

# SouthwestNOW

M A G A Z I N E

MAY 2025

## He's That Art Teacher

James-Ryan Cahalan  
helps Village Tech  
students shine

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt  
Crossword

Featured Business:  
Pekos Bill Pottery and  
Garden Decor

Best of In the Kitchen:  
Asian Cuisine

2025

# Duncanville Events

MAY

2

5PM-10PM

*BloomFest Music & Arts  
Festival  
Armstrong Park*

JULY

4

*4th of July in Duncanville*

9AM 4PM-10PM  
*Parade Celebration  
Armstrong Park*

SEPT

20

4PM-10PM

*Hispanic Heritage Fest  
Armstrong Park*

DEC

5

5PM-10PM

*Holiday Lights in the  
Park  
Armstrong Park*

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DUNCANVILLE ISD

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ON THE COVER



James-Ryan Cahalan makes art come alive for Village Tech students.

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

*You never know when it's ...*

The other day I was in Walmart, browsing the clearance aisle to see if anything I needed was on sale. The odd collection of stuff made me feel like I'd happened upon the backroom of the Island of Misfit Toys.

I was looking at this and that when this small, bearded guy, maybe my age, maybe a little younger, reached out and tapped a one-pint can of paint with his first two fingers. "This is a good deal on polyurethane, if you've got anything that needs polyurethane-ing."

I tried not to look back as I kept pushing my basket down the aisle. It was so "cringe," as teens say. I was still trying to figure out if there was anyone else he could be addressing, since I'd never seen this guy before in my life. But no, I was the only other person on the aisle. And then he started grumbling about how rude people are today.

I felt like I'd left the Island of Misfit Junk and entered one of those insurance commercials for the company that "can't keep you from turning into your parents," but can save you money on your insurance. I just kept pushing my basket.

It was a weird experience. Did he really think I wanted to stop and have a deep conversation about the wonders and joys of polyurethane? Did he have deep wisdom to dispense about what objects could or could not benefit from a nice coat of polyurethane? I have the feeling that if I'd stopped to engage him, I might still be in that Walmart discussing paint.

*Time for a fresh coat!*



*Adam*

Adam Walker  
SouthwestNOW Editor  
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# HIS THAT ART TEACHER

— By Adam Walker

Art has been part of James-Ryan Cahalan's life from his earliest days. "When I was very young, I remember my father painting watercolors of landscapes in the Philippines. I was born there, because he was a Navy officer. I used to copy his paintings. When I attended Duncanville High School, I was thinking about becoming a tattoo artist. I was a TA in some of my art classes, and I began to love teaching. By the time I graduated in 2009, I had completed two AP portfolios in one year. That's 60-plus pieces of art. I entered a lot of competitions.

"For college, I went to Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design. I studied art education with an emphasis on painting. In high school, most of my painting had been with acrylics. I was afraid of oil. So they told me, 'Nope. You can't use acrylics anymore.' I had to learn to use oil paints. Now that's my favorite medium. I love how you can blend with oils. I graduated in 2012 and started teaching at Village Tech School in 2013. This was my first job after college, and I've been here for 13 years now.

"My interest in art has evolved," James-Ryan noted. "I like to do a lot of different kinds of art, but I keep coming back to portraits and figure paintings. I especially like to paint men who are gentle and expressive. I found hands and feet difficult, so I focus on getting them just right. I like hyperrealism, with its attention to fine detail, because it's challenging.

"I don't like to stick to just one thing. I also enjoy fun still lifes. Mine are usually very satirical and playful. Recently, I've been painting a lot of nostalgic toys. I painted my Pikachu Pez dispenser. Then I decided to paint my Gameboy Color. And I have a thing for rubber ducks. I'm still a kid at heart. I like to go with the flow. Anything can inspire me. When I'm doing portraits, sometimes, I get too involved in the details and end up making mistakes because I have artist's block. That's when I'll do something I'm not used to. I'll experiment with something playful. But I always come back to portraits and figures."

His job allows him to explore all kinds of art with his students. "I like to start my young students off with mixed media



sculptures of monsters. You can't make a monster wrong. You can't get the proportions wrong, or the colors. Children love to use their imaginations, but they don't get as much practice as they used to. Monsters are a good way to get them thinking creatively. There is no box when it comes to monsters!"

Right now, the students of Village Tech are working on art projects for the Dallas Zoo. They are helping the zoo by creating public art to show the zoo's mission to educate the public about animals. The students had to pitch their ideas to adult administrators at the Dallas Zoo, and the zoo picked the ones they wanted the students to create and install. "They've been working on this all year. The zoo approached us in November. When the students came back from winter break, they had three weeks to put their proposals together and present them to the zoo. They presented 18 proposals, and the zoo chose seven of them. They've been

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 June 2nd-6th  
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building models, testing materials and then making the artwork. Now they have some of the art installed and are getting the rest of the pieces ready to install.”

The zoo asked for art to explain

pollinators and to show off the 12 species the zoo is working to conserve. This project is shared by the sixth-, eighth- and 12th-graders. “The zoo changed the train outside the reptile house, and they’re using the space created for the pollinators exhibit,” James-Ryan said. “The students set up an archway explaining the life cycle of butterflies. They researched butterflies in their science classes, and then they measured butterflies and scaled them up to eight times actual size. They did the same with their eggs, caterpillars and chrysalises. The eighth-graders worked on a project about butterfly camouflage and created a piece where you have to try to find as many butterflies as you can. There’s a build-a-bug game and a piece of lenticular art that shows an image of a butterfly from one angle and one of a caterpillar from another angle. They had a month-and-a-half to learn how to do all of this, and how to weatherproof their art.”

For the 12 protected species, the kindergarten, first, sixth and seventh grade students are working together. The students are creating 3x5 flat mosaics,

which are being pieced together by the kindergarten students like paint by numbers, but that wasn’t enough. “Our kids love animals. When they visited the zoo, they fell in love with the hippos. Hippos are not one of the 12 protected species, but they wanted to create a piece of art for the hippo hut. There’s a famous piece of art at The Met in New York. It’s a blue hippo artifact from ancient Egypt. The museum calls it *William*. That was the students’ inspiration for designing *Gloria*. She’s a 3-D mosaic, 8 feet long and 4 feet wide. The high school students sliced layers of insulation foam and assembled her frame. The sixth- and seventh-graders are covering her in glow-in-the-dark rocks. She’ll be bright blue by day, but at night she’ll glow blue. They have to complete all the mosaics and install them by May 17” That’s a tall order.

“We have a four-day school week, but the students beg to come in on their days off to work on this art. They stay after school. They’re really fired up about art. This is our present to the community, and it shows off the students’ learning for the whole year.” **NOW**

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**Zoomed In:**  
Kiersten Brown and Liv Yang

By Adam Walker

Kiersten Brown and Liv Yang are teammates on Duncanville High School’s new girls’ flag football team. This is the first year for this sport, which may become a UIL sport next year.

“I’m a multisport athlete,” Kiersten, a senior at DHS, reported. “Cheer makes me flexible and helps with catching. Track makes me fast. When they said we were going to have this team, I said, ‘Why not?’”

“I grew up loving football and played football with the boys,” Liv, who is a junior, remembered. “But I was always told it was not for girls. Now I have the opportunity to enjoy football. So I’m really excited about this.”

Their Coach, Lydia Bartlett, said, “Both of these girls are so tough. You should see them on the field.”



Melody Locket holds an impromptu story time with Ashia and Adonis.



Tre Gilkey and Jasmine Perez take second place in mixed doubles tennis.



The Perot Tech Truck comes to the Duncanville Library for spring break activities.



Jorden Alex of DeSoto celebrates doctors’ Match Day, beginning her residency.



Annette Anderson speaks to the Cedar Hill History Museum about Native Americans.



Hillside Village provides space for kids to have some fun on their parents' shopping expeditions.



Becky Walker grabs lunch at Grow DeSoto Market Place.



Local art students decorate the walls of Take Out Burgers.

# Asian American Pacific Islander

## 1st Annual Celebration

FREE EVENT

Join us on Saturday, May 17, 2025 for the first Annual Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Mini Festival! Enjoy this family-friendly fun including cultural performances, food, live music, vendors, activities and more!

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BusinessNOW

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— By Adam Walker

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**Hours:** Tuesday-Friday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
Saturday: 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.  
Sunday: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
Monday: Closed



Pekos Bill Pottery and Garden Decor is a family-owned and -operated business that started during the pandemic. “I was visiting family in Chiapas, Mexico, when the lockdown happened,” Owner Karina Galaviz remembered. I spent time looking through the markets and small local shops in small towns. I saw the colorful patterns and bought a lot of stuff for my own house and yard. Friends and neighbors saw my yard and asked where I got the decorations. I decided to start this business during the pandemic, when people were spending a lot of time in their yards. I offer unique pieces from small craftsmen in parts of Mexico that wouldn’t otherwise have access to larger markets. Many of our pieces are handmade by artisans there, but some of the concrete pieces are made right here.” They opened in Sachse six years ago.

Karina has three children in the family business. Her son, Ramon, operates the Waxahachie location. “He thinks big. He enjoys selling. The Waxahachie location was his idea. We opened the Waxahachie store two years ago. We’re thinking about opening another location up north, maybe in McKinney, next year,” she said.

Pekos Bill offers a wide variety of ceramic, concrete and metal art for the yard, garden and pool. They have fountains from large, multi-tiered examples scaled for the largest houses or business settings to small water features for a backyard nook. “We don’t just sell them,” Ramon informed, “we also install them — the pumps, tubing, everything — it’s all included. And we aren’t limited to just the fountains on display. We do custom fountains. Bring us your idea, and we can make it happen!”

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Brightly colored Mexican glazed pottery is on display, alongside more rustic pots in sizes from small, bucket-sized planters to enormous pots 4 or 5 feet tall. Chimineas and fire pits offer cozy gathering spots for cool fall and winter nights on the patio.

Metal yard art ranges from signs to hang on an exterior wall, or by the poolside, to cutouts of Kokopelli or Sasquatch ranging from a few feet tall to “life” size. Whether you’re looking for pink flamingos or pink llamas or some other metal animal like an armadillo, rooster or giraffe to roam your yard, Pekos Bill has plenty to spur your imaginative yard design. And if those flowerbeds aren’t working out, they have colorful metal flowers that are immune to the brownest thumbs and the harshest weather. They even have life-size saguaro cactus and agave plants.

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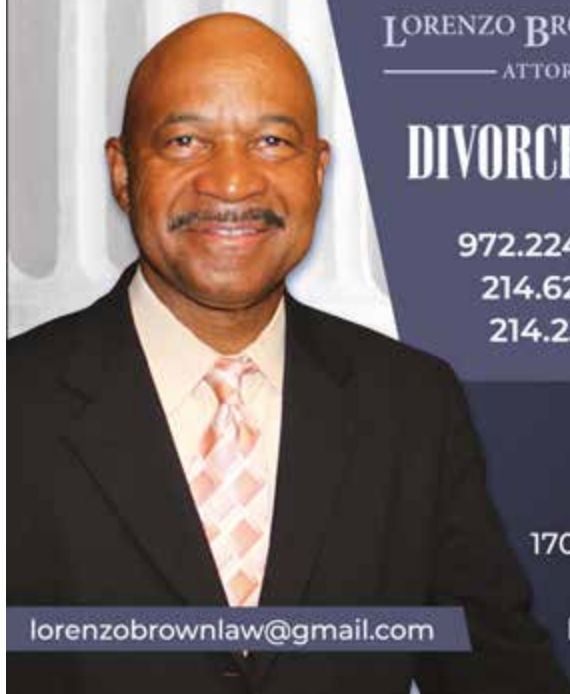
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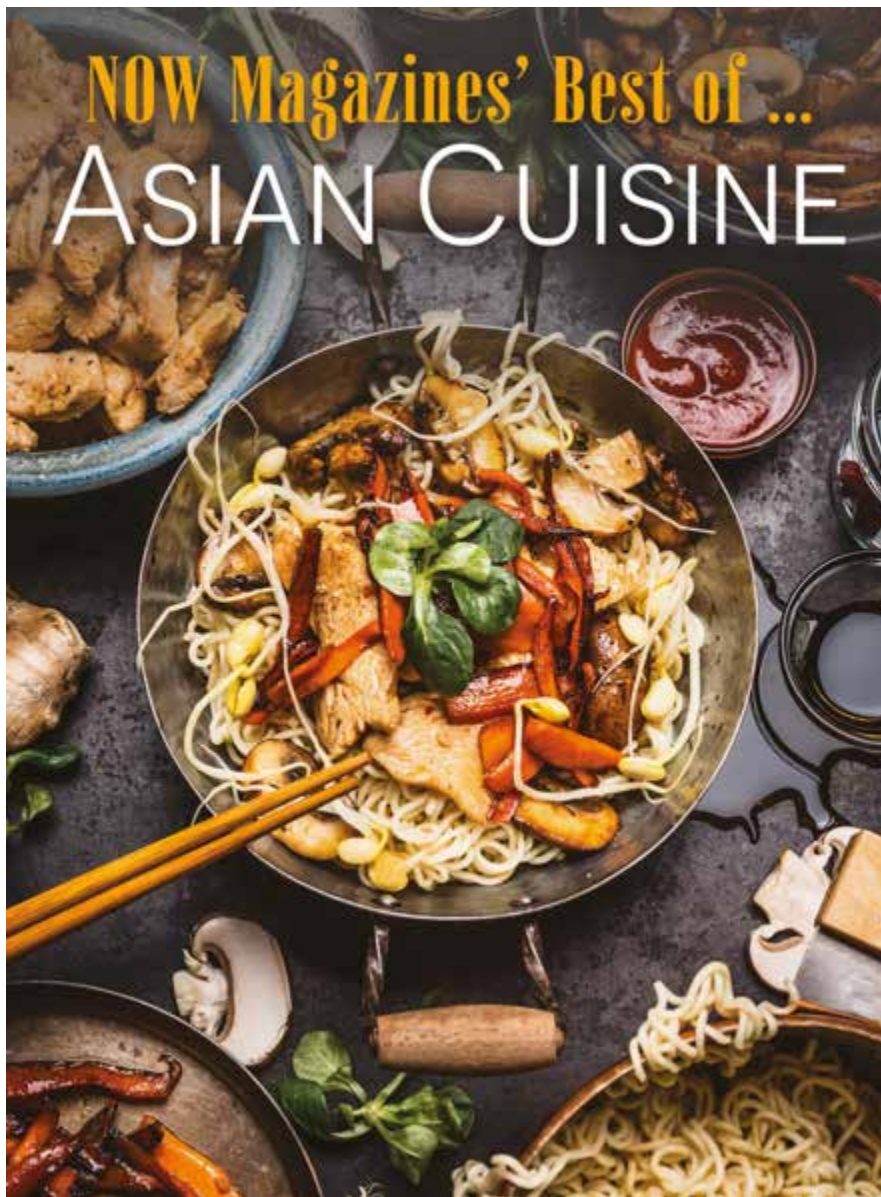
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# NOW Magazines' Best of ... ASIAN CUISINE

Asian cuisine offers a lot of variety. From the mild flavors of Japanese cooking to the spiciness of the Szechuan region, there is something for every palate. Here are a few samplings from the many Asian-inspired recipes we have published over the years. Enjoy! **NOW**

## Thai Chicken Satay

*Provided by Sonia Walters for the October 2017 issue of BursesNOW Magazine.*

- 2 cups Dynasty Jasmine Rice**
- 1 1/2 lbs. chicken breast, boneless**
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar**
- 2 Tbsp. Thai curry powder (divided use)**
- 1/2 tsp. ground white pepper**
- 1/2 tsp. turmeric**
- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt**
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- 1/2 cup coconut milk**
- 1 bottle Thai peanut sauce**

- 1.** Wash rice in water until there is no cloudiness. Drain off rinse water; cover rice with fresh water one-knuckle deep over top of rice. Bring to a boil quickly. Cover, and turn off the heat. Set pot aside until ready to eat meal.
- 2.** Cut chicken into 1-inch-thick, long strips.
- 3.** Mix together sugar, 1 Tbsp. curry powder, remaining dry seasonings and garlic.
- 4.** Rub seasonings on chicken strips and refrigerate overnight.
- 5.** When ready to cook, mix coconut milk with 1 Tbsp. curry powder in a little saucepan. Weave chicken strips onto wooden skewers. Grill chicken, basting with

curried coconut milk.

- 6.** Serve with Thai peanut sauce, Thai Cucumber Relish and Jasmine rice.

## Hot and Sour Soup

*Provided by Vicki Padgett for the May 2019 issue of CorsicanaNOW Magazine.*

- 3-4 cups chicken broth**
- 4 dried shitake mushrooms, rehydrated and julienned**
- 1/4 cup bamboo shoots, julienned**
- 1/2 cup rice vinegar, unflavored**
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce**
- 1 green onion, cut into 2-inch-long strips**
- 1 tsp. Tabasco sauce**
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper**
- Firm tofu, cut into small cubes (optional)**
- 3 Tbsp. cornstarch**
- 1/4 cup cold water**
- 1 egg, beaten (optional)**
- Slivers of chicken or pork, to taste (optional)**

- 1.** In a large saucepan, bring the chicken broth to a boil. Stir in the next 7 ingredients, plus tofu, if using; return to a boil.
- 2.** Mix together cornstarch and water. Add to the soup; stir until thickened. If desired, drizzle in the egg, stirring the soup constantly.
- 3.** For extra protein, add slivers of chicken or pork to the soup as it boils.

## Shrimp Tofu Sauté

*Provided by Vicki Zhao for the June 2024 issue of MansfieldNOW Magazine.*

- 1 carton firm organic tofu, small cubes**
- 2 Tbsp. oil (divided use)**
- 3 1-inch pieces of ginger, sliced**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 20 medium wild caught shrimp**
- 2 tsp. soy sauce**
- 1 tsp. rice vinegar**
- Salt, to taste**
- 2 green onions, chopped**
- 1 tsp. sesame oil**

- 1.** Boil water in a pot. Insert the tofu for 10 seconds to soften, but it should keep its shape. Set aside.
- 2.** Heat a pan over medium heat. Add 1 Tbsp. oil, ginger, garlic and shrimp. Cook the shrimp on both sides until pink; set aside.
- 3.** Place the remaining oil in a pan along with the tofu, soy sauce, rice vinegar and salt to taste. Sauté for 3 minutes. Add the green onions and shrimp mixture. Stir well; toss with sesame oil.

## Basic Japanese Potato Cakes

*Provided by Peter Leung for the March 2021 issue of WeatherfordNOW Magazine.*

*Easy Berry Sauce:*

- 3 1/2 Tbsp. berry fruit spread**
- 1 1/2 tsp. spicy mustard**

**Potato Cakes:**

**1/2 tsp. salt**

**Boiling water, enough to cover potatoes**

**4 medium potatoes, peeled and diced**

**10 Tbsp. corn or potato starch**

**1 1/2 Tbsp. butter, for frying**

1. *For sauce:* Stir the sauce ingredients together until smooth and well blended; set aside.
2. *For potato cakes:* Add the salt to the water; bring to a boil. Stir in the potatoes; cook until very tender. Drain thoroughly; return the potatoes to the pan. Mash the potatoes quickly until smooth; let cool.
3. Add corn or potato starch to the mush; mix well, using clean hands until no lumps remain.
4. Divide the mixture into about 15-18 portions, shape into flat rounds.
5. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat; fry the cakes on both sides until crispy and nicely colored. Serve with berry sauce.

**Korean Bulgogi**

*Provided by Tannie Brantley for the August 2017 issue of SouthwestNOW Magazine.*

**1 lb. beef tenderloin, sliced thinly into 1/2-inch slices**

*Marinade (for 1 lb. of beef):*

**1/2 cup pear, chopped**

**1/4 cup onion, chopped**

**4 cloves garlic, minced**

**1 tsp. ginger, minced**

**1 green onion, chopped**

**2 Tbsp. soy sauce**

**2 Tbsp. brown sugar**

**Pinch of ground black pepper**

**1 Tbsp. toasted sesame oil**

**Several thin slices of carrot**

1. Place beef in a bowl.
2. For marinade: Blend all marinade ingredients in a blender.
3. Add the blended marinade to sliced beef and mix well, refrigerate for 1 hour, or overnight.
4. You can grill, pan-fry, or barbecue the meat on medium heat until cooked through.



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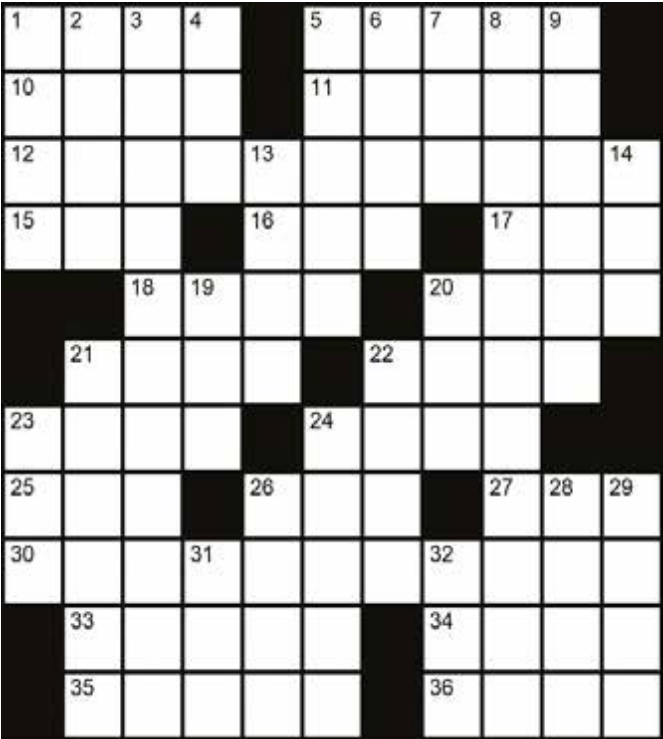
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- Across**

  - 1 Wind-driven clouds
  - 5 Facebook's home Park
  - 10 Without accompaniment
  - 11 Understand finer mess
  - 12 Juice
  - 15 A nickel short of a dollar
  - 16 "I Guess --- Rather Be in Colorado" (John Denver)
  - 17 It's about three-quarters of the Earth's surface
  - 18 Had liabilities
  - 20 Colorful-sounding name for a man?
  - 21 Bud supporter
  - 22 One-third of a 1970 Pearl Harbor movie
- Down**

  - 23 Exact double
  - 24 Anger
  - 25 Old card game
  - 26 Easy-going airport?
  - 27 "More info later"
  - 30 Owned apartment
  - 33 Sao ---, Brazil
  - 34 Jane Austen's meddling matchmaker
  - 35 The Memorial --- Kettering Cancer Center
  - 36 Citrus peel, particularly when grated
- Down**

  - 1 Citizen Kane's Rosebud, for example
  - 2 Health menace E ---
  - 3 Stoic
  - 4 John Lennon was murdered in this month
  - 5 Stuck fast
  - 6 Geraint's wife in "Idylls of the King" (Tennyson)
  - 7 Packers' group
  - 8 Duty-free hours?
  - 9 Salsa brand
  - 13 Not us
  - 14 Mocking cry
  - 19 Skin Jump
  - 20 Big bike
  - 21 Pounces
  - 22 Joni Mitchell's was big and yellow
  - 23 Maintenance, perhaps
- Across**

  - 24 Manor reorganised a Spanish fellow
  - 26 Barry Manilow's drunken showgirl
  - 28 Mooches
  - 29 "I --- a loss for words!"
  - 31 Batman and Robin, for example
  - 32 --- Percé (Northwest Native Americans)

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## Movies in the Park:

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5/12

## National Police Memorial Day:

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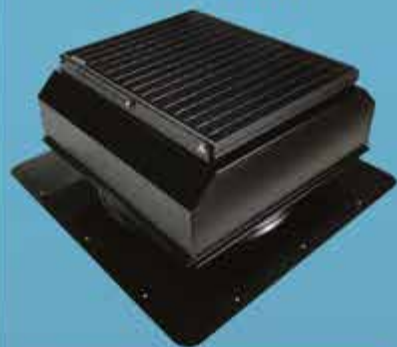
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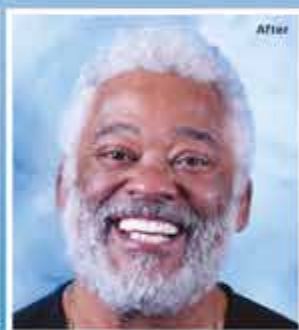
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