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TIDBITS® JUST CANNOT BELIEVE SEA CUCUMBERS

by Janet Spencer

Sea cucumbers have many surprising features. Unfortunately, it's impossible to describe their attributes without using words like "butt" and "poop," which are a large part of their personality. Be forewarned as we puzzle over this endearingly uncharismatic creature of the sea!

ODD ANCIENT ANIMALS

- If you were to see a sea cucumber, you might mistake it for a pile of poop. "Sea turd" would not be an unreasonable nickname. The sea cucumber is essentially a mouth at one end of a tube and a butt at the other, with little else in between. No brain. No eyes. Its main job is to suck up gunk, digest it, and expel it.
- They are known as "detritivores" because they eat decomposing detritus. They're the "vacuum cleaners of the sea." Up to 30 mucus-coated, branch-like tentacles extend from their mouths to draw in sludge, which is digested and expelled.
- What goes in acidic comes out alkaline, improving the pH, which cuts down on algae blooms. The excrement is loaded with calcium carbonate, nourishing corals and seagrass. What worms do on land, sea cucumbers do in the ocean.























For more info see page 13











SEA CUCUMBERS (cont)

- There are an estimated 1,700 known species, inhabiting all regions of the ocean from the shallowest shoals to deepest trenches.
- They are in a class called Holothuroidea, which is Greek for "violent expulsion." What is violently expelled? Innards!
- When it comes to self-defense, sea cucumbers simply turn themselves inside-out, expelling their digestive system in the general direction of any predator, which includes fish, crabs, and turtles. Then they simply grow a new digestive tract, which takes anywhere between a few days and a couple of weeks.
- Sea cucumbers breathe through their butts. Just like their mouths extrude branched tentacles which gather food, their butts extrude stringy white tentacles which draw in oxygen-rich seawater. This breathing apparatus also serves a secondary purpose of self-defense. If disgorging its digestive tract doesn't throw a predator off, it disgorges its breathing tentacles, which happen to be coated with toxins capable of killing whatever is bugging it. Then, the sea cucumber simply re-grows a whole new set.
- Researchers have noted that sometimes sea cucumbers expel their organs for no apparent reason, perhaps because they decide it's time to grow fresh new ones.
- Some species of sea cucumber, when split in half, simply grow into two complete animals.
- They have five rows of tube-like feet, each tipped with a suction cup to anchor them. In spite of their many feet, they move either very slowly or not at all. However, sometimes they can move very quickly by forcefully expelling their poop, which propels them forward. They can also ingest so much seawater that they become buoyant, floating on currents to move up to 56 miles (90 km) per day. (cont)



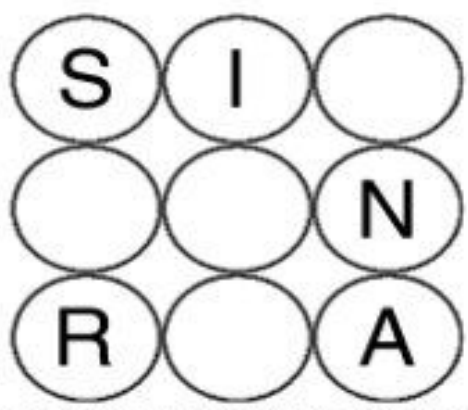


- "Microwave cleaning and sponge cleaning at the same time? Yes, please. Soak a sponge in a shallow dish, and squirt it with lemon juice. Microwave for 30-45 seconds and use to scrub the interior of your microwave. If you have clinging stink, fill a glass bowl with 2 cups of water and add a half cup of baking soda. Microwave to a rolling boil, 3-5 minutes. Allow it to steam for 5 minutes and wipe out." -- K.F in Connecticut
- Fresh versus frozen in the seafood aisle: Unless you're at the docks, most seafood in the grocer's fresh fish case is thawed from frozen. Always ask. It's much cheaper to buy frozen and thaw it yourself.
- A great idea for mini ice packs: Freeze ketchup packets you get from takeout food. They are great for icing small bumps or bug bites.
- Kids always breaking the crayons? For rough little artists, here is a quick fix: Cut short lengths of plastic straws to fit over the crayon. Slip over and tape closed. It gives the crayon a little more structure and protects it from breaking when a child presses down to color with a flourish!
- "If you need to keep your 1-year-old corralled in the bath, try using a laundry basket. The water flows in, but she has only so much room to roam. And it lessen the odds she could slip away from you to the other side of the tub. Always stay with baby from the first drop to the last!" °©-- W.H. in Texas

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 1800 Pembrook Dr., Suite 300, Orlando, FL 32810.

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WORD SPIRAL



Fill in the missing letters to reveal the nine-letter word that starts at one of the four corners and moves clockwise around the perimeter before ending in the center.

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Laugh a bit with TIDBITS

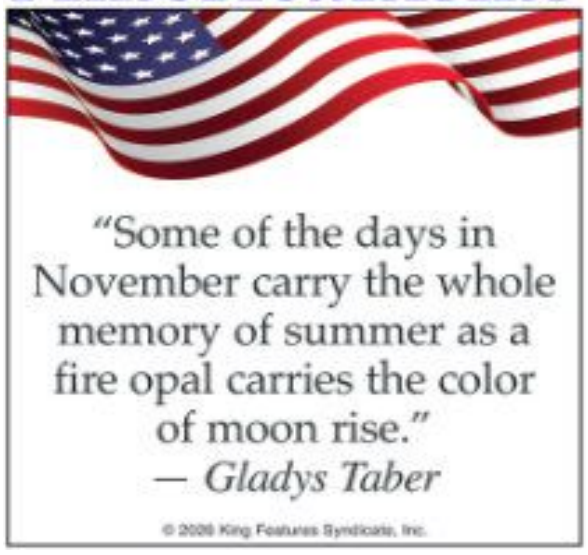
Q: Whose job is it to clean up the ocean?
A: The mer-maids!.

POPULATION (cont)

- Several European countries are also shrinking in population, as well as many island nations.
- Many countries with declining populations make up for the deficit by having immigrants move in. However, in Japan, only 3% of the population is made up of foreigners.
- The United States is the world's top destination for immigration and is home to the largest number of immigrants, with over 50 million currently living in the country. Immigrant residents account for 15.2% of the total population.
- The countries with the highest percentage of immigrant populations tend to be the countries importing workers because their economies rely heavily on foreign labor, particularly the United Arab Emirates, where 89% of the population is immigrants, followed by Qatar (81%), Kuwait (69%), Bahrain (54%), and Saudi Arabia (37%).
- The country with the highest percentage of men is Qatar, with 248 men for every 100 women, due to the influx of migrant workers to perform manual labor. In second place is the United Arab Emirates (177 men for every 100 women), for the same reason.
- If people were evenly distributed across the 10 million square miles of land available for human habitation, there would be 808 people per square mile, or 0.8 acres per person.
- Wyoming is the least populated state with a population of 580,000 residents.
- New Jersey is the most densely populated U.S. state, with approximately 1,304 people per square mile.
- Macau, a region with less than one-sixth the area of Washington, DC, has the highest population density of all nations in the world at 57,777 people per square mile. Greenland has the lowest population density at less than one person per square mile. (cont)

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Americanisms



"Some of the days in November carry the whole memory of summer as a fire opal carries the color of moon rise."
— *Gladys Taber*

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Fun Fact

The word "yoga" was first seen in the writings of the Rig Veda, regarded as one of the world's oldest religious works. The Rig Veda consists of 1,028 hymns organized into "mandalas," or books. Before they were written down (around 300 BCE), these verses were preserved only by oral tradition, being memorized by practitioners called rishis and their disciples.

Source: asivanayoga.com

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TIDBITS Laughs!

Q: Why did the sea cucumber cross the ocean?

A: To get to the other tide!

THE IMMORTAL FEET (cont)

- The detached feet absorbed nutrients directly from the ocean water. Three years later, the feet showed no signs of deterioration; in fact, they are still doing fine today.
- This is unusual because tissue samples from animals don't normally survive on their own. When a piece of an organism is separated from the whole, it dies fairly quickly. Scientists can keep cells alive in the lab for a while, but only in carefully sterilized, precisely controlled environments. These feet were submerged in an environment teeming with bacteria that would normally attack and break down unprotected biological material. Not only did the feet survive, but they also showed signs of immune activity, cell division, and tissue reorganization.
- Researchers nicknamed the specimens their "little lab zombies." They are not quite alive in the usual sense, having no mouth, no gut, and no way to reproduce. But, they're not dead, either. They sit in the tank, healing, growing, and maintaining themselves, in a biological gray zone. Something in this tissue knows how to keep itself going without a body attached to it.
- Subsequent research showed that the sea cucumber's mouth tentacles can similarly achieve apparent immortality in spite of being amputated.
- If scientists can figure out how sea cucumber tissue keeps itself alive and growing after being cut off from the rest of the animal, it could open new doors in wound healing, tissue repair, and regenerative medicine.
- Sea cucumbers have been around for roughly 400 million years. They evolved before trees, flowers, and dinosaurs. They survived the mass extinction that killed the dinosaurs, and four other mass extinctions before that. And now a piece of one has survived for three years in a lab tank just to confuse a group of scientists.



Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- In Syria, Christmas gifts are distributed by one of the Wise Men's camels.
- People who run an average of five miles or more per day have a 41% lower risk of developing cataracts.
- After the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt looked for a bulletproof car, but since federal regulations prohibited spending more than $750 for an automobile, the only one seemingly available was Al Capone's limousine, seized by the Treasury Department after he was arrested for tax evasion.
- The low air pressure of a tornado can actually pull a person's eardrum outward.
- Do you pace while talking on the phone? Psychologists believe this could be a type of coping mechanism to make up for lack of body language and nonverbal cues that typically accompany conversations.
- Some people can burp the entire alphabet.
- Five New Jersey high school seniors secretly banded to shovel an elderly woman's driveway during a snowstorm at 4:30 in the morning so she could make it to her dialysis appointment that day.
- In the Mediterranean region, tumbleweeds are used to make soap.
- A London skyscraper's curved glass focused sunlight hard enough to melt parts of a Jaguar and fry an egg in a pan on the pavement.
- In 2022, Shoji Morimoto of Tokyo, aka the "Do Nothing Rent-a-Man," charged around $70 merely to show up and do nothing. Astonishingly, one customer hired him 270 times.

Thought for the Day:

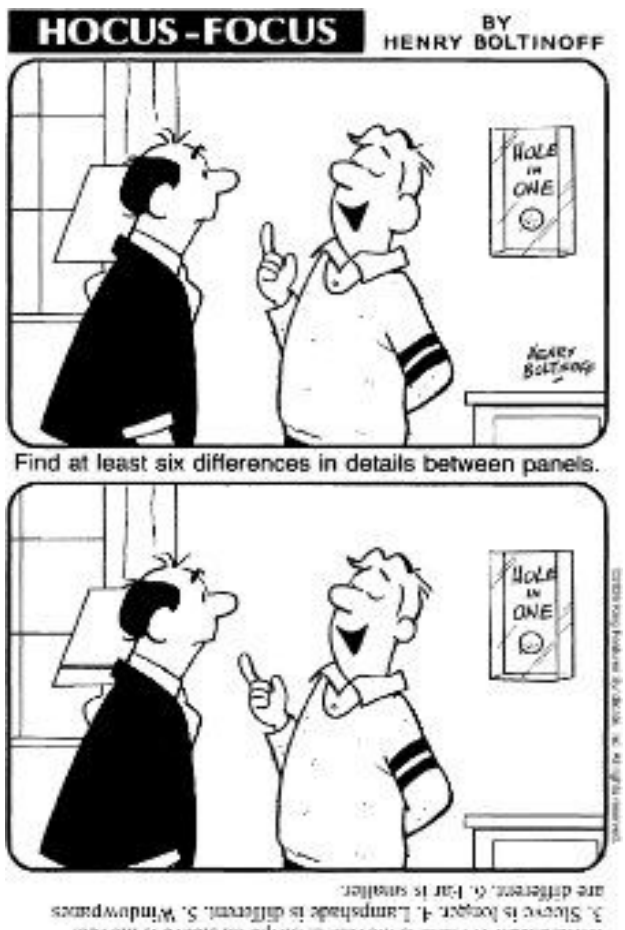
"We must overcome the notion that we must be regular ... it robs you of the chance to be extraordinary and leads you to the mediocre."

°©-- Uta Hagen

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Hand is moved. 2. Stripe on sleeve is moved. 3. Sleeve is longer. 4. Lampshade is different. 5. Windowpanes are different. 6. Hair is smaller.



1. Ebenezer
(PG-13) Johnny Depp, Rupert Grint
2. The Cat in the Hat
(PG) Bill Hader, Mayabella Sage Mccrillis
3. Godzilla Minus Zero
(R) Minami Hamabe, Ryunosuke Kamiki
4. Ramayana
(PG-13) Ranbir Kapoor, Yash
5. You Can See Everything
(R) Amanda Seyfried, Christopher Abbott
6. How to Rob a Bank
(R) Nicholas Hoult, Zoë Kravitz
7. Ghost Soldier
(PG-13) Jim Caviezel, Cameron Gayden
8. Wild Horse Nine
(R) John Malkovich, Sam Rockwell
9. Wildwood
(PG-13) Peyton Elizabeth Lee, Jacob Tremblay
10. Clayface
(R) Tom Rhys Harries, Tim Faraday
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STREAM SOURCE

Here's what to watch and where to watch it for the week of Nov. 30, 2026.

ON NOW: "Dasher" (TV-Y) -- Disney+

ON NOW: "Blade Runner 2099" (Limited Series) -- Prime Video

1-Dec: "Collect & Praise" (Season 1) -- Netflix

1-Dec: "Trinity" (Season 1) -- Netflix

1-Dec: "The Deputy" (R) -- Paramount+

2-Dec: "In a Holidaze" (TV-14) -- Netflix

2-Dec: "Bad Monkey" (Season 2) -- Apple TV

3-Dec: "Pride and Prejudice" (Limited Series) -- Netflix

4-Dec: "P-Valley" (Season 3) -- Starz

4-Dec: "The Devil's Hour" (Season 3) -- Prime Video

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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STICKELERS by Terry Stickels

Here's a geography trivia puzzle...

a. Kathmandu is the capital of ___?___.
b. Quito is the capital of ___?___.
c. South Africa has three capitals: Bloemfontein, Cape Town and ___?___.

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ONE MORE FACT

Sea cucumbers are marine invertebrates belonging to the phylum called echinoderms which includes star fish, sea urchins, and sand dollars. The name is Greek for "hedgehog skin" because every member of the group has spiky skin.

CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR
is **LONGFELLOW**

One letter stands for another. In this sample, **A** is used for the three L's, **X** for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

JTMBXJK XN XWETNNXPOL,

MBL CTFY XMNLOZ NDVN

"X'W ETNNXPOL"!

— DAYFLV BLEPAFJ

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HealthBits

By Dr. Holly Carling

SACRIFICING OUR HEALTH

At certain times of the year, our mental and emotional stability stand out more glaringly than other times. We are now entering one of those times. As the stress of the holidays bear down on us – fervent shopping, working longer hours, kids events and expectations that commonly arise with various activities, how strong we are emotionally can impact the joy we can feel.

Too often we sacrifice our health. It is practically expected that stress and melancholy will come at this time of the year, not only because of the holidays, but because of the onset of harsher weather and overcast skies. Less sunshine, less summer fun activities seem to make us feel low and slow. However, there are ways to bolster ourselves so that we can feel more balanced this time of year.

Diet is the quintessential way to bolster ourselves. As we rush around like crazy, we dump our good (or mediocre) diets in favor of fast and easy. Low protein diets, flavor enhancers, preservatives, artificial food additives, sugar and other junk foods and stimulants such as coffee and energy drinks can accentuate a poor stress response and imbalanced emotional health.

Prior nutrient deficiencies are compounded during this time. For instance, the Vitamin B complex is known for its effect on healthy brain functioning. It is gobbled up more quickly in a frenetic lifestyle. Vitamin D, calcium, magnesium, and chromium help elevate mood or have a calming effect. This is especially important at night when sleep is critical. Herbs such as chamomile, valerian root, St. John's Wort and passion flower all help with sleep, relaxation and the ability to cope with stress. However, check with a health practitioner knowledgeable in this arena, especially if you are taking medications, before taking herbs that you're not sure are appropriate for you.

Sleep is especially important when stressed, yet it is the thing most often sacrificed this time of year. Getting to bed early goes a long way in having a clear, functioning mind, which results in more productivity, which will make you feel better!

Stress and emotional upset result in a weakened immune system. That, of course creates more stress. Taking herbs which bolster immune function such as echinacea, goldenseal, mushroom complexes, etc. taken a little each day can help keep your immune system a little more on track.

Acupuncture is helpful in supporting all the systems involved in stress and emotional balance. Systems affected by stress such as the digestive system, immune system and endocrine systems are usually easily balanced by acupuncture treatments. Managing pain and other health related issues automatically reduces stress, increases energy and helps with better emotional wellbeing.

This year, don't sacrifice your health just because of the holidays. Do more to support your body and mind, and your body and mind will support you!

Want to hear more from Dr. Carling? Check out our podcast. Search for VitalHealth4You on your favorite podcast listening app or go to vitalhealthcda.com/podcasts/



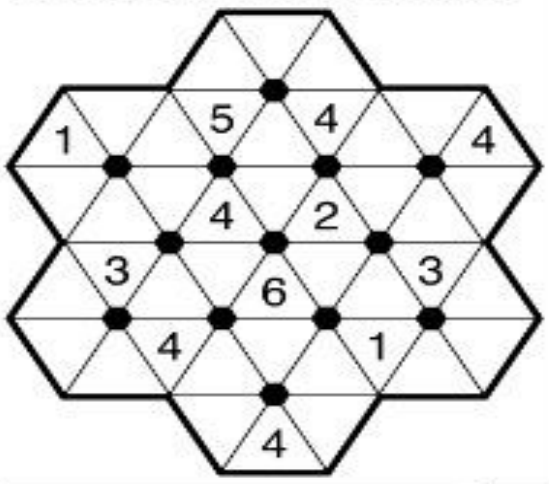
Dr. Holly Carling is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, Licensed Acupuncturist, Doctor of Naturopathy, Clinical Nutritionist and Master Herbologist with over four decades of experience. Dr. Carling is a "Health Detective," she looks beyond your symptom picture and investigates WHY you are experiencing your symptoms in the first place. Dr. Carling is currently accepting new patients and offers natural health care services and whole food nutritional supplements in her Coeur d' Alene clinic. Visit Dr. Carling's website at www.vitalhealthcda.com to learn more about Dr. Carling, view a list of upcoming health classes and read other informative articles. Dr. Carling can be reached at 208-765-1994 and would be happy to answer any questions regarding this topic.

Medical/Health Disclaimer: The information provided in this article should not be construed as personal medical advice or instruction. No action should be taken based solely on the contents of this article. Readers should consult appropriate health professionals on any matter relating to their health and well- being. The information and opinions provided here are believed to be accurate and sound, based on the best judgment available to the author, but readers who fail to consult appropriate health authorities assume the risk of any injuries.

SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

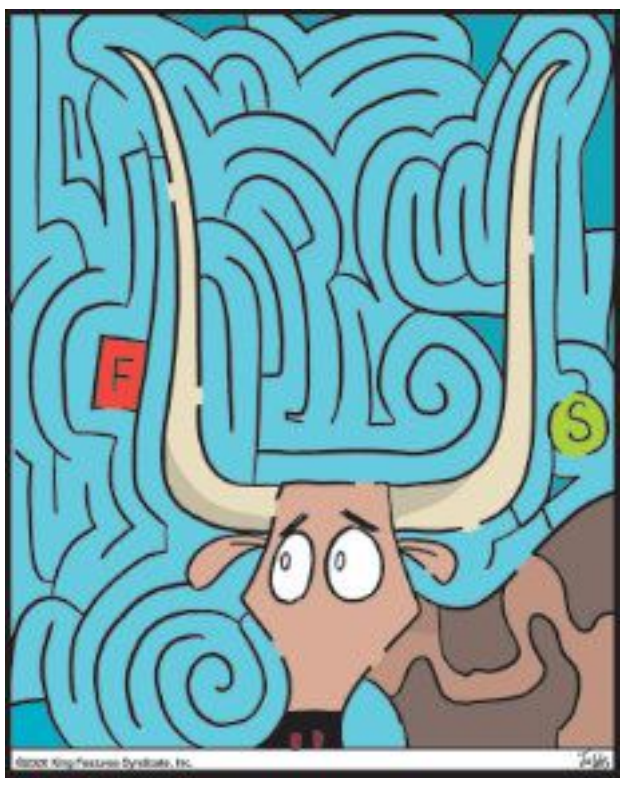
There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.



DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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VETERANS ★ POST ★

By Freddy Groves

Need a job?

The VA processed over 3 million disability claims in fiscal year 2026, which just ended. Now, in the beginning of fiscal year 2027, they're expecting even more claims and will hire over 2,000 additional staffers to process them.

Last year the VA cut the backlog of benefits claims by more than 70% and cut the processing time in half. Accuracy went up to 94%, and they were granting over 60% of the claims. Only 3% of claims went to appeal. During all this, over 300,000 new veterans were enrolled in healthcare and 41 new health facilities opened.

All of this is because the VA has made a massive effort to enroll veterans, hosting over 11,000 events.

But they can't keep this pace up forever without something changing. What they need are more employees in the right positions.

Want to help? Need a job? Apply for a position as a Veterans Service Representative (www.usajobs.gov/job/889245400). See that page for information on the position, including the salary range ($50,460 - $82,007 per year) for grade GS7 and the duties involved. Watch the video about a day in the life of a VSR. If interested in applying, don't delay. The announcement will close on Dec. 21.

For information about the federal hiring process, see www.usajobs.gov/HiringPath/Public

To hunt for federal jobs by keyword or location, see www.usajobs.gov. Scroll down to find links to jobs for the public, students, federal employees and veterans. Remember: If you want to claim the Veterans Preference points, you'll need a copy of your DD-214. Points can be 10 for disabled veterans or 5 for non-disabled veterans.

You'll be able to search by job type, whether there is relocation assistance, if travel is required, the pay, any security clearance required and more. At this writing, the variety of federal jobs across the country includes medical doctor, mechanical engineer, criminal investigators, aircraft mechanic, Marshals for the DOJ, agents for Border Patrol, mathematician, chaplain, deportation officer and many, many more.

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Paw's corner by Sam Mazzotta

Thanksgiving guests don't have the right to bother your pets

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: Last Thanksgiving, my Uncle Dave and one of my cousins went into the room where my mini-Dachshund, Tonks, and my two cats were staying. They brought my pets out into the front room and let everyone play with them. Tonks was so frightened that he pooped on the carpet, and my cats Jaz and Aimee scratched two of the kids and crawled under the sofa. It took days to settle them all down again. With another Thanksgiving approaching, how can I stop my relatives from doing this again? °©-- Caroline G. in Sanford, Florida

DEAR CAROLINE: Don't invite them. Seriously. If guests can't respect your wishes to leave your pets alone -- and worse, don't respect animals, as if they're cuddly toys -- they don't get to be guests anymore.

That's the easy answer, but families aren't always easy to deal with.

If you must host Thanksgiving at your place to keep peace with the family, consider moving your pets to a trusted friend's home for the day or boarding them at a kennel or pet daycare.

Consider this, too: Instead of hosting at your home, book a table at a restaurant serving Thanksgiving dinner and ask any family or friends attending to pay their share of the meal. Your pets will be comfortable in their own home, you won't have to worry about cooking or cleanup, and your most annoying relatives probably won't show up -- because the food isn't free.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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MINI SUDOKU

	6	1			
	3				
	4				6
		6	1		
				6	4
			5		

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 6-box square contains all of the numbers from one to six.

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By Ryan A. Berenz

1. Paydirt Pete is the mascot for which Texas college athletic teams?
2. Which Major League Baseball team had a starting infield of Steve Garvey, Davey Lopes, Ron Cey and Bill Russell together from 1973 to 1981?
3. Which rapper and TV personality became a sponsor of the U.S. Water Polo men's and women's national teams and frequently appeared at their 2024 Paris Olympics events?
4. The Omni Coliseum, opened in 1972 and demolished in 1997, was home to which NBA franchise?
5. In 1990, 60-year-old Fred Newman made how many consecutive free throws while blindfolded?
6. Which Kenyan female distance runner, nicknamed the "Pocket Rocket," won the gold medal in the 5,000-meter race at the 2016 Rio De Janeiro Olympics?
7. Which screen legend made his first appearance as the Tramp character in the 1914 film "Kid Auto Races in Venice," set during a pushcar race in Los Angeles?

Answers

1. The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) Miners.
2. The Los Angeles Dodgers.
3. Flavor Flav.
4. The Atlanta Hawks.
5. 88.
6. Vivian Cheruiyot.
7. Charlie Chaplin.

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TIDBITS presents

TRIVIA NEWSFRONT

1. What percent of animal life below 15,000 feet consists of sea cucumbers?
2. Are sea cucumbers more active during the day or the night?
3. A protein extracted from sea cucumbers has shown promise at curing what mosquito-borne disease?
4. How do sea cucumbers communicate with each other?
5. What does the Japanese name for sea cucumbers translate as?

TIDBITS QUOTE

"The crazy thing is we live on an ocean planet - nobody gets that yet." -Graham Hawkes



Ceramic Trees

Artificial Christmas trees have been around since the 19th century, if not earlier. Trees made of dyed feathers originated in Germany and were introduced to the U.S. by the early 20th century. The mid- to late-20th century saw trees made from several new materials. The famous aluminum Christmas trees, sparkling in silver before any lights or ornaments were added, were first made in the 1950s. New types of plastic that gained widespread use after World War II proved to be perfect for making durable, realistic-looking synthetic pine needles. But one tree trend of the 1950s to 1970s used a very old material: ceramic.

Small ceramic Christmas trees measuring between 12 and 24 inches were just the right height to display on a table. An electric light hidden in the attached base shines through the transparent plastic ornaments attached to the tree's limbs, and the tree often came with a small star to put on top.

While many companies made trees like these, the most famous are by the Atlantic Mold Company, which continued making them until 1999. Atlantic Mold trees are usually marked, but, as with many ceramics, be careful if the mark includes a date. It might be the date the mold was created; the tree itself may be newer.

An unusual example sold at Keystone Auctions LLC for $127. It is unmarked but has a scrolled base like the Atlantic Mold tree. At 23 inches, it is taller than the usual ceramic tree. A close look shows the tiny plastic bulbs come in shapes like birds and holly sprigs, adding extra festive touches. And one more detail doesn't come through in pictures: a music box in the base.

Q: My grandparents bought a settee in the 1920s. I have it now, and it has been refinished and reupholstered. It has interesting gold trim with carved human faces on the upper arms. Can you tell me anything about it and what it might be worth?

A: Furniture with gold trim and carved masks has come into fashion many times; most notably during the American Empire (c. 1815-1840) and Greco-Egyptian Revival (c. 1860-1890) periods. Decorations like these, as well as imagery like sphinxes, winged mythological figures, and furniture feet carved to look like animal hooves or paws evoked a sense of the ancient world and its luxury and exoticism. They were inspired by major archaeological expeditions.

There was another Egyptian Revival in the 1920s, after the discovery of King Tutankhamun's tomb. Designers incorporated Egyptian-inspired motifs in art deco furniture and jewelry. The value of your settee will depend on its material and condition. Identifying a maker will increase the value. Settees from the 1920s without a known maker can sell for anywhere between about $150 and $500.

CURRENT PRICES

Christmas tree, stand, cast iron, molded house and flowers, pierced base, four panels, train, boat, car, zeppelin, figures, four-footed, Germany, 8 1/2 x 10 inches, $110.

Bells, sleigh, 28 brass bells, light brown leather strap, cotter pins, buckle, 74 inches, $150.

Candy container, Santa Claus, holding Christmas tree, red cap and coat, blue trousers, white trim, fur beard, molded and painted face, mica, Germany, 14 1/2 inches, $1,080.



"The Social Reckoning" (R) -- The sequel to "The Social Network" (2010), which put Oscar nominee Jesse Eisenberg ("A Real Pain") on the map, is officially available to rent starting Nov. 24! This sequel jumps from the original events of the first film that took place in 2003-2004 to 2019, with Jeremy Strong ("Succession") replacing Eisenberg as Meta Platforms CEO Mark Zuckerberg. "The Social Reckoning" touches on the 2021 Facebook leak and the overall threat against user safety that the social media platform presented at the time. Oscar winner Mikey Madison ("Anora") portrays Frances Haugen, the whistleblower who leaked the company's internal documents, while "The Bear's" Jeremy Allen White takes on the role of Wall Street Journal reporter Jeff Horwitz, who was heavily involved in breaking the news to the public. With mixed reviews from critics, the film unfortunately bombed at the box office, only earning $18.1 million against a budget of $42 million. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The Altruists" (TV-MA) -- This series out now to binge is led by Julia Garner ("Weapons"), who looks almost unrecognizable without her signature blonde hair, and Anthony Boyle ("House of Guiness"). In just eight episodes, the series delves into the cryptocurrency exchange FTX, as well as its founders Sam Bankman-Fried (Boyle) and Caroline Ellison (Garner), emphasizing the fact that Bankman-Fried and Ellison were incredibly intelligent and hopeful with their company. But going "all in" on their dream results in a $36 billion fraudulent scheme that quickly turns their lives into a nightmare. Look out for comedian Matt Rife, who seems to be doing well after his recent controversies, Hudson Williams from "Heated Rivalry," and Jennifer Grey from "Dirty Dancing." (Netflix)

"12 12 12" (TV-MA) -- Anthony Mackie ("Desert Warrior") trades his Captain America suit for an FBI badge in this heist series that co-stars Jamie Dornan ("The Tourist"). The series' title nods to its storytelling format, which is broken up into three stages: the 12 months of planning leading up to a huge banking heist in Zurich, the 12 hours executing the heist itself, and the 12 days following the heist. Paul (Dornan), the criminal mastermind behind the heist, obviously has his motivations for planning it, but what Paul doesn't know is that the FBI agent tasked with finding him also has personal reasons of his own. The first three episodes are out now, with subsequent episodes premiering every Friday. (Apple TV)

"Runner" (PG-13) -- This action-comedy film features Alan Ritchson ("War Machine") and Owen Wilson ("Focker-in-Law") in roles that aren't much different from anything else we've ever seen them in. Wilson plays a medical courier named Ben, who enlists the help of a runner/smuggler named Hank (Ritchson) to transport an organ for a little girl in a hospital. The problem? The organ donor has an extremely rare blood type, and the leader of a Colombian cartel also needs this specific organ for his dying mother. Luckily, Ben enlists the right person to help him complete his mission, because Hank's past as a soldier turns out to be quite useful to kick cartel butt! Premieres Nov. 27. (Hulu)

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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. LITERATURE: Who does Dorothy's house land on and kill in "The Wizard of Oz"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: Which country does Easter Island belong to?
3. MUSIC: In which city did The Beatles form?
4. ANIMAL KINGDOM: Hippos are native to which continent?
5. ANATOMY: What is peristalsis?
6. MOVIES: What kind of animal is Donkey's wife in the animated movie "Shrek"?
7. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What are the names of the two marble lion statues outside the main New York Public LIBRAry?
8. MEASUREMENTS: In physics, what is a jiffy?
9. TELEVISION: What is Bill Nye's nickname, based on his shows?
10. HISTORY: Where did the Anasazi native tribe live in modern America?

Answers

1. The Wicked Witch of the East.

2. Chile.

3. Liverpool, England.

4. Africa.

5. Muscular contractions that push food through the digestive system.

6. A dragon.

7. Patience and Fortitude.

8. The time it takes light to travel 1 centimeter in a vacuum.

9. The Science Guy.

10. Southwest United States.

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TIDBITS presents

Quiz BITS

1. What is the average lifespan of a sea cucumber?
2. What is the maximum estimated lifespan of a sea cucumber?

MAGIC MAZE ● TOPPINGS



Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: WHIPPED —

Bacon bits	Glazes	Meringue	Sauces
Dressing	Gravy	Nuts	Sprinkles
Frosting	Guacamole	Pepperoni	Syrup
Ganache	Icing	Salsa	

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Bake Swedish Toffee Shortbread Slices for the Holidays

Holiday cookie-baking time is here! There are so many tempting possibilities, like classic sugar cookies and favorite recipes that have been handed down from generation to generation. Celebrating our family's Scandinavian-American heritage, we prepare a variety of traditional sweets from the old country, -- most notably tasty spritz cookies. We fill a cookie press with the simple butter dough to create a variety of shapes, then the kids decorate them before they're baked.

This year, I'm adding a new Swedish favorite to the cookie platter that was introduced to me by my friend Kris. Having lived in Stockholm for many years, she collected unique recipes, including these Swedish Toffee Shortbread Slices ("Skurna Knackkakor").

Once the dough is formed for the cookies, kids will have an active part in shaping it like clay into logs on the baking sheet, then flattening them into rectangles before baking. When they come out of the oven, the final fun step is neatly cutting them into thin diagonal slices. When they're cool, enjoy! But don't be surprised if you're tempted to eat more than one of the two-bite cookie.

SWEDISH TOFFEE SHORTBREAD SLICES (SKURNA KNACKKAKOR)

Makes 40-45 cookies

- 1/4 cup raw, unpeeled almonds
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon light or dark corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Adjust oven rack to middle position and preheat oven to 350 F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper. Process almonds in a food processor, or use a nut grater to create a medium-to-fine textured meal. Set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat together butter and sugar. Add ground almonds, corn syrup, vanilla, baking powder, flour and salt. Combine on low speed for 2 minutes. Finish by hand to form the dough. It'll be crumbly at first.

Using your hands, divide the dough into three equal parts. Shape each portion into a log that's about 10 inches long. Place on prepared baking sheets and flatten into 1-1/2-inch-wide rectangles.

Bake for 15 minutes, or until edges start to brown. Remove from oven and let stand a few minutes. While still warm, use a dough scraper to cut each rectangle diagonally into 2-1/2-inch-long thin slices. Cool completely before storing.

Donna Erickson creates relationships and community through food and fun. Find more to nourish and delight you at DonnaErickson.com.

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Salome's Stars

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Restless Rams and Ewes might want to let others finish a current project while they start something new. But if you do, you could risk losing out on a future opportunity.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) The Bovine's creative forces start revving up as you plan for the upcoming holidays. Some practical aspects also emerge, especially where money is involved.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Moments of doubt disrupt your otherwise-clear sense of purpose. Don't ignore them. They could be telling you not to rush into anything until you know more about it.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) A planned trip might have to be delayed. Plan to use this new free time to update your skills and your resume so that you'll be ready when a new job opportunity opens.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A flood of holiday party bids from business contacts allows you to mix work and pleasure. Your knowledge plus your LEOnine charm win you a new slew of admirers!

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) An unexpected act by a colleague complicates an agreement, causing delays in implementing it. Check out the motive for this move; it's not what you might suspect.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) You might want to cut ties with an ingrate who seems to have forgotten your past generosity. But there might be a reason for this behavior that you should know about. Ask.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Be careful not to set things in stone. Much could happen during the next several days that'll make you rethink some decisions -- and maybe change them.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Your plans to help provide holiday cheer for the less fortunate inspire others to follow your generous example. Expect welcome news by week's end!

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) You're in your glory as you start planning for the holiday season ahead. But leave time to deal with a problem that needs a quick and fair resolution.

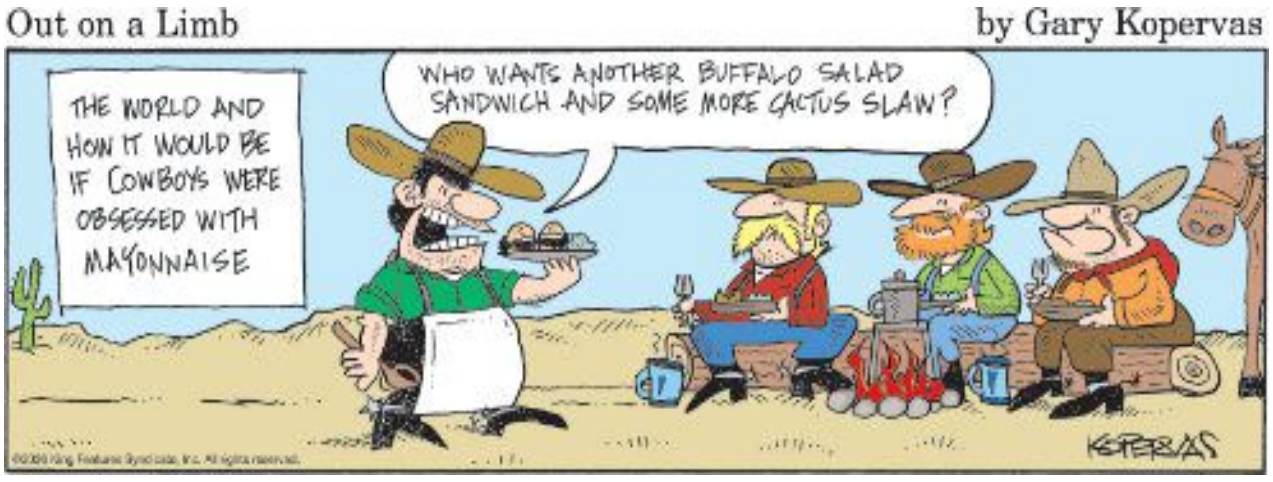
AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) The upcoming holiday season provides a perfect setting for strengthening relationships with kin and others. A new contact has important information.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Instead of fretting over a cutting remark by a co-worker, chalk it up to an outburst of envy of your well-respected status among your colleagues and superiors.

BORN THIS WEEK: You instinctively know when to be serious and when to be humorous -- attributes that everyone can find endearing.

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Out on a Limb by Gary Kopervas



CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

JTMBXJK XN XWETNNXPOL,

MBL CTFY XMNLOZ NDVN

"X'W ETNNXPOL"!

— DAYFLV BLEPAFJ

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Super Crossword

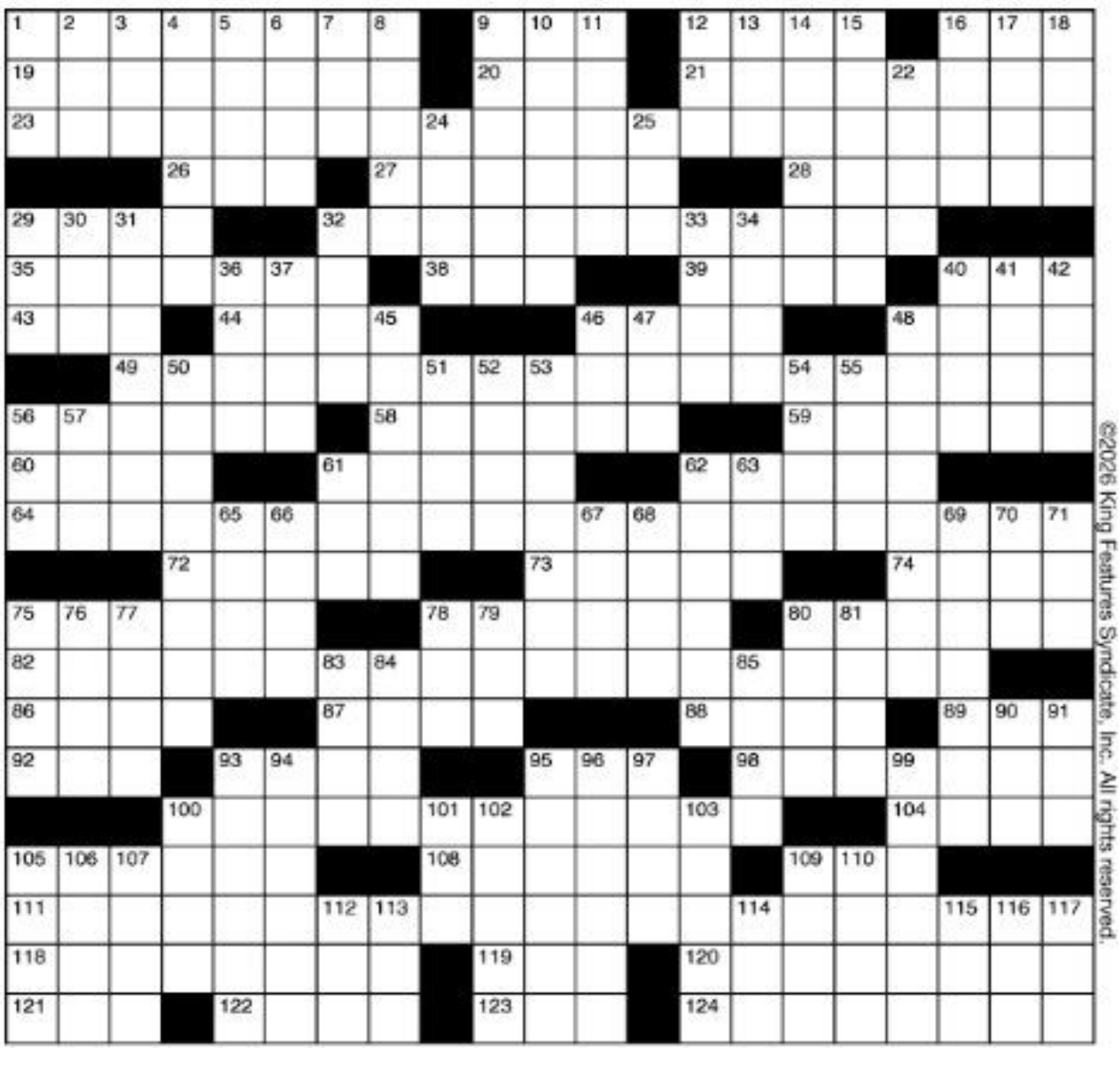
BEINGS AMONG THE BLOOMS

ACROSS

1 "The Breakfast Club" bunch
9 Successors of LPs
12 Chores, e.g.
16 Thurman of "Burnt"
19 Not too hard to construct
20 Oval portion
21 Sea east of Italy
23 Start of a riddle
26 Singer Yoko
27 Neighbor of an Ethiopian
28 Instrument with over 30 strings
29 Madeline of "High Anxiety"
32 Riddle, part 2
35 Hard to find
38 Even one
39 Feels poorly
40 Show — (films, plays, TV, etc.)
43 "Assuredly!"
44 Emulate a supermodel
46 Bull's-eye hitter
48 Do a fall yard chore
49 Riddle, part 3
56 Deceive
58 Most liberated
59 Puts in the crosshairs
60 Yuletide
61 Huge meal
62 Louvre Pyramid architect
64 Riddle, part 4
72 Raise, as a flag
73 Earthen cooking pots
74 Soul singer India
75 Cincinnati citizen, say
78 Less certain
80 Be nippy with, as a pup
82 Riddle, part 5
86 Omit
87 Page for think pieces
88 Post-shower powder
89 Bride's vow
92 Ares, to Zeus
93 "I" problems
95 Gun, slangily
98 Largest city in Scotland
100 End of the riddle
104 In the past
105 British noble, in brief
108 "Mrs." with an infamous cow
109 "She's the one"
111 Riddle's answer
118 Result of a shaving slip
119 Tucson-to-Tulsa dir.
120 Delights in the flattery, maybe
121 Styled like
122 Late-night host Meyers
123 Garnet, e.g.
124 Zooms past

DOWN

1 Sporty German auto
2 "Yay team!"
3 Alias lead-in
4 Wyoming range
5 Place in hock
6 "Peek- —!"
7 "McQ" actor Gulager
8 "That '70s Show" character Michael
9 Guy driving a taxi
10 Given to reverie
11 La — (Italian opera house)
12 Tip container
13 Lofty verse
14 Pelé's nation
15 Peaceful protests
16 Provo's state
17 Performer acting silently
18 Big PC brand
22 Poker cost
24 Nick Jr.'s "explorer"
25 Band booking
29 Door opener
30 Hoppy drink
31 Shook a leg
32 Admit to it, with "up"
33 Seniors' org.
34 Tubular pasta
36 Tablet since 2010
37 Use a ballot
40 Saloons
41 Giant in retail furniture
42 Liveliness
45 Consequence
46 Two, in Chile
47 Toward a boat's stern
48 Think deeply
50 It's spun by hip gyration
51 River to the Caspian
52 — majesty (treason)
53 Allows to go with no punishment
54 Accessory for Superman
55 Stadium level
56 Genetic helix
57 Near-eternity
61 Hi- — (some stereos)
62 Trapped by habit
63 Show hosts, in brief
65 Tiger sound
66 Funny Fey
67 Roman 152
68 Cassini of fashion
69 Quitter's statement
70 Vardalos of the screen
71 Catch on to
75 Bettors' calculations
76 Savior
77 Clicked-on symbol
78 "— done it!"
79 Gave grub to
80 Banknote
81 Peruvian ancient
83 Jack or hammer, e.g.
84 — facto
85 — to riches
90 ICU worker
91 Be indebted
93 Sets foot in
94 Pressure felt by a jet pilot
95 "Bonanza" star Lorne
96 Degraded
97 Actress Garr
99 Morally degraded
100 Colon's meaning in an analogy
101 Vie for the affection of
102 Bull on a bottle of glue
103 Fractions of newtons
105 "— -Ca-Dabra" (1974 song)
106 Not fictional
107 Chichén — (Mexican ruins)
109 Abhor
110 Irish Gaelic language
112 Stomach
113 Utmost
114 Hiatus
115 ALF et al.
116 Pencil remnant, e.g.
117 CIA type



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Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Dec. 7, 1909, Belgian-born chemist LEO Baekeland was granted a patent for "a method of making insoluble products of phenol and formaldehyde"-- the first synthetic plastic, which was dubbed Bakelite in his honor. It went on to be advertised as "the material of 1,000 uses."
- On Dec. 8, 1542, the future Mary, Queen of Scots was born in Linlithgow Palace in Scotland to the country's dying king, James V. His only surviving child, she took the throne when he passed away only six days later.
- On Dec. 9, 1869, Uriah Smith Stephens founded a secret order of tailors in Philadelphia called the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor, which became America's first major national labor organization.
- On Dec. 10, 1922, the Canton Bulldogs beat the Toledo Maroons by 19-0 and were declared the first champion of the newly renamed National Football League. The league champion is determined by best regular-season record.
- On Dec. 11, 1961, the ferry carrier USNS Core arrived in Saigon with the first American helicopter unit, assigned to airlift South Vietnamese Army troops into combat and including 33 Vertol H-21C Shawnee helicopters and 400 air and ground crewmen to operate and maintain them.
- On Dec. 12, 1997, 14-year-old Michael Carneal was indicted as an adult on three counts of murder and five counts of attempted murder after shooting his classmates at Heath High School in West Paducah, Kentucky. On Dec. 1, the boy had taken out a pistol and fired 11 shots into a group of students in the school's lobby. He would later claim he'd been inspired by the movie "The Basketball Diaries," starring LEOnardo DiCaprio. Following a plea of guilty but mentally ill, Carneal was sentenced to life in prison with a possibility of parole in 25 years.
- On Dec. 13, 1992, Manon Rheaume became the first woman to play in a regular-season professional hockey game, entering at the start of the second period with the score tied at 1 in the International Hockey League contest. In almost six minutes, she stopped four shots and allowed one goal before being replaced by the Atlanta Knights' starter.

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

By Matilda Charles

Don't be alone over the holidays!

Here come the holidays, and many of us will be alone. Maybe we no longer have a spouse, or never did. Maybe family is scattered across the country and can't get together. Or perhaps too many of our friends are no longer here.

But we don't have to be alone.

There are several ways to be among others over the holidays, to keep from feeling blue, to stay positive, upbeat and relaxed.

*Check the coming events at the senior center, your church, the local shelter or even the hospital or rehab center. Maybe the senior center is hosting a holiday meal or a party, or your church will have a series of holiday-themed talks or get-togethers. Ask about any events at the rehab center that could use an extra pair of hands: pushing wheelchairs to a musical event at the facility, helping a patient wrap presents bought for family members, playing piano for a carol singalong or helping to decorate the activity room.

*Volunteer to help cook the holiday meal at the shelter for the homeless that will attend. Whether you're cooking, serving or pouring coffee, your help will be appreciated. A hint: Sign up early, as those slots fill quickly with those who want to volunteer.

*Host a potluck dinner. Plan in advance and invite others to create a dish to bring. Hold a games night, with others bringing their favorite games and a snack. If your place is too small, ask about using a room at the senior center or church.

*Deliver meals to shut-ins from locations that provide free meals, such as the senior center, Meals on Wheels or restaurants. Deliver the Secret Santa toys and gifts if there is a toy fund in your town.

*Accept invitations! If you're invited somewhere, go!

A bonus to getting out and about: You might meet people you'll stay in contact with after the holidays.

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WHAT HAPPENS IN ASSISTED LIVING?

A typical day in an assisted living community is often filled with warmth, comfort, and activities that promote both well-being and joy. It's a space where seniors can enjoy their independence while receiving the support they need, all within a nurturing environment that feels like home.

Morning: A Fresh Start

The day begins on a peaceful note. Residents can wake up at their own pace, knowing that assistance is always available if needed. A hearty breakfast is served in the dining room, where everyone can enjoy nutritious, home-prepared meals while chatting with friends. The atmosphere is warm and inviting, and it feels like catching up with family over coffee. After breakfast, residents might choose to participate in gentle exercise classes designed to energize the body and mind or catch up on current events. There might be a visit from one of the favorite pets from our pet therapy partners, or musical entertainers that invite everyone to sing along!

Mid-Morning: Activities and Social Time

After breakfast, the day opens up with a variety of engaging activities. Some may join a group for an art class or music therapy session, while others may prefer a stroll in the beautifully landscaped courtyard. There's always something to do, whether it's a book club, a crafting session, or even a friendly game of bingo. Social events like these help create bonds among residents (and those caring for them), by keeping the atmosphere vibrant and full of life.

Afternoon: Relaxation and Recreation

After a delicious lunch, residents have time to relax or pursue personal hobbies. Some may retreat to their rooms for a nap or to enjoy a quiet afternoon of reading. Others might head to a common area to watch a movie or enjoy a card game. The community might have a scenic drive or a picnic in the park planned. Staff members are always present, offering a helping hand or friendly conversation.

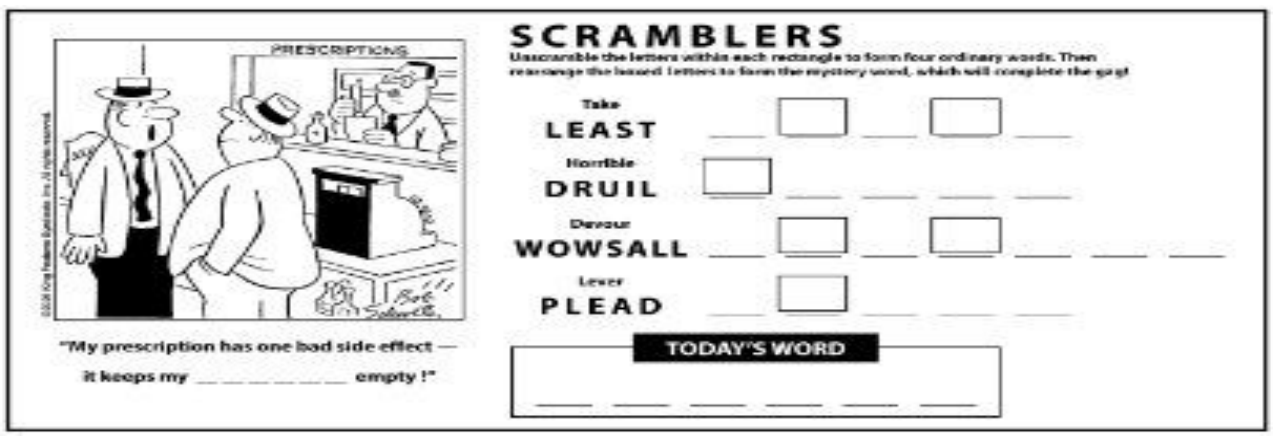
Evening: A Cozy End to the Day

Dinner is another opportunity for socializing, with delicious meals tailored to different tastes and dietary needs. As the day comes to a close, residents can unwind with a variety of evening activities—like enjoying a cup of hot chocolate and watching the sun set in the courtyard together, watching a classic film, or simply relaxing in one of the walk-in bathtubs with a little Epsom salt and essential oil. The day ends on a cozy note, ensuring that everyone feels happy and at home.

In assisted living, every day is filled with moments of joy, connection, and comfort,
where each resident can live life at their own pace while being part of a caring community. Call me today for a free consultation in navigating assisted living and memory care options.



Becky Georgius
Sales and Marketing Director
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TIDBITS PUZZLE ANSWERS

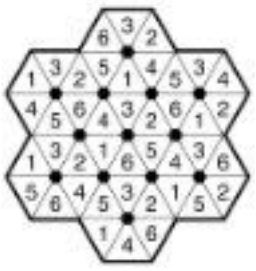
Quiz BITS
ANSWERS

TRIVIA NEWSPRINT

MINI SUDOKU
Answer

2	6	1	4	3	5
4	3	5	6	2	1
1	4	2	3	5	6
3	5	6	1	4	2
5	1	3	2	6	4
6	2	4	5	1	3

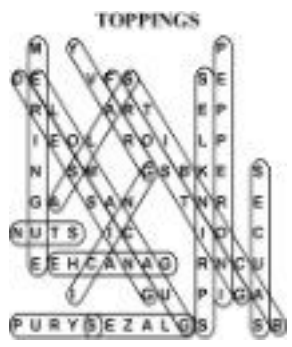
SNOWFLAKES
solution



SCRAMBLERS
Solution
1. Steal; 2. Lurid
3. Swallow; 4. Pedal
Today's Word
WALLET

Word Spiral
Answer
ABRASIONS

TOPPINGS



CryptoQuip
answer
I am prone to hiding bashfully in my shoulder wrap, but recently I'm starting to come out of my shawl.

MINI SUDOKU
Answer

2	6	1	4	3	5
4	3	5	6	2	1
1	4	2	3	5	6
3	5	6	1	4	2
5	1	3	2	6	4
6	2	4	5	1	3

Stickelers Answer
a. Nepal
b. Ecuador
c. Pretoria

CryptoQuote
answer
Nothing is impossible, the word itself says "I'm possible"!
— Audrey Hepburn

Super Crossword
Answers

B	H	A	T	P	A	C	K	■	C	D	S	■	J	O	B	S	■	U	M	A	
M	A	K	E	A	B	L	E	■	A	R	C	■	A	D	R	I	A	T	I	C	
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Woman With Bladder Stones Should Minimize Supplement Use

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have uncomfortable bladder stones, and I'm on a low-oxalate diet to help prevent more stones. I also have osteoporosis, and my blood work shows high calcium. My doctor suggests Prolia, which I question since I am a 95-year-old female and exercise daily. I've switched my calcium citrate to calcium with magnesium and stopped taking Tums for heartburn. I'm asking for any additional suggestions about my calcium intake and Prolia. -- T.G.

ANSWER: You have a dilemma. Calcium supplements are often used in people with osteoporosis because the medicines that treat osteoporosis need calcium to work. The studies that have shown them to be effective all used supplemental calcium.

On the other hand, calcium supplements -- whether they're Tums (calcium carbonate) or calcium citrate, or they include magnesium -- all clearly increase the risk of kidney and bladder stones in people who make calcium oxalate stones.

In my opinion, the best way out of this dilemma is to increase your dietary calcium, while avoiding or minimizing calcium supplements. Getting calcium through the diet reduces the risk of stone formation, so it'll be your best way to help with stones.

It's possible to get the recommended amount of calcium for osteoporosis through diet alone, but it does require planning. Working with a registered nutritionist can help you plan a meal program that can get you the calcium you require. By getting most of your calcium through food, this will help prevent stones.

Finally, women with osteoporosis in their 90s are at a very high risk for fractures, and denosumab (Prolia) is one of several reasonable treatments to reduce fracture risk.

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DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm 75 years old and currently taking tamsulosin to manage benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). I'm looking into surgical solutions for an enlarged prostate, preferably noninvasive, and I saw an article on prostate artery embolization (PAE). Could you enlighten me on the benefits and potential medical problems/side effects of this procedure? -- S.L.N.

ANSWER: Before considering surgical solutions like PAE, you should consider a second medication along with tamsulosin, such as dutasteride or finasteride. These medicines shrink the prostate slowly over time and work well with tamsulosin and similar medicines.

They also reduce the risk of prostate cancer; however, they can cause sexual difficulties in men at a rate of about 5%, although they usually (but not always) diminish over time. Rarely, the reactions persist even after the medicine is stopped.

PAE involves identifying the artery to the prostate radiographically and injecting materials that block part of the blood flow, which causes the prostate to shrink. A recent review evaluated 11 different surgical therapies, including less-invasive procedures like PAE. PAE has less effectiveness than standard surgery, and retreatment rates are higher than with other treatments. However, sexual side effects are very low with this treatment. Side effects immediately after the procedure include difficulty urinating, nausea and vomiting.

I recommend finding an experienced urologist and discussing other options like standard surgery, laser surgery, a prostate lift, transurethral microwave thermotherapy, water vapor therapy, and more. A surgeon who knows your particular anatomy and your concerns for side effects can help you decide the best option.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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