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8 MAKING

MINIATURES

Susie Mendoza brings

Susie Mendoza brings Texas-sized talent to small-scale art.

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Carpet Outlets of Texas, Inc. — Red Oak

20 COOKINGNOW Cathy Tucker



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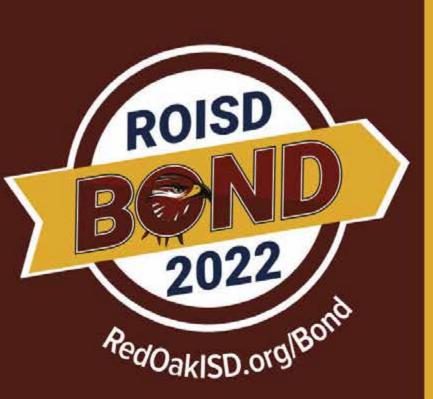
ON THE COVER

Tiny designs have raised big funds for charity.

Photo byShane Kirkpatrick.

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Town Hall Meeting

Tuesday, April 5 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM Red Oak High School

Facility Tours

Saturday, April 9 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Wooden Elementary, Red Oak Middle School, Goodloe Stadium, and Transportation

Town Hall Meeting

Tuesday, April 21 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM Eastridge Elementary

Early Voting

April 25 - May 3

Election Day

RED OAK'IS

Saturday, May 7

REDOAKISD.org



PRE-K

Registration Opens Tuesday, April 19



First Come, First Served









April - National School Library Month

Apr. 2 - ROISD Job Fair

Apr. 12 - Senior Citizen Luncheon

Apr. 15 - Good Friday Holiday (No School)

Apr. 18 - ROISD School Board Meeting

Apr. 26 – Elementary Open Houses

Apr. 28 – Secondary Open Houses

May 2-6 - Teacher Appreciation Week

May 7 - Election Day

May 16 - ROISD School Board Meeting

May 26 – Last Day of School

Details at RedOakISD.org

Angel Morris North Ellis Co.NOW Editor angel.morris@nowmagazines.com (972) 533-7216

EDITOR'S NOTE

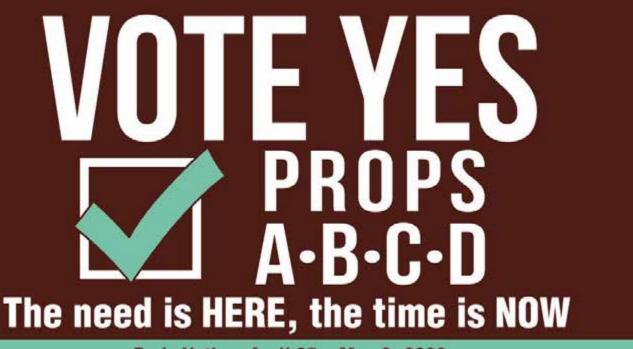
Find your center ...

At the end of this month we will be one-third through the year. One-third! Can you believe it? The realization got me thinking about a simple photography trick that can make images more visually interesting. For those unfamiliar with the term "rule of thirds," it basically means mentally dividing the image in your frame into a virtual tic-tac-toe grid (some cameras actually offer an enable-grid option). Then, you situate your subject at one of the points where the lines of the grid intersect — meaning they are showcased in the left or right third of the picture. It's appealing because it is unlike the typical shot, where we amateurs instinctively center whatever it is we're photographing.

Obviously, there is nothing wrong with having one's subject centered — leaving equal space to either side. We tend to see symmetrical things as more beautiful, in fact, so the rule of thirds challenges our way of thinking. If our photo is heavily weighted to one side, we might consider it off balance. Renaissance-era painters, however, are credited with considering how our eye actually moves around an image, rather than focusing on a single thing. In that case, the rule of thirds can direct your viewer's eye left or right to the subject, while subtly showcasing other areas of interest as well.

This idea of positioning things a little differently has merit beyond the camera, too. If we focus only on what's directly in front of us, we most certainly miss some lovely things along the periphery. In photography, and life, seeing things through the rule of thirds may sometimes serve us well.

Embrace the imbalance!



Early Voting: April 25 - May 3, 2022 Election Day: Saturday, May 7, 2022, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.



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Making MINIATU

— By Angel Morris

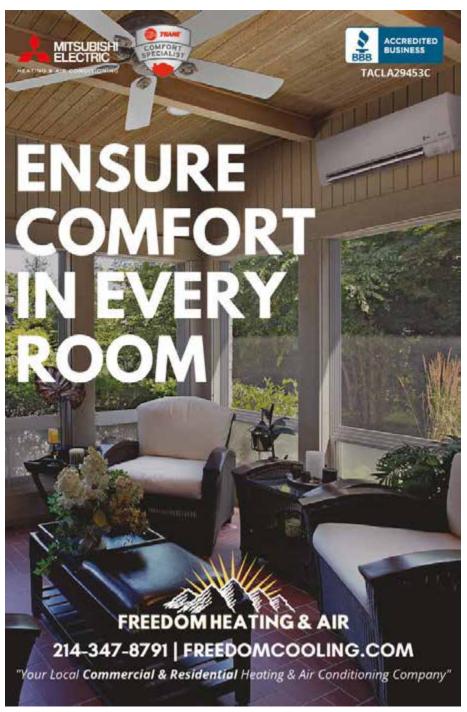
As a girl, Susie Mendoza caught glimpses of doll houses in a gift shop window. The memories of the pieces within the houses are as perfect as the models she creates today. "As a child, there was this restaurant that was a big deal to go to. My dad walked with me to entertain me while we waited our turn to be seated," Susie recalled. "A nearby shop had doll houses in the window. I was mesmerized by how tiny and perfect those little worlds in the window were."

Today, Susie is a miniature artist reproducing real life in one-twelfth scale. Creating mostly period homes and scenes, she has donated her work to charities raising funds for special needs adults. But her path to miniature making was a winding one.

Susie attended elementary and high school in Alhambra, California, just a few miles outside of Los Angeles, then studied legal research/law at the University of La Verne, a private university at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. "After working for a paralegal for some years, I wanted a change. I enlisted in the U.S. Navy and became a torpedoman, specializing in Harpoon and Tomahawk Cruise Missiles," Susie explained.









Susie also worked with her husband. Mike, growing a business that assisted families toward financial independence, helping them eliminate debt and be protected against life's tragedies and unexpected expenses. The pull of her artistic side led Susie to miniature art, however.

"My mom was a seamstress, and she stoked my love of all things creative. I always drew, constructed and made things," she reflected. "Art imitates life, and miniatures are my means of reflection."

While still living in California, Susie built new dollhouses or rehabilitated old ones for donation to charities. "I donated a beach bungalow, so that was a small house, to Assistance League. It sold for about \$400. I donated multiple houses to Salem Christian Homes, a group of homes for the developmentally disabled, and one of the homes sold for \$900 and the other for \$1,100."

Noting that anything in real life can be recreated in miniature, Susie said the first thing one needs to get started is patience, followed by basic tools such as a ruler, clamps, X-ACTO knives or scalpels, sand paper and glue, "I've never been more challenged than I have with scale miniatures. Time is really up to the person and the degree of detail you want to put into your piece," she admitted.

Susie once spent two years building and finishing a Victorian, San Franciscostyle dollhouse. "I made a huge majority of the furnishings including a wroughtiron bed and a Knole sofa. For a piece of furniture, such as the bed, I need to figure measurements of a real-life bed, draw the wrought-iron design and then assemble the pieces to solder them together," she outlined.

While the process is time consuming at first, Susie said one learns ways to make things quicker and explained that resin printers and home laser cutters have taken scale art to the next level. "We can do even more a little easier and faster," she said.

Just as Susie was hitting her miniature stride, the pandemic hit, and charity auctions came to a halt. The family business pivoted to an online model, and Susie and Mike moved to Texas to be nearer family. Now she hopes to find local charities to benefit with her dollhouses.

Currently, Susie is creating a Queen Anne Row House called Villa Paonne that will be decorated with a peacock theme and feature a tiki bar complete with ice chest and smoker. Her largest finished themed piece is a Victorian home set in 1922. "Everything in the house is white, except for the hummingbird stained glass at the top of the third floor. It's a tribute to my mom and what her home may have looked like if her life was a little different," Susie stated.

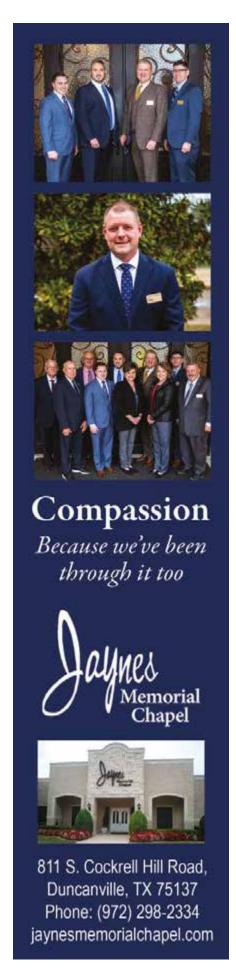
Susie's prized creation is a 1930s-era miniature. "My favorite piece is a small vanity. The carved mirror and the tiny drawers that slide out ... it is a perfect representation of a vanity you'd find in a woman's home in that era," she described.

Besides recapturing a moment in time, Susie said her favorite part of making miniatures is seeing people's reactions to them. "My son, Mark, always looks at them in amazement and awe. The sparkle in his eyes is what drives me to keep impressing him," Susie admitted. "Watching his reaction when I turned on electricity within a little sushi restaurant we built together was magical!"

Susie credits her husband and family as her biggest supporters. "My children think I'm amazing and slightly nuts, and that's a pretty cool thing to have your kids think about you," she joked.

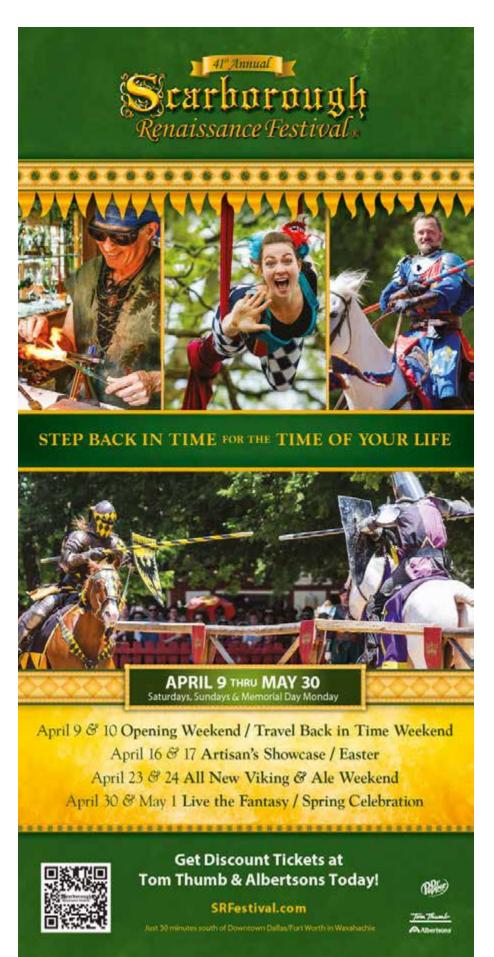
Susie also enjoys sewing, quilting, needlework, baking and decorating, but most appreciates the chance to introduce others to the art of miniatures. "I've loved miniatures since I was 7 and I'm glad the road of creativity led me back to them," she said. "Now I get to bring these houses to life, and a charity gets to raise some money from them. It's a win-win, and I'm excited to see others experience the art." NOW















Around Town



Hayven Waltmon and Wyatt Witfill flip pancakes at the Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner at First United Methodist Church Red Oak.



Micah Arevalo gets a head start on his second summer mowing yards, hoping to grow into his own business someday.

Zoomed In: Raylan Nelson

By Angel Morris

Supporting the PTA of his school, Eastridge Elementary, Raylan Nelson set out to raise funds selling World's Finest Chocolate Bars. "He loves talking to people and getting to bring them something they enjoy!" Raylan's mom, Mindy, said.

Ultimately, Raylan sold 24 boxes, and he placed in the top three out of all the students selling candy bars. When not helping others, he enjoys playing baseball and watching the lowa Hawkeyes sports teams whenever they play.



Verity Murphy, Ireland Keenan and Staci Marchbanks win the Ovilla Road Baptist Church Nailed It or Failed It cake decorating competition.



Red Oak's Miracle Atterson celebrates her 18th birthday with Madison Cantrell and Jagger Kubin.

NOW



As part of the ROHS Functional Living and Academics class, Jordan Ratterree and Ann Cheek dress up for Twin Day in T-shirts that honor a friend who passed away.

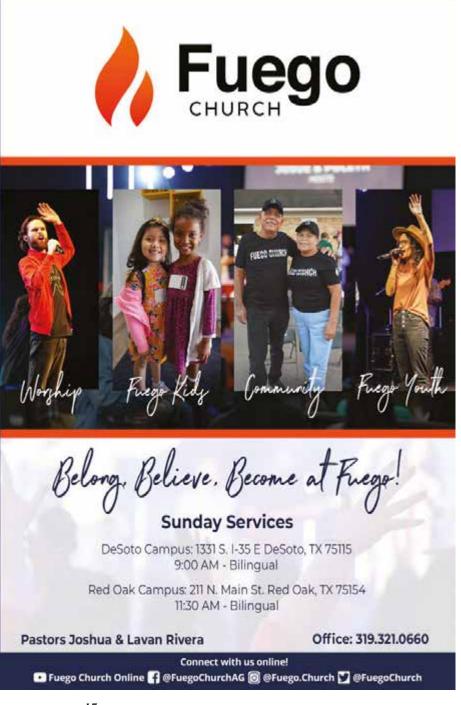


Declan Lloyd enjoys the city of Red Oak's Touch A Truck event.



Sharon Varnell makes an Easter wreath during a craft time hosted at The Senior Citizen Center of Red Oak.







Carpet Outlets of Texas, Inc. - Red Oak

By Angel Morris

Carpet Outlets of Texas, Inc. — Red Oak

274 E. Ovilla Rd. Red Oak, TX 75154 (972) 617-7847 www.CarpetOutlets.net oscar@carpetoutlets.net Facebook: Carpet Outlets of Texas Inc. - Red Oak Listed on Angie's List

Hours: Monday-Friday: 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Saturday: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

From hardwood to RigidCORE floors, carpet to tile, Red Oak's Carpet Outlets of Texas, Inc. has your floors covered,

backed by store manager Oscar Morales' decades of experience in the industry. "I began working with Carpet Outlets at the age of 15 and became manager in 1991, after graduating from Ferris High School," Oscar reflected.

Carpet Outlets of Texas, Inc. has operated in Dallas since 1973. Bruce Moreland opened the Red Oak outlet in 1986, and the store now houses a full 3,000 square feet of quality flooring, which includes the latest carpet and flooring trends. "Whether customers want natural wood flooring or the look of wood, in a waterproof laminate or tile, we have many options. You can also see our display of granite or quartz for countertops or bath and kitchen remodels," Oscar noted.

A family man himself, Oscar knows the importance of sticking to a budget while maintaining or improving one's home. "We offer financing to make a remodel affordable. In most cases, homeowners pay 50 percent down and 50 percent upon completion," he explained. "We also offer

financing of 12 to 18 months, nointerest with approved credit."

As a young man, Oscar worked days and attended Cedar Valley College at night. He has since married, raised four children and built his home in neighboring Oak Leaf. He is aware that customers work hard for their money and is dedicated to providing them with quality products and outstanding installations.

Offering commercial and residential flooring, Carpet Outlets incorporates a diverse product line and the skilled tradesmen to ensure customer satisfaction with installation and remodels. Mansfield, Cedar Hill, DeSoto and all of Ellis County are local areas Carpet Outlets serves. However, business can take them to destinations in Plano, Arlington, Dallas and as far away as Oklahoma.

"When our loyal customers move, we will travel to where they are to do work for them," Oscar stated. "Seventyfive percent of our customers are from referrals. We are thankful to our loyal and repeat customers and contractors. We do commercial and residential work and a lot of churches. We love doing it and meeting so many special people."

As people prepare for spring, which may include home improvement plans, Oscar invites folks to consider Carpet Outlets of Texas, Inc. "Though we are a flooring store, we do complete remodels for bathrooms and walk-in showers that are anywhere from 8 to 12 feet tall," Oscar said. "We do it all — lights, countertops, shower body sprays and the rain shower systems with frameless glass."

Celebrating its 35th anniversary this year, Carpet Outlets of Texas, Inc. — Red Oak can be found on Angie's List, where the company has received the coveted Angie's List Super Service Award. While many customers have researched such sites, others need help finding exactly what they want. Either way, Oscar and his crews are here to serve. "Come see the amazing selection in our showroom firsthand. Walk through and look at our quality, affordably priced flooring," Oscar invited. "We take pride in helping each and every customer find their perfect floor." NOW





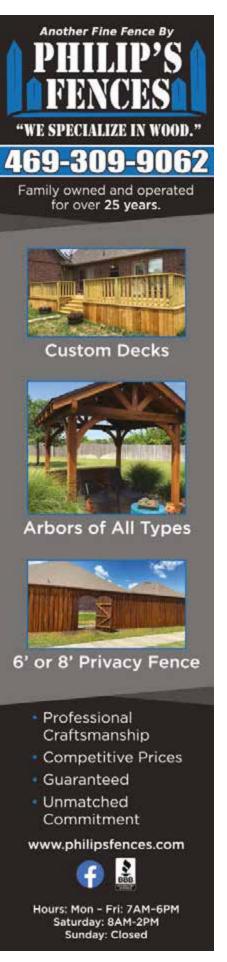














Cathy Tucker always liked baking, and one of her first and favorite toys was an Easy Bake Oven. "I started with cookies and just always made what I liked. When my stepmother stopped making fudge, I started. Soon I was baking pies, then cakes. When I realized how good they were, but not pretty, I took decorating classes," Cathy admitted.

Cathy treats her real estate clients to "welcome mat cakes" as housewarming gifts and pies for Thanksgiving. "I've created baby shower cakes, Louis Vuitton cakes, Hulk, Elmo, sock monkeys, and none are from patterns or instructions. I've done cakes for graduations and birthdays, football parties, Valentine's Day. I would look at them online and create them with fondant. This was really fun!" Cathy explained. "I even baked my son's and nephews' three-tiered Eagle Scout cakes. But after a super stressful experience making a friend's wedding cake, my husband told me I was retired from weddings!" Now

Wedding and Specialty Cakes Buttercream Frosting

A bakery I learned a lot from used Duncan Hines Cake Mix, added a favorite filling then topped with this frosting!

- 4 Tbsp. meringue powder
- 2 lbs. (8 cups) powdered sugar
- 2 tsp. clear vanilla extract
- 2 tsp. almond extract
- 2 tsp. clear butter extract

Water, enough to create 1/2 cup when combined with the extracts

- 1/2 tsp. salt 2 cups Crisco
- **1.** Add the meringue powder to the sugar; mix in. In a measuring cup, add the extracts and water. Add salt.
- **2.** In a heavy mixer, cream the shortening, liquid from step 1 and half of the powdered sugar until fluffy. Slowly add the rest of the sugar.
- **3.** Cream on medium speed until smooth and fluffy. Do not beat on high. Keep sides scraped. Can be refrigerated for 2 weeks and frozen for months. Allow to come to room temperature to frost and decorate. This will frost an 8-inch, 2-layer cake with a border.

Pound Cake

You can frost this or not. If glazing, melted butter and confectioner's sugar mixed together works well. Add a flavor if desired. 1/2 lb. (2 sticks) butter (If using margarine, add 1 tsp. butter extract.)

1/2 cup Crisco 3 cups sugar

5-6 eggs

1/2 tsp. baking powder

Pinch of salt

3 cups flour (Do not use self-rising flour.)

1/2 cup cocoa (optional)

1 cup milk

1 tsp. vanilla, lemon or almond extract (optional)

1. Grease and flour a large Bundt pan or 2 large loaf pans. Cream the butter, Crisco and sugar until smooth. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition.

2. Sift dry ingredients together. Add flour mixture alternately with the milk and extract, if desired. Beat 4 minutes on medium speed.

3. Bake in a 325 F oven for 70-75 minutes. Do not open the oven for the first hour! Test with a wooden skewer for doneness.

4. Cool for 20 minutes; then run a knife around the sides and center before carefully inverting onto a cooling rack. Cool completely before serving.

Auntie Babe's Best Cheesecake Ever

Crust:

1 2/3 cups graham cracker crumbs

2 Tbsp. sugar

1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon

6 Tbsp. butter, melted

Filling:

3 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened 2-3 hours or microwaved 30 seconds at a time

1 cup sugar

3 large eggs, beaten

1/2 tsp. vanilla

Topping:

16 oz. sour cream 3 Tbsp. sugar 1/2 tsp. vanilla

- **I.** For crust: Combine the ingredients; pat into the bottom and sides of a 9- or 10-inch springform pan using the bottom of a glass.
- 2. For filling: Beat the cream cheese thoroughly with a hand mixer; add the sugar gradually.
- **3.** Add the eggs in thirds. Add the vanilla; pour into the prepared pan. Bake at 375 F for 25 minutes; remove from the oven. Add
- **4.** For topping: Whip the ingredients; carefully pour evenly over the cake. Continue baking at 500 F for 5 minutes. Chill at least 24 hours; longer is better.







HERSHEY'S "Perfectly Chocolate" Chocolate Cake Makes 12 servings.

Cake:

2 cups sugar

1 3/4 cups flour

3/4 cup HERSHEY's cocoa

1 1/2 tsp. baking powder

1 1/2 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. salt

2 eggs

1 cup milk

1/2 cup oil

2 tsp. vanilla

I cup water, boiling

"Perfectly Chocolate" Chocolate Frosting: 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter or margarine

2/3 cup HERSHEY'S Cocoa 3 cups powdered sugar 1/3 cup milk 1 tsp. vanilla extract

1. For cake: Heat the oven to 350 F. Grease and flour 2 9-inch round baking pans. Stir together the sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt in large bowl.

2. Add the eggs, milk, oil and vanilla; beat on medium speed of mixer for 2 minutes. Stir in the boiling water. The batter will be thin. Pour the batter into the prepared pans.

3. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes; remove from the pans to wire racks. Cool completely. Frost with "Perfectly Chocolate" Chocolate Frosting.

4. For frosting: Melt the butter; stir in the cocoa. Alternately add the powdered sugar and milk, beating to spreading consistency.

5. Add a small amount of additional milk, if needed. Stir in the vanilla. Makes about 2 cups of frosting.

6. Variation 1 - one-pan cake: Grease and flour a 13x9x2-inch baking pan. Heat the oven to 350 F. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake 35-40 minutes. Cool completely before frosting.

7. Variation 2 - three-layer cake: Grease and flour 3 8-inch round baking pans. Heat

the oven to 350 F. Pour the batter into the prepared pans. Bake 30-35 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes; remove from the pans to wire racks. Cool completely before frosting.

8. Variation 3 - Bundt cake: Grease and flour a 12-cup fluted tube pan. Heat the oven to 350 F. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 50-55 minutes. Cool for 15 minutes; remove from the pan to a wire rack.

9. *Variation 4 - cupcakes:* Line muffin cups (2 1/2 inches in diameter) with paper baking cups. Heat the oven to 350 F. Fill the cups 2/3 full with the batter. Bake 22-25 minutes. Cool completely before frosting. Makes about 30 cupcakes.

Cool completely before frosting.

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Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	
10	-	\vdash	T	\vdash	+		11	1		12
13	1	T	T	+	\vdash		14	T	T	+
15	1	t	t		16	17			T	†
			18	19		T		20	T	t
21	22	23	Т	\vdash		24	25			t
26	1	t		27	28		\vdash			
29	T	1	30		t		31	32	33	34
35	1	1	t		36	37				t
38	\vdash	\vdash	H		39	T				+
	40	+	+		41	+	\vdash	1	+	+

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Across

- 1 Workout woes
- 7 Kind of stock option
- 10 Go bananas
- 11 "--- neither and you say neither..."
- 13 Pay back
- 14 Fermented rice drink
- 15 Kernel
- 16 Evita's successor
- 18 Isn't slang
- 20 Edge
- 21 Leaves port
- 24 Starts the show
- 26 Cribbage marker
- 27 Hawkeye state
- 29 Becomes violently active
- 31 Dull to learn by
- 35 Roman aloha
- 36 Aviator Earhart
- 38 On one's rocker?
- 39 German children
- 40 Beat it
- 41 Remodels

Medium

Down

- 1 Silent one
- 2 Wander aimlessly
- 3 " ... take arms against --- of troubles" (Hamlet)
- 4 Crackers
- 5 Cast lead block
- 6 Bierkeller mug
- 7 Its most famous landmark does not look normal!
- 8 Working OK
- 9 Bamboozle
- 12 Shrill cries
- 17 Store affoat
- 19 "Till the Devil whispered behind the leaves, "it's pretty, but --- Art ?"" (Kipling)
- 21 Detailed requirements
- 22 Forward pass
- 23 Crested herbivorous lizard
- 25 Immediate ancestor
- 28 Honshu port
- 30 Composition in verse
- 32 Ye --- Tea Shoppe
- 33 Layer of a wedding cake
- 34 Corn spikes
- 37 .001 inch

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Solutions on page 28

Sudoku Puzzle

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Solutions on page 28





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4/1-4/30

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4/1-4/15

Spring Auction Adventure:

Essential Foundation Inc. online fundraiser benefiting Ellis County programs including foster care, adoption, mentoring, mediation, etc. Visit www.efiinc.org to bid. Email admin@efiinc.org or call (469) 552-6246.

4/8-4/10

Ennis Bluebonnet Trails Festival 2022:

Arts and crafts vendors, tasty food and kids' activities.
Live music on the mainstage.
Admission: \$5 at the gate only; children under 12: free.
www.bluebonnettrail.org.

4/9

Easter Egg Hunt:

Community egg hunt. 2:00-3:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church Red Oak, 600 Daubitz Dr.

Charity Bowling Tournament:

Supporting the causes of Red Oak Lions Club. 1:00 p.m., Hilltop Lanes, 2010 U.S. Hwy. 287, Waxahachie. Contact (214) 715-9323 or (214) 864-8014 for more details.

4/13

Red Oak Easter Egg Hunt:

Bring your camera for pictures with the Easter bunny when he arrives at 6:00 p.m. Hunt will be divided by ages 0-3, 4-6, 7-10 and children with special needs. 6:30 p.m., 200 Lakeview Pkwy. (behind the Red Oak Municipal Center). No pets. For more information, visit the city website or call Sarah Zuniga at (469) 218-1270.

4/15

Good Friday Tenebrae: Service of Light and Darkness.

7:00-8:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church Red Oak, 600 Daubitz Dr.

4/29

Bling Bang Bash:

Dinner, auctions, designer bag bingo and gun raffle. Benefiting CASA of Ellis County and the Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Ellis County Youth Expo, 2300 W. Hwy. 287 Bypass, Waxahachie. Visit https:// casaofelliscounty.ejoinme.org/ BlingBangBash2022 for tickets.

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



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An Important HEALTH WARNING for Men and Women Age 55 or Older!

Do You Suffer from Pain, Burning, Numbness, or **Tingling** from Nerve Damage Caused by Diabetes, Infection, or ANY of the Other Conditions Listed in this Urgent Special Report?

If so, now you can virtually end your discomfort, protect your health, and help you live a more active life.

Dear Suffering Friend:

Tens of millions Americans have nerve damage — a condition known as "neuropathy."

The most common symptoms of nerve damage are pain, burning, tingling, and loss of feeling in your feet, legs, and fingers — with the pain ranging from mild to almost unbearable.

If you are diabetic, and especially if you are also age 60 or older, odds are that your nerve damage has been caused directly by your diabetes — although many younger diabetics also have nerve damage from this potentially deadly disease.

But many OTHER people with these symptoms — pain, burning, and tingling — are NOT diabetic, yet also suffer from nerve damage.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the many diseases and conditions that can destroy the nerves in your extremities and limbs include:



- √ Alcoholism
- ✓ Autoimmune diseases
- √ Vitamin deficiencies
- √ Liver disease
- √ Underactive thyroid
- Repetitive motions such as typing
- √ Bone marrow disorders
- ✓ Certain prescription medications
- ✓ Falls, sports injuries, and other trauma
- √ Wearing a cast or using crutches
- - √ Chemotherapy
 - √ Tumors
 - √ Infections
 - √ Kidney disease

New hope — and better health for men and women with nerve damage ...

CALL US TODAY TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT 469-732-0880 or 972-937-0086

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Crossword Sudoku Solutions

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