

Waxahachie NOW

M A G A Z I N E

FEBRUARY 2025



Flipping Around

Kit Gunderson
springs into action

Also inside:
Scavenger Hunt
Crossword/Sudoku

Be My DIY

A child's handmade
card is the best valentine

Best of In the Kitchen:
Asian Cuisine

Featured Business:
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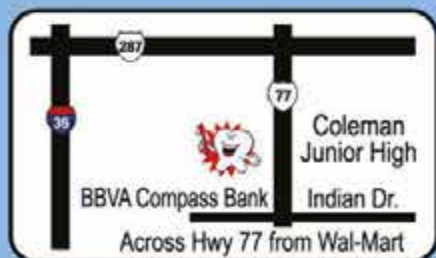
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ON THE COVER



Kit Gunderson wins lots of medals.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Adam

Adam Walker
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Let's go fly a kite ...

That's the final song in the 1964 musical, *Mary Poppins*, and it's good advice for February 8, National Kite-Flying Day. That's a Saturday this year, so there's no excuse not to hit one of the parks to try your hand at this ancient entertainment.

Simple kites are cheap to buy or easy to make, and the simplest kite — a diamond-shaped bit of paper or plastic, with a couple of sticks and a bit of string — is good for hours of fun, with the right wind. There are plenty of YouTube videos and blogs teaching you and your kids how to make a simple kite. It would be a fantastic craft to work on in the evenings of the week leading up to the day.

But you don't have to stop there. Kites can get really extravagant! There are huge bat-winged stunt kites or sport kites perfect for displaying aerobatic prowess. There are box kites, ribbon kites and inflatable kites. Few things are as dramatic as a yards-long dragon kite roaring and writhing across the sky. In parts of Asia, they stage kite wars cutting each other's strings till only one kite is left flying.

Some kinds of hang gliders, paragliders, parafoils and parachutes are even, technically, kites. So clearly, their construction goes way beyond paper, sticks and glue. These kites support grown men!

In *Mary Poppins*, the lost father's final act of rejoining his family is repairing his son's torn kite and taking the family to the park to fly it. There they find the whole city out, taking the advice from the opening line. Maybe this is a good time to join in with your kite ...

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Doctors used to announce to new parents that they had a “bouncing baby boy.” It was a strange phrase, but in Kit Gunderson’s case it might have been literally true. Kit is a competitive champion in tumbling and trampoline. The boy is in constant motion. Conversations are punctuated with handstands and L-sits.

Kit is 7 years old. “I started when I was 5. I like tumbling and trampoline. It’s really entertaining. You get to flip around. It’s really fun,” he said. Kit competes in three events: trampoline, double mini and floor. “My favorite skill is a back tuck, because it’s the first skill I learned.”

“You learned a back handspring first,” his mother, Katie, corrected.

“Well, the back tuck was the first *hard* skill. I like learning hard stuff. If I fail, I’m not gonna leave till I get this.” Mother; father, Mark; and Coach Niki at Waxahachie Gymnastics Center all affirm that statement of his determination.

His first competition was at age 6. “He did just awful,” Coach Niki declared. “First place across the board!” she laughed.

At his recent GymKats competition, he won no medals. “I only got ribbons, because that’s all they gave, but I did get a HERSHEY’S after, so it was OK!” He does love his chocolate. His second favorite kind is Milky Way. He’s very sure about that, but he isn’t sure which is his favorite.

FLIPPING AROUND

— By Adam Walker

"WELL, THE BACK
TUCK WAS THE FIRST
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GONNA LEAVE TILL
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Though the lack of medals at GymKats was disappointing, Kit can console himself with the three gold medals he won at the National Championships. They were held in Texas this year, so all the winners also got cowboy hats. "They only gave me one cowboy hat, even though I won three times," Kit lamented. "If they gave me three, I would have put them on top and on top and wear all of them together!" His scores in the 7-year-old category were as good or better than the two age groups above him.

Kit practices three times a week, sometimes four. But that's just official practices at the gym. "At the house I do a lot of stuff, but mostly basketball," he said. His parents claim no piece of furniture is safe. Between Kit and his older brothers, Titan and Archer, the Gundersons go through a lot of sofas. One of Kit's favorite games is "Spiderman," for which he pulls his mattress downstairs and jumps off the balcony. His mother admits that it is very much a "boy house."

Kit is also into crafts. It isn't unusual to hear him commanding his father to buy him more tape. "He built an entire skate park out of cardboard and duct tape on the kitchen counter. Then he used flies as his skaters," Katie said. It seems Kit has a talent for catching flies in mid-air and making them part of his self-entertainment.

"He was only 2 the first time he caught a fly," Mark remembered.

"For as much energy as he has, he's really simple," Katie declared.

Stories about trips to the skate park are punctuated by sound effects

and dramatic breathing. Whether it's basketball, skating, tumbling or other wild activities, Kit is always proud to show off his scrapes and tell how he got them. "The first time he had a cramp, he said, 'Dad something is wrong!' And then staged a death scene. The only time he stops moving is when he's watching gymnastics videos on YouTube," Mark explained. "He'll watch the same video over and over until he figures out how to do a skill."

"He always listens really well," Coach Niki added. "He's very goal oriented."



He had the goal of doing a standing back full before his 7th birthday, and he did it a couple of weeks before he turned 7. He has an innate ability to stay focused no matter what else is happening in the gym. He doesn't like not doing something well. He likes to help out with private lessons and show his version of pointers. He's a mini-coach. The first time I saw him, I said, "This kid is rare."

"He seems simple, but he's so complex," Mark stated. "Some people have a switch in their brain that flips. When they're under pressure, they become their best ever. At his first competition, he killed it. He beat the scores of 9- and 10-year-olds, when he was only 6. He's really learning to compete with himself. He's so daring and determined to learn success from failure."

"Sometimes, when you first start something," Kit explained, "it's scary, but it's still fun. You do it a bunch of times until you're good. It's fun. I like it very, very much. On trampoline, when you hit it, then you glide through the air. You get all that free time. You're not just flying through the air, you're gliding through space!" **NOW**

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Be My DIY

— By Angel Morris



Handmade Valentine cards for a classroom giveaway not only save money, but they are a great way to tap into your child's creativity and occupy them for an afternoon. If getting started is a challenge, however, it can help to offer a few prompts for kids to copy or build upon.

Your first step, however, is to round up construction paper, markers, crayons and any other craft supplies that may come in handy. If your child wants to put their cards in an envelope, keep the size of the envelopes you have on hand in mind when cutting construction paper for cards. The less your child has to step away to find necessary supplies, the smoother the card crafting will go!

If kids have a hard time getting started on their own, it can help to create a few sample cards for them to follow. You might ask them to think of their favorite movie character, a game they enjoy playing or even popular slang among their classmates. These are great jumping off points for messages to include on valentines. If all else fails, here are a few simple themes to consider:

Tic-Tac-To My Heart. After cutting paper to the size that will fit your envelopes when folded in half, have children write the words "You Won ..." atop the front of the card. In the remaining space of the card, draw a tic-tac-toe board (also known by kids today as a hashtag symbol). Cut out three red hearts and glue those in boxes diagonally down the board. Fill in some of the remaining squares with X marks. On the bottom of the card front, the words "My Heart" complete the message. Children can write "Happy Valentine's Day!" inside, or just sign their name.

Puzzle Perfect. Have children draw two connected puzzle pieces. Draw one half



of a heart within one puzzle piece, completing the rest of the heart on the other piece, so that one full heart is seen across the two pieces. Draw the pieces large enough so that they will cover a good portion of the front of the card when cut in two. Color the heart, then thickly outline the puzzle pieces in black. Cut apart the two puzzle pieces, gluing one piece in the center of the card front, and the other on the inside of the card. Children can write a variety of messages related to puzzles on the card, such as (outside) "Our Friendship," (inside) "Is a Perfect Fit!" Or (outside) "Like a Puzzle Piece," (inside) "You Complete Our Class!"

Lucky in Love. Help children cut out four small hearts from green construction paper, then glue them atop the card front in the shape of a four-leaf clover, drawing a stem to the ground. Write something like, "I'm SO Lucky ..." atop the card. Inside, cut out a single red heart, also drawing a stem from it to the ground. The inside message can be any variation of why your child feels lucky: "You're My Friend," "You're My Classmate" or, even, "You're My Valentine."

Remember, you can always go with a smiley face heart on the front and "Happy Valentine's Day!" inside. Simple is heartfelt, too! **NOW**

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Trainer Daniel Treat challenges the pole to a fight at Lord's Gym.

Zoomed In: Kate Authier

By Adam Walker

Kate Authier is principal at the new Wilemon STEAM Academy campus. "I was principal at our previous campus for seven years," she shared. "We started preparing for this move at the end of last school year, when the teachers boxed up anything they knew they wouldn't need until after the move. We've been packing as we go all year — while learning three new curriculums! We've had a lot of support from the whole staff."

They moved in the first day after Christmas break — then had two "snow" days. "The first day was very smooth. It felt like we'd always been here. The students, families and staff helped design this building. They were so excited to tour their building. Most of the classrooms were already finished because the teachers came in Saturday through Tuesday to get ready!"



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— By Adam Walker

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you want to put a metal roof on your home, Metal Mart has you covered! In addition to exposed fastener and standing seam roofing, we even offer a metal roof option that looks like Spanish clay tile. The energy efficiency and longevity benefits of a residential metal roof are undeniable.”

Metal Mart is the supply source for all manner of metal building components. They offer a large variety of metal panel profiles for wall and roof applications. In addition to finished panels, they also offer slit coils and flat sheets for jobsite roll forming and fabrication.

Metal Mart offers in-house trim fabrication using the latest electronic equipment and experienced personnel. They stock a wide variety of Galvalume and Kynar 500 painted flat sheets, and they pride themselves on custom trim and flashing shapes for all types of roofing and complete most orders in 24 hours or less.

C.J. said, “We offer a complete line of fasteners for both metal and wood framing, ridge vents, roll-up doors, entry doors, radiant barrier and fiberglass insulation. If you need structural steel, we stock cee purlin, square and rectangular

tubing, I-beams, angle iron, punched plates and purlin clips. We can source non-stock structural steel items at good prices, with short lead times.” The Waxahachie location has hard-to-find hardware items, including hinges of all sizes and types, latches, rollers, pipe caps, tubing caps, gate parts, decorative metal items and welding supplies.

They carry the tools you need for working with metal construction materials. Everything from hex sockets, vice grips and tin snips to cutting blades and drill bits can be found in stock. They also supply power tools like chop saws, nibblers, power shears and electric screw guns.

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They offer free price quotes and technical assistance for their products. And even though they are one of the largest privately owned metal components manufacturers in the United States, they are open to the public, and there is no minimum order for any of their products.

C.J. has been with Metal Mart for 24 years. “Twenty-two of those years have been here at the Waxahachie location. Duke Ostrander, my assistant manager, is a Waxahachie native, and he’s been with the company for 34 years.” Duke is sometimes referred to as the company’s “good will ambassador.” John Baker, from Wichita Falls, is the area manager, and Waxahachie native Clif Loveless, the first manager of the Waxahachie location, is now general manager over all 44 Metal Mart locations.

McElroy Metal Mill, the parent company of Metal Mart, is a nationwide employee-owned business (ESOP), and has been manufacturing metal products since 1963. All those years of experience in both manufacturing and retail add up to understanding their products and the needs of their customers. They believe in a people-friendly, laid-back approach to business, and like to have long-term relationships with their customers. **NOW**

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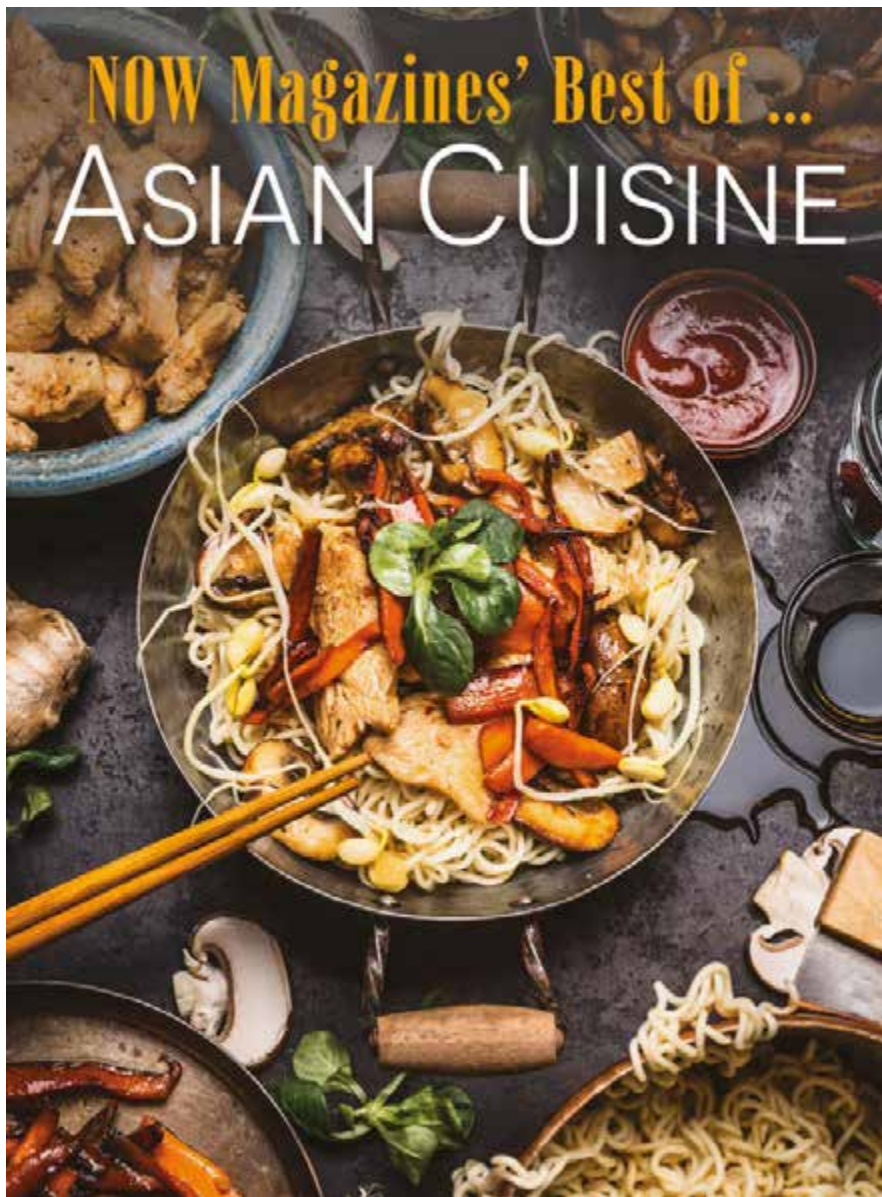
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- ends removed, cut in half
- 1 cup carrots, shredded (divided use)**
- 1 cup red cabbage, thinly shredded (divided use)**
- 1 cup fresh bean sprouts (divided use)**
- 1 1-lb. pkg. cooked shrimp, peeled, no tail**
- 1/2 cup cilantro (divided use)**

- 1.** For dipping sauce: Combine all sauce ingredients in a medium-sized bowl, whisking until smooth.
- 2.** For shrimp rolls: Boil noodles until tender but not mushy, about 6 minutes, or according to package directions. Drain; cool with cold water. Refrigerate until ready to use.
- 3.** Fill a pie dish or bowl large enough to hold rice paper with water. Set damp dish towel on cutting board. Immerse one rice paper sheet into water for 15-20 seconds.
- 4.** Remove, shaking off excess water; lay flat on dampened towel. Paper may still seem stiff. However, it will become pliable as you build each roll.
- 5.** Lay one piece of lettuce over bottom third of rice paper. On lettuce, place 2 to 3 Tbsp. of noodles, 1 Tbsp. of carrots, 1 Tbsp. of cabbage and a few bean sprouts.
- 6.** Roll paper halfway into a cylinder. Fold sides in envelope pattern. Lay 2-3 shrimp along the crease. Place a few pieces of cilantro beside the shrimp. Keep rolling paper into a tight cylinder to seal.
- 7.** Repeat with remaining wrappers. Store with seam side down. Serve immediately with dipping sauce.

Instant Pot Sweet and Sour Pork

Provided by Ian Davis for the April 2024 issue of North Ellis Co.NOW Magazine.

- 1 pkg. Pioneer Roasted Pork Gravy Mix**
- 1 cup water**
- 1 cup light brown sugar**
- 1/3 cup white vinegar**
- 3 Tbsp. soy sauce**
- 3 Tbsp. tomato paste**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1/4 tsp. ginger, ground**
- 1 lb. boneless pork chops, cubed**
- 1 onion, chopped**
- 1 green bell pepper, sliced**
- 1 8-oz. can pineapple chunks, drained**

- 1.** In a large bowl, whisk gravy mix, water, light brown sugar, white vinegar, soy sauce, tomato paste, garlic and ground ginger. Pour into the Instant Pot.
- 2.** Add the pork, onions, bell peppers and pineapple chunks into the sauce mixture; stir.
- 3.** Pressure cook on high for 10 minutes.

Mongolian Stir-fry Beef

Provided by Gavin Bone for the February 2019 issue of WaxahachieNOW Magazine.

Asian cuisine offers a lot of variety. From the mild flavors of Japanese cooking to the spiciness of the Szechuan region, there is something for every palate. Here are a few samplings from the many Asian-inspired recipes we have published over the years. Enjoy! **NOW**

Peanut Pad Thai Sauce

Provided by Helen Taylor for the April 2021 issue of EnnisNOW Magazine.

- 1/3 cup rice vinegar**
- 1/3 cup soy sauce**
- 3 Tbsp. crunchy peanut butter**
- 2-3 Tbsp. red chili sauce**
- 1 lime, juiced**
- 1/4 cup brown sugar**
- 1 tsp. minced garlic**
- Sesame oil, to taste**

- 1.** Combine all ingredients. Add to your favorite stir-fried vegetables and rice noodles.

Spring Rolls

Provided by Sara Allen for the March 2019 issue of MidlothianNOW Magazine.

- Dipping Sauce:*
- 1/2 cup hoisin sauce (I wouldn't use off brand.)**
 - 1/4 cup peanut butter, smooth**
 - 1/4 cup water**
 - 1 Tbsp. rice vinegar**

Shrimp Rolls:

- 6 oz. thin rice noodles**
- 10 round rice paper wrappers**
- 10 leaves red leaf lettuce, thick stem**

- 1 1/4 lbs. flank steak, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tsp. minced ginger
- Chili garlic sauce, to taste
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- Green onions, sliced for garnish
- Pinch red pepper flakes

1. In a large Ziploc bag, add the flank steak and cornstarch. Toss the beef to coat evenly.
2. Heat a large skillet to high heat; add vegetable oil. Once heated, add the steak in a single layer.
3. Cook on each side for 1 minute, or until the edges begin to brown. Once the steak is cooked, remove and set aside on a plate.
4. In a small mixing bowl, combine soy sauce, brown sugar, water, ginger, chili garlic sauce and garlic. Add the sauce to the pan; bring to a boil.
5. Add the steak to the sauce. Allow the sauce to thicken for a couple of minutes.
6. Toss with the chopped green onions; sprinkle with red pepper flakes.
7. Serve on top of steamed white or fried rice.

Hot and Sour Soup

Provided by Vicki Padgett for the May 2019 issue of CorsicanaNOW Magazine.

- 3-4 cups chicken broth
- 4 dried shitake mushrooms, rehydrated and julienned
- 1/4 cup bamboo shoots, julienned
- 1/2 cup rice vinegar, unflavored
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 green onion, cut into 2-inch-long strips
- 1 tsp. Tabasco sauce
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- Firm tofu, cut into small cubes (optional)
- 3 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 1 egg, beaten (optional)
- Slivers of chicken or pork, to taste (optional)

1. In a large saucepan, bring the chicken broth to a boil. Stir in the next 7 ingredients, plus tofu, if using; return to a boil.
2. Mix together cornstarch and water. Add to the soup; stir until thickened. If desired, drizzle in the egg, stirring the soup constantly.
3. For extra protein, add slivers of chicken or pork to the soup as it boils.

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

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Photo by Bill Smith.

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TRAILS

— By Bill Smith

Whether you hike, bike, jog, skate — or none of these and you just live in North Texas — there is a good chance you have heard of the Katy Trail, which runs through the Uptown and Oak Lawn areas of Dallas. What you may not know is that there is another Katy Trail that traverses much of the state of Missouri and a number of similar trails for public use all across the United States.

One of the things many of these trails have in common is they were all formerly railroad tracks. The Katy Trails are named for the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad, previously known as the MKT or “Katy.” The trail in Dallas is 3 1/2 miles long and is nicely paved and maintained by Friends of the Katy Trail. It is also part of the city of Dallas Park System.

The trail in Missouri is much longer, and at 240 miles, it is the longest rails-to-trails project in the United States. While the Dallas trail supports skating, the Missouri trail, constructed of crushed gravel rather than concrete, serves as a great place

to travel by horseback. The park runs from Clinton, Missouri, to Machens, Missouri. While the Dallas trail is often highly populated by area residents out for an hour or so of fun and exercise, the Missouri trail is often used by adventurers taking multiday trips. Much of the trail parallels the Missouri River, and there is ample space for travelers to tent camp, but some choose to spend their nights at the bed-and-breakfasts located in the towns that dot the trail. The Katy Trail in Missouri is also a state park. From the website referenced after this article, you can find connections to two other rails to trails in Missouri — the MKT Trail and the Rock Island Trail.

Rails to trails began as a movement by a group of walking and biking fans, railroad historians, conservationists and several other enthusiasts almost 40 years ago. A dedicated organization was formed after the groups began meeting in Washington, D.C., with a vision for preserving unused railroad beds for public use. On February 1, 1986, Rails to Trails Conservancy was formed.

There is probably some kind of trail that has been formed or supported by the group in every state today. In California, the Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail goes from Westwood to Susanville. It follows the old Fernley and Lassen Railroad line, which closed in 1956. This trail crosses water 12 times on bridges and trestles and passes through two tunnels.

In Pennsylvania, the Allegheny National Forest trail is an



undeveloped trail that offers a variety of hiking and skiing options with various levels of difficulty. The trail begins on a railroad grade along a creek, connects with the Mill Creek Trail and leads to the Twin Lakes Trail.

The website for Rails to Trails Conservancy states, "Since our founding, RTC has worked from coast to coast, supporting the development of thousands of miles of rail-trails and multiuse trails for millions of people to explore and enjoy."

If you have an interest in these trails anywhere across the country, you might just find your next adventure at traillink.com. The site is very user-friendly, and an app that can be downloaded to your cell phone is also available. **NOW**

Sources:

1. kattytraildallas.org/history/.
2. kattytrailmo.com/katy-trail-state-park/.
3. traillink.com/.





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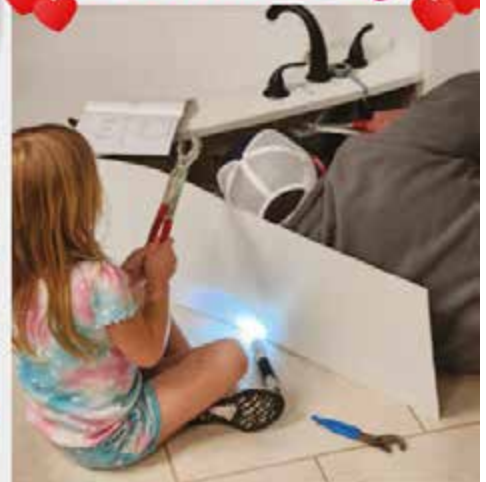
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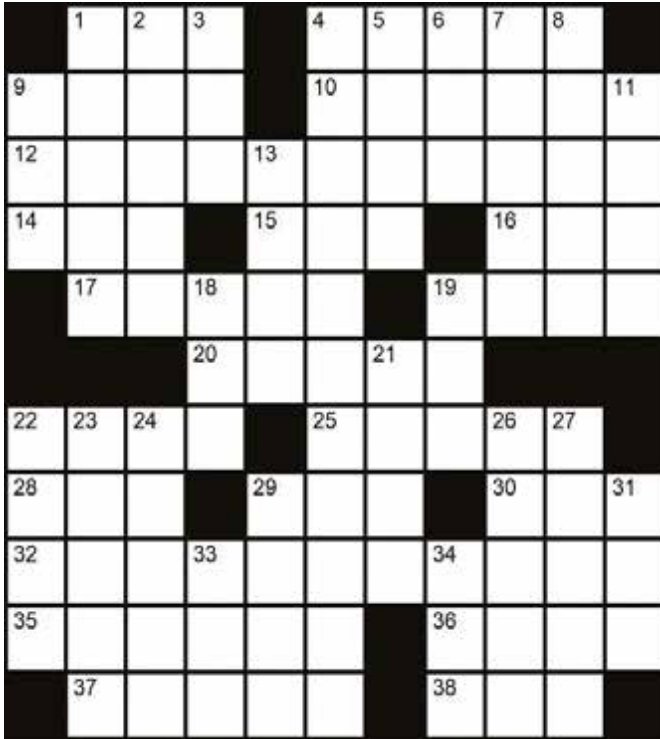


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2024

Crossword Puzzle



CrosswordSite.com Ltd

Across

- 1 Upper limit
- 4 Tires
- 9 End of a radio alphabet
- 10 On the contrary
- 12 Now and then
- 14 Controversial driving video game
- 15 Go on to say
- 16 "Catfish: The TV Show" host -- Schulman
- 17 Japan's "City of Water"
- 19 Breathe convulsively
- 20 Irritably impatient
- 22 Turkey

Down

- 1 Film script words between scenes
- 2 Assumed name
- 3 Groan-causing wordplay
- 4 "Steps in Time" autobiographer
- 5 Augment with something superfluous
- 6 Rugged four-wheeler
- 7 African republic preceded by the Ashanti Empire
- 8 Monica ---, stabbed during a tennis tournament
- 9 Take a sharp turn
- 11 Your answer is requested
- 13 Remove
- 18 Organization for Nadal and Djokovic
- 19 Where to work on a six-pack?
- 21 A whole lot
- 22 First word of "The Marines' Hymn"
- 23 Angler's equipment
- 24 Bo's master
- 26 Gut bugs
- 27 Poppy Pomfrey at Hogwarts, for example
- 29 Yankees' legend -- Rizzuto
- 31 "Adios!"
- 33 High ball
- 34 Media organization which disseminates "ideas worth spreading"

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Easy

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

Medium

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

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HAPPY Valentine's Day FEBRUARY

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.

2/6

Aloha Dreams:

Daddy Daughter Dance. \$25/ person. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln. Tickets must be purchased in-person at the Civic Center, cash or check only.

2/7-2/8

Strong Feelings

About Being Alive:

A very funny show about being sad. \$20. 7:00 p.m., Black Box Theater, Nelson University, 1200 Sycamore St.

2/7-2/9

Let Him Sleep 'Til It's Time for His Funeral:

A comedy about turning 50. \$15. **Friday & Saturday:** 7:30 p.m.; **Sunday:** 2:30 p.m., Waxahachie Community Theatre, University Church, 221 Solon Rd.

2/8

Dancing With the Ellis County Stars:

Local "celebrities" raise funds for Texas Baptist Home for Children. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Grand Ballroom, Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane. Purchase tickets and vote at <https://tbhc.org>.

2/19

Heart Smart Conference: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service helps keep your heart

healthy. 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Waxahachie Senior Center, 122 Park Hills Dr.

2/21

Mentors Care

Purse Fundraiser:

Win designer purses and help struggling high school students. Gucci raffle, bingo and silent auction. Tickets: \$75 each; table of 8: \$550. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane. For more information, visit www.mentors.care/2025-purse-bingo-fundraiser.

2/22

Master of my Faith – Captain of My Soul: Ellis County African American

Museum and Library Annual Hall of Fame Induction and Scholarship Luncheon. Speaker Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II. \$65. 1:00-5:00 p.m., FUMC, 505 Marvin St.

2/28

Casino Night Fundraiser for Angel Gallegos:

Proceeds support the VWM Foundation. 7:00-11:30 p.m., City of Rice Event Center, 305 N. Dallas St., Rice. For tickets, call (903) 519-0274.

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



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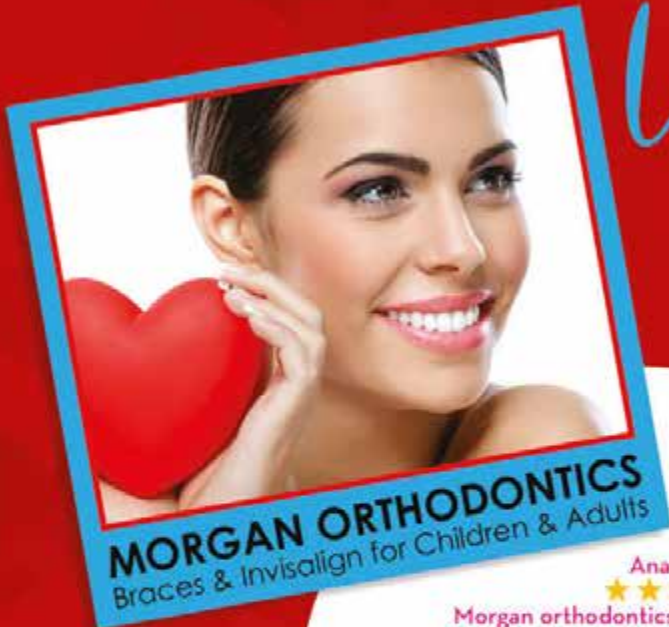
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