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HOPE



ON THE COVER



Navarro County has a new ally in the fight against cancer.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome, 2025!

This year, I can celebrate a new start with a slightly remodeled heart after my cardiac surgery last fall. Thanks to everyone who has wished me the best and to those who have helped me get back in shape. It's a daily journey, but here's to everyone living their best life as we get another new start.

I love camping adventures, especially with my two fur friends along, so several years ago, I joined two groups of women who also like to camp. One of our recent adventures was at Lake Murray State Park in Oklahoma. Our Texas state parks are wonderful, but so is this sister state's Lake Murray. One of the things I enjoy about these two groups is that they are both multigenerational. We learn so much from each other. I've experienced the same thing in the medical profession. The medical student shadowing a doctor was the one who had the best idea of how to proceed with my oldest granddaughter's care recently. It was great to have both experienced doctors and the student who had just studied this new procedure which, after a little discussion, we all agreed was the path to take. It's never too late to learn something new or learn from longtime experience.

A trip to the Corsicana Government Center's front lawn is a learning and remembrance time. A new marker was dedicated on Veteran's Day. As a member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, I again listened to a reading of the famous words of Colonel William B. Travis, in what has become known as the Travis Letter, written from his days as commander of the Alamo. May we continue to learn, even from those who lived long ago.

Let's make the new year wonderful!



Virginia

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NEIGHBORS

Helping

NEIGHBORS

— By Virginia Riddle

Everything changes for a cancer patient and his or her family when an oncology doctor says the Big C word. Often, very unexpectedly, the life road ahead for the patient becomes scary and threatening. Family financial issues, health insurance claims, time away from work and from children, with treatments away from home, are some of the daily challenges patients and family members navigate in order to battle cancer. Knowing the need for help and support for many going through treatment, a new group has been formed to assist Navarro County citizens fighting cancer, as well as to celebrate and encourage those who have survived this disease. “We formed the Navarro County Cancer Support (NCCS) group to raise money in order to provide assistance to Navarro County residents who are going through cancer treatments and facing financial challenges due to their diagnosis,” Donna Miller, the group’s president/treasurer, stated.

“We give a helping hand,” Edie Smith, an oncology nurse, said. Edie serves on the group’s Giving Committee. The committee reviews each application for assistance by evaluating factors to determine how they may financially help each patient. The applicant’s work status; support system; where and how often a patient receives treatment; and extra expenses during treatment such as travel expenses, hotel stays, etc., are areas that are considered. The Giving Committee reviews each application and decides to issue a one-time check and/or a gas card. “It’s a one-time thing, but each applicant can reapply,” Donna explained.

“We’re all volunteers who were previously



involved in the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life in Navarro County,” Donna continued. “However, we wanted the monies raised to stay in Navarro County, so soon after the COVID quarantine ended, and having received several ‘God signs,’ we started organizing by contacting the Freestone County group. They





have been doing this in that county for more than 10 years, so they became our pattern. They were thrilled for us to start a group in Navarro County and were more than glad to help get us started." The Navarro County group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Founding members include Donna Miller, president/treasurer; Emily Lawhon, vice president; Kelly Lovett, vice president; Sharon Thomas, vice president and Larry Miller, secretary.

NCCS held its first annual Wine and Cheese event in September. "We wanted to do something a little different, since there are so many events in this county. It's a great time to fellowship and gift monies. It was a joy to see all the participation, and we are excited to watch it grow each year," Edie said. Other events are in

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the planning stages, such as a Survivor Event to celebrate survivors, and to encourage those who are fighting this disease, as well as their caregivers. "We want to involve, and honor, survivors," Edie added. Donations may be made as an honorarium or memorial by contacting a member of NCCS. Serving with Edie on the Giving Committee are Margo Cook, Audrey Reed and Lois Garrett.

Almost everyone has been affected by cancer, whether it be a friend, family member or themselves personally. To Lois, surviving cancer has been a personal battle. A native of Palestine, Texas, she has lived in Navarro County for 34 years. "I volunteer my time to this group because God didn't leave me here not to share my time and experience with others," she offered. Lois has been employed by Super 1 Foods for 33 years and is serving as office manager, but she finds time to also volunteer with Wade Wellness Services and G.W. Jackson Multicultural Society. She's the board treasurer for the Dr. Kent E. Rogers Clinic. She experiences memorable moments in



helping people. "It's just that feeling you get knowing you're helping someone," Lois said. In her spare time, she enjoys baking, crafting and traveling.

A native of Lancaster, Texas, Donna has lived in Corsicana for the past 12 years. Employed by Community National Bank & Trust of Texas, she volunteers with NCCS because of the needs she saw cancer patients and their families having to meet. Donna also serves on the Salvation Army of Corsicana's board. "I enjoy being able to help fellow residents," she said. "Organizing the Navarro County Cancer Support and serving with my fellow board and committee members has been a great joy," Donna added. "Everyone working with this

organization has a servant's heart and is sincere in helping others in need." In her spare time, Donna enjoys adult coloring books and spending time with her grandkids and family.

Edie, a native of the Texas Hill Country, has lived in Navarro County since 1981. As an oncology nurse, she sees and treats cancer patients and has also experienced cancer journeys with friends and family members. "This support group's mission is very near and dear to me," she stated. Edie has worked for Texas Oncology for 25 years. In her spare moments, she enjoys spending time with family, doing anything outdoors and traveling.

It doesn't take long for most folks who move to Navarro County to realize that Navarro County residents still take the time to care for each other. Donna, Edie and Lois all agree that it's the people that make living and working in this county a pleasure. Donna said, "We have a very giving community." **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information, visit Navarro County Cancer Support on Facebook.

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Zoomed In: Don Coker

By Virginia Riddle

Thirty years ago, Don Coker arrived in Corsicana to serve as a highway construction company helicopter pilot, but he's also been an air medical helicopter pilot, "a law man" serving as a helicopter flying state trooper and a Navarro County sheriff's deputy. Retired, but still flying for fun, he's one-half of the Coker's Creations team with his wife, Terri. "I went deer hunting, and my wife bought my first woodworking equipment, so I had to learn how to use it," Don said of his woodworking pieces. "I've always been a handyman, and I've lived a good life." He and Terri are members of the Cowboy Church of Corsicana. A son is a police officer in Dawson, and the couple have two daughters. He reflected, "I enjoy visiting with people and the camaraderie of others."



The traditional turkey spaghetti at the First Methodist Women's Bazaar is a winner again.



Ken Higdon draws the winning raffle ticket for Hull Creative Arts Foundation board members.



The Fannin Fantastics warm hearts at Corsicana's Christmas Tree Lighting.



CHS Lady Tigers, Josslyn Tanner and Aaliyah Mathis, ring bells for the Salvation Army.



Bobbie Mason explains the care and propagation of succulents to Better Garden Club members.



K & K Creations cuts the ribbon.



Tammy Britton and Jessica and Wyatt Kindon vote for their favorites in Navarro College's Festival of Trees.



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— By Virginia Riddle



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The company's mission statement follows Proverbs. "We create confidence and trust for our clients through innovative solutions, excellent service and anticipating their individual needs." The business offers free in-home consultations.

Joseph's wife, Raquel Elder, is a co-owner. Joseph handles sales, Raquel does the accounting and office work, Jaymes Murphy is operations manager and Seth Foster is the lead installer. "We work as a team," Joseph said. "Doing business is more fun when surrounded by people who share your vision and want the company to succeed. The business serves clients in Navarro, Hill, Freestone, Ellis and Kaufman counties and is a member of the Corsicana & Navarro County Chamber of Commerce. "Our business partners with Answer International, an organization that rescues women and children from sexual abuse and slavery," Joseph added.

"I grew up in a working-class family with eight siblings in Waco," Joseph said. "I learned the value of hard work long before deciding to start my own business." He started an asphalt maintenance and parking lot repair business, and through that experience, met Kevin and Kim Garman,

franchise owners of Budget Blinds of Waco. "I became their lead installer and fell in love with the Budget Blinds brand concept," Joseph recalled.

A year later, Raquel finished her degree in radiology, and the couple moved to the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex for her career. Joseph started working for a Budget Blinds franchise there, and after only four months, the franchise owner mentioned to him that she was wanting to sell her franchise location in Mansfield, Texas. "It was overwhelming at first, since we had just moved to the area, but I knew it was an opportunity I didn't want to miss," Joseph stated. "We didn't have the way to get the money in a traditional sense, so we told her we wanted to purchase the franchise, but she would have to finance us, and we would pay her as we made money with the business. I knew after seeing the Waco location's success, it would work. Two years and two months later, Raquel and I took our 'lender' out to eat and paid her the last check. We officially became Budget Blinds franchise owners in 2012 and own the Corsicana and Mansfield franchises."

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"Each day's different, and each home or business is different," Joseph stated. "Some projects are challenging. Those allow us to be innovative and collaborative with our client in producing their vision and accomplishing their goals."

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Best Ever Tomato Soup

Poblanos Stuffed With Chicken and Cheese

4 large poblano chilies
 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
 1/2 medium white onion, chopped
 1 large garlic clove, chopped
 1 tsp. dried oregano
 1 tsp. cumin
 Pinch of ground cinnamon
 Kosher salt, to taste
 1 Tbsp. olive oil
 2 cups chicken, cooked and shredded
 1 1/2 cups rice, cooked according to package instructions
 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
 1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
 1 Tbsp. lime juice

1. Broil the poblanos 5-8 minutes until blistered; remove from heat. Cover the poblanos with a kitchen towel until cool; peel. Slit; remove the seed core. Rinse to remove any remaining seeds.
2. In a food processor, puree the tomatoes, onions, garlic and all spices.
3. In a 12-inch skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the puree; cook, stirring frequently, 8-11 minutes until the liquid has evaporated. Remove from the heat; stir in the chicken and rice. Add the cheese, cilantro and lime juice; stuff the mixture into each pepper.
4. Bake at 350 F 5-10 minutes until the cheese melts and the stuffed peppers are heated thoroughly.

CookingNOW

IN THE KITCHEN WITH SHARI BARRETT MCGHEE

— By Virginia Riddle



Overnight Blueberry French Toast

Cooking spray
 1 14- to 16-oz. loaf challah, cut into 2-inch cubes (divided use)
 1 1/2 cups fresh blueberries
 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, room temperature
 8 large eggs
 1/2 cup, plus 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar (divided use)
 2 1/2 cups half-and-half
 1 Tbsp. vanilla
 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
 1/4 tsp. salt
 Blueberry-maple syrup, to taste

1. Lightly coat a 9x13-inch baking pan with cooking spray; layer 2/3 of the bread in the pan. Add the blueberries; top with the remaining bread. Place spoonfuls of cream cheese around and between the bread cubes.
2. In a bowl, whisk the eggs. Add 1/2 cup of sugar and the remaining ingredients, except the syrup; mix well. Pour the custard over the bread. Pat the bread down gently; cover. Refrigerate overnight.
3. In the morning, remove the pan; uncover.

A native of Wisconsin, Shari Barrett McGhee's cooking began under the tutelage of family members and was influenced later when she resided in New Mexico and Arizona before moving to Texas. "In Wisconsin, meals were hearty in the winter and lighter in the summer," Shari shared, "and almost everything tastes better with cheese on it." Life in the Southwest gave Shari a love of the different regional styles of Mexican food. "I learned milk, a dollop of sour cream or a sopapilla with honey cools one's mouth when it's on fire," she added.

Shari, a retired juvenile probation officer, and her husband, Mike, a retired sheriff's office sergeant, crossed paths 20 years ago. She revealed, "I cook, so when I'm finished eating, I can sit back and say, 'That was yummy.'" **NOW**

Let set at room temperature for 15 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350 F

4. Sprinkle the casserole with the remaining 2 Tbsp. of sugar. Bake 45-50 minutes until the casserole top is golden. A knife inserted should come out moist but clean. Cool on a wire rack for 20 minutes. Serve warm with blueberry-maple syrup.

Blueberry-Maple Syrup

1 1/2 cups maple syrup
2 cups fresh blueberries (divided use)
1 lemon
Pinch of salt

1. In a small saucepan, stir the syrup and 1 cup blueberries; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat; simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Remove from the heat; stir in the remaining berries.
3. Prepare the lemon zest and squeeze the lemon; add to the berries. Add the salt. Serve warm over the Overnight Blueberry French Toast.

Best Ever Tomato Soup

Serves 8.

1 28-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 10.5-oz. can chicken broth
2 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. sugar
1 Tbsp. onion, chopped
1/4 tsp. baking soda
2 cups heavy cream

1. In a large stockpot, mix all the ingredients, except the heavy cream; simmer for 1 hour.
2. Add the heavy cream; heat over low heat. Don't let the soup scorch, but heat it thoroughly.

Grape Salad

1 8-oz. pkg. light cream cheese, softened
1 7-oz. jar marshmallow cream
1 bag green grapes, halved
1 bag red grapes, halved
1/2 cup slivered almonds, roasted

1. In a serving bowl, combine all ingredients.
2. Chill before serving.

To search for more great recipes from any of the 9 NOW Magazines publications, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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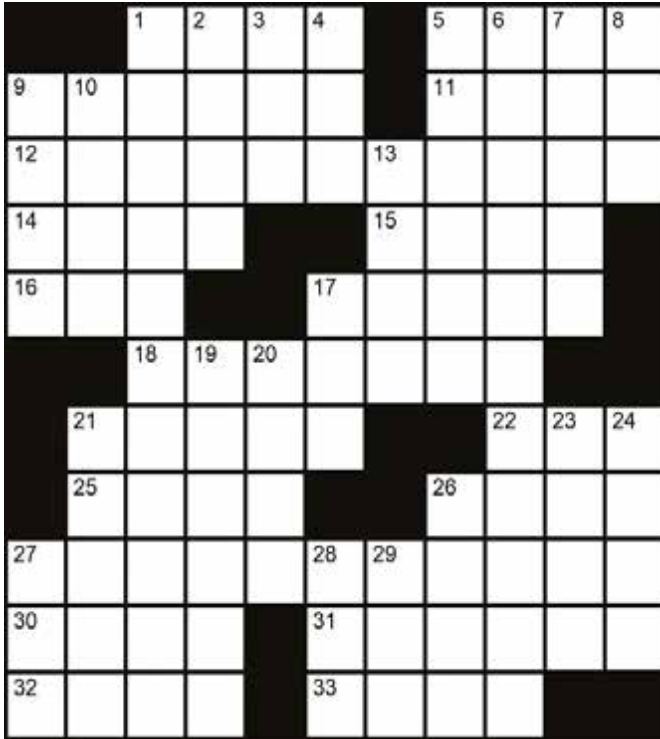
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Crossword Puzzle



CrosswordSite.com Ltd

Across

- 1 Took a dip
- 5 "Trust ---" (Janet Jackson song)
- 9 They raise the pitch
- 11 Bok ---, Chinese cabbage
- 12 Hill product
- 14 Condo, for example
- 15 "The Cannonball Run" star Reynolds
- 16 Ft. Collins setting
- 17 Track prelims
- 18 Without being stated
- 21 Title for a lady

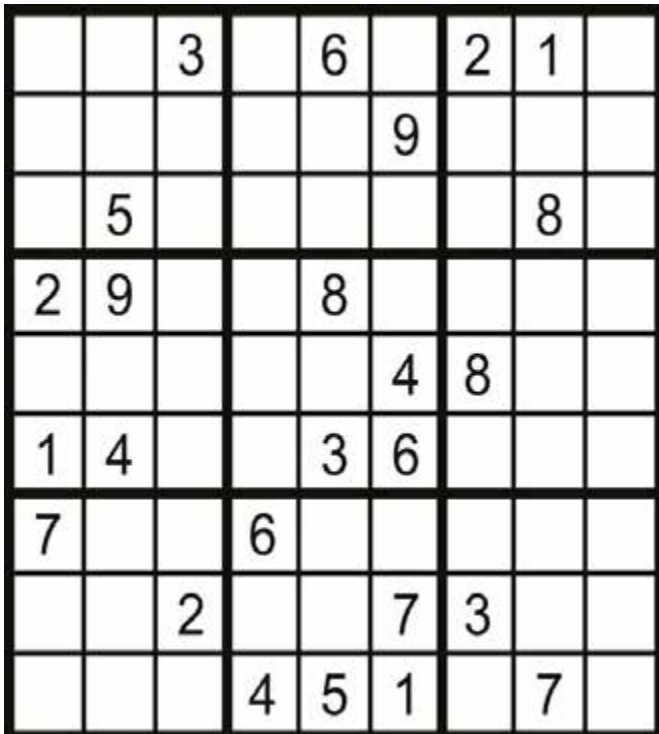
Down

- 22 Popeye's verb of being
- 25 "... --- - Cold --- - is master of them all." (Kipling)
- 26 Composer --- Bartók
- 27 Drives immediately behind another racecar
- 30 Oversupply
- 31 Whoopee!
- 32 "... of the D'Urbervilles"
- 33 10 Down output
- 1 Mad guitarist played as one of twelve on high
- 2 Formal legal document
- 3 Brown delivery firm
- 4 Ocean-height standard
- 5 Real
- 6 17th century European war
- 7 Cheers
- 8 Feminine half, in Chinese thinking
- 9 Urban renewal target
- 10 Cackleberry makers
- 13 Assist
- 17 "She Done --- Wrong" (Mae West movie)
- 19 Gets a little one a little later in life
- 20 Metal containers
- 21 Toulouse thousand
- 23 Mrs. Alfred Hitchcock
- 24 Hot Lips worked at one
- 26 North Atlantic hazard
- 27 U S M C noncom
- 28 French alternative to "café"
- 29 Bald patch patch?

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

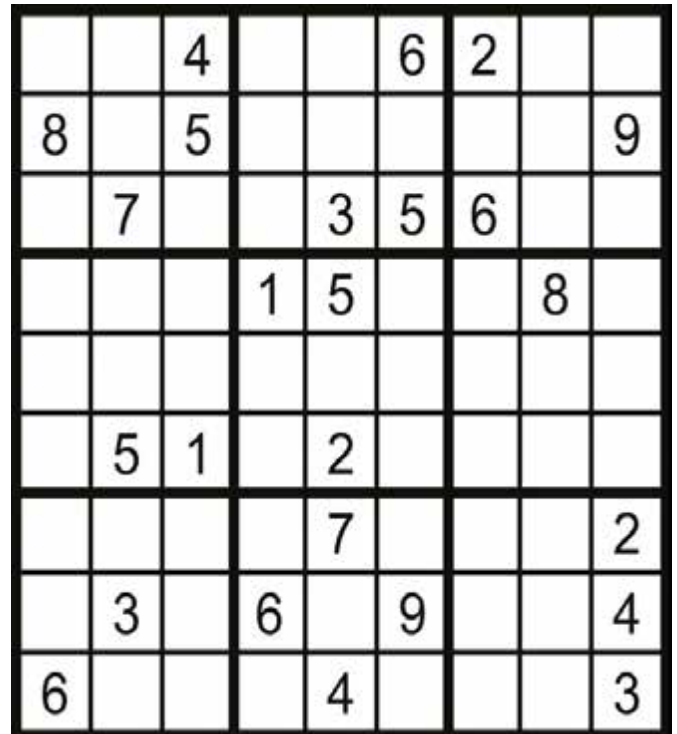
Sudoku Puzzle

Easy



CrosswordSite.com Ltd

Medium



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JANUARY

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.

1/4, 1/11, 1/18,
1/29

**Navarro College
Basketball Games:**
Times vary, Special Events
Center, Corsicana Campus,
[www.navarrocollege.edu/
calendar.html](http://www.navarrocollege.edu/calendar.html).

1/8, 1/15, 1/22

**Kinsloe House Luncheons
and Programs:**
\$20. Noon, Kinsloe House,
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1/11

Mildred Friends of Youth:
Live music, powwow drawing,
silent auction and live auction.
\$25 dinner tickets. 6:00 p.m.,
Countryside Event Center,
3460 SE CR 0040.
(903) 654-8298.

1/21

**MLK Scholarship
Breakfast:**
7:30 a.m., Cook Education
Center, 3100 W. Collin Street.
[www.navarrocollege.edu/
calendar.html](http://www.navarrocollege.edu/calendar.html).

1/23

**Corsicana Newcomers
Club Meeting:**
The 2025 officers will be
installed. 11:00 a.m., Kinsloe

House, 618 W. Third Ave.
For more info, call Annie Avery
at (714) 345-6707.

1/25

Perils and Pages:
Go on a Dungeons and
Dragons adventure. 10:00
a.m., Corsicana Public Library,
100 North 12th St. Facebook:
Corsicana Public Library.

1/30

Nonprofit Luncheon:
11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.,
Cook Education Center, 3100
W. Collin Street.
[www.navarrocollege.edu/
calendar.html](http://www.navarrocollege.edu/calendar.html).

2/15

Dancing for Our Stars:
5:30 p.m., Cook Education
Center, 3100 W. Collin Street.
Livestream starts at 8:00 p.m.
Facebook: Dancing for
Our Stars.

Mondays

Caregiver Support Group:
4:00-5:00 p.m., Corsicana
Senior Center, 919 W. Park Ave.
(828) 228-3579.

Tuesdays

**Corsicana Lions Club
Meeting:**
Noon, Sirloin Stockade,
2508 W. 7th St. Facebook:
Corsicana Lions Club.

Yoga at the Library:
Bring your own supplies. 6:00
p.m., Corsicana Public Library,
100 North 12th St. Facebook:
Corsicana Public Library.

**First
Wednesdays**

Community Senior Day:
Speakers, bingo, prizes and
lunch. 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.,
First Baptist Church of Eureka,
8718 S. Hwy. 287, Corsicana.
For more information, call
(903) 875-4652.

**Third
Wednesdays**

Senior Fun Day:
11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., MLK
Center, 1114 E. 6th Ave.
(903) 874-7259.

Wednesdays

Storytime:
10:30 a.m., Corsicana Public
Library, 100 N. 12th St.
Facebook:
Corsicana Public Library.

Corsicana Rotary Club:
Noon, Corsicana Country Club,
4100 Country Club Dr.
www.corsicanarotary.com.

**Second
Thursdays**

Savvy Seniors:
Lunch, games. 11:30 a.m.,

Corsicana Senior Center, 919 W.
Park Ave. (903) 654-4980.

Third Fridays

Better Garden Club:
9:00 a.m., First Methodist
Church Corsicana,
320 N. 15th St. Facebook:
Better Garden Club.

First Saturdays

**Rainbow Girls & Pledges
Masonic Youth Meeting:**
New members welcome.
10:00 a.m., Corsicana Masonic
Lodge, 201 N. 15th St.
ddean45@hotmail.com.

**Second
Saturdays**

Mimosas at the Market:
10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.,
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