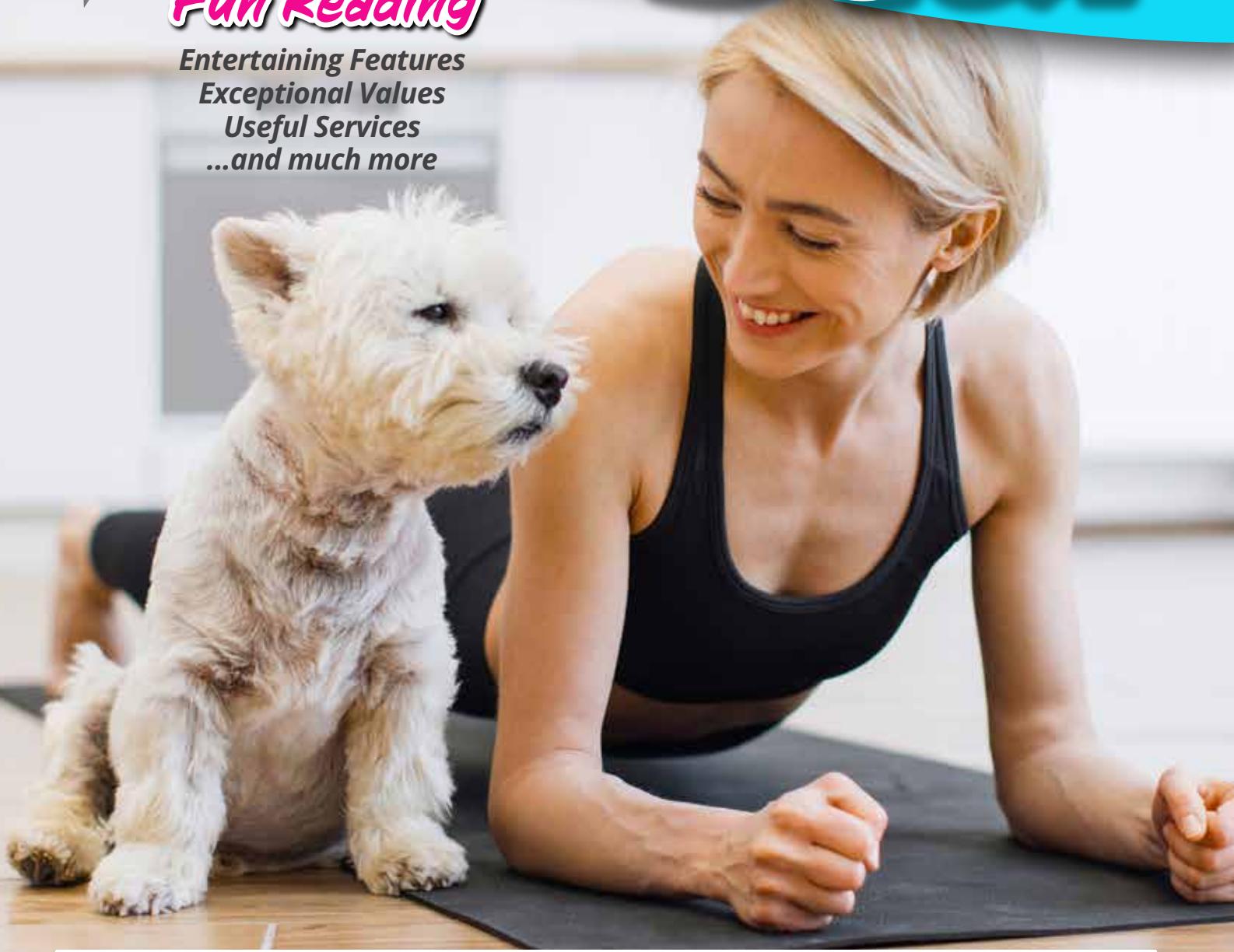


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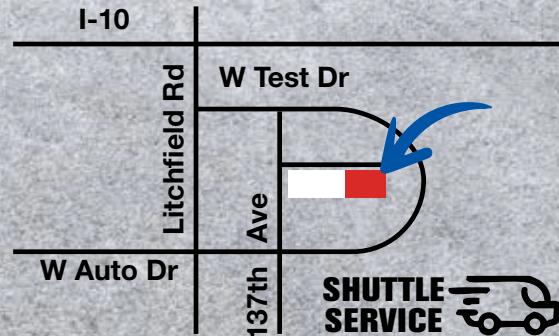
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JANUARY 2026

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Healthy habits for your mental health

Are you neglecting your mental health?

According to the National Council on Aging, up to 25 percent of American adults 65 and older are living with a mental health condition such as anxiety or depression. Additionally, chronic physical illnesses, such as diabetes, arthritis, Crohn's disease, obesity and Parkinson's disease often accompany mental health problems. Consequently, more healthcare professionals are emphasizing the importance of caring for both your mental and physical health to improve the aging process.

HEALTHY HABITS

Consider adopting the following habits to support your mental well-being:

Exercise. Regular physical activity boosts the production of mood-enhancing hormones called endorphins.

Diet. Eating a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables supports your psychological well-being.

Hobbies. Engaging in activities you enjoy, such as gardening or playing board games, keeps your mind active and fosters a positive outlook.



Social interaction. Participating in community activities, volunteering and maintaining regular contact with your loved ones can help reduce feelings of isolation.

Professional support. If you experience persistent feelings of dread or sadness that interfere with your daily life, seek help. You can find valuable resources by reaching out to a helpline, joining a support group or talking to a healthcare professional like a doctor or psychologist.

Listen to your needs and adopt these simple strategies for better mental health.

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STORING MEDICATIONS:

Are you making any of these mistakes?

Medications are sensitive to several factors. If you store them incorrectly, they can lose their effectiveness or even become dangerous to your health. Handle and store them with care. Here are three mistakes to avoid at all costs.

NOT READING THE LABELS

Always check the storage instructions for your medication. Most pharmaceuticals must be kept:

- Away from direct sunlight
- In a room without risk of freezing or excessive heat
- Away from humidity
- In the refrigerator

You can find this information on the label, packaging insert or your prescription. Read it carefully before storing your medication.

BLINDLY RELYING ON THE EXPIRATION DATE

The expiration date of a medication only applies to unopened products stored in their original containers. In other words, if the container has been opened or

stored under different conditions, the expiration date may no longer be valid.

STORING MEDS IN ONE OF THE WORST PLACES

Many people keep their medications in an unlocked cabinet above the bathroom sink, in the "medicine cabinet". Avoid this habit at all costs. The bathroom is warm and humid, which can damage your medications. Also, avoid keeping them in your car's glove compartment or on a windowsill. And if there are children in your home or who visit, or a family member with memory issues, it's best to keep your medications safely locked up.

Questions about storing a medication? Ask your pharmacist for advice.



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Are you storing your toothbrush correctly?

If stored incorrectly, your toothbrush can become a breeding ground for bacteria, which can be harmful to your health. It can even cause re-infection after a cold. Here's a quick reminder of the best storage practices.

- After brushing, rinse your toothbrush thoroughly to remove toothpaste and debris. Clean both the bristles and the handle.
- Place your toothbrush upright in a holder or glass so excess water can drain away.
- Make sure toothbrushes belonging to different household members don't touch each other.
- Keep the toothbrush holder or glass several feet away from the sink and toilet to prevent contaminated droplets from landing on the toothbrushes.

Adopt these healthy habits today. Your smile will thank you for it!



6 steps to keep your feet healthy

CLEAN YOUR FEET DAILY with a mild cleanser, rinse thoroughly and dry well, especially between the toes. Avoid soaking your feet in very hot water for too long. It can weaken your skin and nails.

WEAR THE RIGHT SHOES. Always choose shoes that fit properly and provide good support. Save the high heels for special occasions.

REMOVE DEAD SKIN CELLS. Once a week, gently exfoliate your feet with a pumice stone, foot scrub or exfoliating glove to remove dead skin cells.

MOISTURIZE. Skin on our feet tends to dry out and crack. Apply a lotion or cream to keep feet soft and hydrated. Avoid applying between your toes, where moisture can build up.

TRIM NAILS PROPERLY. Cut and file toenails regularly with clean tools. Be careful not to cut them too short, as this can lead to ingrown toenails.

CONSULT A PROFESSIONAL. Do your feet hurt when you walk? Is your skin irritated or itchy despite good care? Is a wound not healing? No matter the problem, don't wait for it to get worse. See a foot health professional promptly.

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Hollywood

by Tony Rizzo

Nicole Kidman intends to tell her side of her breakup with Keith Urban. Apparently, attempts to save the marriage were fruitless, and she moved out of their home in Nashville, Tennessee. She plans to spill everything about their marriage, as well as her marriage to ex Tom Cruise in her tell-all memoir.



PHOTO CREDIT: DEPOSITPHOTOS

Nicole Kidman
(“Practical Magic 2”)

Her upcoming projects are “Practical Magic 2” with Sandra Bullock, Dianne Wiest and Stockard Channing, and the horror film “The Young People” with Johnny Knoxville and Heather Graham. (“The Young People” is directed by Osgood Perkins, son of “Psycho” star Anthony Perkins.)

★★★

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



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Jonathan Bailey
(“Wicked: For Good”)

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

But after three years of “Wicked” (including the shooting of the two films and the massive press tour), he’s at a crossroads. The next role he chooses could

make or break his career. You might say he has to make the most “Wicked” decision of his career!

★★★

“Avatar: Fire and Ash” rolled out with a box office gross of \$347.1 million it’s first weekend. The first “Avatar” (2009) grossed almost \$3 billion (making it the top-grossing film of all time). “Avatar: The Way of Water” (2022) grossed \$2.4 billion (ranking third behind “Avengers: Endgame” at \$2.8 billion). “Avatar: 4” is due in December 2029, and “Avatar: 5” will arrive in December 2031. All five “Avatar” films were filmed simultaneously to allow time for postproduction and to use the same cast.

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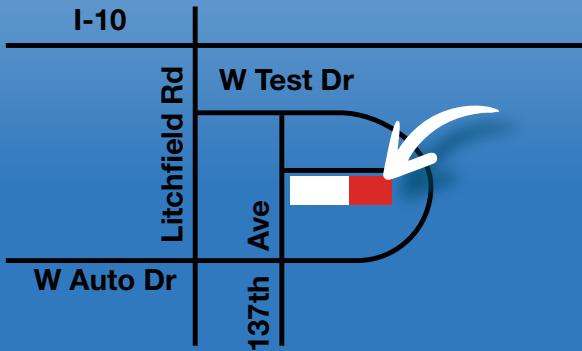
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Do we need vitamin supplements?

Many of us have made our list of resolutions for the New Year, and some of those resolutions involve health and fitness. We've decided to get healthy and believe that the answers lie in exercise, diet, social interaction for mental health -- and vitamin supplements.

Of those, the one that puts up red flags is the vitamin supplements. If we don't know what we're doing, we can cause problems because what we take might be unsafe.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) has explored the topic of supplements for seniors (www.nia.nih.gov/health/vitamins-and-supplements/dietary-supplements-older-adults) and the site is full of caveats and warnings.

To be considered:

- If you're hunting for supplement information on the internet or by watching TV ads, be wary about who is behind it. Do they have a reason (such as profit) for promoting a certain supplement?
- Remember that more is not necessarily better. Too much of any supplement might be harmful to you.

Check the NIH dietary supplement database at dsld.od.nih.gov. They have over 200,000 supplements listed, and you can search by product, brand or ingredient.

Before you start taking supplements, talk to your doctor. You might be advised to make some adjustments to your diet instead, or they might know of a reason in your medical profile that indicates a certain supplement could cause problems for you.

The NIH also recommends looking at the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025, a free publication online at www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf. There is a whole section for older adults.

When it comes to our prescription drugs, we need to be aware there as well. To check for any interactions with drugs you are taking, go to drugs.com, click "Drugs Interaction Checker" and enter the drug name. You'll get a result that shows any interactions as well as warnings, side effects and uses of the drug.

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Here's a Tip

Here's a Tip

Pair Movement With a Daily Habit

Attach movement to something you already do—march in place during commercials, stretch while coffee brews, or do heel raises while brushing your teeth.

Use the "One-Plate Rule"

For meals, fill one plate once—half vegetables, one-quarter protein, one-quarter starch. It simplifies healthy eating without counting calories.

Protect Balance With a 60-Second Test

Once a day, stand near a counter and try balancing on one foot for up to 60 seconds. Improving balance is an effective fall-prevention tool.

Use Light to Improve Sleep

Open the blinds first thing in the morning and dim lights after dinner. This simple cue helps regulate your body clock and improve sleep quality.

Stretch Before Bed, Not Just After Waking

Five minutes of gentle stretching before bed can reduce stiffness, nighttime cramps, and morning aches.

Adopt the "Good Enough" Rule

Consistency matters more than intensity. If a walk is short, a meal isn't perfect, or a day goes sideways—it still counts.

Raise a Puppy. Change a Life.

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

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

If accepted as a puppy raiser, you would receive a very young puppy and spend the next year getting it socialized and used to different environments, with good house manners and basic obedience, and exposed to various situations to give it confidence.

If you're not sure you can commit to such a long project, other possibilities are short-term fostering to

provide socialization opportunities for the puppy, co-raising with another individual or family, and in some states there is a prison puppy program that has inmates raise and train the dogs during the week before handing them over to weekend volunteers who provide experiences outside of the prison walls.

Your next step is research. Check out the list of groups in our area that provide trained dogs to individuals in need. Make sure you meet any criteria, and contact them to ask about becoming a puppy raiser.



Key Organizations Serving the Phoenix Area:

AZ Power Paws
azpowerpaws.org
Needs puppy raisers and offers support; requires fingerprint clearance card and a commitment to training.

America's VetDogs
vetcards.org
Places dogs with veterans; covers expenses but raisers provide food and training, attending monthly classes.

Canine Companions
canine.org
Offers volunteer puppy raising for future service dogs; raisers provide home and training, with support from the organization.

K9s For Warriors
K9sforwarriors.org
Relies on puppy raisers for various foster durations, from weekends to over a year, with supplies provided.

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Saving lives with Buddy Check

One of the most valuable things you can do in the new year will be to check on your buddies, those you've served with and those in your area, and make a regular routine of it. It's called Buddy Check, and you could be saving a life.

A few stats:

-- Depending on the source you read, there are 17 to 22 veteran suicides per day. Yes, the numbers have decreased slightly over the years, but even one is too many.

-- The rate of male veteran suicides is 60% higher than for nonveterans. For women veterans, the numbers are even higher.

-- The reasons vary. Between needing to adjust to civilian life, homelessness, isolation, not wanting to ask for help and PTSD, many of our buddies are in trouble, especially if brain injury (even mild TBI) is part of the equation.

This is where you come in, with Buddy Check.

Go online to va.gov and search for "Veteran Buddy Checks." Click on the fact-packed 20-minute

training video and learn how you can help. Become familiar with the S.A.V.E. acronym -- know the Signs, Ask the right questions, Value their life and Enlist help. Then take the pledge to check on 10 veteran buddies.

Your best source to locate other veterans is the Together We Served website (www.TogetherWeServed.com). To access the data base you'll need to enter your name, email address and branch of service. If you want, you can add a few details about yourself. Once on the site, you'll find a unit directory and over 2 million veterans who've signed up. You can start with their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/TogetherWeServed.

Look at the American Legion Buddy Check. Go to www.legion.org and search for "Buddy Check." Learn about their program and download the tool kit.

If you are the one who needs help, don't wait, don't hesitate. Help is only a phone call away, day or night, at the Veterans Crisis Line. Dial 988 and press 1. Or text to 838255. For confidential support for a family member or friend, see VeteransCrisisLine.net.

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Jay began servicing pools in the late 80s and steadily expanded his expertise in design and construction. Today, Palo Verde Pools is a family-owned business with more than 40 years of combined experience, offering complete, resort-inspired outdoor living solutions. Our commitment to quality craftsmanship, clear communication, and a seamless process—from initial concept to final orientation—has made us a trusted industry leader.

Jay, an Arizona native, and Kaylan, a U.S. Navy veteran originally from the East Coast, share a passion for the Southwest lifestyle and outdoor living.

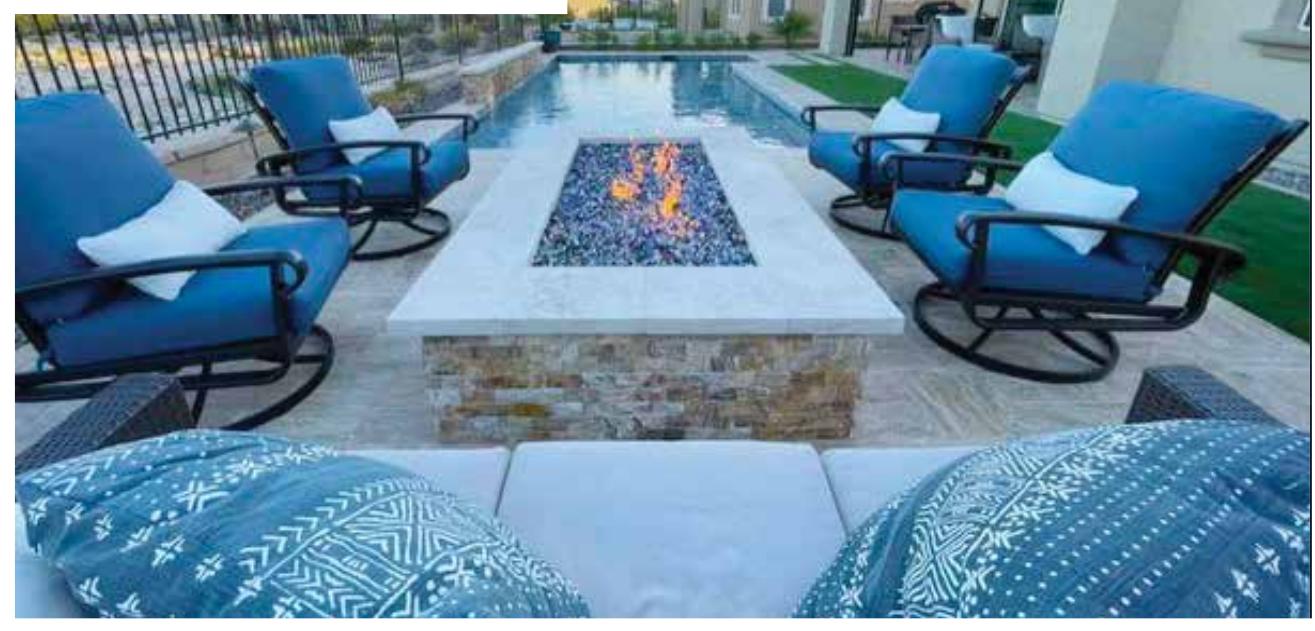


Jay & Kaylan

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Unleash your creativity!

The many benefits of visual art

You don't have to be an artist to reap the benefits of making and enjoying art. In fact, even small doses can be advantageous. Here's what you should know.

A TOOL FOR LEARNING

Making art helps learners create different kinds of connections in their brains and increases their ability to think creatively and solve problems.

A FEEL-GOOD ACTIVITY

Art isn't just for kids. In fact, an increasing number of adults are making art as a way to relieve stress. From filling in adult coloring books and making art journals to completing DIY projects and assembling crafts from a kit, it's easy to find ways to unleash your creativity.

Indeed, taking a pause to color, paint, draw or sculpt allows you to break away from routine thoughts and the daily pressures of modern living. What's more, creating art has been shown to release dopamine



in the brain, one of the chemicals believed to be responsible for feeling good.

VIEWING ART IS ALSO GOOD FOR YOU

Studies indicate that just one hour of looking at art, such as at a museum, can change the way you think and feel. In fact, it's been shown that those who spend time looking at art are able to think more critically about things and feel more empathy toward other people.

From doodling with a pen to creating a masterpiece with paint and a canvas, making art is good for you. And remember, creativity is a like a muscle: the more you use it, the more powerful it will be.

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How can you reduce your grocery spending?

Along with housing and transportation, food is one of the biggest expenses for most households. If your grocery bills seem to be constantly increasing, you can try these smart ways to save.

CHOOSE UNALTERED FOODS

Instead of buying convenience items, such as pre-cut vegetables or grated cheese, opt for them in their original form. Prepared or modified products can easily cost more than their unaltered counterparts.

PLAN AROUND CURRENT DISCOUNTS

Take a few minutes to browse store flyers and search for online promotions to find the week's specials and deals. These resources will help you find the best places to shop, even if it means making an extra stop. When you know what's on sale, you can build a focused shopping list and stick to it. Many mobile apps also show you the best prices for the items you're looking for.

ALWAYS EAT BEFORE YOU SHOP

Never shop on an empty stomach. Satisfying your appetite before you go grocery shopping will prevent you from making impulse purchases, which can quickly drive up your bill.

WATCH OUT FOR FAKE DEALS

In many supermarkets, it's not uncommon to see reduced price signs in bright colors and bold text. But don't be fooled! Compare the price per weight or unit with similar products. You'll often find that the so-called bargain isn't really cheaper at all.

BE OPEN TO SUBSTITUTIONS

Canola oil is often cheaper than olive oil, as is store-brand mayonnaise compared to the name brand version. Small substitutions like these can add up to big savings over time.

COOK AND STORE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Ready-to-eat meals save time when you're in a hurry, but they cost a lot more than home cooking. You'll quickly see that buying all the ingredients and cooking your meals from scratch reduces your expenses.

Consider cooking larger portions and freezing individual servings. This will ensure you have quick, homemade meals ready on busy days.

EAT LESS MEAT

Plant-based proteins like tofu, tempeh and legumes are often much cheaper than meat. Replacing animal proteins with these options from time to time keeps your meals varied, nutritious and, above all, easy on your budget.

Remember that the goal isn't to deprive yourself, but to make informed choices based on your needs, tastes and means. Happy grocery shopping!

RECIPE

Spaghetti Carbonara

INGREDIENTS

3 egg yolks
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
8 slices of bacon, finely chopped
14 ounces spaghetti
Freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine the egg yolks and Parmesan cheese in a bowl. Set aside.
2. In a frying pan, fry the bacon over medium-high heat.
3. Meanwhile, cook the spaghetti in boiling water. Do not drain.
4. Using tongs, remove the cooked pasta from the water, place it in the frying pan and turn off the heat. Add the egg and cheese mixture and mix well. If necessary, add a little pasta water.
5. Garnish with a generous amount of black pepper and a little grated cheese, if desired. Serve immediately.



This simplified version of a classic Italian dish could very well become one of your favorites!

Have you tried one of the recipes in the West Valley Star?

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"Are there ways to save on my home insurance?"

Along with mortgage payments and taxes, home insurance can be a major expense for homeowners. Is this the case for you? Are you looking for ways to reduce your premium and minimize the strain on your finances? Here are a few tips.

INCREASE YOUR DEDUCTIBLE

The deductible, the amount you pay out of pocket in the event of a claim, directly affects your premium. Depending on your insurance policy, you may be able to lower your monthly payments by opting for a higher deductible.

REVIEW THE COST OF REBUILDING

Many homeowners get sufficient home insurance coverage for a rebuilding cost equal to their home's purchase price. Nowadays, it's not uncommon for a home to cost more to purchase than it would to rebuild in the event of a major disaster.

By assessing the realistic cost to rebuild your home and adjusting your policy accordingly, you may be able to get your premium reduced. However, take care not to underinsure your home just to save money. You may regret it if an accident occurs.

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PROTECT YOURSELF FROM WATER DAMAGE

Water damage is the most common cause of insurance claims and can increase your premium. By protecting your home against water-related problems, you can help keep your insurance payments as low as possible.

For example, consider replacing old plastic pipes, which deform and crack over time, with braided steel pipes in your plumbing. This upgrade can significantly lower your home's risk of water damage. It may require an upfront investment, but it's well worth it.

Looking for more ways to save on your home insurance? Contact your insurance broker or a financial advisor near you.





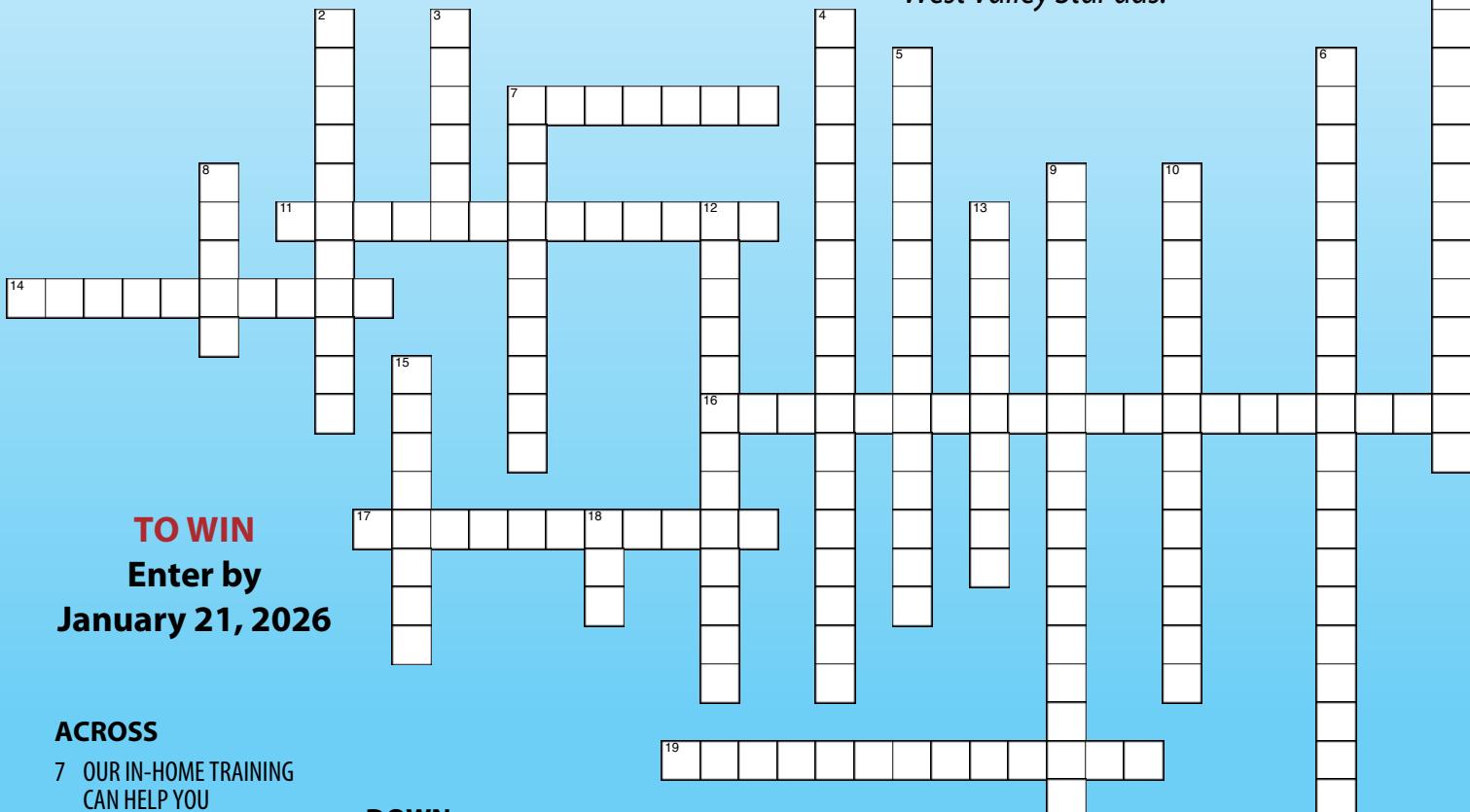
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Answers to the clues can be found in this month's
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- 11 NEW PHONE NUMBER
- 14 Confidence-building
- 16 (WITHOUT WARNING)
- 17 lower next year's tax bill
- 19 exciting attractions, rides and daily shows

DOWN

- 1 FARE SAVINGS
- 2 What's the difference?
- 3 Fine Arts Recovery
- 4 our care packages
- 5 60,000 BATTERIES PER YEAR!!!
- 6 we're proud to stand behind every service
- 7 Educational Seminar on Gold & Silver
- 8 Prevents Fire & Overheating
- 9 START THE NEW YEAR WITH A NEW CAR

- 10 Ready to upgrade
- 12 helps eliminate excessive tissue
- 13 4K Patio Covers
- 15 Give Now... Get It All Back!
- 18 Not if you call us!

OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES. Solve the crossword puzzle and mail it in to win. The answers to all crossword clues are found in ads appearing in this edition of West Valley Star. The answers may contain ALL OR PART of a company name. When entering an advertiser's name, there are no spaces, no LLC, or Corporations. Must be 21 or older to enter the contest. 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 2 and 2 movie passes. One winner will receive a consolation prize of 2 movie passes. Winners will be notified by phone, and prizes will be sent by mail.

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Name _____

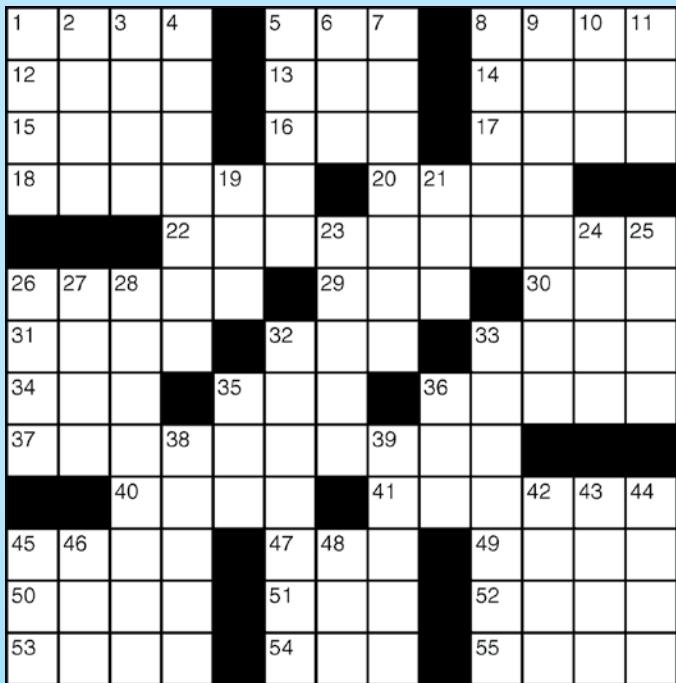
Address _____

Phone _____

email _____

Mail puzzle with answers to:

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



ACROSS

1 Pundit's piece
5 "Kapow!"
8 Ancient mariner
12 Carousel, for one
13 Half of dos
14 German car name
15 Hgt.
16 Baseball's Hodges
17 \$ dispensers
18 Humble
20 Tolkien villains
22 Eye furtively
26 Plant firmly
29 Droop
30 Shelter
31 Librarian's advice
32 Enjoy Vail
33 Ink smudge
34 Fine, at NASA
35 Middling grade
36 '70s club

37 TV ratings period

40 Relaxing refuges
41 Fruity desserts
45 Spiced tea
47 Wedding words

49 Yuletide tune
50 Body powder
51 Popeye's Olive

52 Concept
53 Canonized Fr. women
54 Born

55 Pretzel seasoning
DOWN

1 Utah city
2 Heap
3 Idyllic place
4 Concocted

5 "Taps" instrument
6 Singer DiFranco

7 Hawaiian island
8 Civil rights org.

9 Moves more goods than

10 USN bigwig
11 That chap's
19 Moreover

21 Cleaning cloth
23 Cockeyed
24 Fair-hiring org.

25 Low-carb diet
26 Eventful periods

27 Calico's call
28 School fundraiser

32 Time with a therapist
33 Skimpy suits

35 IRS employee
36 Aachen article

38 Grand stories
39 Paris school
42 Pop
43 Rind
44 Blind part

45 Dol. fractions

46 Fez, e.g.

48 Coloring agent

Answers on Page 29

Time to beat: 25 minutes



Grand Prize
Kelly D
GOODYEAR

Sudoku

by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 3x3 box contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

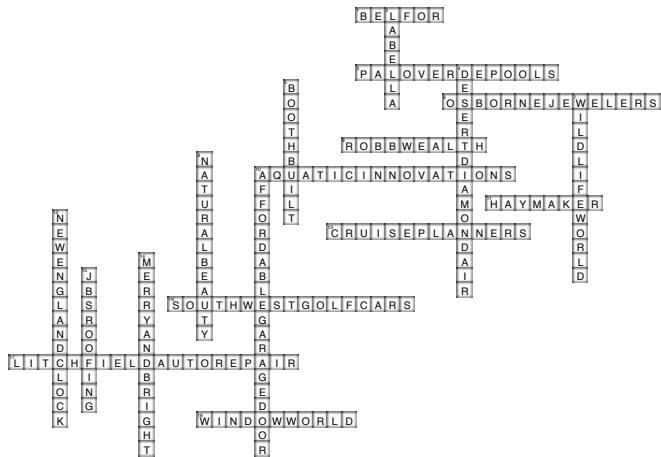
DIFFICULTY: ★ ★ ★

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Answers on Page 29

Dinner and A Movie DECEMBER SOLUTION



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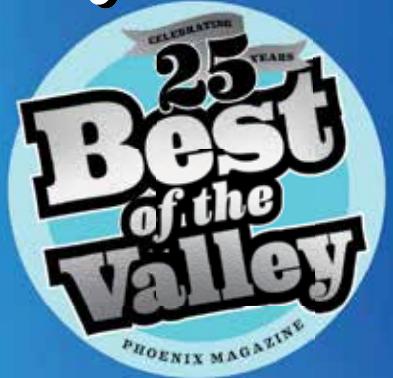


I've been relying on Justin's crew since 2023 after the fumblings and miss-directions of a handful of other aquarium service providers. Justin and Bobby have been, hands down the most consistently professional, easiest to work with, available for emergencies, and overall most technically competent of all aquarium retailers and service providers in the greater Phoenix Area. I have been keeping reef aquaria for over 50 years, since the days of dolomite and undergravel filters, when the concept was a novelty. I am particular, I know a bit, and I need a crew to partner with that can match wits with me to figure out the more challenging stuff. The Justin-Bobby Team matches my needs, is patient with my sometimes old-school thinking, and always is keen to make sure I am satisfied. They are as interested in the success of my reef as I am!!

I cannot give Aquatic Innovations a recommendation too high. If you are struggling with your salt aquarium and you still haven't contacted Justin, then its your own damn fault...

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AI Scams:

What You Need to Know—and How to Protect Yourself

Scammers aren't necessarily smarter than they used to be—but they do have a powerful new tool: artificial intelligence (AI). AI allows criminals to work faster, sound more convincing, and personalize scams in ways that were difficult just a few years ago. That's why learning how these scams work is one of the smartest steps you can take to protect yourself and your family.

Social media is often the starting point. Photos, videos, names, travel posts, and even casual comments can give scammers enough information to sound familiar and trustworthy. That doesn't mean you need to delete every photo you've ever posted, but it does mean reviewing your privacy settings. Limit who can see your posts, avoid sharing full names of family members, and think twice before posting real-time travel plans or detailed personal information.

Photos and videos deserve special attention. AI tools can now copy a person's voice from short audio clips and mimic facial expressions from videos. In rare but alarming cases, scammers have used these

tools to create fake phone calls or video messages that appear to come from a grandchild or loved one in distress—often asking for urgent financial help.

Personalization is another common tactic. A scammer who knows where you vacationed, your dog's name, or your grandchildren's names can use that information to build trust before asking for something seemingly harmless—like confirming your address or spelling your name.

Awareness works. Be skeptical of urgent requests, especially those involving secrecy, pressure, or money. If you receive a call or message that seems off, pause and verify it through another method.

For reliable, easy-to-understand information, the McAfee website offers a helpful overview in its *Guide to Deepfake Scams and AI Voice Spoofing*. If you believe you've been targeted or victimized, report it to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center at ic3.gov. Staying informed, cautious, and willing to slow down remains your best defense in an AI-driven world.

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-- *Dave Barry*



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DANCING: An unexpected remedy for the ailments of aging



Older adults are frequently reminded how important it is to keep physically active, maintain social connections and look after their cognitive health. Is there one activity that can support all three goals? According to some experts, dancing is a surprisingly effective option.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Whether it's salsa, contemporary dance, cha-cha-chá, line dancing or swing, dancing is widely recognized as an excellent way to keep the body moving. Not every style dramatically boosts cardiovascular fitness, but all forms of dance work the joints. Dancing engages the feet, legs, hips and arms, helping to improve flexibility, strengthen muscles and support bone health.

COGNITIVE BENEFITS

Every time you coordinate your movements to the rhythm of the music, your brain stays active and alert. Combined with the positive emotions that music brings, this sensory stimulation strengthens neural connections. This is a major protective factor for maintaining cognitive function as you get older.

SOCIAL ADVANTAGES

Loneliness is a harsh reality many seniors face, but gathering in a group one or more times a week for an enjoyable activity fosters a sense of belonging and helps prevent social isolation. Staying connected with others helps keep you mentally and physically healthy, proving the old saying true: "Healthy mind, healthy body!"

Do you want to stay active and age well? Contact a local dance school or community recreation center.



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Kidney failure: a silent and dangerous disease

Following routine medical check-ups, many older adults are shocked to learn they have kidney failure—and for good reason. This disease often goes unnoticed because its symptoms resemble those of other conditions. That's why it's often described as insidious. Here's what you need to know.

Kidney failure occurs when the kidneys' filters, called "nephrons," become damaged and can no longer effectively remove waste and excess water from the body.

What are the symptoms?

Kidney failure can cause several symptoms, including:

- High blood pressure
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite and weight
- Itching
- Difficulty breathing

What are the treatments?

Treatment depends on the stage of the disease. In mild to moderate cases, doctors focus on monitoring blood characteristics and taking steps to slow or prevent further kidney damage. In advanced stages, treatment may involve dialysis or hemodialysis, both methods of filtering the blood. In some cases, a kidney transplant may be required.

Regular medical check-ups are key to detecting kidney failure early. Take charge of your health by talking to your doctor.



What do the kidneys do?

The kidneys are organs that sit on either side of the spine. They remove waste products from the blood (such as urea and creatinine) and regulate water and mineral levels in the body. They also produce hormones that help regulate blood pressure, form red blood cells and maintain proper calcium and phosphorus levels in the body.

Strange But True

by Lucie Winborne

In 1945, Soviet children presented the U.S. ambassador in Moscow with a wooden Great Seal as a friendship gift. It just happened to include a hidden listening device, which spied on American diplomats for seven years before it was discovered.

When humans blush, their stomach also turns red.

On the California side of the U.S.-Mexican border is a city named Calexico. On the opposite side is a town called Mexicali.

England's Queen Victoria defied both the clergy and her personal physician to become the first monarch to use anesthesia (chloroform) during childbirth.

Women blink about two times less often than men.

Professional chefs in wealthy 17th-century European households were primarily men, who often cooked in the nude or in their underwear due to kitchens' intense heat.

Deaf quarterback Paul Hubbard was the first to use the "round formation huddle" in football, to ensure that his teammates could interpret his hand gestures.

Benedict Cumberbatch is the second cousin, 16 times removed, of King Richard III, whom he portrayed in the 2016 BBC miniseries "The Hollow Crown."

Crime novelist James Patterson co-wrote the famous "I'm a Toys 'R' Us Kid" jingle

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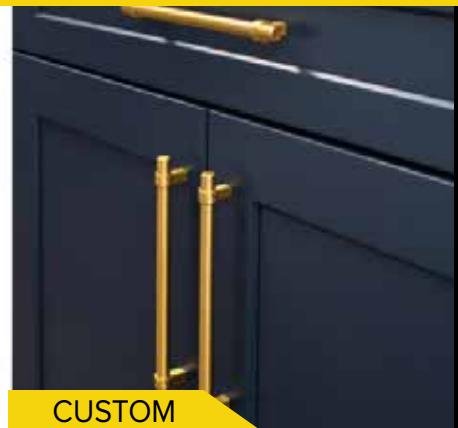
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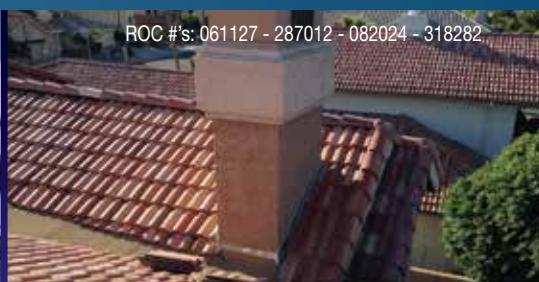
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