

# MansfieldNOW

M A G A Z I N E

JANUARY 2026

## Reel Beginnings

From home movies to a Mansfield Movement, Michael Hill was born to create

In the Kitchen With Kelsyn Hart

Also inside:  
Scavenger Hunt  
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

*Hello, Mansfield!*

Every time I drive through Mansfield, I'm reminded how blessed people are to call this city home. You can see it on the busy sidewalks of Historic Downtown, in the parents cheering from the sidelines at local games and the simple wave from a neighbor as you pass by. Mansfield has grown over the years, but it is still called home for many, and easy to love.

This year, we will celebrate more people who make this community feel alive. You'll read about residents who give their time and talents to others, local businesses that continue to shape daily routines and families who bring fresh energy to long-standing traditions. Each story reflects the heart of Mansfield: steady, creative and full of people who care.

We hope this issue brings you a moment of connection. Maybe it nudges you to try a new restaurant, attend a community event or simply look around and notice something good about your corner of the city. Mansfield grows stronger when we show up for one another, and sharing these stories is one small way to keep that spirit going.

Thanks for spending part of your time with us. Enjoy the issue, and enjoy Mansfield.

*Have a great month!*

*Sandra*

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## ON THE COVER



*Michael Hill enthusiastically spreads his passion to those around him.*

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SCAN ME

A close-up photograph of a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing black-rimmed glasses. He is looking down at a tablet computer that is held in front of him, obscuring his lower face. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with other people.

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# Reel. Beginnings

— By Sandra Walters

*Michael Hill grew up in a household where creativity was as normal as breathing. “My dad was always recording us. I remember making home movies when I was 3 years old. Yes, I knew what a camera was that early in life,” he said. “I recall asking my father if I could hold it.” His parents were producers in their own right. His father worked in music production and carried a leather bag packed with a camera and cables, always ready to film their next home project. His mother poured her artistic abilities into her roles as a youth church leader and recreation director in Orange, Texas.*

For Michael, production was never something reserved for special occasions. It was daily life. He performed with his brothers and sister, acted out scenes in the living room, absorbed every bit of creative energy around him and learned to edit videos at 8 years old.

School brought its own mix of joy and challenges. “I started in a private school that felt warm and welcoming, then I had to transfer. Being the new kid hit hard. My kindness made some classmates unsure of me, but, eventually, I found a group of friends who understood me. We rehearsed and performed skits at recess for the teachers whenever we had the chance.”

At 12, that same kindness made him a target for bullying. He grew up loved and protected, but as he got older, he felt unprepared for the world. One day, overwhelmed and alone in his room, he considered ending it all. However, the sound of his father producing music in the other room arrested him and got him through the moment. He escaped from his room, walked into his father’s presence to embrace the environment. Though his dad didn’t know why he showed up, the interruption

**TODAY, MICHAEL IS A 26-YEAR-OLD MANSFIELD RESIDENT WHO ONCE DREAMED OF HOLLYWOOD BUT LACKED THE RESOURCES TO CHASE IT. SO, HE BUILT HIS OWN VERSION OF HOLLYWOOD IN HIS HOMETOWN.**

saved Michael. He continued with life and began to embrace being a quirky creative. That year, he submitted a short film entitled *Pony* and won a district-wide award for his video. He has shown up in a variety of places, making spaces as a performer, not totally realizing his gift.

Michael said, "I never saw myself as a strong writer until middle school, when my English teacher, Ms. Kristina Logan, pushed me to take AP classes in high school." He enrolled in honors classes the following years and excelled. "She saw my gift. Also, my film teacher, Ryan Tuomey, at Ben Barber noticed my ability to edit at an advanced level during my freshman year. He celebrated me then and continues to encourage me today."

Michael's confidence carried him

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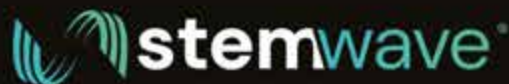


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said. “This is the genesis. Mansfield is the hot spot. I believe it will be the camp of Hollywood.”

That belief turned into action when COVID sent everyone home. Michael and his friends began filming a parody of *Stranger Things* in his garage. That small spark grew into something far bigger.

Today, Michael is a 26-year-old Mansfield resident who once dreamed of Hollywood but lacked the resources to chase it. So, he built his own version of Hollywood in his hometown. After eight years of gathering creative friends, producing content and refusing to quit, Michael and his team created their biggest project yet: *Small Town Outsiders*, a 1980s-inspired sci-fi thriller series.

The project started as a single pilot episode in March 2022. To fund it, Michael saved his own money and launched a crowdfunding effort because he believed deeply in the team behind it. When they premiered the pilot during Mansfield’s Art Week that March, the reaction pushed them into new territory, and in October of that year, a full series was completed. In addition, the project received interest from two streaming

platforms: Roku and Tubi, which began in February 2024.

Now the team is preparing for season two, powered by volunteers, donors and a growing circle of creatives eager to be part of something homegrown. The cast is diverse. The crew is local. And the momentum is something Mansfield has never seen before. City officials have taken notice, and residents talk about the project as a sign of what Texas arts could become.

Michael sees all of this as more than a personal win. “I’m creating opportunities for people,” he said. “I visualized it bigger before it existed. Mansfield has progressed, and this project represents that.”

The actors arrived in limousines and strolled down the red carpet. He said, “I know how to create an environment honoring the participants. They took pictures with fans. It was great. I didn’t imagine myself doing film production in grade school, or maybe I did? My training started when I was a toddler.” Now the boy who made home movies at age 3 is leading a movement in his own backyard. And for the first time, Mansfield looks a little like the Hollywood he once dreamed of. **NOW**

to The University of Texas at Arlington, where he majored in communications. By then, the pull toward production was undeniable. He shifted from music projects to film writing, spending long hours in his room sharpening his skills. What started as a private passion, soon drew others in. Young adults and kids who struggled to fit in found their way to him. Some had been bullied. Some felt invisible. Michael understood them. He built a place where their creativity counted, and where they could grow, all while he worked his way to earning his bachelor’s degree in 2023.

“I feel I owe the city of Mansfield,” he

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Angie's list





*Asher, Jaxon and Wyatt pose on the court at High Tops Basketball Camp.*

## Zoomed In: Kaylee Spiegel

By Sandra Walters

Residents filled the room as the choir opened with cheerful holiday songs, followed by a few classics everyone could hum along to. Many sang along with the Bearitones choir from Boren Elementary, which brought warmth and energy to Watercrest at Mansfield. Kaylee Spiegel said, “I enjoyed our visit as their faces lit up, and they tapped their feet or sang with us. We spent time greeting them after the show, which made the moment feel even more special.”

This was part of an outreach effort to share music with the community, and the students delivered with heart. The performance gave students an opportunity to showcase their musical skills while learning the value of kindness and connection.



*Georgia Sexton reflects on the season with a smile.*



*he Philipphoses smother their son with kisses.*



*Four generations of the Torres and Hegna family spend time together.*



Zachary and Ezekiel Hajovshy look mischievous in their axolotl outfits.



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## Together As One:

### Mansfield Celebrates the Reopening of Katherine Rose Memorial Park

The City of Mansfield celebrated the reopening of Katherine Rose Memorial Park (Rose Park) in mid-December 2025. After nearly two years and \$7 million of renovations, Rose Park offers an inclusive and engaging space for all. Featuring over 100,000 square feet of adaptive play space for children of all abilities and the world-exclusive PlaceMaker Squirrel, known as Walnut, Rose Park is a REMARKABLE destination where families may continue to create lasting memories together.

In 2020, the City of Mansfield Parks and Recreation Department adopted the 2020 Master Plan. Rose Park was the resounding number one resident priority in the southwest quadrant, due to its high visibility, high use, sentimental value and age. The City listened and then

went back to residents to hear what improvements they wanted to see. The City hosted extensive public involvement opportunities. From public meetings and surveys to focus groups for children with accessibility limitations and their families, the community provided feedback. The message was clear; they would like to see reinvestment in the popular park with a focus on inclusion, so all children feel welcome to play.

Park planners thoughtfully considered every detail. Having the ability to reconfigure the layout has allowed for expanded restrooms, triple the previous parking and nearly four times as much play space. It also allowed for accessibility to be at the forefront of the new design.

A completely reimagined forest-themed wonderland

featuring modern play equipment has been woven into the natural surroundings through the use of artist-sculpted structures resembling logs and leaves that greet families. Additionally, accessible elements are integrated into every aspect of the design, creating a unified space for all kids to gather, grow, preserve and PLAY together.

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Dr. Tomi Ola-Peters’ interest in medicine began early, sparked by a childhood curiosity about how the human body works. In the fifth grade, she knew she wanted to become a physician, and that sense of purpose has guided her throughout her life. What started as simple questions about health grew into a long-term commitment to helping people live fuller, healthier lives.

She earned her medical degree and later completed a postgraduate certificate in public health at the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. During her training, she developed a strong interest in preventive



care and the connection between daily choices and long-term health. Dr. Ola-Peters completed her internal medicine residency at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler, where she gained broad experience caring for patients with a wide range of conditions. She went on to practice in both outpatient and inpatient settings at Good Shepherd Medical Center-Longview, John Peter Smith Hospital and Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. These roles strengthened her clinical judgment and deepened her understanding.

As a board-certified member of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, a diplomate of the American Board of Obesity Medicine and with more than 16 years of experience, she works at the TCU School of Medicine as an adjunct associate professor. Also, she has mentored medical students — physician assistants and nurse practitioners from UT Tyler and the University of Texas at Arlington.

In 2023, she founded DivineTouch Medical Center, an internal medicine primary care practice focused on compassionate, personalized and accessible health care. Dr. Peters was inspired to assist student interns in Mansfield ISD by providing medical assistants with hands-on training opportunities through her practice, which allows them to learn real clinical skills with a professional care team, because teaching became an important component of her job.

“I truly enjoy living and working in Mansfield,” Dr. Ola-Peters shared. “There’s a strong sense of community, and I wanted to build long-term relationships with patients while contributing beyond the clinic walls.”

The practice has expanded considerably by conducting over 10,000 outpatient treatments, demonstrating that Mansfield and the neighboring areas trust in its capacity for care. DivineTouch Medical Center emphasizes proactive and preventive care. Their services include preventive exams, chronic disease management, weight management, wellness testing, allergy treatments and same-day sick visits. Dr. Ola-Peters incorporates lifestyle medicine into many aspects of care, working with patients to understand how nutrition, activity, sleep, stress and daily habits influence their health. Her goal is to empower patients to take an active role in their well-being, not just manage symptoms.

Her commitment to this area extends beyond the clinical setting. She supports back-to-school health care initiatives and participates in elder-care programs, reinforcing her dedication to serving families in the community. She believes that health care is strongest when assisting people at every stage of life. While looking back on her journey from hospital medicine to private practice, Dr. Ola-Peters describes it as both challenging and deeply rewarding. “It is a privilege to serve,” she said. “I’m grateful to God for the opportunity and excited about the continued growth and impact ahead.” DivineTouch Medical Center is currently welcoming new patients. To schedule an appointment for primary care, preventive services or chronic disease management, contact the clinic today. **NOW**

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# CookingNOW

## IN THE KITCHEN WITH

### KELSYN HART

— By Sandra Walters



“I was playing in my toy kitchen at the age of 3, and I never stopped cooking,” Kelsyn Hart said. “My family has always been my biggest inspiration, especially my grandmothers, who encouraged my curiosity and supported my passion. My heritage also guides my style.” Her mother’s side is French, Chinese and Mexican, and her father’s side is Creole and German. Those influences show up in her flavors and choices in the kitchen.

“I am both self-taught and formally trained. During my childhood, I watched cooking shows and practiced techniques. Then, I began culinary arts training at Ben Barber Innovation Academy, as I learned under Chef David Roberson.” After high school graduation, she attended the Pennsylvania College of Technology, where she focused on classical cuisine and techniques. For two years, she cooked at the Kentucky Derby, preparing food for thousands of guests, which included well-known culinary figures like Bobby Flay. **NOW**

### Classic Crab Cakes

- 1 lb. lump crab meat**
- 1/2 cup Ritz crackers, finely crushed**
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped**
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise**
- 1 egg**
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 tsp. Old Bay seasoning**
- Salt, to taste**
- Pepper, to taste**
- 2-3 Tbsp. butter**

- 1.** In a bowl, gently combine the crab meat, cracker crumbs and parsley.
- 2.** In a separate bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, egg, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, Old Bay seasoning, salt and pepper.

- 3.** Gently fold the wet mixture into the crab mixture. Don’t break up the lumps. Form the mixture into 6-8 cakes. Chill for 20-30 minutes until firm.
- 4.** Heat the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Cook the cakes for 3-4 minutes per side until golden.
- 5.** Serve with lemon wedges or tartar sauce.

### Creamy Baked Macaroni & Cheese

- 1 lb. elbow macaroni**
- 4 Tbsp. butter**
- 4 Tbsp. flour**
- 3 cups milk**
- 3 cups sharp cheddar, shredded**
- 1 cup mozzarella, shredded (optional)**

- 1/2 tsp. paprika**
- Salt, to taste**
- Pepper, to taste**
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs (optional topping)**

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 350 F. In a pot, boil the pasta until al dente; drain.
- 2.** In another pot, melt the butter. Whisk in the flour to make a roux; cook for 1 minute. Add the milk slowly, whisking until thick and smooth. Stir in the cheeses, paprika, salt and pepper.
- 3.** Combine the cheese sauce with the pasta; pour the mixture into a baking dish. Top with the breadcrumbs, if using.
- 4.** Bake for 20-25 minutes until bubbly.

### Honeybun Cake (Like the Bakery)

*Cake:*

- 1 box yellow cake mix**
- 4 eggs**
- 3/4 cup oil**
- 1 cup sour cream**

*Swirl Layer:*

- 1 cup brown sugar**
- 2 tsp. cinnamon**

*Glaze:*

- 2 cups powdered sugar**
- 1/4 cup milk**
- 1 tsp. vanilla**

- 1.** *For the cake:* Grease a 9x13-inch pan; preheat the oven to 325 F.
- 2.** Mix the cake mix, eggs, oil and sour cream until smooth.
- 3.** Pour half of the batter into the prepared pan.
- 4.** *For the swirl layer:* Mix the brown sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle the mixture over the batter.
- 5.** Add the remaining batter on top of the swirl layer. Gently swirl with a knife. Bake 40-45 minutes.
- 6.** *For the glaze:* In a bowl, mix all glaze ingredients; pour over the warm cake.



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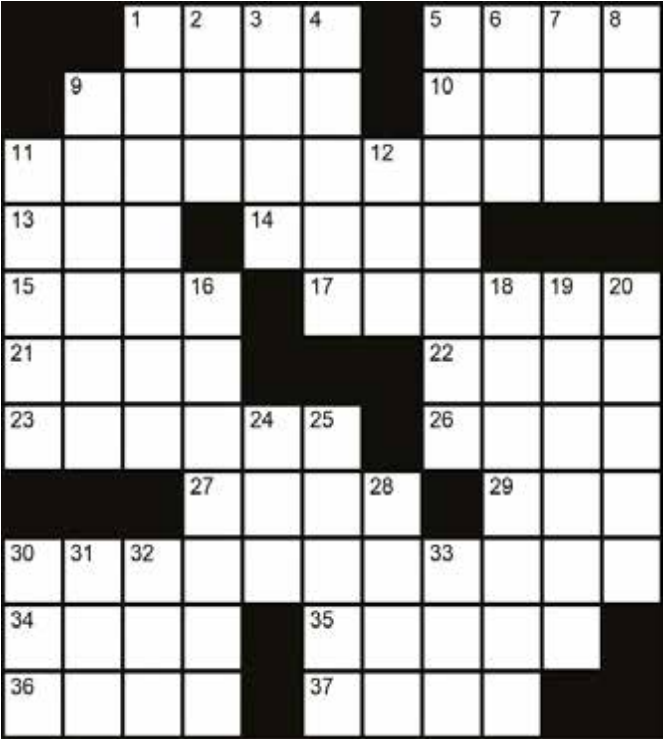
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# Crossword Puzzle



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## Across

- 1 Soften
- 5 Voucher
- 9 Riyadh resident
- 10 Tex-Mex munchie
- 11 US mends toys haphazardly, producing a racket-maker
- 13 Finish first
- 14 Blueprint detail, briefly
- 15 Garfunkel and Malik, for example
- 17 Involuntary movements
- 21 Encounter

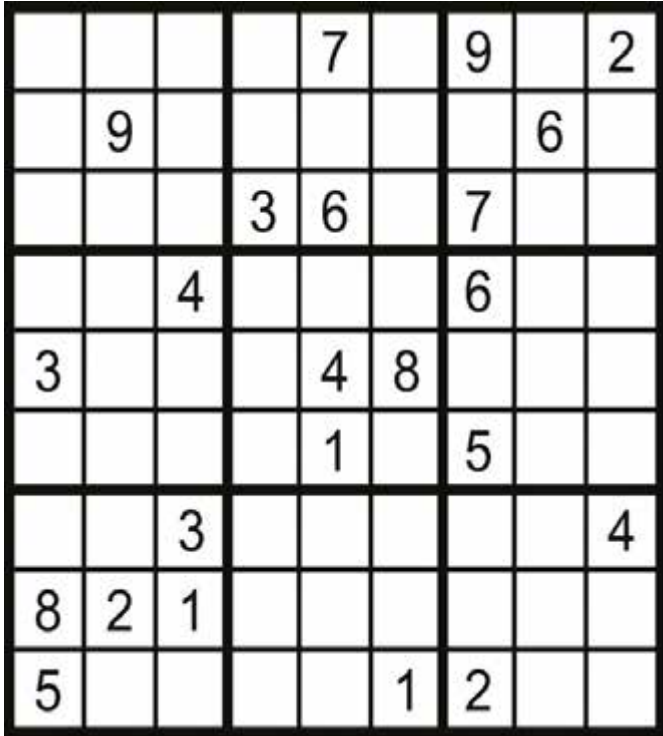
## Down

- 22 Diamond record-maker?
- 23 Powers a bicycle
- 26 Clear-thinking
- 27 Easily split mineral
- 29 Gymrat's pride
- 30 Fin
- 34 Related by blood
- 35 Heed the dentist's advice
- 36 Agents, for short
- 37 Seizures
- 1 Mocked
- 2 Wanton destroyer of beauty
- 3 Has sum fun
- 4 Filmy fragments
- 5 Sources of inside information?
- 6 Bowler or bonnet
- 7 Assassinate
- 8 Huck's pal
- 9 After-dinner party
- 11 Slough
- 12 I reckon
- 16 Pollen producers
- 18 Chilean food fish
- 19 Norm is overturned for non-voters
- 20 Iditarod lineup
- 24 Cover
- 25 Mock
- 28 "And -- ask is a tall ship ..." (John Masefield)
- 30 At a great distance
- 31 He separated Harry and Jack
- 32 Big wheel
- 33 His wife looked back in the end

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.

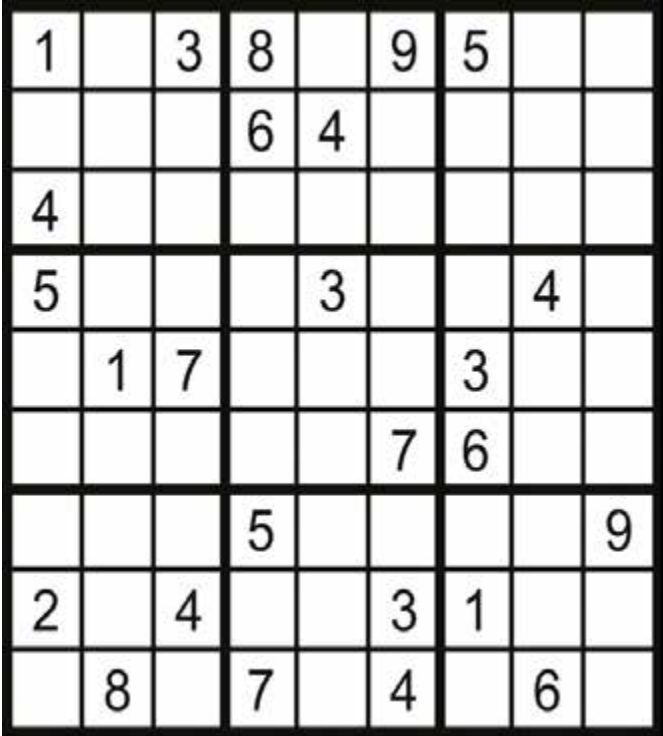
# Sudoku Puzzle

Easy



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Medium



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# Happy New Year

## 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.

### 1/1-1/16

#### **Christmas Tree Drop-Off:**

Drop off live Christmas trees to be mulched. There will be a self-service trailer for drop-off near the Home Depot Garden Center. No flocked or artificial trees, as they cannot be recycled. Free for Mansfield residents. Home Depot, 1725 N. U.S. 287

### 1/3

#### **Shred Day:**

Bring your documents for secure, on-site shredding. Mansfield residents only, no businesses. Please bring your documents in paper sacks or cardboard boxes to help speed the lines. Free. 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Environmental Collection Center, 616 S. Wisteria St.

For more information, call (817) 728-3655.

### 1/17

#### **MLK Parade and Celebration:**

The city of Mansfield's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day — Day of Service. During the event, they will honor Dr. King's legacy with a day of action, unity and a whole lot of community love. Mansfield's Animal Care and Control will be at the event with adoptable pets (weather permitting) and a donation drive that benefits the animal shelter. Free, but registration required. Katherine Rose Memorial Park, 303 N.

Walnut Creek Dr. For more information, email: lindsey.tashman@mansfieldtexas.gov.

### 1/25

#### **48 Hr. Sparks Film Screening:**

A quarterly short film challenge designed to ignite creativity, foster collaboration and build a stronger local filmmaking community across all ages and experience levels. This is hosted in partnership with the city of Mansfield, which empowers filmmakers to create original short films in just 48 hours — from concept to final cut. Each season, teams receive a surprise genre, a prop and a line of dialogue at kickoff. Then, they race the clock to craft their story. \$10. 2:00-11:00 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main St. For more information, call Joe Manco at (469) 247-6966 or email 48HrSparks@gmail.com.

### Mondays

#### **Bilingual Story Time:**

Children 3-6 years old, both English and Spanish speakers, with a caregiver can enjoy 30 minutes of books, songs, finger-plays and rhymes in both English and Spanish. This story time fosters emergent literacy, reinforces group listening skills and allows children to become familiar with a second language. 10:30 a.m., Mansfield Public Library, 104 S. Wisteria St.

### Tuesdays

#### **Story Time for Tots:**

Toddlers 18 months to 3 years old with a caregiver can enjoy 30 minutes of books, songs, finger-plays and rhymes introducing toddlers and parents to developmentally appropriate literature and related activities. This introduces group listening skills and provides interaction with others. Free; no registration. 10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library, 104 S. Wisteria St.

### Wednesdays

#### **Family Playtime:**

For ages 0-5 years. Open playtime in our Family Place Library area. Bring your young children to play with others while building skills through play. Parents are required to remain with children at all times. No registration required. 11:00 a.m.-noon, Mansfield Public Library, 104 S. Wisteria St.

### Second Wednesdays

#### **Mansfield Lions Club Meeting:**

Work closely with MISD to provide free vision testing and eyeglasses to students who need them. Noon-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Methodist Medical Center, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 2700 E. Broad St. RSVP

to Karen Williams, president, at (817) 729-4978.

### Thursdays

#### **Chess Club:**

Learn how to play chess or just brush up on your skills. All ages and levels welcome. Free, no registration. 6:00-7:30 p.m., Mansfield Public Library, 104 S. Wisteria St.

### Second Thursdays

#### **Business Unplugged:**

Unplug from your social media for face-to-face networking, free food, drinks and music. 4:30-6:30 p.m., [www.mansfieldchamber.org](http://www.mansfieldchamber.org).

#### **Open Mic Night:**

Join for a night of amazing talent and good vibes. Whether you're a musician, poet, comedian or just want to enjoy the show, this is the place to be. Safe for all ages; bring the whole family. Come showcase your skills, or simply cheer on the performers. \$8-\$15. 7:30-9:15 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main St. For more information, call (972) 704-5001.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [sandra.walters@nowmagazines.com](mailto:sandra.walters@nowmagazines.com).*



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