

# MidlothianNOW

M A G A Z I N E

MARCH 2026

## Drumming the Dream

Chris Bradley performs  
in a tribute band

In the Kitchen With  
Mallory Vaitekunas

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Crossword

Featured Business:  
All Glow Med Spa

Postal Customer

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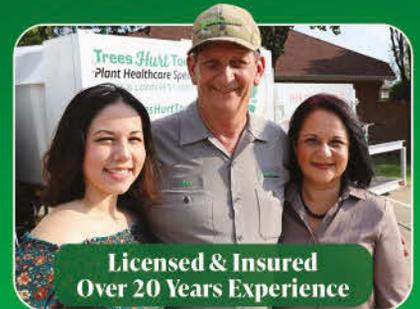
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**Angel Morris**  
MidlothianNOW Editor  
angel.morris@nowmagazines.com  
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## ON THE COVER

Bricks in the Wall  
— a leading Pink Floyd tribute band — features Midlothian's Chris Bradley on drums.



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General Manager, Rick Hensley*

### EDITORIAL

*Managing Editor, Becky Walker  
Midlothian Editor, Angel Morris  
Office Assistant, Kristin Bato  
Editor/Proofreader, Virginia Riddle*

### GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

*Creative Director, Chris McCalla  
Artists, Kristin Bato . Martha Macias  
Anthony Sarmienta . Jennifer Spence*

### PHOTOGRAPHY

*Photography Director, Chris McCalla  
Photographer, Anthony Sarmienta*

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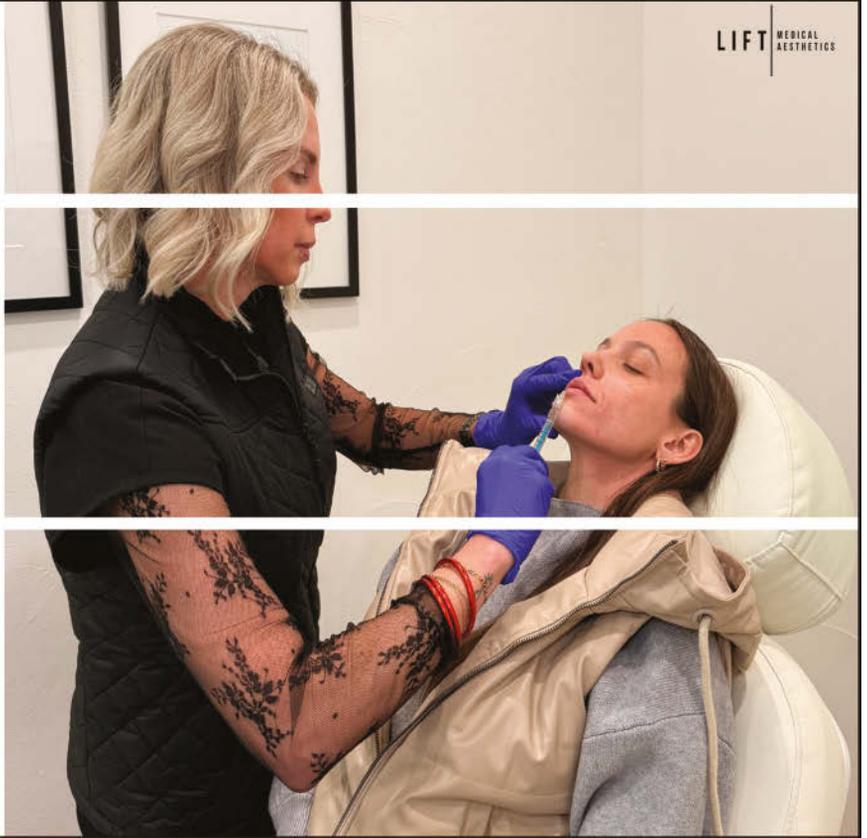
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# DRUMMIN' THE DREA

— By Angel Morris

*Borrowing a junior high buddy's drum set for the summer eventually led to Chris Bradley's rock band career. "The first time one of my early bands played in front of a few hundred people cemented it for me. ... I wanted to be a performer to connect with the crowd," he recalled.*

A Cedar Hill High School graduate and music major at Cedar Valley College, Chris began working the Dallas club scene. "Meeting people, performing and studying drums like crazy — it was heaven!" he recalled. "A band I was in at age 21 gained the interest of a national promoter, and we headed out on the road, earning a solid rep as an opening act for major bands."

The band, Wasteland, toured in support of Tesla, Vince Neil (Mötley Crüe), Cinderella, Warrant, Great White, King's X, Dokken, Slaughter and Zakk Wyld (Ozzy Osbourne's guitar player) to name a few. Then, Chris joined a "punk country band," touring across the U.S. "Four guys in a van with no trailer and a tiny drum set playing for pennies literally everywhere. After five years and several albums, I started to get really lonely on the road and decided it was time to come home."

After a musical hiatus, Chris eventually joined Saints Eleven, the first band he'd been in with a business plan. During this time, he learned that a drummer's role is not to showboat but to "be the bus driver. Keep things simple and strong so everyone can follow you."

Several months later, the band had its first album. "We got air time and made a name for ourselves in a five-state area, signed to the largest independent label in Texas at the time and went in and recorded album number two."

The second album made regular rotation on Country Music Television, and the band believed it was headed for rock stardom. "We released three more singles with videos and hit the top 10 on



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Photo by Tara Bone Photography.



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*May you see your children's children.*

*May you be poor in misfortunes and rich  
in blessings.*

*May you know nothing but happiness  
from this day forward.*



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the regional radio charts, but nothing ever clicked," Chris admitted. "We played some of the biggest festivals in Texas, did the whole Nashville thing, even played a NASCAR race. But we just couldn't get teeth at the national level."

After five years, Chris decided to focus on family. "I had neglected my family a ton and decided I wasn't going to allow my dreams to mess up their lives. I'd play a show here and there, but turned down two big-time artists. Then I didn't play the drums anymore," Chris, who has been general manager at Adkin's Seasonings in Midlothian for 16 years, said.

A call from an old friend led to Chris' eventual return to performing. "Bricks in the Wall is the largest Pink Floyd tribute band in North America, so when I got an opportunity to audition with them, I was in shock," Chris remembered. "My boys were in high school by this point, so they were old enough to be part of it all. Even if it was only one big show, I wanted them to be able to say, 'Dad did it. It wasn't all for nothing.'"

Before auditioning, Chris went to a Bricks' performance where he ended up playing in the show. "I'd gone to make sure I could handle the responsibility and ended up performing with them at a theater in front of a ton of people ... and I had no idea what I was doing," Chris joked.

Thirteen people bring Bricks in the Wall shows to life. "From backup singers to laser guys and cinematographers and lights and sound, plus the core band, everyone has a very important part to play, and each one of us is vital to everyone's success," Chris credited.

Despite years of performing, Chris said he still gets stage fright. "I'm petrified to walk out onstage and start the process. It's so important

to me that people enjoy themselves that I put myself through mental hell before shows," he shared. "The mental anguish sometimes starts weeks before shows if they are big ones. It's a ton of pressure to get out there and do it.

"Still," Chris continued, "my saying is, 'This never gets old.' After all the crap I've been through, this situation is like a dream. It's always new and fresh and challenging in the best way."

Chris said one of his most memorable performances to date was his first headline show at House of Blues Dallas. "It was the pinnacle of what I had always wanted. If it all fell apart, I had not only headlined House of Blues, but we sold it out ... now that was the shizzle."



Photo by Tara Bone Photography.

Chris is also proud of any involvement his sons have with his music. "I'm the luckiest guy in the world to have them along for the ride. If they decided they didn't want to be a part of this with me, I might not do it anymore. They are the pulse now."

Besides his two sons, Chris has been inspired by the likes of Liberty DeVitto (Billy Joel's drummer); Kenny Aronoff (John Mellencamp's drummer); John Bonham (of Led Zeppelin); Paul Geary (Extreme's drummer); and Tommy Lee (of Mötley Crüe). "My first real drum kit came from Liberty, but that's another story," Chris noted. "There are a ton of others that have shaped my playing, but those are the biggies."

When not performing or cooking (his other love language), Chris likes to fish, hunt and participate in Boy Scouts. Mostly, he just enjoys making audiences happy. "I'm a performer. If I help you forget the daily woes and have some fun," he said, "then I've done my job." **NOW**

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## Zoomed In: Hailey Hollaway

By Angel Morris

The winter storm that hit Texas beginning Friday, January 23, was a significant arctic event that brought a combination of heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain to nearly the entire state, including Midlothian. Unofficially named Winter Storm Fern, it brought approximately 80 consecutive hours of sub-freezing temperatures, not climbing above 32 F until midday Tuesday, January 27.

Midlothian Heritage High School student Hailey Hollaway took advantage of the cold weather. "The best part of the storm was for sure no school and sleeping late!" she shared. "My dog, Pepper, really didn't want to go out and only liked the cold with her sweater on. We only went out for a few minutes to get winter wonderland pictures!"



Graham and Addison Gabrysch catch a moment of sunshine on the coldest day of the year.



Sadie enjoys laundry-basket sledding in her Dove Creek backyard.



Jennifer LeDoux braves an icy Walter Stephenson Road.



Danny Cole turns his Longbranch neighborhood street into a makeshift hockey rink.



Charlotte Kibbe sleds outside her home.



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## Zoomed In: Deanna Lariz-Downing and Gabriella Parker

By Angel Morris

Deanna Lariz-Downing and her daughter, Gabriella Parker, were better prepared for this year's winter storm than that of 2021. "We got loads of wood, bought external chargers, shopped for groceries a week earlier when we knew it was coming and filled water containers with water just in case we lost power," Deanna noted.

A piano teacher, Deanna held virtual lessons with students, and she and Gabriella had time to cook together. "I made homemade pot pie! We lit the fireplace and watched movies, played with our cat, then had to get out. So, we walked to our nearby park," Deanna shared. "The icicles on all the trees we saw on our walk were truly magical."



Dr. Peter Venkman - aka Venky - and Mallory Vaitekunas brave the cold for outdoor fun.



Wayne Thrash (with assistance from son, Carson) make a sled out of a pair of water skis and an old wheelbarrow.



Members of the 4 Men's Alliance Tribesmen participate in their weekly outdoor workout and devotional.



Abigail and Jude Rushing build the smallest winter snowman.

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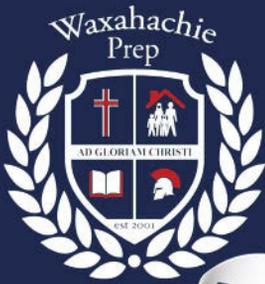
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# All Glow Med Spa

— By Angel Morris

All Glow Med Spa attracts clients who want to blend the art of beauty with the precision of medical science. “We are founded on the principle that true beauty is *both* an art *and* a science,” Medical Director Dr. Rajiv Rugwani noted.

Dr. Rugwani, a board-certified ophthalmologist with extensive surgical and medical training, offers aesthetic treatments designed to enhance natural features while prioritizing skin health and rejuvenation. His team includes licensed aestheticians and laser technicians.

All Glow Med Spa provides a menu of the latest aesthetic treatments using advanced technology. Many procedures



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offer instant results and minimal to no downtime. Each treatment plan is customized to fit individual needs, whether a client wants a subtle refresh or a full transformation.

The spa specializes in expert injectable treatments to smooth wrinkles, restore lost volume and enhance facial features, including:

- BOTOX.
- Dermal Fillers (e.g., Juvéderm).
- Advanced Laser Treatments.
- PRP Vampire Facials.

All Glow Med Spa can also address various skin concerns and hair removal needs with techniques such as:

- Laser Hair Removal: A popular service, providing effective and long-lasting hair reduction.
- Laser Skin Rejuvenation/Toning: Treatments designed to improve pigmentation, skin tone and overall texture.
- Laser Spider Vein Treatment: Targeted treatments for the removal of visible spider veins.

Medical-grade facials and collagen-stimulating treatments are provided at the spa for a luminous glow:

- DiamondGlow Facial: A highly recommended procedure for fresh, luminous skin.
- Chemical Peels: Ideal for brightening dull skin, evening tone

and reducing pigmentation and fine lines, with fall and winter being optimal seasons for treatment.

- Microneedling: Stimulates collagen production to improve texture, reduce fine lines and minimize scars.
- Medical-Grade Facials: Customized solutions for various skin concerns, including acne skin and enlarged pores.

Beyond aesthetics, the spa offers specialized treatments focused on overall well-being:

- PRP Hair Restoration: Uses the client's own platelet-rich plasma to stimulate natural hair growth without surgery or downtime.
- Red Light Therapy: Used in conjunction with other treatments to boost circulation and enhance results.
- Blue Light Therapy: Used to treat acne, bacterial load on skin and acne inflammation.
- Near Infrared Light Therapy: Used to treat muscle and joint pain, repairs nerve and tissue and improves circulation.

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Before expanding his expertise into aesthetics with the opening of All Glow Med Spa, Dr. Rugwani completed his Internal Medicine internship at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas after graduating from The University of Texas Medical School at San Antonio. He then specialized in Ophthalmology at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas. Further training took place at Parkland Hospital, Children's Medical Center of Dallas, Zale Lipshy Hospital and the Veterans Hospital of Dallas.

For a limited time, a **FREE 30-minute introductory facial** is available for new guests who mention this article. Clients can also win luxury prizes. Last month's winner walked away with a Louis Vuitton wallet! "We pride ourselves on being knowledgeable, attentive and caring ensuring clients feel comfortable and heard throughout their journey," Dr. Rugwani stated. "The goal of All Glow Med Spa is for clients to leave the office feeling confident and happy every time." **NOW**

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Mom Kasey's Favorite  
Banana Bread

## CookingNOW

# IN THE KITCHEN WITH MALLORY VAITEKUNAS

— By Angel Morris



Turning 12 this month, Mallory Vaitekunas has been in the kitchen since she was a toddler. “My mom started a cooking show with me and my twin brother on YouTube, called *The Mallory and Matthew Cooking Show!* We would scream the intro in our happy 2-year-old voices,” Mallory recalled. “I’m pretty sure that’s where my interest in cooking all started.”

Mallory’s all-time favorite recipe to prepare is muffins. “In the mornings, when it’s just one of ‘those’ mornings where everyone’s in a rush and everything’s chaos, then I enjoy not having to go crazy to make breakfast,” she shared. “It saves me and my ‘built-in best friend’ brother from being late to the bus stop!” **NOW**

### Dad Matt’s Favorite Cake Pops

#### 24 Oreo cookies

**1/3 cup cream cheese, softened**

**1 12-oz. pkg. semisweet chocolate melts**

**1 12-oz. pkg. white chocolate melts**

**1 Tbsp. coconut oil (or more if needed)**

**Lollipop sticks**

1. Crush the Oreos into fine crumbs using a food processor, or place them in a Ziploc bag and crush them with a rolling pin. Mix the crumbs with the cream cheese until smooth and fully combined.
2. Roll the mixture into 1-inch balls. Place on a lined baking sheet; freeze for 15-20 minutes.
3. Separately melt the chocolate and white chocolate with coconut oil for a smooth finish.
4. Secure the lollipop sticks by dipping the tip into melted chocolate and inserting it

into each Oreo ball. Freeze for 10 minutes.

**5.** Dip the pops into the melted chocolate, coating evenly. Tap off the excess chocolate.

**6.** Decorate with sprinkles, crushed Oreos or chocolate drizzle while the coating is wet.

**7.** Set by placing the pops in a Styrofoam block or cake pop stand. Refrigerate for 10 minutes to harden. Serve and enjoy!

### Brother Matthew’s Favorite Pumpkin Bread

**1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour**

**1 cup granulated sugar**

**1 tsp. baking soda**

**1/2 tsp. salt**

**1 tsp. ground cinnamon**

**1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg**

**1/2 tsp. ground allspice (or cloves)**

**2 large eggs, lightly beaten**

**1 cup canned pumpkin puree  
(not pumpkin pie filling)**

**1/2 cup vegetable oil (or melted butter)**

**1/4 cup water**

*Optional Add-ins:*

**1/2 cup pecans, chopped**

**1/2 cup walnuts, chopped**

**1.** Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease and flour a 9x5-inch loaf pan, or line it with parchment paper for easy removal. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice.

**2.** In a separate medium bowl, combine the eggs, pumpkin puree, vegetable oil and water. Mix until well incorporated.

**3.** Stir the wet and dry ingredients together with a spoon or spatula just until everything is combined. Do not overmix; a few lumps are fine. Gently fold in any optional chopped nuts, if using.

**4.** Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan; smooth the top. Bake 50-60 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool and serve.

### Mom Kasey’s Favorite Banana Bread

**3 large, very ripe bananas, mashed  
(about 1.5 cups)**

**1/3 cup butter, melted**

**3/4 cup brown sugar, lightly packed  
(Granulated sugar works, too.)**

**1 large egg, lightly beaten**

**1 tsp. vanilla extract**

**1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour**

**1 tsp. baking soda**

**1/2 tsp. salt**

*Optional Add-ins:*

**1/2 cup walnuts, chopped**

**1/2 cup pecans, chopped**

**1/2 cup chocolate chips**

**1.** Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease or line a 9x5-inch loaf pan, leaving some overhang on the sides for easy removal.

**2.** In a large bowl, stir the mashed bananas with the melted butter until well combined. Add the brown sugar, egg and vanilla extract; mix until evenly blended.

**3.** In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt.

**4.** Gradually add the dry ingredients to the banana mixture. Stir gently with a spatula just until the flour disappears and is combined. Do not overmix or the bread may become dense and chewy.

**5.** Gently fold in any optional add-ins, if using.

**6.** Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan; smooth the top. Bake for 50-60 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs. Cool and serve.



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# Where Are They NOW?

# ANGELINA BETTANINI

— By Angel Morris

*The pageant industry is known for showcasing some of the most beautiful women in the world, but its stereotypes have not always been inclusive. Angelina Bettanini set out to change that. “I wanted to inspire others to chase their dreams, no matter their appearance,” she said.*

After competing in her first pageant, Angelina was crowned America’s Ideal Miss Texas 2024 and went on to compete at the National Pageant. America’s Ideal Miss is a nationwide competition that emphasizes skills relevant to life, personal development and community involvement. Winners receive cash scholarships, travel opportunities and compete at the national level for the next title.

As a full-figured role model, this was Angelina’s first step toward promoting body positivity and encouraging more girls to consider pageant participation. Then, she found herself a victim of social media backlash. “Following nationals in 2024, I had gone back to my hometown and was given the chance to speak with kids at schools I had attended. Social media is part of the job when it comes to holding a title, so I was documenting my week and experiences,” she recalled.

A video of Angelina in her car removing her crown after appearances became a nightmare. “Overnight millions of people had viewed it, and the comments started to roll in. But instead of being focused on my title or the work I was doing, they were tearing me apart for my appearance,” she remembered. “I was extremely lucky to have an amazing support system who rallied around me in that time. As much as it hurt, I am grateful for the ways it worked for good in my life.”

This fueled Angelina’s mission even more. “Every pageant participant puts in an immense amount of work behind the scenes. What you see for only a few moments on stage, is evidence of hours of effort, training to showcase their talent and much time involved in their community,” Angelina noted. “Being a plus-size pageant queen, you also have the mental side of others potentially criticizing you because you are not their typical standard of beauty.”



Angelina persevered, competing in America’s Ideal Miss Nationals in July 2024, placing in the top 16 in the country, receiving third runner-up in national talent and becoming the Senior Division Be Ideal award recipient. “Winning the Be Ideal awards at both state and national levels is a huge honor, as it’s voted on solely by staff at the pageant. It’s awarded to someone they feel is showing the true characteristics of the ‘Impactful, Dynamic, Encouraging, Authentic and Loyal’ motto,” she explained. “It speaks to the love and kindness I try to show everyone I come in contact with.”

Angelina said much of her compassion was born

from a decade of pain that was finally diagnosed as endometriosis — a condition resulting from endometrial tissue outside the uterus causing pelvic pain. “After multiple doctors, I finally found one who would listen,” she noted. “I had surgery in April of 2025 for the official diagnosis. They were able to remove endometriosis tissue and cysts. While I’m still on the road to a full recovery, since surgery, my pain has lessened immensely. Endometriosis had consumed my life.”

Angelina currently holds the title of Miss Midland Collegiate America and is set to compete at the Texas Collegiate America pageant in January 2026. A Brigham Young University student online, Angelina became involved in the Midlothian community as a substitute teacher, local gym staffer and city employee for a period of time.

Today, Angelina is working alongside coaches at Amanda Moreno Consulting and A Queen’s Conversation to further her pageant goals. “Among many other things, we work on mock interviews and walking routines to ensure I feel the most confident during pageant week,” she shared.

Angelina recalled a favorite moment from a pageant prep session. “I heard from a coach about a young girl who said she joined pageantry because of me. If my story was able to impact one person, then I know it was worth sharing, even when it wasn’t glamorous,” she said.

In these years as a titleholder, Angelina said hers is a story meant to inspire other young women to pursue their dreams regardless of stereotypes. “Pageantry allowed me an outlet during a tough time in my life. I originally set out with a goal to prove to myself I could do it by competing at state,” she noted. “Throughout this journey, I have grown my confidence and have been able to truly root myself in who I am and how I want to give back to those around me, including raising awareness for endometriosis.”

Despite challenges, Angelina said pageantry was the best decision she has ever made. “I have been so lucky to gain friends and mentors from across the country who have left an impact on me,” she expressed. “It has opened doors on opportunities that were never in my wildest dreams.” **NOW**

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Dr. Allala is a graduate of the Texas A&M School of Dentistry. "When I started there, it was still Baylor. My diploma has both names on it," she recalled. "I specialize in oral surgery, and we're really good at it. I'm nothing without my team. We do everything in dentistry. I like being well rounded. I enjoy being an overachiever, so I'm constantly taking continuing education, keeping up with all the

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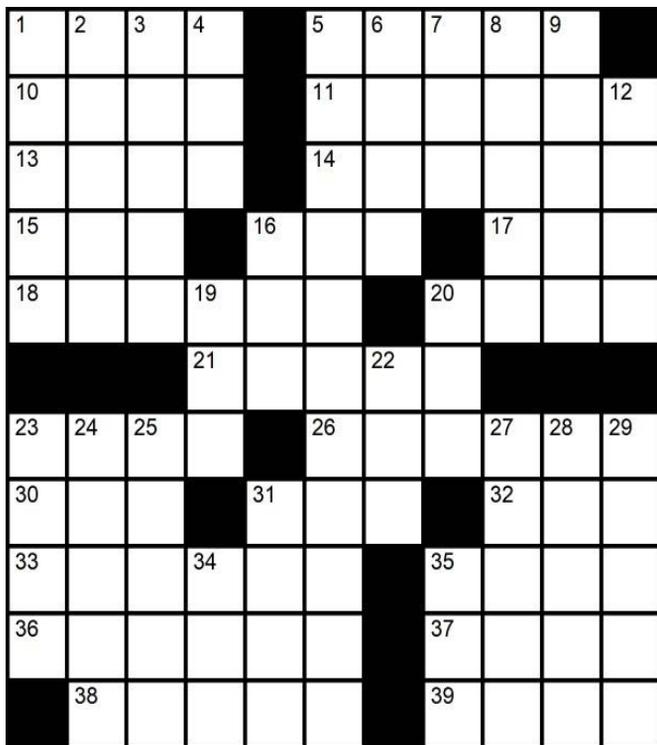
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# Crossword Puzzle



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## Across

- 1 Book sheet
- 5 Future fungus
- 10 Playwright Novello
- 11 Space shuttle commander --- Collins
- 13 --- a one: zip
- 14 Hang in there
- 15 "Silent Spring" killer
- 16 Fastener
- 17 "--- 'em!"
- 18 Per annum
- 20 Quick look
- 21 Mopes about rhyming stuff
- 23 Unwelcome messages
- 26 Joined together
- 30 --- Turner, rebellious slave
- 31 Bon --- (clever remark)
- 32 "Bobby Hockey"
- 33 False
- 35 "Battle Hymn of the Republic" author
- 36 Merrymaking
- 37 "It depends on what the meaning of the word ---" (Bill Clinton)
- 38 "Me and Bobby ---" (Kris Kristofferson)
- 39 "... two --- for a twenty?"

## Down

- 1 Hop variety
- 2 Dodge
- 3 Big artery
- 4 Prepare scrapple, for example
- 5 Be on the same wavelength
- 6 Light ringing sound
- 7 --- Ironsides (the USS Constitution)
- 8 Put back into service
- 9 Strange and mysterious
- 12 Dracula's target
- 16 Group once led by Yasser Arafat
- 19 Rotational speed
- 20 Not-for-profit TV spot
- 22 Encountered
- 23 Cosy
- 24 Airline that flew Clippers
- 25 Overturned tacit old Greek dialect
- 27 Bullwinkle J, for example
- 28 General --- Rommel
- 29 Apparel
- 31 Silent
- 34 "Andy Capp" cartoonist --- Smythe
- 35 Strike

Find puzzle answers within this magazine. Online versions and solutions are also available at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

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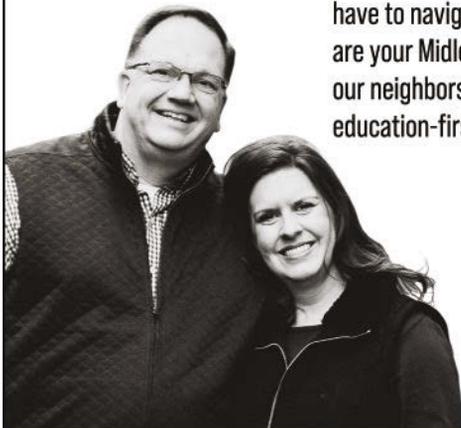
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10	I	V	O	R		11	E	I	L	E	E	N				
13	N	A	R	Y		14	E	N	D	U	R	E				
15	D	D	T		16	P	E	G		17	S	I	C			
18	Y	E	A	R	L	Y		20	P	E	E	K				
					21	P	O	E	M	S						
23	S	P	A	M		26	T	E	A	M	E	D				
30	N	A	T		31	M	O	T		32	O	R	R			
33	U	N	T	R	U	E		35	H	O	W	E				
36	G	A	I	E	T	Y		37	I	S	I	S				
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