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M A G A Z I N E

MAY 2020

Pandemic Management

County Judge Todd Little
appreciates Ellis County's
response

In the Kitchen With
Sarah Cooper

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Kids' Fun Page

Crossword/Sudoku

Featured Business:

Southern Star Home Team

Century 21 Judge Fite Company

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ON THE COVER

Ellis County Judge Todd Little encourages residents to use the official county website, <https://co.ellis.tx.us>, for the most recent COVID-19 information.

Photo by

Hdconnelly - Dreamstime.com

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE



As we practice social distancing ...

During this COVID-19 pandemic, things have changed rapidly, necessitating companies make adjustments to how they do business, and we at NOW Magazines are no different. Like many of you, we are now officing from home, and our magazines may look a little different to you this month, due to some of the adjustments we have made as we navigate these challenging times. But we will get through these times together.

If you are like me, the events of the last couple of months have left you wondering what the future holds, but there is comfort in knowing our nation and the world have weathered many storms and come through OK on the other side. As I've pondered over this new reality, my thoughts have repeatedly gone back to one very brave lady named Corrie ten Boom. She and her family were Dutch Christians who lived in Nazi-occupied Holland during WWII. Their faith told them to love their neighbors as they loved themselves. So, they built a secret room in their home where, over time, they hid and saved nearly 800 Jews from the Nazi Holocaust. Eventually, they were betrayed, and the whole family was imprisoned in the concentration camps. Only Corrie survived.

In time, Corrie became an author and speaker with a worldwide ministry. Her message was one of forgiveness and reconciliation. While in college, I had the privilege of meeting Corrie's nurse, who cared for her during her last years. The stories about her life have always been an inspiration to me.

Corrie said, "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." Wow. So much faith and trust from someone who had experienced so much hurt, loss and tragedy. She lost her loved ones, her home and her job. But she never lost her faith, and it carried her through the dark times. And on the other side of the dark, was beauty again — full of life and hope and purpose. As we navigate the dark times our world faces now, we, too, can trust our unknown futures to God.

Beautiful stories are being reported of people finding ways to help, even in this time of social distancing. From a high school robotics class making face shields for medical professionals using 3-D printers and people shopping for neighbors in high-risk demographics to ministers holding online church services and entertainers live streaming concerts to add some joy to our lives, good is happening all around us, as people love others as they love themselves. What can you do within the guidelines our leaders have established to keep us safe and healthy? It may be no more than calling a family member or a friend, but hearing your voice might be exactly what that person needs at that very moment.

Is the future uncertain? Yes. But the truth is, the future is always uncertain. We never really know what the future holds. And it is always the best policy to live a loving, giving life.

We can know peace.

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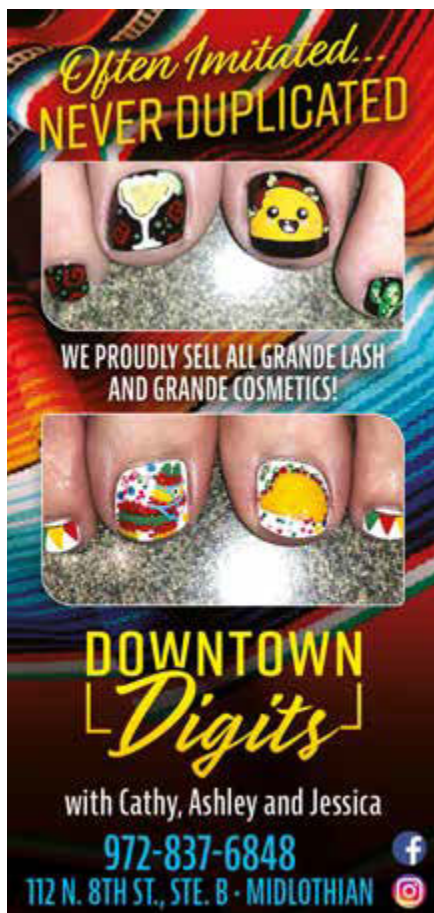
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As Ellis County Judge Todd Little addressed the county commissioners at their special meeting on April 3, he remarked, “The weight on your shoulders and my shoulders has been different this last three weeks than it has been the previous 15 months.” Even though one of the budget line items that was created in Judge Little’s first year on the bench was for emergency management, he admitted no one could have predicted that the COVID-19 pandemic would be the emergency.

“We prepared for natural disasters, an enemy we could see like water from a flood or buildings damaged by hail or a tornado. We put \$300,000 in the budget for emergency contingencies. We wanted to be pro-active and do things like draw up a map of all facilities in the county that house hazardous chemicals. I could still remember hearing the blast from the West, Texas, explosion as I shot hoops in my driveway. Having spent a career in insurance and risk-management, I knew emergency management was something that comes with the title of County Judge. We have emergency response companies that have already pre-bid their services if we have to respond to a chemical spill on the highway.”

Everyone would agree that responding to a worldwide pandemic, which really does potentially affect everyone, required quick thinking and response. The timeline up to this point included just hearing about the virus during the first week in March, then responding quickly with a Disaster Declaration to begin protecting communities on March 17. That was a seven-day order. “I had met with county department heads on March 9, and convened what we call our ‘task force’ when the order was issued. The task force included the mayors and

superintendents of most of the cities in the county, and we stood together as one when we issued the declaration. On the evening after we issued the first order, we received notice from our County Local Health Authority identifying the first confirmed positive case of COVID-19 in Ellis County.”

The school superintendents from around the county were looking to the county government for direction. “The schools were out for spring break, and if we did not act quickly, all of the students would be back in school with the potential of rapidly spreading the virus. The positive response from the schools has been great. The first order gave them authority to extend spring break for another week.”

In every city across the county, there are trained emergency coordinators. All of them have training in the National Incident Command System (NICS). The Incident Command System is identified on the FEMA website as, “A management system designed to enable effective and efficient domestic incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications operating within a common organizational structure. ICS is normally structured to facilitate activities in five [sic] major functional areas: command, operations, planning, logistics, Intelligence & Investigations, finance and administration. It is a fundamental form of management, with the purpose of enabling incident managers to identify the key concerns associated with the incident — often under urgent conditions — without sacrificing attention to any component of the command system.”

Judge Little pointed out that most police and fire chiefs have this training. “Once an emergency happens, a process begins that is called the chain of command. While larger counties have a department of health, smaller counties generally do not have one, and Ellis County has never had one. While we might not have the same resources as a larger county to handle a pandemic, our communities here are strong and resilient, and together we will overcome COVID-19.

“Something Ellis County is blessed

with that most counties our size do not have is a strong medical network. This three-hospital network includes Baylor Scott & White in Waxahachie, Ennis Regional Medical Center and the new Methodist Midlothian Medical Center, which is scheduled to open later this year. That will make three full-service hospital emergency rooms available in our county.”

The judge admitted that COVID-19 surprised a lot of us because it arrived so quickly. “Our close proximity to the Metroplex would have to be a contributing factor, particularly in our hardest hit communities, where so many residents commute to the large cities.”

The economic effect of the virus will take a toll on the county, but not as severely as on the city budgets. “The cities depend more heavily on sales tax revenue, and closed businesses with the employees on furlough will be a drain. The majority of the county budget is from property taxes, and there is a long-term effect from the economic downturn that will potentially affect property values. In another proactive step, The Ellis County Commissioners’ Court voted unanimously 5-0 to approve a resolution to go to the State of Texas for property tax relief, by freezing appraisal values at the 2019 limits.

Communicating accurate information to the citizens is a priority in the county, as rumors tend to spread quickly through social media. Residents are urged to follow the Ellis County TX Government Facebook page, where the information is timely, accurate and direct from the source. Today, the county page has more than 14,000 followers. Before the pandemic began, there were about 5,000.

“There is a lot of information on social media, but I would also direct people to the official county website, <https://co.ellis.tx.us> where residents can access the resources and the most recent COVID-19 information in Ellis County.”



Photo by Elaine Baca.

ANDEMIC

M A N A G E M E N T

— By Bill Smith








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Besides the physical health impact and the economic impact of the pandemic, Judge Little also recognizes, and relates to, the psychological impact the virus is having on individuals and families. The judge explained, “Babies are affected because their mothers are affected. Young boys are affected because their fathers are affected. Perhaps this is the first time parents have been unable to go to work and provide the support they need. Grandparents and grandchildren are missing each other.”

Of course, we all want to see a return to normalcy, we want things the way they were, but is it possible to see something positive as we stay at home? Judge Little mentioned how families were finding creative ways to relate, perhaps re-living some time before many of us were consumed by social media. “Just last night, my family and I sat around our dinner table, talking until 2:00 a.m. We just had a long conversation. There was no high school or Little League game to go to, so that’s what we did instead. We were together as a family, and it was just us. Our church is in our home right now. We are all lifting each other up. We have to look for the hope in things.”

“As a former mayor,” Judge Little said, “I can tell you that every mayor I have met and talked with during this time has been interested in taking care of their individual communities. We are blessed in Ellis County to have mayors. All are very concerned and very considerate





Photo by Elaine Baca.

in caring for their populations. This has been a surprise for all of them, and they have been resilient. They have all shown strength, and I believe they understand the importance of taking care of their people. They've done a great job working with their first responders and their city councils to make it easier on their citizens. This has not been easy on anyone, but they work very hard to lift the burden from their citizens. They understand the emotional and financial drain people are feeling. I really believe they have a great sense of empathy for their constituents, and they have always been team players, working and finding solutions to COVID-19."

At times like these, people turn to their faith for strength, wisdom and guidance. Judge Little has been truly appreciative of all of the support, encouragement and prayers he has received from so many. Ellis County citizens have been doing a good job, cancelling events and festivals like the Polka Festival in Ennis and the Scarborough Renaissance Festival in Waxahachie, and it is important to continue following the guidelines established by the governor and the CDC. Quoting II Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind," Judge Little indicated that he does not want citizens to live in fear, but to use wisdom in their daily activities.

"When this is over, things will be different," Judge Little said. "The economy will be different. I think we will see things based less on quantity and more on quality, and more hope, and more community action. And we can build momentum together into the future, and do it even better than before." **NOW**

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BusinessNOW

Southern Star Home Team Century 21 Judge Fite Company

— By Rick Mauch

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Judy McGraw remembers the first house she and her husband, David, bought together. It's a memory that drives her to success daily in her current position as a Realtor with Century 21 Judge Fite. "I remember that feeling when I bought my first house, knowing it was going to be mine," Judy said from her offices in downtown Midlothian, which feature comfortable, open space, almost a café vibe, for visitors. "You walk in that one special house, and you [the Realtor] can see it in a buyer's face that it is the one. My favorite part of my job is still working with first-time buyers. I really love working with families."

Judy has been working to make families happy in the residential real estate industry since she entered the field 17 years ago — and all 17 years have been with Century 21 Judge Fite. She has not only found buyers their first homes — and subsequent homes on several occasions — but also helped their children and even some grandchildren.

Judy spent more than two decades in the retail business before becoming a Realtor, and she was very successful, but the drive from Midlothian to Dallas took its toll. "I got tired of going to the mall," she said with a laugh. "I'd always kind of wanted to

do this. I thought I'd like it because I'd been in sales, and I was right. It was a great decision, and I haven't looked back."

If anything, Judy's success was overwhelming. Three years ago, she closed 78 housing deals herself, but it was an exhausting effort. She knew she had to get some balance in her life.

So, she put together a team. Now, she works with two other Realtors, Angela Gourley, who started as her assistant, and Hilary Silvers, a lifelong Midlothian resident. They call themselves the Southern Star Home Team. Residential real estate is the team's specialty.

Judy and her team at Century 21 Judge Fite also endear themselves to the community with regularity. Judy is chair of the board of the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce and helps with various events, including the Wine & Arts Festival. Hilary is the treasurer of the Midlothian Downtown Business Association. Also, the Southern Star Home Team hosts an annual snow cone party, where past clients can bring in school supplies for children in exchange for a snow cone.

There's also the annual pie day, where their office gives out about 1,000 pies each year. "It's such a fun day. We start about noon, and people will pick up pies all afternoon," she said. "Our clients ask all the time, 'When's pie day?'" They look forward to the Monday prior to Thanksgiving every year.

Judy said being a successful Realtor is more than selling houses. "Building relationships is what is really important to us," she noted. "You want each individual person to feel as important as the next. It's being available. People want someone who's available to them. That's the No. 1 way to make them feel important, and our Southern Star Home Team is ready to serve."

Even during these unprecedented times, Judy and her team are working to service their clients and community. "We are doing showings both virtually and, with a mask and sanitizer in hand, in person. We are reaching out to past clients to check on them and are trying to help where we can," Judy noted. "We are also very proud to still be able to offer our Relentless Scholarships to seniors at both Midlothian high schools, and are already reviewing applications!" **NOW**

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Zoomed In: Joyce Sebesta

By Angel Morris

MidlothianNOW Advertising Representative Joyce Sebesta makes the best of working from home, which became a necessity with shelter-at-home requirements thanks to the COVID-19 virus pandemic. "I have worked all over the house, breakfast nook, dining room table, my bed lately because I have been sick and trying to contain myself," Joyce noted.

Joyce began working for NOW Magazines eight years ago, in the Corsicana, Ennis and Waxahachie markets, before becoming the Midlothian representative. "I like working with everyone in all my markets. I like seeing how everyone runs their businesses, visiting with all the different personalities," Joyce said. "It is totally different from working as a teacher and a registered nurse. I am so thankful for NOW giving me a chance to work here."



Employees at Tio Tony's work hard prepping to-go orders for customers who continued to support them during restaurant dine-in closures.



Walnut Grove Middle Schooler Corinthia Wulf participates in the Chalk Your Walk activity that began as a result of shelter-at-home regulations.



Before schools closed due to COVID-19, Midlothian Heritage High School senior Jay Wilkerson was joined by family and coaches to commit to Washington State University's football program.



Having recently moved to Midlothian with their parents, Leila and Lucas Gonzalez enjoy visiting new sites around the city.



Hudson, Marci and Jason Godfroy volunteer in the community through Rock City Fellowship's Service Day earlier this year.



Evie and Finn Nelson show some of the felt magnets and artwork created while spending more time at home over the last several weeks.



Mary Steadman in her daytime pjs with pup, Lucy, gets through quarantine with the help of Rocky Road ice cream.



Practicing social distancing, Zoe Neystel participates in a neighborhood parade honoring Lucy Boyd's 5th birthday, where 70 cupcakes were distributed.



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CookingNOW *In the Kitchen With* SARAH COOPER

— By Angel Morris

Foodie Sarah Cooper loved watching her mom come up with fabulous dishes out of whatever she had on hand. “She was well-known for gourmet cooking. Unfortunately, she didn’t write many of her recipes down!” Sarah recalled.

Sarah said her cooking style, “ranges all over. I enjoy looking up recipes on Pinterest, and then tweaking them to my personal tastes,” she noted. She also loves desserts. “I’ve been working on the perfect chocolate chip cookies since I was in high school. I think I’ve about got it!”

A sixth-grade reading teacher and cheer coach at Walnut Grove Middle School, Sarah has many interests. “My loves in life are my family and friends; my dog, Hamilton; a hot cup of coffee; a good book; writing; photography; and going to concerts.” **NOW**

The BEST Chocolate Chip Cookies

The key is browning your butter! Watch online tutorials on how to do it properly.

1 cup Land O’Lakes Butter, unsalted
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/4 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. sea salt, coarse
1/2 cup brown sugar, light
1/2 cup brown sugar, dark

1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 extra-large egg, room temperature
1 extra-large egg yolk, room temperature
2 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

1. Cut butter into even pieces. Over medium heat, melt butter; whisk frequently until browned. Remove from heat; cool to room temperature. *Note:* I pour mine into a glass bowl to cool for 3 hours.

2. Preheat oven to 350 F. In a mixing bowl, sift or whisk together flour, baking soda and sea salt; set aside.

3. In a mixer, combine sugars and browned butter; blend until smooth. Add egg, yolk and vanilla.

4. Give dry ingredients another good whisk. Mix into sugar mixture 1/2 cup at a time.

5. Fold in chocolate chips. Cover; chill for at least 30 minutes.

6. On a greased or parchment-lined cookie sheet, scoop dough out by tablespoonfuls, about 2 inches apart.

7. Bake for 8 minutes. Remove from oven; allow 2-3 minutes before moving to a cooling rack.

Sarah’s Salad

A family favorite!

2 cups 2% or whole milk
2 3.4-oz. boxes tapioca pudding
1 3.4-oz. box lemon Jell-O
1 3.4-oz. box orange Jell-O
1 pt. heavy whipping cream
1 tsp. vanilla

- 1 30-oz. can fruit cocktail, drained
- 1 15.25-oz. can mandarin oranges, drained

1. Pour milk and tapioca into a saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat, whisking thoroughly, until boiling. Stir in both boxes of Jell-O; pour mixture into a glass bowl. Refrigerate until solid. (I usually do this the night before.)

2. In a mixing bowl, beat whipping cream and vanilla until soft peaks form. On low speed, fold in tapioca concoction, one spoonful at a time, until mixed together.

3. Fold in fruit cocktail and mandarin oranges with a spoon. Keep refrigerated until time to serve.

Cookie Pudding

What the Cooper Girls want at their birthday parties every year!

7 cups 2% milk (divided use)

1 5.1-oz. box chocolate Instant Jell-O pudding mix

2 3.4-oz. boxes cheesecake Instant Jell-O pudding mix

1 family-size pkg. Chips Ahoy! Cookies, original

8 oz. Cool Whip, thawed

1. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together 5 cups milk and all 3 boxes of pudding for 2 minutes; set aside. Pour remaining milk into a shallow bowl.

2. Dip each cookie into the milk; layer cookies in the bottom of a dish with at least 3-inch-tall sides. Pour pudding mix over the cookies, spreading evenly.

3. Top with Cool Whip; serve immediately.

Creamed Spinach

Pairs perfectly with grilled rib-eyes.

2 lbs. fresh spinach

4 Tbsp. butter, salted

1/2 cup yellow onion, diced

4 Tbsp. garlic, minced

1 cup heavy cream, plus extra, to taste

1/8 tsp. nutmeg

Pinch cayenne pepper

Salt, to taste

Pepper, to taste

4 oz. cream cheese, softened

1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1. In a large pot of salted, boiling water, cook spinach for 1 minute. Drain completely, squeezing out excess water; pat dry with paper towels. Cut with kitchen shears; set aside.

2. In a large skillet, melt butter. Over medium heat, cook onion in the butter for 5 minutes. Add garlic; cook for 1 minute more.

3. Stir in heavy cream, nutmeg, cayenne,



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Sarah's Salad

1 lb. chicken tenders
4-5 Tbsp. butter, salted

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Place crackers and seasonings in a gallon-size baggie. Crush the crackers with a rolling pin until fine. Add chicken to the baggie; shake until completely coated.
2. Cut butter into slices; place on a large baking sheet. Melt in the oven; place chicken on the baking sheet, leaving space between each strip. Bake for 10-12 minutes; flip chicken with tongs. Bake for another 10-12 minutes, or until cooked through.
3. Place chicken on a paper towel-lined plate to soak up the grease; serve immediately.

Sour Cream Green Chile Enchiladas

3 cups chicken (I use Rotisserie, but shredded chicken breasts or canned chicken works also.)
4 oz. cream cheese
8 oz. green chilies (divided use)
3 cups Monterrey Jack cheese (divided use)
Garlic powder, to taste
Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste
10-12 flour tortillas, small and soft

3 Tbsp. butter, salted
3 Tbsp. flour
2 cups chicken broth
1 cup sour cream

1. Preheat oven to 375 F. In a large skillet over medium heat, mix chicken, cream cheese, 4 oz. chilies and 1 cup cheese. Sprinkle with spices.
2. Fill each tortilla with the chicken mixture; roll up the tortillas. Place filled tortillas, seam down, in a lightly greased 9x13-inch pan.
3. In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk flour into the butter for 1 minute. Add broth; whisk together. Cook over medium heat until it thickens and bubbles.
4. Remove from heat; add sour cream and remaining chilies. Sprinkle additional spices to taste.
5. Pour sauce over enchiladas; add remaining cheese on top. Bake 25 minutes, and then broil 3 minutes to brown the cheese.

salt and pepper. Bring to a boil; simmer until mixture begins to thicken.

4. Add in cream cheese, stirring until a consistent, creamy texture. Add more heavy cream, if needed, 1 Tbsp. at a time. Stir in spinach and Parmesan cheese; serve immediately.

Oven-fried Chicken

Serve with creamy mashed potatoes, gravy and green beans.

1 sleeve Ritz crackers
1 Tbsp. Lawry's Seasoned Salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 tsp. paprika

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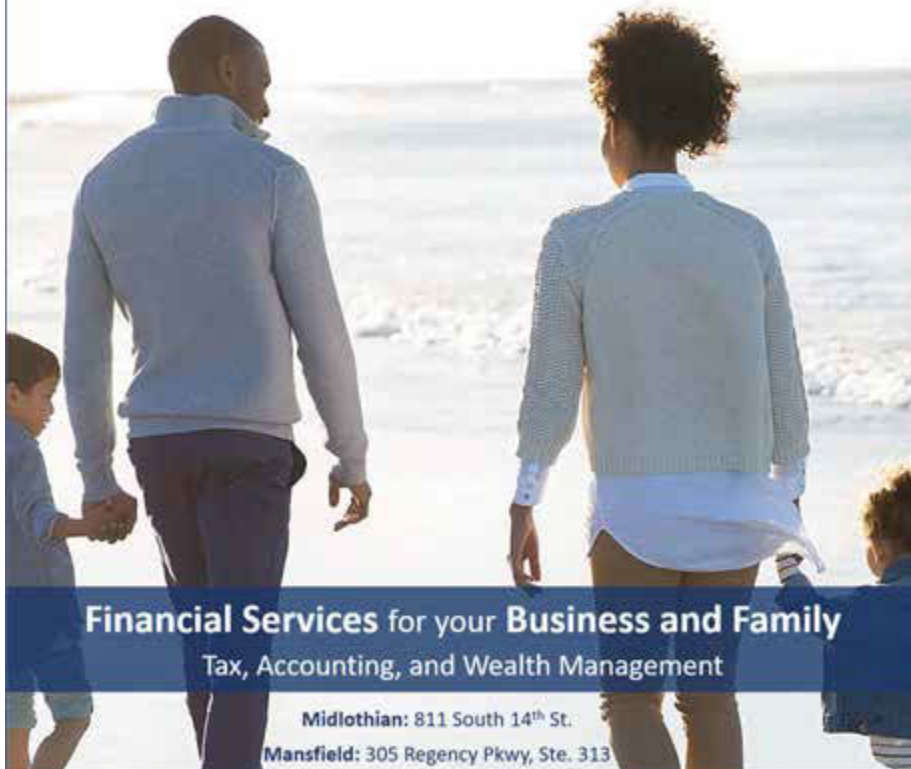
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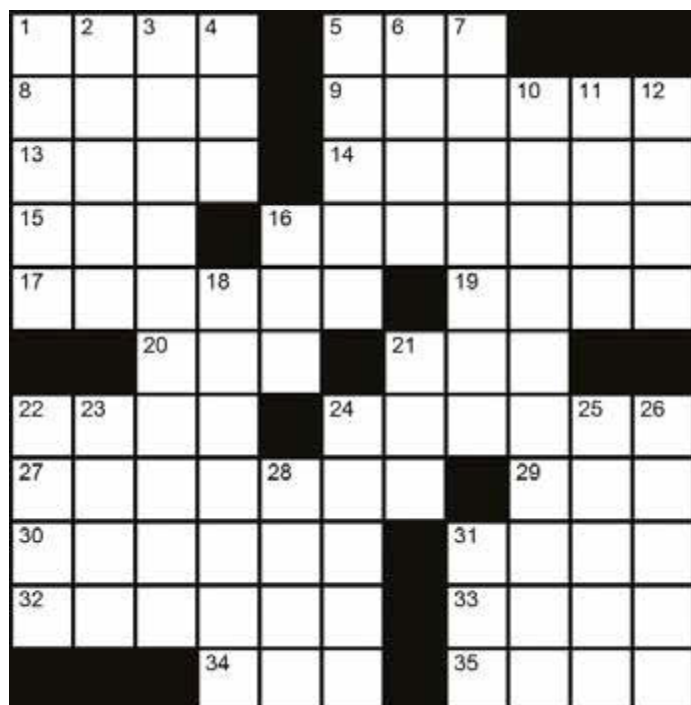


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Across

- 1 Greatest part
- 5 Pull laboriously
- 8 Fuzzy red monster
- 9 It's on top of the world
- 13 — Turing, of "The Imitation Game"
- 14 Dark
- 15 Abner's intro
- 16 Ladies' man
- 17 Scold
- 19 Basic unit of heredity
- 20 Average
- 21 Fondle
- 22 Supercilious manner
- 24 Discontinued Chrysler marque
- 27 Bewitched
- 29 One circuit
- 30 Deliver to a judge
- 31 Opportune
- 32 Not destroyed or lost
- 33 Way out yonder
- 34 Defiant exclamation
- 35 View from Los Alamos

Down

- 1 Soft, dry and friable
- 2 Skateboard maneuver
- 3 Contract details
- 4 Weight unit: may be long or short
- 5 Illumination
- 6 "Daily Bruin" publisher
- 7 Composer — Bizet
- 10 Perk up
- 11 So be it
- 12 Funerary bonfire
- 16 Amtrak unit
- 18 Urgent sale words
- 21 Write
- 22 His name is on a stadium in Queens
- 23 Large-screen format
- 24 Pool dimension
- 25 Spanish appetizers
- 26 Musical drama
- 28 Sushi option
- 31 Run into

Solutions on page 28

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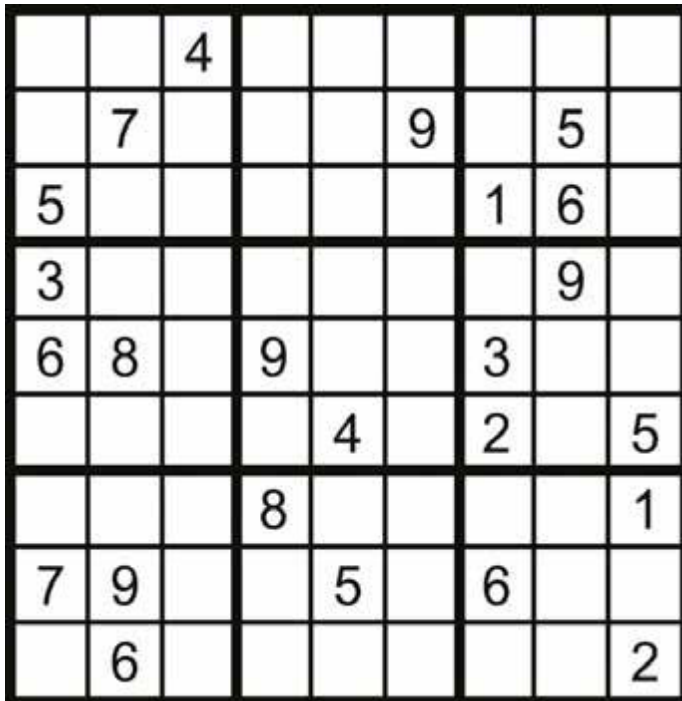
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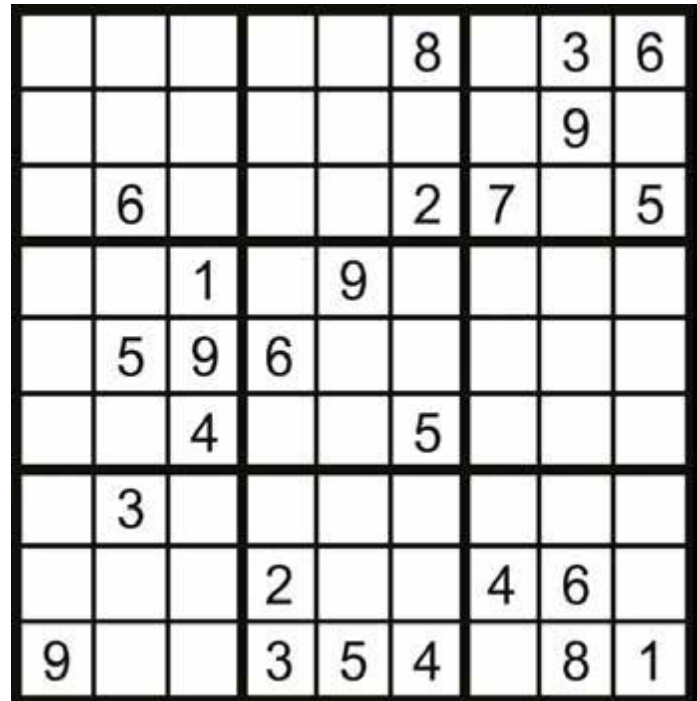
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Solutions on page 28

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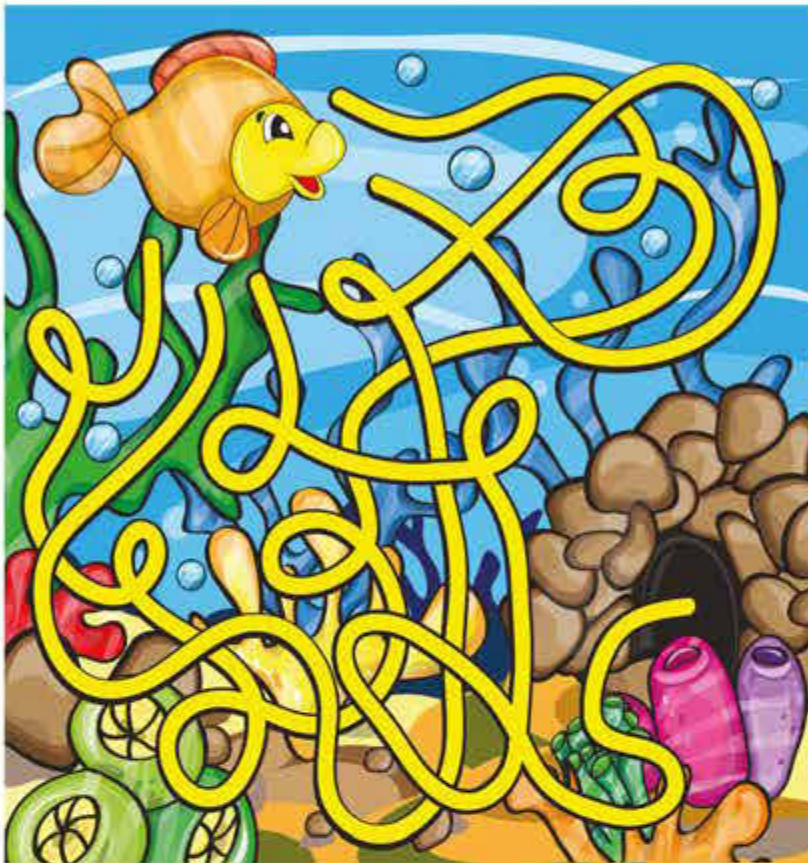
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P	L	O	P	B	P	C	C	O	B
L	P	R	E	L	E	H	O	L	E
A	E	R	R	U	M	R	T	E	R
N	A	A	P	P	L	E	R	M	R
T	R	C	C	H	E	R	R	Y	Y
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8	E	L	M	O		9	I	C	E	C	A	P
13	A	L	A	N		14	G	L	O	O	M	Y
15	L	I	L			16	C	H	A	R	M	E
17	Y	E	L	L	A	T			19	G	E	N
						20	P	A	R			
22	A	I	R	S			24	D	E	S	O	T
27	S	M	I	T		28	T	E	N		29	L
30	H	A	N	D	U	P			31	R	I	P
32	E	X	T	A	N	T			33	A	F	A
						34	Y	A	H		35	M
												E
												S
												A

Easy

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

Medium

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

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