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Following Her Heart

Makeup artistry is
Nalani Lear's passion

Tales of Texas

I Adopted the World

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Crossword/Sudoku

In the Kitchen With
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*Nalani Lear encourages
others to embrace their
own artistry.*

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Mar. 21 – ROISD School Board Meeting

Mar. 28 – Staff Development Day (No School)

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Details at RedOakISD.org

EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

Angel Morris
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Worth repeating ...

Every now and again my teen son sweetly indulges my choice of sappy films and sits through something he might not otherwise choose to spend two hours of his free time watching. Recently, that was *The Map of Tiny Perfect Things*, which turned out to be not only a movie we both appreciated, but a gentle reminder of the fragility of life and the preciousness of time.

Released a year ago this month, *Perfect Things* was dubbed a “science fiction romantic comedy drama,” suggesting there’s a little something for just about everyone in its plot. Evoking the 1990s film *Groundhog Day* (in which a weary weatherman finds himself stuck in the same day on repeat), two teens find themselves living in a temporal anomaly — an endless loop of time — that results in new perspectives on everyday things.

During the show I couldn’t help reflecting on these last two years, when the world has had somewhat of a temporal anomaly of its own. It was about this time in 2020 when hints of a global pandemic surfaced, but who imagined we’d live the scenario through 2021 and into 2022? Life became less *Perfect Things* and more *Groundhog Day* as we all desperately hoped to wake up from the seemingly longest day in history.

I no longer care if Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow, but rather if there’s a light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel anywhere in sight. I keep thinking one day we’ll wake up, and it will all have just been a bad dream. Perhaps like the characters in both films, we’ll eventually learn whatever lesson we were meant to find.

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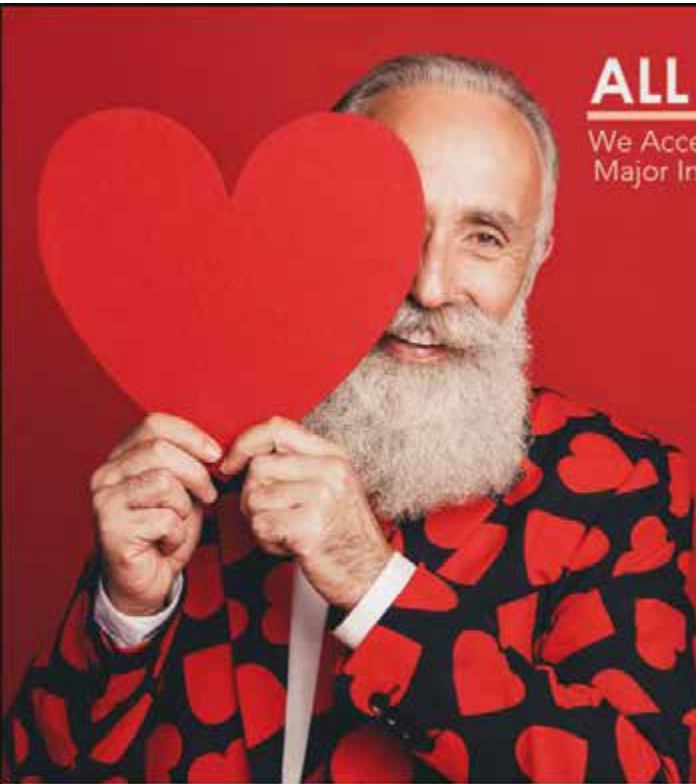
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Nalani Lear is a creative soul who has spent much of her young life in artistic endeavors. From 14 years of dance training to her pursuit of a career in makeup artistry, Nalani believes in putting your passion to work.

A Red Oak native, Nalani attended local schools from elementary to her sophomore year in high school when she felt pulled toward something new. She completed high school online, but she wasn't compelled to go to traditional college after graduation. "I realized I wanted to do something related to cosmetology, and then I found L Makeup Institute online," she recalled.

L Makeup Institute was founded in 2010 specifically for students seeking careers in makeup and special effects. Originally, the accredited makeup artist school was solely based in Las Vegas, but it opened a Texas branch in Southlake in the summer of 2020. "I'd been doing makeup since middle school drill team, so I was familiar with glam and performance looks," Nalani admitted. "LMI opened the year I graduated high school, and its nine-month program seemed perfect for me. I'm always itching to try something new, but I get easily bored."

Nalani completed LMI's four programs — Mastering the Art of Beauty, Airbrush & Body Painting, Hair Styling for the Makeup Artist and Special Makeup Effects — and graduated at the top of her class. "In my valedictorian speech, I told about how, after a six-hour body painting final, my friends and I got in my car and screamed at the top of our lungs," she reflected. "It was the most stressful final I'd ever taken."

With an LMI diploma, graduates are prepared for work in film, retail, salons, special effects labs and more. Nalani's focus is makeup artistry for special occasions, and she has already landed work in short films, for magazine shoots, expos and more. "I'm really interested in wedding makeup and boudoir shoots," she said. "Being part of someone's big day, or helping them feel good about themselves and boosting their confidence, is an honor."

FOL HER

A close-up portrait of a woman with dark hair, wearing heavy makeup including bright pink eyeshadow, long eyelashes, and bright red lipstick. She is holding a large, round, brown makeup brush to her right cheek, applying blush. The background is a solid teal color.

**"MAKEUP
IS ALWAYS
EVOLVING,
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LOWING HEART

— *By Angel Morris*

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Nalani said makeup artistry involves much creativity, but also some fundamental steps. "It starts with prepping the skin, adequate moisturizing and priming depending on the person's skin type," she relayed. "I begin with the eyebrows, highlighting and filling in, then I do eyeshadow with a base of eyeshadow primer or concealer.

"After eyes, I complete the face with foundation, concealer and setting powder, along with contour blush and highlight."

While Nalani is most comfortable with beauty makeup, she is no stranger to creating darker looks, and aced that difficult final exam with her body piece themed "cyberpunk skeleton." "I was inspired by a Netflix series called *Love, Death and Robots*," she noted. "I've always loved edgy style, Halloween and horror movies, and I got to combine those in body painting. From freehanding to airbrush, I was able to put all my emotion into it, and it was so gratifying."

Nalani's Instagram account showcases her range of style. IG and other social media platforms are essential in the makeup industry. "Makeup is always evolving, and you have to stay active online looking at what's new," she said. "TikTok is another great resource."

In the last decade, TV shows like *Face Off* and *Skin Wars* showcased the skill behind makeup artistry and added to its popularity as a career. "There are so many artists and, especially starting out, it's more about who you know than what you know when it comes to finding work," Nalani explained. "But I'm committed to continuing to learn, to staying inspired and not losing my footing."

Nalani said the support from her mom/best friend, Kasi, and

grandparents, Vicki and Clint Bowen, motivates her to pursue this dream. "I think they were surprised I've stuck with it, and I know they're very proud," she said. "Now my mom asks me about makeup instead of the other way around, and she's always on the lookout to help me find jobs. She is a traveling nurse and has a lot of contacts!"

So, in addition to her day job at Waxahachie's Three Rivers Coffee Co., Nalani continues to freelance in makeup artistry with the hopes of making it her full-time job one day. "I love a good cup of coffee. I love creative writing, music and anything with friends. But my professional goal is to pursue more editorial photo shoots and keep learning from people with more experience."

Nalani described a perfect assignment for her as one where she gets to spend



a lot of time talking with the client, after researching them online to get a feel for their personal style. "I love having music as my muse; nice, natural lighting, scheduling time for breaks and, of course, refreshments," Nalani described.

Nalani also likes to give advice to others like her, who may be considering nontraditional education in creative fields of study. "Even if everyone around you downplays it or doesn't appreciate your dream, just know that the feeling of gratification you get from doing it means more than what anyone else thinks," she reminded. "I think you have to embrace your weird. Get quirky and let your artistry sing. Then anyone who didn't understand will be there to support your success." **NOW**



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Zoomed In: Gennie and Jeremy Fitch

By Angel Morris

Gennie arrived late to dinner one evening at the Hardin-Simmons University cafeteria back in 1992. So instead of sitting with her normal group, which was getting up to leave, she joined a table where Jeremy was sitting with a mutual friend. "The friend didn't stay long, and it gave us a chance to get to know each other," Jeremy recalled.

The couple married on August 12, 1995, and celebrated their 25th anniversary in 2020, with a vow renewal ceremony surrounded by their six children, who range in age from 22 to 4 years old. "We strive to keep God first in our marriage and family and spend most of our time being our children's biggest cheerleaders at all of their various activities!" Gennie explained.



Andy and Allie Barger met in grad school, and Allie admits to pursuing Andy after that. She said he is the backbone of the family and her best friend who gave her their two children.



Married more than a decade, Cedric and Marlena Goree are both Army veterans who met in New York City when Cedric was stationed there. They are raising three children.



Moses and Glynnis Morales met at age 8, began dating at 15 and have been married 27 years now. They have four children and three grandchildren.



Cody and Amanda Davis met at church in middle school, began dating their senior year of high school and married in 2004 after dating throughout college.



Jennifer and John Misemer met in college but began dating years later after a chance encounter at the State Fair. They married in 1998, had three children and still consider the fair their special place.



Anthony and Tammy Smith have been married 13 years, and Tammy credits him for his love and dedication, especially during two years of her sickness.



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—TALES OF TEXAS—

I ADOPTED THE WORLD

— By Adam Walker

Names of civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X and John Lewis are known to everyone nationwide, young and old. But here in Texas, much of the progress toward equality was spearheaded by an unassuming woman in old South Dallas. Juanita Jewel Craft helped change the face of race relations in Dallas and beyond.

Juanita Craft isn't the household name that the men are, but she should be. Born in 1902, in Round Rock, by 1925 Craft, as her friends called her, was living in Dallas. She earned a teaching certificate from Samuel Huston College, but worked as a maid at the Adolphus Hotel. In 1935, she joined the NAACP and found her life's work. As the membership chair of the Dallas branch, she hid the membership rolls to protect her fellow members from those who would have used the rolls to harass those fighting for change. She assisted in organizing 182 branches of the NAACP and worked hard to ensure that African-Americans paid their poll tax and secured their rights to vote. She herself had been the first African-American woman to vote in Dallas County. She was surrogate mother

to the young members of the Dallas branch, advising them on life choices and choosing the right brides and husbands, as they struggled to integrate lunch counters, schools and the State Fair. She would later be elected to the Dallas City Council for two terms.

Mrs. Craft owned a small house, on Warren St., near Fair Park, but she lived in the guest house out back, running the main house as a boarding house for young men who are leaders in today's NAACP. She welcomed important figures like MLK and LBJ to her house, when they came to talk to her about her work. But she also welcomed the neighbor kids. The girl who lived next door, named her daughter Juanita, for her, and called her Neet. "Mrs. Craft met a lot of people and had a lot of photographs. On one wall of her sitting room, she had a picture of herself with JFK standing behind her. On the opposite wall was a picture of Neet," Patricia Perez recalled.

Patricia was one of those youth who spent countless hours at the Craft house. "That was my house of power. You just felt it being around her. She showed us in word and deed. She was militant, but quiet. She knew what wasn't right and knew it could be changed. She had all these community connections, and she used them to enhance our lives. I felt empowered and special when I was with her."

Bob Lydia was one of those young men who received advice from Mrs. Craft. "I rented a room from her. She'd give

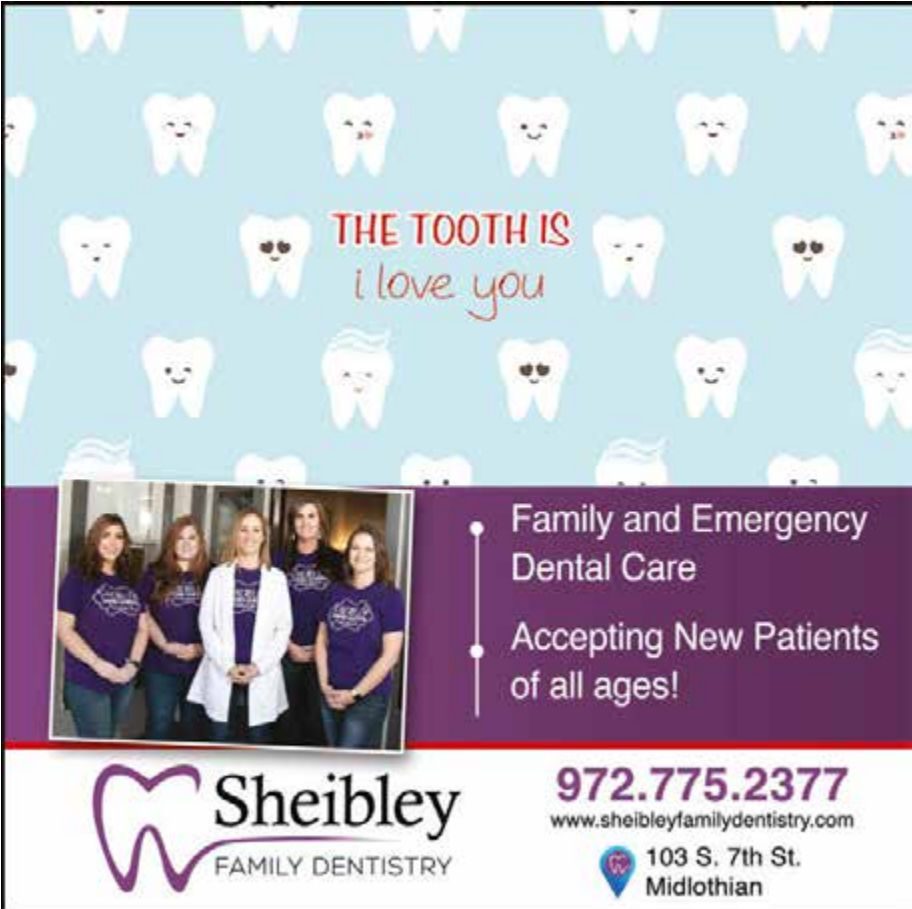
me and the other young guys advice on which girls to avoid. Craft was like a mother. She was also artistic. She'd buy wooden boxes and turn them into decoupage purses. She wouldn't accept any help making them, but she did take the leaves we'd bring her to use. She'd sit on her bed and put in all the screws and nails. She could sew anything. She kept a garden and canned and made jams and jellies. She was very frugal. She wanted to teach us young people how to behave and be respectful. If you wanted something done, all you had to do was sit down with her, and she'd figure out a way. She didn't have to scream and holler. I thought I was too young, but Craft decided I should be the first vice president for the Young Adult Council of the Dallas NAACP, and she made it happen."

In 1977, Mrs. Craft was interviewed for the Black Women's Oral History Project held at Harvard University. In the interview she discussed the hardships of growing up Black in the pre-Civil Rights era. Her mother died in 1935 from tuberculosis, because there was no state hospital for Black people. But she never let hardship stop her. And her reach extended far beyond South Dallas, or even Texas. She worked with Eleanor Roosevelt and other national leaders on important issues, and rallied support for Thurgood Marshall as he litigated cases eliminating whites-only primary elections and "separate but equal" education.

She was 73 when she was first elected to the Dallas City Council, where she served from 1975-1979. "When she won, she said, 'I showed 'em!' And a few other words," Bob Lydia remembered. She died in 1985, leaving behind a better Texas for all of us. Her house on Warren St. is now a Civil Rights museum. **NOW**

Sources:

1. <https://www.nps.gov/people/jjcraft.htm>.
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3. <https://www.womenintexashistory.org/biographies/juanita-craft/>.
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5. Personal interviews with Bob Lydia and Patricia Perez.



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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With CRISTINA ROMERO

— By Angel Morris

Born and raised in Quito, Ecuador, Cristina Romero earned a degree as a food processing engineer. While this prepared her for factory production, she remained a home baker at heart. “My kids always asked me to make birthday cakes, cupcakes and cookies,” she explained. “This led to me helping others make their own parties special.”

Commercial brands began noticing Cristina’s party foods, and then she had the chance to participate in a national baking contest judged by *Cake Boss’s* Buddy Valastro. “Getting to know him was one of the greatest experiences a baker could have!” Christina admitted. “Today, people can find my work on Facebook or Instagram through Sweet Branding; and I’m happy to share here some recipes people will love to make at home!” **NOW**

Dulce de Leche

- 8 cups whole milk
- 2 to 2 1/2 cups sugar or panela/piloncillo raspadura, adjust to taste
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda

1. Combine all the ingredients in a large pot

over medium-low heat, stir until the sugar or panela is well dissolved. Reduce the heat to low.

2. Continue cooking until the mixture is significantly reduced and starts to thicken while the color changes from a creamy beige to a caramel tone. It will take between 2 1/2 to 3 hours for the dulce de leche to be done.

3. During the first 1 1/2 hours, stir

occasionally to prevent boiling over and sticking. During the last hour, it needs to be stirred more frequently and has to be watched very closely to keep it from burning.

4. Cook until it has a dark amber or caramel tone and has a creamy consistency. Keep in mind that it will thicken more when it cools down. This can be served warm or cold. Must be kept refrigerated.

Passion Fruit Mousse

- 1 2/3 cups (14 oz.) pure passion fruit juice (can also use unsweetened frozen concentrate)
- 1 14-oz. can condensed milk
- 1/4 cup sugar (optional, add less or omit if it’s sweet enough with the condensed milk)
- 3/4 cup heavy cream

Garnish:

Whipped cream

Fresh passion fruit pulp

1. Blend the passion fruit concentrate with condensed milk and sugar, if using. Add the heavy cream; continue blending until well mixed.
2. Pour into ramekins or small glasses; refrigerate overnight or for at least 4 hours. Serve garnished with whipped cream and passion fruit pulp.

Quinoa Salad

- 2 cups quinoa, cooked (I cook mine in the rice cooker with broth.)
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup spinach leaves
- 2 cups basil, finely chopped
- Mozzarella cheese, cut into bite-size pieces
- A few handfuls almonds or nuts of your choice, crushed

1. Cook the quinoa in advance if you can. It tastes best when it's had a few hours to cool. Toss all the ingredients together to combine.

Chicken and Artichoke

Drizzle olive oil

- 1 lb. chicken breasts
- 1 15-oz. can diced tomatoes with Italian herbs
- 1 15-oz. can quartered artichoke hearts, drained
- 2 big handfuls baby spinach

1. Heat a large saucepan over medium-high heat with a drizzle of olive oil. Add the chicken; cook for 1-2 minutes to brown the outside.
2. Add the tomatoes and artichokes. (You can add any other vegetables you want at this point, such as mushrooms or broccoli.) Cover; cook for about 10 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through.
3. Add the spinach. Cover again; cook for 1-2 minutes, until wilted.
4. Serve and enjoy!

Ecuadorian Shrimp Ceviche

- 2 red onions, very thinly sliced
- 2 lbs. shrimp (If you buy it raw, I suggest you cook it in beer or coconut milk for amazing flavor.)
- 4 tomatoes, very thinly sliced or diced
- 1 bell pepper red or green, diced (optional)
- 10-15 limes, freshly squeezed
- Juice of 1 orange
- 1/2 cup ketchup or 1/2 cup freshly blended tomato juice for a fresher style ceviche
- 1 bunch cilantro, finely chopped
- Salt, to taste




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Ecuadorian
Shrimp Ceviche

Pepper, to taste

Oil (sunflower or light olive oil), to taste

1. Soak the onion slices in salt water for 10 minutes; rinse well and drain. Cook the shrimp; save the broth.
2. Mix all the ingredients together in a large bowl; let it sit in the refrigerator for 1 to 2 hours, adding some broth to the ceviche marinade for extra shrimp flavor.
3. Serve with chifles (fried green banana or green plantain chips) or patacones (thick fried green plantains).

Nutella Cheesecake

48 oz. cream cheese
1 cup granulated sugar
1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
3 eggs
2 cups heavy cream
1/3 cup cake flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
Nutella, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F. Whip the cream cheese, sugar and vanilla extract until fluffy.
2. Add the eggs, heavy cream, cake flour and baking powder; mix until smooth and creamy.
3. Add a sheet of parchment paper to an 8-inch cake pan. Pour in the mix; bake 45 minutes. Refrigerate overnight.
4. Cover with Nutella before serving.

Chocolate Cake

Butter, for coating the cake pan
Flour, for dusting the cake pan
3 cups all-purpose flour
3 cups granulated sugar
1 1/2 cups unsweetened cocoa powder
1 Tbsp. baking soda
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 1/2 tsp. salt
4 large eggs

1 1/2 cups buttermilk
1 1/2 cups warm water
1/2 cup vegetable oil
2 tsp. vanilla extract
Frosting of your choice

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Butter 3 9-inch cake rounds. Dust with flour; tap out the excess.
2. Mix together the flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, baking powder and salt in a stand mixer using low speed until combined.
3. Add the eggs, buttermilk, warm water, oil and vanilla. Beat on medium speed until smooth. Divide the batter among the prepared pans.
4. Bake 30-35 minutes until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
5. Cool on wire racks for 15 minutes; then turn the cakes onto racks to cool completely. Frost with your favorite frosting and enjoy!

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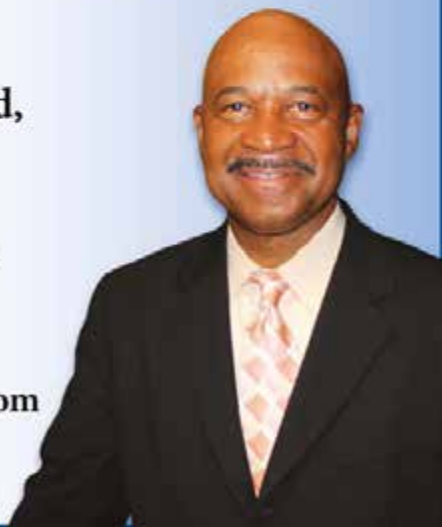
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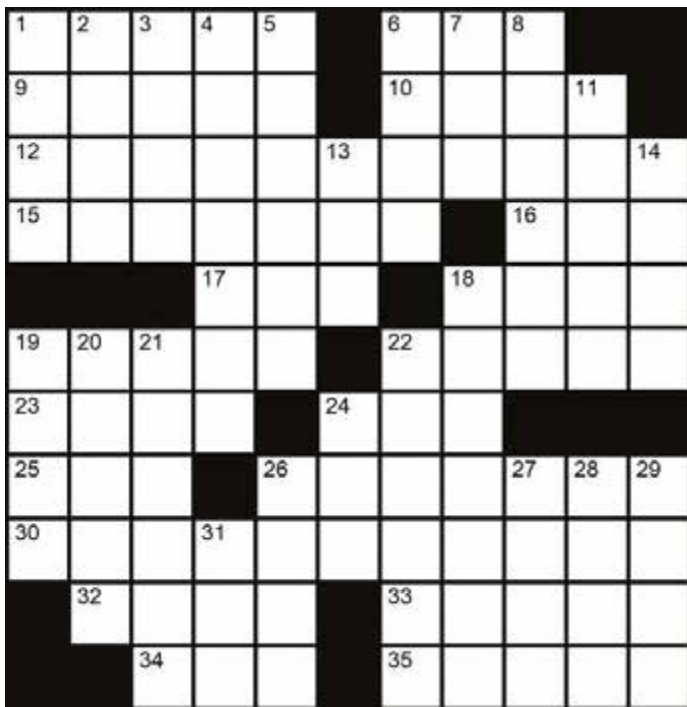
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Crossword Puzzle



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Across

- 1 Form
- 6 Most of the US Army holds this rank
- 9 "Stick close to your desks and never go ---, ..." (Gilbert and Sullivan, HMS Pinafore)
- 10 His 'n ---
- 12 Murder
- 15 That's ridiculous!
- 16 Reward for waiting
- 17 Reproduced without correction
- 18 Sushi wrap
- 19 What breadwinners bring home
- 22 Little ones are allegedly made of sugar and spice
- 23 Smoother
- 24 It sucks, in short
- 25 Recyclables container
- 26 Connecting
- 30 Classic jazz song - Amy Winehouse's last recording, with Tony Bennett
- 32 Contemptible individual
- 33 Julia Roberts has been one since 2010
- 34 Welkin
- 35 Extra map section

Down

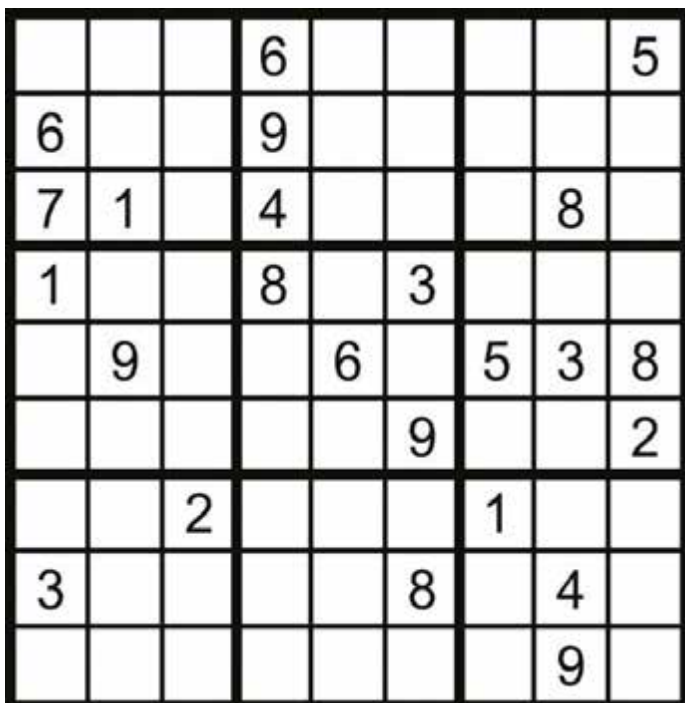
- 1 Male only
- 2 Render useless
- 3 Admin. aide
- 4 She played Snoop in "The Wire"
- 5 Start gently
- 6 Bilko's --- Silvers
- 7 Marshland
- 8 Meteorite pockmark
- 11 Hooch producer
- 13 Sort of fly
- 14 He played Dr. Foreman in "House"
- 18 Starts being effective
- 19 Crisp lettuce
- 20 Very funny
- 21 Buyable apartments
- 22 Female Indian Prime Minister
- 24 Rouge, rosé or blanc, on some menus
- 26 "The --- is a Tramp"
- 27 They are always charged
- 28 Au naturel
- 29 Surfeit
- 31 Jabber

Solutions on page 28

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Sudoku Puzzle

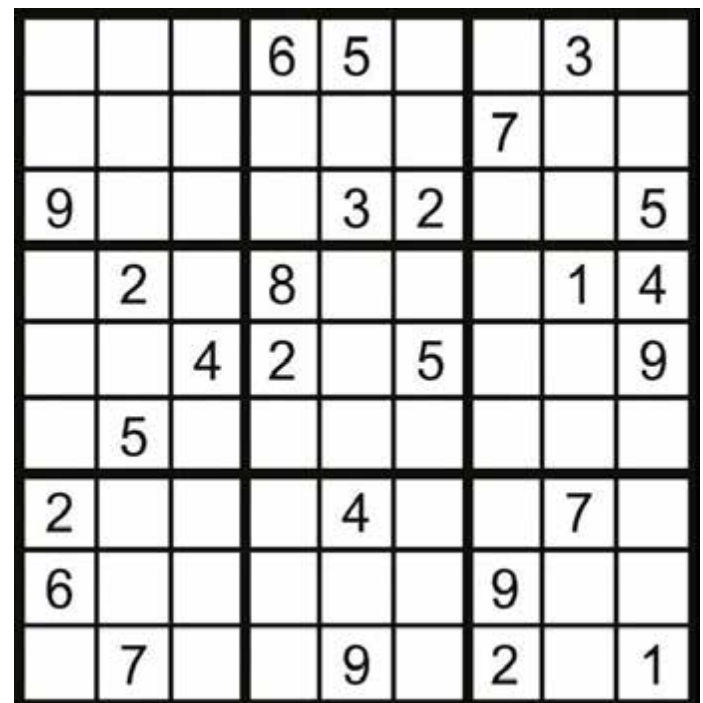
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Solutions on page 28



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2/12

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2/23

Chamber Luncheon:

Guest speaker and lunch included. \$15 for members who RSVP; \$18 without RSVP. \$20 for non-members. Noon-1:00 p.m., Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Learn more by contacting (972) 617-0906 or admin@redoakareachamber.org.

2/26

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Book Club:

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Third Wednesdays

Lancaster Women's Connection:

Welcoming women in Ellis County to this once-a-month event. Cost is \$15 which includes lunch, a special feature and a Stonecroft Speaker. Reservations due **Thursday** prior to the monthly meeting. 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Country View Golf Course, 240 W. Belt Line Rd., Lancaster. Contact Dee Ann Ellis at deeannellis@sbcglobal.net or (972) 921-6221.

Second Thursdays

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Second Saturdays

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



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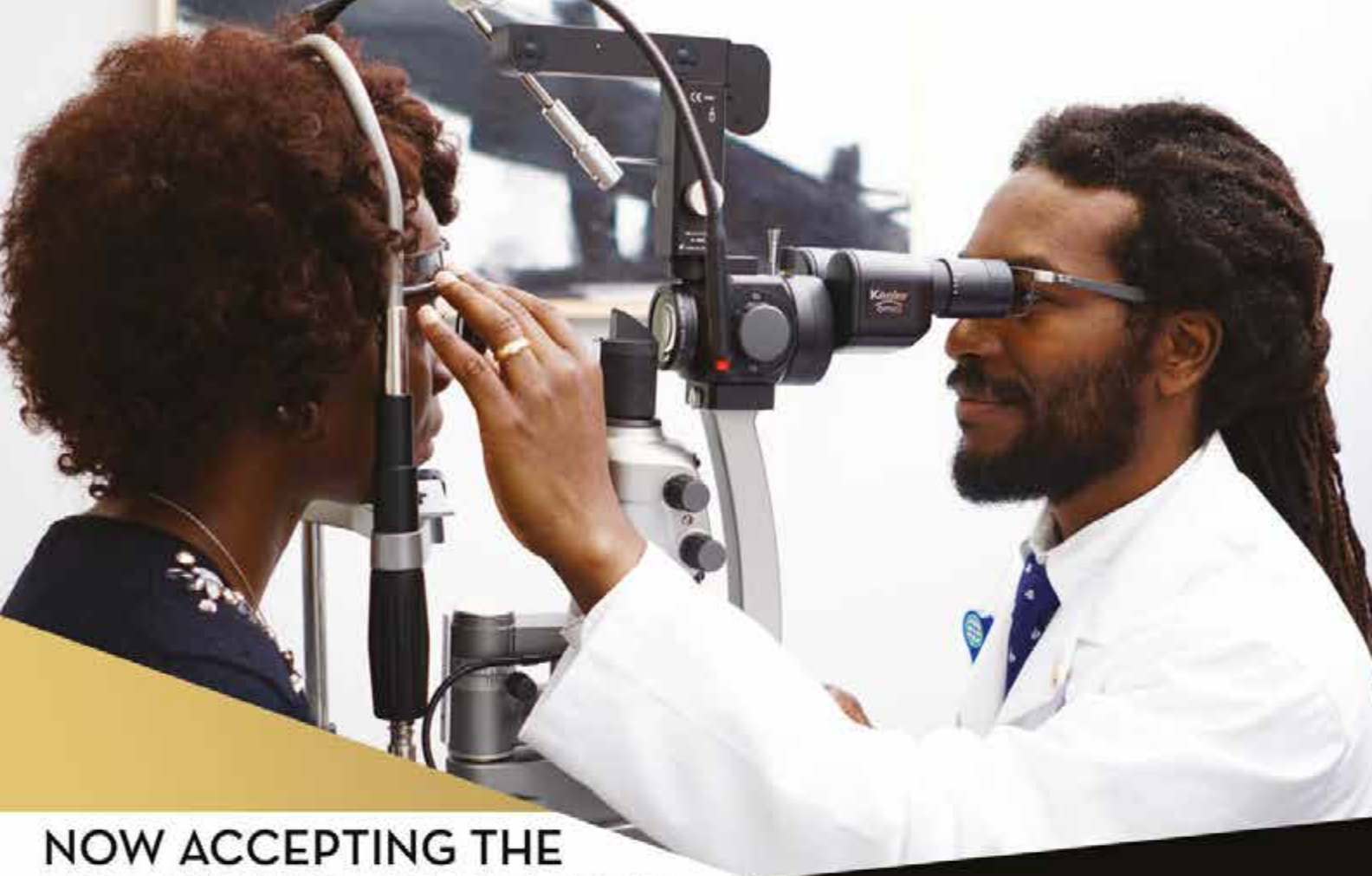
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