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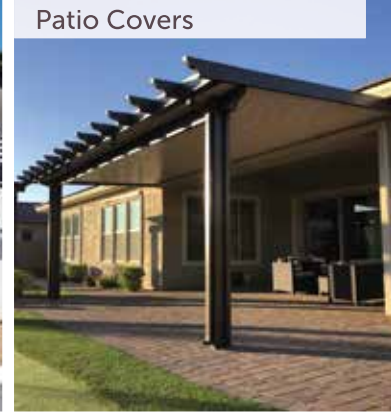
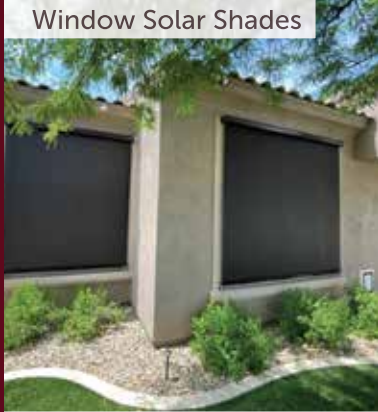
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Senior Newsline 6
Paws & Claws 7
Your Good Health 8
Celebrity Extra..... 9
Veteran's Post..... 10
Non-Profit Spotlight..... 20
Games..... 21 & 22
Hollywood 25
Recipe 26
Service Directory 28 & 29
Green Living..... 29

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Embrace the holiday season: supporting local matters

As the holiday season draws near, your purchasing decisions make more of an impact than ever. Sure, big-name retailers and online giants may offer convenience, but there's something truly special about supporting local businesses during this festive time. Here's a handful of reasons to opt for locally sourced gifts.

Invest in your community and build connections

Whether it's artisanal soap, lotions and skincare products made with locally sourced ingredients, delectable treats from a neighborhood bakery or chocolate shop, or handcrafted pottery or glassware from a local artist, each purchase directly supports the livelihood of small business owners and their families.

Moreover, when you support local businesses, you can build personal connections with the people behind the products. Whether you're chatting with the owner of your corner bookstore or learning the story behind a handmade item, shopping local allows you to create meaningful connections and learn more about the community around you.

Score unique finds that won't hurt the planet

Shopping local often means stumbling upon one-of-a-kind gifts you can't find anywhere else. From customized artwork and prints to specialty tea blends from a nearby cafe and locally distilled spirits and craft beers, your local retailers offer a treasure trove of goods waiting to be discovered.

Additionally, sourcing goods from nearby businesses minimizes the carbon footprint associated with long-distance and overseas shipping and transportation. Whether it's organic textiles from a local weaver or locally sourced honey and preserves from a nearby farm or apiary, choosing local goods can contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious lifestyle.

When you shop locally this holiday, you'll do more than just purchase gifts; you'll create a community connection and support the vibrant businesses that make our region thrive.



A festive Christmas-themed graphic for Phoenix Flooring and Remodel. It features a circular logo with a phoenix bird in the center, surrounded by the text "PHOENIX FLOORING AND REMODEL". To the right, large gold text says "Up to 25% OFF". Below that, it says "Now through 01/15/2025". A cartoon Santa Claus is holding a red banner that says "Merry Christmas & happy new year". At the bottom, the phone number "608-833-0777" is displayed. The background is red with gold stars, snowflakes, and Christmas ornaments.

An advertisement for Osborne Jewelers. It features a close-up of a square-cut purple gemstone ring and a matching necklace with a square-cut purple gemstone pendant. The jewelry is set against a background of purple flowers and white snowflakes. At the bottom, the text reads "Osborne Jewelers THE STORE INTEGRITY BUILT", "15350 W McDowell Rd. Goodyear, Az 85395", "www.osbornejewelersinc.com", and "623-925-1815".

Ready to volunteer?

Have you considered what you'll do with your spare time in the New Year? How about volunteering? There are so many ways we can step up.

AmeriCorps Seniors (americorps.gov/serve/americorps-seniors) provides opportunities to over 200,000 seniors every year to go into the community and give back. If there's an interest, there's likely a place that needs help.

The Foster Grandparent Program connects seniors with children ranging from premature babies all the way to young teenage mothers for mentoring and tutoring.

In the **Seniors RSVP Program**, seniors are matched with organizations that help others in the community.

The Senior Companion Program pairs a volunteer with another senior who needs help with daily living activities.

What do we seniors get out of volunteering? We gain new skills or improve the ones we already have as we share our experience. We can earn a small stipend. We can lessen our isolation and feelings of loneliness as we interact with others. And we experience better health, including mental health with a decrease in anxiety and depression.

The only eligibility requirement is that volunteers must be age 55 and older.



If you're interested in exploring volunteering opportunities, go online to the AmeriCorps website and click on the Pathfinder. Put your state or area of interest in the search box. You'll be shown lists of agencies that can use your volunteer help as well as the email contact and website for those agencies.

You might end up teaching a child to read, or volunteering as an aide in a kindergarten class. You might help another senior with tasks he or she can no longer do, such as laundry or writing letters to family. You could work behind the counter at a recreation center signing out basketballs. You might sort vegetables in a food bank. The opportunities are nearly endless.

If you need inspiration, look at the National Service Reports for your state to see what others have been doing.

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Paws and Claws



Gifts for pet lovers: treat your furry friends

Whether you're a proud pet parent or need the perfect present for a pet-loving friend, consider these five fantastic gift ideas for the four-legged pals in your life.

Pet camera. Ever wonder what your furry friend gets up to when you're not around? Modern pet cameras are equipped with two-way audio and even treat dispensers, allowing you to interact with your pet.

Personalized pet paraphernalia. Show your love for your pet with personalized items such as a custom pet pillow, socks, blanket, dishes or even a personalized pet portrait.

Homemade treats. Whip up some simple recipes using pet-friendly ingredients like peanut butter, pumpkin or sweet potato.

Interactive toys. Puzzle feeders, treat-dispensing toys and feather wands are great options for engaging your pet's senses and providing hours of entertainment.



Heated bed. Heated pet beds come in various shapes and sizes and are especially ideal for older pets or those with arthritis.



Spoiling your pet with these thoughtful gifts strengthens the bond you share with them.

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	APR 12 (SAT) 6:05 PM	San Antonio Gunslingers	Glendale, AZ
	APR 26 (SAT) 6:05 PM	Northern AZ Wranglers	Glendale, AZ
	MAY 3 (SAT) 6:05 PM	Tucson Sugar Skulls	Tucson, AZ
	MAY 10 (SAT) 6:05 PM	Bay Area Panthers	Glendale, AZ
	MAY 17 (SAT) 6:00 PM	Vegas Knight Hawks	Glendale, AZ
	MAY 24 (SAT) 6:05 PM	Northern AZ Wranglers	Prescott Valley, AZ

	MAY 31 (SAT) 6:05 PM	Vegas Knight Hawks	Henderson, NV
	JUN 7 (SAT) 4:05 PM	Jacksonville Sharks	Jacksonville, FL
	JUN 14 (SAT) 6:05 PM	Tucson Sugar Skulls	Glendale, AZ
	JUN 21 (SAT) 6:05 PM	Bay Area Panthers	San Jose, CA
	JUN 28 (SAT) 6:05 PM	Green Bay Blizzard	Glendale, AZ
	JUL 12 (SAT) 6:05 PM	San Diego Strike Force	Glendale, AZ
	JUL 19 (SAT) 4:05 PM	San Antonio Gunslingers	San Antonio, TX
	JUL 27 (SUN) 6:05 PM	San Diego Strike Force	San Diego, CA

"Why Am I Sweating More?"

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm a 62-year-old woman in good health who has always been very active. When I was younger, I would hardly be sweaty after I worked out. My clothes would be dry. Now when I do a similar workout, I'm so sweaty that my clothes are wet. Why is there such a big difference? Is it hormone-related? I also have hot flashes. -- M.C.

ANSWER: Yes, it's very likely to be related to hormonal changes from menopause. When estrogen levels go down due to the ovaries ceasing production, temperature regulation at the level of the hypothalamus in the brain is changed. The brain causes heat-losing changes like skin flushing and sweating much more easily.

This can happen for no particular reason, but it may be triggered by exercise. So much heat can be lost that a woman may get so cold, she shivers to rebuild heat.

If it's bothering you, try less-intense exercise, exercising in air conditioning or near a fan, or swimming.

DR. ROACH WRITES: A recent column on hair loss and thyroid disease prompted many readers to write me with their experiences. One reader noted that increasing protein in their diet seemed to slow down hair loss and even cause some regrowth. Another reader recommended biotin. I often recommend this as a trial, despite a lack of good evidence that it works. Biotin is a B-type vitamin that is very safe, although it can interfere with a lab assay when it comes to thyroid levels and other hormone levels.

Note that both hair loss and thyroid disease are very common, and it is not always the case that thyroid disease causes hair loss.

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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Celebrity Extra by Dana Jackson

Q: I've been watching the Bruce Springsteen documentary on Hulu, but I could have sworn there was also a movie coming out with an actor playing him. Am I remembering correctly? -- D.D.

A: You didn't dream it; it's true. A motion picture about Springsteen's life while recording his iconic acoustic album "Nebraska" in the early 1980s is currently in production. None other than Emmy-Award-winning actor Jeremy Allen White ("The Bear") will portray him and says that he would even like to try singing for the film, as opposed to being dubbed over.

Titled "Deliver Me from Nowhere," the movie is based on the recent book of the same name by author Warren Zanes and will be directed by Scott Cooper ("Crazy Heart"). The film will also star two other actors who are no strangers to awards ceremonies: Jeremy Strong ("Succession") and Paul Walter Hauser ("Black Bird").

★ ★ ★

Q: Why is "Wicked" going to be a two-part film? How long was the Broadway musical? -- E.L.

A: "Wicked" was originally a novel written by Gregory Maguire before it became a Broadway musical. The stage version is about 150 minutes, plus an intermission. Even if the

movie translates the musical verbatim, it would still be a long film, but it might not require a second one. The reason that a second film, which will premiere in theaters in November 2025, is needed might be due to the film version including more elements from the book. (Also, it's a great way for the studios to make more money.)

I personally believe that pro-shot musicals, which are filmed live musicals, are the best way to see a Broadway show on your screen. Disney+ did this with "Hamilton," which allowed millions of people who couldn't see the original cast on Broadway to experience the show.



COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande star in the upcoming film "Wicked"

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com

or write me at

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Operation Gratitude still going strong

Since it began in 2003, Operation Gratitude has sent over 4 million care packages to deployed service members. Starting several years ago, OpGrat has expanded their range of giving to include first responders, wounded heroes, recruit graduates coming out of boot camp and veterans, saying thank you to those who serve. The kids aren't left out either. Over 20,000 Battalion Buddy teddy bears have been send out to military children in one year alone.

The donated items (ranging from expensive gadgets to snacks to games to necessities) come from corporations, small companies, community and civic groups, and individuals.

Volunteers are at the heart of OpGrat. They write letters to be included in the packages and volunteer at the packing events. Local groups create handmade items, scout troops and companies hold fundraisers and schoolchildren collect loose change.

I first wrote about Operation Gratitude in 2008 and have been tracking them through the years. While other efforts have come and gone, OpGrat has only grown and expanded. One memorable highlight was the year founder Carolyn Blashek personally delivered a care package to a soldier in Iraq. That box contained the keys to a new vehicle, courtesy of the automaker.

Requesting a care package to be sent to someone is easy, just visit www.operationgratitude.com. Packages can be sent to Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel deployed overseas and National Guard serving domestically. Want to open your wallet and help? For more information, call them at 818-960-7878.

If you doubt the value of this ongoing effort, look at the videos on the website. And look for Carolyn Blashek, the woman who started OpGrat in her living room in 2003 after talking to an Iraq War soldier who doubted that anyone cared about whether he'd make it back. She decided to prove him wrong, and 4 million packages later, she has.

Here's a Tip

by JoAnn Derson

Want to mix it up a bit with your traditional chocolate chip cookies? Try rolling them in different types of chopped nuts or sprinkles. Even crushed pretzels are really good. Or change the flavor of the chip. Add minced dried fruit, quick oats or other seeds for a change of taste. Melt chocolate chips and dip one side in it, then let dry on waxed paper. Endless possibilities!

Having a holiday party? Put foods and drinks in places that guests tend to linger. With different stops, guests will not bunch up in one place and it actually encourages mingling!

"I have added an additional shower curtain bar in my tub. I hang up my towels and washcloths there to air dry, and they are out of sight behind the shower curtain." -- A reader

"Digital picture books are very easy to make these days, and they make great gifts. But here's a way we use our digital photos to keep the kids engaged at our family gatherings. Each family prints out a selection of photos. We let the kids make their own books using half sheets of paper, glue and markers. They design frames, etc. After they have several pages done, we tie them together and make a cover of heavy card-stock. It's a great take-home craft, a special souvenir for visitors, and it gets them talking about family moments." -- R.E. in Alabama

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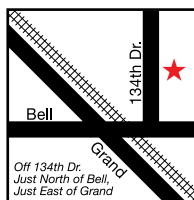
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Safety tips for festive outdoor decorations

Outdoor Christmas decorations can transform your home into a festive wonderland, but only if you prioritize safety while creating your holiday display. To ensure your decorations are both beautiful and secure, take these precautions.

Look for “outdoor use” labels

Use only lights and ornaments designed for outdoor use. Unlike their indoor counterparts, these are built to withstand harsh weather conditions, which could pose a fire hazard if exposed to moisture.

Verify the condition of the cords

Carefully inspect all electrical cords for frays or cracks. Using damaged cords can lead to electrical shocks or fires. It’s also crucial to use outdoor-rated extension cords and ensure they can handle the power load of your decorations.

Secure all decor

Secure lights with clips or hooks instead of nails or staples. These alternatives prevent damage to the cords, reducing the risk of electrical issues. Additionally, firmly attach all decorations to prevent them from being blown away or knocked over in the wind.

Don’t overload a circuit

Spread out your decorations across multiple outlets to

avoid overloading the circuit. Overloaded circuits can lead to blown fuses or even fires. Protect all electrical connections from moisture by using weatherproof covers and elevating plugs off the ground.

Turn them off

Always turn off your outdoor decorations when you’re not home or before going to bed. An outdoor timer can help automate this process.

Finally, monitor the weather forecast. If severe weather is expected, remove or secure your decorations to prevent damage.



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How to celebrate if you're sick

The flu and other illnesses can strike at the worst possible time. Catching a virus just before the holidays is certainly disappointing, as it deprives you of the long-awaited gatherings with loved ones. Will you be spending Christmas at home this year? Here's how to enjoy the festive season despite your illness:



Exchange greetings by voice.

Organize an audio or video call with your loved ones on Christmas Eve to wish each other "Merry Christmas." Hearing friendly voices is a great way to lift your spirits!

Eat together, virtually.

If your condition allows it, you could enjoy a meal remotely with your family members. They can place a screen on the table in a strategic location so you can all see each other.

Treat yourself to something fun.

In between naps or telephone conversations, do what you like! Take a bath, watch an entertaining movie, play a video game and more.

Finally, remember that you'll be able to plan a face-to-face meeting with your loved ones in a few days or weeks. Until then, take care of yourself!

Here's a Tip

If you have an ink stain on fabric, saturate the ink spot with hairspray and blot using a clean white cloth or non-decorated paper towel. Repeat until all the ink is gone. Make sure you test on an inconspicuous area first.

Fels-Naptha or Zout are great stain removers. They'll usually even get out stains that have gone through the dryer. Dampen the stained area and rub with the soap. Shave 1/4 cup of the soap into a tub of water and soak the stained garment overnight. Rinse and allow to air dry. Repeat if necessary.

"If you're traveling, let your host/hostess know of any serious health problems or allergies you may have and what to do in case of an emergency." -- M.W. in Saskatchewan Canada

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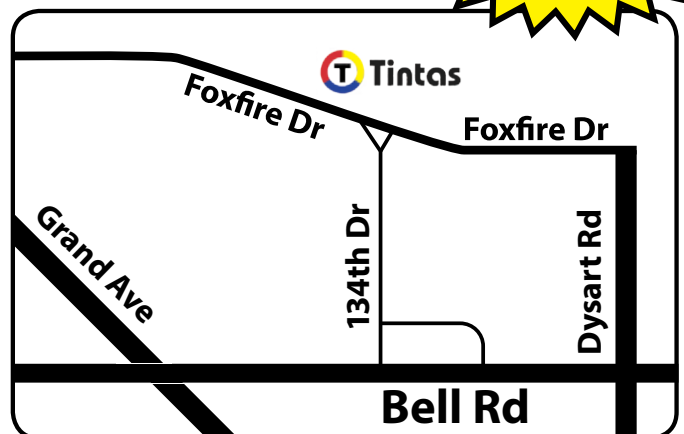
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CELEBRATE The MAGIC

Brighten the holidays for those **less privileged**

Hopefully, we are all aware of our many privileges — good health... a dependable job.. abundance... Would you like to express your gratitude by bringing comfort to people less fortunate than you this holiday season? Here are four ideas to inspire you.

Volunteer. Plenty of organizations need “helping hands” in the run-up to the festive season. You can wrap toys for underprivileged children, cook or serve meals for financially vulnerable families or collect food for Christmas hampers. We’re spoiled for choices when it comes to getting involved in our area!

Visit someone in the hospital. Spending any holiday in the hospital is tough. You could bring a little joy to someone in the hospital by visiting them during Christmas, Hanukkah or the New Year. Bring a greeting card, a few sweets or a gift. Take advantage of your visit to do an activity with them, like walking down the corridor and chatting, playing cards or watching a movie.

Lend a hand. Do you have a few hours to spare? Use your free time to spread happiness and gratitude. You could show your generosity by helping someone with

limited mobility put up their outdoor decorations, help an elderly neighbor with some home maintenance, or pick up groceries for an exhausted caregiver.

Invite someone over for the holiday. For various reasons or circumstances, such as divorce, moving, illness or work, someone in your circle may be spending the holidays alone. Whether it’s a family member, a neighbor, colleague or friend, open your arms and your home to them. Invite them to celebrate Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, or Hanukkah with you, or ring in the New Year together. Your hospitality is sure to warm their hearts!

Sharing warm clothing with someone without a home, welcoming a newcomer family, sending greeting cards to nursing home residents, donating to a worthy cause, whatever your way of giving, don’t hesitate to encourage your loved ones to get in on the action! No matter how big, acts of mutual aid and solidarity can make all the difference in making the holiday season a happy time for those less fortunate.

What kind gestures will you make this year?



BRATE of CHRISTMAS

Charitable presents that make a difference

Are you looking for a different way to give presents this year? Consider these suggestions for gifts that give back.

Donate to your loved one's favorite charity

Make a meaningful impact by donating to a charity that holds a special place in your loved one's heart. You can even support a specific cause that aligns with their passions. For example, consider donating in their name to organizations such as A Place for Hannah, The Giving Group, or a local animal shelter.

Dedicate trees or green space in your loved one's name

Give the gift of sustainability. Contact the local city offices about dedicating a tree in your loved one's name for a nearby park, or a plot of woodland through organizations like A Living Tribute. These presents help combat deforestation and create a legacy in honor of your loved one.

Sponsor a family in need in your loved one's name

Spread joy and goodwill on behalf of your loved one by supporting a family facing hardship. You can connect with a local charitable organization like Harvest Compassion Centers or an international program like Save the Children or UNICEF. These organizations provide essential resources and support to people in need during the holiday season and the rest of the year.

You can also buy physical gifts from local non-profits or free-trade shops. Look for handmade jewelry, artisanal crafts or organic goods that make good gifts and directly benefit communities and artisans around the world.

A PLACE FOR HANNAH helps individuals start over after treatment and prison
www.apfhaz.org

THE GIVING GROUP is a group of 100+ friends dedicated to making amplified contributions to four selected non-profits every quarter
www.tggaz.org

A LIVING TRIBUTE plants tribute trees in US forests to honor your friends and loved ones
www.shop.alivingtribute.org

HARVEST COMPASSION CENTERS are three reimagined food and clothing banks
www.harvestcompassioncenter.org

SAVE THE CHILDREN protects vulnerable children around the world
www.savethechildren.org

UNICEF protects and cares for children worldwide
www.unicefusa.org



Year-End Giving Strategies

Timing your donations strategically helps you maximize your financial planning and the charity's needs. For example, making donations by December 31st ensures that your gifts qualify for the current year's tax benefits. You can reduce your taxable income while supporting causes that often experience a surge in need during the holiday season.

While the tax benefits of charitable giving are important, the impact of your donations on the organizations and causes you support is just as critical. Thoughtful giving ensures your contributions align with your values and create a legacy.

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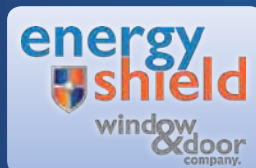
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Fun ideas to spice up your Christmas gift exchange

The traditional Christmas gift exchange can sometimes feel predictable, but you can add excitement and fun to this holiday tradition with a little creativity. Use these ideas to inspire your next festive gathering.

1. Secret Santa with a twist

Add an element of playfulness by setting a theme for the gifts, such as "handmade," "something cozy" or "gifts that start with the letter 'S.'" This encourages creativity and makes the unwrapping more surprising.

2. White elephant gift exchange

In this lively game, each participant brings a wrapped gift, and numbers are drawn to determine the order of gift selection. The catch? Others can "steal" gifts, leading to a hilarious and unpredictable exchange.

Add another element to the game. Let your gift exchange be dictated by the flip of a coin. Heads you choose a gift to unwrap, tails you get to steal from another person. It's amazing how just adding a little coin to a game can change it completely.

3. Mystery box exchange

Each participant fills a box with several small, themed items. During the exchange, participants pick a box without knowing what's inside. It's a fun way to discover a variety of surprises in one package.



4. Gift auction

Use play money or tokens for this game. Each person brings a wrapped gift, and participants bid on them in an auction-style exchange. This adds an element of strategy and competition to the gift-giving process.

These unique gift exchange ideas can transform your Christmas celebration into an event filled with laughter, creativity and delightful surprises.

And consider having a few backup gifts for people who forgot theirs, or changed their mind about playing.

A large advertisement for Wildlife World Zoo Aquarium & Safari Park. The ad features a purple vertical banner on the left with the text "GOOD FOR FOUR!" and "\$5 Off Admission Per Person / \$20 Value". The main text reads "Enjoy the new 5 acre addition to our Safari Park!" and "See our 10 New Species! Including New Zebras, Pygmy Hippos, Clouded Leopard and Monkeys!". The ad also mentions "With 6,000 animals, 8 shows daily, tons of rides, a thousand thrills and a million smiles. All in One Day! Everyday!" and "Arizona's Ultimate, Year-Round Family Fun Destination. Arizona's Largest Collection of Exotic Animals." The Wildlife World logo is in the bottom right corner, along with social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Snapchat.

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SPOTLIGHT on a NON-PROFIT

A Place For Hannah

Where second chances manifest...

WHO WE ARE

A Place for Hannah is a dedicated nonprofit organization committed to helping women rebuild their lives after incarceration. Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive environment where women can find the resources and guidance they need to start anew. We believe everybody makes mistakes, and the women who land in prison because of these mistakes deserve a second chance at life.

WHAT WE DO

We offer comprehensive support through sober living homes, life skills training, employment assistance, and emotional support. Our goal is to empower women to regain their independence, rebuild their confidence, and rejoin the community as strong, capable individuals.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE!

Returning home from prison can be an incredibly challenging transition, and it is crucial to acknowledge the need for healing and support in this process. Many women leaving the criminal justice system have experienced trauma, abuse, and a host of mental and emotional struggles during their time behind bars. Reintegration into society is not merely a matter of physical freedom, but also one of healing and rebuilding their lives. It is vital that we recognize the unique needs of these individuals, offering a holistic approach that includes group counseling, therapy, and access to social services. Without proper support and a safe space for healing, the cycle of incarceration and its associated trauma can persist, hindering these women from making a successful re-entry into society.

We all have a story, a past that may bear scars, and a future that holds the potential for healing and transformation. A Place for Hannah is a sanctuary, a place where we embrace new beginnings, support one another, and collectively strive for personal growth. A Place for Hannah stands as a beacon of hope, a space where people can come together, share their stories, and help each other heal. It's a testament to the power of community and the belief that no matter where we've been, or what we've done. We all have the capacity to rewrite our narratives, make amends, and create a brighter future.



The women we serve are...

- Restored to their authentic self.
- Supported with loving community for healing and revitalizing.
- Empowered with emotional and life skills for transformation.

HOW CAN YOU HELP SUPPORT US?

Financial Donations: Make a one-time donation or set up a regular monthly contribution. A Place for Hannah is also a dollar-for-dollar charity. See our website for how to donate.

Product Donations: Donate your surplus inventory and equipment.

Volunteer Your Time: Offer your skills and expertise as a volunteer or become a mentor.

Become a Sponsor: Sponsor a woman, a home, an event, or an activity. We're looking for local businesses to partner with to create a better community for all.

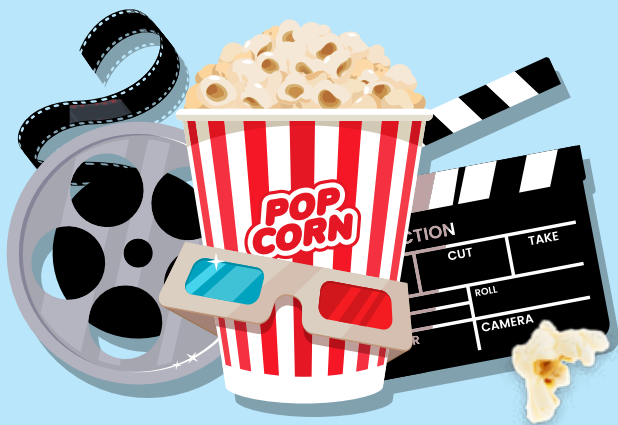
In-Kind Donations: Currently we are in need of: new hygiene items, cleaning supplies, bikes or scooters, new underwear and bras, gently used or new clothing and shoes, new twin size bedding and blankets, and new towels.

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

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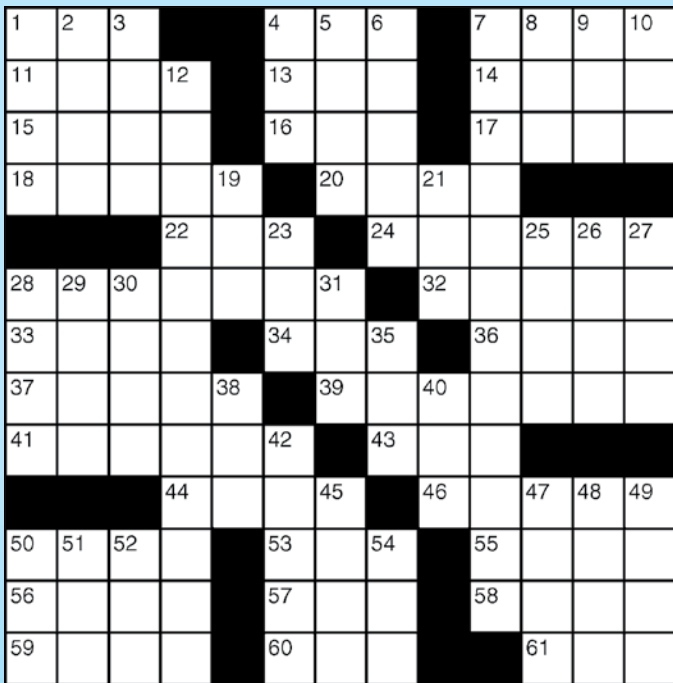
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ACROSS

- 1 Newt
- 4 Former Delta rival
- 7 Very dry
- 11 Bjorn of tennis fame
- 13 Documentarian Burns
- 14 Portrayal
- 15 Afrikaner
- 16 Fire sign?
- 17 Pinnacle
- 18 Lieu
- 20 Trumpet
- 22 Actress Vardalos
- 24 Trite
- 28 Basking venue
- 32 Skiing spot
- 33 Twistable treat
- 34 TV's Danson
- 36 Autobahn auto
- 37 Open-mouthed
- 39 Swiss cheese
- 41 Wards off
- 43 Resort
- 44 Pleasing
- 46 Batter's dry spell

50 Spiced tea

- 53 Vitamin stat
- 55 Bangkok cuisine
- 56 Hayloft site
- 57 Whatever
- 58 Christmas
- 59 Unforeseen problem
- 60 Skillet
- 61 Chart-topping song

DOWN

- 1 Recedes
- 2 Shoe insert
- 3 Shade provider
- 4 -- -la-la
- 5 Desire
- 6 Sneeze sound
- 7 Basis for repeat purchases
- 8 Sinbad's bird
- 9 City on the Danube
- 10 Golf peg
- 12 Banner at a new store
- 19 Conk out

21 "Kidnapped" monogram

- 23 Play part
- 25 Aspiration
- 26 Mimic
- 27 Prefix with conference
- 28 Fly high
- 29 Incite
- 30 Tide type
- 31 Small barrel
- 35 Hosp. workers
- 38 Football's Manning
- 40 Boom times
- 42 Discard
- 45 -- St. Vincent Millay
- 47 "Nope!"
- 48 Algeria's neighbor
- 49 Artist Mondrian
- 50 "CSI" aier
- 51 Solo in space
- 52 Altar constellation
- 54 Novelist Rand

Answers on Page 29

Time to beat: 22 minutes

NOVEMBER WINNERS

Grand Prize
Allison Zuckerman

GOODYEAR

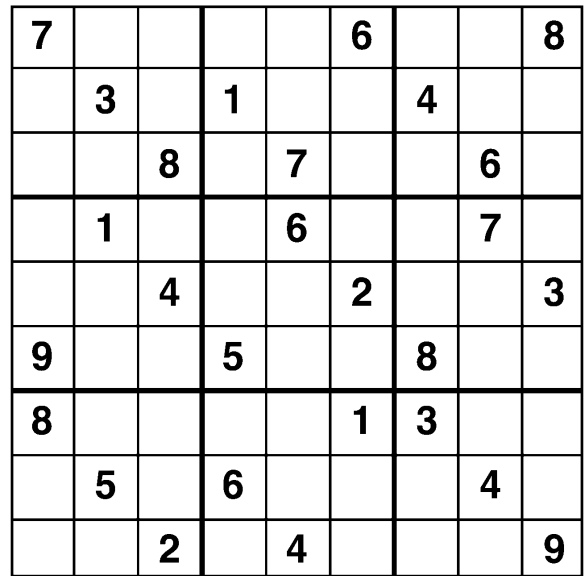
WINNER OF MOVIE PASSES
Diana Romero

GOODYEAR



Sudoku

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.

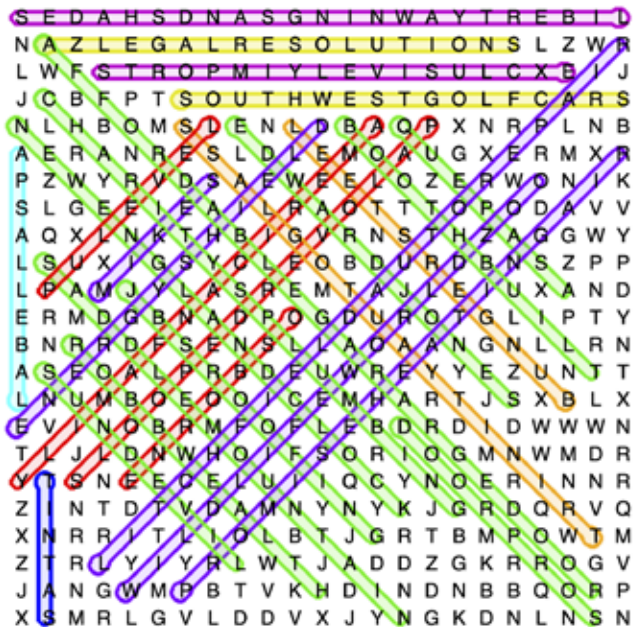
DIFFICULTY: ★ ★ ★

★ MODERATE ★ ★ CHALLENGING

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Answers on Page 29

Dinner and a Movie
NOVEMBER SOLUTION



Office Christmas parties: 5 golden rules

The office Christmas party is a time for celebration, camaraderie and holiday fun. With the right balance of merriment and professionalism, it's an opportunity to strengthen your bonds with co-workers. Follow these six rules to ensure your office Christmas party is enjoyable and memorable:

Show up. Attending your office Christmas party shows respect for the organizers and supports team spirit. Arrive on time so you don't miss out on important moments, like speeches or gift exchanges.

Dress appropriately. Follow the dress code if one is specified on the invitation. When in doubt, opt for festive yet professional attire. Avoid anything too revealing or casual.

Mingle and network. Don't spend the whole night with the same people you always hang out with. Use this opportunity to socialize with colleagues you might not interact with daily. It's a great way to build relationships and enhance team spirit.

Moderate your alcohol intake. If alcohol is served, drink responsibly. Overindulgence can lead to embarrassing situations and damage your professional reputation.

Mind your manners. Be polite to everyone, including waitstaff and event organizers. Your behaviour reflects not only on you but also on your company.

Finally, leave at an appropriate time but avoid being the first or last to depart. Thank the organizers and express appreciation for the effort they put into planning the party.

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Tips for styling your mantel

Styling your mantel is a fun and creative way to add character and charm to your living space. Whether you prefer a minimalist look or a more eclectic style, here are some practical tips to help you design a mantel that stands out:

Start with a focal point

Choose a central piece to anchor your mantel display. This could be a large mirror, an eye-catching piece of art or a statement clock. The focal point sets the tone for the rest of your decor and draws attention to the mantel.

Layer and add height

Place taller objects, such as vases or candlesticks, toward the back, bringing forward lower-profile items like framed photos or small sculptures. This layering technique adds dimension and keeps the arrangement visually engaging.

Mix textures and materials

Combine smooth ceramics with rustic wood, shiny metals with soft textiles or glass with greenery. This contrast enhances the visual appeal and makes the display more dynamic.

Use odd numbers

Decorate with odd numbers of items for a balanced, engaging effect. Groups of three or five items are particularly effective. This arrangement feels more natural and less rigid than even-numbered groupings.



Add personal touches

Incorporate personal items that reflect your style and interests. For example, family photos, travel souvenirs and heirloom pieces can make your mantel feel unique and meaningful.

Style your mantel this winter to showcase your personal style and create a beautiful and inviting focal point in your home.

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Hollywood by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Oscar winner Robert Downey Jr. (“Oppenheimer”) is telling fans who’ve been begging for another “Sherlock Holmes” film that they may get their wish soon. His first “Sherlock Holmes” film was in 2009 and grossed \$524 million. Its sequel, “A Game of Shadows,” released in 2011 and grossed \$543.8 million, which makes you wonder why it’s taking so long. Jude Law will return as Dr. Watson for this “threequel.”



COURTESY OF WARNER BROS.

Jude Law as Watson in “Sherlock Holmes”

Before then, Law hit screens in “The Order” (with Nicholas Hoult) on Dec. 6. He will also star in Ron Howard’s “Eden,” with Ana de Armas and Sydney Sweeney, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival on Sept. 7.



George Clooney made his mark in eight episodes of “E/R” and the TV series “The Facts of Life” in 1985. He went on to receive eight Oscar nominations (winning two) and four Golden Globes. Now he’s taking on Broadway in a stage version of his 2005 hit film “Goodnight, and Good Luck,” written by his longtime producing partner Grant Heslov.

The story follows Edward R. Murrow as he exposes Senator Joseph McCarthy’s anti-communist witch hunt. The original film cost \$7 million while grossing \$54.6 million. The show opens on April 3, 2025, at the Winter Garden Theatre, which just ran the musical “Back to the Future.” How appropriate!



Tom Cruise is developing a sequel to “Top Gun: Maverick,” (which made \$1.496 billion) as well as “Days of Thunder” (1990). Despite suddenly moving from Paramount Pictures to Warner Bros. this year, his plans would necessitate returning to Paramount to produce and star in these two films, since they own the rights to both. Maybe Cruise wants to recapture happier times with Nicole Kidman when they made their first film together. It’s unlikely that Kidman would return for a sequel!



Trying to make a comeback is Johnny Depp, who plans to star opposite Penelope Cruz in the thriller “The Day Drinker.” The only place he’s been able to work recently is Europe, where he filmed “Jeanne du Barry” (2023) and “Modi, Three Days on the Wing of Madness” (2024). Even though the jury unanimously found that Amber Heard could not substantiate her allegations against Depp, Hollywood producers just don’t think he’s bankable anymore.

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LOUD OR NOISY

RECIPE *from Stiletto Momma*

Christmas Pulled Ham

INGREDIENTS

5-7 pound bone-in ham (not spiral cut)

1/4 cup whole grain mustard

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1 (10 ounce can) pineapple slices

INSTRUCTIONS

Place 5-7 pound bone-in ham cut-side down in a slow cooker. If the ham has any thick layers of skin, trim them off. Score the surface of the ham in a crisscross pattern, about 1/4 inch deep.

In a small bowl, whisk 1/4 cup whole grain mustard with 2 tablespoons brown sugar until well combined. Spread the mustard and brown sugar mixture evenly over the surface of the ham. Arrange the pineapple slices over the glazed



ham, pressing them gently to help them adhere.

Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

The ham should pull apart easily with a fork; if it's still tough, cover and continue cooking for an additional 30 minutes or until tender.

Shred the ham with forks and serve.

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Strange But True

by Lucie Winborne

The fuller your refrigerator, the more energy-efficient it is.

Dr. Seuss coined the word "nerd." The term originated in the 1950 book "If I Ran the Zoo."

Nobel Prize winner Niels Bohr was given a perpetual supply of beer piped into his house.

Between 1848 and 1850, the population of San Francisco grew from 900 to 35,000 people thanks to the Gold Rush.

During his World War II service, Lyndon B Johnson was due to fly in the observation seat of the B-26 bomber Wabash Cannonball. However, he was replaced when he had to use the bathroom before takeoff. The Wabash Cannonball was shot down during that flight over New Guinea with no survivors.

A Chinese millionaire sold canned air to people on the streets to raise awareness of air pollution and then donated the money to charity.

Newborn babies can only see in black and white for a few months.

Seventy percent of the dirt on your clothes is invisible.

Arachibutyrophobia is the fear of peanut butter getting stuck to the roof of your mouth.

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was the U.S. capital for the shortest period of time, one day, on Sept. 27, 1777.

"Life is a great big canvas, and you should throw all the paint on it you can."

– Danny Kaye



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Light Pollution: It Can Affect Your Health

Light pollution isn't just a hindrance to stargazers — it's a significant concern for human health and the environment. Here's what you need to know.

How does light pollution affect humans?

Excessive artificial light at night can interfere with your natural sleep patterns and cause problems for both people and animals. This happens because the light influences your body's internal clock and can make it harder for you to fall asleep.

The body produces a hormone called melatonin, which helps you sleep. Melatonin is supposed to increase when it's dark. However, too much light at night can lower the amount of melatonin. The resulting lack of sleep can lead to health issues like tiredness, headaches and stress.



What you can do?

Here are a handful of things you can do to limit light pollution:

- Use warm-toned, low-intensity bulbs for indoor and outdoor lighting to minimize the harsh blue light that disrupts circadian rhythms.
- Ensure outdoor lights are properly shielded, directing light down instead of up into the sky.
- Turn off unnecessary indoor lighting at night and install curtains, blinds or window films to prevent leakage of interior light into the night sky.
- Install timers and motion sensors on outdoor lights to ensure they come on only when needed, reducing unnecessary light pollution.
- Spread awareness about the effects of light pollution and encourage friends, family and community members to adopt light-friendly practices.



By understanding the impacts of light pollution and taking practical steps to reduce it, you can help create a healthier, more sustainable environment.

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Answers to Puzzles on Page 22

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8	4	7	9	2	1	3	5	6
3	5	9	6	8	7	2	4	1
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The best gift is a safe ride home

HOLIDAY PARTIES

If you're drinking or taking drugs, don't drive!

During the holidays, you often hear tragic stories of people losing their lives in road accidents involving alcohol and drug use. However, these tragedies can be prevented. Here are a few simple tips to ensure you and those around you stay safe this festive season.

Are you a driver?

Even if you feel okay to drive, it's a proven fact that consuming alcohol and drugs — no matter how much — will still impair your judgment. It's best to have a plan of action before you go out. Consider arranging to stay overnight at the party location or assign a designated driver for your group. Other options for getting home safely include hiring a rideshare service or taxi.

Are you a passenger or witness?

If you notice that someone is unfit to drive and still intends to get behind the wheel, speak up! Let them know it's not okay and suggest alternative options. The same applies if you're a passenger in a group that's sharing a vehicle. If you're asked to ride with a driver who has been consuming drugs or alcohol, refuse and do everything you can to encourage others to do the same.

When it comes to alcohol and drugs, everyone shares the responsibility to stay safe. As a driver, avoid getting behind the wheel, and as a witness, act. Everyone can do something to prevent the devastating consequences of impaired driving — including criminal penalties, severe injury and death — by working together.

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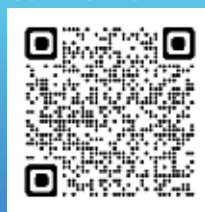
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To Our Valued Readers and Advertisers,

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you for your continued support this past year. Our community magazine thrives because of your belief in us, and we cannot thank you enough for being part of our journey!

As we look ahead, our mission remains clear: to deliver fun and interesting articles you'll enjoy reading, plus practical, helpful information you can use.

As we celebrate the holidays, we want you to know that your support is the greatest gift we could ask for, and we are privileged to have you in our corner!

**Wishing you a warm
and wonderful holiday season,
and all the best for 2025!**





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