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## TIDBITS® RIDES THE SCHOOL BUS

by Janet Spencer

Over 480,000 school buses operate daily in the U.S., transporting about 27 million students. This is the largest mass transit system in the country. Come with Tidbits as we ride the bus!

### HISTORY LESSON

- The earliest school buses were horse-drawn wagons with benches on both sides, first appearing around 1827. Kids boarded from the back to avoid alarming the horse. Wayne Works of Indiana became the first company to manufacture a wagon specifically for collecting school children in 1892.
- In 1869, Massachusetts was the first state to fund transportation for all school children. By 1919, every state funded similar programs.
- In 1915, International Harvester constructed the first motorized school bus.
- The first Blue Bird school bus was introduced in 1927. Today, Blue Bird is the nation's top producer of school buses.

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**For more info see page 13**

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SCHOOL BUS FACTS (cont)

- Among the 44 different design decisions made that week was painting every bus the same shade of yellow—a color with a touch of orange known as “National School Bus Glossy Yellow,” which is highly visible in dim light and bad weather. Standardizing this specific color allowed buses to be more easily recognized, which led to greater safety. Yellow paint, reflective outlines, and flashing lights all work together to ensure school buses are visible from 500 feet (152 m) away.
- School-bus yellow is so specialized that some state laws prohibit its use on private vehicles.
- Another design standardized in 1939 was to have students board the bus from a side door that opened curb-side. The back door was repurposed as an emergency exit. By now, the bus bodies were made entirely of steel instead of wood, with windows made of safety glass.
- The first swing-out stop-arm on a school bus was introduced in the 1950s, and laws were enacted making it illegal to pass a bus when it the arm was deployed. Today, flashing yellow lights indicate when a bus is about to stop or when it’s stopping to pick up students on the same side of the road. When yellow lights are flashing, it’s still legal to pass. When the red lights flash, indicating students are crossing the street, it’s illegal to pass.
- During World War II, bus manufacturing transitioned to military production, but demand for school buses surged after the war due to the Baby Boom and suburban expansion. One-room schoolhouses disappeared as more rural children were transported into town, with many school districts opting to own their own bus fleets.
- Today’s buses offer built-in Wi-Fi, route-optimizing mapping programs, and GPS tracking that allows parents to monitor the bus’s location via smartphone apps. Many models include collision avoidance systems and onboard cameras to enhance safety. (cont)

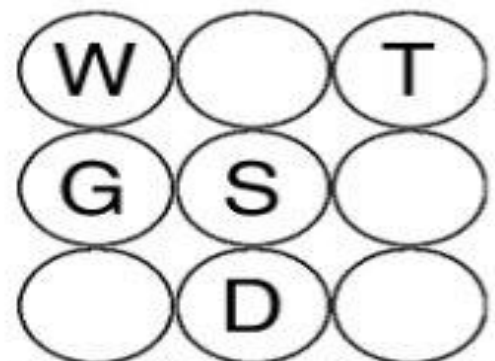


- To remove stubborn hard water deposits from a shower head (without removing it), do this trick: Add a cup of plain white vinegar to a zipper-top sandwich bag (or a larger bag with added vinegar to fit larger showerheads). Submerge shower head in the vinegar and draw bag up tightly around the stem. Use a rubber band to secure the plastic bag around the showerhead. Leave overnight. Remove, scrub and shower to release the deposits.
- "When moving, use foam plates as separators for your dinner plates. Use kitchen towels to wrap serving platters. If you have a box that separates glasses, drop a spice jar into each glass. Use all the space and you'll have less boxes to move." -- P.L. in South Carolina
- Borax can be used to keep sidewalks free of weeds. Simply sprinkle a little Borax on the sidewalk and sweep into the cracks. This is a very effective weed killer, but it will also kill your grass if you use too much, so keep it in the cracks only!
- "Have a stripped screw? Place a wide rubber band over the head and insert your drill. The rubber band fills in the stripped spots and makes the drill catch the screw. It works most of the time." -- D.D. in Nebraska
- "Make audio recordings or short videos of you reading your children's favorite books for them to play when you are busy doing housework, working or cooking." -- K.A. in Oregon
- If you have a sticky zipper, try running a candle along the zipper face, then zipping it up and down a few times.

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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SCHOOL BUS SAFETY (cont)

- School buses are regarded as one of the safest forms of transportation. They are also the most regulated vehicles on the road. A frequent question concerns the absence of seatbelts; they are considered redundant for the following reasons:
- Buses are heavier and sturdier than most other cars on the road. They have a low center of gravity for increased stability, so crash forces are distributed differently than they are in passenger cars and light trucks. During crash tests, it was found that the bus broke apart where sections were riveted together, posing a threat that children in a crash could be injured by pieces of the broken bus. Now, the bus frame is a single large piece, designed to keep the vehicle intact in a rollover situation.
- Buses are reinforced with steel ribs running down each side in three places: at floor level, seat level, and the level equal to the tops of the seats. These reinforcements not only increase protection in side-impact collisions but also indicate to rescuers where cuts should be made to release trapped children.
- Passengers are sitting high above the roadway, where they avoid the brunt of the impact.
- Passengers are protected by high-backed, thickly padded, and closely spaced seats, which absorb crash energy and minimize movement during sudden stops. This "compartmentalization" works similarly to eggs nestled in a carton.
- The roof is designed to support 1.5 times the vehicle's weight, making roll-overs survivable. Emergency exits are located in the rear of the bus as well as on the sides, with additional pop-out windows and an exit hatch in the roof.
- A specially positioned fuel tank enhances safety, and tires are selected for maximum traction. Interior flooring is also designed for increased slip resistance.

# Fun Fact

In 1867, on Coney Island, New York, an immigrant named Charles Feltman invented the first “hot dog bun,” enabling beachgoers to enjoy his “Frankfurter” sausages without needing plates or silverware. Over the next 60 years, Feltman’s “hot dog” stand grew into Feltman’s Ocean Pavilion, serving up to 40,000 hot dogs each day.

Source:  
[www.feltmansofconeyisland.com](http://www.feltmansofconeyisland.com)





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## Americanisms



“When I no longer thrill to the first snow of the season, I’ll know I’m growing old.”  
— Lady Bird Johnson

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Q: Do your school buses run on time?  
A: No, they run on diesel!

**TIDBITS QUOTE**

"I wasn't aiming at the school bus, but of course I got expelled anyway." -Rick Riordan

THE REAL DANGER

- Mile for mile, school bus fatalities occur at one-seventh the rate of all other auto accidents. However, on average, six school-age children die each year as passengers on school buses. From 2000 to 2023, 61 fatalities involved a driver illegally passing a stopped school bus, averaging 2.5 deaths annually.
- About two-thirds of children killed by a bus are killed by their own bus. Nearly all of these accidents happen within 10 feet (3 meters) of the bus during loading and unloading. The 10-foot area around a school bus poses the greatest risk of injury to children.
- Today, most buses are equipped with arms that swing out from the front bumper, blocking access to the area immediately in front of the bus where small children are invisible to the driver, who sits high above in the seat. This design forces kids to walk further in front of the bus so they can be seen.
- Dash cameras, rearview cameras, and oversized mirrors help reduce blind spots for bus drivers and increase student safety.
- Some buses are now equipped with traffic cameras that document vehicles illegally passing a stopped bus by recording license plates for enforcement. After installation in New York, officials observed that over 50,000 motorists per day illegally passed stopped buses in the state.
- Although vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds are exempt from seat belt laws, more and more states are opting to install three-point seatbelts in their buses. California was the first, in 2004, followed by Texas in 2010.
- School bus drivers must hold a Commercial Driver's License and undergo 40+ hours of training. Most bus drivers work about 180 days per year.
- Access to school buses significantly decreases student absences, reinforcing their value beyond cost considerations.



By Lucie Winborne

- The first animal ever cloned, the famous sheep Dolly, was named for singer-songwriter Dolly Parton.
- According to a study, dancers and choreographers reported the highest divorce rates.
- Students are more than four times more likely to drop out of school if they are unable to read proficiently by the third grade.
- Early hairspray formulas often used shellac, a resin secreted by female Kerria lacca bugs.
- Some scientists have speculated that a zombie apocalypse may not be impossible because humans are vulnerable to neurotoxins, parasites and viruses such as rabies, which can alter behavior and brain function. Prions, the proteins behind mad cow disease, can remain active in deceased tissue, while hypothetical nanobots could raise similar questions.
- Holes in crackers allow steam and gas to escape so the product will remain flat and crisp.
- According to Gallup, Inc., more people recognized the term "UFO" than remembered the name Gerald Ford in a poll taken just six months after Ford left the presidential office.
- The Wizard of Oz's full name is Oscar Zoroaster Phadrig Isaac Norman Henkel Emmannuel Ambroise Diggs. He called myself OZ because the other initials spelled P-I-N-H-E-A-D.
- Frida Kahlo is the only Mexican woman to have a major solo exhibition at the Louvre.
- In many early Northern European tribes slaves were forbidden from hunting since they were not allowed to own weapons or bear arms.

Thought for the Day:

"A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kickboxing." -- Emo Philips

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Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Lamp is different. 2. How the is missing. 3. Sign is shorter. 4. Napkin holder is missing. 5. Bar is smaller. 6. Shoe is shorter.



1. Spider-Man: Brand New Day  
(PG-13) Tom Holland, Zendaya
2. Insidious: Out of the Further  
(PG-13) Amelia Eve, Island Austin
3. The Odyssey  
(R) Matt Damon, Tom Holland
4. PAW Patrol: The Dino Movie  
(PG) Carter Young, Mckenna Grace
5. The End of Oak Street  
(PG-13) Anne Hathaway, Ewan McGregor
6. Mutiny  
(R) Jason Statham, Chaneil Kular
7. Tony  
(R) Dominic Sessa, Antonio Banderas
8. The Fast and the Furious  
(PG-13) Vin Diesel, Paul Walker
9. Spa Weekend  
(R) Leslie Mann, Isla Fisher
10. Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma  
(R) Jack Haven, Hannah Einbinder
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   | 4 |   | 7 |   | 1 | 5 |
| 1 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 6 |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   | 5 | 9 | 7 |   |   |
|   |   | 6 |   |   |   | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| 7 | 4 |   |   |   |   | 6 |   | 9 |
| 5 |   |   |   |   |   |   | 7 |   |
|   | 6 | 5 |   | 8 |   | 1 |   | 2 |
|   | 7 |   |   |   |   | 3 | 9 |   |
| 2 |   | 3 |   | 4 | 1 | 5 | 6 |   |

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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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.

JOSG LFRJ WOKQ OBBJOC,  
LGJ RXILJCX FI LGJCJ FQ  
FLI JQLFCJLX.  
— CJQJ WOZROU

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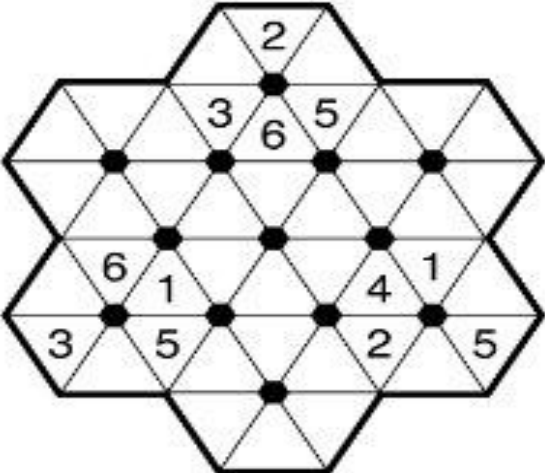
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DR. HOLLY CARLING  
AND ALICIA BALESHA

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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HealthBits

By Dr. Holly Carling

WHEN PAIN IS A PAIN

Nobody likes pain, but without this important communication tool, we’d be in big trouble. Pain is an alert system letting us know that something is wrong. Whether it is warning us that we are touching a hot stove and will get burned, or an organ that is in trouble sending out its red flag telling us there is some internal threat going on that needs attention, we’d best heed the warning. But when it is unrelenting, it can be a pain to have pain because it inhibits us in our life.

There are as many causes for pain as there are ways to respond to it. Some can tolerate grand levels of pain and be able to push through it, while someone else is incapacitated by it. There are also different classifications of pain.

First is acute or chronic. Acute is sudden onset - short-lived or can be the beginning of chronic pain. It’s usually the result of tissue damage such as fracture, torn ligament or strained muscle. It can also mean organ damage. Cancer, ulcers, irritable bowel, etc. are examples of organ damage. Chronic means that you’ve had pain for a while – it is long lasting. It is usually associated with a disease such as arthritis, autoimmune disorders, fibromyalgia or unresolved tissue damage.

Pain is generally associated with inflammation. Like pain itself, inflammation is important as it is a normal response of the body’s and is essential to healing. However, runaway inflammation can become chronic, and the pain associated with it can be severe. Localized swelling is a normal healing response contributing to the pain and is usually associated

with inflammation.

Chronic pain can be anywhere from dull, nagging and simply annoying, to extreme, needing medication or aggressive pain management. About 70% of those who manage their pain with medication have breakthrough pain – meaning the pain flares even when on medication.

Within the chronic pain category, is also nerve pain. Examples include diabetic neuropathy, post-herpetic neuralgia (shingles), trigeminal neuralgia (facial nerves), stroke, tumor, chemotherapy or radiation therapy. These are generally severe burning, numbness or sharp pains that can have a significant negative impact on lifestyle.

Most people when they think of alternative solutions to pain, they think of acupuncture. Well researched and validated in regards to pain, acupuncture is increasingly becoming the treatment of choice for both chronic and acute pain.

Acupuncture helps to reduce the runaway inflammation and swelling and promote healing. Although we don’t quite understand the full mechanism in acupuncture’s ability to trigger and support healthy healing response, the brain mechanism is pretty well understood.

Acupuncturists don’t just treat the pain. They treat everything else going on at the same time. When it comes to non-injury related pain, knowing all symptoms helps to determine causative factor, and when that is treated, the patient, not just his/her pain, improves. However, injury-related pain is very responsive to acupuncture treatments as well.

So when pain becomes too much of a pain in your life, it is time to consider acupuncture!



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](http://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.

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By Freddy Groves

### The OIG at work

The Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (VA OIG) has been busy. And as is typical, their work involves saving millions of dollars that should have gone to veterans services.

When the OIG analyzed the details about a contractor for the Veterans Crisis Line, they questioned why millions of dollars were paid when the work wasn't actually done. The job involved providing backup services for the toll-free 24/7 crisis line. However, that contractor didn't have enough staff, didn't train the staff they did have and didn't meet federal security requirements. Due to lack of contract oversight, the VA made payments to that contractor -- \$11.2 million worth -- for a year. The OIG, naturally, wants that money back.

Then there was the not-so-small matter of critical medical supplies and equipment and how those were managed. After being called on to inspect the practices at one certain VA facility, the OIG spent months looking at the inventory of expendable supplies, nonexpendable equipment, distribution controls and the leadership. What they found was so bad that four operating rooms had been closed because of lack of supplies, expired supplies and unreliable restocking, causing surgery backlogs and cancellations.

The OIG found expired supplies in operating rooms. (The OIG asked that they be removed, yet two months later the expired supplies were still there.) They discovered 50 pallets of supplies that were expired, damaged or obsolete. When it came to equipment, five pieces couldn't even be located. The value of missing nonexpendable items was \$10.5 million.

The facility had been awarded \$3.2 million for a contract for an inventory management system but never completely installed it and eventually disabled the program. They were then awarded more money to get the contractor to do the complete installation, and that wasn't done either.

Rumor is that the VA's OIG is not getting a bigger budget for 2027. That's ridiculous considering the amount of money they save the VA through their investigations.

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### Pet's dry eye may cause corneal scarring

**DEAR PAW'S CORNER:** My 9-year-old Terrier, "Buzzy," has developed what I think is an eye infection. She has red, irritated eyes and lots of yellowish discharge with runny tears. I called her veterinarian and will be taking her in to be seen this week. The tech on the phone told me it might also be "dry eye," which doesn't make sense with her runny eyes. What can I do to make her more comfortable ahead of the appointment? -- Beth in Santa Monica, California

**DEAR BETH:** Gently clear away the discharge from around Buzzy's eyes with a soft washcloth dipped in warm water. Don't use soap, as this can irritate her eyes further. This will provide some relief.

The vet will check for several additional symptoms to determine what's going on.

Just as with humans, dogs and cats can develop dry eye, known in medical terms as keratoconjunctivitis sicca, or KCS. Several conditions can cause dry eye: infections, injury, certain medications, hypothyroidism or, most common, an immune disorder.

Dry eye can cause scarring of the cornea if left untreated, because the condition changes natural tears so they produce less of the "film" that protects the cornea's surface. If the damage is bad enough, your dog's vision could be permanently impaired. So prompt evaluation by a vet is important -- kudos for contacting them so quickly.

There are very effective medications to manage Buzzy's symptoms, which stimulate tear production and replace tear film. During the first phase of treatment, you may need to administer these medications every two to six hours. Antibiotics may also be prescribed to treat any secondary infection. After this initial phase, Buzzy will probably need lifelong treatment to manage dry eye.

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

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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. Peter Tom Willis, a backup quarterback for the Chicago Bears from 1990 to 1993, played college football for which team?
2. In 1958, Willie O'Ree became the first Black player in the NHL when he took to the ice for which team?
3. Major League Baseball's Outstanding Designated Hitter Award is named after which Hall of Famer?
4. Sportswriter Allison "Al" Danzig is credited with coining what term to describe a tennis serve that the opponent fails to touch?
5. In 1985, Marshall Thundering Herd player Bruce Morris scored the "Shot Herd Round the World," the longest field goal in college basketball history. What was the distance?
6. What phrase was on a T-shirt worn by Washington Bullets' head coach Dick Motta during the team's celebration of their Game 7 NBA Finals win in 1978?
7. In the 1988 Oscar-winning film "Rain Man," Raymond Babbitt (Dustin Hoffman) is a fan of which Major League Baseball team?

Answers

1. The Florida State Seminoles.
2. The Boston Bruins.
3. Edgar Martinez.
4. Ace.
5. 89 feet, 10 inches.
6. "The Opera Isn't Over 'Til the Fat Lady Sings."
7. The Cincinnati Reds.

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A cartoon character of a newspaper or magazine with a face, arms, and legs, holding a steaming cup of coffee.

# ONE MORE FACT

A teenager living 5 miles from school and driving a 2008 Honda Civic emits 1.27 tons of CO2 by driving to school. By taking the bus, they can reduce their carbon footprint to 0.12 tons—less than one-tenth as much. A teenager living 5 miles from school can save \$686 in gas money annually by taking the bus to school.

The logo for "TIDBITS presents TRIVIA NEWSFRONT" with "TIDBITS" in a stylized font and "presents" in a smaller font below it, followed by "TRIVIA NEWSFRONT" in a bold, sans-serif font.

1. This is the only other country where school buses are required to be yellow.
2. Gwinnet County, near Atlanta, GA, maintains the country's largest fleet of school buses. How many do they have?
3. If a kid takes the bus from the first day of kindergarten to the last day of high school, how many times will they have ridden the bus, assuming perfect attendance?
4. How much does a new school bus cost?
5. What is the average age of a school bus driver?



By Terry and Kim Kovel

Art Glass

The Mt. Washington Glass Company was one of the most important American art glass makers of the 19th century. The company started in 1837 as the Mt. Washington Glass Works in South Boston. Later, it moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where it operated until it merged with the Pairpoint Manufacturing Co. in 1894. While it was in operation, Mt. Washington made art glass in many colors and finishes, like two-tone Amberina and Burmese, often embellished with gold and enamel. Its crown jewel may be the appropriately named Royal Flemish, which features panels of multiple colors outlined in gold. It was made by 1889, but the company did not patent it until 1894. Maroon is often one of the featured colors; shades of peach, pink, yellow, cream, and translucent white also appear. The glass is further embellished with designs like flying birds, flowers, or mythical creatures. Decorations were meant to evoke the exotic or antique. Royal Flemish was rarely marked, unlike some Mt. Washington glass lines, which doesn't worry collectors; it is usually unmistakable. Making Royal Flemish glass was a complicated process, so it was not copied by other companies. Even today, it has not been reproduced. This makes it all the more valuable. The covered jar shown here, decorated with medallions inspired by ancient Greek and Roman coins, sold for \$2,280 at Woody Auction.

Q: I bought a Japanese woodblock print at an estate sale. There is a handwritten note on the back that reads "Framed June 1962." I like the print, but I do not know much about this category of art. Because the marks are in Japanese, it has not been easy to find much about them through an Internet search. How can I find out if it is an old print by a known artist and what it may be worth?

A: Japanese woodblock prints have been popular collectibles for centuries. They became available in the West in the late 19th century. Generally, if you have a Japanese print and want to find out more information or a value, it is worth contacting an expert if the print is over 30 years old. If yours was framed in the 1960s, it certainly qualifies. If there is a museum in your area with a collection of Asian art, they may be able to help you identify your print, the artist, and its age, but not its value. Remember that prints, including Japanese woodblock prints, can be reprinted over many years. Look for books on Japanese prints, also called ukiyo-e, at your library. Many auction houses and dealers that sell artwork deal in Japanese prints and may be able to help you evaluate yours. There are some auction houses like the Ukiyo-e Gallery that specialize in them.

TIP: Never use hot or cold water on glass. Use dishwashing liquid, a soft toothbrush, and warm water. Rinse, then dry with a terrycloth towel.

CURRENT PRICES

Carnival glass, Harvest Grape, compote, marigold, scalloped rim, flared base, Indiana, 1960s, 8 1/2 inches, \$30.  
Textile, piano shawl, sky blue, ribbon, macrame border, diamond lattice, fringe, hand knotted, 1920s, 105 x 39 inches, \$115.  
Auto, sign, Goodrich, Guide Post, round, red and white, Slow Down, Safety First, porcelain, 20 inches, \$480.  
Bottle, Star Whiskey, cone shape, brown amber, ribbed, applied handle, embossed oval, mold blown, open pontil, W.B. Crowell Jr., New York, c. 1850, 8 inches, \$770.  
For more collecting news, tips and resources, visit [www.Kovels.com](http://www.Kovels.com)(c)



"The 78th Primetime Emmys" (TV-PG) -- It's time for the night of the year where primetime television gets its flowers! Premiering live on Sept. 14, the Emmys will be hosted by Mariska Hargitay ("Law & Order: Special Victims Unit"), and the categories are stacked with nominees from multiple HBO shows like "The Pitt," "Hacks," "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms," and "Euphoria." Netflix scored with nominations for shows like "Beef," "The Beast in Me," and "Black Rabbit." Not to mention Apple TV's "Widow's Bay" and "Pluribus" with 19 and 18 nominations, respectively! In addition, Michael J. Fox will be honored during the ceremony with the Bob Hope Humanitarian Award for his charitable efforts toward Parkinson's disease research. (Peacock)

"Monster: The Lizzie Borden Story" (TV-MA) -- This could be just me, but I do enjoy seeing a nepo baby flourish in the TV and film industry every once in a while, especially when their parents are as iconic as Ella Beatty's ("Feud: Capote vs. The Swans"). Daughter of acting legends Annette Bening ("Lucky") and Warren Beatty ("Rules Don't Apply"), Ella takes on the lead role of Lizzie Borden in the fourth season of the crime-drama anthology series "Monster." Starring opposite her are Charlie Hunnam, who played the titular role of Ed Gein in the third season of "Monster," as well as Billie Lourd and Sarah Paulson of "American Horror Story" fame. This season follows Lizzie in 1892 Massachusetts, as she becomes a primary suspect after her parents are found murdered in their home with a hatchet. All eight episodes release Sept. 17. (Netflix)

"Dancing with the Stars: Season 35" (TV-PG) -- Thirty-five seasons is an unbelievable feat for any television show, and with the buzz surrounding its new cast of contestants, "DWTS" still seems far from facing cancellation. (I'm not complaining, though!) "Summer House's" Ciara Miller, who just came out of a recent scandal as a reality TV darling, was one of the first of the 16 contestants to be announced, along with "Love Island" presenter Maura Higgins. But the cast announcements that have truly rocked the world of "DWTS" fans were regarding to actress Julia Stiles from "10 Things I Hate About You," actress/dancer Jenna Dewan from "Step Up" (get ready for all the "Wait, she can dance!" comments), and "Glee's" Harry Shum Jr. The season's set for a two-night premiere, beginning Sept. 15! (Disney+)

"Jay-Z in 8" (TV-14) -- "Allow me to reintroduce myself," teases Jay-Z in the trailer for this new eight-part docuseries. Sitting down with record producer/co-founder of Def Jam Recordings Rick Rubin, Jay-Z partakes in intimate discussions about his career, music, life experiences and creative processes. The black-and-white series was shot over the span of two days in a stunning and quiet hall in Paris, with Jay-Z recounting how he started writing music from the age of 9 and leading into how he produced iconic songs like "No Church in the Wild," "99 Problems," and "4:44." The first two episodes premiere on Sept. 18, with new episodes coming every Friday. (HBO Max)  
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1. TELEVISION: What is the name of Jon Snow's dire wolf in "Game of Thrones"?
2. HISTORY: Which Civil War general literally used "scorched earth" tactics in his march from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia?
3. MOVIES: Which 1960s movie has the tagline, "A man went looking for America, and he couldn't find it anywhere"?
4. GEOGRAPHY: Which body of water includes islands known as the Seychelles?
5. CHEMISTRY: Which element's symbol is Sn?
6. LITERATURE: What is the length of a traditional sonnet?
7. GEOLOGY: What is a common name for calcium carbonate?
8. FOOD & DRINK: Which fast-food chain goes by the name Hungry Jack in Australia?
9. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president gave radio addresses that were described as "fireside chats"?
10. ASTRONOMY: What is the shape of the Milky Way?

Trivia answers

1. Ghost.
  2. General William T. Sherman.
  3. "Easy Rider."
  4. Indian Ocean.
  5. Tin (stannum).
  6. 14 lines of poetry.
  7. Limestone or chalk.
  8. Burger King.
  9. Franklin D. Roosevelt.
  10. Spiral.
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Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally  
Unlisted clue hint: LOLLY— WASTE TIME

Bowyang  
Bumfuzzle  
Codswallop  
Collop

Discombobulate  
Ganzo  
Kerfuffle  
Malarkey

Mugwump  
Ornery  
Quire  
Skedaddle

Snool  
Wabbit  
Xertz

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## Make a Family-Style Salade Nicoise

It's market time! On weekend mornings, I like to saunter through our neighborhood farmers market amid the crowds of people who, like me, are attracted to the "picked at their peak" vegetables, flowers, eggs, honey and jams in colorful stalls. Adults and kids alike visit with vendors, while friends happily bump into one another for a chat.

Since produce is overflowing at markets and grocery stores, there's no better time to make a fresh, easy-to-prepare dish that the whole family will love. I was recently inspired by my friend, Ann Francois, to make a big salade nicoise for the centerpiece of her dining table at a recent gathering with our friends.

While I have vivid memories of traveling in southern France and feasting on this country salad (which is typically composed of tomatoes, tuna, hard-boiled-egg halves, and anchovies on a bed of lettuce, dressed with a vinaigrette), Ann's version featured the addition of locally sourced new potatoes and mounds of green beans. Each ingredient was artfully arranged on a platter and served with crusty French bread.

Make this healthy salad with your kids for a light and simple-to-prepare main course. What makes it so family-friendly is that you can tweak it to suit tastes. Add artichoke hearts, capers, or grilled red peppers. Don't like anchovies? Just skip them!

### SALADE NICOISE

Serves 6

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 head Boston lettuce, separated into leaves, washed and dried
- 1 pound firm green beans, preferably French string beans (haricot verts), cooked just beyond the tender-crisp stage and chilled
- 1 pound new potatoes, cooked and halved
- 2-3 (5- or 6-ounce) cans albacore solid white tuna, drained and flaked, or grilled fresh tuna, cut into chunks
- 3 large vine-ripe tomatoes, sliced into wedges
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, halved lengthwise
- 1 cup pitted black olives
- 1 (2-ounce) can anchovy fillets, rinsed and patted dry (optional)

To make the vinaigrette, in a jar, let kids measure and shake vigorously to combine the oil, vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, garlic, salt and pepper. Set aside.

To assemble the salad, working together with your kids, arrange the lettuce over a large serving platter. Top with mounds of the green beans, potatoes, tuna, tomatoes, eggs and olives. Drape the anchovy fillets (if using) over the potatoes. Drizzle vinaigrette over the salad and serve.

Donna Erickson creates relationships and community through food and fun. Find more to nourish and delight you at [www.donnaerickson.com](http://www.donnaerickson.com).  
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**ARIES (March 21 to April 19)** With your Arian charm quotient at an almost all-time high this week (plus all the facts to back you up), you just might win over the last doubters of your proposal.

**TAURUS (April 20 to May 20)** You might be in line for a job change that you applied for. But be advised that you could be called on to defend your qualifications against supporters of other applicants.

**GEMINI (May 21 to June 20)** Creating a new approach to an old idea is one way to get beyond a workplace impasse. There are no such problems in your personal life, where things continue to flow smoothly.

**CANCER (June 21 to July 22)** Be more forthcoming about your feelings concerning a proposed change either in your workplace or in your personal life. Your opinions are valuable. Don't keep them hidden.

**LEO (July 23 to August 22)** A changing situation in your life needs more patience than you appear to be willing to offer. Allowing it to develop at its own pace is the wisest course you can take at this time.

**VIRGO (August 23 to September 22)** With more stability in your life -- both on personal and professional levels -- this could be a good time to strengthen relationships with both friends and colleagues.

**LIBRA (September 23 to October 22)** People have always relied on your integrity not only to get the job done, but to get it done right. So, don't be pressured by anyone into cutting corners to save time.

**SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21)** While others might get rattled over unexpected changes, your ability to adapt calmly and competently helps you make a positive impression during a crucial period.

**SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21)** A changing environment might be daunting for some, but the adventurous Sagittarian takes it all in stride. Meanwhile, a friend from the past could awaken some meaningful memories.

**CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19)** With your self-assurance rising to full strength, the bold Goat should feel confident about opening up to new ventures, as well as new relationships.

**AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18)** Reaching out to someone who has been unkind to you might not be easy. But in the long run, it'll prove to have been the right thing to do. A friend offers moral support.

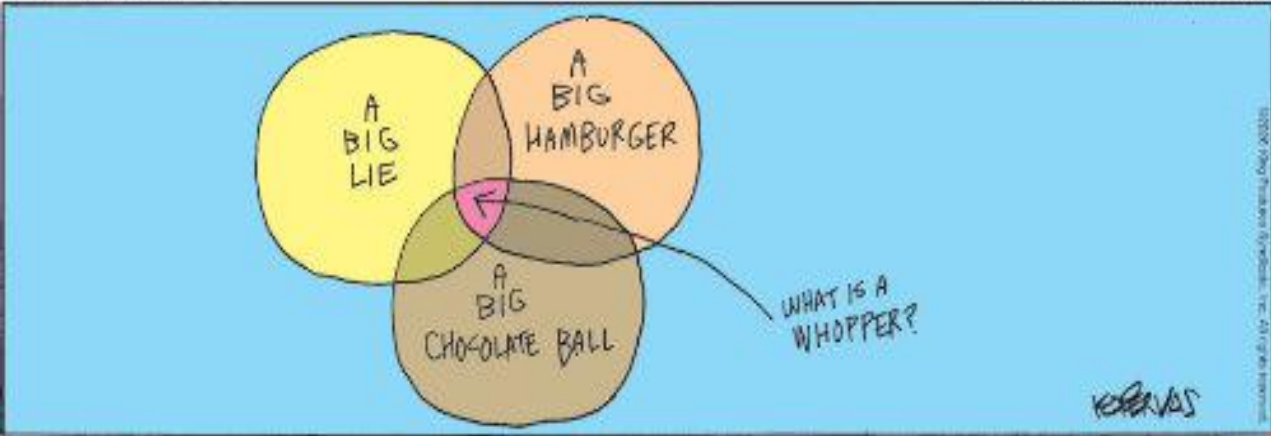
**PISCES (February 19 to March 20)** Your keen insight once again helps you work through a seemingly insoluble problem in your workplace. The weekend offers a good chance to develop new relationships.

**BORN THIS WEEK:** You have a penchant for finding details that others would overlook. You would make a fine research scientist, designer, or editor.

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Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



### CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, it will equal Q throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: V equals S

UPSY M VSS VNQSXPMYO  
ESBWWZ KLXS BYF OSX XPS  
LEOS XN SQGSWWMP MX,  
M KEZ "PNU BFNEYBGWS!"

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Super Crossword

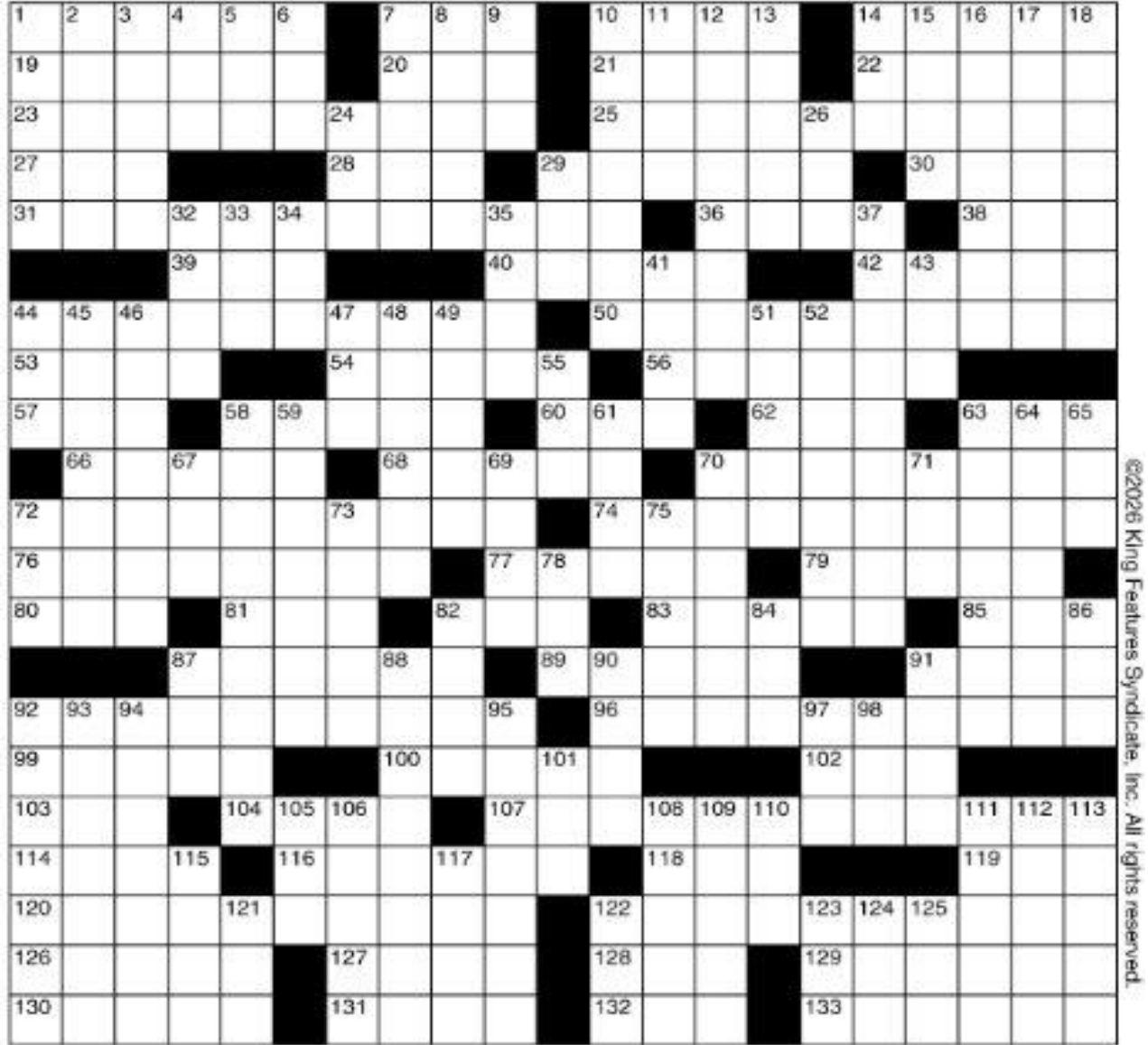
U2

**ACROSS**  
1 Sleep out in a tent  
7 Nutrition std.  
10 Fishing throw  
14 Alpaca's kin  
19 "Moonlight" actress Harris  
20 Suffix of element names  
21 Analogy words  
22 Ancient Athens or Sparta, e.g.  
23 Construction vehicles with tilting beds  
25 Chooses a finger over a pacifier  
27 Before, in verse  
28 "The Raven" writer  
29 German art songs  
30 Qatari capital  
31 1920s-'30s American mobster  
36 Young lady  
38 "Ball —"  
39 Slugger Gehrig  
40 Plant swelling  
42 How food is often fried  
44 Title dragon of a '70s kids' show  
50 Silly sorts

**DOWN**  
53 French suffix with jardin  
54 Neighbor of Venus  
56 Fish-tailed males of myth  
57 Hi-tech "appt. book"  
58 Radical type  
60 1040 org.  
62 Suffix with ball or bass  
63 Roman 901  
66 Northern French river  
68 Roofing piece  
70 Essential (to)  
72 Stiff-bristled bath item  
74 Dazed from a heavy blow  
76 Incentive  
77 GI no-shows  
79 Small needle cases  
80 Suffix with Canton  
81 Turkey Day vegetable  
82 GI R&R center  
83 Racecar fuel  
85 Articulate  
87 River crafts  
89 "Cool beans!"  
91 Get weary  
92 No-bake pie base  
96 Some heirs' cash sources  
99 Concerning kidneys

**ACROSS**  
100 Brooklyn art institute  
102 Granola bit  
103 Big bush bird  
104 Apiece  
107 Brand of popcorn with peanuts  
114 Part of UTEP  
116 Deep and hoarse, as a voice  
118 — de toilette  
119 Hugs, in a love letter  
120 "Painful to face the reality!"  
122 Speechless from shock  
126 Very mad  
127 Actor Liu of "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings"  
128 Mined matter  
129 Séance state  
130 Stocking fiber  
131 Padlock part  
132 Oozy gunk  
133 Alternatives to Cokes

**DOWN**  
1 Stopped  
2 Pacific island republic  
3 Sky streaker  
4 Band blaster  
5 Sch. in Cambridge  
6 According to  
7 Big name in photocopiers  
8 Blue Devils' sch.  
9 Mornings, in brief  
10 Inhabitant  
11 Tennis great Arthur  
12 Seven-card poker variety, e.g.  
13 Marisa of film  
14 Vinyl albums, in brief  
15 Booming  
16 Liquor  
17 Russia's Gorbachev  
18 Tears into  
24 Scannable ID in a market  
26 "It's cold!"  
29 U.K. "Inc."  
32 Sleuth's aid  
33 Great athletes get elected to it; Abbr.  
34 54-Across orbits it  
35 Headed out  
37 Compared with  
41 Daisy relatives, for short  
43 Mother Teresa, e.g.  
44 Place for a fanny pack  
45 Censors, as part of a text  
46 With 122-Down, rodent with a bark-like cry  
47 Ready  
48 Ankle bone  
49 Eurasian mountains  
51 Horse to bust  
52 Suffocate  
55 Homer, e.g.  
58 Not for sale  
59 Matt of "Friends"  
61 Taken-back auto, for one  
63 Village People album with the song "Y.M.C.A."  
64 Kind of roof with four sloping sides  
65 Sort  
67 Addition total  
69 "Eureka!" moments  
70 As originally placed  
71 Minions' leader in "Despicable Me"  
72 Fresno-to-L.A. dir.  
73 Gossipy tidbit  
75 Pertaining to an arm bone  
78 Got the gold  
82 Gorbachev's fed.  
84 How- — (DIY manuals)  
86 "Of course!"  
87 Nashville awards org.  
88 Great elation  
90 Rebuke to "Brute"  
91 Ballet attire  
92 Entered stealthily  
93 Wed again  
94 Anomalous  
95 Affixes to a corkboard, e.g.  
97 Cargo weight  
98 Relatives, informally  
101 Test out  
105 Frau's "Alas!"  
106 Pulverize  
108 Prefix with biology  
109 Tiny role  
110 Wheel middle  
111 Verbs' counterparts  
112 Spherical bacteria  
113 Improves superficially, with "up"  
115 Filmmaker Preminger  
117 24/7 sources of \$20 bills  
121 Cackling bird  
122 See 46-Down  
123 Inits. at Indy  
124 Half of sei  
125 Jay-Z's genre



- On Sept. 28, 1542, Spanish explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo became the first European to sail into San Diego Bay, which he named San Miguel and claimed for Spain. The bay was given its present name in 1602 by Sebastian Vizcaino, who was also the first person to note certain ecological features of California's coast.
- On Sept. 29, 1885, the world's first practical public electric tramway, designed by Michael Holroyd Smith, opened in Blackpool, England, using an underground "conduit" system to supply electricity rather than overhead wires. The route is still active today, operating modern light rail vehicles.
- On Sept. 30, 1934, St. Louis Browns coach Charley O'Leary "unretired" to good effect by becoming the oldest player to get a hit and score a run in the major leagues, at age 58.
- On Oct. 1, 1962, Barbra Streisand signed her first recording contract with Columbia Records. Her manager, Marty Erlichman, negotiated full artistic and creative control, including the right for Streisand to choose her own songs, in exchange for a lower initial pay rate of a \$20,000 advance.
- On Oct. 2, 1985, Hollywood heartthrob Rock Hudson died of AIDS related complications, just a few months after publicly acknowledging he had the disease at a hospital in Paris where he was seeking treatment.
- On Oct. 3, 1997, 69-year-old Hall of Famer Gordie Howe, who was known as "Mr. Hockey" and played his first NHL game when Harry Truman was president, skated the first shift with the Detroit Vipers in their International Hockey League opener for a total of just 40 seconds but became the only professional in the sport to compete in six decades. Afterward, he thanked the Vipers for "putting up with me."
- On Oct. 4, 2011, Michael Morton, who served 25 years in prison for the murder of his wife, Christine Morton, was released after DNA evidence implicated convicted felon Mark Alan Norwood in the crime. The prosecutor in the case later was accused of withholding evidence indicating Morton's innocence.

# SENIOR NEWS LINE

By Matilda Charles

## Beware the supplements on TV

If you're home during the day and have spent much time with the television on, you've no doubt been inundated with advertising for supplements that promise to change your life. By the time you've heard those ads 30 times you can probably quote them word for word. And at some point you might even be tempted to just dial that number and place an order.

Don't do it.

Just because companies create slick ads that sound like they'll solve all your problems doesn't mean it's safe for you to use their products, especially if you take any prescription drugs or have a medical condition.

Supplements are not approved by the Food and Drug Administration. The FDA doesn't evaluate those types of products and doesn't conduct any trials to check their safety and recommended dosage. The supplement companies are required to tell you this in their advertising, but it's in all that tiny text at the bottom of the TV screen that's impossible to read.

Learn all you can about potential drug interactions. Go first to [drugs.com](https://www.drugs.com) and click on the Drug Interaction Checker. Type in the name of your drug. Then type in the name of whatever you're considering taking and see what it says. I tried this with one of my prescription drugs and added one of the frequently advertised products and it showed 11 potential drug interactions. There were also some possible uncomfortable side effects, even without the possible drug interactions.

Seniors are especially targeted by the manufacturers of those supplements, hoping we'll believe their slick claims if we see those ads often enough. It's a billion-dollar industry, and they want your money. Before you dial that number on the TV screen, dial your doctor's office and ask if the supplement is something you should have. Chances are they will say no.

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## DOES MY DAD NEED ASSISTED LIVING OR MEMORY CARE?

Deciding between assisted living and memory care can feel overwhelming, especially when you're thinking about the well-being of someone you love or yourself. It's an emotional journey, but understanding the difference between these two types of care can help you make a decision that brings peace and comfort.

1. Balancing Independence with Support  
Assisted living is designed for those who may need some help with daily tasks like dressing, bathing, or medication management but still value their independence. If your loved one enjoys being active and social but occasionally needs assistance, assisted living could be the perfect balance. It offers a supportive environment while still allowing them to lead a fulfilling and independent life with access to care when needed.

2. Focusing on Memory and Safety  
Memory care is more specialized, offering a secure, compassionate environment for those living with Alzheimer's, dementia, or other memory-related conditions. If your loved one is struggling with memory loss, confusion, or disorientation, memory care provides a structured, nurturing space with professionals who understand their unique needs. These communities are designed to create a sense of comfort, safety, and stability for residents who

might feel anxious or disoriented in everyday environments.

3. Considering Safety and Peace of Mind  
When safety becomes a concern—such as wandering or forgetting to turn off the stove—memory care provides round-the-clock support in a secure setting. Knowing your loved one is cared for in a safe, warm community can offer a sense of relief and peace.

4. Assessing the Level of Care  
It's important to recognize when a bit of extra help is needed. A good place to start is by talking to your loved one's primary care provider. Share your concerns about day-to-day needs and let them help assess whether assisted living or memory care might be the better option. If your loved one is still able to communicate their needs, but could use assistance, assisted living is a great option. If they need more constant care and supervision, or have lost the ability to express their needs or desires, memory care is likely the best choice.

Trust your heart and the professionals to help guide you as to what your loved one needs. There are no right and wrong decisions, but educating yourself on the options available will help you make the choice that feels right for their care and happiness. Call me today for a free consultation in navigating assisted living and memory care options.



**Becky Georgius**  
Sales and Marketing Director  
The Lodge Assisted Living and Memory Care Communities  
208-457-3403

"Clean up my room? You act like \_\_\_\_\_ is just around the corner."

### SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

|        |                    |             |             |             |
|--------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Chart  | <div>HAMNET</div>  | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| Former | <div>RIPOR</div>   | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| Candid | <div>SO THEN</div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| Patrol | <div>STUCO</div>   | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |

**TODAY'S WORD**



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### Micro Crossword

By Elizabeth C. Gorski

**Across**

1 Time's partner

6 Video-streaming brand, and the Japanese word for "six"

7 Apple hollower

8 Sweeteners in a fruit smoothie

9 Potions professor at Hogwarts

**Down**

2 "Music" to a punster's ears

3 Heart line

4 Enya's "How Can \_\_\_ From Singing?"

5 Nightingale, for one

7 Vinyl successors, in short

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

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### TIDBITS WORD POWER

Unscramble this word:

SUMONIB

The word bus is a contraction of this Latin word meaning "for all."

### KNIGHT MOVES

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| A | Y | E |
| N |   | R |
| C | V | L |

Unlock the power of chess to find the eight-letter word of the day. Choose your starting letter carefully, then move around the square in a one by two fashion to get to the next letter.

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### TIDBITS NUGGET OF KNOWLEDGE

The average age of a school bus in the U.S. is about 9.3 years. The average lifespan of a school bus is 12-15 years or 250,000 miles.

TIDBITS PUZZLE ANSWERS

Quiz BITS

ANSWERS

1. 31 miles  
2. 1844, April, 12 (Wednesday)

WORD POWER

ANSWER

OMNIBUS

TRIAL NEWSPAPER

ANSWERS

1. 1000  
2. 1000  
3. 1000  
4. 1000  
5. 1000

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

SNOWFLAKES

solution

SCRAMBLERS

Solution

1. Anthem; 2. Prior  
3. Honest; 4. Scout

Today's Word

CHRISTMAS

KNIGHT MOVES

Answer

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| A | Y | E |
| N |   | R |
| C | V | L |

CRAVENLY

STARCHES

Word Spiral

Answer

ABDOMINAL

Even Exchange

Answers

1. Great, Great  
2. Temple, Temple  
3. Snake, Snake  
4. Sun, Sun  
5. Police, Police

6. Carve, Carve  
7. Arctic, Arctic  
8. Holy, Holy  
9. Travel, Travel  
10. Throat, Throat

MINI SUDOKU

Answer

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| 2 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| 1 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| 6 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| 5 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 |

Micro Crossword

Answer

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | G | A | I | N |
|   | R | O | K | U |
| C | O | R | E | R |
| D | A | T | E | S |
| S | N | A | P | E |

CryptoQuote

answer

I don't want problems solved for me. I want the fishing rod, not the fish.

— Yanni

CryptoQuip

answer

What could you call people who vote "no" on something in a legislative assembly?

Anti bodies.

Super Crossword

Answers

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | O | T | A | S | E | C |   | L | A | I | D |   | S | T | P |   | S | A | U | L |
| A | D | A | P | T | E | R |   | E | B | R | O |   | H | O | E |   | T | O | R | I |
| S | I | X | T | Y | W | A | T | T | E | A | U |   | I | N | A | S | E | N | S | E |
| P | E | I | S |   | B | A | T | T | E | R | I | N | G | R | A | M | E | A | U |   |
|   |   |   | P | U | P | U |   |   |   |   | T | B | A | L | L |   |   |   |   |   |
| B | E | L | L | E | A | U | T | E | L | E | P | H | O | N | E |   | M | E | A | L |
| O | N | E | H | A | L | F | R | E | L | O | A | N |   | C | A | R | L | O |   |   |
| A | T | T | A | R |   | F | I | R | E | S | I | D | E | C | H | A | T | E | A | U |
|   |   |   | E | T | S |   | D | S | T |   |   |   | S | H | A | M | E |   |   |   |
| G | R | E | A | S | E |   | A | L | O | H | A | S |   | O | K | A | Y | I | N | G |
| A | I | R |   | P | L | A | T | E | A | U | D | U | J | O | U | R |   | N | U | I |
| S | C | H | O | L | A | R |   | A | R | M | A | N | I |   | N | O | P | E | T | S |
|   |   |   | L | A | N | A | I |   |   |   | M | A | A |   | E | X | E |   |   |   |
| J | O | L | L | Y | O | L | D | C | H | A | P | E | A | U |   | A | T | I | L | T |
| A | N | T | I | S |   | L | O | O | F | A | S |   | N | O | V | E | L | L | A |   |
| B | O | D | E |   | T | H | E | M | I | G | H | T | Y | T | H | O | R | E | A | U |
|   |   |   |   |   | S | H | O | R | E |   |   | A | C | O | W |   |   |   |   |   |
| B | A | T | E | A | U | O | U | T | O | F | H | E | L | L |   | I | D | E | E |   |
| E | L | E | V | E | N | P | M |   | L | A | M | B | E | A | U | R | O | A | S | T |
| G | O | N | E |   | K | O | O |   | L | I | M | B |   | R | A | I | N | M | A | N |
| S | E | T | S |   | S | E | R |   | A | R | M | S |   | A | R | M | E | N | I | A |

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TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

By Dr. Keith Roach

High Cortisol Causes Patient To Feel Awful Amid Normal Tests

DEAR DR. ROACH: I've been feeling just awful. My doctor put me through the normal tests, and all were good. A neurologist recommended that I get a cortisol test. I did, and it showed a high cortisol level. I'd never heard of this. Would you explain what high cortisol is, how it's treated, and if there are any natural cures or therapies? -- S.K.

ANSWER: Cortisol is a critical hormone that is needed for the function of many body systems. Without cortisone, the body can't respond to stress, and a stressful event can literally kill a patient.

A medical condition called Addison's disease is when the body can't make cortisol (a type of steroid called a glucocorticoid). People with this condition need to take replacement cortisol or a synthetic form daily, and they need to take higher doses when under stress to prevent this. Addison's disease was most often caused by tuberculosis, but the leading cause of Addison's is an autoimmune disease of the adrenal cortex (where cortisone is made). People usually feel weak and tired with Addison's.

Cushing's syndrome is the opposite, where the body makes too much cortisone. The most common cause for this is a benign tumor. In Cushing's syndrome, the list of possible symptoms is seemingly endless, but fatigue and muscle weakness, weight gain in the abdomen but muscle loss in the limbs, and skin and hair changes are common. People can experience the same problem when taking high doses of cortisol or similar steroids such as prednisone, hydrocortisone or dexamethasone.

A cortisol level of 18 isn't diagnostic of Cushing's but almost certainly excludes Addison's disease. Depending on the time of

day, cortisol levels can be between 5-25 mcg/dL, so a level of 18 mcg/dL in the morning may be normal. People with high levels of stress tend to have high to normal cortisol levels.

In contrast, a level of 18 mcg/dL at bedtime would be a very concerning sign for Cushing's. If your doctors were worried about Cushing's, additional testing could be recommended such as a 24-hour urine cortisol test, a bedtime salivary cortisol test, or checking the blood cortisol after suppressing its release with medication.

An endocrinologist is the expert in making the diagnosis and treating diseases of the adrenal hormones, including Addison's and Cushing's.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm 77 years old and concerned about getting a prostate biopsy. My last PSA test jumped from 2.25 to 3.75 ng/mL, and an MRI came back healthy and normal with a PI-RADS code of 2. My urologist suggested a biopsy to be sure that everything is OK, but he also felt comfortable if I wanted to wait six months and get another PSA test done.

I am in good health, exercise regularly, and am not on any medications. Also, can strenuous bike riding affect my PSA score? -- W.B.

ANSWER: A PI-RADS score of 2 means that there's a small chance of clinically significant prostate cancer. The best estimate of your risk is between 4% and 6%. One question I'd ask is whether you'd undergo surgery if a biopsy showed cancer. Surgery is associated with a worsened quality of life; erectile dysfunction and incontinence are common shortly after surgery and persist in many men.

The evidence suggests that in men over 75, surgery doesn't improve their length of life. In a large study, the length of life was actually decreased in men over 75. Radiation treatment is a reasonable alternative for men with symptomatic prostate cancer, so in the unlikely event that you develop symptoms from prostate cancer, this would be a reasonable approach.

Also, bike riding (250 miles over four days) had an increase of less than 0.1 ng/mL for a PSA test.

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](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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