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JUNE 2020

Double Dog Daring to Dream

The class of 2020
stays undefeated

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Kids' Fun Page

Crossword/Sudoku

Featured Business:
Brandon Florence, DDS

Tassel's Worth the Hassle

Ferris graduates embark
on a new journey

In the Kitchen With
Melodie Wisdom

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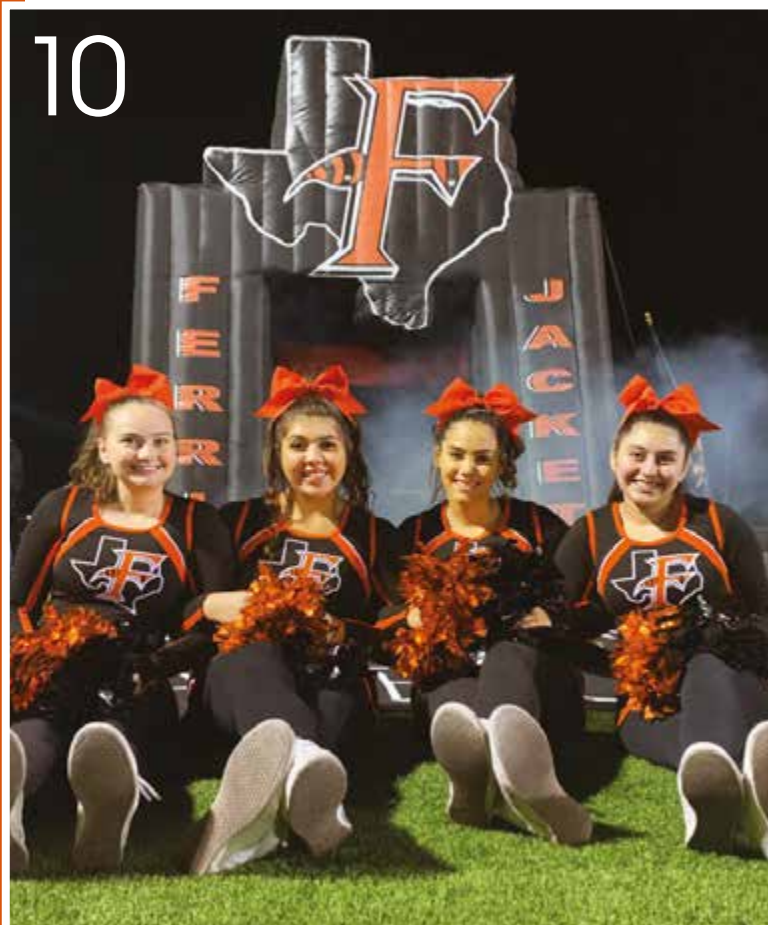
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ON THE COVER

*North Ellis County
praises its graduates.*

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Rachel

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Chin up ...

Over these last few months, "coronavirus" has become a curse word in our nation. The quarantine was enough to make even us introverts go a little stir-crazy. My husband admitted, "I just missed having the option to go fishing, sit down at a nice restaurant or go to the movies." I agree, especially as newlyweds.

There is a funny side to the times we recover from, though. I'll admit, I finally understand the importance of having toilet paper in my life. And I never thought I'd see video gamers (yes, I'm a gamer girl) sell toilet paper for loads of gaming currency. All the memes still pop up in my Facebook feed!

It's easy to laugh a little now that the light shines at the end of the tunnel. However — all jokes aside — things are not "business as usual." We had to learn a new normal, and some things may never go back to the way they were. There's a lot unknown about the future, and that can be a scary thought for the best of us. But the rain never lasts forever.

During scary times, people consider peace a luxury they can't afford. But to the contrary, I think everyone can benefit from staying peaceful. It's not something that just randomly comes upon us, but something we choose. Remaining in peace can help us maintain focus and stay rational. We must fight to protect our peace when things come against us, and I think North Ellis County sets the example as it gleams with hope in every storm.

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As the class of 2020 faces their biggest hurdles, life seems to double-dog dare them to make their dreams a reality. But, the Red Oak seniors are far from defeated. In spite of the COVID-19 school shutdown, they still embarked on their new journey in life with just as much pomp and circumstance, graduating on May 31 at Globe Life Field in Arlington.

Red Oak ISD Superintendent Brenda Sanford has full confidence in the students' abilities to pursue their passions. "They are self-driven and goal-oriented. After what they have gone through with COVID-19, I can add resilient to that list."

Since Mrs. Sanford joined the district in November 2019, she didn't get to know them as personally as she'd hoped. She did, however, take away sweet memories. "During my first meeting with some of the class, we talked about dress code. They were so polite in saying, 'It is different from your generation,'" she laughed. "They could have just called me 'old,' but they were polite and courteous in making their point."

Red Oak High School Assistant Principal Jimmy Alcorn also provided his memories. "During the Hawkette annual dance, I was challenged to lead the Harlem Shuffle dance," he laughed. "To my surprise, all the students hit the floor and were dancing behind me!"

No one could have anticipated this change for these beloved students, but Mrs. Sanford offered some encouragement: "I know that the shelter-in-place orders have been difficult because they took away your vision of your senior year. You missed out on prom, award ceremonies and end-of-the-year activities, but your true character showed, as you took it with grace and understanding. You proved to be everything Red Oak ISD exemplifies."

These seniors have been supported through thick and thin. "As you make your way through the next chapter of your life, remember that life is not always fair," Mrs. Sanford said. "When you hit a bump in the road, you might get off course, or you might even fall. That's OK because that is life. At points like



these in your life, stand up, brush the dirt off and keep moving forward. Your goals and dreams are there, you just have to be willing to do what it takes to achieve them."

Although Mr. Alcorn has had a fine and extended career in the education field, he claimed his best moment occurred in the spring of 2020. "I watched Red Oak seniors rise to the level of expectation by achieving their academic milestones and staying on track to graduate during this pandemic. Wow! I am overwhelmed with how well our seniors maintained their studies, using distance learning and keeping positive attitudes, regarding checking on fellow students, teachers and administrators, during this pandemic. You make me proud to be your Hawk Brother!"

"Continue to focus on your dreams," Mrs. Sanford emphasized. "You have your whole life ahead of you, and if you are willing to put in the hard work and time, there is nothing you can't accomplish. The future is for your taking, so go get it!" **NOW**

DOUBLE-DOG Daring to



CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2020 STAR STUDENTS



Photos courtesy of Red Oak ISD.

Dream

— By Rachel Rich

Happy Father's Day!

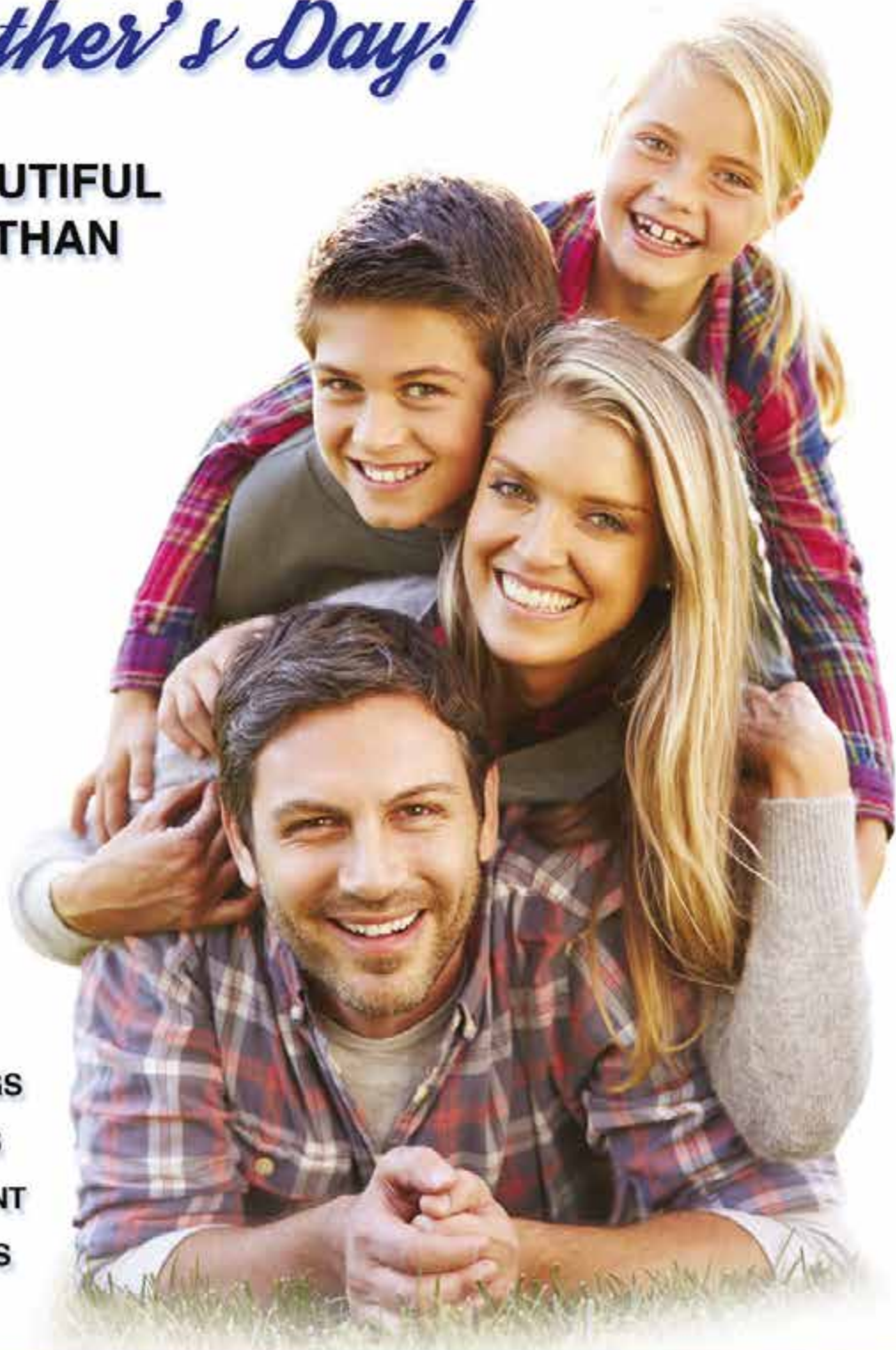
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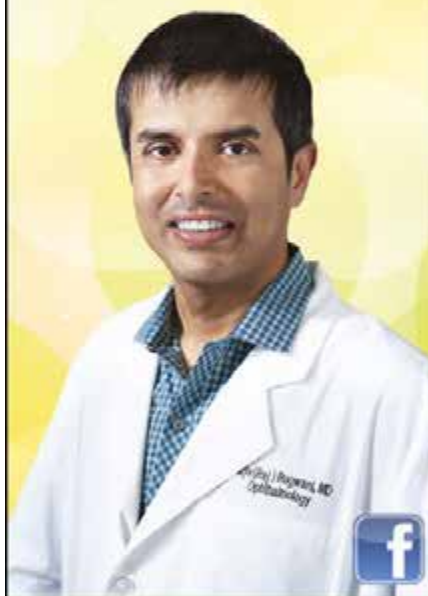
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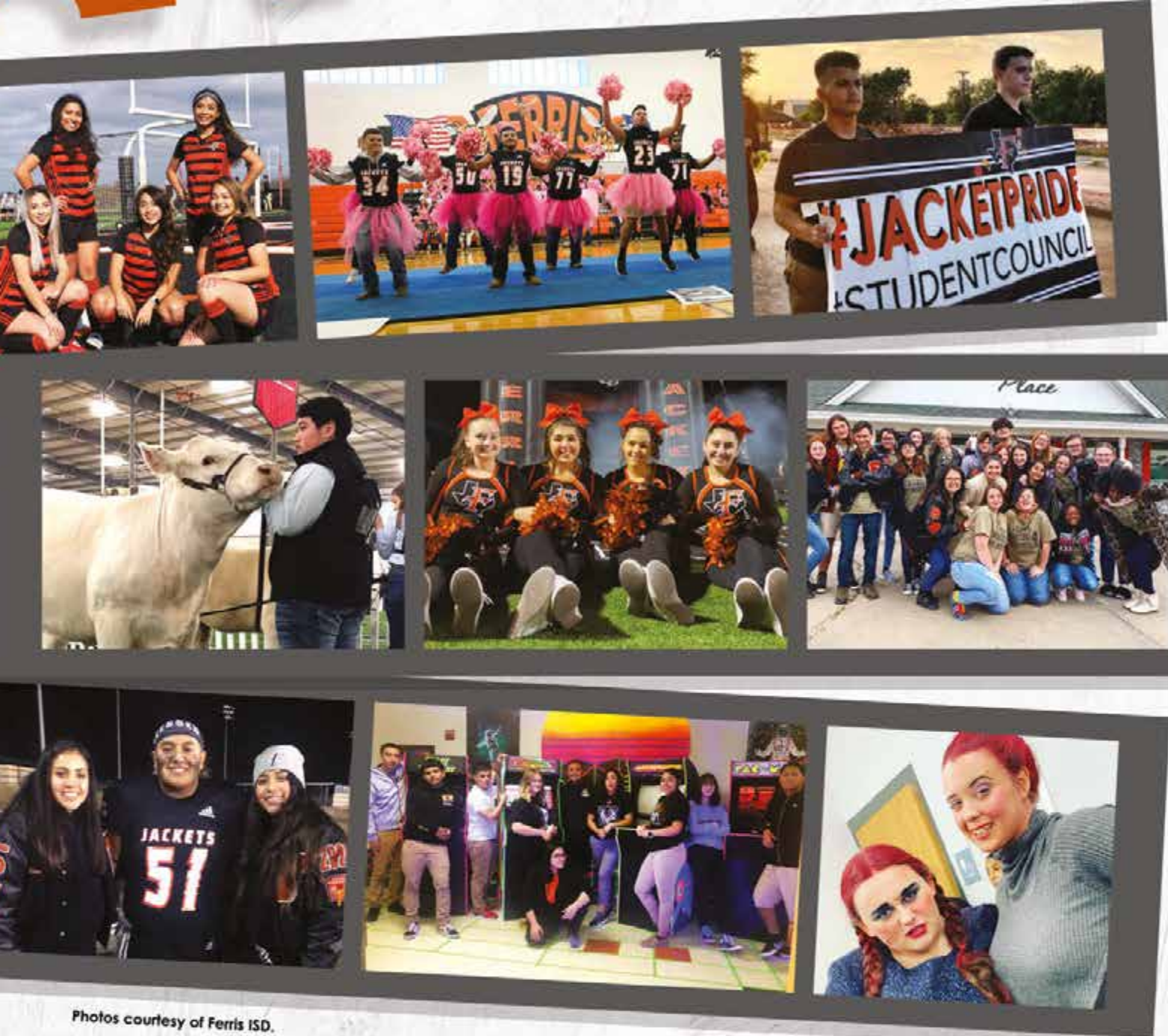
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Tassel's Worth the Hassle

— By Rachel Rich

Even given the unexpected turn of events with COVID-19 school closures, Ferris High School's class of 2020 still shares a bright future. Superintendent James Hartman, among others, is on board with where these students are going in life. "This graduating class is such a talented group: academically, athletically, musically and artistically," he said. "Additionally, they have demonstrated a resilient spirit and a drive to overcome any challenge placed in their path. I have every confidence that they will build upon the great foundation gained at Ferris ISD to truly make their mark in society. It has been an honor to watch them grow and mature during their high school years. I have been blessed



Photos courtesy of Ferris ISD.

by their commitment to our school and to our community. And, I look forward to the bright futures they make for themselves and our country."

Deputy Superintendent Melinda Domain weighed in. "Although none of us anticipated their senior year ending the way it has, and we are all disappointed for them," she said, "I hope they remember that regardless of everything else, no one and nothing can take away from them what they've learned during their years in public school. They earned that diploma, even if graduation doesn't look like they thought it would, and that is something of which they can be proud."

She offered words of encouragement to the seniors: "Whatever you decide to do in life, make it something you love. High salaries and prestige may be nice, but going to a job that you

love and doing something that makes you happy with people who have the same mission as you, are worth much more."

"I joined the Class of 2020 as their principal this year," Principal Andru Gilbert, stated. "We have survived several events together that, in time, will only make us stronger when we look back on this. From the school closure in spring with the water problem, to the tornado that hit our community and the COVID-19 shutdown, this group has shown resilience that is unmeasured." He smiled. "I could not be prouder to serve a group of students like the Class of 2020. You'll forever be a part of my and our community's story."

Principal Gilbert knows they are building a better tomorrow. "While these challenges in closing out your senior year are hard, remember, this is the beginning of you setting your future. Work hard, love others and — most importantly — always be your own biggest supporter. This class will go so far! We are so proud of you!" **NOW**

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Brandon Florence, DDS

— By Adam Walker

Brandon Florence, DDS

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In 2003, Dr. Brandon Florence was a student in dental school, on his way to dinner at Sam's Pizza, when destiny called. "I saw the sign for Joe Potter's dental office. I cold-called him. We worked together from 2004-2013, when he retired. Dr. Potter had been here since 1972. I am able to call him my mentor and friend."



Dr. Florence is passionate about providing quality comprehensive care for his patients and their teeth. "I specialize in the rehab of badly damaged teeth. We use digital impressions created by taking pictures of your mouth. It's an effective patient education tool. We can often restore broken smiles in as little as three weeks. We also screen for sleep apnea and offer an alternative to a CPAP machine. We can screen here in the office and coordinate a take-home sleep test, which is then examined by a board-certified sleep physician. I'm a sleep apnea patient myself and benefit from Oral Appliance Therapy (OAT)."

The family-style relationship Dr. Florence shares with his patients was confirmed during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. "During a training day, a patient came in and showed his support by paying us in advance for an upcoming treatment he had. He said, 'I wanted to make sure y'all had some money, so you stay in business.' He looked at us as family. It was nice

to see people letting us know they're there for us."

Creating a safe environment for patients by paying close attention to proper disinfection protocol was already an integral part of Dr. Florence's practice. "It was the airborne aspect of COVID-19's aggressive communicability we needed to address, but after lots of hours and research, we are prepared." Now, they are glad to be up and running like normal.

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Continuing education is vital to staying on top of the latest developments in the field. "I often spend an entire week with the Pankey Institute, learning new techniques and training with other dentists, surgeons and other professionals. L.D. Pankey believes in a philosophy called the Cross of Life that says it's important to balance work, play, faith and family. I graduated from Dallas Baptist University in 1999 and Baylor College of Dentistry in 2004. I love creating healthy smiles, but it's important to spend time with my wife and two sons. I enjoy fishing and sports. We go to church in Midlothian, where I have enjoyed coaching soccer. Over the years, I have been involved with the Chamber of Commerce here in Cedar Hill, and I was involved in Boy Scouts for years."

Dr. Florence's staff is equally committed to caring for their patients. "My front office team has a combined 34 years of experience. My two hygienists have 36 years of experience, combined. My two assistants also have 36 years' combined experience. Many of them grew up in this community. My team, as a whole, really stands out. We take all PPOs and offer Care Credit and Lending Club as payment options."

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Zoomed In: Easton Settlemyer

By Rachel Rich

At only 3 years old, Easton Settlemyer is making the world a better place. With the help of his mother, Nicole Monk (not pictured), he basks in the outdoors and takes care of plants in his little garden next to his play kitchen. He admitted, "I want to cook my plants!"

Learning about plants via Nicole's instruction, Easton has grown to enjoy gardening. "His favorite part is getting to use the watering hose to water his flowers," Nicole smiled, "and we often splash and play in the water afterward. He always asks, 'Are my plants ready yet?'"

Easton also has an 8-month-old baby sister he loves taking care of. With his ability to cook and grow food, he is on his way to doing that.



Lisa Hendryx virtually teaches her kids until they get to see each other face to face again.



Crue excitedly holds Big Mama tightly.



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Shari Phillips helps those in need at Red Oak's OutREACH Project during quarantine.

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In the Kitchen With

MELODIE WISDOM

— By Rachel Rich



Red Oak Chamber Assistant Melodie Wisdom grew up on California beaches. She left with \$1,000 in her pocket and a map in her hand. Now, she's called Texas her home for 10 years. "I feel like I always have to defend my Texas status after blabbing that I'm from California," she laughed.

Her main love is grilling. "I've become a grill snob," Melodie smiled. "My family has competed in the World Championship BBQ Goat Cook-off in Brady, Texas, for 40 years. One year, I teased my cousin, Joe, and said, 'Joe, you've competed all these years. Next year, I'm going to enter and win, and I'll let you have my trophy.'"

"I entered and was 6th place out of 210 cooks. I never cooked goat before," she chuckled. "And I let him take a picture with my trophy." **NOW**

California Grilled Chicken

3/4 cup balsamic vinegar
1 tsp. garlic powder
2 Tbsp. honey
2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
2 tsp. Italian seasoning
Kosher salt, to taste
Black pepper, freshly ground
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
4 slices fresh mozzarella
4 slices avocado

4 slices tomato
2 Tbsp. freshly sliced basil, for garnish
Balsamic glaze, for drizzling

1. In a small bowl, whisk together balsamic vinegar, garlic powder, honey, oil, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper, forming a marinade. Pour the marinade over the chicken; let it sit about 20 minutes to soak up all the flavors.

2. When ready to grill, heat the grill to medium-high. Oil your grate; then grill the

chicken until it's charred and cooked through, about 8 minutes per side.

3. Top the chicken with mozzarella, avocado and tomato; cover the grill to help melt the toppings to the chicken. This should take about 2 minutes.

4. Garnish the chicken with basil.

5. Drizzle the balsamic glaze over the chicken; enjoy!

Sweet Chili-Lime Grilled Chicken

3/4 cup sweet chili sauce
Lime juice from 2 limes
1/3 cup low-sodium soy sauce
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
(about 1 3/4 lbs.)
Green onions, thinly sliced, for garnish
Lime wedges, to taste, for serving

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the chili sauce, lime juice and soy sauce. Set aside 1/4 cup of the mixture for basting.

2. Add chicken to a large, resealable plastic bag; pour in the marinade.

3. Let the chicken marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours, or overnight, to help get the full flavor on the chicken.
4. When ready to grill, heat the grill to high. Grill the chicken, brushing on some leftover marinade from the bag, until charred and cooked through, about 8 minutes per side.
5. Once done, baste the chicken with the 1/4 cup of reserved marinade; garnish with green onions.
6. Serve with your preferred amount of lime wedges.

Cinnamon Sugar Grilled Peaches

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) salted butter, room temperature (I recommend the REAL Seal Dairy Butter.)
1 Tbsp., plus 1 tsp. granulated sugar
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
4 ripe yellow-flesh peaches, halved and pitted
Vegetable oil, to taste

1. In a small bowl, whip the butter with a spatula until it reaches a smooth consistency.
2. Add the sugar and cinnamon to the butter; mix well.
3. Set your grill to medium-high heat.
4. Lightly baste the peaches with the oil; place them face-down on the grill. Cook until the tops are slightly softened when you touch them. There's no need to move them or check them during the cooking process. Simply wait until the tops are slightly soft, which is important.
5. Remove the peaches from the grill; top them with the tasty cinnamon butter.
6. Make sure you serve the peaches warm, as they will be more enjoyable.

Honey Soy Grilled Pork Chops

This recipe serves 2-4 people.

1/4 cup honey
1/2 cup low-sodium soy sauce
2 garlic cloves, minced
Red pepper flakes, to taste
4 pork chops

1. Mix together honey, soy sauce, garlic and red pepper flakes in a large bowl.
2. Add pork chops to the mixture. Cover; refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or up to 2 hours.
3. Heat the grill to a medium-high heat; cook the pork chops until they are seared and cooked through, showing no pink. This usually takes about 8 minutes per side.
4. Let the chops rest for 5 minutes before plating and serving.

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Grilled Asparagus

2 lbs. asparagus, stalks trimmed
2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt, to taste
Black pepper, freshly ground, to taste

1. Toss the asparagus lightly in oil; season generously with salt and pepper. Let the asparagus sit for 20 minutes.
2. Heat a grill or grill pan to high heat.
3. Grill, turning occasionally, until the asparagus is tender and charred, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Grilled Corn

6 ears corn, husked

Crack Sauce:

3 Tbsp. brown sugar
1 tsp. cayenne pepper
Kosher salt, to taste
Black pepper, freshly ground, to taste
1/4 cup butter, melted

Topping:

1 lime, for squeezing

1. Heat grill to high. Brush grates with oil; place corn on the grates. Grill corn for about



Honey Soy Grilled
Pork Chops

5 minutes, turning occasionally.

2. *For crack sauce:* While the corn cooks, add brown sugar, cayenne pepper, salt, black pepper and butter to a small bowl. Whisk the mixture together until well combined.
3. While grilling, baste the corn until it is totally slathered in the crack sauce. Grill until charred and tender; then grill an additional 5 minutes.
4. *For topping:* Cut lime into four wedges. Squeeze preferred amount of lime wedges onto the corn; serve.

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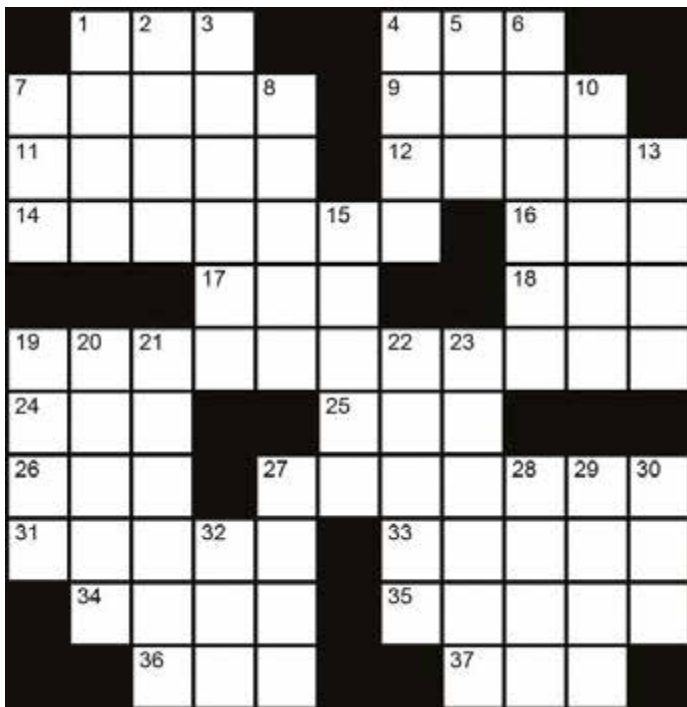
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Crossword Puzzle



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Across

- 1 Plea at sea
- 4 Acquire
- 7 Units of electromotive force
- 9 "A Little Bitty Tear" singer Burl ---
- 11 The ---, Dutch seat of government
- 12 Essayist --- Waldo Emerson
- 14 Infinitely repeated geometric pattern
- 16 Narrative song
- 17 Senior army rank
- 18 Eccentric
- 19 Morning must-have, for many
- 24 Your choice
- 25 Belonging to us
- 26 Source of gas at the track
- 27 Meet expectations
- 31 --- Merman
- 33 Nimble
- 34 Up-and-down toy
- 35 Colossus
- 36 Beak
- 37 Society newcomer

Down

- 1 Rise higher
- 2 Bond girl --- Kurylenko
- 3 House finish
- 4 Vermeer's wore a pearl earring
- 5 "Desperate Housewives" actress --- Longoria
- 6 Spread the word about
- 7 From 30 to 300 MHz
- 8 Words before keys or wheels
- 10 Dashiell Hammett's gumshoe
- 13 Twinned with Jekyll
- 15 Aluminum producer
- 19 Sleeveless cloak
- 20 Togetherness
- 21 Squeezing snake
- 22 --- the elbows, or down-at-heel
- 23 Icy
- 27 No neatnik
- 28 Set of pages
- 29 Excess fat
- 30 Hankering
- 32 Inspect

Solutions on page 28

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Easy

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

Medium

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

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Solutions on page 28

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Kids' Fun Page

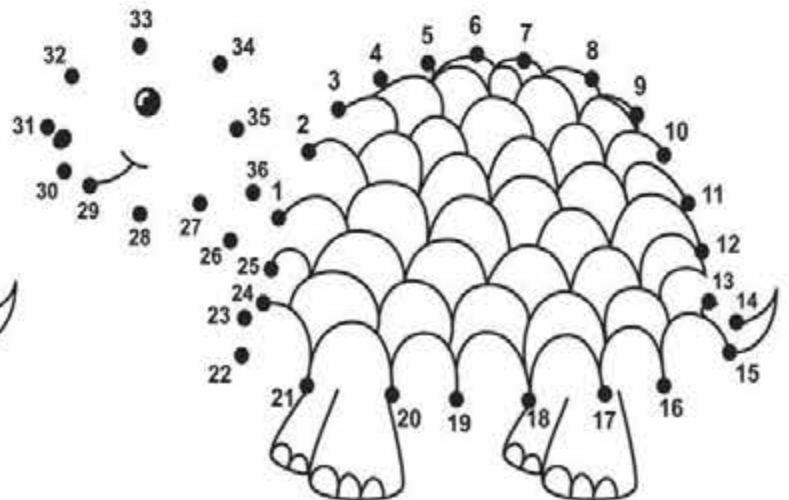
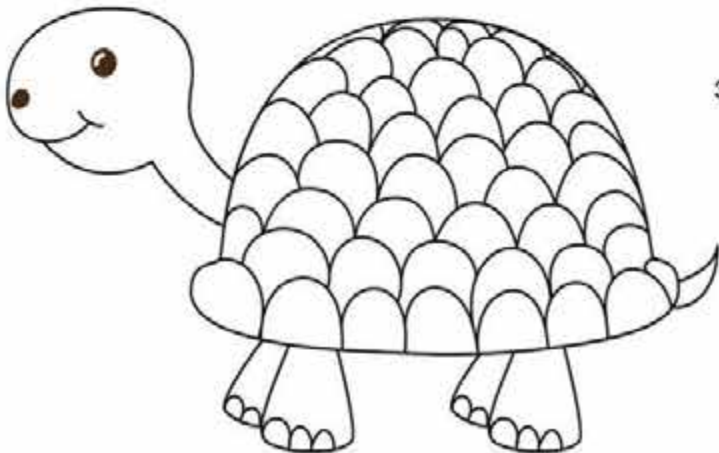
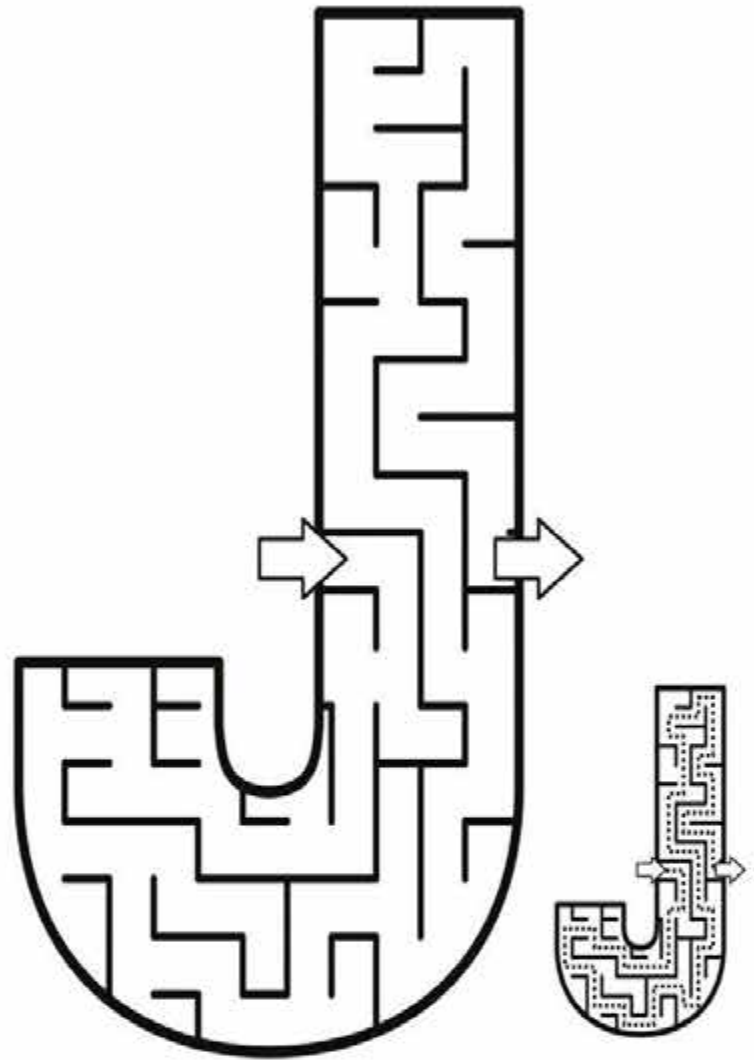
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Doghome Sweet Doghome

— By Angel Morris



With animal shelters reporting all-time lows over the last few months, it appears many folks have welcomed a new pet into their family while sheltering at home. So, what better time than now to try one's hand at building a doghouse?

The website, doggiedesigner.com, has step-by-step illustrations to accompany the most basic plans for doghouse design. Step one, the site suggests, is determining what style home you want to construct — from basic box to igloo style.

For beginning builders, an A-frame design may be your best bet. Here's what you need to know to construct such a shelter for your new (or old) family pet, beginning with its size.

Prepping for Pooch

Measure your dog from nose to tail while he or she is standing, then from head to ground while sitting. This gives you the minimum dimensions for your doghouse and a starting point for purchasing two-by-fours and plywood. You will, of course, want to provide enough space to allow your dog to stretch and move around within the house, but keep in mind an animal's natural tendency to shelter in a cave-like space.



For the most basic of shelters, you can expect to purchase panels for the front/back, top/bottom and left/right sides; for a total of six sheets. The foundation of your house will require four boards, attached to create a rectangle or square, covered with a plywood panel. (Tip: If you know your dimensions before



purchasing supplies, the hardware store often can make the cuts to your materials for you. Your front/back panels will need to be cut into a triangle on top to accommodate a pitched roof.)

Fido's Foundation

Your base boards can be attached by drilling two pilot holes at each end and attaching them to one another with either brackets, nails or wood screws. Nails or screws can then be used to top your foundation boards with the floor panel.

Ideally, you will elevate your doghouse from the ground several inches, either by allowing air between the floor panel and the ground or by raising your base with additional two-by-fours and insulating between them and the floor.

Pup Paneling

Once you have your foundation and floor, you are ready to attach upright two-by-fours to each corner and at the middle of the back and both sides. Then attach two-by-fours along the tops of those boards, to create a square or rectangle mimicking your foundation's shape. Lastly, run a two-by-four across the center of the top square, attaching it at both sides. (You may want to do this with two two-by-fours, both left to right and front to back.)

You now have the outline of your doghouse and may attach your plywood panels to the two-by-fours accordingly, to create your back and side walls. Before securing the front wall, make sure to

cut an opening in the panel to serve as the entrance to the doghouse, keeping in mind your pet's size and shape. Depending on your climate, you may later want to attach a flap around the opening that allows your dog to move in and out but retains heat within the shelter.

Ready for Rover

Lastly, you want to secure a roof to your doghouse frame. It may be made of the same panels used for the walls, but it should be weather-treated, if not covered with asphalt shingles, to decrease the chances of leaking or rotting.

Now you are ready to decorate and style the doghouse. You may want to add bedding, carpeting or heat pads to its interior, and you can paint or stain the exterior if you wish. You may be as creative as you would like when making Rover's new shelter his doghome. **NOW**



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Crossword - Sudoku Solutions



Easy

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

Medium

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

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