

# CorsicanaNOW

MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2025

## Sense of Service

This military family earns stripes at home and in the Army



2025 Holiday  
Shopping Guide

Also inside:  
Scavenger Hunt

Crossword

Featured Business:  
Hootin Holler Beer and Liquor

In the Kitchen With  
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

*Celebrating Gratitude!*

This Thanksgiving is made even more special as the United States prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday next year. Special event planning is underway through several local organizations as well as our city. Life isn't perfect here for anyone, but as I have learned through my travels and from being an ESL teacher, we have much to be grateful for in our country and in this era of technology.

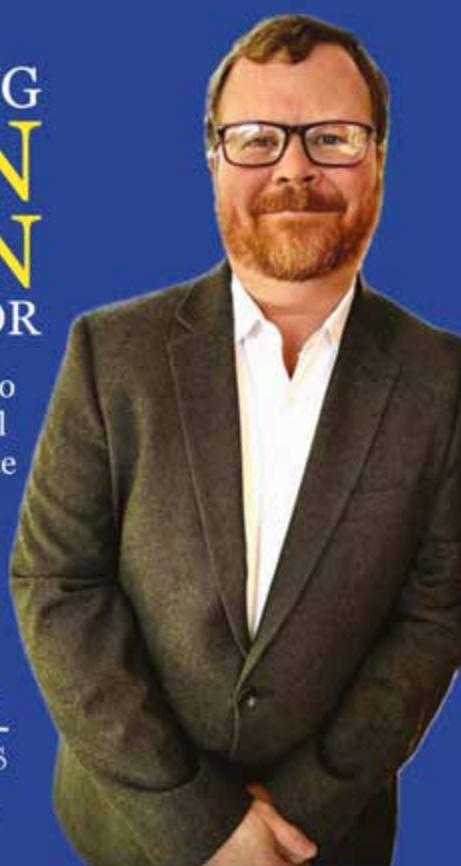
As most of you know, I live to travel, but I'm appreciative when coming home. I will never have a large, beautiful home or expensive trappings of any kind, but I have a roof over my head, a little acreage to call home, work I enjoy, my dogs, friends and acquaintances with whom I share good and bad times and my family scattered across this nation living in beautiful places for me to visit. Most importantly, I enjoy the marvel of modern medical technology and medical professionals who have kept me going places far longer than my grandparents were able to travel.

Visiting ancient sites reminds me of how far civilizations have come. Recently, I explored Acoma Pueblo Sky City. Most of the Acoma people live in the valley below because there's no running water or electricity on their ancestors' high mesa, which overlooks the tribe's sacred Blue Mountain. A bus took us upward, but the ancient trail's steep hike downward makes visitors grateful for air conditioning and cold water at the tribal museum. We do live in a most marvelous age.

*Y'all, count your blessings this Thanksgiving!*

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November 2025  
Volume 22, Issue 11

## ON THE COVER



*The Funk family's next chapter is life on the ranch.*

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# SENSE OF SERVICE

— By Virginia Riddle

They met through mutual friends in Pennsylvania, and he's 16 years older than her. "We lived only 34 miles apart in Maryland and Pennsylvania then," Pamela Funk recalled. "Steven was a firefighter, and we had never crossed paths before. It was cool when we figured it out." Their family, now including son, Logan, age 19, and daughter, Emma, a student at Corsicana High School, has taken a journey familiar to many U.S. military service personnel and their families.

"I was a volunteer firefighter/wildland firefighter in Pennsylvania," Steven said. "I had always wanted to be a firefighter, and I got involved in the National Guard to help people. From there, I chose the Army full time as a career because it was good for my family and me. My best time in the military was during basic training in 2006. I joined as an older male and was able to mentor and help get the younger guys through it. Iraq in 2009-2010 was another memorable time, not so much the situation, but because of the people I was with who made those times better."

Making the Army a career has taken Steven to deployments in Iraq, Kuwait, Latvia and Lithuania, and the family has made moves with their arrival in Navarro County, Texas, being the latest and maybe the last. "What's made my military service unique has been the people I was with during each experience," Steven said. He's a decorated soldier, many times over, and is a member of Hives for Heroes and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Earned medals include the ARCOM Army Commendation Medal (4), the Army Achievement Medal (4), the Army Reserve Component Medal (3), the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and many earned ribbons. Other awards include the Honorable Order of the St. Barbra Award, the Texas Humanitarian Service Ribbon and the General Thomas J. Stewart Medal (2nd award with one bronze oak leaf cluster).

Pamela has supported Steven's decision to become a career soldier completely. After moving to Navarro County, she put her degree in early childhood education and experience in day care to work as Home Helpers' administrator and has recently become part owner, since Stephen will retire from the military after his assignment as Readiness NCO is completed. Pamela is involved in the Family Readiness Group and Operation Homefront. The readiness group supplies resources across the state to soldiers in need. "Sometimes, it's just a day of relaxation after two weeks of training or making sure their families are taken care of, especially if a spouse is deployed," she



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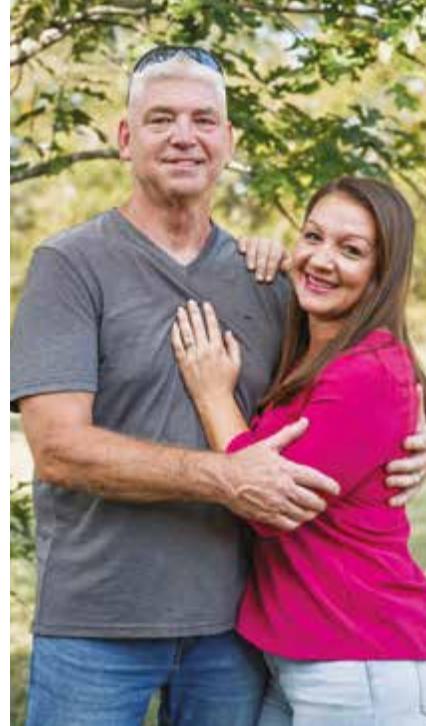


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explained. "For instance, twice yearly, I pick up donations from Dollar Trees for school supplies and presents for military kids. I'm the fun! Deployments are hard. Kids still need to be taken places, and repair men must be met. I like to be that light of hope. I've learned the boundaries of what command does and what I can do. I've been that spouse. It's really on my heart to be that person who helps."

Steven echoed Pamela, "One of the most challenging aspects of being away from family are time zone differences. It's difficult to talk when one person is sleeping, and the other is awake." His current assignment allows Steven to see his family daily and share experiences with others.

After arriving in Navarro County, this family put down roots in the land by buying a ranch. They've also enjoyed life in Navarro County. "I love walking down Beaton," Pamela said. "The community is really great and not fast-paced. My job working with the elderly is gratifying, especially when he or she is a veteran. Our move to Texas has been the best.



small farming in Pennsylvania, and, yes, all the animals have been a learning curve for me. Pamela wanted goats. We have four male goats," he said. "We've got ducks, cows and pigs. I'm learning something new every tomorrow." His hobbies of woodworking, fishing and hunting, which he's done most of his life, help Steven manage the ranch.

"I like everything craft," Pamela shared. "I sew, crochet, read, do kids' stuff with them, paint and volunteer at the animal shelter. I like to travel, but we can't always travel together due to Steven's military travel restrictions. I have travel bucket lists. Some of my best memories are homecoming days, lazy Sunday afternoon days with the family and doing things together around the ranch.

As his career travels on to a different track, Steven advises those considering joining the military to qualify and use the educational benefits. Spouses can use the remaining portion of those benefits. As for Steven's future, it's life on the ranch. "I want to get into beekeeping," he said, "and most importantly, spend time with my family." **NOW**

"And we're in the country far enough away but close enough to get what we need," Steven added.

Steven earned a bachelor's degree and an associate degree in criminal justice, but those didn't completely prepare him for ranch life. "We did

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— By Virginia Riddle

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Rice, Texas, has a new destination for beer, wine and spirits that's already making waves in Navarro County. Hootin Holler Beer and Liquor, the second location from experienced businessman Scott Olden, opened just in time for holiday entertaining. While many locals know the original Gun Barrel City store, this Rice location brings the same commitment to customer service that earned the brand recognition as "Best of the Best Liquor Store in Cedar Creek."

"It's important to our staff and myself that we offer the best customer service," Scott explained. This philosophy drives everything at both Hootin Holler locations.

The Rice store offers an extensive collection of wines, craft beers, hard spirits, liquors, quality cigars and specialty snacks. "Our employees help customers make the best choices," Scott said. "We have good people working at both stores — veteran employees who know their products." Scott invests in his team by taking staff to industry conventions for ongoing education. He employs 12 people at the original Gun Barrel City location and three at the new Rice store.

Hootin Holler extends beyond individual customers by supplying area bars and restaurants. "I own a restaurant, so I know what's important for hospitality businesses to be successful," Scott noted.

The store offers modern conveniences including Door Dash delivery, online ordering with local pickup and competitive wholesale pricing for commercial accounts.

The Hootin Holler name has deep local roots. Originally a Cedar Creek Lake convenience store in Gun Barrel City, the business maintained its distinctive name through ownership

changes. When Scott purchased the name and store in 2022, he saw the perfect opportunity to combine his remodeling experience with a new business challenge.

"The previous owners were retiring so I looked at this as a chance to extend my remodeling experience," Scott explained. "I've enjoyed the renovation and learning what customers want. It's taken dedication, but now we have good products, excellent service, and we're creating a fun environment for employees and customers."

With two locations and restaurant supply services, Hootin Holler has developed significant buying power. "We can keep prices the lowest in the counties we serve," Scott said.

This competitive edge reflects Scott's lifelong business acumen. The Dallas native started young as an entrepreneur with a yard mowing business. After graduating from Southern Methodist University with an accounting degree, he grew that landscaping business for 30 years before selling it. Along the way, he diversified into real estate, remodeling and restaurants.

"I also invest in training staff and empowering them," Scott explained. "Owning a liquor store has been a learning curve, but it's a natural extension of my previous work."

Since moving to the Cedar Creek area in 2004, Scott has embraced rural life. As an Eagle Scout, husband and father of three, he continues volunteering with Boy Scouts of America. Hootin Holler reflects this community commitment through membership in the Corsicana & Navarro County Chamber of Commerce, Cedar Creek Lake Area Chamber of Commerce and Texas Package Stores Association.

"I've found I like the people and pace of rural environments," Scott shared. "People are more polite. It's less stressful, and the drives are peaceful."

Scott's vision extends beyond simple transactions. "I want Hootin Holler to not only be customers' choice but their preferred choice," he concluded. "My staff and I are committed to always meeting or exceeding expectations and building lifelong relationships."

As Rice residents discover their new neighborhood liquor store, they're finding more than competitive prices. They're experiencing personalized service that builds community connections one customer at a time. **NOW**



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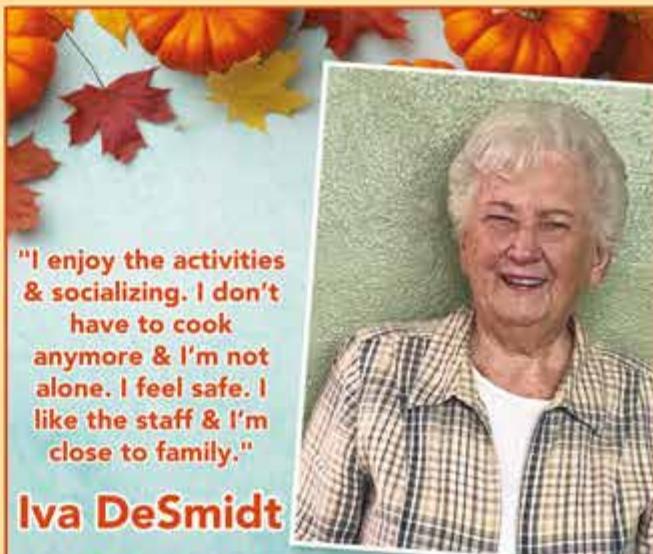


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## Zoomed In: Jahran Brown

By Virginia Riddle

This native son of Corsicana enjoys working as a paraprofessional with students at Corsicana High School, his alma mater. Jahran Brown, also known as "Coach," mentors kids in the community outside of the classroom through his work with the NAACP and as a Mason. "These are really good people," Jahran said. "This is community."

He's also a poet, musician, motivational speaker and author of two books. Friends, neighbors and fellow artists come to hear his poetry at the monthly Meetinghouse Revival's Open Mic Nights. His latest book is for children and titled, *Dad, What's in Your Briefcase?*

Jahran enjoys sports, writing, singing, community volunteering and traveling. He revealed, "My favorite place to go is New Orleans for the music."



*It's Garden Care Day at Compassion Food Pantry.*



*Paul Tomaso shares composting facts and ideas with Better Garden Club members.*



*JLCCS students serve as altar servers for Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. Also pictured is Bishop John Gregory Kelly.*



*Patrons enjoy Puzzle Swap time at the Corsicana Public Library.*

# NOW



James Blair Chapter, DAR, welcomes Marcy Carter-Lovick, DAR National Registrar General, to speak on Women of the Constitution.



Dr. Marianne Wilson and the Corsicana Public Library staff invite the public to celebrate UPS driver, Brian Van Meter, for his 39 years of service.



Pamela Ballantine, Foster Grandparent Program coordinator, explains the program to Mexia Women's Friday Club members.

An advertisement for The Turquoise Armadillo. It features a logo with a white armadillo on a teal background, the text "The Turquoise Armadillo", and "A Rare Bird Has Landed...". Below the logo, it says "Cheryl Pratt • 903-654-0142", "Thursday, Friday &amp; Saturday 10-6", "9921 NWCR 1390 • Blooming Grove, TX 76626", and "5 miles north of Barry (Cryer Creek area)". To the right, there are images of several colorful, patterned dresses hanging on hangers. A Facebook link "The Turquoise Armadillo" is at the bottom right.

A photograph of a family gathered around a table for a Thanksgiving meal. A large turkey is on the table, and everyone is smiling and holding plates. Overlaid on the image is the text "Thankful for the Smiles We Share." in large red letters. Below the image is a group photo of seven people, including a man in the center and six women on either side, all wearing dark shirts with a red heart logo. The background shows a room with bookshelves.

An advertisement for Van Horn Orthodontics. It features a group of seven people, including a man in the center and six women on either side, all wearing dark shirts with a red heart logo. The background shows a room with bookshelves. The text "VAN HORN ORTHODONTICS" is at the top in large white letters, followed by "Zero down • Interest Free", "Easy Payments • No Referral Needed", and "Offices in Corsicana and Fairfield". A "BEST OF THE BEST" badge with "8 YEARS IN A ROW!" is on the right, and the phone number "(903) 872-1200" and address "1450 West Second Ave. • Corsicana, TX • 111 W. Main St. • Fairfield, TX" are at the bottom.

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"I believe every patient deserves dignity, comfort, and compassion at every stage of life," Johnnie shares. "Providing care that supports families as much as it supports patients is what drew me to hospice nursing."

When she's not at the bedside, Johnnie enjoys life in the country with her fiancé and their animals—reminding her daily of the simple joys and comforts that matter most. That same sense of peace and home is what she works to bring to every patient and family she serves.

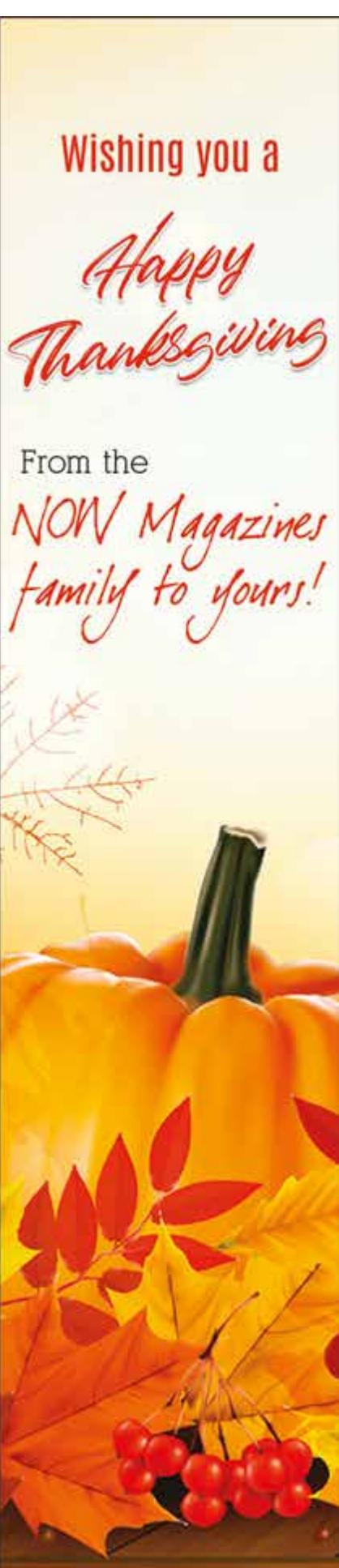


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■ Comfort and dignity for every patient  
■ Support for families when they need it most

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## CookingNOW

# IN THE KITCHEN WITH KAREN WOOLHEATER

— By Virginia Riddle



"My treasured heirloom recipes come to life in my favorite spot: our family's outdoor kitchen." I cherish my time in that kitchen," Karen Woolheater shared. Karen has balanced raising her children, managing her father's business and supporting her and her husband's plumbing venture spanning three decades. "I sharpened my culinary talents by hosting gatherings, camping trips and creating lasting memories with every dish I prepared," she added.

Through her and her husband's Woolheater Wellness Powered by ASEA, Karen reinvents classic recipes with a healthy twist while carefully preserving flavors that make them so special to family, friends and gatherings. She enjoys incorporating wholesome ingredients and cleaner choices. "Our family dinners remain filled with warmth and laughter," Karen added. "I enjoy cooking with heart and serving with soul." **NOW**

## Beefsteak Tomato Salad

**3 large beefsteak tomatoes or any other kind of tomato, thickly sliced**  
**1 large red onion, thinly sliced**  
**2-3 Tbsp. crumbled blue cheese, or to taste**  
**Salt, to taste**  
**Pepper, to taste**  
**1/4 cup Balsamic or Italian salad dressing**

1. On a rectangular plate, alternate the tomato slices and onion slices; sprinkle with blue cheese.
2. Add the salt and pepper; pour the dressing

over the slices of tomato and onion. Chill for about 10 minutes or serve immediately.

## Berry Cobbler

*This is keto-friendly.*

**3 cups berries, fresh or frozen**  
**1 Tbsp. lemon juice**  
**1/4 tsp. Xanthan gum**  
**2/3 cup almond flour**  
**1/3 cup coconut flour**  
**1 cup Swerve or sweetener of choice**  
**1 egg**  
**6 Tbsp. butter, melted**

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F; pour the berries

into a 9x9-inch pan. Sprinkle the lemon juice and Xanthan gum over the berries.

2. In a bowl, add the flours, sweetener and egg; stir until the mixture resembles corn meal. Sprinkle the flour mixture over the berries.
3. Drizzle with the butter; bake for 25 minutes, or until the cobbler is golden brown. Remove from the oven; let sit for 10 minutes before serving it warm.

## Faux Shrimp & Grits

*Grits:*

**2 12-oz. bags riced cauliflower, prepared according to pkg. directions**  
**1/4 tsp. salt**  
**6 Tbsp. butter**  
**12-oz. cheddar cheese, grated**

*Shrimp:*

**4 Tbsp. butter**  
**3/4 cup onion, chopped**  
**1/2 cup bell pepper, chopped**  
**2 garlic cloves, or to taste**  
**1 cup tomatoes, chopped**  
**1/2 tsp. dried thyme**  
**1 Tbsp. almond flour**  
**1 lb. raw medium shrimp, thawed**  
**1/2 to 1 cup vegetable or shrimp stock (divided use)**  
**1 Tbsp. tomato paste**  
**1/3 cup heavy cream**  
**2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce**  
**2 dashes Tabasco sauce, or to taste**  
**Salt, to taste**  
**2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped**

**1. For the grits:** With an emulsion blender or food processor, puree the cauliflower to the desired consistency; stir in the remaining ingredients. Set aside, keeping the grits warm.

**2. For the shrimp:** In a pan, melt the butter; sauté the onions, peppers and garlic until softened. Add the tomatoes with natural juice and thyme. Simmer for 2-3 minutes.

**3.** Add the flour; blend well. Add the shrimp, continually stirring for 2 minutes. Add 1/2 cup stock; cook for an additional 2-3 minutes. Add the tomato paste; blend well. Add the cream, the 2 sauces and more stock, if needed.

**4.** Heat the shrimp mixture until the shrimp are cooked, but don't bring the mixture to a boil. Note: *If you use already cooked shrimp, add them at the end to heat only.*

**5.** To serve, place the grits in a bowl; add the shrimp mixture. Sprinkle with the parsley.



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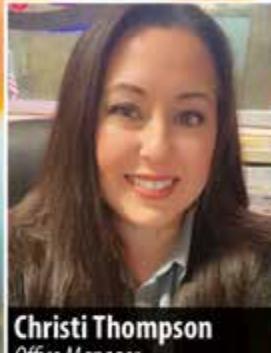
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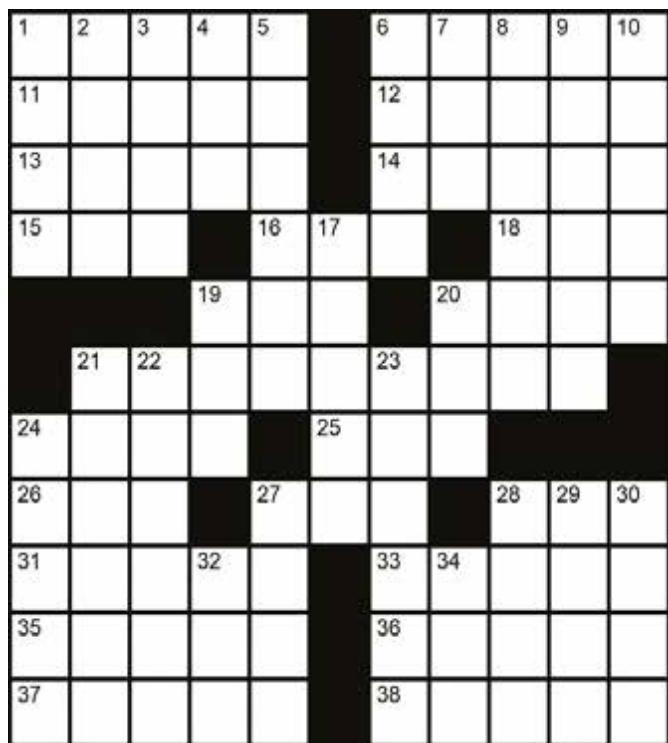
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# Crossword Puzzle



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## Across

1 Obama's youngest  
 6 One Note ---  
 11 Florida Keys, e.g.  
 12 Check for fit  
 13 Detroit gridders  
 14 Oak-to-be  
 15 Testing place  
 16 Kind of port  
 18 Kissing in public, perhaps, briefly  
 19 Hesitator's syllable  
 20 Claim against property  
 21 San Francisco sight  
 24 Duration  
 25 Wee boy  
 26 "It's pretty, but is it --- ?" (Kipling)  
 27 Government agency controlling one-eighth of the country

28 Army detectives  
 31 Supple  
 33 Incongruity  
 35 Muzzle  
 36 "Bronco Billy" co-star Sondra ---  
 37 They might be smashed as Tom gets drunk  
 38 Persuades

10 UN head before Ki-moon  
 17 Nose  
 19 "Ode on a Grecian ---" (Keats)  
 20 Type of TV screen  
 21 Burst of speed  
 22 Military display  
 23 Some Sri Lankans  
 24 Chip dip  
 27 Takes a chance  
 28 Narcotic shrub  
 29 Deep black  
 30 Treats with tinctures  
 32 Sing wordlessly  
 34 Rank

## Down

1 Ledge  
 2 Home to billions  
 3 Grubby guy  
 4 Cackleberry maker  
 5 Suppose Sue mixes it with Sam  
 6 Brief attempt  
 7 Curve  
 8 Short-sightedness  
 9 Place for a patrol

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

## SCAVENGER HUNT WINNER!



Donna Dean, winner of \$50 cash, says, "I love to read the CorsicanaNOW Magazine. I meet new people in the stories and features. It helps me feel more connected to the community."

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**Downtown Christmas  
Carriage Rides**

Friday - Saturday  
Dec. 12-13 and Dec. 19-20  
For more information: [downtownwaxahachie.com](http://downtownwaxahachie.com)

**YMCA Santa Run**

Saturday  
Dec. 13 | 9 am  
Registration information: [waxahachiemca.org](http://waxahachiemca.org)

**Santa Craft Beer Stroll**

Saturday  
Dec. 13  
At Participating Downtown Merchants

**Historic Christmas Tour of  
Homes 2025**

Saturday - Sunday  
Dec. 13-14 | 1 pm - 7 pm  
Tickets online: [downtownwaxahachie.com](http://downtownwaxahachie.com)

**Pajama Story Time at  
Railyard Park**

Friday  
Dec. 19 | 2 pm



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