

SouthwestNOW

M A G A Z I N E

APRIL 2026

The Water Is Fine

Jamie Blair
makes sure
everything flows

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt
Sudoku

Featured Business:
Dallas Area Patrol and
Protection Services

CookingNOW:
Traditional
Easter Recipes

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April 2026
Volume 20, Issue 4



Adam Walker

WaxahachieNOW Editor
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ON THE COVER

The Duncanville
Natatorium is
swimming with
fun.



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publication. Copyright © 2026. All rights
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and individually mailed free of charge to homes
and businesses in the Cedar Hill, DeSoto and
Duncanville ZIP codes.

Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per
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For many years, the Duncanville Natatorium, located on the campus of Duncanville High School, has been quietly serving the community. So quietly that many people don't realize that it is, in fact, open to the whole community, not just students. "I've been working here 14 years," Jamie Blair informed. She's the director of the Natatorium, and makes sure everything runs smoothly, providing water-based programs for all ages and skill levels.

"The best part of this job is definitely helping people meet their goals," she added. "I have so much love for this community. The connections with all of the people who



THE WATER IS FINE

— By Adam Walker

come here are what truly keep me here. Over the years, we've added better lighting, new entry stairs, new lanes, new banners, updated showers and ventilation and replaced part of the deck. We're in constant use." Duncanville High School's swim team and the swim teams of other local ISDs and club teams practice there, starting at 7:00 a.m., before they open to the public at 9:55 a.m. During most of the daytime hours, it's adults only in the pool area. "We have water aerobics classes Monday through Saturday mornings, as well as Tuesday and Thursday nights," Jamie explained. They close at 2:00 p.m. every day, but re-open

"THE BEST PART OF THIS JOB IS DEFINITELY HELPING PEOPLE MEET THEIR GOALS."



from 7:00 to 8:05 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. "We have lap swim times six days a week, but also have private, semi-private and group swim classes. We have had hundreds of lap swimmers use this facility, and we've held countless swim lessons. We teach swimmers, starting at age 6 months. We're certified to teach all ages. The oldest beginner I can remember was a man who was 82 or 83. He married a lady from Hawaii, so he decided it was time to learn! We're also certified to teach amputees and special needs children."

Water aerobics draws a lot of people to the Natatorium. "In the summers, we have at least 80 people in our water aerobics classes. In the winter, it's more like 35-40. The numbers have really grown in the last couple of years," Jamie informed. "We have deep and shallow classes at the same time. They take up four to six lanes, which leaves two to four lanes for lap swimming and two lanes for swimming lessons. The water aerobics ladies are like a family here. We have anywhere from 40 to 60 community members show up for our monthly birthday luncheons. They take trips and go on cruises together. And they send each other get well cards, as well as call each other. They work hard to make sure everyone feels welcome."

Jamie is always ready to give a tour of the facility. "Water does so many powerful things for the body. Members come by, months later, to thank us for being here. You see



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kids, years later, who come up to you all excited, saying, 'You taught me to swim!' Moments like that have kept me here all these years. I love what I do. Not a day goes by that I don't get to help someone in person or on the phone. I swam growing up and took a liking to aquatics very early on. The water is where I'm at peace. If I can help someone else, and be around the water at the same time, that's my best place. I never regret pulling into this parking lot."

During the week, swimmers must be 14 or older. But on Saturdays, everyone can come, whatever age.

"During the school year, it's only Saturday," she explained. "But during the summer, the Natatorium is open to all ages, every day, Monday through Saturday."

The pool is also used for a lot of other things. It's used for rehab and physical therapy. "We have an underwater hockey team that practices here. They're in the pool with their snorkels and flippers, scoring goals in underwater nets. In the past, we've had water polo teams and synchronized swimmers training here. It would be fun to see that again. Special Olympics used to train here. We had one

lady who was training to compete in the triathlon in the Senior Olympics. I enjoyed training her on her dives. We've had other competitive swimmers train here. I'm sure there are some training for competitions now, but they just come and swim their laps. We are trying to start a Water Safety Day for Duncanville ISD schools where we would invite all the elementary and junior high students and teach them about life jackets and how to float on their backs. The key is in your breathing. We also give them swim tests."

In addition to all of this, the Natatorium is also available for private events. "We host birthday parties, church events, Little League events, etc. You can add on a slide or music or shoot basketball from inside the pool. It's a lot of fun. Churches will rent the facility for baptisms. People just don't realize how much we have to offer and how we always try to make everyone feel like family from the moment they walk through the door." **NOW**



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DAPPS

— By Adam Walker

Chief Maurice Jones started Dallas Area Patrol and Protection Services in 2015 to provide professional, armed security services to local businesses and events. “We patrol and protect at local places of worship, medical facilities, funeral homes, call centers and event centers. We use foot patrols, vehicle patrols and drones. We provide a



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physical presence that cuts down on unfortunate events. Command presence is something we strive for. We are not law enforcement, but we are professionals, and we conduct ourselves in a professional manner,” Chief Jones emphasized.

The officers who work for Chief Jones come from a variety of backgrounds. “Some are retired or off-duty, active police officers. Some are military veterans. Others are individuals who have been vetted by the Texas Public Security Bureau. We have been voted the best security service in the area every year since 2017. And we have an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau,” Chief Jones offered. “We’re very people oriented. We try to understand exactly what our clients need. If

your church is having a women's retreat and would find it awkward to have male officers providing security, we have enough fully qualified women to fully staff an event with female officers."

"WE ARE NOT LAW ENFORCEMENT, BUT WE ARE PROFESSIONALS, AND WE CONDUCT OURSELVES IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER."

Chief Jones retired from a long and successful career in management at DART, where he established their honor guard program to serve at special events. When he left the DART management team to start his own security agency, he knew that community relations would be an important part of his work. "I belong to a number of crime prevention organizations. Here at DAPPS, we have a junior officer program, and we keep badge stickers on hand to give to the kids. DAPPY the Crime Prevention Dog makes appearances at schools and events. I'm a member of All Pro Dads in Cedar Hill, and I support the CHISD football program. We have a golf team and raised \$7,000 for toys to donate to the Irving PD one Christmas." Breakfast with the Babes is another child-oriented outreach program Chief Jones participates in. In DeSoto, he is a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and a past chairman of that organization. "I was awarded Small Business of the Year in 2021."

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Zoomed In: Karla Pollock

By Adam Walker

Karla Pollock represented Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center, as a volunteer, at the Cedar Hill Block Party. She brought one of her favorite snakes. "This is a western hognose. And he's what we call a drama queen," she said. "When he feels threatened, he'll pretend he's a cobra, raising up and trying to scare you away. If that doesn't work, he flops over and plays dead. His third trick is, he releases a stinky, foul smell."

Karla has been volunteering at the nature center for a long time. "It will be my 15th anniversary with the center in September. There have been a lot of changes. Now we focus mainly on educational programs that are open to the general public, like bingo, yoga, bird hikes and animal encounters," she said. "We have our annual native plant sale coming up on April 11."



First Methodist School learns about dinosaurs and paleontology from Perot Museum Educator Jacedric.



The 40+ Double Dutch club shows Cedar Hill some love.



Tommy and Trinell Foster do some fishing at Lakeside Park.



Louise Utley gets in her Bible study time at the Duncanville Library.

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Zoomed In: Jim Higley

By Adam Walker

One recent Saturday afternoon, Jim Higley was caught cleaning “on the sly” outside Duncanville First Baptist Church. “I’ve been a member here for 18 years,” he reported. “The trees do what they do, so I’m here cleaning up after them,” he said gesturing at the mess of leaves all over the parking lot and sidewalks, and then to his big trash can on a cart, yellow custodial dustpan and broom. “This is already my sixth bucket of leaves today. I figured I’d dress for if it rained, but it just started drizzling, and it’s a little cold to get wet. So I better finish up here!” With yellow dustpan and broom in hand he moved off to the next pile of leaves, sweeping up nature’s detritus.



Commander Tynetta Runnels of American Legion, District 5, addresses the Circle of Comrades event in DeSoto for Canine Comrades for Veterans and First Responders.



Reta Howze, former tax assessor and DeSoto’s first paid city employee, is declared the 2026 Queen of DeSoto.



Artist Brittney Wells helps celebrate DeSoto’s 77th birthday.



The students of LP Dance prepare to wow at the Cedar Hill Block Party.



Patricia Coleman, of DeSoto, receives the first Ron Bivins-Barbara Record Corporate Community Impact Award.

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Find 5 hidden **Yellow Birds**

in 5 different ads in this issue (not counting the one above).

Email the page numbers and specific ads where they are found, plus your phone number, by April 15th. To ensure your Scavenger Hunt answers go in the drawing, you must use the

Scavenger Hunt Email

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One entry per person.

WIN!

\$50 Cash Prize

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Winner must pick up prize within 30 days of drawing.

Horseshoes were found on pages 11, 20, 23, 28 & 29.

March winner is:
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HOT CROSS BUNS

Easter Sunday brings families together around tables laden with time-honored dishes that have graced holiday celebrations for generations. These traditional recipes combine seasonal ingredients with cherished cooking techniques, creating meals that taste like springtime itself. **NOW**

Hot Cross Buns

Buns:

- 2 1/4 tsp. active dry yeast
- 1 cup warm milk
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp. ground allspice
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/3 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 3/4 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup dried currants
- 1/4 cup candied orange peel

Glaze:

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 Tbsp. milk

1. *For the buns:* Activate the yeast in warm milk with a pinch of sugar, letting it foam for about 10 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, remaining sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice and salt. Cut in the softened butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in the eggs and the yeast mixture.
3. Knead the dough until smooth and elastic, approximately 10 minutes.
4. Fold in the raisins, currants and candied peel. After the dough doubles in size during its first rise, divide it into 12 equal portions, and shape them

into rounds. Arrange them on a baking sheet. Let them rise again.

5. Bake at 375 F until golden brown.

6. *For the glaze:* Combine the glaze ingredients. While the buns are still warm, pipe crosses on top using the glaze.

Glazed Ham With Mustard-Honey Coating

- 1 8- to 10-lb. bone-in ham
- 30-40 whole cloves
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup honey
- 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper

1. Score the ham's surface in a diamond pattern, about 1/4-inch deep. Stud each intersection with a whole clove.
2. Place the ham in a roasting pan; tent with foil. Bake at 325 F, allowing 15 minutes per pound.
3. Meanwhile, combine the brown sugar, Dijon mustard, honey, apple cider vinegar and black pepper in a saucepan. Simmer until the mixture thickens slightly.
4. During the final hour of cooking, remove the foil and brush the ham generously with the glaze every 15 minutes, allowing each layer to caramelize before adding the next.

5. The finished ham should boast a magnificent mahogany crust that glistens invitingly.

Classic Deviled Eggs

- 12 large eggs
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. white vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. white pepper
- Paprika, for garnish
- 2 Tbsp. fresh chives, minced, for garnish

1. Place the eggs in a single layer in a saucepan. Cover the eggs with cold water by 1 inch; bring to a rolling boil. Remove from heat. Cover; let stand for 12 minutes.
2. Transfer to an ice bath immediately to stop cooking and ensure easy peeling.
3. Once cooled, peel the eggs carefully. Halve them lengthwise, and scoop the yolks into a bowl. Mash the yolks thoroughly with a fork. Blend in the mayonnaise, mustard, vinegar, salt and white pepper until completely smooth. Spoon or pipe the mixture back into the egg white halves, creating generous mounds. Finish with a light dusting of paprika and a sprinkle of minced chives for color and freshness.

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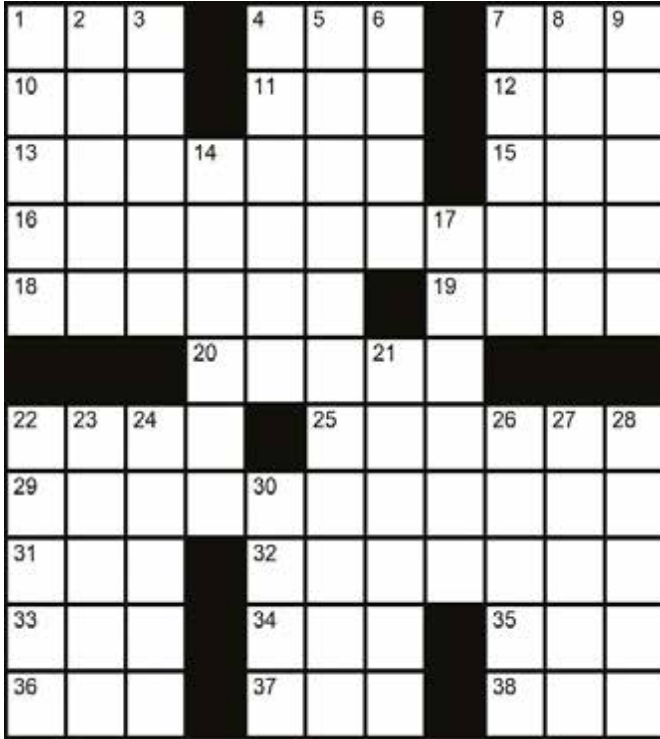
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Crossword Puzzle



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Across

- 1 Windy City "L" operators
 4 Feminine half, in Eastern thinking
 7 20-20, for example
 10 "... Latest Flame" (Elvis Presley)
 11 Grounded bird
 12 "... --- a bottle of rum"
 13 Try
 15 Old crone
 16 Director upset Soviet loner
 18 Venus's Earthly sibling
 19 Careful attention
 20 Market segment
 22 Coral and Yellow
 25 "... When Autumn leaves begin ---" (Jacques Prévert/Johnny Mercer song)
 29 May remembrance time
 31 "Call him drunken --- Hayes ..." (Peter La Farge/Johnny Cash)
 32 Artist's medium
 33 "... the season ..."
 34 Sparse fluid
 35 Go astray
 36 "I'm Dickens, -- Fenster" (Shortlived 60s ABC sitcom)
 37 Spanish "L"
 38 Old food label letters

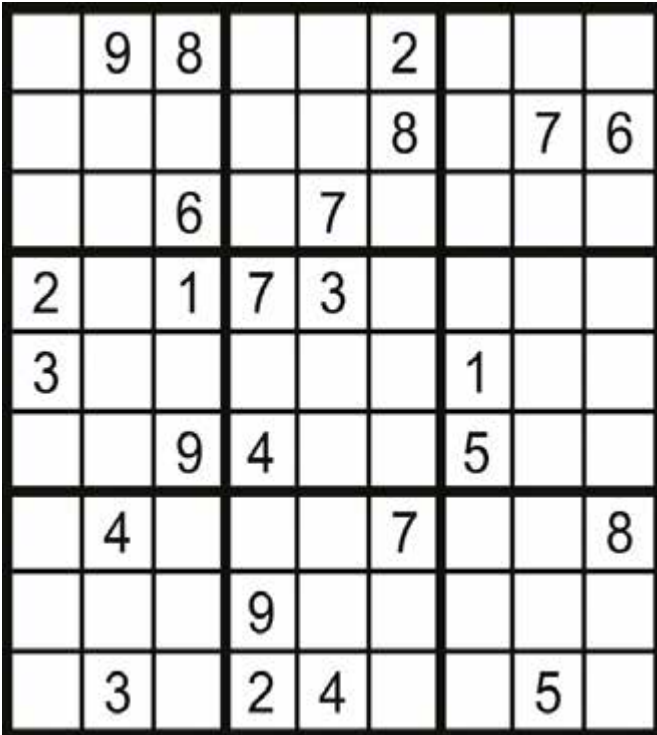
Down

- 1 Total disorder
 2 Name
 3 Play sitar moving about
 4 Mocha native
 5 Idealistic
 6 Loco
 7 Heavy Chevy
 8 Cockamamie
 9 Defeated by a nose
 14 "Still, ..."
 17 1958 Vincent Price movie thriller
 21 Result of shouting too long or loud
 22 One who shapes metal
 23 Very strange
 24 Gather
 26 Harmonica virtuoso Larry -
 27 Scottish landowner
 28 Sportswear fiber
 30 Anger

Find puzzle answers within this magazine. Online versions and solutions are also available at www.nowmagazines.com.

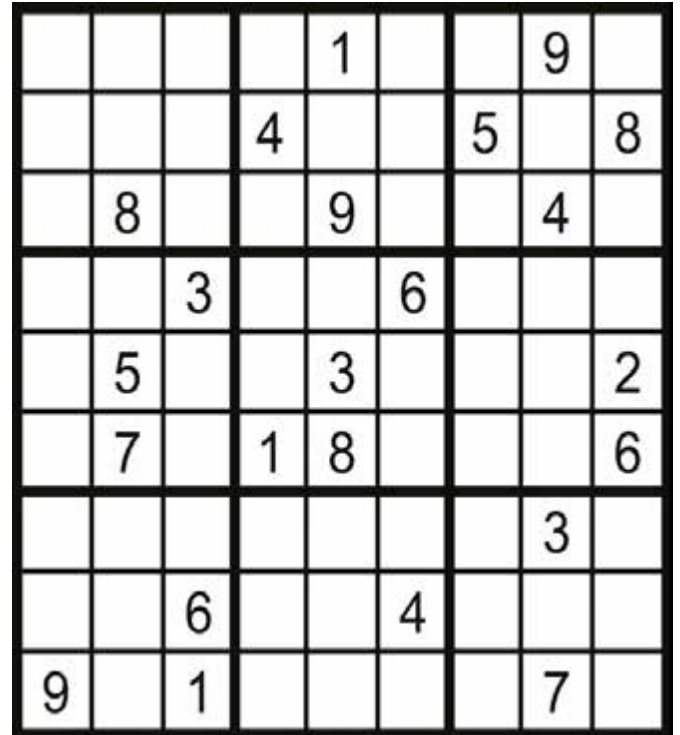
Sudoku Puzzle

Easy



Crosswordsite.com Ltd

Medium



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1	C	T	A		4	Y	I	N		7	T	I	E
10	H	I	S		11	E	M	U		12	A	N	D
13	A	T	T	E	M	P	T		15	H	A	G	
16	O	L	I	V	E	R	S	T	17	O	N	E	
18	S	E	R	E	N	A		19	H	E	E	D	
					20	N	I	C	21	H	E		
22	S	E	A	S		25	T	O	F	A	L	L	
29	M	E	M	O		30	R	I	A	L	D	A	Y
31	I	R	A			32	A	C	R	Y	L	I	C
33	T	I	S			34	G	A	S		35	E	R
36	H	E	S			37	E	L	E		38	R	D

Easy

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

Medium

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



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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

newest techniques and technology. I’m also a native Spanish speaker. I grew up speaking both languages. Our YouTube videos explaining procedures are available in both English and Spanish.”

Dr. Allala is proud of the service they provide at Serenity Advanced Dentistry. “I think we give five-star service. And I know my staff is five-star. We know what works and what doesn’t. I know it sounds corny, but this is my life’s work. Most of my staff have been with me for years, at different locations around DFW, before I came to Cedar Hill. I met Mariela seven years ago, in Pleasant Grove. It was my first job out of school. Racine has been with me four years, and Jazmine three years, both in Red Oak. Our newest team member is Jessica. She found us three months ago when she emailed me looking for an opportunity to shadow a dentist.”

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