nnis NOVEMBER 2023 Flying for Freedom Tom Tolar recalls Vietnam from the air In the Kitchen With Claudia Hill Also inside: 2023 Holiday Shopping Guide Scavenger Hunt Crossword/Sudoku Featured Business: Eternal Rest Funeral Home Postal Customer XT SALLAG OTS TARAY 39ATROY .8.U GIAY ****ECHMSS EDDW****



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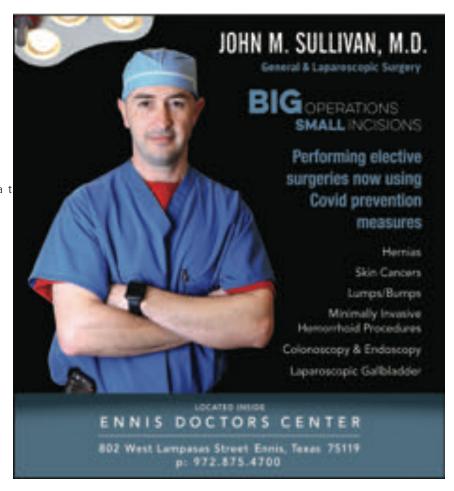
Advertising Representat Linda Roberson . Cherise Burnett Dustin Dauenhauer . Bryan Frye Kelsea Locke . Linda Moffett Karen Schaefer. Jeremy Young

Billing Manager, Angela Mixon

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Thank a veteran ...

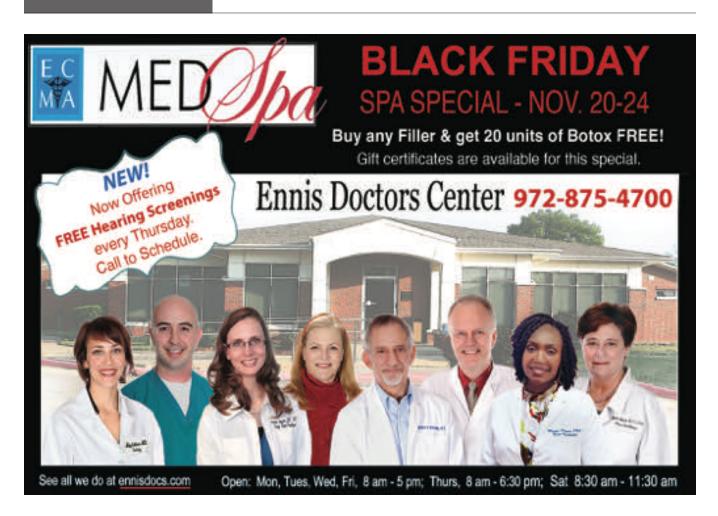
It is probably not really a coincidence that Thanksgiving and Veterans Day fall during the same month. We have a lot to be thankful for, not the least of which is our men and women who have served to protect our freedoms.

Thanksgiving traditions include the Thanksgiving dinner, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the big football game that the Cowboys play. It is a lot of fun, and we try to get as many family members as possible in one place to celebrate. Sometimes the group is small, and we can all gather at the same table. Other years, the "kids' table" has to be set up, and if the game comes on, we may move to the TV trays in the den. Giving thanks with our church families is also a great tradition and may help us focus on what is most important.

Setting time aside on a particular day and celebrating with a feast probably started as a way to celebrate a great harvest. Proclaiming a particular day in the United States for a holiday went through several administrations in various forms until the permanent observation day, the fourth Thursday in November, was set by an act of Congress in 1942.

By contrast and comparison, Veterans Day became a federal holiday in 1938. It is always celebrated on November 11, regardless of on which day of the week it falls. Originally, it was called Armistice Day and commemorated the end of WWI. It was not until 1954 that President Eisenhower signed the bill into law, replacing "Armistice" with "Veterans."

Let's be grateful ...





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FLYING FOR FREEDOM -By Bill Smith



Tom Tolar flew fixed-wing aircraft long before he graduated from Ennis High School in 1968. From his job fueling planes at the local airport, he was able to afford flying lessons and obtained his pilot's license at 17. While he enjoyed flying a Piper Cub around the skies of North Texas, his goal when he graduated was to become a Navy pilot. We were actively engaged in the war in Vietnam, and while things did not initially go as planned, Tom flew many hours as the pilot of Huey helicopters above foreign soil.

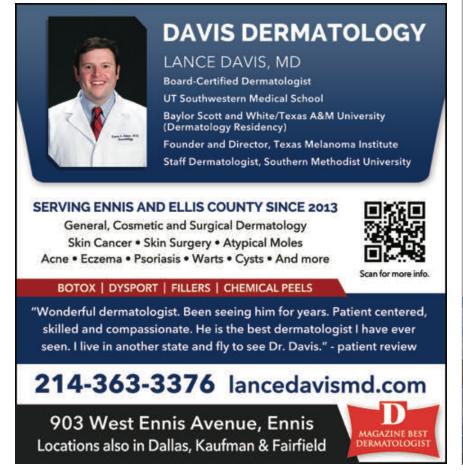
"I went to Navarro right out of high school. The Navy pilots' program required a four-year degree, but I spoke to an Army recruiter who told me that since I already had a pilot's license, they could send me directly to flight school after basic training. He assured me I would be a fixed-wing pilot," Tom recalled. "I understood we were losing about 20 helicopter pilots a day in Vietnam. When basic training was completed, they sent me to Mineral Wells for helicopter training.

"The first six weeks were spent in officer training with lots of harassment. We had 250 when we started training, and 80 graduated. Our final six months of flight training took place at Fort Rucker, Alabama. My first thoughts were that I did not want to fly helicopters, but I came to enjoy it. It was a different kind of flying, and I thought it was fun." Tom began flying helicopters as a warrant officer, which is a specialty training designation for his specific duty, flying helicopters.

After Fort Rucker, he had a 30-day leave, and then he was off to Long Binh, Vietnam, and the 90th Replacement Center. From there he was sent to the 3/16 Air Cavalry at Cần Thơ. He spent only one day at Cần Thơ, then he was on to Vĩnh Long, where he was assigned to C Troop 3/17th Air CAV.

"They had a mission for me right away. It was known as 'firefly.' We circled the airfield all night patrolling the perimeter with a big searchlight. I was the co-pilot with Pilot Ledley Symmes. This was in April of 1971. Ledley had been there since December 1970 and had probably 400 hours in the air.





"On that initial flight, I learned how to light a cigarette in the air. You had to announce to the crew that you were going to light up, and then you counted down, '5-4-3-2-1' seconds, so everyone would know to cover their eyes and not lose their night vision from the flash of the lighter."

For two weeks, Tom accumulated some more hours as co-pilot of a Cobra helicopter while learning the area. They flew with gunships to learn the navigation points of their area of operation. Later, he flew as co-pilot of a UH-1 Huey until he became aircraft commander a few months later.

One of his more harrowing missions was as co-pilot with Captain Dale Johnson. They were sent to Cambodia, flying at 5,000 feet to avoid small arms fire. "We started taking 51-caliber and 37-millimeter fire, later learning that it was radar guided. The fire was intense. Parts were flying off of our helicopter, and it was just about everything except what was critical to stay in the air. We started back to Chi Lăng, and our Cobras were flying around assessing the damage. They were astonished that we were still flying and recommended that we put it on the ground. However, the gauges I was watching said our systems were still good, and Captain Johnson decided to keep flying. We made it back to base. I was certainly scared, and mad at the same time. About two years later, we learned that we were flying to draw fire because Air Force planes were being shot down in that area, and they couldn't find where the guns were. There have been two times in my life when I thought I might die, and I am very grateful to God that He got me through them. This was one of them. The other was when I recovered from a significant heart attack in 2015."

One of the photos Tom brought home from Vietnam shows him putting his fist through a hole in the plexiglass





of the Huey he had flown. That hole was made by a shell that just missed his feet on the pedals. Further, the Huey had been leaking fuel. Tom was unaware of the two hits to the fuel tanks.

Not all missions included such dire circumstances, and Tom related one that seemed unnerving, but in hindsight was humorous. "We were on a single ship run to Sa Đéc to get supplies and carry them to the MACV compound at Chi Lăng. About halfway to Chi Lăng, I noticed transmission fluid on the windshield. Loss of transmission fluid was the worst thing that could happen. If the transmission fails, you are nothing but a chunk of metal heading for the ground. I decided to put the ship down and called for gun cover and a chase bird (another helicopter to carry the crew back to base). Our crew chief got out to inspect the damage. He walked all around the helicopter and eventually jumped back in and said everything was OK and for us to get out of there. It turned out that the 'transmission fluid' was blood coming off the frozen steaks we had picked up for the cooks at the base. I called the base back and said we did not need the chase bird and gun cover, and that our crew chief had the problem taken care of!"

Today, Tom will tell you that the best part of his service was the lasting camaraderie he developed with his fellow servicemen. As a member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, he gathers annually with about 900 other men. Last year, Tom and his wife, Sharon, along with all of their children and grandchildren, went up in a Huey with Tom at the controls. What a memory that made — flying with such precious cargo from Tom's perspective, or with their hero, from the eyes and hearts of the rest of the family! NOW

Editor's Note: Thank you to all of our veterans during this month of gratitude for the freedom we enjoy.







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Eternal Rest Funeral Home

— By Bill Smith

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Gerald Weatherall of Eternal Rest Funeral Home was attending seminary, with plans to be a pastor, when he visited during Christmas break with a college friend's family in Greenville that owned a funeral home. The owner of the funeral home, J.H. Johnson, became a mentor to Gerald, and after moving from the seminary to a mortician college, he

soon went to work for Grundy Funeral Home in Greenville, eventually becoming the owner.

"I knew I wanted to be the owner of a funeral home, but I did not have the resources immediately available. I went to work in corporate America, investing heavily in a 401(k) for 16 years, and I was able to purchase Grundy Funeral Home in 2002. We sold it in 2004 and were able to open Eternal Rest in Dallas," Gerald recalled. "Today, we have locations in DeSoto, Dallas, Plano and, of course, two locations in Ennis."

Gerald also mentioned his grandfather, Henry Ervin, as one of his business mentors. "My grandfather owned a commercial plumbing business. I give him and J.H. Johnson a lot of credit for teaching me that integrity and business go together."

Eternal Rest offers complete funeral services, including preneed plans, cremation, green funerals and a variety of services for viewing and post-funeral receptions for family and friends. "We want people to know that dignity and integrity are what our business represents," he added.

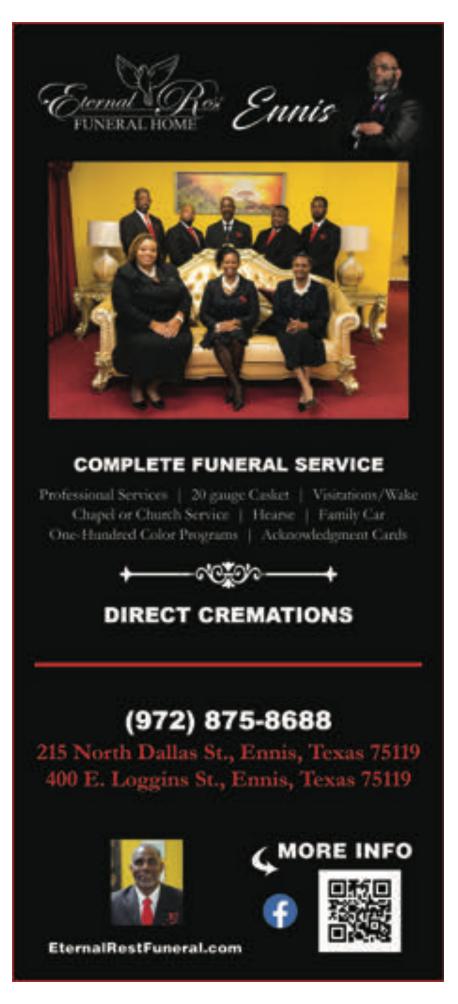
"We also know the value of our preneed plans and encourage everyone to investigate what we have to offer. You can lock in the cost and avoid the effect of inflation on funeral expenses. Important selections and decisions can be made ahead of time, making it much easier for the family when the time comes. Every detail can be covered, and then all the family has to do is bring in their portfolio."

Gerald calls Eternal Rest Funeral Home a trendsetter in the funeral business. "In the past, we have been copied by others," he continued. "We design our funeral plans to meet individual needs." This business model has certainly been successful, as the funeral home continues to grow. "We are building a state-of-the-art crematory and embalming center in DeSoto that will complement all our locations."

Investment in the Ennis community continues to grow, as well. Office Manager Tina Perkins is a local employee, as is Funeral Attendant Thomas Flowers. Steve Barnes is a licensed funeral director recently added to the staff who was born and raised in Ennis, Employees Xavier Tippen and Christine Wilborn also serve in Ennis. "We just opened the second location in Ennis in January 2022. The second location was formerly Jones Funeral Home and was a legacy here. We wanted to preserve it for the families of the community. The building has been completely remodeled, and we are very proud of it," he added.

Looking back, Gerald said that his mother was shocked when he told her that he was dropping out of seminary to attend mortician college. Today, in addition to operating Eternal Rest Funeral Home, Bishop Gerald is senior pastor at Uncommon Church in Dallas, serving with his wife, Pastor Shanneca Weatherall. Gerald continues to overcome obstacles and succeed. and he chronicles much of his story in an autobiography he recently completed titled, Travail-Courage, Success & Legacy.

"We are well established in Ennis. We have invested a lot here, and I think it will do well," Gerald said with optimism. "We provide a service above the average, and our service speaks for itself." NOW







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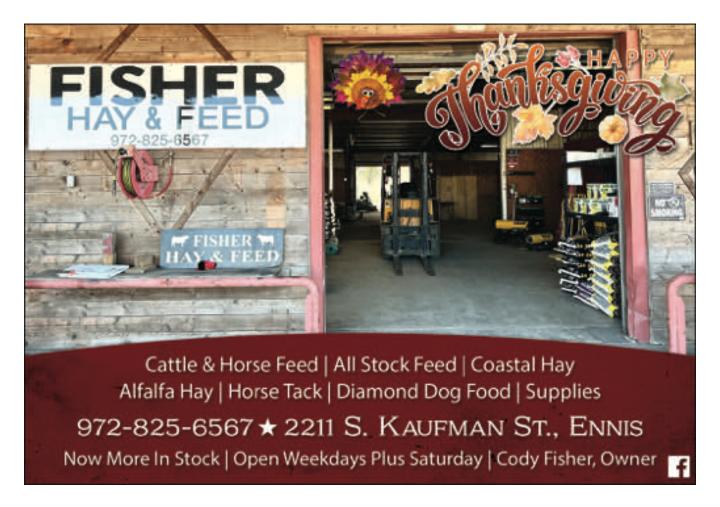




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DECEMBER 2

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DECEMBER 8-9

Holiday Snow Tubing Hills

DECEMBER 15-17

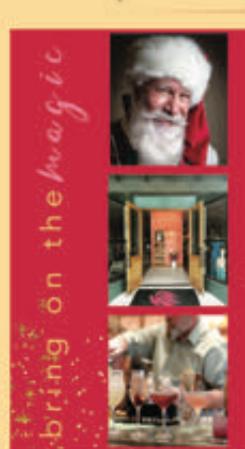
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Around Town



Colton Campbell brings the Lions Club program.

Zoomed In: Trey Honza

Trey Honza moved to Ennis from San Antonio about three years ago to teach eighth grade science at Ennis Junior High. He said he had "lived all over Texas" before that, but he enjoys Ennis and has other family here. "I like how close everything is in the smaller town. In San Antonio, if we said we were going downtown, that meant a 45-minute trip. Here, it is maybe two minutes."

His daughter, Lyra, is in the first grade, and his son, Milo, is in the third grade at Austin Elementary School. They both said they like school, and on this Saturday morning, they were enjoying the "Mornings at Minnie" program at Minnie McDowal Park.



Brandon Slovak and Kennedy catch a big one at the fish pond downtown.



Employees from Arden Insurance Agency enjoy the Taste of Ennis fundraiser benefiting Helping Hands.



These neighbors from West Freeman Street in Ennis gather for a reunion at Cotton Patch Cafe.

By Bill Smith



Cheerleaders Jessie and Jolene Colter pose while shopping downtown.



The Fry family enjoys a morning at Bluebonnet Market.



Charlie and Jeanette Patak celebrate Grandparents Day with Dawsyn.







Claudia Hill is a native of Ennis who was inspired to learn to cook by her mother, Hattie Moucka. "Mom made the best kolaches and pies," Claudia recalled. "I attribute her kolaches to her old O'Keefe and Merritt stove. No one in the family has been able to master her kolaches.

"I cook for my family, neighbors and friends. Usually when my daughter, son-in-law and grandkids come to visit I bake something sweet. I love to spoil the grandkids! I am teaching my granddaughter, Harper Lackey, to bake and cook. When she visits, we are usually in the kitchen baking. I am trying to get her to love cooking, too!" Now

Cheese and Bacon Stuffed Mushrooms

12 large fresh mushrooms (1 lb.) 4 oz. softened cream cheese

I clove garlic, minced

4 slices cooked bacon, crumbled 1/2 cup sharp cheddar cheese

1 Tbsp. parsley, chopped

- **I.** Heat the oven to 350 F.
- **2.** Remove the stems from the mushrooms.
- **3.** Mix the remaining ingredients together; spoon the mixture into the mushroom caps.

4. Place the caps, filled sides up, in a shallow baking dish. Bake 18-20 minutes until heated through.

Pecan Tassies

Makes 24 pecan tassies.

Pastry:

1 stick margarine
3 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 cup flour

Filling:

1 egg

I Tbsp. margarine, meltedI tsp. vanilla3/4 cup brown sugarI cup pecans, chopped

- **1.** Using 2 bowls, mix the pastry and filling ingredients separately.
- **2.** Grease a mini muffin pan with cooking spray.
- **3.** Roll pieces of the pastry into small balls. Place one ball of pastry in each hole of the prepared muffin pan; press the pastry into the bottom and up the sides.
- **4.** Put 1 tsp. of the filling into each pastry.
- **5.** Bake at 350 F for 25-30 minutes.

Cherry Coke Salad

1 16-oz. pkg. cream cheese

1 6-oz. pkg. cherry Jell-O

1 20-oz. can crushed pineapple, undrained

1 cup pecans, chopped

1 cup Coke

1. Combine the cream cheese and Jell-O.

- **2.** Heat the pineapple to the boiling point; add it to the cream cheese and Jell-O. Mix well.
- 3. Add the pecans and Coke.
- 4. Refrigerate until set in a crystal bowl.

Easy Holiday Breakfast

I can crescent rolls

1 lb. sausage

I can diced green chiles, drained

2 cups mozzarella cheese, grated

4 eggs

3/4 cup milk

Salt, to taste

Pepper, to taste

- 1. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
- **2.** Line the bottom of a 9x13-inch pan with crescent rolls.
- **3.** Cook and crumble the sausage; drain. Add the green chiles.
- **4.** Spread the sausage and chiles over the dough. Add the grated cheese over the sausage mixture.
- **5.** Beat the eggs with the milk; add salt and pepper to taste; pour over the sausage and cheese.
- **6.** Bake for 20 minutes. Cook longer to set, just don't let it get too brown. Note: You can also use crescent rolls

without perforations, which makes this recipe easier.

Sweet Potatoes

Potatoes:

3 cups mashed sweet potatoes

1 cup sugar

2 eggs, beaten

1/3 cup evaporated milk

I tsp. vanilla

1/3 cup butter, melted

Topping:

1 cup brown sugar

1 cup pecans, chopped

1/3 cup flour

1/3 cup butter, melted

- **I.** For potatoes: Mix all the ingredients; place the mixture in a greased 13x9-inch casserole dish.
- **2.** For topping: Mix all the ingredients; add to the top of the potatoes.
- 3. Bake at 350 F for 35 minutes.

Fajita Like Venison

I pkg. dry onion soup mix

8 oz. Italian dressing

8 oz. prepared ranch-style dressing

3 lbs. venison, cut in strips across the grain



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Melted butter, to taste Salt, to taste Pepper, to taste

- **1.** Mix the dry onion soup mix with the two salad dressings. Pour over the venison strips in a shallow dish. Marinate at least 1 hour.
- **2.** Place the venison on a grill over medium heat. Brush with melted butter; season with salt and pepper.
- **3.** Cook about 10 minutes on one side;

turn and cook on the second side until just done.

Chicken Gnocchi Soup

- 1 15-oz. jar roasted garlic Alfredo sauce
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups rotisserie chicken, cubed
- I tsp. Italian seasoning
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 16-oz. pkg. potato gnocchi
- 3 cups fresh spinach, coarsely chopped
- **1.** In a large saucepan, combine the Alfredo sauce,

water, chicken, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Bring to a gentle boil.

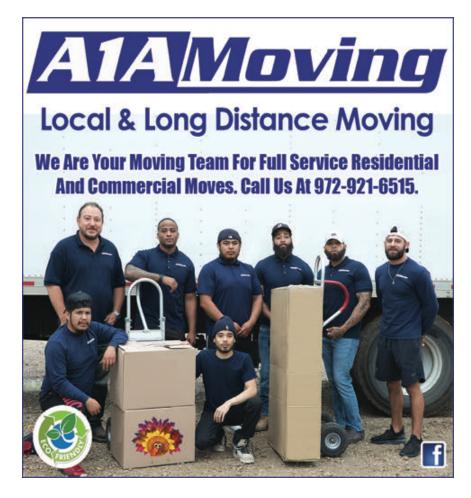
- 2. Add the gnocchi and spinach.
- **3.** Cook 3-8 minutes until the gnocchi float.

Cheesy Broccoli and Rice

1 small onion Margarine, enough for sautéing

- 1 10-oz. box chopped broccoli, cooked 1 10.5-oz. can cream of mushroom soup 2 cups rice, cooked
 - 1/2 to whole jar Cheez Whiz, to taste Dash of garlic powder Cheese, grated (for topping)
 - **1.** Sauté the onion in the margarine.
 - **2.** Mix all of the remaining ingredients, except the grated cheese, together.
 - **3.** Bake at 350 F for 30-35 minutes, until bubbly.
 - **4.** Top with the grated cheese; bake until melted.







Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Tonja Barnebee CPA, PC

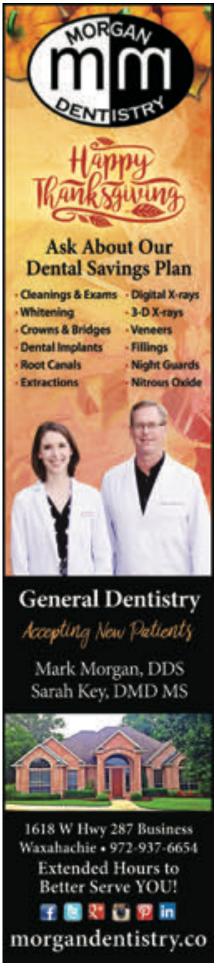
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Across

- 1 "House" and "Shooter" actor Omar ---
- 5 Frat-party wraps
- 10 Skateboarding jump
- 11 "Lummox" writer Fannie --
- 12 Icon
- 13 Efface
- 14 Military gobetweens
- 15 Devoted follower
- 17 Anonymous Jane
- 18 Follow closely
- 20 Sound of a finely tuned engine

Medium

- 21 Swells
- 24 It stopped with HST
- 25 Wise one's call?
- 26 Kind of PC port
- 27 Creditor's statement
- 28 Online connector
- 31 Barrel bit
- 33 In unison
- 35 Old
- watchmaker 36 Kind of eclipse
- 37 Start over
- 38 1/2 fl. oz.

Down

- 1 Patron saint of sailors
- 2 Some forms of packaging
- 3 Iron block
- 4 Believe it proper
- 5 At that time
- 6 Belonging to us
- 7 Marks on a measuring device
- 8 Arrange by type
- 9 Takes the tiller
- 10 Painting medium
- 16 Welcome to Hawaii!

- 19 Seek clarification
- 20 Paid
- sportsperson 21 Vituperative
- 22 Steal stock
- 23 Kind of blue 27 Home on the
- range?
- 29 Easy task
- 30 For each
- 32 Contend
- 34 Pinch-hitter

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Sudoku Puzzle

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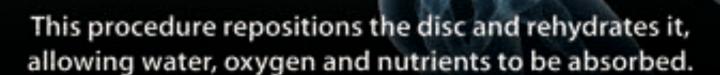






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11/3-11/5

Third Annual Ellis County Livestock Show and Rodeo **Holiday Market:**

Come for the exciting variety of vendors and food trucks! \$25 for a weekend pass, or \$10 entry for adults each day. Children 12 and under are free. Friday: 5:00-9:00 p.m.; Saturday: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; Sunday: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 W. 287 Byp., Waxahachie.

11/10-11/12

Light the Way Music Festival: This is a three-day Christian music festival filled with some of the highest caliber Christian artists, vendors, kids zone and so much more! The Texas Motorplex, 7500 US-287. For tickets and more information, visit www.lightthewayministry.com/texas.

11/18

SOKOL Ennis Christmas Market:

Come shop small business. There will be Color Street Paparazzi, Pampered Chef, permanent jewelry, boutique clothes, baked goods, self-defense key chains and much more. Santa will be there, too! SOKOL Activity Center, 2622 Hwy. 34. For vendor registration and information, email sokolkhbvendors@gmail.com. Additional information at fundraising@ sokolennis.com or call (972) 875-7959.

11/19

Sip and Pour, a Candle **Making Class:**

Join The Sassy Teacher for a funfilled candle-making party. The class is typically about 90 minutes long, including 30-40 minutes to allow the candles to set. Tickets: \$45, available at https://checkout.square.site/buy/ N6PPTMGR33HJKJXVZKACQ7NN. 12:30 p.m., Sugar Ridge Winery, 353 Sugar Ridge Road. For more information, visit https:// www.sugarridgewinery.com or call (972) 666-2888.

11/30

Lights of Ennis Parade and Block Party:

Join us for one of the most spectacular holiday events you'll experience this year! A twinkling parade of lights, live music and dance performances, arts and crafts activities for the kids, free open house at the Ennis Railroad and Cultural Heritage Museum, photo ops galore and, of course, a visit from Santa and friends. Free! For more information, visit https:// www.visitennistexas.com/events.

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



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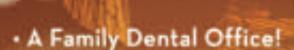
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