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ON THE COVER

Lorelei Hoggard builds trust and lifelong relationships with students.

Photo by
Shane Kirkpatrick.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

Angel Morris
North Ellis Co. NOW Editor
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Let me re-introduce myself!

It was 11 years ago when I first began meeting folks in this community as the new editor of *Red OakNOW Magazine*. Fast-forward three years to May 2013, and NOW Magazines changed the cover name to *North Ellis Co. NOW Magazine* to better reflect the coverage area, which includes Red Oak, Glenn Heights, Oak Leaf, Ovilla and more.

My first story as editor was about a young man named Gary Livingston, who was making history as the inaugural mascot of the new Red Oak High School campus. My last story was of P.K. and Bethany Kelton, a couple who had recently settled in Red Oak and expressed how wonderfully accepting they found the community.

At the end of 2014, I went back to teaching for a while, but am happy circumstances brought me back to this publication. When I initially arrived, the U.S. census calculated Red Oak's population at 10,769. The estimate for 2020 increases that to 14,342. That's more than 3,500 folks who've come to town since my first stint as editor of this magazine! This month, I get to tell you about residents new and old, featuring a standout educator from Life School and a cook who combines her loves of recipes and realty.

I look forward to continuing NOW's tradition of featuring fine North Ellis County folks. Help me by sending your suggestions to the email address you will always find beneath my picture here. I look forward to hearing from you.

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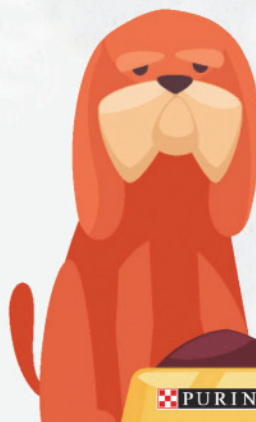


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LIFE

With Lorelei

— By Angel Morris

A chance experience changed Lorelei Hoggard's career path and, as a result, impacted hundreds of students' lives. A fourth-grade teacher at Life School Red Oak, Lorelei hadn't always intended on being an educator. "When living in New Mexico, I worked in a bank. I was really good with numbers, and the bank offered to help me with college if I continued working there afterward," Lorelei reflected. "I happened on a college class in which I had to observe a student classroom, and after the first observation, I knew I was called to be a teacher."

Now having taught for 13 years, Lorelei admits school wasn't always easy for her. "I wasn't necessarily a good college student when I started out. Due to moves and finances, I didn't even finish within the first four years after high school," she recalled. "By the time I was able to graduate, I was maintaining all A's and starting a family. I realized I have the grit to accomplish anything."

Over time, Lorelei taught fifth grade in Grand Prairie, seventh grade in Duncanville and fifth grade at Life School for a year before taking eight years away from teaching to be a stay-at-home-mom to her four sons. The boys attended all of elementary and middle school at Life School, and Lorelei returned to teach at Life School in 2013. "There's a sense of family at Life. I love the feel at the school," Lorelei expressed.

Growing up in Crane, Texas, Lorelei met her would-be husband, David, in first grade, and the couple has been married almost 30 years. She and her family moved to Red Oak in 2003.

Since then, Lorelei has created many memories in her classrooms. "One of my favorite memories had to be this: I had a student, about eight years ago. She moved to Hawaii her fifth-grade year. We kept in touch," Lorelei relayed. "When we went to Hawaii in 2019 for my son's graduation trip, that former student, her mom and her little brother met us. She made me a lei from the tree in her yard and remembered my love of Snoopy and had a few Snoopy items to gift me."

Lorelei missed the closeness with students that was taken away by COVID-19 last year. "It's really hard to talk to a screen. At first, everyone is uncomfortable," she said.

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There has been an upside to remote education, however. "I believe it has made me more patient. Teachers grieved at the loss of the end of our year. When spring break was extended, nobody knew what to think. We all hoped to be back within a month," Lorelei admitted. "When our district announced we would not have students on campus for the rest of the year, I sat and I cried," she said. "Now? Every holiday makes me wonder if we will all come back together. I try to make sure they know I love them ... just in case," she noted.

Lorelei encourages folks to remember the pandemic is still impacting classrooms. "Teachers were thrown into hours of training to make this happen. We can't assume that parents and students know how to do this as well as we do," she said. "Still, teachers are not immune to what is going on, physically or emotionally. We often return home having to help our own children, who are students."

As for student behavior during the pandemic, Lorelei said she has never been more impressed. "Students are so resilient! We can all learn a lot from you. You go forward with your whole heart. You are the sunshine in these tough times," she praised.

The pandemic forced Lorelei to learn new technology skills, adding to her already diverse job description. "I wear many hats with honor and pride. I often act as mother, nurse, counselor and disciplinarian," she listed. "I'm privileged to be placed in this ministry and honored to have some small part in the way a child reaches adulthood."

The philosophy that every child can learn is important to Lorelei. "I push my kids to see forward movement, and that forward movement is celebrated!"





Standout teachers like Lorelei agree that relationships help them reach students. "There may be times when I'm frustrated with them, but I always love them. Always. I want to be that teacher ... the one they remember accepted them just because. They did not have to earn my love."

Currently, Lorelei herself is earning National Board Certification which takes about two years and hundreds of study hours. Other things she enjoys include cooking and singing. "I cook live on Facebook. I don't peddle anything or get anything in return. It's just for fun," Lorelei explained. "Also, I sing on our church worship team at church. Another way I pursue singing is with my sons. Two are gifted piano players. When there is a Christmas recital, they choose a song for me to sing and accompany me on the piano."

Today, Lorelei's son, Harrison, is a senior at The University of Texas at Dallas studying computer science, while Grant is a senior at The University of Texas at Tyler studying business/human resources. Preston is a junior and Gabriel a sophomore at Global High School in Waxahachie.

From about 2007-2019, Lorelei's family was involved in Junior Bible Quiz together. "My boys quizzed, and my husband and I helped. At one point, I was area coordinator. I stepped down two seasons ago when my second son went off to college."

Lorelei dreams of someday writing a book, but for now her focus remains her students. "This is much more than presenting an academic lesson. I want students to trust me enough to come to me with anything," she stated. "It is always a thrill when former students, now adults, seek me out as a friend." **NOW**



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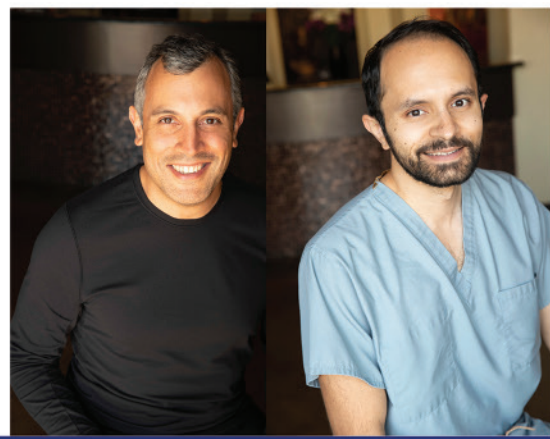
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— By Rachel Rich

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Good health is the catalyst for prosperous living, and no one understands this more than Dr. Christie Egbuchunam. Her practice at Regency Healing Medical Clinic in Red Oak encourages people to come in for check-ups, so they prevent health issues from arising.



“We have started a concierge practice, since there are a lot of people out of work due to COVID-19,” Dr. Egbuchunam explained. “We offer our own Regency insurance at a much lower cost for patients.” With different plans, dependent upon the needs of the patient, Regency Healing has allowed people who can’t afford insurance and doctor visits to now pay a low monthly fee to be seen by her.

Dr. Egbuchunam wants the concierge practice to take off for those in need of financial help. “We can’t just run their care for free, sadly,” she admitted. “But most people can afford to pay \$50 a month and get treated.” Dr. Egbuchunam believes the best part about this new insurance method is their deals with the labs, allowing her to get prices at a much lower rate than the patient can get by going directly to the lab. “I fight for my patients to get the best deals,” she said.

Another specialty of Regency Healing includes weight loss. “We’ve added a new device that improves fat and weight loss

without the need for a diet,” Dr. Egbuchunam explained. One 32-minute treatment can take away 1.6 liters of fat — and it’s FDA approved. Many older people struggle with still being overweight, even though they eat right and exercise. “That’s where this machine comes in handy. It’s a great tool to help people get started.

“We are pushing weight loss right now, especially because of COVID-19,” she said. “If you can control the weight, you can prevent countless health problems.”

Although weight loss is their specialty, they do not use a traditional path for their patients. “Weight loss takes the total person. We consider your whole health, where you are with your health, if you have depression or other mental situations. We look at the medications you’re taking, which can often cause weight problems. We treat the conditions that make you prone to weight gain.”

As much as Dr. Egbuchunam does to help her patients, she has many like-minded, hard workers helping the office succeed. “My biggest backbone at Red Oak is Victoria Molina,” Dr. Egbuchunam said. “She does all she can to help the people who visit Regency Healing.” One of the doctor’s goals this year is also to get a nurse practitioner, who can help tend to more Red Oak patients.

Dr. Egbuchunam has gone above and beyond for others. Once, a lady suffering from an unknown rash walked into the clinic. She argued with staff about not registering before being seen, informing them if the doctor can tell her what’s wrong, she’ll agree to become a patient. “So, I walked up to introduce myself,” Dr. Egbuchunam said. “She told me she’d gone to other doctors who treated her, but the rash kept coming back. I let her know the name of the rash and how it was treated.” Although it couldn’t be cured, Dr. Egbuchunam was able to ease her symptoms. “That day, she registered, and she’s been my patient ever since,” she said.

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Zoomed In: Carolyn Rodriguez

By Rachel Rich

Some people pay attention to the bad breaks during uncertain times. Carolyn Rodriguez, however, sees nothing but opportunity — and the sky is the limit. She recently worked for American Airlines, traveling the world. Now, with a break from her job due to the pandemic, she's not letting anything keep her from being among the clouds, taking up piloting lessons.

In the first stages of the learning process, she is understanding the different parts of a plane and how they operate. "I'm exploring the front of the plane right now to learn more about it," she said, and refers to her training as, "So far, so good."



Kelsi McCraw enjoys a trip out with Murphy while writing.



Abel Garcia dresses up in a fun way for school.



Red Oak High School Student Council gathers for a photo.



Chamber CEO Clint Woodward (left) and 2020 Board Chair Barry Moore (right) present Diamond Awards to top sponsors Red Oak Faith Fellowship, Interbank and Access Self Storage. Baylor Hospital and Linebarger were also honored.



Ovilla Road Baptist Church staff welcomes their kiddos to service.



Connor Brumley practices piano with instructor Regina Graham at Red Oak Music.



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Career and Technical Education



Happy St. Patrick's Day

MARCH

Due to COVID-19, 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.

3/11

**North Texas Food
Pantry at Red Oak ISD:**
ROISD students receive a box with a 30-day supply of food. Families must complete a form with student ID number. From 4:30 p.m. until all boxes are distributed, 109 W. Red Oak Rd.

3/15

Virtual Book Club:
Red Oak Public Library invites the public to share what they are reading/listening to during the pandemic. Facilitated by Library Director Logan Ragsdale and members of the Red Oak Book Club. 6:30 p.m. For Zoom details,

call (469) 218-1230 or email, redoakbookclub@gmail.com.

3/19-3/28

Tulipalooza:
This is a 10-day charity event featuring live music, food trucks, vendors and U-Pick-Em Tulip Field. 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie. For more information, visit <https://tulipalooza.org/>.

Tuesdays

Children's Virtual Story Time:
The library may be closed, but

stories, songs and more are still happening on Facebook @redoaktx.org. 10:00-10:30 a.m. For more details, message librarian@redoaktx.org.

Third Wednesdays

**Ellis County
Christian Women's
Connection Meeting:**
Reservations due **Sunday** before the meeting. Cost: \$13. 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club. For more information, contact Barb at (214) 463-5064 or barb.jacobs19@yahoo.com.

Wednesdays

Weekly Devos:
Oak Church Online devotionals hosted by Pastor Chris and Cara. Available to everyone via YouTube under Oaks Online.

Fridays

Virtual Book Chat:
Book summaries and recommendations on Facebook @redoaktx.org. 4:00 p.m. For more information, message librarian@redoaktx.org.

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



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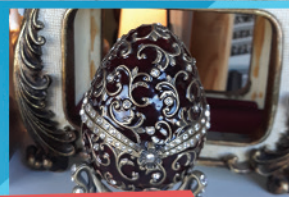
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A woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a pink apron over a black and white polka-dot top, stands in a kitchen. In front of her on a granite countertop are several baked goods: a round cake with white frosting, a round cake with orange glaze, and a stack of small round cakes. A stainless steel refrigerator is visible in the background.

CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

APRIL STOKES

— By Rachel Rich

A baking enthusiast, April Stokes knows how to make food as sweet as she is. “I have watched my mother bake since I was a small child,” she reminisced. “I recall many holidays and birthdays when my mother baked for family and friends. She cooked me a chocolate cake for my birthday every year until I was about 20 years old.”

April is an elementary school teacher, while pursuing part-time realty. She started a YouTube channel, April Stokes Baking Realtor, where she will bake a dish, giving viewers the recipe at the end, while sharing real estate tips. “Baking is a way I relieve stress,” she shared. “It makes me happy.” **NOW**

Italian Lemon Pound Cake

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup unsalted butter, softened
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
1/2 cup sour cream
1 tsp. vanilla
4 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. zest from lemon
1/2 cup buttermilk

Option 1: Lemon Glaze:

1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
3 Tbsp. lemon juice, room temperature

Option 2: Lemon Frosting:

4 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 Tbsp. lemon zest
1/4 cup powdered sugar

1. Preheat the oven to 300 F. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt; set aside.
2. In a separate bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.

3. Beat in the eggs one at a time. Mix in the next 4 ingredients. Mix half of the flour mixture into the butter mixture. Add the buttermilk. Add the remaining flour mixture. Keep mixing thoroughly until the flour disappears.

4. Pour the batter into a Bundt pan that has been sprayed. Bake for 60-70 minutes. Let cool.

5. *For glaze/frosting: Note: You can use either a glaze or a frosting to top your cake.* Mix all of the glaze or frosting ingredients until thoroughly blended. Pour topping onto cooled cake.

7 Up Cake

1 box yellow cake mix
1 large box Jell-O lemon pudding mix
4 eggs
3/4 cup Wesson oil
3/4 cup 7 Up

Glaze:

1 cup powdered sugar
4 Tbsp. milk
1 Tbsp. lemon juice

1. Mix the cake mix and lemon pudding mix in a large mixing bowl. Add eggs; beat well. Add Wesson oil and 7 Up; stir to combine.
2. Pour the mixture into a greased Bundt pan. Bake at 325 F for 40-45 minutes. Allow to cool.
3. *For glaze:* Mix the powdered sugar, milk and lemon juice, stirring until well combined. Drizzle over cake.

Strawberry Cake With Strawberry Cream Cheese Frosting

- 1 box white cake mix
- 1 3-oz. box strawberry Jell-O pudding
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup fresh strawberries
- 1/2 cup milk

Strawberry Cream Cheese Frosting:

- 1 cup fresh strawberries, mashed or finely chopped, depending on the amount of strawberry juice (divided use)
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 1/2 cup butter, room temperature
- 6 cups confectioner's sugar, or more as needed
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream, or more as needed

1. *For cake:* Mix the white cake mix, Jell-O pudding and flour in a bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, add sugar, eggs, oil, strawberries and milk; blend both mixtures together well.
3. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Lightly spray a 9x13-inch pan. Bake for 28 minutes. A toothpick inserted should come out clean; remove cake to cool.
4. *For frosting:* Mix 1/2 of the strawberries with the cream cheese and butter until smooth.
5. Sift sugar; add one cup's worth at a time into the cream cheese mixture. Add cream and remaining strawberries, incorporating completely. Pour over the cake and smooth out, covering the entire cake.

Banana Bread

- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 3 bananas, mashed
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup walnuts (optional)



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1. Mix together the butter and sugar in a bowl. Stir in the eggs and bananas. Slowly add salt, baking soda and flour. Add walnuts if desired.

2. Pour the mixture into a greased loaf pan. Bake at 350 F for 40-50 minutes.

Peach Cobbler

2 15-oz. cans peaches

1 cup sugar

1 cup light brown sugar

1 tsp. lemon juice

1 cup butter, melted

1 Tbsp. vanilla extract

2 Pillsbury piecrusts

1. In a pot, mix the first 6 ingredients. Bring to a boil; cook for 15 minutes.

2. Place a piecrust in a 9x11-inch baking

dish. Pour ingredients over the crust. Apply the second piecrust on top.

3. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes, or until the top crust is golden brown.

Southern Pound Cake

1 cup butter

3 cups all-purpose flour

3 cups sugar

6 eggs

2 cups Cool Whip whipped cream

1 Tbsp. vanilla

1. Heavily grease and flour a 9- or 10-inch pan. Cream butter, flour and sugar in a mixer until fluffy.

2. Add in 1 egg at a time, while incorporating cream a little at a time, until flour and cream are blended well. Add vanilla; mix again.

3. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake at 350 F for 90 minutes, or until the center springs back after a small amount of pressure is applied.

Classic Chocolate Cake

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 cups sugar

3/4 cup cocoa powder

2 tsp. baking powder

1 1/2 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. salt

1 cup milk

1/2 cup oil

2 eggs

2 tsp. vanilla

1 cup boiling water

Frosting:

1/2 cup butter, softened

1/2 cup cocoa powder

4 cups powdered sugar

1 tsp. vanilla

1 pinch salt

6-8 Tbsp. milk

1. Line 2 9-inch round pans with parchment paper; spray with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat oven to 350 F.

2. In a mixing bowl, whisk together the first 6 ingredients. Add milk, oil, eggs and vanilla until the consistency is smooth. Stir in boiling water, mixing until smooth.

3. Divide the batter evenly between both pans. Bake for 30-35 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes; transfer to a cooling rack.

4. For frosting: Beat all ingredients in a bowl until smooth, adding enough milk to get a spreadable consistency. Apply to the cake.



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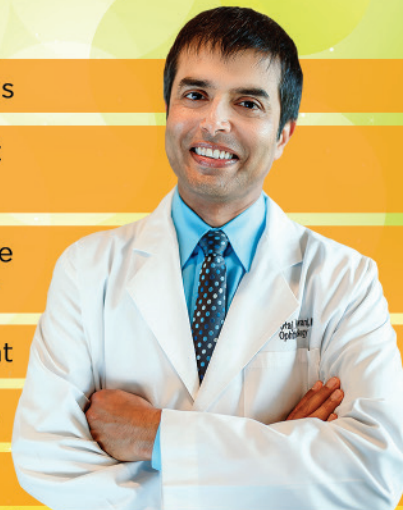
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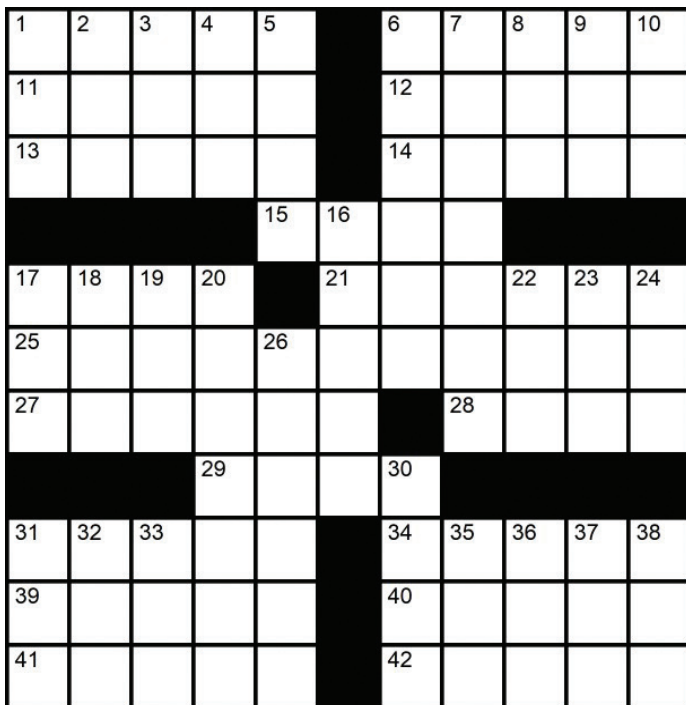
Heart envelopes were
found on pages
Inside Front Cover, 4, 11, 12, 13

February winner is:
Tressa Gregory - \$50 Cash
from NOW Magazines



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Crossword Puzzle



CrosswordSite.com Ltd

Across

- 1 Arm and a leg
- 6 --- Capped Romance (36 Crazyfists)
- 11 Egg producer
- 12 Uncle Tom's creator
- 13 Childe Harold author
- 14 Doesn't possess
- 15 Blacken
- 17 Tex. neighbor
- 21 "The --- File" (Frederick Forsyth)
- 25 Sailor's jacket, maybe
- 27 With sharp side first
- 28 Bloodsucker
- 29 Heavy blow
- 31 Contempt
- 34 Has become rancid
- 39 Like Muzak
- 40 Donald Duck's nephew
- 41 Rowdy ---, an early Clint Eastwood role
- 42 Descriptive record

Down

- 1 High shot
- 2 Excellent tree climber
- 3 Besmirch
- 4 Fraternity man, briefly
- 5 Harmony
- 6 Slightly
- 7 Eye impolitely
- 8 Discouraging words
- 9 "My --- Private Idaho" (1991 film)
- 10 Freshly painted
- 16 They're locked in battle
- 17 Have creditors
- 18 Little goat
- 19 Very cold fuel
- 20 Aim of every undergraduate
- 22 Snow runner
- 23 Fraction of a min.
- 24 Ancient boat
- 26 Bounces
- 30 Top gear for a house
- 31 Spot
- 32 Preceded by the O S S
- 33 Plump
- 35 One kind of offspring
- 36 Unfashionable
- 37 Cone producer
- 38 Visionary

Solutions on page 28

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Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

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

Medium

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

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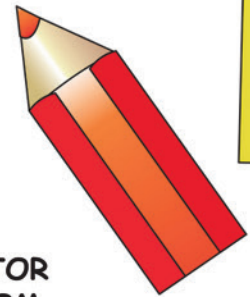
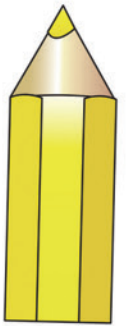
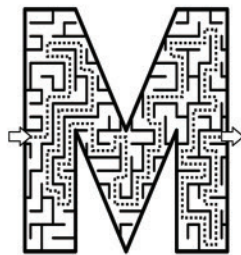
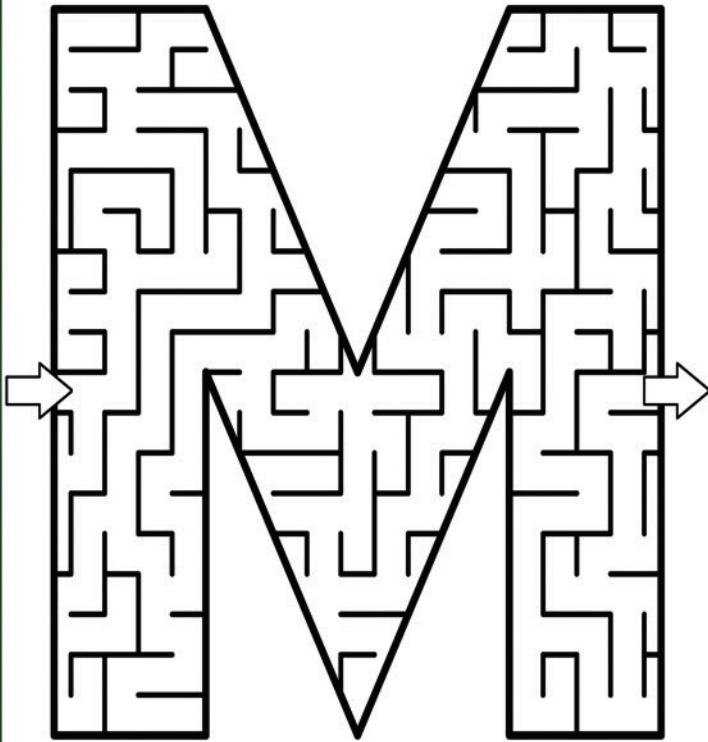
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Linda Waller searched through the magazine several times to find the hidden images, and it paid off. She now has \$50 to spend on herself for her birthday. Happy Birthday, Linda!



Chaplin Stephanie Cicero (not pictured) plays and enters almost every month. Don't give up! You may be our next \$50 cash winner, too!

Crossword - Sudoku Solutions

1	L	I	M	B	S	6	A	S	N	O	W
11	O	V	A	R	Y	12	S	T	O	W	E
13	B	Y	R	O	N	14	H	A	S	N	T
					15	C	H	A	R		
17	O	K	L	A	21	O	D	E	S	S	A
25	W	I	N	D	B	R	E	A	K	E	R
27	E	D	G	E	O	N	28	T	I	C	K
					29	G	U	S	T		
31	S	C	O	R	N	34	I	S	O	F	F
39	P	I	P	E	D	40	L	O	U	I	E
41	Y	A	T	E	S	42	E	N	T	R	Y

Easy

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

Medium

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



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