

# NorthEllisCo.NOW

MAGAZINE

APRIL 2025

## Spinning Her Yarn

Jessica Grissom volunteers through crochet

Also inside:  
Scavenger Hunt  
Sudoku

Featured Business:  
HOTWORX

In the Kitchen With  
Kellee Pruitt

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# Stronger Schools, Stronger Community, Brighter Futures

**Vote FOR DeSoto ISD Props A, B & C**

**Early Vote:  
April 22-29**



**Election Day:  
May 3**



**[DESOTOISDPAC.COM](https://desotoisdpac.com)**

Pol. Adv. By DeSoto ISD Political Action Committee



JOIN US FOR

# EASTER

AT OAKS CHURCH

**SATURDAY  
APRIL 19<sup>TH</sup>**

4:00PM | 6:00PM

**SUNDAY  
APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>**

8:30AM | 10:00AM  
11:30AM

You're invited to celebrate Easter at Oaks Church! This is a free experience for the whole family to come together and celebrate the hope and resurrection of Jesus. We can't wait to see you and your family there!

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# The need is real The time is **NOW**

The need for space at ROISD is not going away, but the cost is going up, year after year. Meanwhile our district continues to grow and our facilities are running out of space.



All three propositions can be approved without an increase in the tax rate

For more information, visit  
<https://roisdbond.com>

## Vote **FOR** these propositions:

### A

- New elementary school to reduce overcrowding
- New state-of-the-art Career and Technology building to train students in 32 career fields and reduce overcrowding at ROHS
- Upgraded and ADA accessible elementary playgrounds

### B

- Turf baseball and softball fields for safety and low maintenance costs
- Practice track with small JV stadium at ROHS, which allows for more home events

### C

- Revamp 48-year-old Goodloe Stadium
- ADA updates at Goodloe to get ROISD in compliance with state codes

Voting starts  
**April 22**

Election Day  
**May 3**

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[www.roisdbond.com](http://www.roisdbond.com)



[REDOAKISD.org](http://REDOAKISD.org)

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# PRE-K

Round Up Event  
Fri., April 4, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
@ Wooden Elementary

Online Registration opens  
Tues., April 1 at 6 p.m.



## Three propositions to address:

- District growth
- Student opportunities
- Long-range facility planning

**No Tax Rate increase** to fund  
\$213.9M in projects.

- New elementary, career & technical  
education center & much more!

## BOND Talk - virtual meetings

- Thursday, April 10 | 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 16 | 12 noon
- Tuesday, April 22 | 5 p.m.
- Thursday, April 24 | 7:45 a.m.
- Friday, May 2 | 7:45 a.m.

Early Voting - April 22-29

Election Day - Saturday, May 3



## Spring Dates

April – National School Library Month  
April 4 – ROISD Pre-K Round Up  
April 17 – Parent, Partner & Volunteer Event  
April 18 – Good Friday (No School)  
April 21 – Easter Observed (No School)  
April 21-25 – National Volunteer Week  
April 28 – ROISD School Board Meeting  
May 3 – Election Day  
May 5-9 – Teacher Appreciation Week  
May 12 – ROISD School Board Meeting  
May 20 – Last Day of School  
May 29 – ROHS Graduation

*Details at RedOakISD.org*







# EDITOR'S NOTE

## Easter rocks!

It's possible pricey eggs for all the world's children simply may not be in the Easter Bunny's budget this year. If you, too, are looking for a wallet-friendly alternative to coloring eggs, perhaps it's time to get creative and consider decorating rocks. This may sound extreme, but hear me out ...

Have you heard of the Kindness Rocks movement? The idea is to paint rocks with uplifting words and images, then hide them around your yard, neighborhood and community, for folks to unexpectedly find and be reminded that being kind "rocks." Why not kill two birds with one stone (pun intended), by replacing eggs with painted rocks for your annual Easter hunt, then hiding those rocks around town? Kids get to "pre-hunt" for suitable rocks (or purchase them at a local store). Families still get the creative opportunity of painting items then hiding and hunting them, plus the added bonus of knowing they will bring a smile to someone's face upon the rock's discovery later.

In fact, this community has its own Facebook page, "Red Oak ROCKS," encouraging folks to add that phrase to the back of their creations before hiding them. Then, those who locate the rocks are invited to post a pic of their treasures and explain where they were found. You can collect or re-hide rocks year-round, but spring is the perfect time to get started. Why not make it a new holiday tradition? After all, it was Easter when the stone was rolled away. Let's resurrect some kindness.

Happy hiding!



Angel

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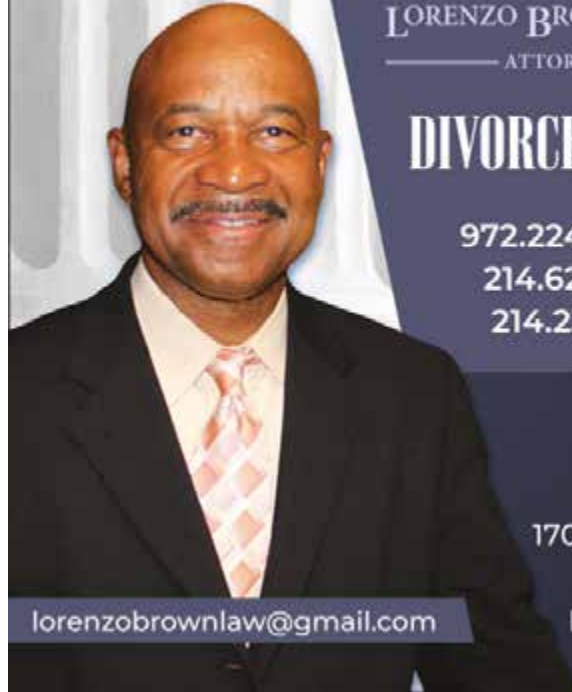
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## North Ellis Co. NOW Scavenger Hunt



Find 5 hidden  
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in 5 different ads in this issue  
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Email the page numbers and  
specific ads where they are  
found, plus your phone  
number, by April 15th.  
To ensure your Scavenger  
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drawing, you must use the

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Winner must pick up prize  
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Hats were found on  
pages 2, 4, 6, 9 and 10.

March winner is:  
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# SPINNING

## *Her Yarn*

— By Angel Morris

*Fred Rogers, of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood fame, is credited with the quote, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." Jessica Grissom did not have to look far. "During the formative years of my life, I watched and 'helped' my mom as she delivered homemade cookies to the police department and fire station. She also delivered Meals on Wheels," Jessica recalled. "I saw her giving freely to others, and it resonated with me."*

With that in mind, Jessica has been involved in many volunteer efforts. Working at Nelson University (formerly Southwestern Assemblies of God University), Jessica volunteered at local elementaries for the Drop Everything and Read Program. "I also helped deliver with Meals on

Wheels and mentored a young woman in the business program," Jessica noted.

Jessica not only graduated from SAGU with an Associate in Biblical Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, she earned an MBA from Dallas Baptist University. She held roles in marketing, human resources and business and finance with SAGU, before she and her husband had a child. "I worked for 18 years before my husband, James, and I had our son, Caleb, and the transition was a bit difficult for me — especially when dealing with the pandemic."

The pandemic brought Jessica back to a childhood hobby. "I found crocheting an expression of creativity," she shared. "Mom taught me when I was around 8 years old. I made lots of potholders and a couple of blankets. I tried mittens. I put it away when I got busy with work, school and getting ready for college.

"I picked it up a few years ago during COVID because my little guy and I had very limited ways to get out. I decided that while I was watching him play, I would start crocheting again," Jessica continued.





As a library supporter, Jessica inquired about teaching crochet there. "I love our library because it is a place where me and my little guy can learn, read and play. I love the diversity in our library circles. It's great connecting with our community," she shared.

"I decided to start teaching crochet because I wanted some hobbies that were just for me. Crocheting teaches attention to detail and also underscores the life lesson that sometimes things get knotted up. You can either take time to unravel and start again or, if it's too bad, cut the yarn and start over!"

That reminds Jessica of the impact of volunteerism. "One woman showed up to group and explained how she was recovering from some major health issues. She needed a place to connect and a hobby to help keep her busy. I was

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so happy to welcome her to our table,” Jessica said. “We’ve had people dealing with all the stuff — job loss, death of a loved one, health issues, divorce, etc. — Hooks and Needles offers a place to share your stories. We encourage each other when times get difficult.”

In addition to volunteering, Jessica is a writer. “When I was 9, my mom read *Little Women* to me. Jo March fascinated me, and I decided to become a writer. Perfectionism kept me hindered for a while,” she admitted.

In 2017, Jessica suffered a miscarriage. “Writing helped me process the grief. Later, I began working on short stories and focused on themes of resilience. Everyone has

been through something, and when we share those things, we create greater space for love and empathy.”

Jessica is currently working on a short story about a brother and sister processing life now that they are adults. “I’m submitting a dozen writings for publication while drafting my book. I hope the stories share a perspective that resonates with readers, allowing glimmers of hope.”

Resilience is part of Jessica’s own story. “I’m the oldest of nine children. My first boss encouraged me to go to college. I worked and saved for a year. People said I would never go, but I was determined to save money and complete my goal,” she said. “Through

hard work and God’s grace, I made it through my undergraduate degree without taking out any loans. I didn’t do all the fun college things, and I ate a lot of tuna. The process taught me discipline and budgeting. It was tough, but it was worth it.”

Jessica credits her grandmother, Olivia, and her mom, Cinda, with teaching her about charity. In reference to her grandmother, Jessica said, “She gave away almost everything she had from tamales to T-shirts. She died a few years ago but left a legacy.” About her mom, Jessica said she, “taught me so many things, loves me well and still rescues me sometimes.”

Furthering those examples, Jessica began volunteering at Baylor Scott & White’s Waxahachie hospital lobby in 2023. When school is in session, she volunteers through Mentor’s Care at Red Oak High School. “I’m proud that I had some good jobs, graduated from university and got published,” Jessica listed. “These are pivotal moments in my life, but I hope to be remembered as someone who loved well and always continued learning.” **NOW**



APRIL 5 THRU MAY 26



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**- Nancy Cunningham**





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
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# GIRLS BASKETBALL 2025 5A DIVISION 1 REGIONAL CHAMPIONS







# CONGRATULATIONS RED OAK HAWKS

## BOYS BASKETBALL 2025 5A DIVISION 1 AREA CHAMPIONS



Photos courtesy of ROISD.

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# BusinessNOW

# HOTWORX

— By Angel Morris

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**Fitness Studio Hours: 24/7**

**Staffed Hours:** Monday-Thursday: 11:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.  
 Friday: 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.  
 Saturday: 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Since May 2022, HOTWORX has been revolutionizing fitness in Red Oak with a patented, infrared workout sauna for the ultimate in hot fitness. HOTWORX uses research that shows an acceleration in metabolism occurs when exercise is paired with exposure to heat and infrared energy.

After 24 years in a corporate career, Laura had enough faith in the HOTWORX method to leave her job in the legal field and open her own facilities. “I was all about the convenience as well as the quick results. I loved the concept, and I love to help people. I love that I can provide a means



for people in the community to obtain their fitness goals in as little as 15-30 minutes,” Laura shared, “simultaneously, reaping the following benefits: Muscle recovery, pain relief, stress reduction, weight loss, increased calorie burn, detoxification, lower blood pressure, cellulite reduction, anti-aging and skin rejuvenation and improved circulation.”

HOTWORX is a virtually instructed fitness program created for members of all fitness levels to experience the benefits of combining heat, infrared energy and exercise for maximum-calorie burn. “The 24-hour access gives members a ‘no excuse’ fitness destination, regardless of their hectic schedules and limited availability. Having 24/7 access to our functional training area, with various 30-minute isometric and 15-minute High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) infrared workouts, provides limitless combinations,” Laura noted.

“This results in incredibly high adherence to our fitness programs. We provide a unique cross-training opportunity for members who love both the variety and consistency they can get,” Laura continued.

At HOTWORX, members practice things like compression



postures, Pilates, athletic-style yoga, ballet barre and/or resistance bands. Workouts also focus on glutes, abs, hips and lower back. "Research has shown that exercise and exposure to infrared energy and heat can accelerate the metabolism. When infrared training is combined with intermittent fasting and a disciplined logging of food intake, your fitness results can catapult onto the fast lane," Laura reported.

**"The 24-hour access gives members a 'no excuse' fitness destination, regardless of their hectic schedules and limited availability."**


The HOTWORX Sweat Basic package is \$59 a month. It includes unlimited sessions, 24-hour access, FX Zone and guest privileges, plus the HOTWORX app that makes it easy to book sessions, track calories and compete with other members.

The Sweat Elite package is \$79 a month. It includes all of the above, plus access to any standard location in the U.S., exclusive virtual personal training on the app, exclusive HOTWORX at Home on the app, Sweat with Buddies and Diet Trax.

"This is such a unique and well-delivered concept. The positives range from overall health and achieving one's personal fitness goals to the benefits of infrared energy and the positive effects it can have on various types of medical conditions," Laura explained. "All you need is 15 minutes to earn the burn! It's more workout in less time."

With the incredible support of her family, friends and HOTWORX coaches, Laura's goal is to bring better health and pain relief to as many people as possible. In 2023, she opened a HOTWORX location in Midlothian, as well. "We are also working on opening a third location in Ennis!" Laura said. "HOTWORX provides a workout unlike any other fitness program available. Stop in for your free session, and see what it can do for you." **NOW**

# Attention Veterans



## Friends Place Adult Day Services

**Adult day services and Alzheimer's care available to veterans in the DeSoto area.**

Friends Place Adult Day Services of DeSoto is part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community Care Network.

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## Zoomed In: Cheyenne Cooper

By Angel Morris

In her first year as a Brownie within the Girl Scouts of America organization, Cheyenne Cooper enjoyed her inaugural cookie sales season. “It was great to meet so many nice members of my community,” she said.

Setting up outside a local pharmacy, where she ran out of cookies quickly, Cheyenne won over customers with her outgoing personality and contagious enthusiasm. “I want to thank everyone for supporting my cookie business by purchasing cookies, making donations or sharing words of admiration,” she said. “Special thanks to Walgreens. See you next year!”



Ovilla Christian School students Samantha Lord and Elizabeth Powell display their superior rank medals from the 2025 TAPPS Regional Music competition.



Ovilla Firefighter Patrick Maples manages a grass fire in the community.



Members of Bandan Koro African Drum and Dance Ensemble perform at the Black History Month Showcase in Glenn Heights.



Students enjoy receiving plastic eggs with baby chick toys from Red Oak ISD Trustee Donna Knight.





Red Oak High School freshman Zaria Bernard sets a new school record in the 200 meter.



The Ovilla Service League Annual Dinner benefits both the Ovilla Police Department (representatives pictured here) as well as the Ovilla Fire Department.



Mayor Sonja A. Brown presents Reserve Champion and First Place Chicken Winner to We Dem Boyz BBQ and Grand Champion to Limp Brizkit in the Red Oak Area Chamber of Commerce first Glenn Heights County Line Cookoff.

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## Creamy Chicken Tetrazzini

- 2 24-oz. bags Pictsweet Farms Frozen Seasoning Blend (divided use)
- 5 chicken breasts
- 3 Tbsp. butter, plus more to taste (divided use)
- 12 oz. spaghetti noodles
- 2 cups broth from boiling the chicken
- 1 14-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 1 14-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1/4 of 32-oz. block Velveeta Cheese, cubed
- 1/4 of 32-oz. block Velveeta Queso Blanco, cubed
- 1/2 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 tsp. Morton Nature's Seasoning Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel, drained
- 3 Tbsp. salted butter
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

1. In a stock pot, boil the chicken breasts in water, butter to taste and 1/2 bag of Pictsweet Blend. When done, shred the chicken. Drain and reserve the broth. Prepare the spaghetti per package instructions.
2. In a skillet, whisk the broth, remaining Pictsweet Blend and the soups until no lumps remain. Cook until fully mixed. While on the stove, slowly add the next 6 ingredients, stirring until melted. Cook until smooth.
3. Preheat the oven to 375 F. Add the chicken and Pictsweet mixture, Ro-Tel, 3 Tbsp. butter and spaghetti to the skillet with the sauce. Toss to coat.
4. Transfer to a greased 9x13-inch baking dish; bake 15 minutes.
5. Sprinkle cheese evenly over the top. Bake 25-30 minutes, until the top is golden and the sauce is bubbling.

## Double Crusted Buttery Peach Cobbler

- 2 1/2 15.25-oz. cans Del Monte Diced Peaches
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar (adjust based on peach sweetness)
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 4 Tbsp. salted butter, cut into small pieces (plus some for brushing)
- 2 boxes Pillsbury Premade Refrigerated Pie Crust

1. In a large bowl, mix all the ingredients together, except the butter and the crusts; let sit 20-30 minutes to release the juices.
2. Preheat the oven to 375 F. Roll out one dough sheet to fit the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish or large pie dish, trimming

# CookingNOW

## IN THE KITCHEN WITH

## KELLE PRUITT

— By Angel Morris



Baking reminds Kellee Pruitt of special times growing up. “My mom baked for family gatherings, and I still remember the smells. I loved helping, and I was always in the kitchen making sure I was able to lick the bowl!” she recalled.

Kellee left her job as an educator to assist her husband, Manuel, in their business, Design's by Cake Daddy. “Baking became something I truly love,” she shared. “My favorite dish to make is my buttery peach cobbler. It always brings a smile to people's faces, which makes it even more special to me.

“It isn't just about the food. It's about the love, connection and happiness that come from sharing it,” she said. “Memories baking with my mom and sister continue to inspire me every time I step into the kitchen.” **NOW**



- excess dough.
3. Spoon the filling evenly over the crust; dot with butter.
  4. Roll out the second dough sheet, placing it over the filling; seal the edges. Crimp if desired. Cut a few small slits in the crust for steam to escape.
  5. Brush with melted butter until coated (sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar, if desired).
  6. Place on a baking sheet to catch drips. Bake 45-50 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown and the filling is bubbling. Cool at least 15 minutes before serving, allowing the filling to set. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream or a dollop of whipped cream.

## Strawberry Cake

- Cake:**
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
  - 2 1/2 tsp. baking powder
  - 1 cup salted butter, softened
  - 2 cups granulated sugar
  - 4 large eggs
  - 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
  - 1/2 cup whole milk
  - 1/2 cup strawberry puree (blended from fresh or frozen strawberries)
  - 1/2 cup strawberries, finely chopped (optional)
  - 1-2 drops pink food coloring (optional)

- Frosting:**
- 1 stick salted butter, softened
  - 1 8-oz. brick cream cheese, softened
  - 1 tsp. vanilla extract
  - 4 cups powdered sugar

1. For cake: Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease and flour two 9-inch round cake pans. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour and baking powder; set aside.
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter and sugar with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Mix in the vanilla.
3. Reduce the mixer to low; alternately add the dry ingredients and the milk, starting and ending with dry ingredients. Mix until just combined.
4. Fold in the puree and chopped strawberries. Add the food coloring.
5. Divide the batter evenly between the pans, smoothing the tops with a spatula. Bake 25-30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
6. Cool in the pans for 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
7. For frosting: In a large bowl, mix the butter and cream cheese until creamy. Add the vanilla extract; stir well to combine.
8. With the mixer on low, gradually add the powdered sugar until completely combined, beating until smooth and fluffy.
9. Place one cake layer on a serving plate; frost generously. Add the second layer, frosting completely.


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# Hello, Spring

## APRIL

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.

4/5

### Red Oak Fire Rescue Community Day:

Safety demonstrations, health checks, giveaways, refreshments. 9:00 a.m.-noon, Central Fire Station, 547 N. Methodist St. Visit [www.facebook.com/ROFRTX/](https://www.facebook.com/ROFRTX/).

### Meet the Author:

The Red Oak Friends of the Library hosts children's book author Loren Smith. 2:00-4:00 p.m., Red Oak Library, 101 Live Oak St.

4/11

### Chamber Classic:

Benefiting local seniors, this is not your ordinary day of golf.

Have you ever teed off with a marshmallow? Hit a golf ball with an 8-foot driver? Prizes, raffle and silent auction, as well. 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Thorntree Golf Club, 825 W. Wintergreen Rd., DeSoto. Register: [www.redoakareachamber.org](http://www.redoakareachamber.org).

4/12

### Bluebonnet Run:

5K and 10K race benefiting CROME Nonprofit, which supports student scholarships and mentorship programs. Check-in: 6:00 a.m.; 10K: 8:00 a.m.; 5K: 8:15 a.m.; Kids Run: 9:30 a.m., downtown Ennis. Register at [www.bluebonnetrun.com](http://www.bluebonnetrun.com).

### Bike the Bluebonnets:

Greater Dallas Bicyclists welcomes you to ride. Advance registration: \$50; in person: \$60. Rolling start: 8:45 a.m.-9:15 a.m., Ferris Junior High School/Yellow Jacket Stadium, 1002 E. 8th St./FM 660, Ferris. [www.gdbclub.com/bluebonnets](http://www.gdbclub.com/bluebonnets).

### Brilliance, Boots & Bling Bingo:

Presented by the Navarro College Foundation. Doors open: 6:00 p.m.; dinner: 6:30 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln., Waxahachie.

### Weekdays

### Library Events:

Daily events for a range of

ages. 101 S. Live Oak St. Visit <https://www.redoaktx.org/library> for schedules.

### Third Mondays

### Book Club:

6:30-8:00 p.m., Red Oak Library, 101 S. Live Oak St. Email [awatterman@redoaktx.org](mailto:awatterman@redoaktx.org).

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [angel.morris@nowmagazines.com](mailto:angel.morris@nowmagazines.com).

## Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 |   |   | 9 |   |   |   |   | 5 |
|   |   |   |   |   | 7 | 3 |   |   |
| 3 | 5 | 2 | 6 |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | 3 |   |   |   |   |   | 5 |
|   |   | 1 |   |   |   | 9 |   | 8 |
|   |   |   |   | 2 |   |   | 1 |   |
| 7 |   |   |   | 3 |   |   |   | 9 |
|   |   | 8 | 1 |   |   | 2 | 6 |   |
|   |   |   |   |   | 5 |   |   |   |

Medium

|  |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |     |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|-----|
|  | 9 | 2 |  | 1 |   |   |   |     |
|  |   |   |  | 9 |   | 4 |   |     |
|  |   |   |  | 8 | 2 |   |   | 1 6 |
|  |   | 1 |  |   |   |   |   | 8 3 |
|  |   |   |  |   |   | 2 |   |     |
|  | 8 | 6 |  | 9 |   |   |   |     |
|  |   | 5 |  |   |   |   |   |     |
|  | 1 |   |  | 6 | 8 |   | 4 |     |
|  |   | 3 |  |   |   |   | 5 | 1   |

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