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### Don't let back pain stand in your way

If you suffer from back pain, it can be challenging to engage in physical activities. However, it's important to stay active to stretch and strengthen your muscles. As you heal, it's important to choose safe activities. Here are a few sports that could benefit you:

*Swimming* is an excellent sport for people with back pain as the water takes the weight off your body. The safest stroke is the backstroke, but avoid the breaststroke, which requires you to arch your back.

**Cycling** can relieve back strain and gently stretch your spine without any impact.

Depending on your preference, you can opt for a road bike or a stationary bike. Just make sure it's well-suited to your frame.

*Walking briskly* for about 30 minutes every day can strengthen your abdominal muscles and reduce back pain. If you enjoy long walks, stick to soft surfaces, like forest trails, instead of pavement. Don't forget to invest in a good pair of shoes!

**Yoga** is the perfect way to relax and stretch your muscles while strengthening them through slow, deep movements. It can also help improve your posture.





### **APRIL 2024**

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Romans 12:12

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# 🝃 Who said healthy snacks have to be boring? 🦿

Are you looking for some healthy snack ideas? Here are a few suggestions that are sure to delight your taste buds without an ounce of guilt.

### **SEASONED POPCORN**

Try swapping the classic butter and salt on your popcorn for seasoning that's both tasty and nutritious. You can try using herbs like thyme and rosemary or Cajun spices like garlic powder and cayenne pepper. You'll be begging for more!

### **DELICIOUSLY GARNISHED TOAST**

Toast isn't just a breakfast food! Spread nut butter on wholegrain toast or jam made with fruit listed as the first ingredient instead of sugar. Yum!

### **FRESH FRUIT REINVENTED**

Fresh-cut fruit is always a great option, but why not

elevate the presentation by threading pieces on skewers and alternating them with cubes of cheese? You can also coat the fruit pieces in peanut butter or hazelnut spread or dip them in Greek yogurt for an appetizing and nutritious snack.



#### **ELEVATED TRAIL MIX**

Prepare your own mix and amp up the taste by simmering nuts, like almonds, walnuts in maple syrup for a few minutes after roasting. Finish it off with a handful of dark chocolate chunks for a tasty treat!

### What is the number one health tip for aging well?

### **GET MOVING:**

**Exercise & physical activity** 

Whether you love it or hate it, physical activity is a cornerstone of healthy aging. Scientific evidence suggests that people who exercise regularly not only live longer, but also may live better — meaning they enjoy more years of life without pain or disability.

### TIPS TO CREATE A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE?

- Measure and watch your weight
- Limit unhealthy foods and eat healthy meals
- Take multivitamins
- Drink water and stay hydrated
- Limit sugared drinks
- Exercise regularly and be physically active
- Reduce sitting
  and screen time
- Get enough good sleep
- Go easy on alcohol
  and stay sober.

Ts it time for a new perspective on your financial future?

Who's giving you financial advice? Are they *really* tuned in to your unique goals and how today's ever-changing financial landscape impacts YOU? As a woman, your focus is different — never less important. A frank conversation with someone who shares your values and relates to you could be

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WEST VALLEY STAR

# Celebrity Extra by Dana Jackson

**Q:** Is there going to be another season of "Heartland"? I was so sad when Ty died in the ending chapter and wondered if Amy found love again. -- *T.A.* 

A: I'm assuming that you're watching "Heartland" via Netflix because only seasons 1-15 are currently available to watch on the streaming service. Fortunately, the Canadian series is on season 17 on the CBC network, but here in the United States, you'll have to wait a bit.

While no official statement has been released, there are reliable sources on the internet saying that season 16 will most likely be available on Netflix beginning in September, possibly earlier. This is because another streaming service, called UP Faith & Family, has first dibs on the show here in the US. Once their customers have had enough time to watch season 16, Netflix viewers will then have their chance, likely starting this September, as mentioned above.

If you can't wait that long, visit UPFaithandFamily.com and learn how you can subscribe to the streaming platform, which calls itself "the leading streaming service for uplifting entertainment." They offer a monthly subscription plan for just \$5.99 month, but as always, be sure to read the fine print.

 $\star \star \star$ 

**Q:** What is the latest on Richard Simmons? He hasn't been seen in years, and now there's a rumor that he died. But fortunately, it was just a rumor, right? -- *E.C.* 

A: American fitness personality Richard Simmons, now age 75, has been reclusive for about a decade. There were rumors that he was being held against his will, but in



**Richard Simmons** 

2022, he issued a statement to the New York Post that he was happy and healthy. Recently, however, he worried his fans again when he posted a message on X (formerly Twitter) that he was dying. He went on to explain, "The truth is we all are dying." He continued with some tips on eating better, getting enough sleep and exercising. Several hours later, he posted again to apologize for the confusion and clarify that he isn't dying anytime soon. He said he simply wanted to remind everyone to embrace every day that they have.

You can follow Simmons on his official page on X: @ TheWeightSaint.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com, or write me at KFWS, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.



# **Get Ready for Brutal Summer Temps!**

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# SPRING

Are you tired of having to tiptoe around piles of stuff in your home? Here are a few tips to help you organize and find a place for all your belongings so you can enjoy a clutter-free home:



 WARDROBE ORGANIZATION SYSTEMS
 You can find various practical and affordable solutions for intelligently storing your clothing and accessories at local hardware and big-box stores, including hooks, shelves, shoe racks, bins and more. The possibilities are endless!

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If you're in the market for a new coffee table, look for one with drawers and compartments that can be used to store items like the TV remote or video game

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controllers. Additionally, some ottomans double as hidden storage for things like magazines and throw blankets. Lastly, keep an eye out for sofa beds that come with drawers for extra storage.

### BATHROOM ACCESSORIES.

Store personal hygiene products, like toothbrushes, towels and washcloths in an organized and attractive way using trays with dividers, towel bars, shelves or shower caddies. If you're tight on space, don't hesitate to utilize the walls or even the top of the door to store items you use less frequently.



Visit your local shops for spring sales on clever storage solutions.



WEST VALLEY STAR



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**APRIL 2024** 

### Clean your pantry like a pro

Here's a step-by-step guide on how to do it right from cleaning and organization pros:

- Empty the pantry completely. You may make some surprising discoveries!
- 2. Sort foods by category: Spices, canned vegetables, cereals, baking, etc.
- Check expiration dates and get rid of any out-of-date products.
- Clean the walls and shelves inside the pantry with an all-purpose "green" cleaner.
- 5. Wipe down the outside of plastic and glass containers and bottles with a damp cloth.
- Carefully put all the items back on the shelves or in storage baskets. Put the items you use most within easy reach, or place canned goods together.
- 7. Wipe down the outside of the pantry, including the doors and handles.

A clean, well-organized pantry makes cooking easier and minimize food waste.

# The satisfaction of stain removal

Certain substances easily stain fabrics and other materials. However, there are several tried and tested home remedies that can be used to remove stubborn stains. Here are a handful:

**RED WINE.** Cover the affected area with a mixture of baking soda and lemon juice. Let it soak for about an hour. You can also use white vinegar to dab out the stain if it's already dry. Finally, rinse with clean, cold water.



**PEN INK.** Apply a bit of white toothpaste or rubbing alcohol to the affected area and rub vigorously. You can also try using a paste made from milk and cornstarch and brushing off the dried residue after a few hours. **COFFEE.** Blot the affected area with a mixture of lukewarm water, dishwashing soap (or laundry detergent) and white vinegar. Let the mixture sit for several minutes and then wash the item as usual. If the stain is still visible, gently dab it with rubbing alcohol.

**BLOOD.** If you're dealing with dried blood, soak the affected area in cool water mixed with white vinegar. Let it sit for about 15 minutes. Blot the mixture and rinse the garment with clean water. Avoid using hot water as this can set the stain.

**OIL OR GREASE.** Got some cooking oil or salad dressing on a shirt? Blot the stain gently with a paper towel to remove as much oil as possible. Gently rub an oil fighting dish soap like Dawn into the stain and let sit for 10 minutes. (Fels-Naptha soap is another good option — and you can find it at the dollar store! Wet the garment and rub with a bar of Fels-Naptha or Zote. Allow to sit.) Rinse and machine wash the garment in the warmest water temperature recommended for the garment. *Allow to air dry.* If the stain remains, repeat the process.

The heat from the dryer may set the stain permanently. Always air dry to make certain the stain is gone before drying in the dryer.

Give these a try! Removing stains always gives you a feeling of relief and satisfaction.





# Common Plumbing, Remodeling or Upgrades Homeowners Don't Think About

### Insights from Charity Tovar, Owner of Charity's Plumbing Solutions

Every week, I receive requests for estimates from prospective clients looking to remodel or make improvements to their homes. Today, I want to highlight some common oversights that people tend to overlook or are unaware of when undertaking remodels or improvements in their homes.





In November 2023, I visited a prospective client who had recently completed a remodel on three bathrooms and was now looking to remodel his fourth. The three bathrooms he had remodeled brushed gold and black fixtures. During our conversation, I inquired, "When are you planning to get a water treatment system? You have a loop on the house, right?" To which he replied, "It's not a priority." I emphasized, "You may want to consider a water treatment system as your next priority. You've spent over \$30,000 on your bathroom remodels, and Arizona's water can ruin these fixtures faster than you think." Fast forward to February 2024, and I received a call: "Charity, I need that

water treatment now!" In just four months, calcium buildup had become very evident, clogging up his pinhole shower heads. Upon inspection, I found that all the brushed gold fixtures were caked with calcium. He had a water treatment system installed the following week.

The moral of this story is, if you're going to invest tens of thousands of dollars in bathroom improvements or have just purchased a brand new home, it's crucial to protect your investment by including a water treatment system in your budget. You may wonder how this happened in just four months. The reality is scale and buildup don't just happen where you can see them. His nearly 20-year-old home had copper pipes with buildup that could migrate to the water exit points, causing clogs in fixtures. Additionally, the source of water from your municipality is a factor; water quality varies from city to city.

Another overlooked aspect is the installation of toilets during a remodel. Some homeowners assume that the tile installer will reinstall the toilets, but as a licensed plumbing company, I want to emphasize the importance of having a plumber handle this task.



The toilet sits on a flange, which holds it in place over the sewer line. Over time, the flange can crack, settle, corrode, or warp. Therefore, it's essential to have a plumber remove the toilet, cap the sewer, and test the emergency shut-off valve. Additionally, changes in floor thickness can affect the water-tight seal between the toilet and the flange, resulting in gaps that can lead to leaks.

Just recently, we received a call from a client in Laveen who noticed a water spot on the ceiling of their first floor. Upon investigation, we discovered that the leak came from a toilet on the second floor. The client had recently had their bathrooms redone, and the toilet had been improperly installed by the flooring contractors, resulting in a gap between the toilet and the flange. Sewer water had seeped into the subfloor, causing extensive damage that required costly repairs.

In conclusion, if you have questions about your remodel, repairs, or need a second opinion, don't hesitate to call Charity's Plumbing Solutions. We're here to review your project and ask the questions you may not know to ask. Your peace of mind and the integrity of your home are our top priorities.



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### SENIOR NEWSLINE by Matilda Charles

# **Senior Safety Tips**

I never thought this kind of thing would happen where I live: A woman was kidnapped in front of a store, in broad daylight, by a man carrying a gun. It's hard to even type those words, so shocked am I to learn of it.

To cut to the chase, the woman is thankfully fine, although no doubt rattled and upset. After being forced to drive the kidnapper to another location, she was able to drive away safely after he fled the vehicle.

Still, it might not have turned out that way.

I can't count the thousands of times I've gone to that same store, or strolled down the main street to the ice cream shop, or come out of a restaurant... at night... and never been afraid. After all, the relative safety in this area is why I moved here. But there are no guarantees that things will stay the same, are there? Unfortunately, that woman's experience has been a life changer for me.

I now carry my wallet and cellphone in an inside coat pocket. If a thief wants my purse, he can have it, with no hesitation that might cause him to do bodily harm to me.

I'm now paying more attention to what's around me -people in parking lots, people milling around -- instead of

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just going on my merry way oblivious to my surroundings.

If I'm headed to the car, my keys are in my hand. Once in the car, I lock the doors, something I've never felt compelled to do.

I trust my instincts if something makes me uneasy. After a recent trip to a store, I waited a minute and walked out with a couple of college students after asking if I could walk across the parking lot with them. They were pleased to escort me all the way to my car.

Stay safe out there and beware of what's going on around you.

Crimes against persons are certainly not unheard of here in the Valley (Maricopa County), perhaps making all of us aware of our surroundings and more conscious of our personal safety. But, if you're a winter visitor, is that still true once you return home? Sadly crime happens everywhere. Don't put yourself at risk. Be smart and take note of your surroundings when traveling or when you're alone, and don't make yourself a target. It's not a bad idea to practice Matilda's safety tips no matter where you are.

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# Here's a Tip by JoAnn Derson

Use a muffin pan to make cookie cups for ice cream or fruit. Just flip your muffin pan over, and press dough over the upturned wells. It will puff up a little, but once it settles, they make very nice bowls. I do this with pizza dough as well. Prebake for a few minutes to form the bowl, then fill with ingredients and complete baking.

Put a tension rod in the cabinet under your sink, and use it to hang spray bottles for extra storage.

"Bread tags (the little plastic clips that hold bread bags closed) make great cord organizers when you are using a multiple outlet power strip. Write the kind of device (e.g. TV, Xbox, cable box) on the tag, then clip it to the plug end of the cord. When you need to unplug, it'll be easy to see which is which." -- C.C. in Ohio

Travel a lot? Make use of those shower caps by pairing up shoes and using the shower cap to hold them together while simultaneously protecting your clothes from the shoe bottoms. Smart!

I sew looped tags onto the corner of our family's wash cloths. My husband installed several hooks in the shower, and when we are finished with our wash cloth, we hang it up by the tag after rinsing it out. They do not mildew this way, because they are allowed to dry.

# VETERAN'S POST by Freddy Groves

# **Expanded PACT Act**

Expanded benefits for the PACT Act have kicked in years sooner than expected. Recently, as of March 5, 2024, veterans exposed to toxins can get VA health care without applying for VA disability benefits first. The PACT Act covers over 20 presumptive illnesses for exposure to Agent Orange and other toxins, as well as burn pits, radiation, oil well fires, depleted uranium and more. The covered illnesses include emphysema, chronic bronchitis, a dozen types of cancer and interstitial lung disease. Deployment wasn't necessary; veterans were exposed to asbestos, firefighting foam, paints, chemicals, pesticides, Camp Lejeune water and more here in the U.S.

If you have filed before and were turned down, file again — or call. The VA is supposed to go through the files and contact you, but don't wait on that. If you're already enrolled in VA health care, call your local VA health facility and ask for your initial screening for toxin exposure. Don't wait on this; get a baseline test. To get more information, call 800-698-2411 (800-MYVA411) or go online to VA.gov/PACT and scroll through the information. You'll find links to file for VA disability, a supplemental claim and more. Read about military exposures at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures.

The VA has spent millions to inform veterans about PACT, but there are some they're leaving out: members of the Maine National Guard who trained at the Canadian military support base in Gagetown, New Brunswick, Canada. In 1966 and 1967, the place was saturated with Agents Orange and Purple as a means of testing effectiveness in killing foliage. Gagetown is still used for National Guard training, not only for units from Maine but other states as well. People became ill, of course, from exposure, but they're not eligible for VA health care for exposure to Agent Orange or any of the other "rainbow" of toxin colors at Gagetown.

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# Homemade Dog Treats

**DEAR PAW'S CORNER:** My new puppy's training is going very well, and he responds very well to rewards of little treats. I worry about feeding him so many processed, storebought snacks though. What are some natural or homemade alternatives for treats? -- Maggie T., Nashua, N.H.



**DEAR MAGGIE:** Many alternative recipes for homemade doggie treats are available on the internet and at the bookstore, but the healthiest ones share many common features. This means that you can find guite a few good recipes out there, or develop a few of your own.

Common ingredients in dog treats are meat protein (either from fresh meats, broths or strained baby foods), whole-grain flours (like wheat, oats, corn or rice), eggs and powdered supplements (like brewer's yeast or garlic). A variety of flavorings can be added, including peanut butter, sugar or molasses, vanilla, salt, and small amounts of cheese or milk. Dry or instant yeast can be added to biscuit-type recipes, to allow the dough to rise before baking.

A popular training asset is liver treats, which can be made fairly easy and which last about four to five days if stored properly (in an airtight container and refrigerated). Chicken livers, eggs and sweetener are pureed, flour or cornmeal is mixed in (some owners add powdered supplements as well) and the mixture is baked, cooled and sliced into bite-size treats.

Certain foods are never safe for dogs, so don't use any recipe that contains these ingredients: chocolate, onions, raisins/ grapes or macadamia nuts. They seem like fairly innocent foods, but can cause serious health problems in dogs.

Baking and testing these snacks out on your puppy can be a lot of fun. Remember, you can also share recipes with other dog owners and perhaps find the perfect treat for your companion.

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

# Strange But True

by Lucie Winborne

Andrew Jackson's parrot was kicked out of his funeral for swearing.

In 1947, The New York Times opined that "the pizza could be as popular a snack as the hamburger if Americans only knew more about it."

Buzz Aldrin's mother's maiden name was Moon.

Indonesian farmers introduce fish into their rice fields so the fish droppings will act as fertilizer. In turn, the fish also eat harmful insects and improve oxygen circulation, increasing crop yields by up to 10%.

Jim Carrey was the first actor to have three number one movies in one year.

The Palais Ideal in France was built entirely of stones that a postman named Ferdinand Cheval picked up on his mail route.

Honey hunters in Mozambique use special calls to recruit the services of birds known as honeyguides. The birds lead the humans to bees' nests, and in return, they get the leftover beeswax.

Army ants that misinterpret the scent trails left by other ants will sometimes break from the crowd and march in circles. If enough ants join them, they can form massive "death spirals."

John Quincy Adams was an avid skinny-dipper who included dips in the Potomac River as a regular part of his exercise regimen.

# **Online learning resources for seniors: stay curious**

Are you looking to expand your knowledge and learn something new? Fortunately, there are plenty of online learning resources available that are specifically tailored to seniors.

One great resource for seniors is Coursera, an online learning platform offering courses from top universities around the world. You can take classes on topics ranging from computer science to psychology, and everything in between.

Many world-renowned museums offer both free and paid virtual tours (the Louvre, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Smithsonian). You can tour art and history collections from the comfort of your home. Another great resource is TED Talks. These short, informative videos cover a wide range of topics and are presented by experts in their fields. You can learn about everything from the latest scientific discoveries to the art of storytelling.

If you're looking for something more interactive, you might want to check out Skillshare. This online learning community offers thousands of courses on topics like photography, graphic design and cooking. You can even find local experts to help you hone a new skill.

Why not embrace your curiosity and dive into the world of online learning?



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# **Fall Off The Bone Ribs**

#### INGREDIENTS

2 to 2 1/2 pounds baby back pork ribs Salt and black pepper

### SWEET AND SPICY BARBECUE SAUCE

tablespoon olive oil
 4 cup finely diced onion
 teaspoon ground cumin
 cup ketchup
 tablespoon hot chili sauce
 tablespoons light brown sugar
 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
 Salt and pepper, to taste

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Remove the membrane from the back of the ribs (this ensures fall-off-the-bone ribs). Generously season both sides with salt and pepper. This is also a great opportunity for adding more flavor with your favorite spice rub.

Cover the ribs with aluminum foil. Bake at a low temperature (275F) for 3 to 4 hours or until tender.

Slather the baked ribs with Sweet and Spicy Barbecue Sauce (or store bought) then broil the ribs for a few minutes until the sauce is caramelized.







# Can knitting and crocheting improve your health?

Do you know that knitting and crocheting is about more than creating beautiful pieces of art? Not only are they great hobbies that can help you unwind and relax, but studies have shown that they can also have a positive impact on your health.

Both knitting and crocheting are known to reduce stress levels. The repetitive motions and focus required in these activities can have a calming effect on the mind and body, like meditation. This makes them a great way to combat anxiety and depression.

Moreover, these activities can also improve your cognitive function. Knitting and crocheting require the use of both hands, which helps improve hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. Following a pattern and keeping track of the stitches can also help to sharpen your memory and concentration.

Knitting and crocheting can also be beneficial for your physical health. The motion of these activities can help to relieve joint pain and stiffness, which is especially beneficial for those with conditions such as arthritis.

If you're looking for a fun and engaging way to improve your health, give knitting or crocheting a try.







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### TO WIN Enter by April 17, 2024

**OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES.** Solve the puzzle and mail in this page to win. Circle all or part of the names of advertisers found in this month's West Valley Star ads. Names may run left, right, up, down or diagonally. Must be 21 or older to enter. Employees of the West Valley Star or its advertisers are ineligible. A drawing will be held from all correct entries. One winner will receive dinner for two and two movie passes. Three winners will receive a consolation prize of two movie passes. Winners will be notified by phone, and prizes will be sent by mail.



Check www.westvalleystaraz.com for any corrections or announcements. Scan and email completed puzzles to info.westvalleystar@gmail.com or...

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Name
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Mail puzzle with answers to:

West Valley Star Puzzle, P.O. Box 5731, Sun City West, AZ 85376

# King Crossword

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50					51	52	53					
54					55				56			
57					58				59			

#### ACROSS

- 1 Manhandle
- 5 Annex
- 8 Trig function
- 12 Within (Pref.)
- 13 "Ben- --"
- 14 Toledo's lake
- 15 "Sure, of course"
- 17 Bakery buy
- 18 "Yippee!"
- **19 Apple music** service
- 21 Pride parade initials
- 24 "Let me think ..." 25 Valley in
- California
- 28 Indy event 30 Wall climber
- 33 Rocker Rose
- 34 Plains grazers
- 35 Formerly known
- as
- 36 Earth (Pref.)
- 37 Stink

38 "lt's -- real!" 39 Texter's "Enough!" 41 Bring up 43 Tell 46 Pink hue 50 Lena of "The Reader" 51 Sake, e.g. 54 Curse 55 Greek mountain 56 Zilch 57 Rosebud, to Kane 58 Camp bed 59 Flag feature DOWN 1 Calico's call

10 Aswan's river

16 Sailing hazard

20 Subsequently

22 Party cheese

23 Stunning gun

27 Story thread

29 Pepsi rival

32 Longing

40 Like lions

42 Expert

43 Filches

31 Victory sign

34 Telly watcher

44 Israeli carrier

47 Funny person

48 Visitor to Siam

52 Altar affirmative

49 Ogler's look

53 Jazz lover

45 Guitarist Clapton

38 Cleveland squad

11 Congers

25 Pester

26 Chopper

2 "My Way" writer 3 Beehive State 4 Jesuit university 5 Sushi fish 6 Press for payment 7 Zwei follower 8 Blood part 9 Ore source

### **Answers on Page 30**

Time to beat: 24 minutes

### MARCH WINNERS **GRAND PRIZE** Christina Blackburn

Litchfield Park

### WINNERS OF MOVIE PASSES

**April Heusevelot Janessa George Karina Madera** Goodyear Goodyear Goodyear

**APRIL 2024** 

WEST VALLEY STAR

# Sudoko

by Linda Thistle



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: \*

 $\star$  moderate  $\star \star$  challenging © 2020 King Features Synd., Inc.

Answers on Page 30

### **Dinner and a Movie** MARCH SOLUTION



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# 50+ active living

### Taking care of your health after 50: what you need to know

Have you recently joined the "50s club," or have you been a member for a few years? Chances are you've started to notice changes in your health. Whether these changes are occasional or permanent, here are some tips to help you take good care of your health after 50.

### WATCH WHAT YOU EAT

Choose nutrient-dense foods to slow muscle loss and help your body regulate cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Try putting these tips into practice:

- Eat fibre-rich foods whenever possible, such as starchy foods and legumes
- Always include fruit and vegetables in your meals
- · Limit your intake of sugary, fatty and processed foods
- Add lean protein to your meals, such as poultry, fish or tofu
- Find out if you need any dietary supplements

### **STAY ACTIVE**

Regular physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and reduce the risk of cardiovascular incidents, which are more likely to occur after age 50. Staying active can also improve your stamina, reduce stress and improve your sleep. Try to include these activities in your daily routine:





- Stretching
- Flexibility exercises
- Walking
- Cycling
- Swimming

### **GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP**

Quality sleep is essential to your health. It stimulates your metabolism to regulate your mood and weight and helps control your stress levels, which can have several physical and mental consequences. Improve your sleep by following these tips:

- Follow a sleep routine by going to bed and getting up at the same times every day
- Invest in a high-quality mattress and pillow
- Avoid using screens before bed
- Try not to consume caffeinated food and drinks, like coffee, tea, cola and chocolate in the evening

#### **GET TESTED**

The risk of developing diseases linked to the circulatory system or cancer increases as you age. An annual checkup with your doctor and knowing your family history will help you spot any signs and symptoms of illness at the onset. Find out about recommended vaccinations and the following tests:

- Mammogram
- Gynecological examination
- Colonoscopy
- Prostate exam
- Blood pressure check
- Blood tests
- Eye exam

Pay close attention to your body as you move into your fifties. If you notice any worrying changes in your body, consult a health professional, such as a doctor or pharmacist.

# Hollywood by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Tom Cruise's "Mission: Impossible 8," which so far has been shot in England, Malta, South Africa, Norway and Italy, resumed shooting in February after the strikes were settled. It's no longer called "Dead Reckoning Part Two" and will have a new title when it opens in May 2025.

Cruise's next project will be directed by four-time Oscar winner Alejandro G. Iñárritu, who won for directing "Birdman" (2014) and "The Revenant" (2015). The title and



Director Alejandro G. Iñárritu

the script, written by Iñárritu and his "Birdman" co-writers, is an original story created by the 60-year-old director, who excels as a filmmaker despite having attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder.

The film is Cruise's first in his partnership with Warners, his new studio. However, he plans to keep making "Mission: Impossible" films, which will reconnect him to Paramount.

### $\star \star \star$

Wait 'til you read this! The British Board of Film Classification just "woke" up after 60 years and is changing the rating for Dame Julie Andrews' "Mary Poppins."

The film, being rereleased in England to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the classic children's film, will now be sporting a PG (parental guidance suggested) rating because of the use of one word: "hottentot," by Admiral Boom (played by Reginald Owen). He uses the term when referring to the chimney sweeps whose faces were blackened by soot. It was used by Europeans to refer to the group of nomadic herders in South Africa known as the Khoekhoe. They still live in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape Provinces in the southwestern coastal regions of South Africa and Namibia.

How absurd is it that children now have to get permission from their parents to see "Mary Poppins"? Do they really believe that six decades of children have all been corrupted? First, Disney had all those problems in Florida and now this in England! Just a spoonful of sugar makes "the wokeness" go down!



25

# **Boomers** are **Buyers**

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### Where can a memorial service be held?

Has someone close to you just passed, or are you thinking about making pre-planned funeral arrangements? In any case, you'll need to choose a location for the ceremony. Here's an overview of the options available to you:

- **Funeral homes.** Most funeral homes have modestly decorated rooms and audiovisual equipment, so you can organize a personalized tribute that can be attended remotely, if required. It's also often possible to organize a post-funeral reception on the premises, so guests don't have to travel.
- **Places of worship.** Depending on your religious beliefs or those of your loved one, you could hold the funeral in a church, chapel, mosque, temple or other religious space.
- Association or company halls. In many municipalities, community associations and companies offer their premises for funeral ceremonies. If the deceased was an association member or had a special attachment to the establishment, such as being a volunteer there, this is a very appropriate choice.
- **Symbolic locations.** More funeral ceremonies are being held in non-traditional locations chosen to reflect the interests of the deceased. Your celebration could take place by a lake, on a soccer field or in a microbrewery.

Discuss your preferences with a funeral home director to find out what options are available.

### Rituals to help you grieve more peacefully

The days, weeks, months and years following the death of a loved one can be very difficult. While there's no right or wrong way to feel, rituals can help you through the process.

### A symbolic language

Rituals are symbolic gestures you make in memory of someone who has died. There are countless ways to remember a loved one. For example, you could:

- Listen to some of their favorite songs
- Prepare their favorite meal and enjoy it with friends
- Watch a film you both liked
- Reread their handwritten cards or letters
- Use something they often used, like their coffee mug
- Wear a piece of their clothing or an accessory
- Put flowers on their grave for their birthday
- Pay your respects in front of their photo or urn

Regardless of the ritual you choose, you don't need to worry about reopening old wounds. In fact, rituals have several benefits. They allow you to connect with your emotions and comfort yourself.

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Sreep living

Do you associate the arrival of spring with cleaning? If you want sparkling clean results without harming the environment, adopt these eco-responsible practices.

### • Use cleaning products that are safe for the environment.

Look for biodegradable cleaners that are ECOLOGO<sup>®</sup>-certified and preferably locally made. Alternatively, you can make your own cleaning solutions using non-toxic, inexpensive ingredients like baking soda, essential oils, lemon juice, white vinegar and table salt.

### • Dispose of hazardous products properly.

Don't throw away items like light bulbs, batteries, leftover paint, medications and ink cartridges in your household garbage. Instead, sort them and take them to designated collection points. You can check your city or municipality's website for recycling instructions.

### • Say goodbye to single-use paper towels and wipes.

Use washable products to dust and clean all the surfaces in your home. You can easily transform stained t-shirts and used towels into rags with a pair of scissors.

### • Optimize how you wash and dry your textiles.

Machine wash curtains, carpets and other items in cold water using a biodegradable detergent and hang them on a clothesline to dry (if the weather permits). Alternatively, you can put them in the dryer with a few dryer balls to get rid of wrinkles and static electricity.

Our local stores are offering a greater selection of eco-friendly products that will help make your spring cleaning as green as possible. Check out farmers markets in the area as a possible source for locally made green cleaning products, or google " how to make green cleaning products".







# Setting SMART goals for your golf game this year

Setting SMART goals for your golf game is a strategic approach to improvement that ensures clarity, focus and attainability. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. Here's how to apply these criteria to your golf goals.

- **Specific.** Clearly define what you want to achieve. For instance, rather than a vague goal like "improve my swing," make it specific, such as "reduce my slice by refining my backswing."
- Measurable. Establish concrete criteria for tracking progress. Instead of a goal like "get better at putting," set a measurable goal like "reduce my three-putt instances by half."
- **Achievable.** Set goals that are challenging yet realistic. If you're currently shooting in the 100s, aiming to consistently break 80 might be too ambitious initially.
- **Relevant.** Ensure your goals align with your overall golf aspirations. If improving your short game is crucial for your overall performance, set goals that prioritize this aspect.
- **Time-bound.** Set a deadline for achieving your goals. For instance, rather than saying "improve my handicap," specify "lower my handicap by three strokes within the next three months."

Other examples of SMART goals include, "decrease my average putts per round from 34 to 30 within the next two months," and "increase my average driving distance by 10 yards through a structured fitness and training program over the next six weeks." These types of goals will give you a clear plan of action and allow you to track your progress.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

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



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