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TIDBITS® CONTEMPLATES RANDOM FACTS

by Janet Spencer

Come along with Tidbits as we consider random facts and useless knowledge!

WEIRD FACTS

- The hills comprising the Scottish Highlands in the British Isles are a continuation of the Appalachian Mountains in the U.S. The two chains were connected before continental drift opened up the Atlantic Ocean.
- Pin cushions often look like little red tomatoes. Those little tomatoes are filled with emery powder of the same type that emery boards are made of. This sand cleans and sharpens pins and needles thrust into it.
- Honey never spoils. Archaeologists examining King Tut's tomb found jars of honey dating back 2,000 years that was still edible. The oldest honey ever found was found in the tomb of a noblewoman in Tbilisi, Georgia. It was approximately 5,500 years old and unspoiled because of the low moisture content and acidic qualities.
- Fresh eel blood is more toxic to mammals than most other venoms that appear in the animal kingdom. The toxin causes muscles to cramp, including the heart. This is why eel is always served cooked well done.
- Fiddler crabs are either left-clawed or right-clawed at the same proportion as humans are left- or right-handed. (cont)

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RANDOM FACTS (cont)

- Botanically speaking, to be considered a berry, the item must have three layers composed of the skin, the flesh, and the berries; it must contain two or more seeds; and it must develop from the single ovary of a single flower. Strawberries, blackberries, and raspberries are not true berries. Neither are cherries. Watermelons are berries, as are bananas, tomatoes, blueberries, peppers, eggplants, and avocados.
- Albert Einstein used math to predict the existence of black holes 40 years before the Hubble telescope provided the first solid evidence that they exist.
- George Washington owned many slaves and was particularly irked when one of them, a woman named Ona Judge, successfully escaped. He was angry because he felt he had treated her well.
- The first computer “bug” in history was actually a moth that crawled into the machine and died. It was found and “de-bugged” on September 9, 1947, at Harvard University.
- There are hydroelectric dams upstream from Niagara Falls. At night during peak tourist season they reduce the amount of water flowing over the falls by 50%, funneling it into reservoirs to be used for power generation during the day. The flow over the falls is cut by 75% during winter months.
- The difference between a cemetery and a graveyard is that a graveyard is attached to a particular holy place such as a church, temple, or monastery, whereas a cemetery is any other burial place that is open to all. The word “cemetery” comes from the Greek phrase meaning literally “sleeping place.”
- When female lions are pregnant, each unborn kitten is encased in an internal “hammock” that swings as she moves. This helps stabilize her movement as she runs and hunts. (cont)



- If you keep aloe around for soothing your skin after being out in the sun, take this tip from J.C. in Florida: "Keep aloe in your fridge; it keeps it cool, and it feels even more refreshing."
- Want to eat more fruits and veggies? Keep pre-cut fruit and easy veggie dippers like carrots, bell pepper strips and celery at eye level in see-through containers in your fridge. The more you see it, the more you will eat it.
- WEDDING TIP: To create a beautiful garland for banisters, use white or light-colored tulle, draped in sections and gathered with a lovely bow. Twist the tulle around a string of clear lights for an even more dramatic effect.
- To create an easy resting mat for toddlers, sew three pillowcases together in a row along the long end. When needed, stuff three pillows in, and it creates a long mat, suitable for naptime or TV time.
- Use wide, flat rubber bands, such as you might find on a broccoli stalk, to identify your drinking glass. Write each person's name in permanent marker on the band, and slip over the glass. Another benefit? It makes the glass non-slip!
- M.R. in Wisconsin writes: "Chalkboard paint is a wonderful creation for creative kids. If you rent and can't paint, you can purchase large squares of smooth pressboard at a building supply store and paint those. Then just mount them to the wall using mirror clips. The kids absolutely love ours!"

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

OH NO, I FORGOT WHICH ONE WAS THE SOY BURGER! NOT SURE WHICH IS WORSE, MY AUNT EATING MEAT OR ME TAKING A BITE OF SOY!!

RANDOM FACTS (cont)

- Lions urinate upwind from prey so the scent blows over to where they are grazing. When the prey moves downwind to safety, they run to where the rest of the pride lays in wait.
- The roar of the MGM lion is actually the dubbed roar of a tiger. Similarly, the call of an eagle in movies is usually over-dubbed by the more dramatic call of a red-tailed hawk.
- Humans have continuously inhabited Australia for nearly 70,000 years, but the nearby island nation of New Zealand has been inhabited for only 850 years. That's when the first Maori arrived. New Zealand was the last major landmass that was settled by humans.
- The continent of Australia is wider than the Moon. Russia is wider than Pluto.
- Groundhogs and woodchucks are the same animal.
- Mozart had an older sister that was just as talented as he was, but their parents pushed her to "retire" while pushing him to succeed. She was the one who preserved his music following his death along with Mozart's wife.
- The modern Homo sapiens is not substantially smarter than the first Homo sapiens of the hunter-gatherer variety; it's just that we have access to the knowledge accumulated through history, the benefits of its application, and efficient ways of sharing it.
- Oxford University in England was founded around 250 years before the Aztec Empire.
- The Wright Brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk was in 1903. Apollo landed on the Moon in 1969. Only 66 years passed between the two events. Neil Armstrong was born in 1930 and was 17 years old when Orville Wright died in 1948. Theoretically, the first man to walk on the Moon could have met the first man to fly.
- We put men on the Moon before anyone even thought to put wheels on luggage. (cont)



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HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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NUGGET OF KNOWLEDGE

Michael J. Fox's middle name is actually Andrew. There was already an actor named Michael Fox, so he needed to distinguish himself with a middle initial, but thought it presumptuous to call himself "Michael, A Fox."



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The Garden Bug

It's very common to see the three-leaved poison ivy plant when doing yardwork or hiking in the woods. Any part of your body that contacts the urushiol oil in its leaves, stems and roots may get an extremely itchy or painful rash that can last days or even weeks! If you must work near this plant or are trying to remove it, use heavy gloves, and wear as much protective clothing and gear as you can, including goggles or a shield for your eyes. Carefully remove these items and wash separately when finished. - Brenda Weaver

Poison ivy



Source: wexnermedical.osu.edu

TIDBITS Laughs!

A: What did the photo say to airport security?
B: He was travelling light!

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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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 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

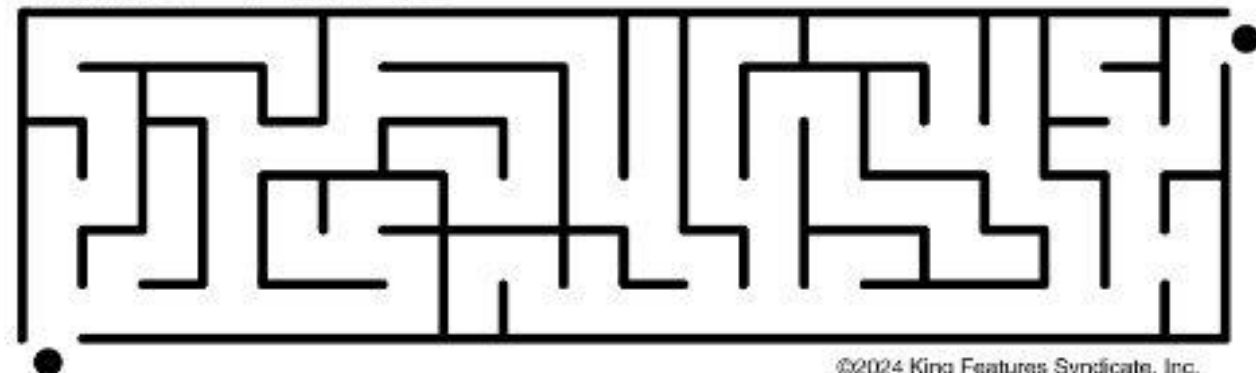
♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Holidays & Observances This Week

- 5/26 Sorry Day
- 5/27 Cellophane Tape Day
- 5/28 International Hamburger Day
- 5/29 Learn About Composting Day
- 5/30 National Mint Julep Day
- 5/31 National Smile Day
- 6/1 Flip a Coin Day

Kids' Maze



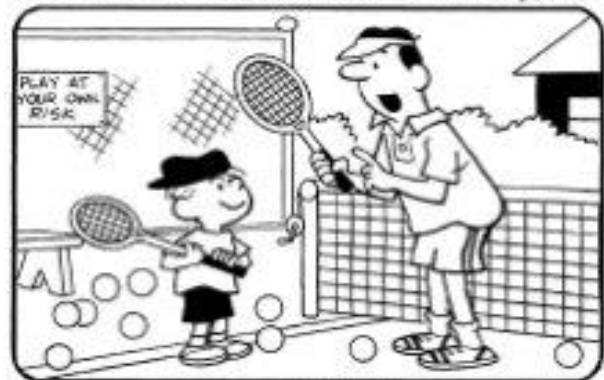
RANDOM FACTS (cont)

- The first flowering plants didn't appear until millions of years after dinosaurs went extinct. The same is true for grasses. If you see dioramas or depictions of dinosaurs surrounded by flowers and grass, they're inaccurate.
- Mammoths still existed at the time that the Pyramids were being built in Egypt.
- By the time Cleopatra was born around the year 69 B.C., the Pyramids were already over 2000 years old.
- Blue whales are the loudest animals on the planet, with vocalizations that can reach 188 decibels.
- Whales still have the remnants of vestigial back legs, with all the bones still intact, though diminished in size, from when they started their evolutionary journey as a land-roaming quadruped called Pakicetus. Though some animals evolved in the sea and moved to land, whales evolved on land and moved to the sea.
- Lions are called "king of the jungle" but they don't live in the jungle; they live on the savannah.
- Cheetah cubs when they are born have white stripes on their backs which make them look exactly like honey badgers. The honey badger is a formidable fighter and most animals give them a wide berth. Cheetahs outgrow the stripes as they mature.
- Bees have tiny hairs all over their eyes, which help the bee sense wind direction and speed. This helps the bees find their way home on windy days.
- Right now there are about 8 billion people on the planet. Throughout history, since the dawn of Homo sapiens, it's estimated that 117 billion people have lived on Earth.
- Fungi share more DNA with humans than with plants.

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Ball is missing. 2. Racket is longer. 3. Stripe on shorts is different. 4. Fence is not as wide. 5. Sign on fence is lower. 6. Bottom of shirt is different.

Strange BUT TRUE

- In 1925, a war between Greece and Bulgaria started after a stray dog crossed their border.
- During the 1917 siege of Jerusalem, the British, in an effort to capture the city from an entrenched Ottoman garrison, airdropped cigarettes filled with large doses of opium in the hope their opponents would be too stoned to fight. It worked.
- Holland, Michigan, has 168 miles of tubing coiled underneath its streets that circulates hot water in order to melt any snow on the ground.
- China's Three Gorges Dam is so huge that it's slowed the rotation of Earth.
- Hard-rocker Ozzy Osbourne once fell asleep during a driving test and woke up to find a note on the seat that said, "You have failed." But give him credit for persistence: After 19 attempts, he finally managed to pass the test in 2009 at the age of 60, and then purchased a Ferrari.
- In Wisconsin, it's legal for kids of any age to drink alcohol in a bar as long as they are with their legal guardian.
- Dwayne Johnson's beard in the movie "Hercules" was made of yak testicle hair.
- The Aztecs regarded childbirth as a form of battle. Women who didn't survive it were thought to rise to one of the highest heavens, the same one as for male warriors who died in battle.
- In 1986 a Soviet pilot made a bet with his co-pilot that he could land his airplane blind. He curtained all the cockpit windows and crashed the plane into the landing strip, killing 70 out of his 87 passengers.

Thought for the Day:

Life is like skiing. The goal is not to get to the bottom of the hill. It's to have a bunch of good runs before the sun sets. - Seth Godin

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"We seem to have found some undocumented income."

KOVELS' ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

By Terry and Kim Kovel
 PHOTO CREDIT: Kovels.com
 PHOTO CAPTION: This candelabrum's primary purpose is decoration, not illumination. By the time it was made, improved forms of lighting like oil lamps and electric lights were available.



Candelabrum

When new technology is invented, the devices replaced don't immediately disappear. This candelabrum is marked with "1887." In 1782, Aime Argand patented a lamp that had a hollow wick and burned any fluid oil. New types of oil lamps and fuels to use with them, like whale oil, turpentine, kerosene and even lard, appeared throughout the 19th century.

Thomas Edison invented the incandescent light bulb in 1879. Candles did not fall entirely out of use, of course; candlesticks and candelabra were still made and used as decorations, as they are today. Because they were more decorative than utilitarian, they became larger and more ornate. The candelabrum pictured here is made of brass, like many early candlesticks. Like many later candlesticks, it features elaborate ornaments: leafy arms, a pierced scrolled base and, most eye-catching of all, a handpainted porcelain tree branch adorned with colorful three-dimensional flowers and two large perching green parrots. Its decorative value brought its price to \$594 at a sale by Conestoga Auction Company.

Q: I have a 1956 Wurlitzer jukebox, Model

1900, that has never been refinished. It has high fidelity, original speakers and plays 200 45RPM records. It's in good working order. Can you tell me the value?

A: Wurlitzer was founded in 1856 in Cincinnati, Ohio, by Rudolph Wurlitzer. He was a recent immigrant from Germany and imported musical instruments from his family's business. Wurlitzer began making pianos in 1880. The first Wurlitzer jukeboxes were made in 1934. The Wurlitzer Centennial Model 1900 was made in 1955 and 1956 to celebrate the 100th birthday of the company. About 12,500 were made. Wurlitzer sold its jukebox brand to Deutsche Wurlitzer GmbH, a German subsidiary, in 1974 and that company continued to make Wurlitzer jukeboxes until 2013. If you want to sell your jukebox, see if a local store buys and sells them, check websites that sell jukeboxes or contact an auction that specializes in coin-operated machines. A Wurlitzer Model 1900 with 245 records sold for about \$4,000 two years ago. However, we have seen a model with 200 records sell for as much as \$8,000, so it's worth your while to do some additional research.

TIP: Worcestershire sauce is a good brass polish.

CURRENT PRICES

Kitchen, food mold, horseshoe shape, tin, 1800s, 11 x 2 1/2 inches, \$65.

Bottle, flask, eagle and cornucopia, olive brown glass, sheared and tooled mouth, early 1800s, 6 5/8 inches, \$275.

Furniture, pie safe, pine, six punched tin panels with stars in circles, long drawer, 1800s, 59 x 39 inches, \$815.

Toy, train accessory, English market station, domed center, peaked ends, Marklin, Germany, 10 x 10 inches, \$1,440.

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

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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You're buoyed by an exciting new venture that opens up more career possibilities. But you need to come down to earth occasionally to deal with home matters.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) The week opens up a new period of opportunities, both personal and professional. Spend the weekend with family and/or close friends.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Aspects favor reasonable risk-taking, as long as you feel prepared for the challenge of a new project. Your personal life also offers possibilities for change.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Things ease up as tensions dissipate. Continue to reach out to those who need to be reassured that the upsets of the past are over and that everything is back to normal.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Somebody loves you, and you know who this person is. While romantic aspects are favorable, it's up to you whether the relationship goes from static to ecstatic.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Educational aspects are strong this week for all Virgans -- especially for children, who will benefit from after-school classes in music, art or dance.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) This is a favorable period for Librans to get started on making those long-overdue lifestyle changes involving health, fitness and relationship matters.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Things begin to settle down in the workplace. But personal situations take on new importance as a loved one shares a matter of great concern with you.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) This is a good time to reach out to new acquaintances and reestablish contact with longtime friends who have earned your trust in past years.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) You're able to assume more control over situations that seemed to be getting out of hand recently. Take time to mend rifts with your mate.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Romantic aspects are strong for senior Aquarians, who prove that getting older just means getting better at playing Cupid's game. "Playmates" include Librans and Leos.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Let your instincts guide you to a decision about a friend who makes a claim on your generous nature. Also, travel plans might need some adjusting.

BORN THIS WEEK: You have a deep, spiritual side that you sometimes hide to let your more practical aspects show through.

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Keeping your pet healthy on a tight budget

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I have a dog and a cat, and my last vet visit cost over \$300. It's incredibly difficult to pay for vet care on top of the ridiculous cost of housing, grocery prices and my own health care costs. How can I keep pet care affordable? -- John in Newton, Massachusetts

DEAR JOHN: Pet care can be quite pricey, and I know you want the best for your dog and cat. I just laid out a few hundred dollars for my senior cat's checkup and tests, so I feel your pain.

The Humane Society of the United States has some good information about cost-saving options, discounted veterinary services and ways to stretch out payments: www.humanesociety.org/resources/are-you-having-trouble-affording-your-pet.

One interesting avenue is veterinary colleges. Today, almost every state has at least one school of veterinary medicine, and many operate low-cost clinics.

Check the town hall or municipal website for upcoming shot clinics. These are held in many communities at least once a year at an easy to access location (like a pet store) and offer required vaccinations at a very affordable cost. Some clinics also offer microchip services and pet wellness exams for a few dollars more.

Finally, if you have the means and just want to get your budget under control, take a look at pet insurance. There are a number of companies providing this service, with several coverage options -- including reimbursing the cost of annual exams and vaccinations, as well as care for unplanned injuries and illnesses. Coverage varies, and it's important to read the fine print and compare plans closely, but it can really help keep unexpected costs from derailing your checking account.

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

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TIDBITS WORD POWER
Unscramble this word:
LUSTYUPACE

Koalas eat only these leaves, but if you give a koala the leaves without the branch, they will starve.



TIDBITS GOES GREEN

During World War I, reducing the weight of bicycles saved 2,000 tons of steel. During World War II, salvaging metal straps from corsets saved enough metal to build 2 warships.



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CryptoQuip

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

Clue: R equals S

RXHFYTD FVIXBQHP IHIVPA
BEYQR ITCH QV SH BRHC SA
TFQPHRR PHYC TEC RZTQHP
DYXYERZY: QTPT SAQHR.

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Annoyed state
- 6 Suitable
- 9 TV schedule abbr.
- 12 Road reversal
- 13 Cornfield noise
- 14 "— the Walrus"
- 15 Idaho's capital
- 16 Minor complaint
- 18 Vehicle's capacity
- 20 Intends
- 21 German pronoun
- 23 "... — quit!"
- 24 Unravels
- 25 Second in command
- 27 Fighting
- 29 "Already?"
- 31 Unparalleled
- 35 Track horse
- 37 Continental currency
- 38 Nepal's neighbor
- 41 D-Day vessel
- 43 — -de-France
- 44 Sole
- 45 Litter container
- 47 Without a sound
- 49 Aromas
- 52 Ornate vase
- 53 Bit of physics

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12						13			14		
15						16		17			
		18			19			20			
21	22			23				24			
25			26		27		28				
29				30			31		32	33	34
			35			36			37		
38	39	40				41		42		43	
44					45				46		
47				48			49			50	51
52				53				54			
55				56				57			

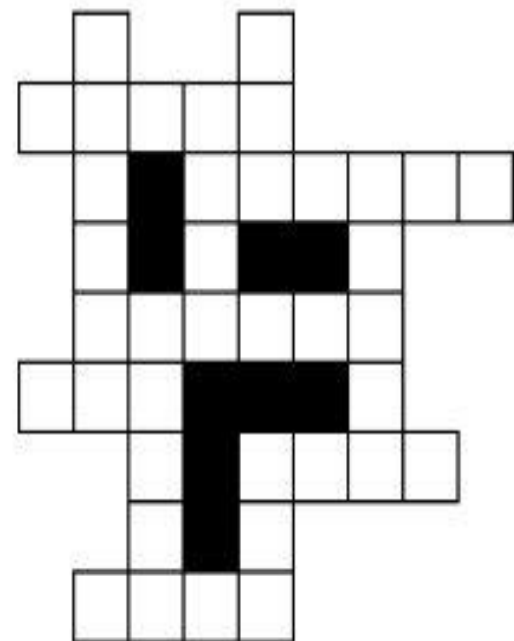
- 54 Illuminated
- 55 "A spider!"
- 56 Summer on the Seine
- 57 Very small
- 9 Leg bone
- 10 Pleasantly warm
- 11 Make — of (bungle)
- 17 "Peter Pan" author
- 19 Swiss money
- 21 Hosp. hook-ups
- 22 Corp. boss
- 24 Summer cooler
- 26 Spinach-eating sailor
- 28 German sausage
- 30 Granola grain
- 32 Man of La Mancha
- 33 Web address
- 34 Fair hirer, in ads
- 36 Boosler of comedy
- 38 Chef's hat
- 39 Accustom
- 40 Lose a starting contest
- 42 Letter-shaped hardware
- 45 Coagulate
- 46 "Garfield" dog
- 48 Cravat
- 50 Ske-daddle
- 51 CIA operative

DOWN

- 1 Tavern
- 2 Jurist Lance
- 3 Savory brunch pies
- 4 Celestial bear
- 5 January, to Juana
- 6 Find not guilty
- 7 Painter Cezanne
- 8 Prefix with night or light



- ERD
- NIPDUA
- ♥BUARM
- ♥ENDE
- ♥AGNIRT
- ♥AET
- ♥UTRN
- ♥EMDNA
- ♥NDA
- IMPREE
- ♥EGURA
- TUIN



Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

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VITALHEALTH4YOU DR. HOLLY CARLING AND ALICIA BALTIA

HealthBits

By Dr. Holly Carling

HOW TO REAP DEEP SLEEP – PART II

In Part I we discussed the physical and nctional hazards of inadequate sleep. In this second part, we will address how to reap deep sleep. For some, falling asleep quickly and easily comes without fanfare, while others take sometimes hours to fall asleep. Another issue is waking once or more during the night, then not being able to return to sleep. Many seem to get adequate sleep, but fail to feel refreshed in the morning. All of these sleep issues are different, and therefore have different remedies. But there are some constants that everyone can do.

First, create a nighttime routine that supports healthy sleep. Dim the lights in the house at least 2 hours before bed, allowing the pineal gland to begin to release melatonin. Melatonin is a hormone that is only released when dark. It is said that even LED lights in your room can inhibit the release of melatonin. Sit in your room when dark and look for any light sources. Power cords, alarm clocks, electronics lights, smoke alarms, etc. Can interfere with proper melatonin production. In addition to creating the circadian rhythm of the brain, melatonin is important in regulating women’s menstruation cycle and reproduction and instrumental in regulating body weight and energy balance.

Many choose to add melatonin or medicate for

sleep and are happy they do, but many don’t see that as a viable option for them for one reason or another. I am not a proponent of melatonin therapy because instead of giving the pineal gland a free ride, I would prefer to find out WHY it isn’t producing enough melatonin, if that is the issue, and address that. Treating the underlying cause is invariably better than just supplanting a function with a close relative, but not exactly the same as your own hormones.

There are many bedtime routines that can be helpful in encouraging sleep. There are also some “don’t do this” advice: Put your media to bed at least two hours before retiring. Even then, wear blue-light blocking glasses as the blue light can adversely affect sleep. Don’t eat sugar, sugary drinks, alcohol or coffee any time after 2pm. Even though some believe alcohol helps their sleep, the quality is not good, so the sleep deprivation continues.

While eating carbs before bed is not good for sleep, eating extra protein is – but not a lot. Just a chunk – like a mini chicken wing or drumstick size. Protein is very stabilizing to the blood sugar, an imbalance of which contributes to waking in the middle of the night unable to return to sleep. Too much food results in the body busily digesting instead of resting. As with all things in life, balance is key. Want to hear more from Dr. Carling? Check out our podcast. Search for VitalHealth4You on your favorite podcast listening app or go to vitalhealthcda.com/podcasts/



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

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

STICKELERS with Terry Stickels

Here’s a puzzle that celebrates critical thinking! Each letter in the equation below represents a number. No word can begin with zero. If U = 1 and R = 0, can you fill in the remaining numbers in this alphametic?

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{FINE} \\ + \text{TUNED} \\ \hline \text{BRAIN} \end{array}$$

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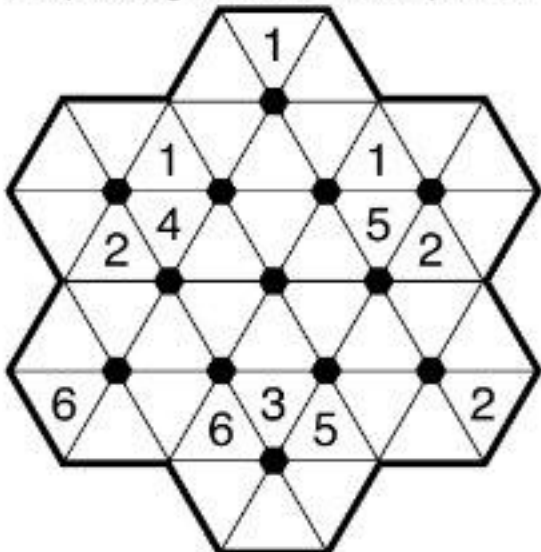
TIDBITS GOES LONG.....

Sharks appeared on Earth before the Atlantic Ocean appeared (23 million years ago), before trees evolved (125 MYA) before the Rocky Mountains rose (80 MYA), and even before the rings formed around Saturn (100 MYA). The earliest shark fossils date back 450 million years.

SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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



DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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VETERANS ★ POST ★

Getting help when leaving the service

Those who leave the service can be in for quite a life change, not only for them but for their families. The transition can be something of a challenge.

The VA knows this and has set aside \$4 million to be used this year as grants to organizations that help with that transition. Additionally, the grant organizations are expected to match that amount, effectively doubling the money.

The services these organizations are to provide include employment placement, interview training, resume help and more. Just getting help with a resume can be a huge step. Trying to translate your military MOS to its civilian equivalent can be daunting.

Besides the grants to organizations, the VA takes its own steps. See benefits.va.gov/transition/transition-home

.asp for more information.

The Military to Civilian Readiness Pathway (M2C Ready) is a two-year effort: one year before you leave the service and one year afterward.

Part of M2C Ready is the Solid Start program, which helps veterans during the first year of leaving the service. They give you three calls during that first year (at the 90, 180 and 365 day marks) to make sure you know about the benefits you have. (A heads up ... take care that you're not talking to a scammer. Veterans are often targeted, so beware what personal info you disclose on the phone.)

You can call Solid Start at 800-827-0611 or see benefits.va.gov/

[TRANSITION/solid-start.asp](https://benefits.va.gov/TRANSITION/solid-start.asp). The page has lists and links to resources you can use. Among others, the sources include employment help, housing assistance, pensions, education, life insurance and getting your records. Don't miss the link to the VA Welcome Kit at the bottom of the page. Get one (it's a download) and keep it with your important documents.

If you're not actually leaving the service yet and are moving from one duty station to the next, hook up with TAP o the Transition Assistance Program. Check the "modules" at benefits.va.gov/TRANSITION/VA-TAP-Course-Catalog.asp for videos on topics of your choice. These are actual training sessions with resource guides.

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3. Glass Sponge	10,000+ years
4. Black Coral	4,000+ years
5. Ocean Quahog clam	500+ years
6. Tubeworm	300+ years
7. Greenland shark	272+ years
8. Freshwater Pearl Mussel	250+ years
9. Rougheye Rockfish	200+ years
10. Bowhead Whale	200+ years

Source: LiveScience.com


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TIDBITS presents TRIVIA NEWSFRONT

- You do this 10 million times a year.
- If you walked 12 hours a day, how long would it take you to walk around the Earth?
- What is the only muscle in the body that never tires?
- This is the only one of the five Great Lakes that's entirely within the U.S.
- This smallest of the Great Lakes is surrounded by the most industry.

Laugh a bit with TIDBITS


Q: Why can't you ever trust atoms?

A: They make up everything!

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30' x 40' x 14' 2' Overhangs-Wainscoat

30' x 40' x 16' 2' Overhangs-Wainscoat

26' x 30' x 10' w/10' x 30' Lean-To

30' x 50' x 12' * with 12' x 50' Lean-to

40' x 60' x 16' with a 14' x 60' Lean-to

30' x 40' x 14' - 2 - Rollups with 30' x 12' Front Car Port

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DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCELICENSED BONDED CERTIFIED OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE.....COVERING ALL OF IDAHO



By Ryan A. Berenz

1. What kicker from West Germany became an Oklahoma Sooners football legend when he made a 41-yard field goal in the final seconds to beat the Ohio State Buckeyes 29-28?
2. What is the nickname of the athletic teams at the University of California, Irvine?
3. Who are the only two racecar drivers representing the United States to have won a Formula 1 World Drivers' Championship?
4. What Jamaican boxer, who briefly held the WBC heavyweight title in 1986, was bludgeoned to death by his nephew in 2006?
5. What South American national soccer team won a shocking upset over Brazil in a 1950 FIFA World Cup final match that Brazilians call "The Maracana Smash"?
6. Name the 2023 sports drama film based on the true story of five young Mexican-American caddies who built their own golf course in South Texas in 1955.
7. What team won the 1989 World Series that was delayed by the Loma Prieta earthquake?

Answers

1. Uwe von Schamann.
 2. The Anteaters.
 3. Phil Hill (1961) and Mario Andretti (1978).
 4. Trevor Berbick.
 5. Uruguay.
 6. "The Long Game."
 7. The Oakland A's beat the San Francisco Giants 4-0.
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GO FIGURE!

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	-			+			=	10	
-		-				+			
	+			÷			=	2	
×		÷				+			
	+			×			=	18	
=		=		=					
48		1				13			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

DIFFICULTY: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

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1. TELEVISION: What is the name of the community college in the sitcom "Community"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: Which two countries in South America are landlocked?
3. HISTORY: Where did the effective end of the Civil War take place?
4. U.S. STATES: Which state comes first alphabetically?
5. FOOD & DRINK: What is an affogato?
6. MOVIES: Which movie features the character Inigo Montoya?
7. ENTERTAINERS: What is singer/songwriter Taylor Swift's middle name?
8. ANATOMY: What is the smallest organ in the human body?
9. LITERATURE: Which fantasy novel (later made into an HBO series called "Game of Thrones") features a place called Winterfell?
10. GEOLOGY: What is the most malleable metal?

Answers

1. Greendale Community College.
 2. Bolivia and Paraguay.
 3. Appomattox Court House, Virginia.
 4. Alabama.
 5. Dessert of ice cream and coffee.
 6. "The Princess Bride."
 7. Alison.
 8. Pineal gland.
 9. "A Song of Ice and Fire."
 10. Gold.
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"The bases are _____ and _____ so is Leon!"

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!

Inspire: **TEALE**

Feature: **DILATE**

Elegy: **RIDGE**

Noble: **DROUP**

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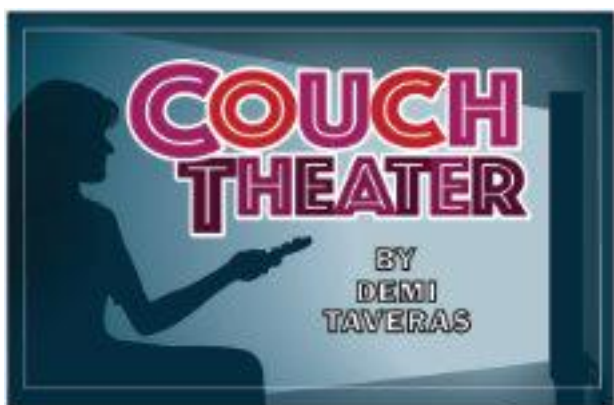


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By Demi Taveras



Photo Credit: Courtesy of Netflix
Photo Caption: Emily Carey, left, and Liam Woodrum star in "Geek Girl."

"Gaga Chromatica Ball" (TV-14) -- Calling all fans of the Mother Monster herself! A new concert experience from pop icon Lady Gaga reaches streaming on May 25, for all the Monsters who weren't able to attend the Chromatica Ball tour back in 2022. Immerse yourself in the dark, edgy atmosphere of the Chromatica Ball with a stage inspired by brutalist architecture. Jam out to songs spanning her decades-long discography, like "Just Dance," "Bad Romance," "Shallow" and "Rain on Me." Filming for this TV special took place during the Los Angeles show at Dodger

Stadium, and the special premieres on May 25. (Max)

"Geek Girl" (TV-PG) -- In her new series, actress Emily Carey goes from playing the tortured young queen Alicent in HBO's "House of the Dragon" to playing a socially awkward teenager named Harriet Manners. As a self-proclaimed "geek," Harriet has accepted a life of limitations until she suddenly gets discovered by a model agency that is desperate for new, raw talent. Although transforming Harriet from a geek to a high-fashion model won't be the easiest transition, luckily, she has the help of fashion connoisseur Wilbur Evans (Emmanuel Imani) and a gorgeous supermodel named Nick Park (Liam Woodrum). The 10-episode series releases on May 30. (Netflix)

"The Boys in the Boat" (PG-13) -- George Clooney ("Ticket to Paradise") sat on the director's chair once again to bring an inspiring story about a rowing team full of underdogs to the big screen. Set in 1936, an underprivileged engineering student named Joe Rantz (Callum Turner) tries out for the junior varsity rowing team at the University of Washington after hearing that a spot on the team comes with jobs and boarding. Even though the junior varsity team is less experienced, these go-getters begin pulling off upset after upset, outrowing their own varsity team and other college teams. Now full of momentum, their coach (Joel Edgerton) sets the team's sights on getting a gold medal at the 1936 Olympics in Nazi Germany. Premieres May 28. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Love Undercover" (TV-MA) -- This seven-episode reality series puts a spin on the traditional dating show format that instantly reminded me of the 2009 TV special "I Get That a Lot," where celebrities like Nick Jonas and

Jessica Simpson would pretend to be regular working-class citizens. In this new show out now, five international soccer stars go undercover in the United States to look for love, with the notion that women will fall in love with them for who they are, instead of their successful careers. The soccer players include Jamie O'Hara and Lloyd Jones from the United Kingdom; Sebastian Fassi and Marco Fabian from Mexico; and Ryan Babel from the Netherlands. (Peacock)

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MAGIC MAZE ● — SQUARES



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

Bevel Carpenter's Floor covering Framing	Grid Hollywood Least Magic	Market Perfect Public Sum of	Town Try Word
---	-------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	---------------------



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Super Crossword

MISS SOUTH CAROLINA

- ACROSS**
- 1 Quartz, e.g.
 - 7 Take — of faith
 - 12 Imbiber's hwy. crime
 - 15 Gown designer Vera
 - 19 Brood pouch
 - 20 Baseball Hall of Famer Edd
 - 21 German "a"
 - 22 Smell
 - 23 Sports contest between two disorderly crowds?
 - 26 Give relief
 - 27 Trapped
 - 28 Negative battery pole
 - 29 Fitting snugly
 - 30 Telly network
 - 31 Perform a hip-hop song about a military operation?
 - 34 Periodic table creator Mendeleev
 - 38 Singer Cooke
 - 39 Mined matter
 - 40 Kid-lit "pest"
 - 41 Cry from a toddler who's dropped a Dairy Queen cone?
 - 44 Present
 - 45 Port in Japan
 - 46 Leaving
 - 47 Oz creator L. Frank —
 - 49 Female rat
 - 52 Things docs prescribe
 - 53 Daybreak
 - 54 Search for a Marvel superhero?
 - 58 eBay action
 - 59 Flip (out)
 - 60 Rodent-catching cat
 - 61 Rubdown given in a mountain chalet?
 - 67 Winged insect native to Iraq or Oman?
 - 69 Setting for petri dishes
 - 70 List of jurors
 - 72 Lower limb
 - 73 Talked on and on about chicken products?
 - 75 Fan noise
 - 77 Use Lyft, e.g.
 - 81 Dadaist Jean
 - 82 Defeat
 - 83 Pale-looking
 - 85 H. Ross —
 - 86 Genesis brother
 - 88 Official account of an excursion?
 - 90 Bagel seed
 - 93 Towing org.
 - 95 Entry points
 - 96 2017 film about skater Harding
 - 97 Supreme Court members' favorite beers?
 - 100 Royal Navy letters
 - 101 Sword parts
 - 102 Some sports rounds, for short
 - 103 Lover of beauty
 - 108 Skating jump
 - 109 Yelled while using a juicer?
 - 112 Pilaf base
 - 113 Singer Grande, to her fans
 - 114 The "A" of A/V
 - 115 Actress Julia
 - 116 The "A" of A&E
 - 117 Vermont hrs.
 - 118 Tire problems
 - 119 Itty-bitty
 - DOWN**
 - 1 Very annoyed
 - 2 "Terrible" Russian
 - 3 Ad- — (wings it)
 - 4 13-digit ID in publishing
 - 5 Region of Italy's "toe"
 - 6 Sour in taste
 - 7 Longtime Yankee nickname
 - 8 Singer Rawls
 - 9 Ger.'s continent
 - 10 Very simple
 - 11 Ghostly figure
 - 12 Myers once of CNBC
 - 13 "You can't — all!"
 - 14 Savings acct. buildup
 - 15 "Alas!"
 - 16 Slowly, on music scores
 - 17 Have as a snack
 - 18 — Green (old eloping mecca)
 - 24 Sleuth, slangily
 - 25 Jay of "Gary Unmarried"
 - 29 Despot of old
 - 31 — to go (eager)
 - 32 Church cry
 - 33 "It just came back to me"
 - 34 Tragic destiny
 - 35 Allison of jazz
 - 36 Apple debut of 2010
 - 37 Clucks of shame
 - 38 Clumsy boat
 - 42 "Zounds!"
 - 43 Gelatin in a petri dish
 - 44 See 47-Down
 - 47 With 44-Down, big embrace
 - 48 "Diana" singer Paul
 - 49 Attic buildup
 - 50 Like Ogden Nash's "lama"
 - 51 To be, to Gigi
 - 53 More than mere doubt
 - 55 Osso buco meat
 - 56 Film director Nicolas
 - 57 Color shade
 - 58 Jezebel's god
 - 59 — shui
 - 61 "— -Ca-Dabra" (1974 hit)
 - 62 Untruth teller
 - 63 Pageantry
 - 64 Mets' gp.
 - 65 Big simians
 - 66 Comics' bits
 - 68 Glittery jewelry, informally
 - 71 Brother in Genesis
 - 74 Put on
 - 75 Cry feebly
 - 76 Mother chickens
 - 77 Seized auto, say
 - 78 De-wrinkle
 - 79 "Finding —" (2016 film)
 - 80 "Tell Mama" singer James
 - 84 Clic — (Bic pen brand)
 - 85 Place to buy a leash
 - 86 Queens' homes
 - 87 Novelist Oz
 - 88 Hot cereal, often
 - 89 Punchline drum hit
 - 90 Big desert
 - 91 Miracle drink
 - 92 Choose
 - 93 With milk, in French
 - 94 "— sure you know ..."
 - 98 Heckles
 - 99 Give credit where credit —
 - 100 "— So Shy"
 - 103 Uproars
 - 104 Newsmen Brit
 - 105 Boys' school in Britain
 - 106 Some till bills
 - 107 Jacuzzi effect
 - 109 Actress Issa
 - 110 Org. for cavity repairers
 - 111 Suffix with beat or neat

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97							98			99				100				
101							102						103		104	105	106	107
108							109				110	111						
112							113				114				115			
116							117				118				119			



Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On June 10, 1692, Bridget Bishop became the first person executed for witchcraft during the notorious Salem witch trials, after a trial lasting eight days. She had already been accused and declared innocent a decade prior to the hysteria.
- On June 11, 1509, England's King Henry VIII married the first of his ill-fated wives, Catherine of Aragon. When she failed to produce a male heir, he divorced her against the will of the Roman Catholic Church, triggering the country's Protestant Reformation. Catherine spent her last years in isolation and continued to consider herself England's rightful queen until her death.
- On June 12, 2016, Omar Mateen forced his way into Pulse, one of Orlando's biggest nightclubs, and opened fire with an assault rifle on the predominantly gay crowd. Forty-nine people died and dozens more were injured in what was then the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history.
- On June 13, 1805, having hurried ahead of the main body of his expedition to the Pacific with fellow explorer William Clark, Meriwether Lewis and four other men arrived at the Great Falls of the Missouri River, confirming that the party was headed in the right direction.
- On June 14, 1922, at the dedication of a memorial site for Francis Scott Key, composer of "The Star-Spangled Banner," Warren G. Harding became the first American president to have his voice transmitted by radio while addressing a crowd. It was not until three years later, however, that a president (Calvin Coolidge) would deliver a radio-specific address.
- On June 15, 1300, poet Dante Alighieri was elected one of six Priors (magistrates) of Florence, Italy, his native city. His political activities, which included the banishment of several of his rivals, led to his exile from Florence and separation from his family for 15 years, during which time he wrote his most famous work, "The Divine Comedy."
- On June 16, 2012, China launched the Shenzhou-9 space capsule on a mission that included the country's first female astronaut, military pilot Liu Yang. The crew spent a week at the Tiangong space lab to test systems and conduct experiments.

SENIOR NEWS LINE

By Matilda Charles

Saving the Memories

Many of us have created our family tree, hoping to leave something to the generations that will come after us. Having a list of the names of our ancestors and all their important dates is valuable, especially if you have a budding genealogist coming up through the ranks in your family.

But we can leave them more than that. We can leave them our personal history, our life story.

If this is a project you'd like to consider, there are several ways to proceed.

You can acquire an old-school cassette tape recorder, a stack of cassette tapes, and start talking. Label them as to the date you made the recording and the general topics you covered on each one.

You can go more high-tech and use the recording feature on your cellphone. Be sure you know how to save and backup the file.

If you prefer to use a computer, you can type your information, save the files and make backup copies, even printing out the pages. With typed pages you can make a memory book, including photos pasted onto the pages.

The hard part for many of us will be what to talk or write about. What will future generations care to know about us and the life we've lived?

You might start by flipping through your photo albums and making a list of potential topics. Pull out your scrapbooks to jog your memory.

A partial list of topics to consider: beloved pets, living through tough times, awards you've won, elderly relatives you remember, important people you've met, your first car, where you met your spouse, fads from high school, the scariest moment of your life, best vacation, a childhood toy, inventions that have come in your lifetime, the first place you ever lived, the dumbest fashion you ever wore, the person who had the most influence on you, etc.

Ready to start?

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SENATOR SHELLEY MOORE CAPITOL: ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IS DEVASTATING FAMILIES...

"Health care is a subject that remains front and center in so many of our national conversations and debates... It continues to poll as a top concern among the American public.

...One of those issues is something that is very close to my heart: Alzheimer's disease.

Like so many Americans, I have felt the impacts of this disease. I lost both of my parents to Alzheimer's, and our family helped to care for them. So I understand the difficulties that caregivers and loved ones face as they try to figure out this difficult challenge.

This disease is devastating, and there is no book or a magic formula for how to face it. But I feel strongly that we can do more to ease the pain of those who suffer from Alzheimer's, to help their caregivers, and most importantly, to find a cure. The statistics surrounding Alzheimer's are staggering. More than five million Americans are

living with the disease, and it's estimated that as many as 16 million will have it in 2050 without some kind of medical breakthroughs. The cost of caring for those with Alzheimer's and other dementias is also notable: an estimated \$277 billion in 2018, increasing to \$1.1 trillion by 2050. Not to mention the emotional costs.

These numbers make it clear that we have some

work to do... I so wish my parents had the opportunity to be involved in decisions regarding their own care, but it's my hope that through early assessment and diagnosis, we can give others that opportunity...

At the same time, it's essential that we continue working toward a cure.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I've worked with Labor-Health and Human Services Subcommittee Chairman Roy Blunt, R-Mo., and others to provide resources for critical Alzheimer's research. With the passage of last year's government funding bill, we have surpassed the \$2 billion milestone when it comes to Alzheimer's research, providing the National Institutes of Health the funding it needs to continue its work and to help support the work of others.

It's easy to get discouraged when you hear about a once-promising clinical trial not moving forward, when you learn another person you know has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, or when a cure may seem so far away. But observing the research being done at NIH and other institutions across the county, seeing the hope and determination in the eyes of those fighting back, and witnessing the bipartisan commitment to tackling this disease—that's all proof that we are making progress..."

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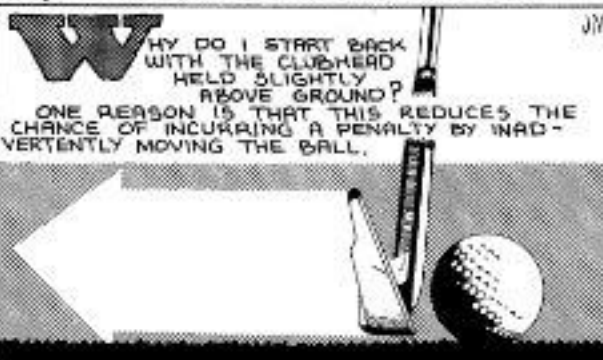
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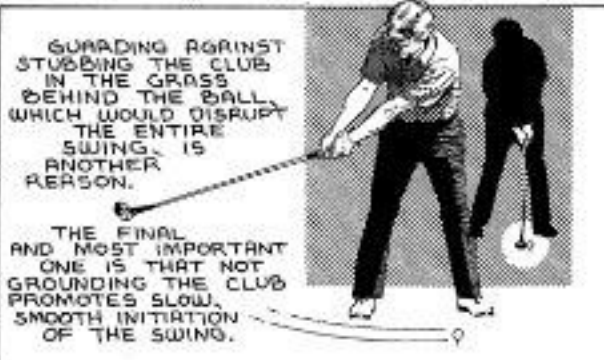
Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

WHY DO I START BACK WITH THE CLUBHEAD HELD SLIGHTLY ABOVE GROUND? ONE REASON IS THAT THIS REDUCES THE CHANCE OF INCURRING A PENALTY BY INADVERTENTLY MOVING THE BALL.



GUARDING AGAINST STUBBING THE CLUB IN THE GRASS BEHIND THE BALL WHICH WOULD DISRUPT THE ENTIRE SWING, IS ANOTHER REASON.

THE FINAL AND MOST IMPORTANT ONE IS THAT NOT GROUNDING THE CLUB PROMOTES SLOW, SMOOTH INITIATION OF THE SWING.



Puzzles4Kids by Helene Hovanec

WORD FUN

Study the two words on each line to find the ONE letter in the left column that is NOT in the word in the right column. Write the extra letter on the blank space. Then read DOWN to answer this riddle:

WHAT TV SHOW DO WATER CREATURES WATCH?

SHOWER	___	SHORE	FATHER	___	EARTH
POLISH	___	SPOIL	HONORS	___	HORNS
EASTER	___	TREES	RAMBLE	___	BLAME
BOLDER	___	ROBED	MOTIVE	___	MOVIE
NINETY	___	TINNY	SAMUEL	___	SALEM
TAILOR	___	TRIAL	KNEELS	___	LEEKs
TRIFLE	___	RELIT	BEAGLE	___	BAGEL



1. What was "Sukiyaki" about?
2. Who wrote and released "Honky Tonk Women"?
3. Who won the 1989 Grammy Award for Best Female Country Vocal Performance for the album "Absolute Torch and Twang"?
4. Who wrote and released "Every Breath You Take"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "What would I do if she should need me and find me kissing you?"

Answers

1. The Japanese title of the 1961 song translates as "I Look Up As I Walk." With the generic lyrics it could have been about lost love, but was instead about holding back tears while having an emotional response to a Japanese security treaty.
2. The Rolling Stones, in 1969. The song ended up in the "Band Hero" video game in 2009 and in the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2014.
3. k.d. lang. Born Kathryn Dawn Lang, lang prefers not to use capitals in the name as a nod to the poet e.e. cummings.
4. Sting, with the Police, in 1983. The song stayed at the top of the chart for eight weeks.
5. "What Will My Mary Say?" by Johnny Mathis in 1963. Originally released in 1961, the song didn't get much notice until the cover release by Mathis.

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1. IF (PG) Cailey Fleming, Ryan Reynolds
 2. Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) Owen Teague, Freya Allan
 3. The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R) Madelaine Petsch, Ryan Bown
 4. The Fall Guy (PG-13) Ryan Gosling, Emily Blunt
 5. Challengers (R) Zendaya, Mike Faist
 6. Back to Black (R) Marisa Abela, Eddie Marsan
 7. Tarot (PG-13) Avantika, Jacob Batalon
 8. Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire (PG-13) Rebecca Hall, Brian Tyree Henry
 9. The Blue Angels (G) Brian Allendorfer, Bobby Speed Baldock
 10. Civil War (R) Kirsten Dunst, Wagner Moura
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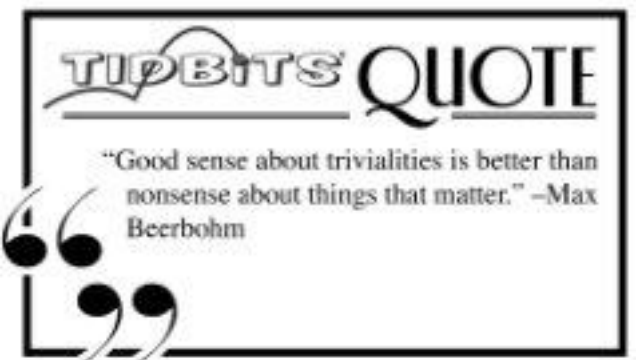
CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

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

PMA QMK'L NEZT LM IT
RSEBP LM IT E JMEVOT,
IAL OL NTVUHI
- ITSKOT UESTKL

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Even Exchange by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1. Broker's venture	___	___	T	___	Actually	___	___	L	___
2. Insertion mark	___	R	___	___	Military student	___	D	___	___
3. Slick or Kelly	___	___	C	___	Wine fruit	___	___	P	___
4. Tenant	L	___	___	___	L.A. ballplayer	D	___	___	___
5. Lancelot's weapon	___	___	D	___	Took an oath	___	___	E	___
6. Child caregiver	___	___	N	___	Detective Drew	___	___	C	___
7. Small ketchup holder	___	A	___	___	Pouch	___	O	___	___
8. Additional benefit	___	___	U	___	Tibias and mandibles	___	___	E	___
9. Frilly skirt edging	___	___	U	___	Sweepstakes	___	A	___	___
10. Goliath's opponent	___	___	___	D	Actress Bette	___	___	___	S

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TIDBITS PUZZLE ANSWERS

TRIVIA NEWSFRONT ANSWERS
 1. West
 2. 1944
 3. West
 4. New England
 5. Louisiana

SCRAMBLERS ANSWERS
 1. Elmer
 2. Detail
 3. Diego & Proud
 Today's Word
LOADED

WORD POWER ANSWERS
 EUCALYPTUS

QUIZ BITS ANSWERS
 1. Apple
 2. Canada

SNOWFLAKES
 solution

— SQUARES —

Sticklers Answer
 The word is
TRANSCONTINENTAL

CryptoQuote
 answer
 You don't have to be
 crazy to do a good job,
 just a fool.
 — Benito Mussolini

CryptoQuip
 answer
 Special computer memory
 units made to be used by
 access RAID and skaber
 Lipinski: Tara bytes.

Puzzles4Kids

Answers

SHOWER	W	SHORE
POLISH	H	SPOIL
EASTER	A	TREES
BOLDER	L	WORKS
NINETY	E	TREY
SAILOR	O	TRAIL
TRIPLE	F	WELT
FATHER	F	EARTH
HONORS	O	HORNS
RAMBLE	R	BLAVE
MOTIVE	T	MOIVE
SAWEL	U	SALEM
KNEELS	N	LEDS
BEAGLE	E	BAGEL

Even Exchange

Answers

1. Really, Really	8. Normy, Nancy
2. Don't, Can't	7. Puck'd, Puck'd
3. Slack, Drape	6. Rival, Rival
4. Loosen, Dopey	5. Huff, Huff
5. Snow, Snow	10. David, Dav's

FEAR & KNIGHT
 answer

Answers

Super Crossword

Answers

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

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TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH
 By Dr. Keith Roach

Patient Seems Unsure of ALS Diagnosis

DEAR DR. ROACH: My question is about amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). I have been diagnosed with this horrible, debilitating disease, and I don't know where I am headed. I went to a hospital for a second opinion and additional testing to rule out other possible causes of this numbness. Nary a test was done -- the neurologist looked at the electromyography (EMG) done by a neuromuscular doctor at another facility, and he just agreed with the diagnosis.

I wanted to get tests done to see if it was perhaps a concussion, if it was from using yard sprays or from COVID vaccines, or if it was due to my having a terrible bad back for years, but none of these were even considered. I am deteriorating rapidly. Would you please give me some suggestions? Am I wrong for seeking other causes? -- J.B.

ANSWER: I am very sorry to hear that you have been diagnosed with ALS. I understand why you would like to believe there are other possibilities for this because there are no treatments for ALS that can stop the progression of this fatal disease.

The diagnosis of ALS is made after a thorough examination and history review. Electrodiagnostic studies, like an EMG or a nerve conduction test, can help support the diagnosis, but they do not make the diagnosis themselves. The nerve conduction study is normal for ALS, while the EMG shows the nerves that are not connecting to the muscles. Other diseases of the muscles and muscle nerves should be considered. MRI scans are usually performed, as they can identify conditions that mimic ALS.

The terrible back you mention could include a condition called cervical myelopathy, which has some features that can be mistaken for ALS.

Routine blood and urine testing should be done to exclude other conditions, such as Lyme disease, and the spinal fluid is sometimes analyzed if the neurologist suspects immune-mediated nerve disease.

However, none of the other possibilities that you mention is likely to be confused for ALS by an experienced neurologist who does a complete exam.

I have three concerns: The first is that you are suggesting you may not have had a thorough evaluation so far. Second, the only symptom you mention is numbness, and although this can occasionally happen with ALS, you are much more likely to have weakness and muscle twitching without numbness. Third, ALS tends to progress slowly, not rapidly.

For all these reasons, and because you need to be sure of your condition, I recommend getting another opinion from a neurologist who doesn't rely on someone else's history review and exam.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 94-year-old female who takes one 0.75-mg pill of levothyroxine per day since 1970. It was prescribed because of low energy. My doctor thinks the usual blood test is all that is required for proper diagnostics. Would I benefit from a more thorough test, and if so, what would you recommend, as my energy level is now very low? -- S.H.

ANSWER: For most people with low thyroid levels, a simple test of the thyroid level and/or the TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone) level is all that is needed to be sure the dose of the replacement thyroid hormone, levothyroxine, is adequate. However, there are many causes for low energy. A low blood count and abnormalities of any critical organ can all cause fatigue.

The diagnosis starts with a careful history review and exam. Lab tests are important, but nothing is as likely to give the correct diagnosis as listening to the patient will.

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

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Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

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