



**City Council passes
2026 Budget plan.**



Chicago is one step closer to avoiding a government shutdown. The new budget does not include the head tax that would tax large corporations, which Mayor Brandon Johnson has been pushing for. The final budget passed 30 in favor and 18 opposing. Some highlights of the new budget include: Increasing the city's plastic bag tax from 10 to 15 cents. Overhauling tax on off-premise liquor sales. Legalizing video gambling terminals in Chicago. Selling debt owed to the city for unpaid fines and fees. Aldermen estimated \$6.8 million in new revenue in 2026 from legalizing video gambling. In proposing to increase the city's plastic bag tax, aldermen estimate \$8.7 million in new revenue. The Mayor's budget team claimed that the new move would generate only \$5.2 million, due to a likely drop in shoppers using plastic bags. The alternative budget estimated \$6 million in new revenue from a new 1.5 tax on off-premise liquor

sales, replacing the current volume based tax, with different rates for beer, wine, and spirits. The mayor's budget team estimated that move would actually result in a \$4.2 million loss for the city. The worst point for the mayor's budget team was the aldermen's proposal to bring in \$89.6 million from selling the debt owed to the city for unpaid fines and fees. Johnson's aides said the plan is not feasible and would not generate actual money from the city, claiming there is no realistic way to find investors to buy debt for things like unpaid parking tickets when the city has no authority to seize vehicles or place liens on property for such debt. "Even though this 1.67% of this budget could have severe consequences of those very people, (the poorest communities) their fight has not ended because this vote has been taken" said the Mayor. Brandon Johnson announced that he will not veto the 2026 budget. **Chicago Government Stays Open...For Now.**

IT MAKES CENTS



IT MAKES CENTS

For more than two centuries, the penny has been a staple of American currency. Introduced in 1793, it quickly became a fixture in everyday transactions and a marker of value in a growing nation. On November 12, 2025, the U.S. Mint pressed its final batch of one-cent coins. Officially bringing the penny's long history to a close.

But why now?

What prompted the Treasury to end production of this iconic coin, and how will its disappearance affect the way we use cash?

Why was the penny discontinued?

The decision to retire the penny was not made lightly. It involved years of debate, studies, and resistance. Ultimately, the move

boils down to a mix of hard economic data and shifting consumer behavior. The most compelling argument against the penny has always been the price tag attached to making it. It is a strange economic paradox when money costs more to make than it is worth. In recent years, the cost of zinc and copper, the primary metals used in minting has skyrocketed. By the time the final batch was pressed this past November, it cost the U.S. Mint nearly 4 cents to produce and distribute a single 1-cent coin. This negative seigniorage (the difference between the value of money and the cost to produce it) meant the government was losing annually just to keep change in our pockets. By discontinuing the penny, the U.S Treasury estimates an annual sav-

ing of approximately \$56 million. These are taxpayer funds that can now be redirected to more vital financial infrastructure. Following Global Trends The global trend has been moving away from low-denomination coins for decades. Canada: Phased out their penny in 2012. Australia and New Zealand: Both nations eliminated their 1 and 2 cent coins in the year 1990s. Europe: Several countries using the Euro have stopped minting 1 and 2 cent coins.

So the presses have stopped. Does that mean your pennies are worthless?

No, but the way we handle cash is about to change.

The Rounding System

Electronic payments do not require physical coins, so a charge of \$19.99 remains \$19.99. However, if you pay with cash, the total bill will be rounded to the nearest nickel. Example: A charge of \$10.02 becomes \$10.00. A charge of \$10.04 becomes \$10.05. The death of the penny acknowledges that our economy has grown and changed and moves us one step closer to a cashless society, though physical money still holds a vital place in our world. While no new pennies are being made, billions remain in circulation, and they are still legal tender. You can continue to use them to pay for goods if you have them, though retailers are likely to phase them out of their drawers quickly.

Editorial & Opinions

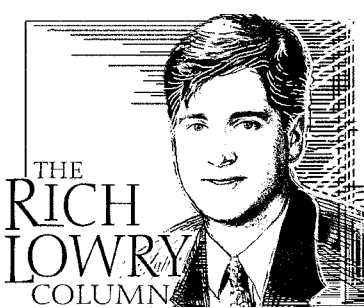


- On Jan. 5, 1914, Henry Ford made the welcome announcement that he was doubling his assembly-line employees' pay. However, there was a perhaps not-so-welcome catch — home inspections to check for alcohol consumption and untidy living quarters.
- On Jan. 6, 1996, snow began blanketing Washington, D.C., and the eastern seaboard in a blizzard that killed 154 people and ended up costing more than a billion dollars in damages before it ended.
- On Jan. 7, 1891, future novelist and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston was born in Notasulga, Alabama. Though she would eventually publish more books than any other Black woman in America, by the time she died in 1960 she'd failed to gain a mainstream audience and was poor and alone in a welfare hotel. Today she is considered one of the most important Black writers in American history.
- On Jan. 8, 1963, Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece,



- the Mona Lisa, was exhibited for the first time in the U.S. at Washington, D.C.'s National Gallery of Art. More than 2,000 dignitaries, including President John F. Kennedy, came out to view it. The exhibit opened to the public the following day.
- On Jan. 9, 1984, Angelo Buono, one of the Hillside Stranglers, was sentenced to life in prison for his role in the rape, torture and murder of 10 young women in Los Angeles. His cousin and partner in crime, Kenneth Bianchi, testified against Buono to escape the death penalty himself.
 - On Jan. 10, 1863, the London Tube, the world's first urban underground rail-

- way, opened. Since its first tunnel ran under the River Thames and had no ventilation, it was always filled with smoke.
- On Jan. 11, 1775, Francis Salvador, the first Jewish person to hold an elected office in the Americas, took his seat on the South Carolina Provincial Congress. In July he earned the nickname the "Southern Paul Revere" when he rode 30 miles to warn of a Cherokee attack on backcountry settlements, and just a month later he became the first recorded Jewish soldier to be killed in the Revolutionary War.



Australia's dangerous naivete

The Bondi Beach attack in Australia was shocking, but not at all surprising. Some of the details were distinctive — an idyllic spot on the Pacific Ocean instantly turned into a killing field, a father-son terror squad — but the basic picture of a radicalized Muslim immigrant targeting a gathering of Jews was dreadfully familiar.

These events follow the same pattern because the fundamentalist version of Islam is, at its root, hostile to Jews. Let's say that there was a refugee flow of Unitarians, and some portion of those Unitarians was antagonistic to traditional Christians, such that they vandalized their businesses, harassed them in the streets and launched massive protests in favor of overseas Unitarian terror groups. In that case, we'd obviously cast a skeptical eye on Unitarian immigration.

Yet, this hasn't been true of Muslim immigration. Mainstream political parties across the West that have championed this open-handed policy are, understandably, losing ground to restrictionist parties that are more clear-eyed about the realities of immigration.

Antisemitism comes in all sorts of varieties, whether Christian, Muslim or secular. Still, it'd startle us to learn that someone attending a fundamentalist Christian church went and shot up a Jewish event, whereas it's not that unusual in an adherent of fundamentalist Islam.

Now, there are different interpretations of Islam, and it's not the role of an outsider to say which is correct. The key point is that important Muslim authorities and countless millions of the faithful embrace a fundamentalist version influential in war-torn areas of the broader Middle East that have sent so many refugees to the West.

The fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood — Hamas is the Palestinian branch — was markedly antisemitic

well before the establishment of the state of Israel. As one analyst has noted, its anti-Jewish agitation included "boy-cotts, graffiti and physical violence."

Sound familiar? A rancid paranoia about the Jews runs through this worldview. The 20th century Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb referred to "the tricks played by world Jewry so that the Jews may penetrate into body politic of the whole world and then may be free to perpetuate their evil designs."

The original 1988 Hamas charter reads like a transcript of the Candace Owens podcast, except with an armed wing attached. It avers that the Jews "strived to amass great and substantive material wealth," and used it to take "control of the world media." They are responsible for the French and Bolshevik revolutions, indeed, "most of the revolutions we heard and hear about." They founded "secret societies, such as Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, the Lions and others in different parts of the world for the purpose of sabotaging societies."

They started World War I and World War II — indeed, "there is no war going on anywhere, without having their finger in it." The document pronounced its support for Muhammad's prediction: "The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Muslims, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him."

On top of all of this, it is believed that any territory once ruled by Muslims (i.e., all of Israel) must be retaken for Islam, and there is a feeling of bitter resentment at the power and success that the Jewish state has been able to amass while Muslim countries in the region have been torn apart by civil strife and stifled by catastrophically poor governance.

All of this is a toxic brew, and yet a swathe of the Muslim world is beholden to these beliefs. It is foolish to think that some element of Muslim immigrants to the West won't share this worldview and act on it — to our great regret.

Australia welcomed a large influx of Muslim immigrants over the last several decades and accommodated a surge of antisemitism after Oct. 7. The resulting atrocity at Bondi Beach was heartrending and all too predictable.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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Thursday,
January 1st

Martin Luther
King Jr. Day
January 19th

Americanisms

"When peoples care for you
and cry for you, they can
straighten out your soul."
— Langston Hughes

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VETERANS
★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

Raising puppies

If you're looking for a project for the new year that will provide big benefits to a disabled veteran, you can do no better than to raise a puppy.

Yes, a puppy. A small, young dog. Puppies who end up as service dogs for disabled veterans aren't born that way. They need a solid first year of socializing and basic obedience, and that's where you come in, should you want to take on this worthwhile project.

Take a look at www.guidedog.org/puppy for an explanation of what is expected. If accepted as a puppy raiser, you would receive a very young puppy and spend the next year getting it socialized and used to different environments, with good house manners and basic obedience, and exposed to various situations to give it confidence.

If you're not sure you can commit to such a long project, see the link above for other possibilities: short-term fostering to provide socialization opportunities for the puppy, co-raising with another individual or family, and in some states there is a prison puppy program that has inmates raise and train the dogs during the week before handing them over to weekend volunteers who provide experiences outside of the prison walls.

Your next step is to go online to search for groups near you that provide trained dogs to veterans in need. Contact them to ask about becoming a puppy raiser. (For more incentive, see www.vetdogs.org for the list of states where weekend volunteers are needed now.)

If you love dogs, perhaps the hardest part of the whole project will be to give up the dog at the end of its time with you when it goes on to its official training to be a service dog for a specific veteran in need. But you'll console yourself knowing just how valuable your efforts have been in giving a good start to a dog that will be a life-changer for a veteran.

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Strange
BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- In 1997, a woman from Louisville, Kentucky, left actor Charles Bronson all of her money, a total of about \$300,000, in a handwritten will. She didn't know him, but it can be deduced that she was a fan.
- The Woolsey Hall auditorium at Yale contains an extra-wide seat built to fit alumnus and former professor William Howard Taft.
- The corpse flower was the official flower of the Bronx for 60 years.
- Adults typically produce about 2 pints of gas each day, in an average of 14 farts. However, it's apparently quite normal to pass gas up to 21 times per day.
- At his inauguration, Teddy Roosevelt wore a ring with a lock of Abraham Lincoln's hair.
- In 1866, Cathay Williams became the first African American woman to serve in the U.S. Army. Women were barred from joining the military at the time, so she enlisted as a man under the pseudonym William Cathay.
- Crime novelist James Patterson co-wrote the famous "I'm a Toys 'R' Us Kid" jingle.
- The American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5 handbook classifies caffeine withdrawal as a mental disorder.
- Because Lancaster, Pennsylvania, is home to a large Amish population, Costco constructed a livestock parking stall for customers arriving via horse and buggy, with a rail for the animals and a roof to shield them from bad weather.
- When that "inner voice" speaks in your head, it triggers small muscle movements in your larynx.
- Michelangelo may have accidentally left a thumbprint on a wax sculpture's butt.
- Sometimes it snows on Mars, but the snowflakes are made out of carbon dioxide rather than water. The flakes don't fall, but create a fog-like effect.

Thought for the Day: "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance." — Aristotle

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SENIOR
NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

AI-assisted scams against seniors

It's not that scammers are getting smarter, but they have a new tool now: AI, artificial intelligence. For our own protection, we need to learn about AI and how to avoid becoming a victim of fraud.

If you've posted any pictures on social media, take them down. Make it your task for January to remove any photos you've put up, especially if — heaven forbid — there are snaps of your children and grandchildren.

If you routinely attach photos in emails to friends and family, and if they tend to post those on their own social media, ask them to remove the pictures. If they don't comply, stop sending them photos. I know, that's harsh. But you have to protect yourself and those dear to you.

Photos are the tip of the iceberg, however. Consider what scammers can do with innocent information about a vacation you took. They can personalize their scam against you and pretend to have met you on that trip. If you've posted the names of family members, or even the name of your dog, they can pretend to actually know you. It will sound so innocent if they then ask for your home address or the correct spelling of your name so they can send you a souvenir.

It gets worse: Scammers can clone voice samples they find online. If you've posted a video of a teen grandchild, scammers can convert that into a fake video call wherein the child appears to be upset and asks for help, which is another version of the grandparent scam.

One of the best sites I've found to learn about AI scams is McAfee's Guide to Deepfake Scams and AI Voice Spoofing at www.mcafee.com/learn/a-guide-to-deepfake-scams-and-ai-voice-spoofing. Also go online and search for "how scammers use AI against seniors."

If you suspect you've been a victim of fraud, report it to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center at ic3.gov.

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KOVELS®

Antiques & Collecting

By Terry and Kim Kovel

19th-Century Furniture

Sometimes, people like to think of the past as a steady, stable time where tradition ruled the day. Ironically, learning about antiques can prove that notion wrong; and some of the best lessons can come from 19th-century furniture. Technological advances made complicated furniture designs more accessible, and the growing nouveau riche meant more customers in need of furniture, often with more extravagant tastes.

The Merklen Brothers of New York, active between the 1880s and 1900, were among the furniture makers taking advantage of new tools and catering to new tastes. The chair pictured here, with twisted posts, a lattice back and a pair of brass finials shaped like storks' heads, is an example of their work. It sold for \$409 at Forsythe's Auctions LLC.

Unusual shapes, barley twists and figural brass fittings make Merklen Brothers furniture unique. An identification tip: Furniture feet in the form of a carved wood claw clutching a glass ball were popular at the time. Merklen Brothers, however, made their ball-and-claw feet with a wooden ball, as seen on this chair.



The Merklen Brothers made furniture in the late 19th century. Many furniture makers of the time used newly invented tools, making pieces with unusual features.

TIP: Lick a cotton swab and use it to remove dirt from small carvings on furniture. Saliva has enzymes that help dissolve the dirt.

CURRENT PRICES

Toy, horse, riding, metal, molded mane and tail, painted, white, red saddle, plastic reins, hanging footrest, wheels, Mobo, 30 1/2 x 28 inches, \$50.

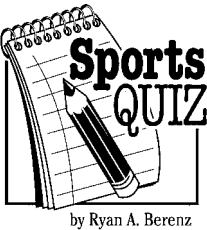
Leather; toiletry case, latch closure, top handle, glass bottles, retailer's mark, Mitsukoshi Gofukuten, Tokyo, Japan, \$65.

Stoneware, churn, cobalt blue feathers, applied arch handles, stenciled, capacity mark, salt glaze, slip glaze interior, wood dasher, Hamilton & Jones, Greensboro, Pennsylvania, base 17 inches, \$810.

Photography, advertisement, Mr. Beard, Daguerreotype or Photographic Portrait, color, posterboard, London, 12 x 9 1/2 inches, \$1,950.

For more collecting news, tips and resources, visit www.Kovels.com

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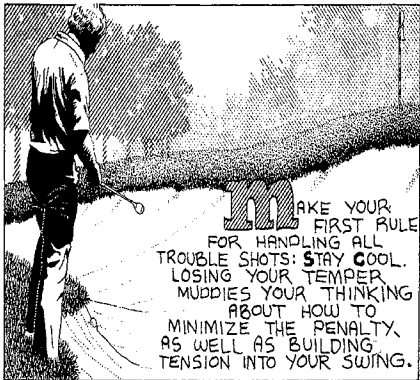
by Ryan A. Berenz

1. Forbes Field, John F. Kennedy Stadium, Three Rivers Stadium, Veterans Stadium and The Spectrum are all demolished sports venues that were located in what U.S. state?
2. Johnny Campbell is credited with being the first cheerleader when he rallied the crowd at what university's football stadium in 1898?
3. The Notre Dame Fighting Irish football team had a 43-game winning streak over what opponent from 1964-2006?
4. Name the Hockey Hall of Famer for the Montreal Canadiens who died of complications from a severely fractured leg he suffered in a 1937 game.
5. Pitcher John "The Count" Montefusco was named National League Rookie of the Year in 1975 as a member of what Major League Baseball team?
6. The Anderson Packers, Waterloo Hawks, Evansville Agogans and Louisville Alumnites were among the teams in what pro basketball league that played one season in 1950-51?
7. He was the American League Rookie of the Year in 1997 with the Boston Red Sox. She is considered one of the greatest female soccer players of all time. They married in 2003. Who are they?

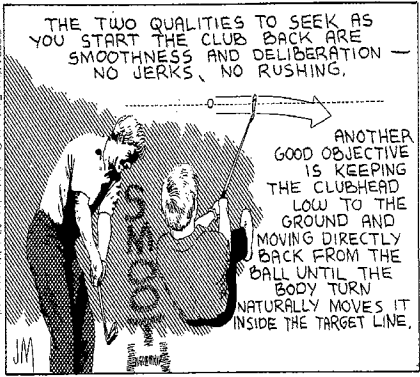
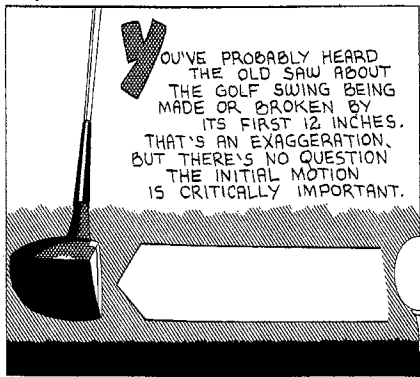
Answers

1. Pennsylvania.
2. The University of Minnesota.
3. The Navy Midshipmen.
4. Howie Morenz.
5. The San Francisco Giants.
6. The National Professional Basketball League (NPBL).
7. Nomar Garciaparra and Mia Hamm.

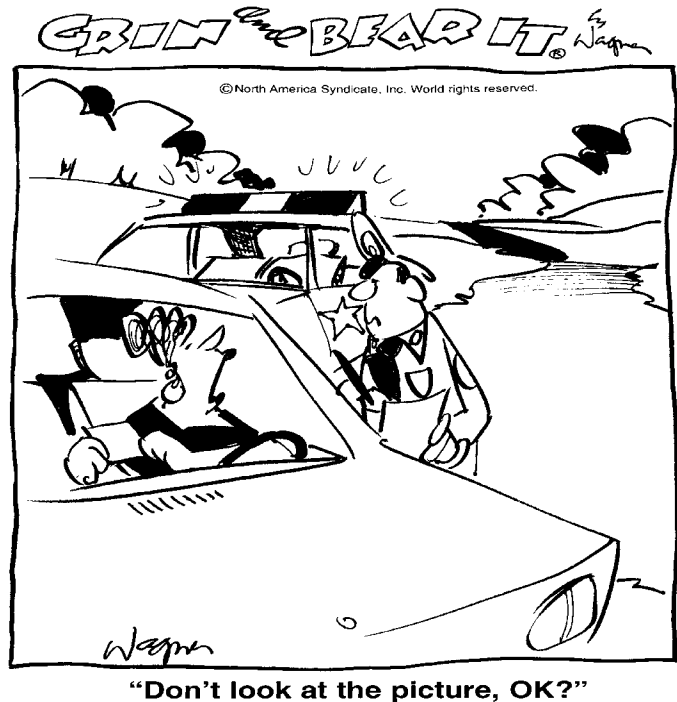
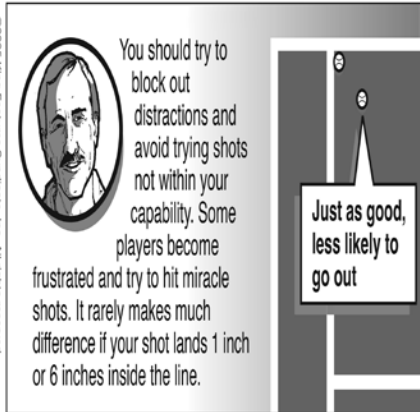
Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



STAN SMITH'S TENNIS CLASS



Health



‘Lactose Intolerance’ Proves To Be A Casein Sensitivity

DEAR DR. ROACH: My wife believed that she had lactose intolerance. After some tests, it was found that she was sensitive to casein rather than lactose. Are there other things in cow’s milk besides lactose and casein that people are sensitive to? — K.A.

ANSWER: There are three main components of cow’s milk that can lead people to having a bad reaction. Lactose is a type of compound sugar called a “disaccharide,” which includes two separate single sugars (“monosaccharides”) — glucose and galactose — that are connected by a chemical bond. This chemical bond is broken by a specific enzyme called lactase. Deficiency is rare in children but common in adults, especially in people with ancestry from Asia and Africa, as well as Native Americans. Without the ability to break lactose into its component monosaccharides, a person is likely to get abdominal cramps, gas and diarrhea if they consume lactose. This is because lactose passes into the colon, where colonic bacteria will digest the lactose and produce gas (as well as discomfort). There is a wide variety in the amount that people need to consume to have symptoms, with some people being exquisitely sensitive and others needing a fair amount of it to develop symptoms. Milk allergies are different. Eighty percent of adults with cow’s milk allergies are women. Cow’s milk allergies are most commonly due to the protein casein (the “curds” of the nursery rhyme) but may also be due to whey protein. People who are allergic to whey protein often have less symptoms if the protein is heated or cooked (for example, milk in baked goods) or if it is changed by digestive enzymes, as in yogurt. Cow’s milk allergies can have various

symptoms. They can be serious and cause anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction. But they may also cause symptoms that people might not recognize as a food allergy, such as skin changes, symptoms of the mouth and esophagus, and food and exercise associated anaphylaxis. Some people develop eosinophilic esophagitis, which can resemble gastroesophageal reflux disease; this causes heartburn that doesn’t respond to the usual treatments. This is only a brief overview of a complicated topic that generally requires an expert in allergy and immunology to help diagnose and manage the condition. ***

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have a “trigger thumb.” My thumb no longer bends at the middle joint and hurts. Exercise doesn’t seem to work. I tried physical therapy, too, without results. — A.M.

ANSWER: Stenosing flexor tenosynovitis, aka trigger finger, is a common issue that I see very frequently in my clinical practice. Symptoms usually start with some “catching” or locking of the fingers while flexing and extending one or more of them. This may progress to discomfort or pain, and it can progress to the point where a finger or thumb is locked in place and needs to be bent by the other hand. Initial treatment includes rest and anti-inflammatories. Some experts use a splint to reduce the trauma from repetitive movement in the pulley system of the hand. If conservative treatment isn’t effective, most hand experts will try an injection of a steroid into the area of the pulley and tendon. Surgery is an option if two or three injections haven’t solved the problem.

Breaking Down the Difference Between a Cold and Influenza

DEAR DR. ROACH: What is the difference between a cold and the flu? — A.T.R.

ANSWER: Both colds and influenza (the “flu”) are respiratory illnesses that are caused by viruses. Influenza is caused specifically by the influenza viruses, which come in two main types (A and B). Influenza A is further broken down into different subtypes based on hemagglutinin (H) and neuraminidase (N). H1N1 and H3N2 are currently the most-common circulating influenza A

viruses. Even within these subclasses, there is strong variability among flu viruses, which is one reason why we need a new flu vaccine each year. Many viruses cause colds. Rhinoviruses (“rhino-” is the Greek word for nose) are the most common, but corona, parainfluenza and enteroviruses, as well as respiratory syncytial viruses, are all well-known causes of respiratory illnesses, which can be difficult or impossible to tell apart from any other type of cold. Unfortunately, there are so many of these viruses, some of which change quickly and others that escape our immune system, so it is (so far) impossible to get immunity by an infection or a vaccine to all the cold viruses. Viruses are generally less severe than influenza. It isn’t always easy to tell flu from a cold, especially in young people. Both can cause a fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat. However, the flu often causes muscle aches, which can be severe. The flu tends to cause higher fevers, more cough and worse headaches, and it often comes along suddenly. (“I got hit by the flu truck.”) Runny nose and nasal congestion tends to be worse with a cold. Since there is specific antiviral treatments for influenza, clinicians will sometimes make decisions on whether to treat a person based on their symptoms, or they may get a lab test to look for the flu specifically. (Some tests will also check for COVID-19, a special type of coronavirus, at the same time.) People who are at a high risk for severe flu may be recommended antiviral treatment, whereas there is not a specific antiviral treatment for colds. It’s particularly important for people over 65 and those with any heart, lung or immune system issues to get the influenza vaccine. The optimum time to get it was from October through the end of November. ***

DEAR DR. ROACH: What do we now call what was once referred to as a “nervous breakdown” in the 20th century? — A.M.

ANSWER: I asked this question to my psychiatry professor way back in the late 20th century when I was a first-year medical student. My professor replied that the term didn’t have a meaning anymore. There is no formal medical or psychiatric diagnosis of a “nervous breakdown.” The term is used by lay-people to describe when a person has severe impairment of their day-to-day function as a result of a psychiatric diagnosis, especially mood disorders like generalized anxiety disorder or major depressive disorder. An adjustment disorder may resemble a

major depressive disorder, but it occurs within a few months of a traumatic life event. A severe case might also be termed a “nervous breakdown.” It is not usually used to describe a person with acute psychosis (a term meaning a grossly distorted sense of reality), such as a person with schizophrenia or bipolar affective disorder in their acute and uncontrolled state. All these conditions have effective treatments. Treatment starts by talking to someone, who might be your own regular doctor or a mental health professional. For people who are in acute distress with thoughts of hurting themselves, the 988 Suicide and Crisis Life-line is an option in the United States and Canada.

Metoprolol Prescription for Palpitations Exacerbates Anxiety

DEAR DR. ROACH: I just discontinued using metoprolol succinate extended release (ER) at a dosage of 6.25 mg. My heart rate is normally in the 70-80s, and my blood pressure is normal. My doctor prescribed it for palpitations, but it seems totally unnecessary. My issue is that I am experiencing tachycardia of over 100 beats every single night as well as dry mouth. Could this be anxiety? And do you think an antidepressant like Zoloft or Paxil would help? I had a Holter monitor, which showed nothing wrong with my heart. The palpitations were sporadic only when I was anxious. I stopped metoprolol because it exacerbated my anxiety and caused me depression as well as panic attacks. My doctor prescribed me 1 mg of Ativan to take at bedtime, but I am very scared of getting addicted to it. So, I thought maybe an anti-depressant would help instead. My doctor prescribed 25 mg of Zoloft, but I want another opinion. — S.S.

ANSWER: Generalized anxiety disorder is a common problem and may be associated with panic attacks (sometimes depression as well). The most common and highly effective medication treatment for generalized anxiety disorder, with or without panic attacks, is an SSRI-type drug like sertraline (Zoloft). Therapy is another option, and the two together are more effective than they are separately.

Metoprolol is an effective treatment for the fast heart rate that some people get when they have anxiety, and metoprolol by itself is helpful for many people who have anxiety. (The high heart rate can make people feel even more anxious.) However, it sounds like metoprolol did not work for you. There is a small increased risk of depression among people who take beta blockers like metoprolol. In my opinion, lorazepam (Ativan) is not a good long-term choice for an anxiety disorder, but it can still be helpful in some people while they’re waiting for another treatment to start working (such as therapy or a medicine like Zoloft). It takes six to eight weeks to reach maximum effectiveness. Addiction is not an issue when both the patient and prescriber agree that it will be only used as a short-term treatment. For Zoloft, 25 mg is a low dose, and some people need higher doses (sometimes much higher) to control their symptoms. ***

DEAR DR. ROACH: Why shouldn’t you use antibiotics for a cold? — T.Y.A.

ANSWER: There are two main reasons. The first is that antibiotics are effective against bacteria; they’re not effective against the viruses, which are the cause of colds. It is true that a person (or their doctor) cannot be 100% sure whether they have a virus, but people are generally pretty good about knowing when they have a cold. The second is that resistance to antibiotics has become a major issue in medicine. There are now strains of bacteria that are resistant to all antibiotics, and I have seen patients die because their bacteria were resistant to all the antibiotics we have. Using antibiotics less often and for shorter durations is a major goal to reduce the rate of antibiotic resistance. (Antibiotic use in animals that are raised for food is a major issue as well.) Patients can help by not asking for (or demanding) antibiotics for what are almost certainly viral infections. ***

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.

Financial

WIN IN YOUR RETIREMENT Older Americans are turning sweepstakes into their jobs

“Sweepers”. A term for hardcore hobbyists. These are not casual players. Some people enter up to 100 sweepstakes a day — through social media and subscription email newsletters such as SweepSheet, Sweeping America and iWin Contests. Sweepstakes started to become widely popular in the 1950’s, when marketers began using contests to raise

brand awareness. The Publisher’s Clearing House sweepstakes launched in 1967, made millions of Americans believe that they may already be a winner. But in recent decades, sweepstakes have spawned a subculture, especially among older people. “It still gives me an endorphin rush” says Steve d’Adolf, 82, a retiree in San Diego. He spends an average of seven hours a day entertaining sweep-stakes. Over the years, he has won a ride on the Goodyear Blimp; trips to four Super Bowls; met many celebrities like Britney Spears, Carrie Underwood,

Mariah Carey, Gloria Estefan and Michael Buble’ and dozens of vacation trips. Judy Bailey,72, has won an array of prizes — a Princess Cruises trip, thousands of dollars in gift cards, tickets to Miami Dolphins games and much more. Bailey says she plays sweepstakes to keep her brain active since retiring in 2008. “I didn’t want my brain to check out on me.” Filling out entry forms helps. Here are some tips from longtime sweepers. Go online. Websites like Sweepstakes Advantage, Contestgirl, Online Sweepstakes and Sweepstakes

Fanatics list hundreds of sweepstakes, as well as info on entry frequency and prize type.

Be consistent.

Make it a regular part of your routine. Doing it once isn’t enough. If you enter every day,you’re going to increase your odds.

Use a separate email address

Never use your normal email for entering sweepstakes. If you don’t your inbox is just going to be flooded with junk mail. Create a new account devoted solely to your

sweepstakes hobby.

Stay local

Focus on sweepstakes that limit entries to regular customers, subscribers or people who live in certain areas. Those typically offer better odds of winning than national sweepstakes, which can have odds that are worse than Powerball.

Avoid scams.

Don’t pay for a prize. If collecting your winnings isn’t free, then pass. And never provide financial information to anyone who contacts you about a sweepstakes prize. That’s a red flag.

Inspired Holiday Entertaining



FAMILY FEATURES

The holiday season is a time for creating meals and memories that last a lifetime, but it’s also one of the busiest times of the year. In the blur of commitments, crowded schedules and endless prep, the tension between a desire to create magical meals and wanting to actually enjoy them is real.

The right cookware can help shift that balance. Inspired by the calming essence of the outdoors, the KitchenAid Evergreen Design Series brings a breath of fresh air into the kitchen, blending expressive design with performance that simplifies the season. From durable stockpots to versatile nonstick pans, these tools elevate both prep and presentation.

In the middle of the holiday bustle, they provide a sense of calm and control, helping you plan ahead, cut stress and truly savor the moments that matter most. Because the best holiday moments aren’t just about what’s on the table – they’re about the joy you feel when you’re a part of them, from the quiet satisfaction of chopping, stirring and creating to the connection that comes when you share the results with those you love.

Including 12 pieces, the Hard-Anodized Ceramic Induction Nonstick Cookware Set brings the emotive power of nature into the kitchen, elevating your cooking with deep forest-green hues and elegant bronze handles. Ideal for stove-to-oven-to-table cooking, the high-performance ceramic nonstick cookware is eight times harder than traditional aluminum and features thick, forged bases for fast, even heating. Shatter-resistant glass lids seal in heat, lock in flavor and allow easy monitoring.

When you’ll be spending many special evenings around the table during the holiday season, these invaluable tools can help streamline the cooking process whether you need a dish that can be made in advance and frozen for easy entertaining like this Homemade Pumpkin Ravioli with White Wine and Herb Butter Sauce or one that lets you focus on the fun and celebrations even with guests in town such as Butternut Squash Mac and Cheese with Bacon.

If those seasonal recipes call for stirring, whipping or mixing, the KitchenAid Evergreen Design Series Tilt-Head Stand Mixer is up to the task with 10 speeds, a tilt-head design to easily add ingredients and more than 10 different available attachments. Blurring the line between appliance and art through its unique color, finish and walnut wood bowl, it gives makers unmatched potential for creative expression.

Find more recipes and tools to bring culinary inspiration to life during the holidays at kitchenaid.com.

Homemade Pumpkin Ravioli with White Wine and Herb Butter Sauce

Recipe courtesy of Marge Perry and David Bonom
Servings: 4

Ravioli:

- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin puree
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1/3 cup grated Pecorino Romano cheese, plus additional for serving (optional)
- 2 tablespoons plain dried breadcrumbs
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 pinch ground nutmeg
- 48 round dumpling wrappers
- water

Sauce:

- 6 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, divided
- 1/3 cup chopped shallots
- 2/3 cup dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

To make ravioli: Line fine mesh sieve with dampened cheesecloth. Add pumpkin puree and strain 1 hour. Transfer to bowl and stir in egg, cheese, breadcrumbs, sugar, salt and nutmeg.

Arrange six dumpling wrappers on work surface in single layer. Place 1 tablespoon pumpkin mixture in center of each and brush edges with water. Place second wrapper over filling, carefully pushing out any air bubbles then pressing edges to seal.

Transfer ravioli to baking sheet covered with parchment paper. Place sheet of plastic wrap over ravioli. Repeat with remaining wrappers and filling.

In KitchenAid Evergreen Design Series 6-Quart Ceramic Stockpot over medium heat, bring salted water to a gentle simmer

To make sauce: In KitchenAid Evergreen Design Series 3-Quart Ceramic Saucepan over medium-high heat, melt 1 tablespoon butter. Add shallots and cook, stirring occasionally, 1 minute. Add wine, bring to boil and cook until mixture resembles wet sand, 8-9 minutes.

Reduce heat to medium-low and whisk in remaining butter and heavy cream until melted. Stir in sage, chives and salt; keep warm, stirring occasionally.

To cook ravioli, add half to simmering water and cook, stirring gently once or twice, 3 minutes. Remove with slotted spoon and divide between two plates. Add remaining ravioli to pot and repeat dividing between remaining plates. Spoon sauce over ravioli and serve with additional grated cheese, if desired.



Butternut Squash Mac and Cheese with Bacon

- 8 ounces elbow macaroni
- 6 slices center-cut bacon
- 1 onion, chopped
- 5 cups butternut squash, cubed
- 3 1/2 cups chicken broth, divided
- 3/4 cup low-fat milk
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 pinch nutmeg
- 1 pinch salt, plus additional, to taste, divided
- 1 pinch pepper, plus additional, to taste, divided
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded, divided
- chopped parsley (optional)

In KitchenAid Evergreen Design Series 6-Quart Ceramic Stockpot, cook macaroni noodles according to package instructions. Set aside.

In KitchenAid Evergreen Design Series 5-Quart Ceramic Saute Pan, cook bacon until crisp. Chop and set aside.

In same pan, add chopped onion and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until pieces are soft and lightly caramelized.

Add butternut squash cubes to onions along with 2 cups chicken broth. Cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat and cook until squash is soft and most liquid is reduced.

Pour squash and onions into bowl and add milk, remaining chicken broth, dry mustard, nutmeg and pinch of salt and pepper. Using KitchenAid Evergreen Design Series Tilt-Head Stand Mixer, puree mixture until smooth and creamy.

Pour pureed sauce into saute pan. Over low heat, add Parmesan cheese and 3/4 cup sharp cheddar cheese a little at a time, stirring constantly. Add noodles and stir well.

Add salt and pepper, to taste. Top with chopped bacon, remaining cheese and chopped parsley, if desired.

Comfort foods

Made fast and healthy

by Healthy Exchanges

Buffalo Wing Pizza Bites

If you're looking for the perfect football snack, give this recipe a try. One minute it will be there, and the next it will be gone.

- 1 (8-ounce) can Pillsbury Reduced Fat Crescent Rolls
- 1/2 cup Kraft Fat Free Blue Cheese Dressing
- 1/2 cup Kraft fat-free mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon chili seasoning
- 2 full cups diced cooked chicken breast
- 1 cup diced celery
- 1 1/2 cups shredded Kraft 2 Percent Milk Cheddar cheese

1. Heat oven to 400 F. Pat crescent rolls into a rimmed 10-by-15-inch baking sheet, being sure to seal perforations. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes or until light golden brown.

2. In a small bowl, combine Blue Cheese dressing, mayonnaise and chili seasoning. Spread mixture evenly over partially baked crust. Evenly sprinkle chicken and celery over dressing mixture and top with Cheddar cheese.

3. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes. Place baking sheet on a wire rack and let set for 5 minutes. Cut into 24 squares. Serves 12 (2 each).

TIP: If you don't have leftovers, purchase a chunk of cooked chicken breast from your local deli.

• Each serving equals: 167 calories, 7g fat, 12g protein, 14g carbs, 384mg sodium, 117mg calcium, 0g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Protein, 1 Starch; Carb Choices: 1.

Comfort foods

Made fast and healthy

by Healthy Exchanges

Auld Lang Syne Dip

Add a dip to your vegetable and cracker tray that won't add extra pounds to your hips this holiday season.

- 1 (8-ounce) package Philadelphia fat-free cream cheese
- 1/2 cup Kraft Fat Free French Dressing
- 1/4 cup Land O Lakes no-fat sour cream
- 1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon dried onion flakes
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes

1. In a large bowl, stir cream cheese with a sturdy spoon until soft. Add French dressing and sour cream. Mix well to combine. Stir in Worcestershire sauce, onion flakes and parsley flakes.

2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Gently stir again just before serving. Makes 8 (3 tablespoon) servings.

• Each serving: About 52 calories, 0g fat, 4g protein, 9g carb., 301mg sodium, 91mg calcium, 0g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1/2 Meat, 1/2 Carb.; Carb Choices: 1/2.

Good Housekeeping

Glazed Ham

This is an easy and delicious ham to serve at Christmastime. For variety, brush the orange glaze on a roast turkey!

- 1 12-pound fully cooked smoked whole ham
- 2 tablespoons whole cloves
- 2 (10-ounce) jars orange marmalade
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 tablespoons prepared mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 cup dark seedless raisins
- 1 (15 1/4-ounce) can pineapple rings for garnish
- Maraschino cherries and parsley sprigs for garnish

1. With sharp knife, remove skin and trim all but about 1/4-inch fat from ham. Stud ham with whole cloves. Place ham, fat-side up, on rack in large roasting pan. Insert meat thermometer into thickest part of ham, being careful that pointed end of thermometer does not touch bone. Bake ham in 325 F oven 2 1/2 hours. If ham browns too quickly, cover with a tent of foil.

2. After ham has baked 2 1/2 hours, prepare glaze: In 2-quart saucepan over medium-high heat, heat marmalade, orange juice, mustard, ground cloves and ground ginger to boiling. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Brush some of the glaze over ham; bake 30 minutes or longer until meat thermometer reaches 140 F (about 15 minutes per pound). Add raisins to remaining marmalade mixture; heat through and keep warm.

3. To serve, place ham on large, warm platter; garnish with drained pineapple rings, maraschino cherries and parsley sprigs. Serve with remaining marmalade mixture. Makes 18 servings.

• Each serving: About 380 calories, 16g fat, 80mg cholesterol, 2,300mg sodium.

Comfort foods

Made fast and healthy

by Healthy Exchanges

Cheesy Garlic Potatoes

This is a great side dish to accompany any meat — from a simple chicken breast to your favorite meatloaf recipe.

- 1 (10 3/4-ounce) can Healthy Request Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 3/4 cup chunky salsa (mild, medium or hot)
- 1 1/2 cups (6 ounces) shredded Kraft 2 Percent Milk Cheddar Cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes
- 3 1/2 cups (18 ounces) diced cooked potatoes

1. In a large skillet sprayed with olive oil-flavored cooking spray, combine mushroom soup, salsa and Cheddar cheese. Stir in garlic and parsley flakes. Cook over medium heat until cheese starts to melt, stirring occasionally. Add potatoes. Mix well to combine.

2. Lower heat and simmer for 10 minutes or until mixture is heated through, stirring occasionally. Makes 6 (3/4 cup) servings.

• Each serving equals: 185 calories, 5g fat, 10g protein, 25g carbs, 658mg sodium, 233mg calcium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Starch/Carb, 1 Meat; Carb Choices: 1 1/2.

Good Housekeeping

Lucky Asian Steak Noodle Bowl

In many Asian countries, people eat long noodles on New Year's Day to lengthen their life. One catch: You can't break the noodle from your plate to your mouth.

- 8 1 pound sirloin steak
- Salt
- Pepper
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon chili paste
- 1 cup spiralized carrots
- 1 cup frozen shelled edamame, thawed
- 1/2 cup mint
- 1/2 cup cilantro leaves
- Toasted sesame seeds and sliced scallions, for serving

1. Cook buckwheat soba noodles per package directions. Rinse with cold water; refrigerate.

2. Meanwhile, pat sirloin steak dry and season with salt and pepper. Heat large skillet on medium-high. Add olive oil, then steak, and cook to desired doneness, 5 to 7 minutes per side for medium. Let rest at least 5 minutes before slicing.

3. In large bowl, whisk together rice vinegar, sesame oil, chili paste and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Add soba noodles and spiralized carrots (thawed if frozen) and toss to coat. Fold in edamame, mint and cilantro leaves. Top with sliced steak, toasted sesame seeds and sliced scallions.

• Each serving: About 545 calories, 22 g fat (7 g saturated fat), 37g protein, 540mg sodium, 53g carb, 3g fiber.

Good Housekeeping

Chicken Parmigiano Mini Meatloaves

- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup plain dried bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup marinara sauce
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

1. Heat broiler. Line broiling pan (without rack) with foil. Spray foil with nonstick cooking spray.

2. In bowl, mix chicken, egg, bread crumbs, Parmesan, salt and 1/4 cup marinara sauce just until blended. In foil-lined pan, shape meat mixture into four 4-by-2-inch oval loaves.

3. Place pan in broiler 5 to 6 inches from source of heat and broil meatloaves 15 minutes or until no longer pink inside. Spoon remaining 1/4 cup sauce over loaves; sprinkle with mozzarella. Broil 1 to 2 minutes longer or until cheese melts. Makes 4 main-dish servings.

Good Housekeeping

Chocolate-Dipped Pretzels

Pretzels dipped in sweet, chocolatey candy coatings are super simple to make (and even easier to eat!). Create different varieties of pretzels by mixing up the types of chocolate bars you use.

- 16 mini Hershey's chocolate bars
- 12 medium pretzels

1. Roughly chop one variety of mini Hershey's chocolate bars. Melt, dip half of each pretzel into the chocolate, then transfer to a wax paper-lined rimmed baking sheet; refrigerate until set. Repeat with other varieties of chocolate.

Comfort foods

Made fast and healthy

by Healthy Exchanges

Creamy Tuna Macaroni Salad

Sandwiches, no matter how good, can get mighty boring. Perk up your lunchbox with this tuna pasta salad.

- 2 1/2 cups uncooked elbow macaroni
- 1 1/4 cups frozen cut green beans
- 1 1/2 cups frozen cut carrots
- 3 cups water
- 1 (10 3/4-ounce) can reduced-fat cream of celery soup
- 1/2 cup fat-free mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon lemon pepper
- 2 (6-ounce) cans white tuna, packed in water, drained and flaked
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onion

1. In a medium saucepan, combine uncooked macaroni, green beans and carrots. Cover with water. Bring mixture to a boil. Cook over medium heat for about 10 minutes or until macaroni and vegetables are tender. Drain and rinse under cold water.

2. In a medium bowl, combine celery soup, mayonnaise, parsley flakes and lemon pepper. Add drained macaroni mixture, tuna and onion. Mix well to combine. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Gently stir again just before serving. Serves 6 (1 full cup each).

• Each serving equals: 222 calories, 2g fat, 19g protein, 32g carb., 405mg sodium, 3g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 2 Meat, 1 1/2 Starch, 1 Vegetable.

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Crime

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Burglary on the 3000 block of North Lincoln Avenue.

Robbery on the 1900 block of North Western Avenue.

Robbery on the 1000 block of North Hermitage Avenue.

Theft on the 4700 block of North Marine Drive.

Theft on the 2400 block of North Orchard Street.

Theft on the 2500 block of West Bradley Place.

Vandalism on the 3700 block of West Fremont Street.

Assault on the 500 block of West Division Street.

Assault on the 6000 block of North Kenmore Avenue.

Theft on the 2400 block of West Addison Street.

Theft on the 1000 block of West Webster Avenue.

Burglary on the 4000 block of North Rockwell Street.

Theft on the 4900 block of North Sheridan Road.

Theft on the 2700 block of North Seminary Avenue.

Theft on the 3600 block of North Southport Avenue.

Theft on the 2700 block of North Clark Street.

Theft on the 1400 block of West Hutchinson Street.

Theft on the 600 block of West Diversey Parkway.

Theft on the 600 block of West Wrightwood Avenue.

Theft on the 0000 block of West Walton street.

Theft on the 900 block of West Cornelia Avenue.

Theft on the 4600 block of North Clark Street.

Theft on the 4700 block of North Broadway.

Vandalism on the 1600 block of North Milwaukee Avenue.

Theft on the 4400 block of North Broadway.

Assault on the 3200 block of North Broadway.

Theft on the 400 block of West Surf Street.

Theft on the 3200 block of North Ashland Avenue.

Theft on the 700 block of West Aldine Avenue.

Theft on the 4800 block of North Lincoln Avenue.

Theft on the 900 block of North Ashland Avenue.

Theft on the 2500 West Logan Park Boulevard.

Vandalism on the 4700 block of North Broadway.

Theft on the 4500 block of North Seeley Avenue.

Assault on the 1800 block of North Larabee Street.

Theft on the 3200 block of North Clark Street.

Theft on the 900 block of West Belmont Avenue.

Theft on the 3200 block of North Clark Street,

Arrest made on the 4500 block of Troy Street.

Burglary on the 1500 block of North Milwaukee Avenue.

Burglary on the 3000 block of North Lincoln Avenue.

Shooting on the 5700 block of North Washtenaw Avenue.

Shooting on the 1000 block of North Francisco Avenue.

Theft on the 4000 block of North Troy Street.

Burglary on the 1000 block of North Hermitage Avenue.

Vandalism on the 1000 block of North Lawndale Avenue.

Robbery on the 3700 block of North Broadway

Vandalism on the 2700 block of North California Avenue.

Theft on the 4700 block of North Marine Drive.

Theft on the 2400 block of North Orchard Street.

Vandalism on the 5600 block of North Campbell Avenue.

Theft on the 2100 block of West Peterson Avenue.

Theft on the 2400 block of North Orchard Street.

Theft on the 2500 block of West Bradley Place.

Theft on the 2100 block of West Peterson Avenue.

Assault on the 5100 block of North Seeley Avenue.

Vandalism on the 3700 block of North Fremont Street.

Vandalism on the 3400 block of West Addison Street.

Theft on the 2400 block of West Addison Street.

Theft on the 1000 block of West Webster Avenue.

Burglary on the 4000 block of North Rockwell Street.

Assault on the 1000 block on North Western Avenue.

Shooting on the 1900 block of West Howard Street

Shooting on the 1900 block of West Howard Street .

Assault on the 00 block North Wabash Avenue.

Burglary on the 1500 block of North Milwaukee Avenue.

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SNELLING IS A MAN OF FACTS, NOT CONCLUSIONS

In 2021, there were 805 homicides. In 2023, there have been 623. Homicides have declined sharply. Through the end of November, 390 people have been killed in Chicago. Other measures of violent crime have fallen too since Snelling took over. Through the first half of 2025, carjackings were down 58% from the same period in 2023; aggravated assaults down 13%; gun involved assaults, 24%. Why is that? No one really knows. Maybe it's something Snelling is doing as superintendent. He is well liked in many circles. He's a 31 year department veteran and a native Chicagoan, raised in Englewood, unlike his predecessors from New York City. People seem to trust him. Susana Mendoza said, "The one decision that Johnson got right, was hiring Snelling." Chicago remains among the nation's most violent cities. As of mid-November, 2025, there had been 18 police involved shootings, where the target was killed or injured, more than in all of 2024. He doesn't like the word "aggressive" rather being more efficient and more proficient.



What’s Hot In Hollywood & Gardening

HOLLYWOOD — Now that **Tom Cruise** has won an Oscar (even if it's an honorary one), where does he go from here? He received four previous nominations for "Born on the Fourth of July" (1989), "Jerry Maguire" (1996), "Magnolia" (1999), and "Top Gun: Maverick" (2022). Now, at 63, with 50 films behind him, can he still continue making action films, jumping from planes and off buildings (and occasionally injuring himself)?

Cruise's 51st film will be an untitled **Alejandro G. Inarritu** film (tentatively titled "Judy") that he's producing along with **Innaritu**, who wrote the screenplay. It also stars **Jesse Plemons** and **John Goodman**.

The Academy gave Cruise the Oscar for "his incredible commitment to our filmmaking community, to the theatrical experience, and to the stunts community." Cruise accepted the award, saying, "Making films is not what I do. It is who I am!"



Tom Cruise
(Uncoming in "Judy")

Leonardo DiCaprio wasn't even born when "The Wizard of Oz" was made, but his company Appian Way Productions has announced that they're doing a documentary about the making of "The Wizard of Oz." They promise that it'll be a behind-the-scenes look at the classic 1939 film, and it will contain never-before-seen footage.

When I went to the Chinese Theater that was showing "Oz" in IMAX and 3D to commemorate its 75th birthday, I was shocked by something that I'd never seen in the hundreds of times I viewed "Oz!" In the the Enchanted Forest scene where they read a sign that says, "I'd turn back if I were you," the Lion runs away, but the Scare-crow and Tinman bring him back. The Scarecrow is holding, among other things, a gun. Was this a big blooper, or did they actually have guns in Oz? Hope they can explain this!

It's the time of year when networks clean house, making room for new shows for January 2026. CBS has canceled "S.W.A.T.," "FBI: Most Wanted," and "FBI: International." NBC's dropped "Night Court" and "Lopez vs Lopez," while ABC is done with "The Conners."

Showtime has dropped "Original Sin," while Netflix has canceled **Arnold Schwarzenegger's** "FUBAR" and "Cobra Kai." Finally, Disney+ said goodbye to "Goose-bumps."

possibly be extended. The critics liked it, and his fans say, "Hanks for the memories!"

HOLLYWOOD — **Jonathan Bailey** debuted his career at age 6 as Tiny Tim in 1995, in a Royal Shakespeare Theater production of "A Christmas Carol." He acted in "Les Miserables" on stage and in the film "Girl with a Pearl Earring" (2008). He starred in a few British films but was then cast as Fiyero in "Wicked" (which grossed \$760 million).

Bailey followed this up with a lead role in "Jurassic World Rebirth" (which grossed \$868 million) and received the title as People magazine's "Sexiest Man Alive." Now he currently has "Wicked: For Good" out, which is headed for at least \$500 million.

But after three years of "Wicked" (including the shooting of the two films and the massive press tour), he's at a crossroads. The next role he chooses could make or break his career. You might say he has to make the most "Wicked" decision of his career!

were filmed simultaneously to allow time for post-production and to use the same cast.

Another film getting a sequel is "Jumanji" (the fifth and final installment). Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart, Jack Black and Karen Gillan are returning, along with Brittany O'Grady (of the series "Star" and season one of "The White Lotus") and Burn Gorman ("Game of Thrones," "The Dark Knight Rises," and "Pacific Rim"). It opens in December 2026.

Jim Henson's Muppet collection from "Fraggle Rock," "Labyrinth," and "The Dark Crystal" brought in a whopping \$2.6 million at an auction held this past Nov. 25.

Oh, that **Glen Powell**! He has his hands in everything and isn't just relying on acting (although "The Running Man" was a disappointment in theaters). His Hulu series "Chad Powers" had good ratings, and Hulu just green-lit season two.

Also, his thriller "How to Make a Killing," with **Margaret Qualley**, **Topher Grace** and **Ed Harris**, wrapped and is due in theaters in February of next year. In addition, he'll star in the film "Ghostwriter" (from director **J.J. Abrams**), along with **Jenna Ortega** and **Samuel L. Jackson**.

Now Powell's getting bolder as a producer; his production company's next release is "The F**k-boat" for Paramount. It's a high-concept film like "Risky Business," and choosing this title could be riskier than flying an F/A-18 Super Hornet as he did in "Top Gun: Maverick"!



Jonathan Bailey
(“Wicked: For Good”)

"Avatar: Fire and Ash" opens on Dec. 19 and has a lot to live up to. The first "Avatar" (2009) grossed almost \$3 billion (making it the top-grossing film of all time). "Avatar: The Way of Water" (2022) grossed \$2.4 billion (ranking third behind "Avengers: Endgame" at \$2.8 billion).

The fourth top-grossing film of all time is "Titanic" (1997) at \$2.3 billion, and the fifth top-grossing film of all time is the Chinese animated fantasy "Ne Zha 2" (2019). What? (That's what I said.) It was released in IMAX and 3D in Beijing, then in America; it ended up grossing \$2.2 billion.

"Avatar: 4" is due in December 2029, and "Avatar: 5" will arrive in December 2031. All five "Avatar" films

celebrity extra

by Dana Jackson

Q: Is the actor who plays Kial the surgeon on "Beyond the Gates" the same actor who used to be on "The Young and the Restless" years ago? I forgot the character's name, but I think he was involved with Sharon. — G.S.

A: You have a great memory because it's been more than two decades since Greg Vaughan played a handsome drifter named Diego on the CBS daytime soap "The Young and the Restless." He's actually been on several other soaps for much longer stretches since then. From 2003-2009, he played Lucky Spencer on ABC's "General Hospital" before landing his longest-running daytime role as Eric Brady on NBC's "Days of Our Lives." Vaughan's latest soap gig is on the genre's newest series "Beyond the Gates," which airs weekdays on CBS. Expect to see his character, Dr. Kial Roberts, romancing the ladies. He already appeared to have eyes for Daphnee Duplax's Dr. Nicole Dupree Richardson.



Greg Vaughan
(“Beyond the Gates”)

Q: When is "The Boys" coming back to Amazon? Is it the final season, or will they surprise us with more? — J.W.

A: The satirical superhero series "The Boys" will return for its fifth and final season on April 8, 2026, on Amazon Prime Video. Showrunner Eric Kripke told TVLine that despite its continued popularity, the story was always meant to end after five seasons. Antony Starr's character, Homelander, will be back along with Karl Urban, Jack Quaid and Erin Moriarty. Fans of CW's "Supernatural" will be thrilled to learn that not only is Jensen Ackles returning in his recurring role of Ben/Soldier Boy but that his former "Supernatural" co-stars Jared Padalecki and Misha Collins will be joining him. While many will be mourning the loss of "The Boys" when it concludes in late May 2026, they can rejoice in the fact that there will be a prequel series led by Ackles titled "Voight Rising."

Q: I really miss the show "Good Girls." What is the actress who played Annie doing these days? — D.E.

A: Mae Whitman had a baby last year, but she's back at work on

a new series, this time on Hallmark. In "Twelve Dates 'Til Christmas," she plays Kate, a textile pattern designer whose friends sign her up for a matchmaking adventure for the holidays. Her co-stars include Jane Seymour ("Harry Wild") and Mary McDonnell ("Major Crimes"), as well as — I'm assuming — 12 actors to play her eligible bachelors. The six-episode series filmed on location in Ireland.

Whitman has been acting since she was a young child. Most fans recognize her as Amber from the hit NBC family drama series "Parenthood," a role she played from 2010-2015. "Good Girls" really allowed her to stretch her comedic wings that she first started exercising as bland Ann on "Arrested Development." She became a first-time mother in August 2024 when her son, Miles, was born.

"Twelve Dates 'Til Christmas" premiered on the Hallmark Channel on Dec. 5. New episodes air the next day on Hallmark+.

Send me your questions at
NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com.



Myrrh




Myrrh trees grow in the very hot, very dry regions of the Arabian Peninsula, Somalia and Ethiopia. The resin of the myrrh tree has a long and ancient history as a valuable substance in many cultures. To harvest it, the tree itself is wounded repeatedly to cause its resin to "bleed" out, then harden. These secretions are then collected and used to make perfume, incense, flavoring for food and as medicine. Myrrh can be grown in warm, arid parts of the U.S. such as southern California, Arizona, Texas, and Florida.


- Brenda Weaver

Source: healthyplants.com/Myrrh

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Planting dill and parsley




Dill plants do not transplant easily due to their long taproot; create a permanent bed by allowing dill to mature and self-seed over the long-term. To help establish, plant new seeds every few weeks to ensure an ample supply all summer and to prepare for pickling season. Parsley is rich in vitamins and minerals and adds beauty to both the vegetable and flower garden. There are several varieties, including Italian Flat Leaf and Curly. They can be grown in pots if you have limited space. Dill and parsley will attract and feed the beautiful Eastern Black Swallowtail, and can feed its caterpillars as well.

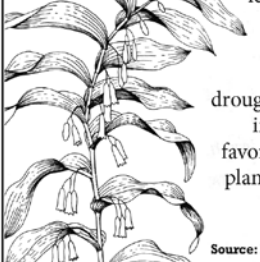
- Brenda Weaver

Source: extension.psu.edu

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Solomon's Seal



"Solomon's Seal" is the common name for a number of species in the genus Polygonatum. These plants display broad, alternating leaves and many clusters of bell-shaped flowers that dangle along each stalk. They prefer rich, moist, well-drained soil, partly or fully shaded. They are drought-tolerant once established, have few insect or disease problems, and are not favored by deer. Beside their use as garden plants, they are used medicinally, and also prepared as food.

- Brenda Weaver

Source: hort.extension.wisc.edu

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RIDDLE SEARCH – PLACES TO SHOP

Look up, down, and diagonally, both forward and backward to find every word on the list. Circle each one as you find it. When all the words are circled, take the UNUSED letters and write them on the blanks below. Go from left to right and top to bottom to find the answer to this riddle: **How do meowing animals do their Christmas shopping?**

Bazaar

Bookstore

Boutique

Emporium

Fair

Flea Market

Gallery

Kiosk

Mart

Mini-Mall

Museum

Outlet

Pet Shop

Plaza

Stall

Stand

B	O	U	T	I	Q	U	E	F	F
O	A	M	I	N	I	M	A	L	L
O	R	Z	K	I	O	S	K	O	E
K	M	M	A	C	T	A	T	G	A
S	U	R	I	A	F	T	R	A	M
T	E	A	L	L	R	E	O	L	A
O	S	L	A	Z	A	L	P	L	R
R	U	G	D	N	A	T	S	E	K
E	M	P	O	R	I	U	M	R	E
S	P	E	T	S	H	O	P	Y	T

Riddle answer: _____

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Just Like Cats & Dogs

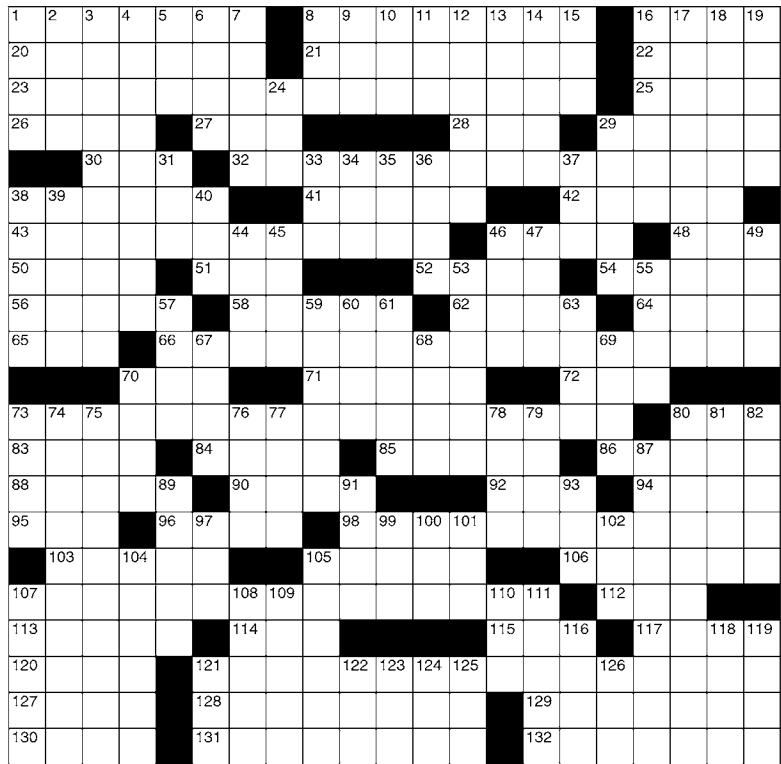
by Dave T. Phipps

Riddle Answer:

From catalogs.

Crossword

Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
1 Small, sticky sheets
8 Sentimental souvenir
16 Bit of aquatic flora
20 In hitting position, in baseball
21 Haphazardly
22 Ringing thing
23 Providence university founded to educate Dracula?
25 Not phony
26 Auld lang—
27 Wed.
28 Stale
29 Passover bread
30 Pixelish type
32 Nicer than a Madison university?
38 Actress
41 Jeans, e.g.
42 Ridden horse
43 Located on a Somerville university's campus?
46 Pooh or Yogi
48 Encyclopedia unit: Abbr.
50 Clueless
51 Cruise of film
52 Mine metals
- 54 Baseball Hall of Famer Tony
56 Some Siouan people
58 Shakur of hip-hop
62 LAX stats
64 Little — ("Hairspray" girl)
65 Certain till bill
66 Title of a picture album featuring an Atlanta university?
70 Paella veggie
71 Singer Abdul
72 Org. offering towns
73 Inadequate leader of a Durham university?
80 Easter meat
83 Santa — (desert winds)
84 Tart garnish
85 Italian actress
86 NFL coach
88 Fort Knox bar
90 — deck (cruise ship part)
92 Cup edge
94 Actress Lena
95 Loud noise
96 Mega melee
- 98 Unable to escape from a New York university?
103 Routine
105 Animals of a region
106 Pretenses
107 Houston university attended for four complete years?
112 Tattoo fluid
113 Make ecstatic
114 "Way cool!"
115 Tazo drink
117 "Intolerance" star Lillian
120 TV imp
121 Leave a New Haven university with no exit fee?
127 Kin of -trix
128 Able to do no wrong
129 Swiveled
130 Big name in private jets
131 Used a sieve on
132 Partner of Hutch
- DOWN
1 Alehouses
2 Nashville's Grand Ole —
3 Wall builder, e.g.
4 Moist wipe
5 "Son of," in Arabic names
6 Successor of Roosevelt
7 Malty brew
8 Kit — bar
9 Biblical verb ending
10 Sooner than, in verse
11 —Man (arcade game)
12 Hair nets
13 Past puberty
14 Organizing expert Marie
15 First-aid pro
16 Chafe
17 Golf great called "The Merry Mex"
18 Like many a bored person's eyes
19 Permit
24 Early car inits.
29 Subway system
31 Winter woe
33 Mil. missions
34 Fissure
35 The Yoko of "Dear Yoko"
36 "Beetle" Bailey dog
37 Troop gp.
38 Plane flier
- 39 "La, — to follow so"
40 Sternward
44 Dog in Oz
45 X-rated stuff
46 Actress Mary — Hurt
47 Actor
49 Like loafers
53 Fix
55 Peru's capital
57 Went swiftly
59 Burst open, as corn
60 Lab gel
61 Very mean
63 Eye carefully
67 Lug
68 In addition
69 Gobbles up
70 Cali currency
73 Installed, as carpet
74 Totally wipe out
75 Document of English liberties
76 Metric mass, in brief
77 Give forth
78 Nixing mark
79 City in Oklahoma
80 Hawaiian dancers' garments
81 Wonderland girl
82 Long, thick heads of hair
87 Wishing to receive
89 Stale
91 Royal name of Norway
93 Sow or boar
97 Figure skater
Midori
99 Arles assent
100 Wolf Blitzler's channel
101 Chiang — -shek
102 Rapa — (Easter island)
104 No longer ill
105 Hat for Frank Sinatra
107 Mutinous sort
108 Former senator Lott
109 Spiteful sort
110 Home for a 93-Down
111 Messy stacks
116 Dismounted
118 Search for
119 Lamarr of "Algiers"
121 Mil. enlistees
122 Mentalist
Geller
123 Khaki cousin
124 Certain till bill
125 Bouquets-to-order co.
126 Mendes of "Hitch"

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What's the best age to spay or neuter a dog?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: When should I get my purebred puppy spayed? "Macy" is a rambunctious, 6-month-old Bernese, and I'm getting conflicting information from friends and my vet. My friends say that she should go through one or two heat cycles before I get her fixed. The vet wants it done right away. Who's right? — Carol H., via email

DEAR CAROL: Oh, wow. This is quite a topic of conversation in my pet circles, as I'm sure it is with your fellow pet owners. I don't think anyone is going to be super happy with my answer, because I'm not going to give you a definitive age at which puppies should be spayed or neutered. Instead, I'm going to punt this to the American Kennel Club (AKC), which has a great article on why recommended ages differ: www.akc.org/expert-advice/vets-corner/neutering-spaying-right-age-dog.

With that said, I commend you on making the decision to spay your puppy. Among owners of purebred dogs, deciding if and when to "fix" them is sometimes a tough choice. However, if an owner does not intend to breed their dog (responsibly, of course), spaying or neutering can curb some undesired behaviors and prevent some health problems.

If you decide to spay Macy after her first or second heat, wait until the heat cycle has completed before undergoing the procedure. This will reduce the possibility of excessive bleeding. Also, keep her under your control during her heat cycle — indoors unless you're walking her. When you take her for walks, stay next to her and keep her on a strong leash. It will amaze you how many dogs become intensely interested in Macy as you pass by. Keep your distance from all of them during this period.

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

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Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

Super Crossword

Answers

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

Horoscope



ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Handle that potentially awkward situation by warming up your confidence reserves and letting it radiate freely. Also, expect an old friend to contact you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) It's not too early for the practical Bovine to begin planning possible New Year workplace changes. A recent contact can offer some interesting insights.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) A request for an unusual favor should be carefully checked out. Also check the motives behind it. Your generosity should be respected, not exploited.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Party time beckons, but for some Moon Children, so do some workplace challenges. Deal with the second first, then you'll be free to enjoy the fun time.

LEO (July 23-August 22) A warm response to an earlier request might be a positive indicator of what's ahead. Meanwhile, Cupid could pay a surprise visit to single Leos looking for love.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) How you respond to a proposed change in a project could affect your situation. Be prepared to show how

well you would be able to deal with it.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) The revelation of a secret could cause some changes in how to deal with a workplace matter. It very likely also validates a position you have long held.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) An attempt to get too personal could upset the very private Scorpio. Make it clear that there's a line no one crosses without your permission.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) The savvy Sagittarian might be able to keep a family disagreement from spilling over by getting everyone involved to talk things out.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Be careful not to push people too hard to meet your ideas of what holiday preparations should be. Best to make it a cooperative, not a coerced, effort.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) An unexpected request could make you rethink a position you've had for a long time. Meanwhile, plan a family get-together for the weekend.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Someone might find that it was a fluke to try to use your sympathetic nature to get you to accept a situation you're not comfortable with. Good for you.

BORN THIS WEEK: You like challenges that are both mental and physical, and you enjoy always beating your personal best.

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Weekly SUDOKU

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