MansfieldNow

FEBRUARY 2023

The Connector

Venetia Sneed's passion brought many voices to the table

In the Kitchen With Lakita Whitehurst

Also inside: Scavenger Hunt Crossword Featured Business: Budget Blinds

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Postal Customer



Alan M. Taylor, II MD, FACP, FACC www.dietsolutioncenters.com



Priscilla, Grand Prairie, TX

I started Diet Solution because nothing else was working. I signed up at two different fitness clubs, and I even attempted the Keto diet. However, I didn't realize that accountability is what I needed. I gained 60 pounds while pregnant with my son. Within the next four years, I only lost 20 of those pounds. My weight gain caused me to slip into a depression while I was wedding dress shopping. I was no longer confident and mentally battled with my weight daily. A family member mentioned Diet Solution, and I noticed she had lost a lot of weight herself. I decided to give it a try. I was given the freedom to be able to eat most of the food I enjoy, and if not, DSC was able to provide me with the proper substitution. Weekly check-ins were quick and easy! It was a great feeling to know that you were losing weight and inches! Within three months, not only did I lose all the weight I gained, but I even got down two pounds lower than what I was before getting pregnant with my son. The best news is I am still keeping it off! I love how people all around me notice my weight loss. It has brought out the confidence that I lost. I recommend DSC to anyone that wants to lose weight, no matter how many different diet programs you have tried!

BEFORE

WER CONN

Priscilla lost 40 lbs.*

> *Individual results may vary.

AFTER



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Orthodontist

February 2023 Volume 18, Issue 2

ON THE COVER



Venetia Sneed reflects on her commitment to the community.

Photo by

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Sandra

Sandra Walters MansfieldNOW Editor sandra.walters@nowmagazines.com (682) 554-1743

EDITOR'S NOTE

Mansfield Family...

It's February already. The first month of the new year went by quickly. When I think of February, I consider it being Black History Month and how this coincides with the Love Month.

Various memories come to mind. I remember Valentine's Day being one of the best parties in elementary school because we collected cards and candy from our friends. Usually, the party occurred at the end of the day, so we waited with great anticipation. Somehow, those cards with red hearts made us feel loved and acknowledged.

I find it fascinating that the Love Month and Black History Month collide, and I am grateful for the love I received from my ancestors who lost their lives for my freedom. Also, I honor those who endured Jim Crow Laws. As a child, I hated history in school because I found it to be boring and oftentimes uncomfortable to hear. However, it's history. I remember when I learned my mother-in-law was the first African-American child in her high school. That surprised me because in my head, history was a long, long time ago, but my mother-in-law attended school before Ruby Bridges. I salute her bravery.

I recall my childhood pastor, Howard Caver, saying, "If you forget your history, you're bound to repeat it." Many times, people say, "Get over it," but what they don't understand is we've only been celebrating Black history for 53 years. When you do the math, you'll see why some people are still dealing with pain. I don't fully know what that feels like since I benefited from the Civil Rights Movement. Today, I recognize the contributions and struggles of my African-American culture.

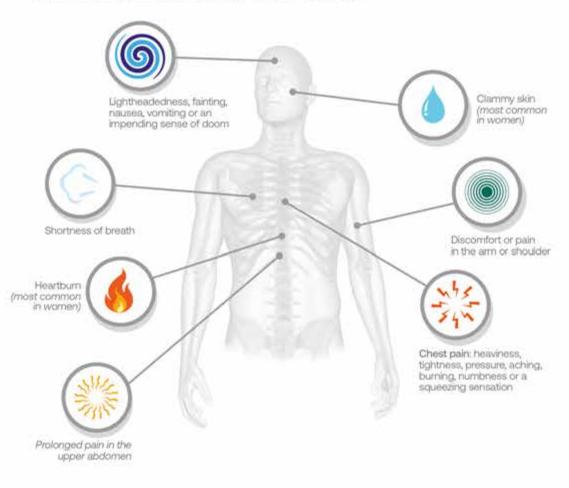
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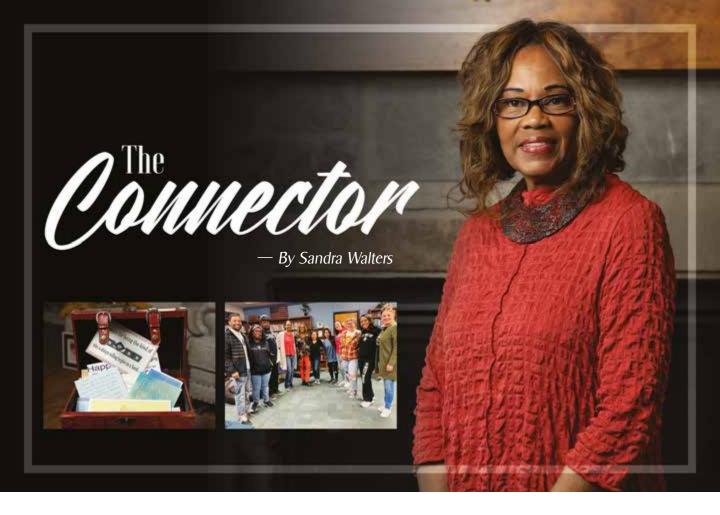
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Venetia Sneed's passion began in elementary school. "In fourth grade, I was called to be an educator," she said. "I played school with my friends and held a variety of positions that included teacher, principal, counselor and attendance clerk." Even before she received an official position, her excitement for being an educator was innate.

"Since my father served in the Army, I grew up in diverse communities and was always exposed to a variety of people. I never saw myself as being beneath anyone or having limitations. I viewed myself as equal to everybody else, so it was challenging to work in situations where they viewed me differently," Venetia explained.

She knew she wanted to be a teacher but wasn't sure what type until she walked into her business class, where Mrs. Carcamo taught typing, shorthand and accounting. Venetia fell in love with the idea of being a business teacher just like her. As time went on, she graduated from high school and majored in business administration at The University of Texas at El Paso. After earning her BBA, she completed the requirements for a business education certificate, knowing in her heart that she would one day land in her own classroom.

"Following graduation, I worked as a retail buyer for men's furnishings and clothing. People considered this fascinating, but my interest waned. I found no redeeming value in this career," Venetia explained. After six years, she was laid off when the company went out of business. She considered this as a win and ran as fast as she could to follow her heart and calling.

In 1988, the Birdville Independent School District hired her as a business instructor, and Venetia finally felt like she was living on purpose. "The students were somewhat diverse, but very few looked like me," she said. "I recall taking a day off to observe the MLK Jr. birthday before the United States acknowledged it as a holiday. I vividly remember one of my colleagues asking, 'Where were you yesterday?' and I replied, 'I celebrated MLK Day.' She responded, 'Oh, yeah, I forgot y'all had a holiday.' I replied, 'No ... We all had a holiday. It's a holiday for *all* Americans.' She looked puzzled, but said, 'Oh, OK.'''

This level of disregard ignited a fire in Venetia to be an advocate for diversity in education. After realizing African-American parents and students were underrepresented as well as didn't seem to have a presence or a voice in school districts at large, she pursued a midmanagement and principal's certification to become an administrator, hoping for an opportunity to represent diversity of thought, culture, experience and impact. She served as an assistant principal at Haltom Middle School in Birdville and at Ousley Jr. High in Arlington. During that time, her husband, Darrell Sneed, became the first Black principal in Mansfield ISD at Howard Middle School, and Venetia soon became the first Black administrator in the central office as the coordinator of human resource services. Later, she held the title of director of human resource development. Both she and her husband were trendsetters in Mansfield ISD.

In the early 2000s, Mansfield grew exponentially, and the demographics changed dramatically. Superintendent Vernon Newsom and HR superintendents, Judy Miller and Linda Chance, were

committed to employing qualified diverse candidates who look more like the students in the community. Venetia said, "I felt like I was hired to be the legs, arms and feet of the district to bring more diversity to the teaching and administrative teams."

Venetia's responsibilities included coordinating the MISD recruiting initiatives, organizing the district teacher job fair and facilitating both teacher and administrator interviews. Setting up job fairs in diverse settings to draw more people to this area and then bringing them back to the job fair for campus interviews served as a catalyst for diverse campus growth. Venetia mentioned, "Diversity comes in a variety of ways because everybody's story is important. Children need to see their cultures represented in their schools, and our campuses should mirror the community of learners we serve." Venetia understood her unique position to connect great diverse applicants with awesome Mansfield schools. Partnering with principals was a critical component, and she found that many of the principals "got it" and appreciated the support to diversify. Communicating with them throughout the year helped to enrich the culture of their staff.

Venetia also created the KEEPS program, which was designed to mentor new teachers. KEEPS became just one of the vehicles the district used to retain great teachers and lead the state in retention rates. She provided leadership and supervision to the substitute office; the student teacher placements; The Go2 Program for staff interested in professional advancement; MTOP — the induction of new professionals; and was the Title IX officer.

"I believe I had the best job in the district for 17 years and found great joy in connecting the right people to the right people. Providing opportunities for others to have a seat at the table where they can be seen and heard is fundamental to equality. I'm grateful to MISD and the colleagues I worked with who embraced diversity, while rising to the challenge of making it happen," Venetia concluded.

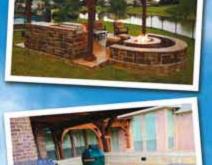
Today, MISD is a majority-minority district, where almost 72 percent of the students are diverse. While not as high as the student percentage, the staff ethnicity has grown over the years, and students of all backgrounds are able to "see" themselves in the teachers and leaders of the district. Venetia said that it is most fulfilling to have played a small role in this. Today, she is happily retired, but connecting and supporting people will never go away because that's just who she is.

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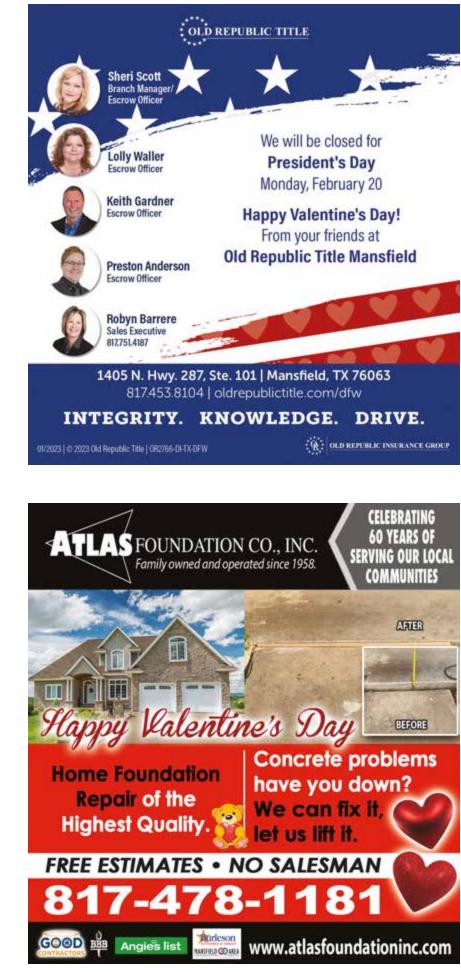
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Zoomed In: By Sandra Walters Iyunna Warner and Odyssey Sims

At the Spring Creek Basketball Tournament, Summit High School point guard lyunna Warner met Odyssey Sims, an elite athlete in the Women's National Basketball Association. "I got the opportunity to meet my favorite point guard in the WMBA. She hugged and encouraged me. This made my day," lyunna said.

Odyssey is a point guard for the Connecticut Suns and a native of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. She attended MacArthur High School in Irving and Baylor University. Since 2014, Odyssey has been playing professionally, but still makes time to celebrate local basketball players.



Kendall, Logan, Nicole and Demetruis Simmons enjoy time at the shooting range.

Around Town



Mila Levine enjoys a car during play time.



Mansfield Mayor Michael A. Evans, Sr. addresses the community at City Hall.



Hayden Geick browses for books at the library.

NOW



Akil Collins challenges his father to chess.



Jason Love, Sonja LaFond Love, Kiersten and Nick Lavallee reconnect over breakfast.



The Marsh famliy takes a picture to commemorate their hiking trip.





BusinessNOW Budget Blinds

By Sandra Walters

Budget Blinds

Joseph and Raquel Elder, Owners 7489 Rendon Bloodworth, Rd., Ste 102 Mansfield, TX 76063 jrelder@budgetblinds.com www.budgetblinds.com/mansfieldtx

Hours: Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Jaymes Murphy joined the Budget Blinds team in 2020 during the pandemic. "I attend a men's Bible study group, where one of the owners, Joseph Elder, was present," Jaymes explained. "During this time, I worked as a marketing manager for a printing company, which planned to close its doors. As I looked for new employment, I asked for prayer during this Bible study. Immediately after the Bible study, Joseph approached me saying that he could use some help with his business, Budget Blinds. I replied, 'I don't have any experience in that industry.' Joseph responded, 'It isn't just

BUDGET BLINDS

about selling blinds. It's about creating relationships with people and solving problems, and I've seen you do that."

Jaymes gave it a try by working in the office answering the phones and scheduling appointments. Eventually, he became the office manager. He simply transferred his military and executive chef skills into the office administration setting. The discipline from being a serviceman and chef translated well as manager of Budget Blinds.

"Working for a Christ-centered family makes things easy. The owners, Joseph and Raquel Elder, bought the franchise I0 years ago. Initially, Raquel executed the office manager duties until they had their first child. Now, she homeschools their kids: Lexia, Rylie and Isaiah Justice. And Joseph continues to complete consultations and installation," Jaymes said.

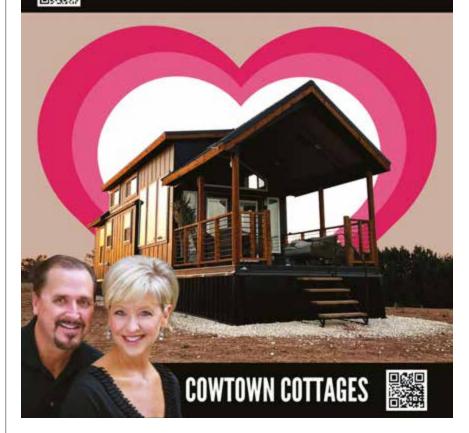
Joseph used his leadership skills and ability to create lasting relationships to build a team, which consists of Jaymes Murphy, Seth Foster and Lynda Crouch. If you have a question regarding Budget Blinds, any of these individuals can assist you. Also, perspective customers are welcome to visit Budget Blinds' showroom or website to view various options. Schedule a free appointment with Lynda, Joseph or Jaymes, who would be thrilled to conduct an in-home consultation in the Mansfield, Burleson and Kennedale areas.

CUSTOMERS ARE GIVEN A SAMPLE BOOK WITH HUNDREDS OF OPTIONS TO SUIT THEIR NEEDS, WHETHER THEY WANT SOMETHING DECORATIVE, TO LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF LIGHT, TO INSULATE AGAINST HEAT AND COLD OR TO WIDEN THEIR FIELD OF VISION.

With a wide range of material combinations available for interior window treatments, Joseph and Jaymes meet clients in the convenience of their homes to discover their needs. One of the two will measure the windows in a casual, yet professional, manner. Then Joseph or Jaymes sits down with the homeowner to talk about the complete project. Customers are given a sample book with hundreds of options to suit their needs, whether they want something decorative, to limit the amount of light, to insulate against heat and cold or to widen their field of vision. The key to Joseph and Raquel's team approach is education and relationships. The owners desire that possible customers visit the showroom and view the website to learn more about the variety of options.

Budget Blinds offers a five-year, no-questions-asked warranty on every Budget Blinds product and a lifetime warranty on color-fastness for the faux wood blinds and shutters. They are confident in the service and products they offer. Budget Blinds celebrated 30 years this year. Do you want to beautify, renovate or highlight a view? If so, schedule an appointment today to update your window coverings with blinds, shades, shutters and drapes.

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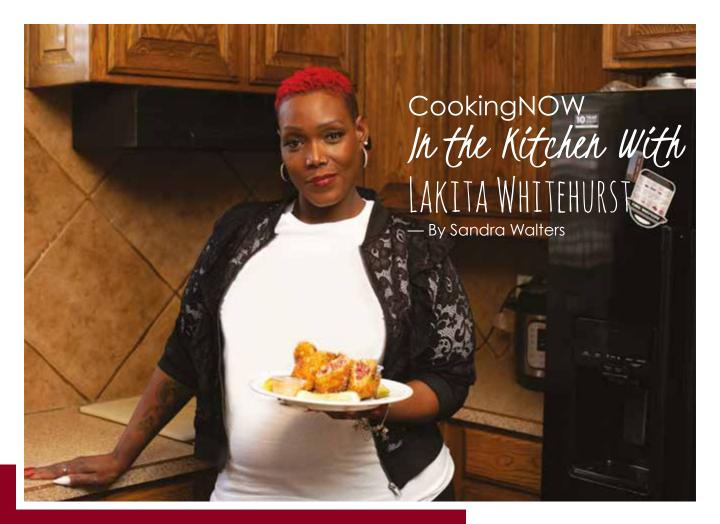
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"Cooking with my mom during Thanksgiving was like a party. Seeing her move around that kitchen in her muumuu creating a dance performance as music played in the background while she taste-tested different dishes displayed perfection. However, after she passed in 2015, it became a way for me to be close to her," Lakita Whitehurst stated.

Last year, her oven broke a few weeks before Thanksgiving, but she was ensured that the replacement would arrive by Thanksgiving. "But it didn't, so I had to prepare an entire Thanksgiving dinner in the Instant Pot, air fryer, deep fryer and stove top," Lakita said. She loves those appliances, so she shares some of her cooking secrets with Mansfield. NOW

Instant Pot Detroit Style Corned Beef and Cabbage KitaRolls

- Corned Beef: 2 lbs. corned beef and seasoning packet 2 cups cold water 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar 1 large can beer 1 medium onion, chopped 1 bulb garlic, chopped 1 stalk celery, chopped 1 green bell pepper, chopped 2 dried sage sprigs
- Cabbage: 1/2 head cabbage, roughly chopped I large can beer 1 medium onion, chopped I bulb garlic, chopped 1 stalk celery, chopped I green bell pepper, chopped 1 red bell pepper, chopped I orange bell pepper, chopped I yellow bell pepper, chopped 1 tsp. fresh thyme 1 tsp. fresh rosemary I tsp. fresh basil 1 tsp. garlic powder I tsp. onion powder l tsp. pepper

- I tsp. Cajun seasoning 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. butter

Egg Rolls: 1-2 pkgs. egg roll shells 1 pkg. mozzarella cheese Corned beef Cabbage 1 egg 1 cup water

I. For corned beef: Place all the corned beef ingredients in an Instant Pot. Turn on manual pressure on high for 2 hours. Place to sealing mode.

2. When cooked, naturally release until the pin drops. Then, manual release the rest of the pressure. Immediately transfer the corned beef to a wire rack to cool.

3. For cabbage: Place the cabbage, beer, vegetables, herbs and spices in a skillet with the olive oil, butter and the juice from the cooked corned beef.

4. Cook about 15 to 20 minutes. Drain and let cool.

5. For egg rolls: Take 2 eggroll shells. Add
1 Tbsp. of cheese, 2 Tbsp. of shredded
corned beef and 1 Tbsp. of cabbage.
6. Combine the egg and water to make an egg wash. Seal the egg roll shells with the egg wash; deep fry in 359 F vegetable oil

for 5 minutes. Drain on wire rack for 5 minutes. 7. Enjoy with Thousand Island or ranch dressing!

Instant Pot Iamaican Oxtails

Marinade:

1 yellow onion, chopped 1 red bell pepper, chopped I orange bell pepper, chopped I green bell pepper, chopped 2 stalks celery, chopped I ripe tomato, chopped I can stewed tomatoes, drained I Tbsp. tomato paste with oregano, basil and garlic 1 tsp. browning sauce 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce Oxtails: 2 lbs. Oxtails Cold water for soaking 1/4 cup white vinegar 1/4 cup mustard 1/4 Tbsp. olive oil 2 cups beef broth 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar 2 Tbsp. hot sauce 2 Tbsp. ketchup 3 sprigs fresh thyme **3** sprigs rosemary 3 sprigs sage 3 bay leaves I whole star anise 4 cloves I garlic bulb, minced I tsp. cumin powder 1 tsp. garlic powder I tsp. onion powder 1 tsp. paprika I tsp. chili pepper powder 1 tsp. ground ginger I tsp. salt 1 tsp. pepper I whole scotch bonnet

Slurry: 2 Tbsp. cornstarch 2 Tbsp. water

Additional Ingredients: I can butter beans, drained and rinsed 3 Tbsp. olive oil

I. For marinade: Combine all of the marinade ingredients.

Turn off the sauté mode.

2. For oxtails: Soak the oxtails in cold water and white vinegar for 20 minutes. Rinse with cold water; pat dry. Remove the fat. **3.** Massage the oxtails with the mustard. 4. Place the oxtails in the marinade. Refrigerate for 4 to 8 hours. 5. Turn the Instant Pot to sauté; add 1/4 Tbsp. olive oil. Sear the oxtails on all sides.





Instant Pot Detroit Style Corned Beef and Cabbage KitaRolls

6. Add the beef broth and remaining oxtails ingredients to the Instant Pot stainless steel inner pot; place the oxtails in without laying them on top of each other.

7 Pour the marinade into the Instant Pot. Close the lid; pressure cook on high for 2 hours. When finished, allow a natural release of the pressure until the pin drops on the top of the Instant Pot. Move the valve to venting and manually release the remaining pressure.

8. Use a large spoon to baste the oxtails with the broth in the inner pot.

9. For slurry: Combine the cornstarch and water in a bowl. Add it to the pot with the

can of butter beans. Add 3 Tbsp. olive oil. **10.** Turn on sauté mode; stir continuously on low for 10 minutes. Serve and enjoy!

Instant Pot Collard Greens & Smoked Ham Hocks

1 lb. smoked ham hocks I cup onion, chopped 1 bulb garlic, minced I whole green bell pepper, chopped 1 bunch cilantro, chopped 1 stalk celery, chopped 2 sprigs thyme 2 sprigs rosemary 2 bay leaves 2 Tbsp. garlic powder 2 Tbsp. onion powder 2 Tbsp. paprika 2 Tbsp. ground ginger 2 Tbsp. basil 2 Tbsp. Italian seasoning 2 Tbsp. salt 2 Tbsp. pepper 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes 2 cups chicken broth 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar 2 dashes hot sauce 2 lbs. collard greens, chopped 1 lb. mustard greens, chopped

2 whole large turnips, chopped

I. Place the ham hocks, onion, garlic, green bell pepper, cilantro, celery, thyme, rosemary, bay leaves, spices, chicken broth, apple cider vinegar and hot sauce into the pressure cooker.

Add the collard greens, mustard greens and turnips while pushing them down fully. Place the lid on the pressure cooker, making sure the valve is set to sealing. Cook on high for 35 minutes. Once finished, release quickly by switching the valve to venting.
 Open the lid; remove the ham hocks to debone with a fork. Return the meat to the cooker.

4. Stir and enjoy!

To search for more great recipes from any of the 9 NOW Magazines

publications, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



"For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." John 3:16-18NIV

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- Virginia Woolf



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Chinese principle 28 Man-eating

giant

30 Angolan capital

34 Globally

renowned

36 Hullabaloo 37 Often "done" in the middle of the day

26 Bright, positive

24 After costs and taxes 25 "Messenger"

weapon 11 Get -

(banish)

13 Failed to keep

15 Behind, at sea 16 Dictator of former

Yugoslavia

- Down
- 1 Scat artist Fitzgerald
- 2 "Land of a
- million elephants"
- 3 "Meet Me
- Louis
- 4 Behaved
- 5 Requirement for a surprise party
- 6 Vase
- 7 "Seven Years in Tibet" actor
- --- Monk, TV 'tec 8
- 9 Alleviate
- 12 Fishing bob
- 14 Sine of 30"
- **18** Instruction
 - books, as Mulan reinterpreted
- 20 Chesterton's
- sleuthing cleric
- 21 Close, Don and I go off
- 22 Pan inventor
- 27 Full range 29 "Born Free"
 - character
- 31 Forbidden act
- 32 Down source

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.



33 "But, --- was ambitious, 1 slew him" (Shakespeare. "Julius Caesar")

35 Key to oblivion?

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Valentine's Day

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

2/2-2/4

Peter Pan:

Presented by the Mansfield High School Fine Arts Department. Three children of the Darling family receive a visit from Peter Pan, who takes them to Never Land. Cost: \$10-\$12. 7:00 p.m., Dr. Jim Vaszauskas Center for the Performing Arts, 1110 W. Debbie Ln.

2/3

Scrabble Tournament: Wordle can't compete with the OG. Battle your family and others in a Scrabble tournament! Open to all ages. We'll have word games for all levels and prizes for the champs! Registration required. Cost: \$5. 6:00-7:00 p.m., 106 S. Wisteria St. For more information, call (817) 728-3680.

2/11

Frozen Fest:

Do you have cabin fever? Join us for a chillin good time at Frozen Fest. Participants will explore frozen experiments, create tracks in the 'snow,' create snowflakes, learn about animals in winter, enjoy a guided story walk and embark on a selfguided scavenger hunt through the woods. Dress up like a snowman to win a prize! Winter scene photo op. All ages. \$10-15. Registration required. 1:00-3:00 p.m.,

Elmer W. Oliver Nature Park, 1650 Matlock Road. Classic Movie Series: Featured movie will be Sabrina. This classic romantic comedy starring Audrey Hepburn, Humphrey Bogart and William Holden makes a perfect Valentine's Day date in the first of our classic movie series. Cost: \$5. 2:30-4:00 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main St.

2/20

Rocket League E-Sports Tournament:

Compete for the right to be known as the best rocket league player in Mansfield and a chance to win Academy, Amazon or E-Sports themed gift cards. Prize awarded to winning team in each category. Please be prepared to share your Epic Gamer Tag. Ages 10-plus. Registration required. Cost: \$10. 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 106 S. Wisteria St. Call (817) 728-3680.

2/22

2.22.23 Tutu 2.2 Fun Run: Join us for this 2.2-mile fun run. No chip timing, but prizes will be awarded for the runners who are too cute, too slow, have the most creative tutus and more. Free, but registration is required. 6:00-7:30 p.m., James McKnight Park East, 700 U.S. Hwy. 287 N. Register at https:// www.cognitoforms.com/MansfieldAc tivitiesCenter/_22223TutuRun.

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





MansfieldNOW Scavenger Hunt



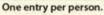
Find 5 hidden Valentine Bears in 5 different ads in this issue

(not counting the one above).

Email the page numbers and specific ads where they are found, plus your phone number, by February 15th. To ensure your Scavenger Hunt answers go in the drawing, you must use the

Scavenger Hunt Email

scavenger.man@nowmagazines.com





Snowmen were found on pages 15, 17, 30, 32 & Back Cover

January winner is: Cindy Harding - \$50 Cash from NOW Magazines

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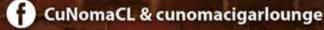


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