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AUGUST 2020

## Back on the Bike

Nothing keeps  
Marek Backer down

## A Texas Star

There will never  
be another  
Audie Murphy

Also inside:  
Scavenger Hunt  
Kids' Fun Page  
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## ON THE COVER

*Marek Backer's friends  
love his sick BMX skills.*

**Photo by**  
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# EDITOR'S NOTE



## Rachel

Rachel Rich  
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*Make new friends ...*

Remember August during school? You'd get your supplies and new wardrobes ready for a fresh look that you hoped would be cooler than everything that was "so last year." It was a time of excitement.

The older I get, the more I find I miss August during school time. I couldn't wait to see people I hadn't seen in months and exchange summer adventure stories. I don't miss the schoolwork or the early mornings and late nights, but I miss the anticipation of seeing friends.

Going to Palmer schools my whole life, I made many friendships. I held one best friend from kindergarten through my high school years who helped mold me into the person I am today. Although we went separate ways after graduating, I hope I positively impacted her life as much as she impacted mine.

I was also a band nerd — we all stuck together — and I made friends with FCA students and drill team members. Do I still maintain all those friendships today? No. Do I miss some of those ex-classmates? Absolutely! They all had an impact on who I became and taught me life lessons and new perspectives.

Even when August doesn't call for a back-to-school shopping spree anymore, our journey in friendships doesn't end. We learn from the people we meet. They can challenge us, build our character or become a lasting friend who fights alongside us during tough times. Don't fear friendship with those you meet. You may give the right perspective to someone facing hardship or help them accomplish their dreams. And who knows? They may do the same for you!

*To friendships!*



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# BACK ON THE BIKE

— By Bill Smith

To win a Grand Nationals in any event must be exciting, and it is something few of us can claim. To win your first Grand Nationals at age 11 in BMX opens a whole future in the sport, which is especially important if you love it. Despite being active in the sport for only a short time, Ovilla resident, Marek Backer, quickly moved from novice to the expert class and competes at the national level. Now 13 years old, he already had his sights set on the World Championship. He tried for it, but missed qualifying by one spot. However, he tried to qualify again, before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred and cancelled races. It's clear this young athlete doesn't give up.

BMX is an acronym for Bicycle Motocross and has its origins in MX Motocross racing, which is motorcycle racing on similar tracks. While Marek previously competed in MX, his mother, Roxann Backer, said, "The time, travel, expense and homeschooling just got to be too much on our family. We needed a





# "I LOVE THE COMPETITION, AND I LOVE TO WIN."



sport that Marek could compete in that would allow him to be home more and attend public school. BMX is working great. Marek's younger brother, Crosby, competes in BMX, also, but not with the same drive that Marek has." However, Marek and Crosby both won the Grand Nationals in their respective divisions in the same year, a rare feat for siblings. Track Director Casey Allen said, "Only a handful of siblings have ever done that."

"I love the competition, and I love to win," Marek said with a big smile. "I used to enjoy the motorcycles, but competing on the bicycle is just as good now. We compete in age brackets and classes, so I compete against 13-year-olds in the expert class. Once a class is achieved by winning a fixed number of races in the prior class, we move up and never go back down to the prior class."

Marek explained that none of his school friends currently participate in BMX, but some have expressed interest. "The boys at school couldn't care less because the big sports are





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football and basketball. The girls think it's cool. I have made lots of friends in the sport, and we are at a track a lot," he offered. He spends time in practice runs at his local track, DeSoto BMX, and in competitions.

The sport is not without its investment. Though not as time-consuming and financially draining as MX, the cost of bikes that BMX racers use can be considerable. "We don't usually just go to the store and buy a complete bike. The frame is the most important part, and this one is aluminum," Marek pointed out. "These wheels are carbon fiber, as is the front fork. Just the pedals may cost a couple of hundred dollars. The weight of the bike is important. The lighter, the better," he said, as he casually lifted the bike by the saddle with one hand.

There is still a considerable amount of travel involved. In January, Marek competed in Las Vegas, February in Tulsa, March in both Houston. He was headed to Phoenix, Arizona, and Rockhill, North Carolina, and then the "Cajuns" in Louisiana, all working toward the World Championships in Houston, which was postponed due to COVID-19.

All races after the race in Houston were cancelled or postponed. USABMX held their first National competition since COVID June 5-7 in Oklahoma. "I did race there," Marek informed. Locations for Nationals depend on the state's COVID requirements.

While BMX racing is not supposed to be a contact sport, injuries do occur, and Marek is too familiar with what can happen in a split second on the track. Last July, he was practicing at the Cowtown track in Fort Worth. "I was going down the second straightaway and was too far forward on the bike. My knee hit the jump and broke my femur right in the middle. It happened so fast.

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I didn't know I was hurt. I tried to stand up, but people came running over and told me to stay down. They called an ambulance." One of the parents at the track was an EMT and was able to keep things calm.

Rehab started as soon as the doctors said it was OK. Marek recalls his physical therapist fondly in his first visit. "He asked what my goal was. I told him, 'To get back on a bike and race for the Grands in 2019.' He made that happen." Roxann expressed that he is just now getting back to where he was. Seeing him ride today, one would never know he finished rehab in December.

Marek is dedicated to his sport. Besides time at the track, before he broke his leg, he was running about 15 miles per week. "I do sprints on the bike 10 or 20 times, one or two times a week. It's all about endurance. It's too hard if your legs get tired on the bike."

Since COVID-19, he and his brother train with Tanner Sebesta, a Pro BMX rider, personal trainer and USABMX track operator. Tanner provides daily workouts, which consist of strength training and bike work. "Now that our local track has opened back up, he has track work that he does, as well," Roxann stated.

When asked what the future holds, Marek was quick to answer, "Lots and lots of BMX!" He pointed out that one can turn professional in BMX at 16, but his plans right now include looking for a college scholarship in BMX. "One of the big BMX schools that I have thought of is Marian University in Indianapolis, Indiana." The Marian University Knights were the 2019 USA Cycling Collegiate Club of the Year and were recognized for achievements on and off the track. While Marek is not sure what course of study he will take, he will no doubt be successful, and there is a good chance he will get there on a bike! **NOW**

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*Tales of Texas*

# A TEXAS STAR

— By Angel Morris

*It was not entirely uncommon for young men of a certain era to lie about their age in order to enlist in the U.S. military. It was, however, unusual for any one soldier to accumulate the accolades bestowed upon Texan Audie Murphy, who would go on to be the most decorated American combat soldier of World War II.*

Born June 20, 1925, in Kingston, Hunt County, Texas, Audie Leon Murphy was one of 12 children born to Emmett and Josie Belle Murphy, sharecroppers with little means. This humble beginning perhaps encouraged him to enlist in the Army at age 17 and did not stop him from going on to earn 33 military awards, including the Medal of Honor, as well as five additional honors from Belgium and France. It is believed he wounded, captured or killed some 240 enemies, while he, himself, was wounded three times and fought in nine major campaigns to survive the war.

Rising from army private to staff sergeant, Murphy also earned a "battlefield" commission to 2nd lieutenant during his three years of active combat. Released from the Army in September 1945, Audie made the cover of *Life Magazine*, and was invited to Hollywood by actor James Cagney.

After two challenging years with little work, Audie received bit parts in a couple of films. In 1949, he landed his first starring role in the film, *Bad Boy*. A year later, he signed a contract with what is today called Universal Studios, where he starred in 26 films between 1950 and 1965.



In 1955, he starred in the film adaptation of his own autobiography, *To Hell and Back*, which had been a bestseller in 1949. The film was Universal's highest grossing picture until being surpassed by *Jaws* in 1975.





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Concluding his Universal contract in 1965, Audie went on to work with other producers and studios and would complete 44 feature films, including many westerns, during his career. It is reported that Audie earned about \$3 million in his 23 years of acting.

Outside of acting, Audie was also a rancher and a successful racehorse owner and breeder. He was known as a gambler, winning and losing fortunes over sporting events and poker games.

Contrary to his military and acting persona, Audie was also a poet and songwriter, and had dozens of songs recorded by famed artists including Dean Martin, Charley Pride, Porter Wagoner, Roy Clark and many more.

Like many military veterans, Audie reportedly suffered from depression, insomnia and battle fatigue (now called post-traumatic stress disorder), and even became addicted to sleeping pills. He kicked his habit and began speaking publicly about the problems faced by returning military veterans, becoming a champion for Korean and Vietnam War veterans and encouraging the U.S. government to better address war's emotional impact and the resulting health care needs.

Audie's life was tragically cut short on May 28, 1971, when he was just 45 years old. On a business trip, Audie

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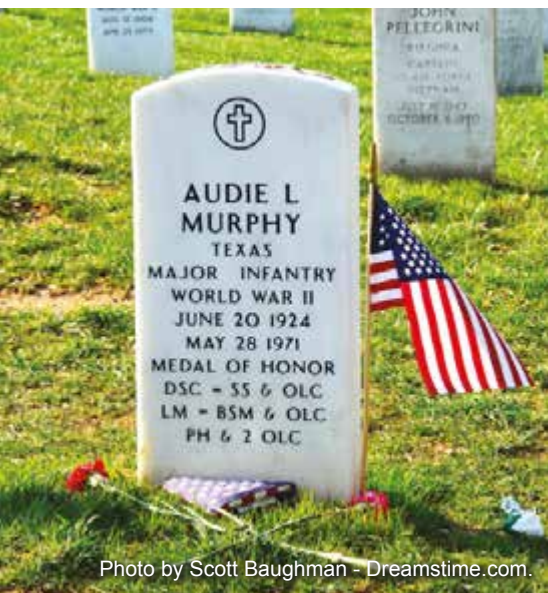
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died in a plane crash, with the accident attributed to rain and fog. He was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery on June 7. His gravesite has become one of the most visited at the cemetery, second only to President John F. Kennedy's.



Audie, who had been married twice in his lifetime, was survived by his second wife of 20 years and their two sons, Terry and James. Terry founded the Audie Murphy Research Foundation to preserve his father's memory. The Audie L. Murphy Memorial Website showcases books, collectibles, media clips, photos and more as they relate to Audie's life and career.

Since his death, Audie's birthday, June 20th, has been dubbed Audie Murphy Day in Texas by both the state legislature and then-Governor George W. Bush. In 2013, Audie's only surviving sibling, Nadine Murphy, accepted the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor on Audie's behalf, awarded posthumously by Governor Rick Perry.

Audie's namesake website notes that he is truly a one-of-a-kind World War II veteran. "What Audie accomplished during this period is most significant and probably will never be repeated by another soldier, given today's high-tech type of warfare," the site states. "The U.S. Army has always declared that there will never be another Audie Murphy." **NOW**

Source: [audiemurphy.com](http://audiemurphy.com).

Photos, unless otherwise noted, courtesy of Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum.

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## Arabella of Red Oak

— By Virginia Riddle

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Arabella of Red Oak’s Independent Living offers something for everyone, whether that’s dining in the restaurant, on the



patio or poolside; taking a yoga class; swimming with the grandchildren in the resort-style pool, while enjoying a variety of mocktails; working out in the fitness center; enjoying a spa day in the full-service salon; or having a drink at the bar with friends, residents benefit from Civitas' passionate care, passionate service and passionate cleanliness. Their staff handles all of the behind-the-scenes needs like housekeeping, event planning, laundry and maintenance items, so residents can partake in what they truly enjoy.

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Eli McChesney enjoys his snow cone on a warm day.

## Zoomed In: Kim Kozlovsky

By Rachel Rich

As Red Oak Life School adhered to the COVID-19 restrictions, the staff held an outdoor summer drive-through parade for their elementary school students. With more than 100 vehicles circulating through the parade, well wishes kissed the air. First grade teacher Kim Kozlovsky was one of many teachers to show her love for her kiddos. "The parade was full of so many emotions," she shared.

Holding up signs filled with support, she spread some extra love as her kids basked in summer fun. "[The parade] was able to provide some closure to the year for us and the families. It wasn't the same, but seeing their big smiles and waves was great. I can't wait to be back and love on our students in the new school year!"



Faryn Harrison and Paislee Garcia, third-generation Ferris students, show pride for their school.



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# CookingNOW

## In the Kitchen With

### JUSTIN PATTERSON

— By Rachel Rich

On nice summer days, people may find Justin Patterson standing in front of a smoker, cooking up tasty meals for friends and family. “With the world the way it is today, there isn’t enough person-to-person conversation,” he shared. “I really enjoy time with people, cooking, talking and, especially, eating.”

His favorite style of cooking mixes between Mexican and barbecue, while he learned his best tricks of the trade from his mother. He also helps coach his kids’ sports teams in Ferris. “If I am at any gathering, you will find me by a pit or in a kitchen. I do all the cooking on vacations and holidays.” He laughed, “My favorite thing is seeing the shock on people’s faces the first time they try my food.” **NOW**

## Smoked Brisket

**1 whole packer brisket**  
**Mustard, enough to cover the brisket**  
**2 cups salt**  
**2 cups coarse brown pepper**  
**(Sichuan pepper)**

**1.** Note: I like using packer brisket and trimming it. Don’t be afraid to trim your own brisket and possibly mess it up. After a few times, you will get the hang of it.

**2.** Using hickory wood, fire up your pit or grill; heat to 225 F. Slather the brisket in mustard. This helps bind the salt and pepper to the brisket. The vinegar in the mustard also helps tenderize the meat. Salt and pepper the meat. Place it on the pit or grill.  
**3.** Once the internal temperature reaches 167 F, pull the brisket out; wrap with non-waxed butcher paper. Return brisket to the pit or grill until the internal temperature reaches 202 F.  
**4.** Remove brisket. Wrap it in a towel; place

it in a cooler for at least an hour.

**5.** Before you’re ready to serve, take the brisket out of the cooler; heat until the center is warm.

**6.** Note: A good rule of thumb is 12 hours of cook time for brisket, but a meat thermometer helps to be more precise.

## Stuffed Poblanos

*My friend, Matt Kellen, and I invented this recipe together 10 years ago. Love you, buddy!*

**10 poblano peppers, whole**  
**1 lb. bacon**  
**16 oz. cream cheese**  
**1 lb. Colby jack cheese, shredded**

**1.** Fire up a charcoal grill. Cut the tops off the poblano peppers; cut down the middle, lengthwise. Put peppers on the grill to char.  
**2.** In the meantime, cut the bacon into pieces; fry in a pan. Set pieces aside, while keeping the pan’s heat on.  
**3.** Gently set cream cheese into the hot bacon grease until soft.  
**4.** Add bacon pieces back into the pan with



the cream cheese. Once mixture is well incorporated, spoon it into the peppers. Add shredded cheese on top.

5. Place the peppers back on the grill until the cheese is melted. Enjoy!

### Smoked Salsa Verde

*This recipe is not for the faint of heart.*

- 10 tomatoes
- 10 jalapeños
- 10 serrano peppers
- 4 habanero peppers
- Olive oil, to taste
- Salt, to taste
- 1 avocado (optional)
- 1 cup sour cream (optional)

1. Toss all vegetables in olive oil and salt. Put everything on a smoker set at 250 F for about an hour to an hour-and-a-half.
2. Once heated thoroughly, blend in a blender until smooth.
3. For a creamier and less spicy salsa, add an avocado and sour cream.

### Corn Casserole

- 12 slices bacon, or more to taste (divided use)
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 4 Tbsp. flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 24 oz. sour cream (or 36 oz. for a creamier texture)
- 2 24-oz. cans corn, drained
- 1 Tbsp. parsley

1. Fry the bacon; set aside. Keep the grease. Crumble the bacon into pieces.
2. Sauté the onion in the bacon grease; blend in flour and salt.
3. Gradually stir in sour cream. Stir in the corn and half of the bacon. Heat for 2 minutes; transfer mixture to a greased dish.
4. Bake at 350 F for 20-30 minutes, or until bubbly. Top with remaining bacon and parsley.

### Granny Moore's Chocolate Cake

*This favorite recipe has been passed down at least four generations. Read the entire recipe before starting.*

Cake:

- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 4 Tbsp. cocoa
- 1/2 cup regular milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp. baking soda

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Wings

**Frosting:**

**4 Tbsp. cocoa**  
**4-6 Tbsp. milk**  
**1/2 cup margarine**  
**1 box powdered sugar**

- 1. For cake:** Preheat the oven to 350 F. Combine the flour and sugar in a mixing bowl.
- 2.** In a saucepan, combine water, butter, shortening and cocoa; bring to a boil. Pour mixture over flour and sugar; mix with a blender.
- 3.** In a small bowl, combine milk, vanilla, eggs and baking soda. Add to cake mixture; mix in a blender for about 2 minutes.

- 4.** Pour the cake mixture into a 9x12-inch pan; bake for 30-35 minutes.
- 5. For frosting:** Combine cocoa, milk and margarine; bring to a boil for about 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Mix in powdered sugar.
- 6.** Pour mixture onto cooled cake. The cake must be mostly cooled or the frosting will melt and pool onto the sides.

**Wings**

**5 lbs. wings**  
**Olive oil, to taste**  
**Meat Church Holy Voodoo Seasoning, to taste**

**Meat Church Día de la Fajita Seasoning, to taste**

- 1.** Place all wings in a bowl, covering with olive oil so the seasonings stick to the wings. Put a healthy dose of seasonings on the wings.
- 2.** Place the wings on the grill, skin side up. (I like to use a kettle-style cooker on the offset method for wings, so you never have to turn them.) Season with additional seasoning, if desired.
- 3.** Cook at 400 F for about 45 minutes; serve.

**Smoked Peach Cobbler**

**2 16-oz. cans peaches**  
**1 pkg. yellow cake mix**  
**2 sticks butter**  
**Cinnamon, to taste**

- 1.** Pour the peaches into a 9x11-inch baking pan.
- 2.** Sprinkle the cake mix over the peaches evenly. Do not stir in.
- 3.** Cut butter into small square slices; place on top. Do not stir in. Sprinkle with cinnamon.
- 4.** Bake in a smoker box until the top is brown and the sides are bubbly; serve.
- 5. Oven option:** If you do not have a smoker box, bake in the oven at 350 F until the top is brown and bubbles on the sides, about 30 minutes.

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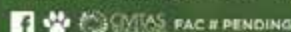
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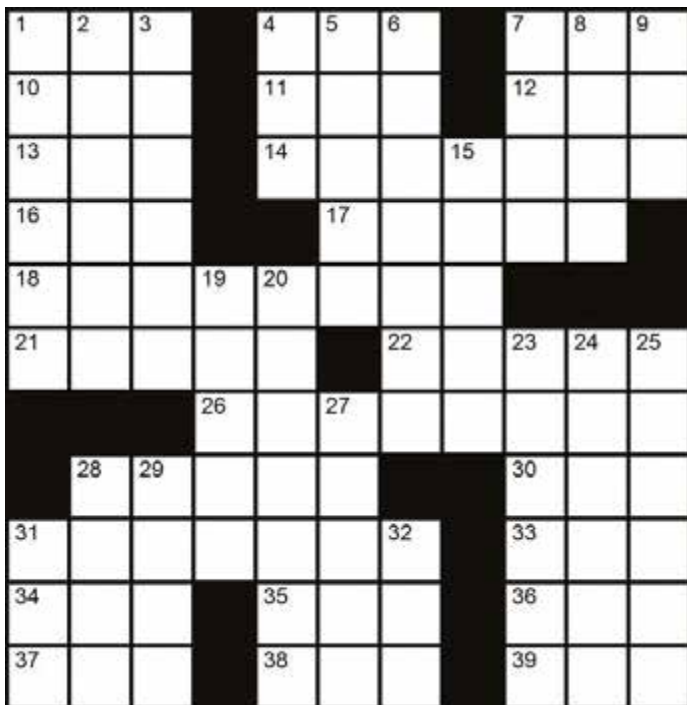
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# Crossword Puzzle



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## Across

- 1 Label for Elvis
- 4 Trucker's bedroom?
- 7 Youngster
- 10 "Huffington Post" owner
- 11 Undergarment
- 12 Position of a golf ball
- 13 Corn eater's leftover
- 14 Organizations
- 16 Mamie's other half
- 17 Rubbed in during Lent
- 18 787 or MD90
- 21 Admitted
- 22 Some final resting places
- 26 To a certain extent
- 28 Utah's --- Hatch
- 30 Semiformal evening jacket
- 31 One is super every four years
- 33 Pismire
- 34 Bill dispenser
- 35 Ram's dam
- 36 Fifth sign
- 37 Howl
- 38 Steep
- 39 Wrongdoing

## Down

- 1 Kind of discrimination
- 2 A website might send you one
- 3 Queen Victoria's consort
- 4 TV network with eye logo
- 5 From eastern old Iran
- 6 Droopy-eared hound
- 7 Turn tail
- 8 Outer edges
- 9 Triumphant cry
- 15 Deliberately lose
- 19 Kind of poker
- 20 Person with special access
- 23 Mercury and others
- 24 Sultanate in Borneo
- 25 Churchyard gravedigger
- 27 Dumbfounded
- 28 "--- sight!"
- 29 Cognac bottle name
- 31 Check
- 32 Nevertheless

Solutions on page 28

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# Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

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

Medium

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

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Solutions on page 28



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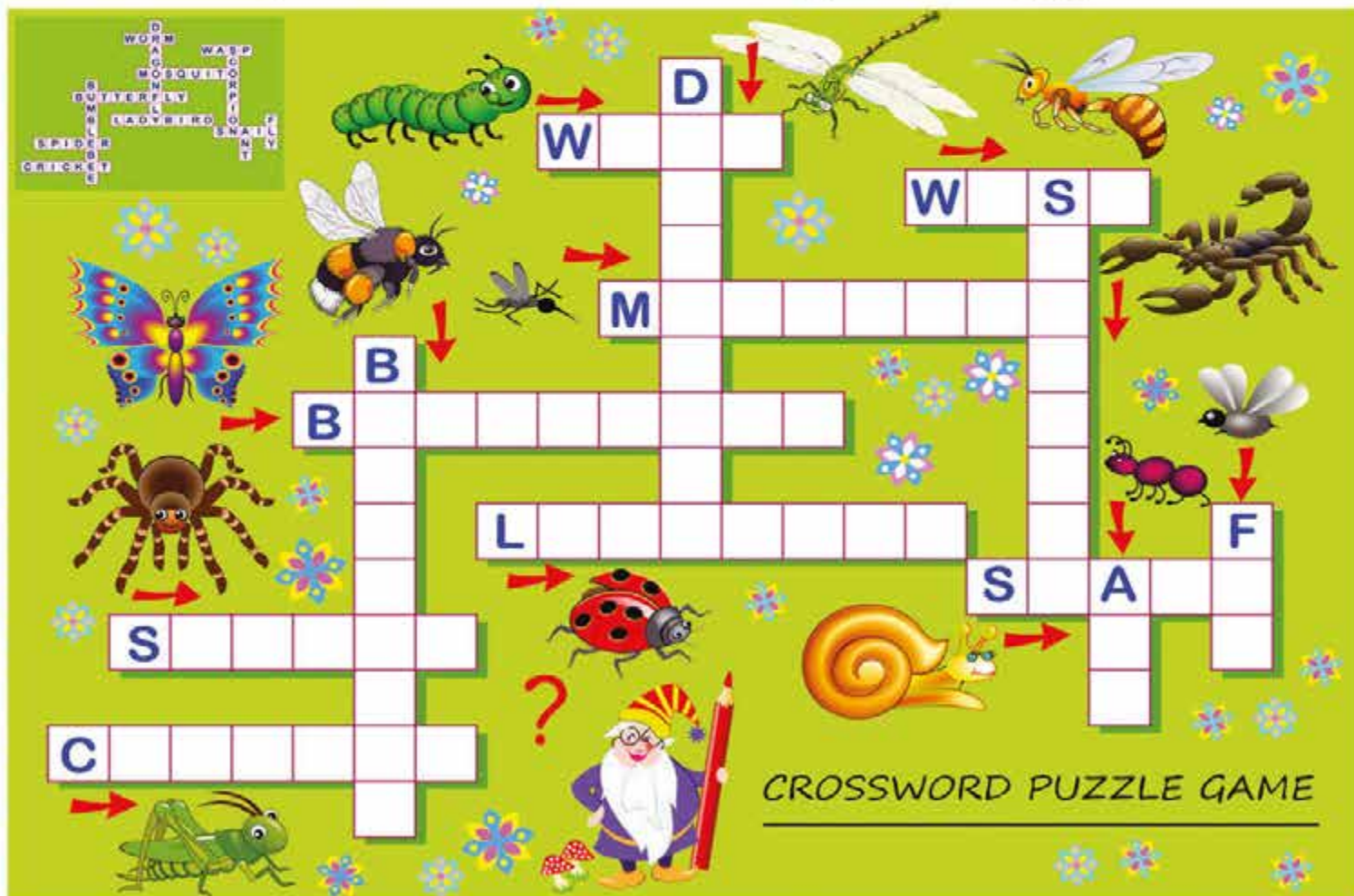
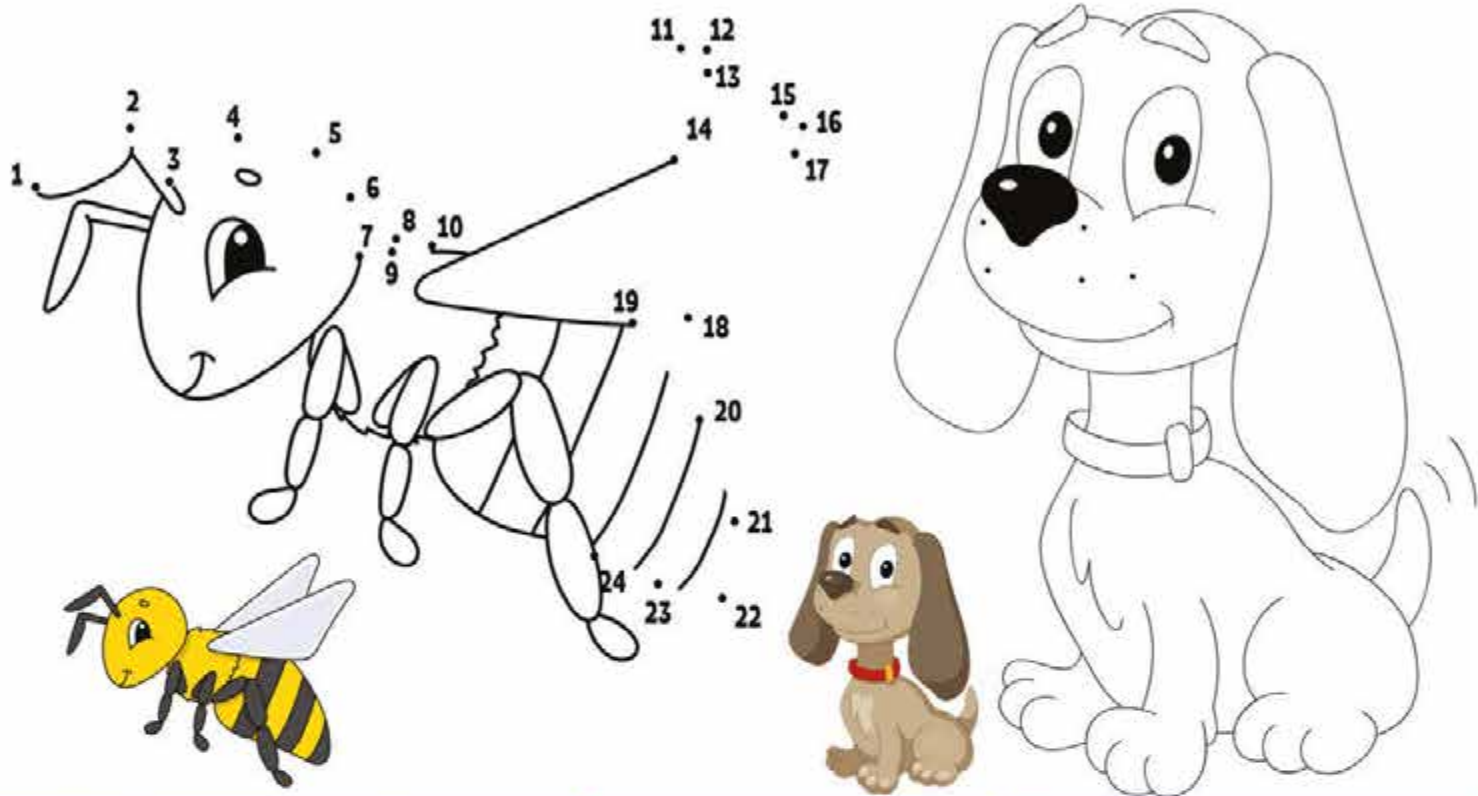
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**8/8**

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### Thursdays

#### Virtual Topical Thursday:

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[www.facebook.com/redoaktx.org](http://www.facebook.com/redoaktx.org). Join director Logan Ragsdale for various topics on Facebook live. 2:00 p.m.

### Fridays

#### Virtual Book Chat:

Watch virtually through the Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/redoaktx.org](http://www.facebook.com/redoaktx.org). Director Logan Ragsdale will discuss his favorite reads in different genres, read from popular books and recommend sources for avid readers to stay informed on the latest books. 4:00-5:00 p.m.

### First Saturdays

#### 4:19 Food Pantry:

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*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [rachel.rich@nowmagazines.com](mailto:rachel.rich@nowmagazines.com).*

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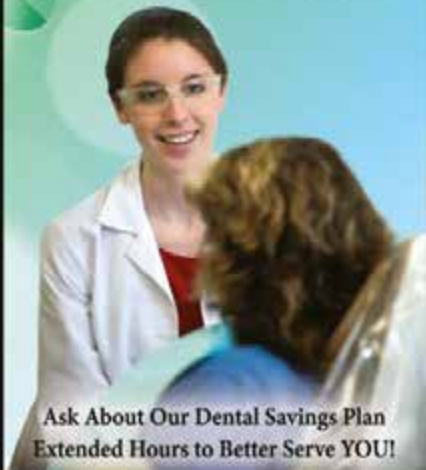
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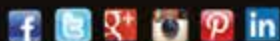
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**Mom, Geneise Waltmon, stands along with her daughter, Hayven Waltmon, who is very happy to be the scavenger hunt winner.**



**Joyce Gee enjoys reading the magazine and looking for the hidden images. Winning the \$50 was such a surprise and an extra bonus.**

## Crossword - Sudoku Solutions

1	R	C	A		4	C	A	B		7	F	R	Y	
10	A	O	L		11	B	R	A		12	L	I	E	
13	C	O	B		14	S	Y	S		15	T	E	M	S
16	I	K	E		17	A	S	H	E	S				
18	A	I	R		19	L	I	N	E	R				
21	L	E	T		22	T	O	M	B	S				
				26	A	S	I	T	W	E	R	E		
				28	O	R	R	I	N					
31	T	U	E		32	S	D	A	Y		33	A	N	T
34	A	T	M		35	E	W	E		36	L	E	O	
37	B	A	Y		38	R	E	T		39	S	I	N	

### Easy

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

### Medium

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



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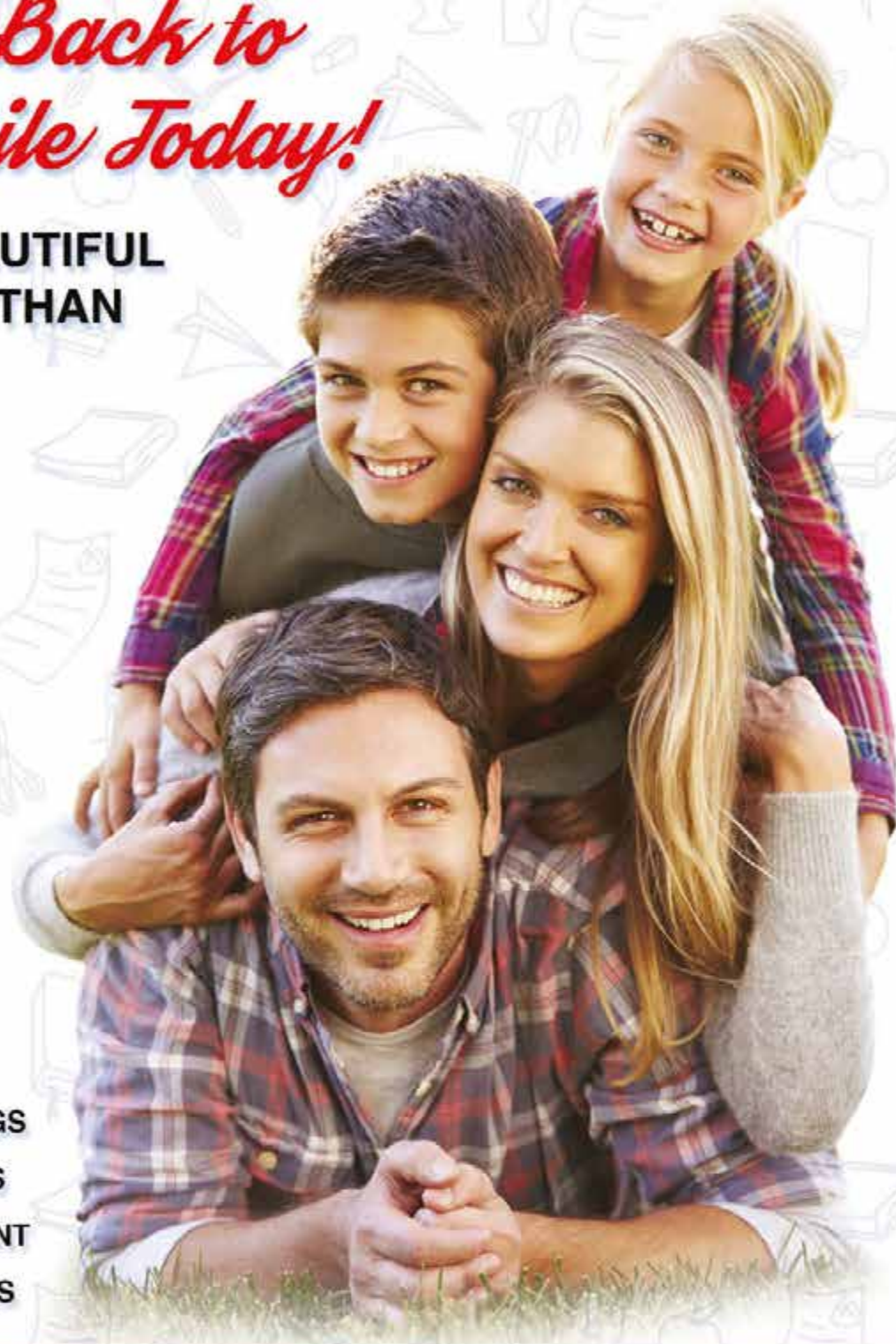
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