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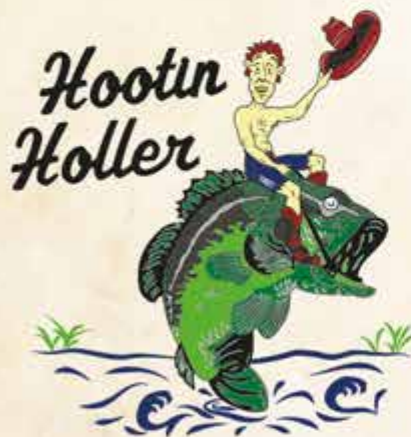
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Initiated by the local RE/MAX Lakeside Dreams, John & Julie Teel believe our Richland Chambers Lake will be a safer place to live with enhanced VFD equipment and training, thanks to the annual Poker Run.

If you were a participant in the past or own a business and are considering becoming a sponsor, last year we introduced a "Goodie Bag" for businesses to promote their services. We had over 25 different items in the 150 bags we gave away. We are planning on providing this again for our business sponsors.

If you're interested in getting involved or want to learn more, please visit www.BenefitRC.org. If you or your company are considering donating, please contact Sponsorships Chair Bob Griffin at 972-523-8622 or rlgiff12@gmail.com.

Press Contact: Paul Osiecki (214-213-1685)

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- Volunteer your time: Sign up to assist with the day's event. Coming soon!
- Participate in the Annual Poker Run on July 19 at The Harbor Restaurant and Marina.

We have an aggressive 10-year Anniversary goal this year of \$150,000, and we know we can achieve this goal with your help.

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Virginia

Virginia Riddle
CorsicanaNOW Editor
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Happy Fourth!

For the past 14 July 4ths, I have celebrated the day, including a full fireworks show, with my dog, Jazz. He wasn't fearful of the beautiful blasts of sound and light, instead, he relished the moments together with a smile. All good things end, however, and I knew we were enjoying borrowed times for the past three years, since Jazz survived pneumonia, but still retained a cough, enlarged heart and collapsed trachea.

Many of you met my little boy, held him while he gave kisses or enjoyed walking with us at his favorite pathway, Community Park. He was my frequent sidekick in all my work and play in Corsicana/Navarro County. He was always the perfect guest!

A rescue, supposedly a hybrid Pomchi, I met then 1-year old Jazz when I volunteered for LARAS House at a joint adoptathon with the Humane Society-Navarro County, December 2011. Sadly, nobody had wanted him. Having never owned a 7-lb. dog, and having three Pit Bulls, a Chow and half Chow/half coyote at my ranch, I took Jazz home that day. He strutted himself right into the house and our hearts.

A traveling man, Jazz loved his camping adventures, his stays in motels/hotels and visits with my kids/grandkids and their pets. We had a great last night in a motel and had just arrived in Albuquerque when he quietly, without warning, took his last breath in my arms. He passed away doing exactly what he loved, surrounded by love.

During this July 4th holiday, with full area shelters/rescues, find the time to volunteer or adopt/foster. Celebrate freedom by providing a future furry friend a home.

God Bless America!

July 2025
Volume 22, Issue 7

ON THE COVER



Under Debbie Taylor's tutelage, the CHS debate teams excel.

Photo by
Anthony Sarmienta.

Publisher, Connie Poirier
General Manager, Rick Hensley

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor, Becky Walker
Corsicana Editor, Virginia Riddle
Office Assistant, Kristin Bato
Writer, Emma McKay
Editors/Proofreaders, Rachel Rich
Virginia Riddle

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla
Artists, Kristin Bato . Martha Macias
Anthony Sarmienta

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Chris McCalla
Photographer, Anthony Sarmienta

ADVERTISING

Advertising Representatives,
Linda Moffett . Linda Roberson
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SCAVENGER HUNT WINNER!



Robin McGraw, winner of \$50 cash,
said, "I've lived in Corsicana since
2021 and have enjoyed playing the
scavenger hunt and learning about
different local businesses."

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BUILDING BRIDGES

— By Virginia Riddle



When teaching in Cairo, Egypt, and Shanghai, China, she was known by students as Miss Debbie. Now as a Corsicana High School teacher, she's known as Momma T or MeeMaw. No matter where Debbie Taylor's classroom has been located during her 47 years of teaching or by what name she has been known, her knowledge — gained while traveling the globe and living overseas — is inspirational and valuable in the way she approaches teaching and volunteering in the community. "I went to Europe while in high school, and I started then to look at other cultures with an attitude of appreciation," Debbie said. "I learned there are reasons for everything."

This Dallas native returned to earn a BSED degree from the University of North Texas, followed by a master's degree in theater from Texas Woman's University, and became a wife and mother of now grown son, Justin. "I was a theater kid, but I dated a debater and watched the rounds, which inspired me to take debate in college. Debbie taught theater, speech, debate and English-as-a-Second Language in Plano ISD for 23 years. "There were immigrants in Plano, and the teachers didn't know what to do to help them. I asked for them to be placed in my speech classes where

they enriched my classes. ESL students are very appreciative," she recalled.

When Debbie became an empty nester, her spirit of adventure kicked back in. She applied for an ESL teaching position in Cairo, where she stayed for 10 years, eventually becoming the program director. "I've always liked to travel for adventures and learning," she said. "However, I learned that living in a country is different from traveling to a country. I settled in, surrounded by different languages. I had to learn to navigate a different world and be calmer and more patient. I learned to live with less and with crunchy towels in Cairo. During the first year, I craved food from home, but those cravings went away, and now I miss Egyptian foods. Living elsewhere opens one's eyes to a wider world. Not everyone does things the same way, and that's OK."

While in Cairo, Debbie started a

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decorating business. She shared, "I learned to work with fabrics." The Warehouse Living Arts Center benefits from Debbie volunteering the sewing expertise she learned in Cairo. "At the Warehouse, I can stuff envelopes, hem a costume or whatever. It's all about being part of something larger than me. Volunteering there is wacky and wonderful — like a sewing or quilting bee," she added.

School holidays gave Debbie a chance to see other parts of the world, and it was during a Christmas holiday that she cruised to Asia. "I got off the ship in Shanghai and knew I wanted something different," she said. "I fell in love with the old and new architecture of Shanghai, applied and was hired to teach at the Shanghai American School. The kids were fluent in English, so to advance their skills, I took them to debates. I also helped with costuming, sets and lighting for



plays. I enjoyed working with fabrics and tailors in making theater costumes and my personal clothes.” Debbie learned that Chinese foods in Shanghai aren’t the same as in Texas, and she bought a dog, Mayzie, who resides in Corsicana, too.

As retirement started to concern her, Debbie decided she didn’t wish to retire overseas. “I wanted to spend time with my parents who now live with me in Corsicana and have a simple life in a very quaint and small community, but be near the arts and amenities. Just as she now keeps up through Facebook, WeChat, Messenger and Instagram with folks she’s met around the globe, Debbie had kept up with Cran and

Frances Dodds, who she had met while doing theater in college. Through Cran, who was teaching theater at CHS, Debbie learned of an open teaching position. A visit, application and introduction to 100West Artist and Writers Residency and WLAC was all it took to entice Debbie to life in Corsicana. “It was a sweet transition and the perfect job for me,” Debbie said.

Memories abound. The safari in Africa where a gorilla knocked her down; multiple visits to Europe; the Western Wall, Petra and Turkey in the Middle East; India; and Asia where she was touched by the Killing Fields. “I was seeing what I watched on the news about Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos when growing up,” Debbie remembered. “Some of the vacations were very luxurious, and I and other teachers could pretend we were fancy.” A favored holiday was the call to prayers and party at the end of Ramadan’s fast. “We would celebrate at someone’s home or a café along the Nile River,” Debbie recalled. In Shanghai, she marveled at the annual tomb sweeping in April, when families cleaned and

beautifully decorated cemeteries with red ribbons and incense.

Her CHS debate teams have done well in the three years Debbie has coached. “Students gain a wide knowledge of current events, the implications and why the events matter,” Debbie explained. Debate requires deep research, speaking and writing skills and critical critiquing. It’s very collaborative. We’re moving into higher caliber debate tournaments, and four students qualified for state UIL competition. I love teaching. Every year, we start over. I’m very analytical about what works and doesn’t work, and I value student opinions. My students have drive and intelligence, and I want these kids to achieve greatness. I can’t quit.

“When I moved here, I hoped for friends, and I’ve made the best friends anyone could dream of,” Debbie shared. Her philosophy — nothing here or when traveling is a calamity. “If it’s not a fun time, it’s a fun story,” Debbie added. And she has many more fun stories to share with her Corsicana friends and students. **NOW**

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By Virginia Riddle

Come meet Rachel as the library's Summer Reading Program continues. She concluded, "I love this library and community and enjoy seeing the kids' faces light up as they learn to read."



Alpha Rho Chapter, DKG officers, Karen Cox and Marcia Anderson, welcome Marissa Castillo, Compassion Corsicana's executive director.



Rough Rider and President Teddy Roosevelt rides again.



Better Garden Club members plan a prayer garden at The Salvation Army's site.



Blooming Grove ISD students, Roselyn Cano Hernandez, Esmaelia Lawhon and Colby Carrizales, show their winning entries in the Navarro Council of the Arts Youth Exhibit.



Joann Pierson shares House of Refuge information with Corsicana Newcomers Club members.



Mills Place residents, city and chamber officials are all smiles over the new street signs.



Dr. Neal Green tells, with great humor, of his life's journey as a Corsicana OBGYN doctor.

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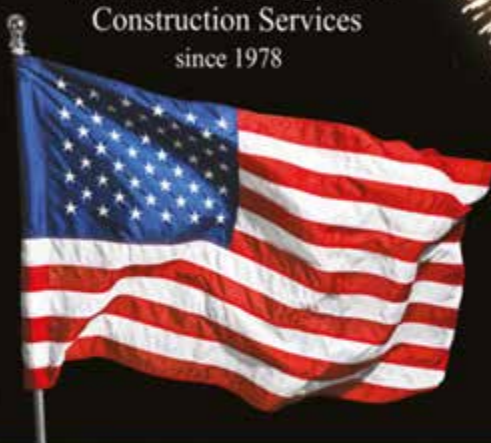
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· TALES OF TEXAS · SPIRIT ON THE HILL

— By Emma McKay

With a century separating us from the days of Prohibition, the age of speakeasies seems like a distant, almost fictional moment in history. However, history may be closer than you think. Located in Arlington, Top O' Hill Terrace, served as a gambling den to some of American history's favorite celebrities for nearly 30 years.

In 1921, Beulah Adams Marshall, a former culinary writer for the *Dallas Journal*, saw the need for an eatery along the newly constructed cross-continental Bankhead Highway. She and her husband, Thomas, purchased a hill on the edge of Arlington and constructed a sandstone house to host Beulah's vision. The tearoom became a hit amongst residents of the DFW area. People traveled from all over to try her famous chicken fried steaks or attend events hosted at the tearoom.

Upon visiting Beulah's Top O' Hill Terrace tearoom, Fred and Mary Browning found potential in its location to create a highly profitable gambling hotspot right off the popular

thoroughfare. In 1930, the Brownings bought the property from the Marshalls and converted it into a destination for illicit activities such as drinking, gambling, prostitution and horse betting. Fred Browning already owned clubs in Richmond, Texas, and near Tulsa, Oklahoma, so establishing a location in Arlington wouldn't be a troublesome pursuit. After all, he'd built up a reputation in the gambling world and had connections he could use to fill Top O' Hill with dealers, dancers and moonshine. This also meant he knew what precautions he'd need to take in ensuring his business would survive police raids.

Fred began to make renovations to the land to keep his staff, patrons and business safe from "Johnny Law." A sandstone wall was erected around the property with guards posted at its iron gate entrance. At the guard towers, warning buzzers were installed, which, when pressed, alerted those in the main house that the cops were on their way, giving them time to hide the evidence or escape.

As the gambling den's popularity grew, Fred expanded his operation. He dug a two-story basement underneath the house, designating it as the base of illegal operations. He also created a labyrinth of escape tunnels, should the need for a quick exit arise. Some of these tunnels spilled out into the nearby woods or circled back to the tearoom's garden,

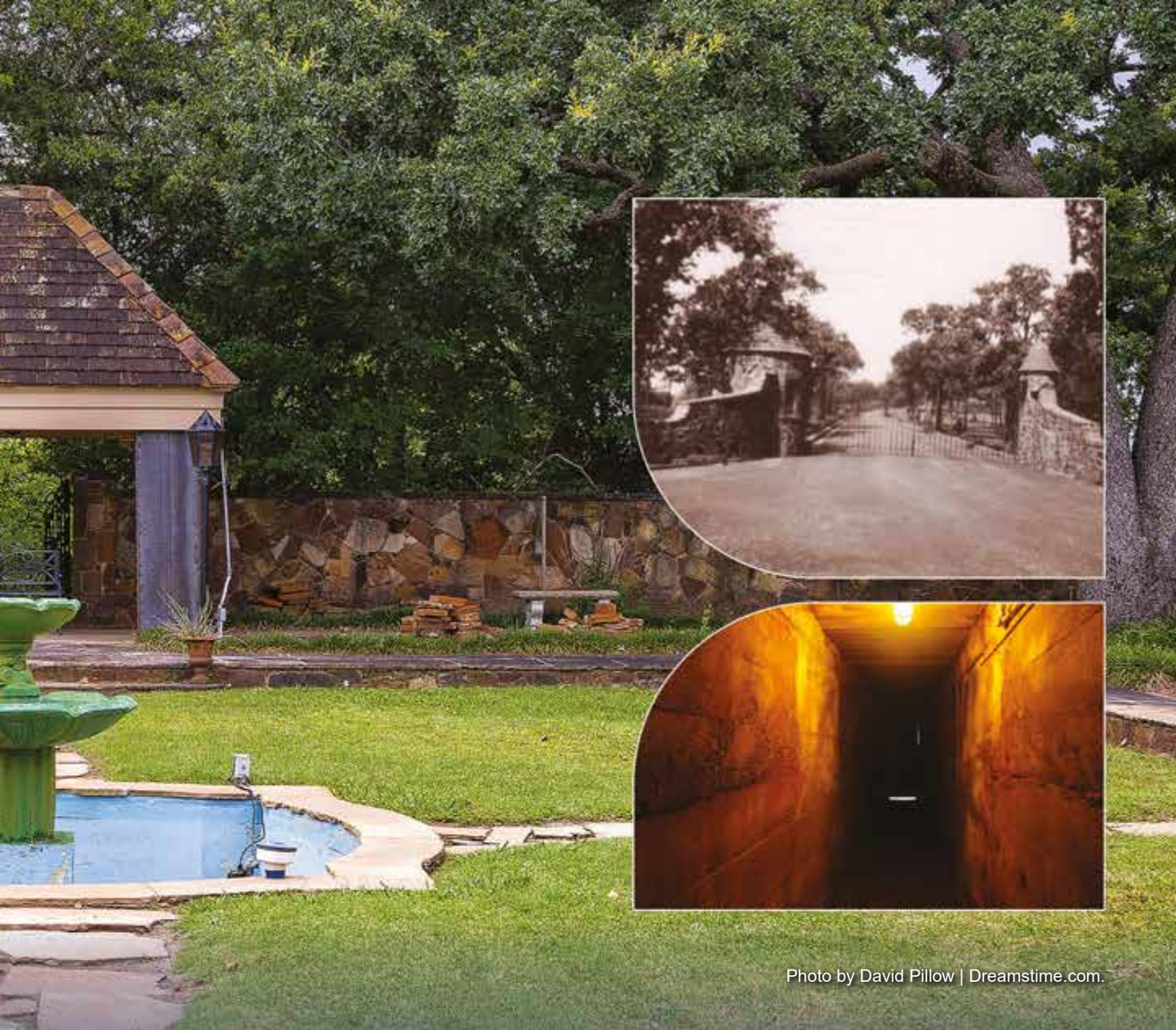


Photo by David Pillow | Dreamstime.com.

allowing guests to pretend they were merely enjoying the flowers and teacakes. Although many of these tunnels have been found over the years, historians believe there may have been many more which were lost to time.

In the height of its success, gamblers traveled far and wide to spend the evening at Top O' Hill, including celebrities such as John Wayne, Frank Sinatra, Ginger Rogers and the infamous Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. To ensure these visitors weren't cops in disguise, the Brownings created a series of checkpoints patrons had to pass through before reaching the main attraction.

Thanks to Fred's precautions, in the nearly 30 years of its operation, his gambling club survived several police raids. However, that all changed on August 10, 1947. Led by M.T. "Lone Wolf" Gonzauillas, a small team of Texas Rangers crawled through the woods, effectively giving Fred's guards the slip. The men snuck through a back door, catching patrons by surprise. The rangers arrested eight employees and 50 patrons and confiscated \$25,000 worth of equipment, which, according to Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis' inflation calculator would equate to over \$352,000 in 2024. This raid marked the end of an era for the tearoom.

Top O' Hill gambling parlor never regained the same number of patrons as it did in its heyday. Founder of Bible

Baptist Seminary, Frank J. Norris had been one of Top O' Hill's biggest opposers during its operation, and had vowed to one day own the land and shut down the gambling parlor. In 1956, four years after Pastor Norris passed, Bible Baptist Seminary, now known as Arlington Baptist University, purchased the property. In 2003, the Texas Historical Commission named the tearoom as a historical landmark. These days, visitors can donate \$10 to schedule a tour of the tearoom to learn about its history and see surviving memorabilia collected by Vickie Bryant, wife of former university president, David Bryant. **NOW**

Photos, unless otherwise noted, by George Moreno from the Top O'Hill Terrace Collection, courtesy of Arlington Baptist University.

Sources:

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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

— By Bill Smith

Driving northeast from North Texas over, under, around and through the mountains of Arkansas to Branson, Missouri, makes a scenic and interesting trip. The destination is worth the journey, and with so many activities and things to experience, you just cannot do them all during one visit. Chances are, at least one return trip will be on your agenda.

Accommodations in Branson are varied and can be as simple as a campsite at Table Rock State Park, an inexpensive motel room or a bed-and-breakfast for two. Cabins, condos and resorts that host your whole family are also available. Arlo Guthrie sang, “You can get anything you want at Alice’s Restaurant,” and while there may not be an Alice’s in Branson, there is just about any other food offering you may desire.

One place you can count on for a delicious, home-style meal is Paula Deen’s Family Kitchen. Located near downtown on Branson Landing, the food is served in a tastefully appointed atmosphere, and you cannot leave there hungry. Every meal is all-you-can-eat and includes a choice of dessert.

Branson is all about music, and many of the restaurants

feature live entertainment, sometimes as a stage performance, or perhaps as a singing server. Mel’s Hard Luck Diner has a 1950s theme in its decor, and the servers may be singing oldies, Christian or country music. Food at Mel’s is a variety of soups, salads and sandwiches, including burgers, fries and awesome desserts, such as Rock Around the Chocolate, which is a huge ice cream delight. You’ll need to leave extra room for it!

Just one more restaurant to mention is in nearby Springfield in the huge original Bass Pro Shop. This “side-trip” from Branson is worth the drive to see the flagship store. Don’t miss the aquariums and the outstanding wildlife mounts, but the restaurant that you will enjoy in the store is Hemingway’s Blue Water Café. Their website boasts, “Dedicated to legendary author and sportsman Ernest Hemingway, its lodge-style decor features authentic memorabilia from Papa’s global adventures. A lovely old mahogany bar parallels a huge saltwater aquarium running nearly the length of the main dining room. On the dinner menu: fresh seafood creations by the late renowned Chef Marcel Bonetti, plus an eclectic mix of signature dishes, sandwiches and salads made with locally grown ingredients to suit every palate.” The restaurant lives up to the hype.

So, you have a place to stay and a place to dine. Now, what is there to do in Branson? Live performances of varied genres are at the many theaters. Clay Cooper has a great



show at the theater that bears his name. Don't miss an opportunity to attend the production at the Sight & Sounds Theatre. You will be amazed at the sets and costumes in this beautiful venue. You may experience a Roman soldier riding a white stallion as he rides off to battle down the aisle. If you want to see Elvis, you may not find him there, but at least one of his cousins has a show in Branson, and there will probably be more than one Elvis impersonator there during your stay.

For the kids, there are zip lines, bumper boats, Ferris wheels and miniature golf galore. Ride the Branson Scenic Railway, a duck boat or a trolley. Shop at Dick's 5 & 10. Go see The Butterfly Palace or the Titanic Museum. Book your next trips to Branson — one is just not enough! **NOW**

Source:

l.basspro.com/shop/en/resorts-restaurants.

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Strawberry Butter Jam Cookies

CookingNOW

IN THE KITCHEN WITH ANNIE IVIE

— By Virginia Riddle



The most cherished recipes in Annie Ivie’s collection are from her mother and her Polish and Italian aunts. “When I was younger, I loved being in the kitchen with my mother,” Annie recalled. “We would pick a recipe out of a cookbook and create it with our own special twists.” Experimenting and combining different flavors has stayed with Annie. Having owned a Chicago design company before moving to Texas six years ago, Annie combines her love of design and baking in her company, Simply Done. “I think food should be just as pretty to look at as it is enjoyable to eat,” she explained. “Baking to me is all about sharing love through flavor,” she said. “I hope these recipes bring joy to your table.” **NOW**

Amaretto Fudge

- Cooking spray**
1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
3 cups chocolate chips
1/2 tsp. quality vanilla
2 Tbsp. amaretto liqueur
1/2 cup almonds, sliced

1. Line a 9x9-inch or an 8x8-inch pan with foil; spray with cooking spray.
2. In a medium-size saucepan, mix the sweetened condensed milk and chocolate chips; melt on low heat until the chips are melted. Add the vanilla and amaretto; mix well.
3. In another saucepan, toast the almonds

- for a few minutes until slightly browned.
4. Remove the chocolate chips mixture from the heat; quickly spread the mixture into the prepared pan. Sprinkle with the toasted almonds.
 5. Let the fudge set at room temperature until cooled; chill in the refrigerator until it hardens before serving.

Strawberry Butter Jam Cookies

- Cookie Dough:**
1 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
Parchment paper

- Buttercream:**
3/4 cup butter, softened
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
1 1/2 cups powdered sugar

- Jam Filling:**
3/4 cup strawberry jam
1 tsp. cornstarch (optional)

1. *For dough:* Preheat the oven at 320 F. Beat the butter and sugar together for about 3-5 minutes until the mixture is pale, light and fluffy.
2. Sift the flour into the butter mixture; mix until a soft dough is formed. Divide the dough in half; form each half into a disk shape. Place the disks between 2 large sheets of parchment paper.
3. Use a rolling pin to roll each half to about 3/16-inch thickness; place the dough sheets on a baking cookie sheet. Refrigerate the dough for 30 minutes.
4. When the dough is chilled, remove it from the refrigerator; peel away the top layer of parchment paper. Lightly dust the dough with flour.
5. Use a 2-inch round cookie cutter to cut the dough. Half of these rounds will serve as the bottom half of the cookies.
6. With a smaller cookie cutter, cut half the 2-inch rounds in the middle. This will serve as the “window” for the jam.
7. Place the cutout shapes onto a baking sheet; bake for 12-15 minutes until just lightly golden brown. Remove; let cool.
8. *For buttercream:* Cream the butter for 5 minutes; add the vanilla; mix. Add the powdered sugar; blend well.
9. Pipe a swirl of buttercream just around the edges of the solid halves of the cookies. Place the cookie halves with the small window on top of the buttercream-lined cookie halves.
10. *For the jam:* For a desired thicker consistency, the jam can be mixed with cornstarch before placing it in a small piping bag. Fill the cookies’ centers with the jam before serving.





CorsicanaNOW Scavenger Hunt



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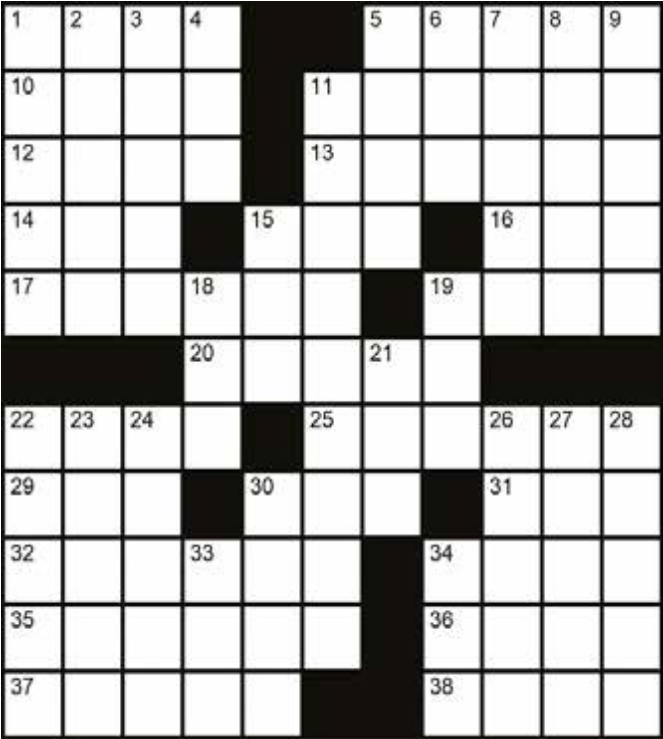
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Across

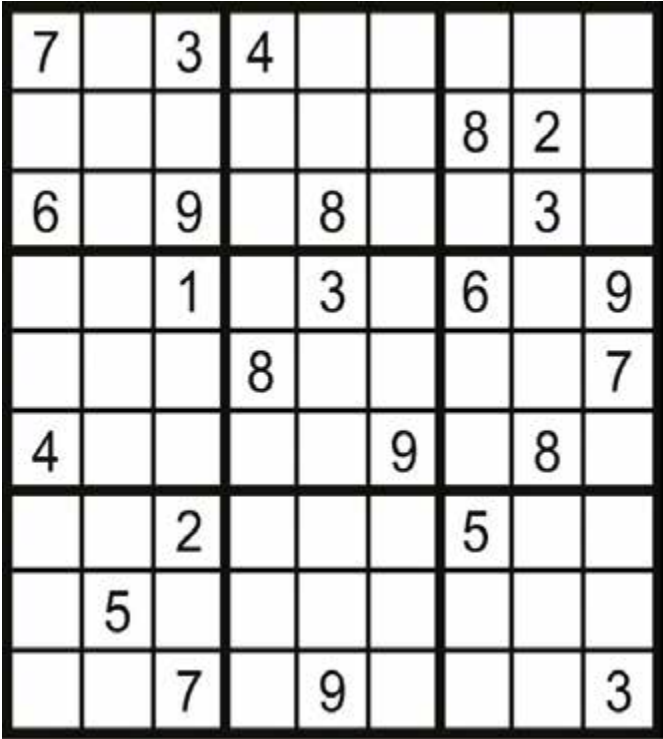
- 1 Golf green marker
- 5 Drawbacks
- 10 Tiny bit
- 11 The Boilermakers' home
- 12 "... company, ..."
- 13 Again in Avignon
- 14 Off-color
- 15 The unicorns missed it, presumably
- 16 Unopened flower
- 17 Legwear introduced in 1940
- 19 Falconer's strap
- 20 Aromatic seed found in Siena after earthquake
- 22 Bill
- 25 Nature's title, often
- 29 Worthless piece of cloth
- 30 Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, Boris Johnson et al.
- 31 Unity
- 32 Take too far
- 34 Remedy
- 35 Nairobi native
- 36 Dating from
- 37 Little rocket maker
- 38 Fresnel or fisheye, perhaps

Down

- 1 Act like a native
- 2 Humble
- 3 Coral island
- 4 Sparse fluid
- 5 Defeated
- 6 Atomic energy overseer
- 7 Ancestral Pueblo building material
- 8 Teachers, in India
- 9 Plants of the future
- 11 Confused Mom ripens fruit
- 15 --- Arbor, MI
- 18 Whiskey cask material
- 19 Blacker than black
- 21 "... yer old man!"
- 22 Out of dough
- 23 Roof overhang
- 24 Representative
- 26 Legislative group
- 27 Notorious fraudulent company
- 28 Coral formations
- 30 Smartphone ancestors
- 33 Cereal grass
- 34 The Orioles' Mr. Ripken

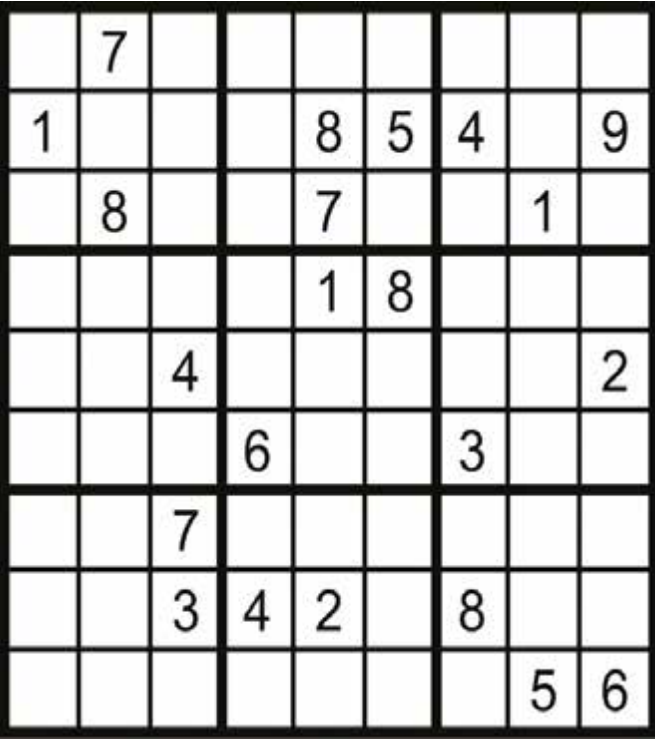
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Easy



Crosswordsite.com Ltd

Medium



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Happy Independence Day

JULY

Some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press. Check with individual organizations or your city or Chamber websites to verify dates and times.

7/1-7/25

Navarro County Boys & Girls Club Summer Camp:
Monday-Friday: 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., 1000 Jackson Ave.
bgcdallas.org/summer.

7/1-7/31

Corsicana-Navarro County Health Department School Vaccines:

No appointment needed. All insurances accepted; bring shot record. **Monday-Friday:** 8:00-11:00 a.m.; 1:00-4:00 p.m.
For information, call (903) 874-6711.

City of Corsicana Parks & Recreation Department Kids' Activities:

Times and dates vary.
Facebook: Corsicana Parks and Recreation Department.

7/1-8/2

Summer Reading Program:

Weekly programming for kids.
Monday-Thursday: 2:00 p.m., Corsicana Public Library, 100 N. 12th St. Facebook: Corsicana Public Library.

7/1-8/8

Day Camp 2025:

Boys and girls ages 5-12.
7:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Corsicana YMCA, 400 Oaklawn Dr.
www.corsicanaymca.org.

7/4

Light Up the Night and KCDC Fundraiser:

Family fun, live music, fireworks. Noon-11:30 p.m., Garden Park & Downtown Kerens. Facebook: Kerens Area Chamber of Commerce.

Freedom Fest:

Live music, food trucks, kids' activities. 6:00 p.m.; fireworks show: 9:25 p.m., I.O.O.F. Park, 1301 N. 45th St. Facebook: City of Corsicana.

7/11

Food Truck Friday:

6:00-9:00 p.m., 224 E. 5th Ave.,
For more information, visit www.visitcorsicana.com/events.

7/11-8/1

Warehouse Theatre Youth Co. Summer Classes:

Art, photography, dance and drama classes offered. Warehouse Living Arts Center, 119 W. 6th Ave.
For more details, call (903) 872-5421.

7/14-7/19

Camp Hoblitzelle:

Ages 13-17. Discover how to love like Jesus, horses, archery, fishing, sports, zipline, canoes, swimming, paintball. For more information, email terusa.zuniga@uss.salvationarmy.org.

7/17

Hull Creative Arts Foundation Bourbon Pairing:

\$125/per person, includes steak dinner paired with bourbon. 6:30 p.m., Corsicana Country Club, 4100 Country Club Rd.
For more details, visit www.hullcreativearts.com.

7/19

James L. Collins Catholic School Casino Night:

6:30 p.m., JLCSS Gym, 3000 W. State Hwy. 22. Facebook: James L. Collins Catholic School.

WLAC Murder Mystery Dinner Fundraiser:

7:00 p.m., Corsicana Country Club, 4100 Country Club Rd.
For more details, call (903) 872-5421.

Tuesdays

Yoga at the Library:

Bring your own supplies. 6:00 p.m., Corsicana Public Library, 100 N. 12th St. Facebook: Corsicana Public Library.

Tuesdays and Saturdays

Navarro County Farmers Market:

7:00 a.m.-noon, 408 E. 6th Ave. Facebook: Navarro County Farmers Market.

Second Thursdays

Savvy Seniors:

Lunch, games. 11:30 a.m., Corsicana Senior Center, 919 W. Park Ave. (903) 654-4980.

Fourth Thursdays

Corsicana Newcomers Club Meeting:

Karen Woolheater will speak on "Aging Backwards." Reservations required. 11:00 a.m., Kinsloe House, 618 W. Third Ave. Annie Avery, (714) 345-6707.

Second Saturdays

Free Fitness Class:

9:00 a.m., Campbell Arts Plaza, 109 E. 5th Ave. (903) 654-4852.

Mimosas at the Market:

9:00 a.m., Downtown Corsicana. (903) 654-4850.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to virginia.riddle@nowmagazines.com.



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