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DeSoto ISD School Board Elections Results

At the conclusion of the November 3, 2020 election for the DeSoto ISD Board of Trustees, the residents of DeSoto re-elected Karen Daniel to her seat in Place 3 and Dr. Tiffany Clark to her seat in Place 4. Running unopposed, Abe Cooper Jr. was elected to Place 5 replacing former Trustee Aubrey C. Hooper who retired from his post in September of this year after nine and a half years of service.

Cooper was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. Raised and surrounded by educators, Cooper attended Dallas ISD schools and graduated from South Oak Cliff High School in 1989 before going on to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree from Paul Quinn College. Cooper followed in the footsteps of his parents and pursued a career in education serving as a Physical Education teacher at K. B. Polk Elementary Vanguard in Dallas ISD for 10 years.

A DeSoto resident for more than 22 years, Cooper has been actively engaged in service to the DeSoto ISD school community by volunteering at Desoto West Middle School's former Male Leadership Program and serving as the DeSoto Eagles Football team's chaplain. As an active member of the DeSoto community, Cooper plans to focus his work as a trustee on supporting organizational health and wellness with the goal of improving culture to enhance student learning. Cooper is happily married to his wife, Dionne. The Coopers have two children: a son, who currently attends DeSoto High School and a daughter, a graduate of DeSoto High School and currently studies at Texas Christian University.

The DeSoto ISD Board of Trustees voted to elect Board Officers at the Monday, November 16, 2020, regular meeting of the Board:

Amanda Sargent - President DeAndrea Fleming - Vice President Abe Cooper, Jr. - Secretary

Four DeSoto Track Athletes Sign College Intent Letters

DeSoto Independent School District hosted a COVID-friendly early signing day for four studentathletes and their families at the DHS Athletic Field house.

These four track stars signed athletic, full-ride, scholarship-based commitments to the universities at which they will continue their athletic pursuits while also working towards college degrees. "This is an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our student-athletes and their families as they sign athletic scholarships to compete at some of the nation's top universities—a testament to the caliber of athletic and academic experiences offered to DeSoto ISD scholars," said DeSoto ISD Athletic Director Larry Davis.

The following DeSoto High School track studentathletes made commitments by signing their National Letters of Intent:

> Mia Abraham Univer Lacie Deboskie Florida Logan Neely Unive Jalaysi'ya Smith TO B

University of Illinois Florida A&M University University of Illinois TO BE DISCLOSED

Upcoming Calendar

- . Dec. 14: DeISD Board Meeting
- Dec. 21 Jan. 1: Winter Break Campuses
 & District Office Closed
- · Jan. 4: Student Holiday
- · Jan. 5: Student Holiday
- · Jan 18: MLK Jr. Holiday No School
- Jan. 19: DeISD School Board Meeting

#DeSotoSoaringBeyond

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8 VISIONS OF SUGAR PLUMS

At Home With the Martins

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28 COOKINGNOW Joshua Harper



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ON THE COVER

You can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!

Photo by Shane Kirkpatrick.

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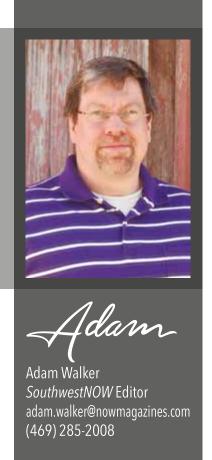
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Thanks to the district's 29 career pathways — the most offered under one roof — Duncanville ISD students have access to more opportunities and their choices are limitless. Interested in a world class education? The application window opens in January for the Duncanville High School Collegiate Academy and middle school Choice Programs.





EDITOR'S NOTE

'Tis the season!

One of my favorite Christmas memories is the year I was in a play called Ebenezer Jr. I played Ben, the title character, who is a selfish teenager concerned with nothing more than which relative he can con into getting him the biggest gift. That role is perfect for a bit of over-the-top hamming it up. Just my style.

The director didn't appoint a props master, so finding props, and costumes for that matter, was up to the actors and their parents. For a costume, all I needed was PJs and a bathrobe. But props were another matter. I cut strips of yellow legal pad and taped them end to end to make a miles-long Christmas wish list. The first time the director saw me whip that out, to unroll off the desk and down the steps of the stage, was dress rehearsal. He nearly died!

My father owned a service station supply business, so empty boxes were never in short supply. Mom wrapped a number of these for under the tree, not knowing the "Dad" of the play (who had never shown up for a practice and knew none of his lines!) would start opening them. FRAM Oil Filters for all! Christmas is full of surprises! But you can still find me humming songs from that play!

Enjoy the moments!

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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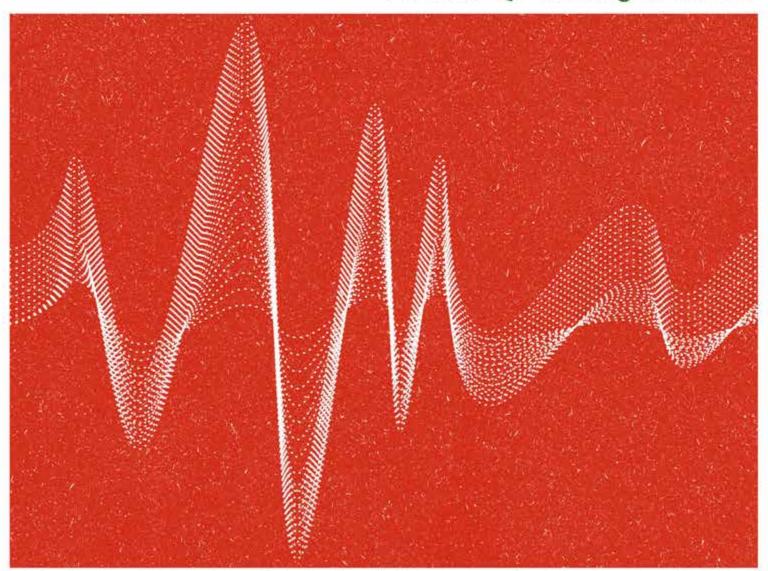
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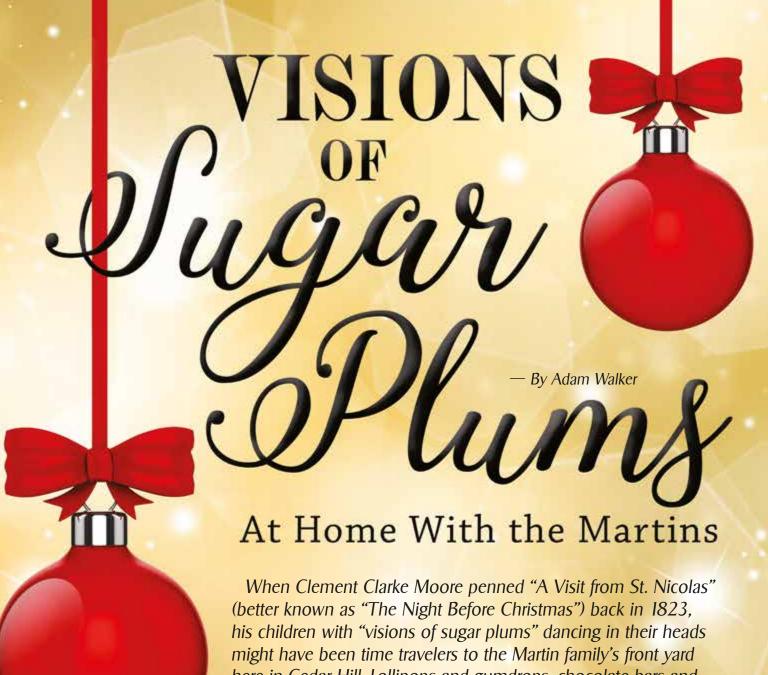
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here in Cedar Hill. Lollipops and gumdrops, chocolate bars and candy canes seem to grow from the ground, like magical crops from Fairyland! Apparently, Zina Martin and her parents have gotten a hold of the number to Santa's Seed Company!

Zina and her mother, Emelda, are self-described "partners in crime" when it comes to the craft work necessary to pull off the front yard wonderland. "I had done something similar decorating for my school," Zina reported. "I sort of fell down the Pinterest rabbit hole, and soon I was buying all the out-of-season pool noodles I could find for 25 cents each." Many of those pool noodles transformed into colorful suckers. A blow-up donut, a gingerbread man, an ice cream cone and outsize Christmas baubles in the shrubs and trees complete the look.

"The HERSHEY bar is poster board wrapped in aluminum foil," Emelda confessed. "The living room and dining room were filled with craft supplies while we worked on the decorations, but it wasn't a chore. We felt exhilarated! Now we keep adding to the Christmas decorations a little each year."

"It's a way of sharing the holiday experience with people around here. Some of the neighbors wanted to book Zina to decorate their yards this year!" said proud father, Reginald.

Zina recalls that as a child growing up in Houston, her father, always encouraged her creativity when doing science projects. "I loved science projects. Dad always had some ideas for my











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presentations. He encouraged me to go above and beyond. He fostered a sense of excellence and allowed my creativity to go wild. I went to the state finals."

"Creativity is generational in this family," Emelda confessed. "My mom was a caterer and got very creative with table settings. She created sets for local theater productions. She sewed for weddings."

"She also had a flower shop," Reginald added.

Zina agreed. "I learned a lot from her." Creativity continues in the family genes, as Emelda proudly informed. "My son is a chef and a photographer. And all of my grandchildren play stringed instruments. Zina's daughter, Anastasia, is a certified junior chef."



Zina's main talent is art, which fills the house. "When this house belonged to my brother and sister-in-law, everything was just white walls. That's how they liked it. But I fixed it!" Her paintings and multimedia pieces hang on every wall throughout the house, even in the bathroom! Zina's father was indirectly responsible for a remodel of the bathroom. Zina had filled a vase with the origami flowers she enjoys folding. Reginald placed the vase in the bathroom. Upon seeing it, Emelda was so taken with the colors that she redid the room in salmon, gray and blue to match the artwork!

Zina recalled how one of her larger pieces came about. "Mom and Dad had this huge mirror they hung above the fireplace when they moved in. One day it fell and shattered, so they looked everywhere to find a new one." Emelda and Reginald decided that the better course of action was to have their daughter create a large piece of art to replace the mirror. The result was a large-scale multimedia piece of a dancer. Feathers, animal-print fabrics, leather, bark and metal accent the paint work of a dramatically posed woman.

"I found the photograph that piece is based on," Reginald confessed. "There's been a lot of interest in Zina's artwork on Facebook." he added.

Most of Zina's art features African-American women, like herself. And many of her pieces have either been created for domestic violence charities or directly address this important issue. "One of my pieces shows a woman rising from the ashes on wings of fire," Zina explained. "It's inspired by a scene in a story by Stephen King." She has also illustrated adult coloring books and children's books written by her sister-inlaw and others.

This multigenerational household works well for everyone. "When my parents retired, they were looking outside Houston for a condo, but we had four bedrooms here. My brother told them, 'Come here. You can save money on your retirement.' They came, but that other part didn't work out. They're having fun!" Zina shared.

Though the Martins keep their Christmas decorating focused on the yard, mainly because it's easier to take down and store, it also fits with Reginald's philosophy about the yard in general. "You don't have to spend a lot of money. You can be selective and design something very nice, if you don't try to do it all at once." Recently, he's been focusing more on planters and perennials, for ease of maintenance in his gardening. He's full of ideas for the next stage, and the one after that, but recognizes the importance of implementation. "If you don't get started, you never get anywhere!" Zina and Emelda both recognize Reginald's "healthy competition" with the other neighborhood gardening enthusiasts.

Simple childhood delight is sure to bring a smile to your face if you happen upon this Christmas confection. And Zina, Emelda and Reginald will doubtless keep baking up batch after batch of sugar plumbs to dance in your dreams! NOW





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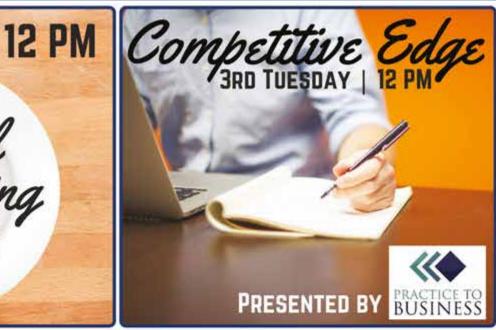
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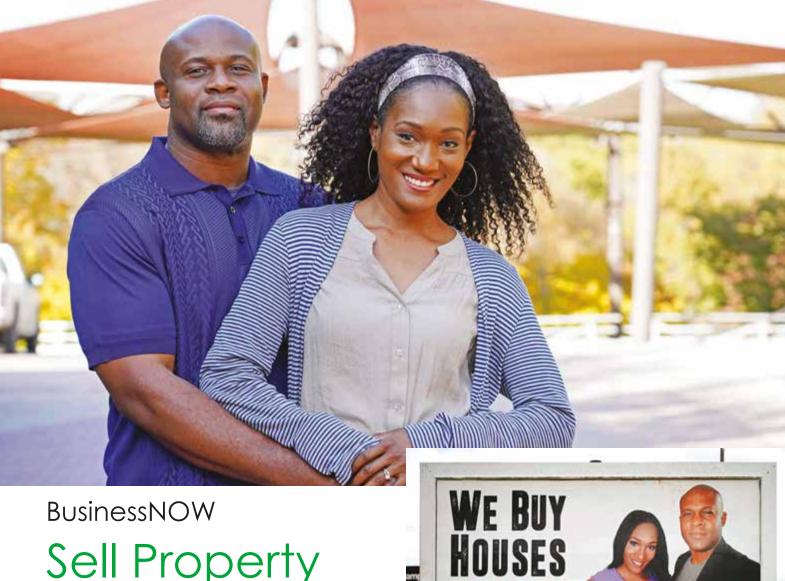
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— By Adam Walker

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Jeffrey and Keitha Freeman are a husband and wife team on a mission to help people sell their problem properties without all the stress that can entail. They aren't traditional real estate brokers, who help you find someone else to buy your property. They buy your property, making the process of unloading your burden quick and stress free. "We offer problem solving for problem properties," Keitha explained. "We buy your home guickly, and there are no commissions involved."

Sell Property Stress Free specializes in properties with little to no equity, those with nonpaying tenants, inherited property, long-vacant properties and those with judgments or liens. "We work with properties where foreclosure is imminent, saving the owners from financial nightmares that can last for 10 years," Keitha emphasized. Sometimes, it's health issues or an unexpected relocation for work or other reasons that leave you needing to make changes quickly.

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Jeffrey agreed. "We care about your situation. We have caring hearts."

Sell Property Stress Free understands these situations because Keitha has personal experience. "I'm coming from a place of knowing what it's like. I went through a divorce, and that resulted in me having a home I couldn't afford. It was a nightmare. Now, this is what we do. We keep the process confidential by helping you quickly resolve your situation."

Their process is simple. First you tell them about your

situation. Next, they give you options to consider. Then you choose your option and set a closing date, which is normally within a few days. Keitha and Jeffrey deal with all kinds of properties. "We want people to know that we don't only work with ugly homes, but pretty ones, too. We handle properties in the \$300K-\$500K range all the time, but also lower-end properties, commercial properties and properties that are just land," Jeffrey explained. "Bring us any situation, and we'll explore it with you. We have our own lenders and brokers, so we can give options for any situation you may find yourself in. We're all about helping. There's no obligation if you walk through the process with us. You can say, 'No,' to all our offers and walk away without obligation, because we don't bind you to a contract."

> "We offer problem solving for problem properties."

"Regardless of the condition your property is in, or how complicated the legal entanglements, we almost always find a solution," Keitha said. "And we can help with properties as-is, junk and all. We can refer our customers to credit repair analysts to help you get back on your feet, and we can even assist with your first month's rent or mortgage at your new location. Also, people should know that we buy properties throughout Texas, not just in the Metroplex." So, if your problem property is your lake house, or the farm or ranch you just inherited, Jeffrey and Keitha have you covered.

Jeffrey summed up their philosophy for what they're trying to accomplish. "We're a husband and wife team who care about your situation. We're here to give you options. We want to see how we can help you. It may seem like a small thing we're doing, but we want to help as many people as possible!" NOW







Around Town



First Methodist School students celebrate Community Helper Day!

Dr. Tucker relaxes after a long week of seeing chiropractic patients.

Zoomed In: Lisa Hall

By Adam Walker

Gardening enthusiast Lisa Hall had quite a surprise while working her flower beds at her DeSoto residence recently. "I work in my flower beds every other day," she reported. She had expected her horticultural efforts to produce some nice color to brighten up her home, but she got just a bit more than she bargained for!

"This humongous sweet potato came from what they call a nonproducing vine that you buy at any local nursery for the aesthetics of the leaves. Yet here we are with fruit. God's word is not void!" she exclaimed, proudly displaying the monstrous tuber. Just one sweet potato that size should easily supply her holiday table with a surplus of sweet potato casserole, candied yams or sweet potato pies!



DeSoto ISD staff perform checks for the phase 2 reopening.



Duncanville's The Complete Boutique holds a sports bra fitting event for Living With the Heart of Dance.



Lady Longhorns donate to the Austin Street Center after their match is cancelled.



DeSoto Parks and Recreation pays homage to Mayor McCowan by donning Delta red.



Cedar Hill PD helps out with the Halloween drive-through event.



Phyllis and John Lambert win the Big Spender Ticket Grand Prize as they retire as the owners of Gold-N-Things.

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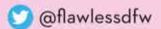
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Dr. Joshua Harper, a professor at Dallas International University, is a Houston native who has traveled the world, picking up recipes as he went. "I learned to cook from my mother. She says I was 2 when I'd drag a stool to the counter, proclaiming, 'I help!' Tex-Mex, Cajun and Southern food say home to me. But I've lived on four continents, so I've eaten my way around the world!"

He learned to make tortillas, so he could have Tex-Mex in East Asia, and he picked up local dishes while teaching in a Kenyan seminary and earning his Ph.D. at Cambridge. "I really enjoy variety. Give me one thing too often, and I get bored. Unless that's noodles or stuffed dumplings of some sort!" he proclaimed. Now

Christmas Pudding

- 1 1/2 Tbsp. butter
- I cup white sugar
- 2 Tbsp. molasses
- 1/2 box (100 grams) Atora brand suet (available in the international section of grocery stores.)
- 1 lb. mixed dried fruit of your choice

- I small Granny Smith apple, chopped
- Zest of 1 orange
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. allspice 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
- Pinch cloves
- Pinch cardamom
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup pecans, almonds or walnuts, chopped

- 2 cups fresh breadcrumbs (4-6 pieces stale or toasted sandwich bread, pulsed in the food processor)
- Juice from 1 orange 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 (ggs, beaten
- 3/4 cup brandy or rum
- 1/3 cup flour 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- **I.** Grease a 5-6 cup mixing bowl; the ideal bowl is tall, not wide. Cut a circle of waxed paper to fit into the bottom; grease the bowl.
- **2.** Mix the butter, sugar and molasses thoroughly. Add next 11 ingredients. Add orange juice, eggs and liquor; mix.
- **3.** Sift the flour and baking powder together. Add to the mixture; mix thoroughly. (It should not be too runny; add flour if needed.)
- **4.** Pack pudding mixture into the prepared bowl. Cut a circle of waxed paper; place it on top of the pudding. Wrap the whole bowl thoroughly in waxed paper and then 2 layers of foil. Pleat the foil at the top of the bowl to

allow a bit of expansion in the pudding. Tie wrapped bowl up with string, leaving a loop at the top as a handle.

- 5. Place a metal trivet in the bottom of a large pot, to raise the bowl off the bottom of the pot. Fill the pot with water until it reaches halfway up the side of the bowl. Steam the pudding for 6-8 hours. Check the water level occasionally to make sure the pan doesn't
- **6.** Cool the pudding; rewrap with new foil. Store in a cool, dark place for 4-5 weeks, adding 1-2 Tbsp. of brandy or rum every week or so to "feed" the pudding.
- **7.** On the day of serving, steam the pudding for at least 2 hours to reheat it. Unwrap and turn it out onto a plate. Flambé the pudding with 1/4 cup brandy or rum.

Beef Pilau With Kachumbari

Pilau:

1-2 onions, chopped Oil, for frying 2-4 cloves garlic, chopped 1-2 Tbsp. ginger, minced 1 Tbsp. ground cumin 1/2 tsp. black pepper 1 tsp. ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp. ground cardamom

1/4 tsp. ground cloves

1 lb. stew beef

2 beef bouillon cubes

3 1/2 to 4 cups water

2 cups basmati rice

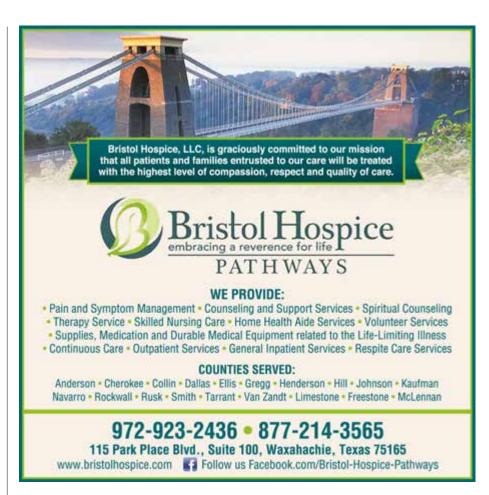
Kachumbari:

I red onion, diced 1-2 large tomatoes, diced 1/2 bunch cilantro, chopped (leaves and stems together) Chili pepper, chopped (optional) 1-3 tsp. lime juice (1-2 key limes) Salt. to taste

- 1. For pilau: Sauté the onions in several Tbsp. of oil over medium heat until caramelized. Add garlic and ginger.
- 2. Add spices and meat; sauté until no longer pink. Add bouillon cubes, water and rice.
- **3.** Once the pot begins to boil, reduce heat to low; cover for 20-25 minutes.
- **4.** For kachumbari: Soak the onion in water for 5-10 minutes to reduce sharpness. Drain; toss with tomatoes and cilantro. Add chilis, if using. Toss with lime juice and salt just before serving on top of pilau.

Kenyan Coastal Fish Curry

I medium onion, minced Oil, for frying 2 cloves garlic, minced





- 1 Tbsp. ginger, minced
- 1 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1-2 Tbsp. garam masala (or curry powder of choice)
- 1-2 tsp. ground turmeric
- 1 can coconut milk
- I lb. white fish (tilapia or any mild fish), cut into 1-inch chunks

Salt, to taste

- **I.** Sauté the onion in oil until beginning to turn golden; add garlic and ginger. Puree in the food processor; return to the pan with a bit more oil.
- **2.** Add the tomato paste, garam masala and turmeric; sauté about 1 minute. Add coconut milk and 1/2 a can of water. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for 5-20 minutes.
- **3.** Add the fish; simmer for 5-10 minutes, or until the fish is done. Salt as needed.

Summer Pudding

16-32 oz. frozen or fresh mixed berries Stone fruit, chopped, to taste (optional)

- 1/4 cup sugar, or to taste
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 2-3 Tbsp. jelly or jam (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch (optional)
- 1/2 loaf white sandwich bread, crusts removed



I. In a deep 2-qt. bowl, measure out enough fruit to fill it, leaving 1/2 inch at the top. Put the first 6 ingredients in a pot, on low heat; bring just to a simmer. The mixture should be juicy, but the berries should not collapse. Taste; if too tart, add a bit more sugar.

- **2.** While the fruit is heating, line the bowl with plastic wrap. Arrange the bread, covering the bottom and sides of the bowl. Trim as necessary to get a single layer with no cracks.
- **3.** Remove the bread pieces one by one, dipping the outward-facing side of each into

the berry juice, before returning it to the bowl, to ensure the pudding is pretty when served.

- **4.** Pour the berry mixture into the bowl. Arrange more bread atop the berries, making a lid. Cover with plastic wrap; put a plate that fits inside the bowl onto the top layer of the bread. Refrigerate with a weight (a can or jar) on top, to compress the pudding. Chill at least 3 hours, but overnight is better.
- **5.** Invert the pudding onto a plate with a lip or rim. Serve wedges in bowls. Top with whipped cream or ice cream.



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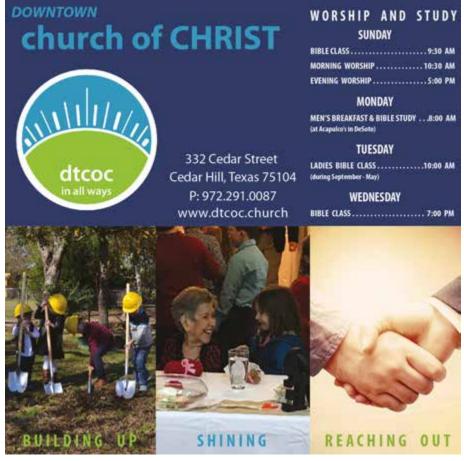
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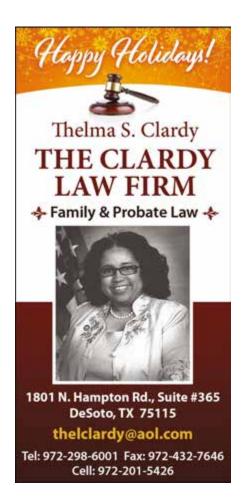




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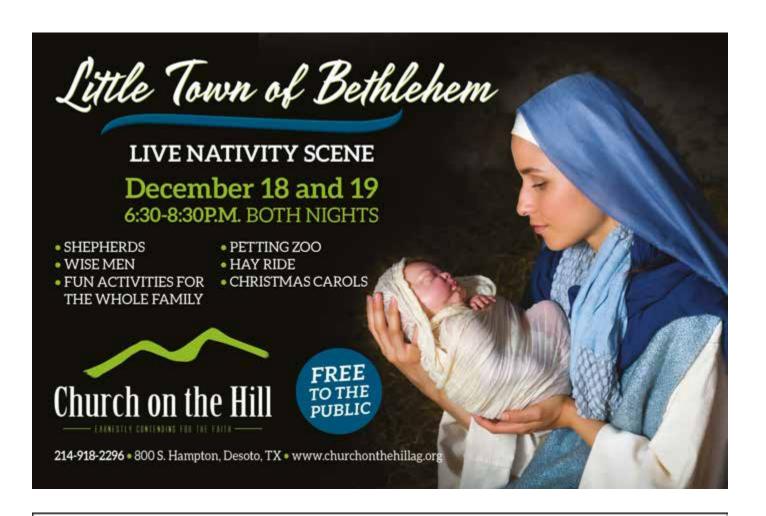
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Crossword Puzzle

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Across

- 1 National economic yardstick
- 4 Islamic sect
- 8 E.g. King Cole's fiddlers
- 9 Greet the judge
- 10 County whose most populous city is Yonkers
- 13 Nose bag grain
- 14 CD---
- 15 Mischievous person
- 16 Intoxicated state
- 18 Long hard walk
- 19 Palindromic competition vehicle
- 21 First Pauline and now Jeanne Phillips
- 23 Discharge
- 26 Fur scarf
- 27 III. neighbor
- 28 Go right, to a horse
- 29 Focus
- 32 Rifle accessory
- 33 Working tirelessly
- 34 Campsite accommodation
- 35 "— rather go naked than wear fur" (slogan)

Down

- 1 Dandyl
- 2 Hullabaloo
- 3 Poker chips
- 4 Part of a wineglass
- 5 Owns
- 6 Pump
- 7 *25* album singer
- 8 "Terrible" time for tots
- 9 Water's edge
- 11 Foam clog
- 12 Murder victim of 6/6/68
- 17 Fork over
- 18 "I Tawt I Taw a Puddy --- "
- 20 "--- bon!"
- 21 "General Hospital" network
- 22 Encouragement
- 24 Stinking to high heaven
- 25 Stocking fillers?
- 27 Exuded
- 30 Swindle
- 31 Untrained

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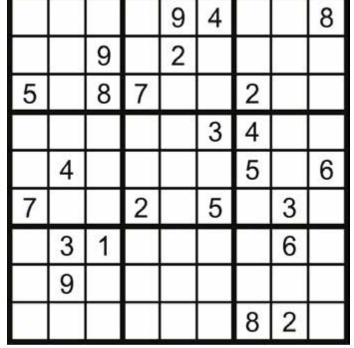
Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

Solutions on page 44

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

Medium

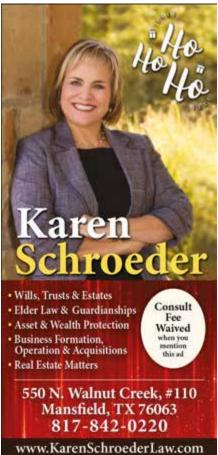


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Solutions on page 44

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ristmas DECEMBER Due to COVID-19, 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.

12/5

Ugly Christmas Sweater Party:

Wear your ugly best and BYOB. \$15-\$25. 8:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m., Next Level Giants Event Center, 900 N. Polk St., Ste. # 170, DeSoto.

12/13

The Experience:

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12/18

Poetry Night:

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Tuesdays in December

Elf Academy Grab & Go:

Craft at home. Enjoy a treat. Fun, free and safe! Event dates: 12/1, 12/8 and 12/15. 10:00 a.m.-noon, Hillside Village, 305 W. FM 1382, Ste. 590 Cedar Hill.

First and Second Saturdays

Vision Boards:

Come with your dreams. All materials provided. Refreshments served. Home is large enough for social

distancing. \$25. Noon-2:00 p.m., 214 Cozy Ln., Cedar Hill. Call (214) 515-2884 to RSVP.

Third Saturdays

Duncan Switch Saturday Street Market:

The event includes vendors. food and fun. 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Main and Center streets, Duncanville.

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

"And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." - Luke 2: 10-11



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Easy

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

Medium

1	2	3	6	9	4	7	5	8
4	7	9	5	2	8	6	1	3
5	6	8	7	3	1	2	9	4
9	1	5	8	6	3	4	7	2
3	4	2	9	1	7	5	8	6
7	8	6	2	4	5	1	3	9
8	3	1	4	5	2	9	6	7
2	9	7	1	8	6	3	4	5
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Merry Christmas from Our Family to You and Yours!

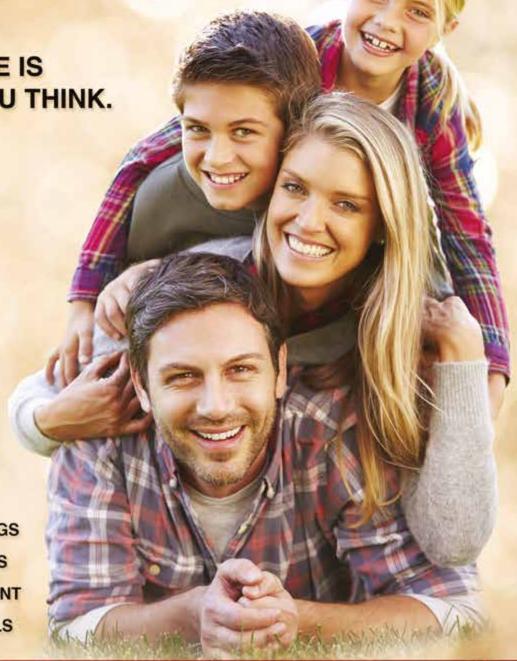
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