 10 minutes). Drain potatoes and set aside. Reserve 1 cup of the potato water.
2. Cut bacon strips in half. Cook bacon until crisp; chop and set aside. Reserve 1/4 cup bacon grease, and discard the remainder of the grease.
3. Sauté onions in reserved bacon grease, on low heat, until transparent. Whisk 8 oz. of the heavy whipping cream slowly into the onions.

4. Add half of the turkey stock. Add 1/4 cup flour and whisk slowly until the flour is smooth and thick (avoid overheating or boiling the mixture).
5. Add celery salt, black pepper and garlic powder.
6. Once mixture is thick, pour it over the potatoes and stir it in slowly.
7. Add remaining turkey stock, and remaining whipping cream; cook on medium heat allowing potatoes to cook through.
8. Top with crumbled bacon and shredded cheddar cheese.

Crab Soup

Provided by Amy Lane for the April 2022 issue of WaxahachieNOW Magazine.

4 qts. water
2 cups potatoes, cubed
1 lb. crab meat
1 14-oz. pkg. frozen corn
1 12-oz. pkg. frozen peas
1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes
2 Tbsp. butter
1/4 cup fresh parsley
2-4 cups chicken or vegetable broth

1. In a large pot, bring the water to a boil; add the potatoes. Cook until fork-tender;

drain off most of the water, leaving just enough to cover the potatoes.

2. Add the crab meat and the next 5 ingredients. Add broth to your liking; mix well.
3. Simmer over medium-high heat for 20-30 minutes; serve.

Chicken Tortilla Soup

Provided by Tricia Jones for the October 2010 issue of BurlesonNOW Magazine.

3 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
1/2 tsp. olive oil
2 tsp. minced garlic
1/4 tsp. ground cumin
2 14.5-oz. cans low-sodium chicken broth
12 oz. frozen corn kernels
1 can black beans, drained
1 cup chopped onion
1/2 tsp. chili powder
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 cup chunky salsa
8 oz. corn tortilla chips
1/2 cup shredded low-fat Mexi-blend cheese (optional)
1/2 cup fat-free sour cream (optional)

1. In a large pot over medium heat, sauté the chicken in the oil for 5 minutes. Cut into bite-size pieces, return chicken to pot and cook through.
2. Add the garlic and cumin and mix well.
3. Add the broth, corn, black beans, onion, chili powder, lemon juice and salsa.
4. Reduce heat to low and simmer for about 20 to 30 minutes.
5. Break up some tortilla chips into individual bowls and pour soup over chips.
6. Top with the cheese and a little sour cream. Makes 6 to 8 servings. *NOTE: For a time saver, bake 6-8 chicken breasts on the weekend and use the pre-cooked chicken cut into bite size pieces.*



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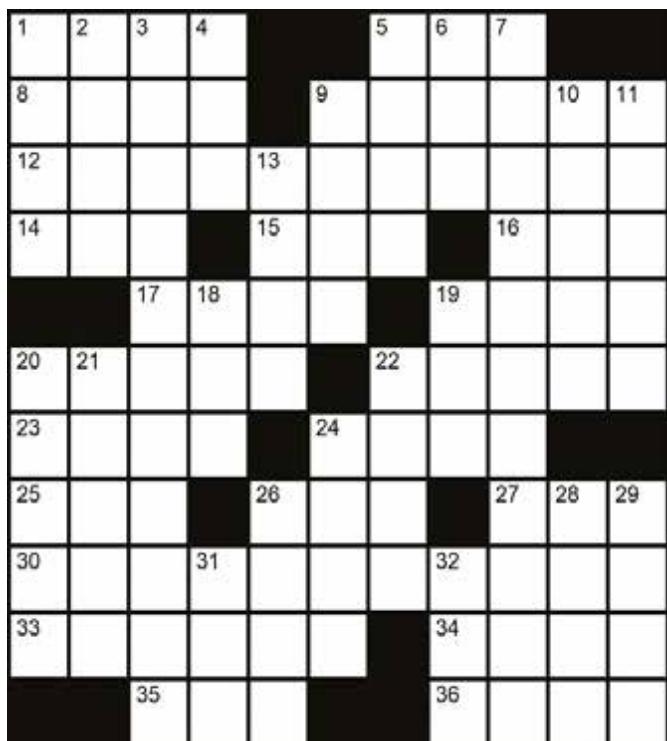


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Crossword Puzzle



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Across

- 1 Musical Mama, who died young
- 23 Thin rope
- 24 Japanese clogs
- 5 Feverish ailment
- 25 "All This, and Heaven ---" (1940 Bette Davis movie)
- 8 Not manual
- 9 Spanish rice dish
- 12 Smashed replica tomb - it's troublesome
- 14 Fox partner in Oklahoma
- 15 " --- we there yet?"
- 16 Number of people brought home, briefly
- 17 Make sweaters
- 19 Such as Shakespeare
- 20 Shaft
- 22 Alexandre --- , author of the story behind "La Traviata"

Down

- 1 Toy gun ammo
- 2 Migraine feature
- 3 Security dealer
- 4 Blubber
- 5 Renown
- 6 Meadow
- 7 Rural inmate turned blue
- 9 Sassy
- 10 Seventh sign of the zodiac
- 11 They change bases
- 13 Den
- 18 Doze off
- 19 Nevertheless
- 20 Pretend to be
- 21 Perch
- 22 Obscure
- 24 Measuring instrument

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Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

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

Medium

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

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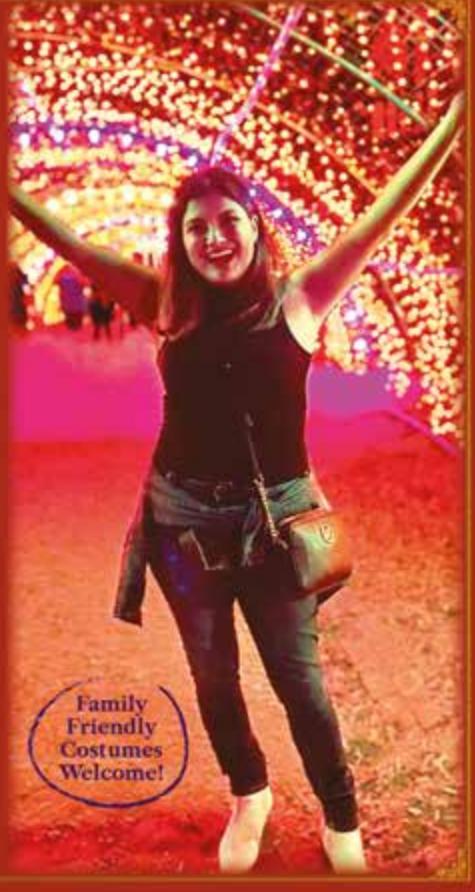
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OCTOBER

10/4

Art Tigerina Band & Grupo Rodeo Concert in the Park:

Free. 4:00-7:00 p.m., Armstrong Park, 100 James Collins Blvd., Duncanville.

10/7

National Night Out:
Party in the Park: Free. 6:00-8:00 p.m., Traphene Hickman Library, 450 Pioneer Trl., Cedar Hill.

National Night Out:
6:00-8:00 p.m., 201 James Collins Blvd., Duncanville.

10/11

Pink Diamonds Best

Southwest Health Fair and Bike Ride:

Free mammograms and other health screenings. 8:00 a.m.-noon, Duncanville High School, 900 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.

Country Day on the Hill:

Free. Free parking at CHHS, with shuttle service. 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Downtown Cedar Hill, 600 Cedar St.

Movies in the Park

Double Feature:

Monster House and *Hocus Pocus*. Free. 7:00-11:30 p.m., Armstrong Park, 100 James Collins Blvd., Duncanville.

10/18

Sims Rec Center

Anniversary:

9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 310 E. Parkerville Rd., Cedar Hill.

10/24

Boo Bash:

6:00-8:00 p.m., Duncanville Fieldhouse, 1700 S. Main St.

10/25

Crossroads of Texas GO TEXAN Country Festival:

Texas-made crafts and culinary favorites, 200-plus booths. Country artist Randall King. Free. 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Downtown Waxahachie.

Scare on the Square:

Free. 6:00-8:00 p.m., Downtown Cedar Hill, 600 Cedar St.

A Halloween Murder Mystery:

\$45 pre-sale/\$55 at the door. 7:30-9:00 p.m., Corner Theatre, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd., DeSoto.

10/31

October Fun Festival:

Ages 12 and under. Free. 6:00-8:00 p.m., DeSoto Rec Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd.

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



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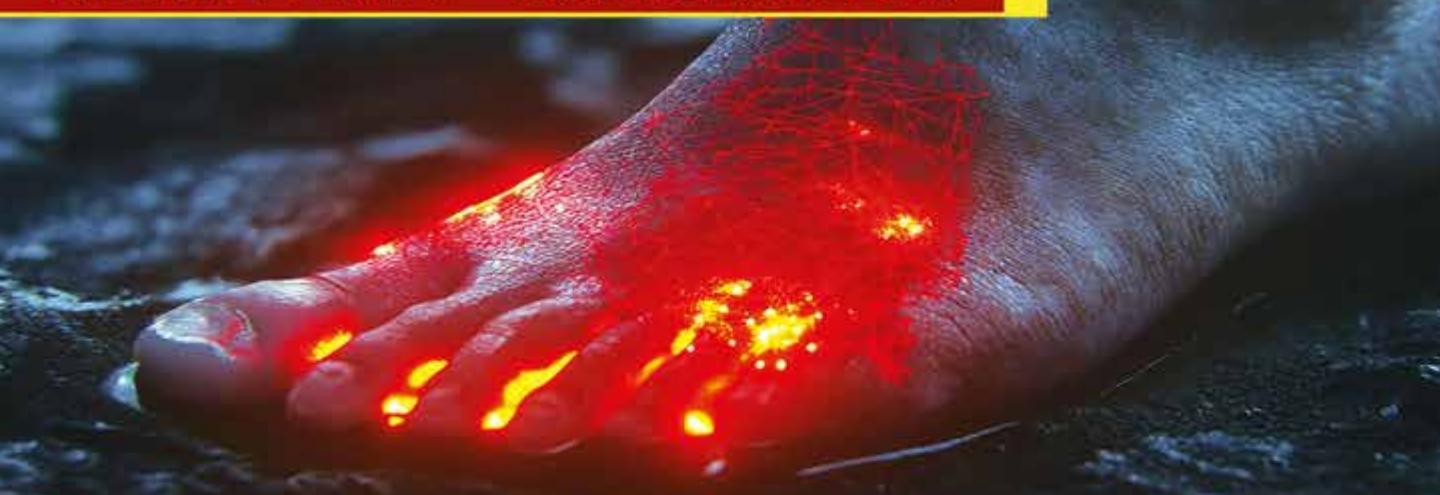
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Dr. Allala is a graduate of the Texas A&M School of Dentistry. "When I started there, it was still Baylor. My diploma has both names on it," she recalled. "I specialize in oral surgery, and we're really good at it. I'm nothing without my team. We do everything in dentistry. I like being well rounded. I enjoy being an overachiever, so I'm constantly taking continuing education, keeping up with all the

newest techniques and technology. I'm also a native Spanish speaker. I grew up speaking both languages. Our YouTube videos explaining procedures are available in both English and Spanish."

Dr. Allala is proud of the service they provide at Serenity Advanced Dentistry. "I think we give five-star service. And I know my staff is five-star. We know what works and what doesn't. I know it sounds corny, but this is my life's work. Most of my staff have been with me for years, at different locations around DFW, before I came to Cedar Hill. I met Mariela seven years ago, in Pleasant Grove. It was my first job out of school. Racine has been with me four years, and Jazmine three years, both in Red Oak. Our newest team member is Jessica. She found us three months ago when she emailed me looking for an opportunity to shadow a dentist."

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