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INSIDE



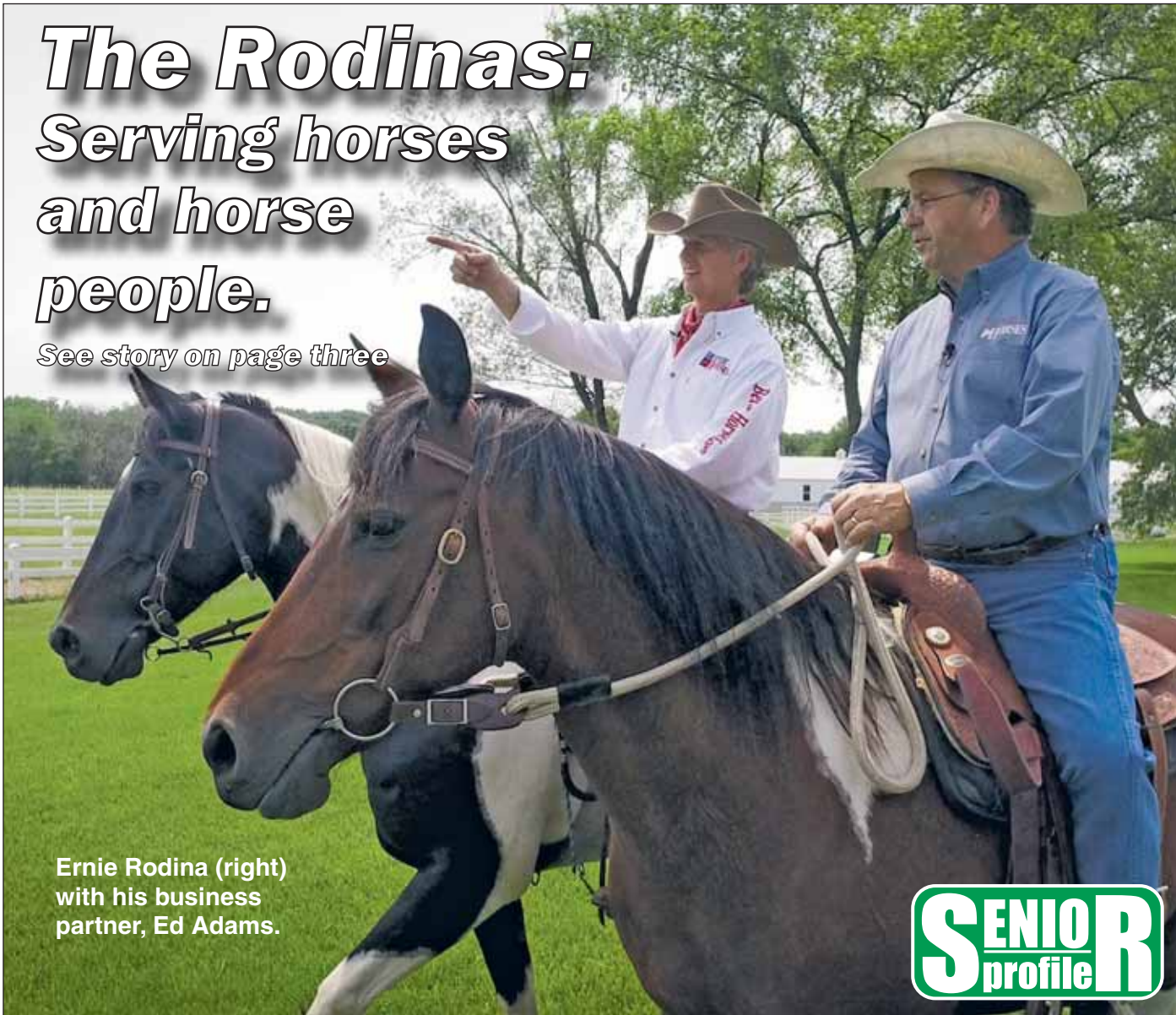
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The Rodinas: Serving horses and horse people.

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Ernie Rodina (right) with his business partner, Ed Adams.

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Rodinas grow newsletter into multimedia company

By Kevin Groenhagen

Ernie Rodina, Ottawa, spent his earlier years in Wyandotte County, Kansas. He was involved in 4-H and developed an interest in horses, including taking care of his own ponies, Red and Cherokee, during those years.

After graduating from Washington High School in Kansas City, Kansas, Ernie went to Ottawa University in Ottawa to study biology. He graduated from Ottawa University in 1977. In 1978, he started his first career as a dealer account manager with Purina Mills, which at that time was the farm animal feeds unit of Ralston Purina. (Land O'Lakes now owns Purina Mills.)

"I was in the right place at the right time," Ernie said. "Purina had a good training program. They had at least one year and half or two years of on-the-job training. Their training program was second to none."

"My job was to sell feed and set up Purina feedstores to sell feed," he continued. "I always tried to build a relationship with the horse people and the cattle and livestock producers. I was big on building relationships when I was working for Purina."

While Ernie was working on building relationships with his Purina clientele, he also began building a relationship in his personal life. Interestingly, this relationship blossomed from, of all things, blue cheese dressing.

During the early 1990s, Ernie began making a mild blue cheese dressing for Scipio Supper Club near Garnett. Ernie said his dressing didn't have a "nuclear waste taste." Responding to the popularity of the dressing among diners at Scipio, Ernie partnered with Scott Burkdoll, a cattle rancher and owner of the supper club, to make and market Big E's Blue Cheese. By 1994, Big E's Blue Cheese was available in about 35 grocery stores in Topeka, Ottawa, Lawrence, and Kansas City. Westport Flea Market Bar and Grill and the Leawood Country Club also served the dressing. Big E's Blue Cheese was even available on the KU Jayhawks' training table.

Because it was expensive to pay someone to do demos at grocery stores, Ernie took his dressing to stores and did the demos himself.

"Ernie was doing a demo at a grocery store in Kansas City and, even though I don't like blue cheese, he talked me into buying a jar," said Connie, Ernie's wife. "He asked me what I did, so I told him I worked at a hair salon on the Plaza and gave him my business card. He came in and got his hair cut. He then asked me out to dinner and I told him I don't date clients. He then asked, 'If I don't get my hair cut here again, will you go to dinner?' I went out to dinner with him and that was that."

While Connie didn't share Ernie's love for blue cheese, she did share his love for horses. In fact, Connie's father, Bill Fowler, was a self-employed farmer and rancher in Oberlin, Kansas. The Rodinas currently have three Quar-

COURTESY PHOTO



Ernie Rodina with his friends. Front Row: Steve Stafford, Ernie Rodina. Back Row: Mark Burkdoll, Ed Adams, Ron McDaniel, and Dawn Dawson.

ter Horses, but have owned as many as seven.

As part of building relationships with his Purina clientele, Ernie started publishing a tri-fold newsletter that he and Connie mailed to his customers. They did the publication as a tri-fold for two or three years. Ernie secured sponsors for the newsletter, which he called *Checkerboard Corral*.

"The sponsors subsidized the news-

letter for me by advertising," Ernie said.

Ernie's supervisor at Purina had no problem with him doing a newsletter on the side. However, he advised Ernie to change the name since Ralston Purina was famous for its "checkerboard" trademark.

"He said Purina might not be happy with the name *Checkerboard Corral*,"

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR

Kaw Valley
SeniorMonthly

Kevin L. Groenhagen
Editor and Publisher

Kaw Valley Senior Monthly is published monthly by Groenhagen Advertising, L.L.C., and is distributed at over 160 locations throughout the Lawrence-Topeka area. Any opinions expressed by our writers are not necessarily those of Groenhagen Advertising, L.L.C. Subscription rate is \$9.50 for 12 monthly issues.

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The Rodinas

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

Ernie said.

The Rodinas talked about different names for the publication and decided *Better Horses* was the best one. *Better Horses*, which is now printed on newsprint in a tabloid format, will begin its 23rd year of publication with the 2022 “Stallion Edition,” which the Rodinas will publish this month. In addition to the annual “Stallion Edition,” the Rodinas publish Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter issues, for a total of five issues a year. Each issue includes, among other features, articles on training and caring for horses, an inspirational message from Pastor Steve Stafford of the Risen Ranch Cowboy Church in Carthage, Missouri, “Connie’s Cooking Corner,” and other features of interest to equine enthusiasts.

“We’re the only regional publication about horses in northeast Kansas,” Ernie said.

The Rodinas distribute more than 10,000 copies of each issue of *Better*

Horses throughout the region. In addition, readers can read *Better Horses* online at betterhorses.com. The Rodinas also do a monthly e-blast to more than 15,000 horse owners.

Of course, before a publication can be distributed, someone has to sell advertising and lay out the pages.

“Connie has a whole list of advertisers and they are all her friends,” Ernie said. “This is a relationship-building business. Our niece, Jennifer Mitchell, is a graphic artist. We give her all the meat and potatoes and she puts it together. She is really good and she doesn’t panic.”

“She’s really easy to work with,” Connie added.

A few years after launching *Better Horses*, the Rodinas began taking steps to make their company multimedia and extend their reach beyond northeast Kansas. They launched a *Better Horses* Radio Show, which is a weekly program that currently airs an hour of great equine information on more than 25 radio stations in not just the Midwest, but as far west as KNCW 92.7 FM in

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The Rodinas

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

Omak, Washington, and as far east as WAUB 107.9 FM in Auburn, New York. Listeners can find a complete list of radio stations and schedules at betterhorses.com/media/#regionalradio. Better Horses Radio is also available as a podcast that is available at, among other places, iTunes.

“We talk about God, horses, horse training, cowboys, cowgirls, rodeo, equine health, some cattle, and even about Roy Rogers,” Ernie said.

Each Better Horses Radio Show program begins with an inspirational prayer. Ernie is then joined by co-hosts Dawn Dawson and Ron McDaniel, both of whom have many years of equine experience. McDaniel is also a well-known cowboy poet.

“My mother was my biggest promoter for the radio program,” Ernie said. “She’d always tell me I had a face for radio.”

While publishing *Better Horses*

and running Better Horses Radio, the Rodinas also kept busy with Old West Cowboy Days for several years.

“We did Old West Cowboy Days for six years,” Ernie said. “It was a big event in Ottawa. We promoted the Western way of life. That was a lot of work.”

Ernie was the founder and organizer of Old West Cowboy Days, which was held in June from 2004 to 2009 and included a cattle drive and parade down Main Street in Ottawa, Western art, live music, cowboy poetry, vendors, and booths. The event went on hiatus in 2010 because Ernie no longer had the time to organize it. When Old West Cowboy Days made its return under a new organizer in 2015, Ernie served as the cattle drive’s honorary trail boss.

After nearly 36 years with Purina, Ernie retired in July 2014 so he could devote more time to *Better Horses* and Better Horses Radio.

In December 2020, Rural Radio, “The Agribusiness & Western Lifestyle Channel,” announced that the



Recent issues of *Better Horses*

Better Horses Radio Show would become part of its programming on Rural Radio SiriusXM Channel 147. Ernie credits Ed Adams, who became a partner in Better Horses, LLC, four

years ago, for getting their radio program on Rural Radio.

Five years ago, Better Horses LLC launched Better Horses TV, a weekly

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The Rodinas

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television show for the equine community. Ernie stressed in the first episode that Better Horses TV would build on the relationships he and others had developed over the years. Better Horses TV is now available on Sundays on five broadcast television stations and nationwide on two cable networks, the Cowboy Channel and RFD-TV. (A station list is available at betterhorses.com/media.) Episode 162, which aired last September, featured NFL legend Terry Bradshaw, who established Terry Bradshaw Quarter Horses in Thackerville, Oklahoma, more than 25 years ago. An archive of past episodes is available at youtube.com/user/BetterHorsesNetwork/videos.

A month before the Rural Radio SiriusXM announcement, the Kansas Horse Council (KHC) presented Ernie with the Bud Newell Award at its annual meeting in Osage City. Bud Newell was the founder of KHC, which provides the Kansas equine

industry with leadership and direction through education, promotion, and public policy advocacy.

“Nobody deserves this award more than Ernie Rodina for all he does for horses and horse people,” said Jim Thomas, KHC president, when presenting Ernie with the award.

While the Rodinas have had many peaks during their lives, they have also experienced valleys. In April 2019, Ernie was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia (LBD). According to the Mayo Clinic, LBD “causes a progressive decline in mental abilities. People with Lewy body dementia might have visual hallucinations and changes in alertness and attention. Other effects

include Parkinson’s disease signs and symptoms such as rigid muscles, slow movement, walking difficulty and tremors.”

Ernie sees his readers, listeners, and viewers as members of his family and has shared the news of his diagnosis and with them. He shared his story, “Dealing with a Terminal Illness thru Jesus Christ,” with KOFO 1220AM (Ottawa) listeners in October 2020.

“I cried one time since I found out I have this,” Ernie told KOFO listeners. “This was a Saturday after I found out on April the 8th. And it was tears of joy. I was by myself and I started reflecting on who I would get to see in Heaven. People I haven’t seen in a

long time. My dad, my mom, friends, family.”

On March 15, 2021, the Rodinas’ youngest son, Matt, passed away. Ernie informed *Better Horses* readers in the Fall 2021 issue that he and Connie had launched a website, Mattswish.net. “Getting our message out with information on Lewy Body Dementia in helping support research to find a cure for his dad’s disease, was Matt’s Wish,” Ernie wrote.

Ernie currently has no plans to retire from his business.

“I’m still having fun at it,” he said. “The way I look at it, I’m in the fourth quarter and hoping to go into overtime.”



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Bridge Haven to open Eltern's House in May

By Billie David

Bridge Haven, located at 1701 Research Park Drive in Lawrence, Kansas, is putting the finishing touches on its newest memory care home, which is scheduled to open in May of 2022.

The new addition to the memory care homes on the Research Park campus will be called Eltern's House. "Eltern" is a German word for "parent." This name is in keeping with the tradition of giving the homes German names. The first home on the campus was named Oma's House, or Grandma's House, and the second one was named Opa's House, or Grandpa's House. The third was named Madel's House after owner Robert Wilson's daughter, with the word "Madel" being an affectionate word for little girl in German.

The names reflect Bridge Haven owner Robert Wilson's Austrian upbringing. It is Wilson who has overseen construction of the homes as well as selecting the design for each one and giving each home a theme, including one with a crane theme, another with a dog-and-hunting theme, another with wild horses, and the new one with an animal theme, which will be reflected in the Eltern's House décor.

The construction of the new home became necessary to meet demand.

"We have had a sizable waiting list over the last couple of years, and have realized the need is there," said Bridge Haven's executive director, Sarah Randolph. "Half of the rooms in Eltern's House are already taken."

Eltern's House will be the fourth and final home on Research Park Drive because there is no more room on the campus for another one.

In keeping with the design of the other homes on the campus, as well as in consideration of the needs of memory care residents, the new 7,000-square-foot building has high ceilings in the main area, which makes it very sunny, and this area looks out onto trees on two sides with a field to the south.

"The residents can look out and see the trees and birds," Randolph said. "It is very peaceful."

The feeling of peace extends to visitors to the home as well.

"It is very important for the visitors to feel good when they walk in," she explained.

Adding to the peaceful setting is a large patio, a fish pond, and a walking path.

Each corner of the home has three bedrooms with bathrooms, and the hallways open onto a large kitchen, living room and dining area, where the residents can take their meals together.

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE EIGHT

COURTESY PHOTO



Long-time Bridge Haven staff member, Taylor Bowen, shares a laugh with former Fire Captain Sam Brubaker. Brubaker's family endowed Sam's Fishing Spot, which is a beautiful heart-shaped flagstone patio.



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Bridge Haven

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE SEVEN

The bedroom groupings not only provide for a large common area, but also ensure that the hallways are short so that residents don't get confused and staff can see them easily. For memory care residents, this is essential, Randolph explained.

As for the bathrooms, "A lot of attention goes into designing them," Randolph said. "For safety, we make sure they are as simple as possible."

"The food is made in the kitchen," she added. "Breakfasts are made to order, so the residents can choose exactly what they want to eat and menus are modified for each new resident."

The activities that the residents of the different houses engage in differ from one another depending on the preferences of the individuals who live there. In one home, for example, residents enjoy cards and Chinese checkers, while in another home, the residents enjoy Bingo and movement exercises,

and in a third home there is a Parkinson's exercise group. In the new home, there is an area for games, including skee ball, a vintage slot machine, and darts, as well as a media room where residents can watch games and movies on a big TV screen.

"There is a lot of interaction among the residents," Randolph said. "Once they become familiar with one another, they seek each other out."

Outdoors, there is a children's play area, where young visitors can work off energy, and their grandparents can watch.

Also outdoors, all of the residences are connected to one another in the back through a secure, fenced-in walking path, and the back yard also features a covered pavilion, a beer garden patio, and a gazebo.

The staff-to-resident ratio is another advantage to living on the Research Park Drive campus. The state requires only one staff member per 16 residents, but Bridge Haven sees to it that there are three staff members on hand for all 12 residents, or a ratio of one staff member per every four residents. And

despite the trouble some homes have hiring and keeping staff during the Covid pandemic—studies show that 44 percent of direct care staff have left their positions, some of them through burnout and others through illness and death—Bridge Haven has managed to keep the staff-to-patient ratio steady.

"The pandemic has burned staff out, but ours have stayed very dedicated," Randolph said, praising her staff members who have chosen to continue working at Bridge Haven. "My staff

is happy, and you can see it in the residents' faces that they feel safe and secure. One hundred percent, it's the staff commitment. It doesn't matter how pretty the place is if the staff doesn't care."

Bridge Haven's web address is mybridgehaven.com, where more information can be found, and there is a virtual tour available there as well. For questions about Bridge Haven or to schedule a tour, Randolph can be reached at 785-218-4083.



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HEALTH & WELLNESS

The health benefits of apple cider vinegar

Apple cider vinegar has been around for a very long time. It has been used since ancient times for a variety of ailments and in the treatment of various diseases. However, since it is such a common home remedy, we often forget about the strength and power of apple cider vinegar.

What is apple cider vinegar? How is apple cider vinegar processed? Apple cider vinegar is mainly apple juice. The



Dr.
Deena
Beneda

process to make it starts by crushing apples and mixing them with yeast. After a few weeks, the natural bacteria and yeast ferment the juice into alcohol. This process is called fermentation. A second fermentation process changes the alcohol into acetic acid, or apple cider vinegar. Most people use the raw apple cider vinegar because it contains more of the natural bacteria and yeasts. What is referred to as the “mother” is the cloudy sediment you see in the bottle and it is believed that this has all the medicinal benefits.

There are many medicinal benefits of apple cider vinegar:

1. **Whitens teeth:** If you can handle the strong taste of apple cider vinegar, it can whiten your teeth. Apple cider vinegar is an easy and cheap way to bring back that a natural shine to your teeth as it kills bacteria throughout the entire mouth and removes yellow stains.

2. **Weight Loss:** Unfiltered, raw apple cider vinegar contains a significant amount of acetic acid. Various health studies show that overweight people can experience a decrease in abdominal fat, waist circumference, and overall body weight with regular

intake of apple cider vinegar.

3. **Promotes health bowel movements:** Water soluble fiber like pectin assists with healthy bowel movements. Apple cider vinegar is a great home remedy in the treatment of constipation and helps aid in digestion. Many people claim that apple cider vinegar calms acid reflux or heartburn.

4. **Promotes healthy immune system:** During cold and flu season, apple cider vinegar can help relieve the symptoms of the viruses. It has antiseptic properties that combat fungal and bacterial infections. Congestion, stuffy nose, cough, sore throat and other cold symptoms can have symptomatic relief from apple cider vinegar.

5. **Increases Energy:** Exercise or excessive stress can trigger a buildup of lactic acid in the body, resulting in fatigue. Apple cider vinegar can decrease oxidative stress throughout the , thus helping restore endurance and energy.

6. **Radiant Skin:** Apple cider vinegar can improve skin tone due to its natural astringent properties. It can help reduce wrinkles and fine lines. Apple cider vinegar helps reduce scarring and inhibit the growth of bacteria that cause acne. It also can unplug skin pores and reduce acne inflammation.

Apple cider vinegar is acidic so, when taking it, it is suggested to mix with water or juice. Plus, as with any supplement, it is always best to talk with your health care provider.

- Dr. Deena Beneda, N.D., is a Naturopathic Doctor practicing at Natural Medical Care in Lawrence. She can be reached at 785-749-2255.



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HEALTH & WELLNESS

The evolution of the Lawrence Surgery Center

By Jessica Thomas

LMH Health

Just over two decades ago, a group of surgeons realized there was a need for an outpatient surgery center in Lawrence. At the time, we were only one of a few towns of our size in the area without a center like this.

“Outpatient surgery centers began popping up everywhere,” said Scott



Thellman, MD, a physician with Lawrence Plastic Surgery. “These surgery centers were offering a lower cost option to hospital operating rooms and were designed specifically for outpatient services. The hospital operating rooms were very busy and were having trouble meeting the growing needs of our community. Adding a surgery center would help relieve some of the overcrowding.”

So, what is a surgery center and how is it different from a hospital? A hospital is staffed and equipped to treat all types of medical problems. In contrast, the Lawrence Surgery Center is designed exclusively to perform outpatient surgery. Its easy access, warm surroundings and specialized focus often minimize the stress associated with surgery. LMH Health is proud to be one of many investors in the center.

“When we began looking at ways to organize the surgery center, we looked to other facilities to see how they were structured,” Dr. Thellman said. “Ultimately, we felt the best option was to partner with Lawrence Memorial Hospital (now LMH Health) in an ownership and governance model and we could not be more pleased that we did. The center opened in the early 2000s

and we have continued to have a strong partnership where local surgeons and LMH work together. This close alliance has been essential to helping the surgery center thrive.

Dr. Thellman said over the years things have changed, as the hospital has added more operating rooms and the surgery center continues to stay busy. It came to a point where the center was outgrowing its space at the 6th and Maine Street location and something needed to change.

“After serving patients for about 20 years at 6th and Maine, the Lawrence Surgery Center needed room to grow,” said Jared Abel, vice president of strategy & clinic operations at LMH Health. “The first conversations we had about building a facility in West Lawrence were because of this whole idea of having a larger, more comprehensive and technologically advanced surgery center.”

Abel said the reason the center moved to the LMH Health West Campus was in part to create a comprehensive ambulatory campus where there was the option to add specialties and do more of what the center already offered.

“The conversations for West first started in 2015. After some restructuring in 2017, talks continued and the surgery center at the West Campus successfully opened in late 2020.” Dr. Thellman said. “Of course, we could have never anticipated COVID when we were planning all this, but I am extremely proud of the surgery center team for all we have been able to do despite the headwinds of COVID.”

At the new center, Dr. Thellman said the team was able to do as they had planned and add new surgeons and new services for the Lawrence community, even amidst the height of COVID.

“Not only did we open the center, we added new equipment, procedures, surgeons, operating rooms, staff and

Are you a candidate for an outpatient surgery at the Lawrence Surgery Center?

Wondering if you would be a good candidate for an outpatient surgery at the Lawrence Surgery Center? Consult with your doctor today. The following clinics see patients out at the West Campus for surgeries:

Lawrence Breast Specialists, Lawrence Podiatry Center, LMH Health General Surgery, Sunflower Pediatrics Eye Care and Strabismus (SPECS), Lawrence

Plastic Surgery, Pelvic Health Specialists, Plastics Surgery Specialists of Lawrence, Ortho-Kansas, Lawrence Otolaryngology Associates, Lawrence Anesthesia PA and Lawrence OB-GYN Specialists.

For more information on which providers perform surgeries at the surgery center from these clinics, give the center a call today at (785) 832-0588.

entire service lines like total joint replacement and breast cancer surgery at a time when staffing and supply shortages were widespread,” he said. “Here we are, a year and a few months later and I can say that the team at the center has done the amazing work. The old center was fine and we were able to care for many patients, but we outgrew it. We now have more space, better equipment and room to grow in the future. It’s not easy to look ahead in healthcare, but I’m excited to see how we’ve evolved and grown and am confident we’re well positioned for the future.

Dr. Thellman said watching the surgery center and its reputation grow and become a place friends and family recommend for surgery has been incredible.

Though the team has maintained a loyal group of members over the years, some who remain with the surgery center since its beginning, they’ve been

fortunate to add and bring in new surgeons. In 2020, Jennifer Hawasli, MD, a breast surgeon with Lawrence Breast Specialists, joined the team.

“Coming on board and joining the Lawrence Surgery Center was amazing,” Dr. Hawasli said. “It is hard not to love coming into a brand new, state-of-the-art facility. When you open a center, you get the latest in technology, new equipment and you get to offer this to your patients, which is incredible. But above all, one of my favorite things about the center is how convenient it is for patients. Having so many related specialties under one roof and quite literally right down the hall, allows for patients to not spend the time going back and forth from facility to facility, but rather have all their needs taken care of right there.”

One big difference between the surgery center and the hospital is that there is no emergency department. Since

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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Surgery Center

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

there is no designated emergency department, this allows the surgeons at the center to be able to work more efficiently because the schedule is not delayed due to the life or death emergencies that often come into the hospital.

“Though there is no emergency department, from time to time we can take cases on a semi-urgent basis when needed,” Dr. Hawasli said. “If it is a case that can be taken care of the same day, we try to work with those patients.”

Dr. Hawasli enjoys the diversity of cases that can be seen at the West Campus as well, such as breast surgery, general surgery, orthopedics, ENT (ear, nose and throat), plastic surgery, gynecology and more. Because of this, she has the opportunity to collaborate with other surgeons.

“I can provide the surgery needed for my patient and do a mastectomy, but

then also can collaborate with plastic surgery on their reconstruction,” she said. “We have all the tools and equipment needed to perform many levels of surgeries and being able to collaborate to give the best care possible is a great thing. We can provide a warm handoff and also, having everything under one roof, at one waiting room and check-in area, give the patient peace of mind that they won’t get lost. They are familiar with the area and know where to go.”

Another aspect of the surgery center Dr. Hawasli likes is that it is smaller. If there is something the team members of the surgery center see as a big need for the Lawrence community in terms of equipment, more often than not they can get it for their patients.

“If there is a new piece of technology that will improve patient care, we can often get what we need to care best for patients,” she said. “The Lawrence Surgery Center is an incredible option for patients for convenient surgical services. We continue to grow and improve our patient experience in a beautiful new center.”



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FINANCIAL FOCUS

Watch for changes in RMDs

If you're a certain age, you'll need to withdraw money from some of your retirement accounts each year. But in 2022, the amount you must take out may be changing more than in other years—and that could affect your retirement income strategy.



Derek Osborn

Here's some background: Once you turn 72, you generally must start taking withdrawals, called required minimum distributions, or RMDs, from some of your retirement accounts, such as your traditional IRA and your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan. Each year, your RMDs are determined by your age and account balances. This year, the life expectancy tables used by the IRS are being updated to reflect longer lifespans. This may result in lower annual RMDs than you'd have to take if this adjustment hadn't been made.

If you've started taking RMDs, what does this change mean to you? It can be a positive development, for a few reasons:

- **Potentially lower taxes** — Your RMDs are generally taxable at your personal income tax rate, so the lower your RMDs, the lower your tax bill might be.

- **Possibly longer "lifespan" for retirement accounts** — Because your RMDs will be lower, the accounts from which they're issued — including your traditional IRA and 401(k) — may be able to last longer without becoming depleted. The longer these accounts can stay intact and remain an asset, the better for you.

- **More flexibility in planning for retirement income** — The word "required" in the phrase "required minimum distributions" means exactly what it sounds like — you must take at least that amount. If you withdraw less than your RMD, the amount not withdrawn will be taxed at 50%. So, in one

sense, your RMDs take away some of your freedom in managing your retirement income. But now, with the lower RMDs in place, you may regain some of this flexibility. (And keep in mind that you're always free to withdraw more than the RMDs.)

Of course, if you don't really need all the money from RMDs, even the lower amount may be an issue for you—as mentioned above, RMDs are generally taxable. However, if you're 70½ or

older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 per year from a traditional IRA directly to a qualified charitable organization, and some, or perhaps all, of this money may come from your RMDs. By making this move, you can exclude the RMDs from your taxable income. Before taking this action, though, you'll want to consult with your tax advisor.

Here are a couple of final points to keep in mind. First, not all your retirement accounts are subject to RMDs—you can generally keep your Roth IRA intact for as long as you want. However, your Roth 401(k) is generally subject to RMDs. If you're still working past 72, though, you may be able to avoid taking RMDs from your cur-

rent employer's 401(k) or similar plan, though you'll still have to take them from your traditional IRA.

Changes to the RMD rules don't happen too often. By being aware of how these new, lower RMDs can benefit you, and becoming familiar with all aspects of RMDs, you may be able to strengthen your overall retirement income situation.

- Derek Osborn is with Edward Jones, 1311 Wakarusa Drive, Suite 2200, Lawrence. He can be reached at 785-371-1301 or Derek.Osborn@edwardjones.com. This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.



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JILL ON MONEY

Inflation, the Great Resignation, and the hot housing market: A look back at the economy of 2021

Most of us would like to put the past two years in the rearview mirror—in a major way. Since March 2020, we have been absorbing the devastating physical, emotional, and financial impact of COVID-19. Now, as the year draws to a close, it's worth reviewing where we stand as this second tumultuous year concludes.



Jill
Schlesinger

Big Picture: After the worst recession since the Great Depression, when the economy shrank by 3.4%, the recovery came to fruition in 2021. It is likely that the US economy expanded by an estimated 6% over the year, fueled by a third round of government stimulus, in the form of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan. (You have already forgotten about the two massive measures enacted in 2020, the March 2020 \$2.2 trillion CARES Act,

followed by the additional \$900 billion relief bill passed in December.)

The 2021 legislation delivered \$1,400 stimulus checks and child tax credits to millions of families. In fact, "How to be eligible for stimulus check" nudged out "How to be more attractive" as the number one "How to" search in 2021, according to Google Trends. In addition to government support, the Federal Reserve maintained emergency measures, including monthly bond buying and zero percent interest rates to grease the wheels of the economy and financial markets. Through the combination of the robust fiscal and monetary actions, the 2021 US economy is poised to see the strongest annual growth rate since 1984, year when GDP surged by 7.2%.

COVID Dynamic: The COVID recession was unique in that the drop in output was severe and swift. As much of the country was locked down and waiting for vaccines, households were sitting on a lot of cash—about \$2.4 trillion in excess savings. When lockdowns were lifted and armed with all of that money, Americans were ready to unleash their consumptive habits.

The rapid spending caught producers by surprise and suddenly we were all learning about the supply chain, shipping containers, and logistics.

Inflation is the New Black: Like an old-fashioned trend that pops back up, so too is the concept of inflation. While the economy is not close to the peak annual inflation seen in 1980 (that year, prices accelerated by 13.5%), prices as measured by the Consumer Price Index are running at an annual pace of 6.8% as of November, the strongest annual pace in four decades.

In his July testimony before the House Financial Services Committee, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell noted that the economy has run headfirst into a "perfect storm of high demand and low supply," which should pass as the economy normalizes. While the Fed had maintained that the spike in prices would be "transitory" or temporary, by the end of the year, the central bank shifted its policy to reflect the fact that inflation is likely sticking around longer than previously thought -- and that it would have to shift its policy as a result.

The Great Resignation/Labor Market Shortage: As the year progressed, workers found themselves in a new position of power. Job openings were abundant and for the first time in about two decades, many found that they could leverage a chaotic labor market to their advantage.

Housing: The housing market finished the year a little less hot, though it's surely simmering due to low inventories levels. Unfortunately, even as activity slows, prices remain high. As more properties come on to the market, the situation should improve.

Three-Peat for Stocks: You didn't have to own meme stocks, Bitcoin, or NFTs in 2021 to enjoy gains. The US stock market is about to complete a three-peat of annual double-digit gains.

- Jill Schlesinger, CFP, is a CBS News business analyst. A former options trader and CIO of an investment advisory firm, she welcomes comments and questions at askjill@jillonmoney.com. Check her website at www.jillonmoney.com.

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SENIOR CALENDAR

Editor's Note: While every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the events listed below, some changes may occur without notice. **Please confirm any event you plan to attend.**

If you would like to include your event(s) in our monthly calendar, please call Kevin Groenhagen at 785-841-9417 or email kevin@seniormonthly.net. You may also add events on the Kaw Valley Senior Monthly Facebook page.

ARTS & CRAFTS

FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

ARTSCONNECT FIRST FRIDAY ARTWALK

During the ArtsConnect First Friday Artwalk, you will find every corner of Topeka filled with art, friends and exciting special events. It's an opportunity to shop local, buy art and see the best that Topeka has to offer. Every month is different - and every business is different, so please check our website at www.artstopeka.org for information each month, including an interactive map of First Friday Artwalk businesses and a guide to public art all across Topeka. Free. TOPEKA, artstopeka.org/firstfriday

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

OPEN AIR ART MARKET

2nd Saturday of each month in East Lawrence Warehouse Arts District. Come see a local art market. Art Emergency, Delaware & E. 9th St., 9 a.m.-2 p.m. LAWRENCE

LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

FINAL FRIDAYS

Final Fridays is a celebration of the arts that includes special exhibits, performances and demonstrations in Downtown Lawrence on the Final Friday of the month. See website for participating locations.

LAWRENCE, 785-842-3883

unmistakablylawrence.com

EDUCATION

FEB 7

NEW TO MEDICARE

Get Medicare advice from Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Learning Center, 1-2 p.m. Free. TOPEKA, 785-580-4400

events.tscpl.org/events

FEB 10

INTERNET GENEALOGY 2

Learn more about researching your family with this interactive class. You will learn how to locate local resources from online resources, libraries and repositories. Register online for Zoom link. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Virtual Room 01, 10-11:30 a.m.

TOPEKA, 785-580-4400

events.tscpl.org/events

FEB 24

PREPARING FOR THE 1950 CENSUS RELEASE

Topeka Genealogical Society Monthly Meeting. Barbara LaClair, Topeka Genealogical Society President, will explain the information gathered in the 1950 Census and how to locate individuals in the records that will be released in April. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Virtual Room 02, 7-8 p.m. TOPEKA, 785-580-4400

events.tscpl.org/events

MAR 3

INTERNET GENEALOGY CLASS - FOR BEGINNERS

Get started in genealogy and learn how to build your family tree online. Learn how to use the print and online resources your library offers. Register to receive the Zoom link. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Virtual Room 01, 10-11:30 a.m.

TOPEKA, 785-580-4400

events.tscpl.org/events

ENTERTAINMENT

SECOND & FOURTH SATURDAYS OF THE MONTH

GRAND OTTAWA OPRY

Enjoy our live Branson-style Old Country music shows! Ottawa Memorial Auditorium, 301 S. Hickory. The doors open at 4:30 p.m., the pre-show performance starts at 5:30 p.m., and the Grand Ottawa Opry begins at 6 p.m. Call for more info! Fee. Tickets available at the door. OTTAWA, 785-241-6762

FEB 11

BILL ENGVALL

Bill Engvall has announced that he is saying goodbye to stand-up, launching the farewell tour "Here's Your Sign, It's Finally Time." Bill Engvall is a Grammy-nominated, multi-platinum selling recording artist and one of the top comedians in the country. Most recently, Bill was a contestant on season 17 of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*, and as a fan favorite, he made it to the finals. Earlier this year, Bill lent his voice to the animated comedy series *Bounty Hunters*, which aired on CMT. He previously starred in, and executive produced, the TBS sitcom *The Bill Engvall Show*. Topeka Performing Arts Center, 214 S.E. 8th Avenue, 7:30 p.m. Fee.

TOPEKA, 785-234-2787

topekaperformingarts.org/events

FEB 11

STORY SLAM | WANNA BET?

Real stories, live and uncensored. Stories told live, MOTH-style, with a new theme each month. Never the same story (or evening!) twice. Adults, 18+ only. Free livestream link: <https://vimeo.com/event/1714505>. Lawrence Arts Center Main Stage and Virtual, 940 New Hampshire St., 7 p.m. Free (suggested donation \$10).

LAWRENCE, 785-843-2787

lawrenceartscenter.org/event/story-slam-on-the-road-again

FEB 12

ROSANNE CASH

Rosanne Cash, one of the country's pre-eminent singer-songwriters, has released 15 albums of extraordinary songs that have earned four Grammy Awards and 11 nominations as well as 21 top-40 hits, including 11 No. 1 singles. She also served as the 2015 Artist-in-Residence at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville and was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame that same year. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Drive, 7:30 p.m. Fee.

LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787

lied.ku.edu/calendar

FEB 20

OLIVER HERBERT

Cellist Oliver Herbert, from San Francisco, is quickly building a reputation as an artist with a distinct voice and individual style. "From his opening notes, it was immediately apparent that Herbert has a very vocal approach to his playing and, regardless of the technical demands, he makes his cello sing," raved the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. Performing a wide range of repertoire, Herbert's recent solo and recital appearances include debuts with the San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, Dame Myra Hess Concert Series, Union College Concert Series and the San Francisco Symphony Soundbox, among others. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Drive, 7:30 p.m. Fee.

LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787

lied.ku.edu/calendar

MAR 1

THE POLISH WIENIAWSKI PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Polish Wieniawski Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1944, and its beginnings go back to numerous chamber and solo concerts given by musicians who, after World War II, established ties within Poland. The repertoire and artistic considerations, as well as the joy of making music together, led to a premiere chamber music concert held on February 10, 1945 in the hall of the Music Society. This concert provided the catalyst to extend the orchestra, and a classical music gala was held on May 18 of the same year—the first symphony concert in post-war Poland. The Polish Wieniawski Philharmonic Orchestra has been on many inter-

national concert tours. Performances in Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Sweden, Germany, South Korea, Denmark and Ukraine were acclaimed both by the critics and the public. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Drive, 7:30 p.m. Fee. LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787

lied.ku.edu/calendar

EXHIBITS & SHOWS

DEC 10-FEB 27

BLUE EXHIBIT

Explore the depths of the color blue in the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery exhibit BLUE! From a light robin's egg blue to the rich "new blue," you will discover how blue is made and how it's seen. This exhibit highlights the library's art collection of paintings, ceramics, photographs, glass, artists books and fabric. Alice C. Sabatini Art Gallery at Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 S.W. 10th Ave. Free. TOPEKA, 785-580-4400

events.tscpl.org/events

FEB 25-AUG 19

CONFRONTING THE PAST: THE DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

Recurring weekly on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. In 1882, a violent mob took George Robertson, Isaac King, and Pete Vinegar, arrested under accusations of murdering a white man, from the Douglas County jailhouse and hanged them. Thirteen-year-old Margaret "Sis" Vinegar, the survivor of an assault that prompted Robertson, King, and Pete Vinegar's defense, was also arrested, and sent to Leavenworth penitentiary where she later died of illness. For years, the story of their deaths remained a quiet burden on the community, remembered among the Black citizens of Lawrence but largely forgotten in the telling of the city's history. The Community Remembrance Project, a group of community organizations – including Watkins Museum of History—working to install a marker near the site of the lynching held a soil collection ceremony in fall 2021. The event served as an opportunity for the public to mourn and created a tangible remembrance of the lynching's victims through the collected soil. Soil for each victim of the lynching,

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

including Margaret Vinegar, is now part of the Watkins' permanent collection. The Watkins will partner with the Community Remembrance Project to create an exhibit on the 1882 lynching and remembrance efforts. Watkins Museum of History, 1047 Massachusetts St., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free.

LAWRENCE, 785-841-4109

watkinsmuseum.org/confronting

UNTIL APR 22

LAWRENCE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL: A CENTURY OF CARE

Recurring weekly on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. For 100 years, Lawrence Memorial Hospital has served the people of our city. With unique artifacts and compelling images, this exhibit chronicles the emergence of the hospital from its origins in the early twentieth century all the way through the challenges of COVID-19. Watkins Museum of History, 1047 Massachusetts St., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free.

LAWRENCE, 785-841-4109

watkinsmuseum.org/century-care

HISTORY & HERITAGE

JAN 30, FEB 6, 13, 20, 27 & MAR 6

BLEEDING KANSAS PROGRAM SERIES 2022 - "KANSAS DAY" FACES OF THE FREE STATE HOUSE

A series of talks and dramatic interpretations of the violent territorial and civil war of Kansas and the nation 1854-1865. By author and educator, Bill McFarland, and educator Tim Nedeau. Featuring a special unveiling of a group portrait identifying each member of the 1857-1858 Kansas House of Representatives, the first-ever antislavery majority to convene in Kansas at Lecompton in Constitution Hall. Constitution Hall State Historic Site, 319 Elmore St., 2 p.m. Suggested donation \$3 for adults.

LECOMPTON, 785-887-6520

lecomptonkansas.com/category/events

FEB 7

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Please join us as we celebrate through stories and crafts the brave African Americans who have gone before us. And, you don't want to miss our special guest! Lawrence Public Library, 707 Vermont St., Auditorium, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Free.

LAWRENCE, 785-843-3833

FEB 7

KANSAS AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING

The Kansas Chapter of AAHGS, meets monthly to discuss African American family history and to learn more about African Americans in Kansas history. See our Facebook page for this month's event. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Virtual Room 01, 5:30-7 p.m. Register to attend online.

TOPEKA, 785-580-4400

events.tscpl.org/events

MEETINGS

MONDAYS

GRIEF SUPPORT (VIRTUAL)

Join us for an online grief support group. This group is held weekly via Zoom. For more information about this group or to sign up contact our grief and loss department. Midland Care Connection, 4 p.m.

TOPEKA, 785-232-2044

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Meet with other caregivers in the Baldwin area who may be struggling with some of the same issues you face while caring for your loved one. This support group is for caregivers of individuals age 60 or older. Baldwin Methodist Church, 704 Eighth St., 1-2 p.m.

BALDWIN CITY

SECOND MONDAY OF THE MONTH

KLAH FUN LUNCHEON

Keep Living at Home is hosting a fun senior event every second Monday from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Join us at Perkins restaurant, 1711 W. 23rd St., for lunch (on your own) and a group activity. January event is bingo. Call for more information or to sign up.

LAWRENCE, 785-294-3408

THIRD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, 2910 S.W. Topeka Blvd., 12-1 p.m.

TOPEKA, 785-235-1367

FEB 7

CAREGIVER SUPPORT MEETING

Being a caregiver can be incredibly stressful. Meet and talk to others in the same situation. For more information call April Maddox at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Hughes Room 205, 2-3 p.m.

TOPEKA, 785-235-1367

events.tscpl.org/events

FEB 14

CAREGIVER SUPPORT MEETING

Being a caregiver can be incredibly stressful. Meet and talk to others in the same situation. For more information call April Maddox at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Hughes Room 205, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

TOPEKA, 785-235-1367

events.tscpl.org/events

FEB 17

CAREGIVER SUPPORT MEETING

Being a caregiver can be incredibly stressful. Meet and talk to others in the same situation. For more information call April Maddox at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Hughes Room 205, 2-3 p.m.

TOPEKA, 785-235-1367

events.tscpl.org/events

MISCELLANEOUS

FEB 5

SOUPER BOWL 2022

Enjoy this favorite community event with handmade ceramic bowls starting at \$10. This year's theme is Buy A Bowl, Fill a Bowl as we encourage non-perishable food donations. All bowl and platter purchases support the Lawrence Arts Center. Food donations help Just Food continue to provide support for thousands of Douglas County residents who face hunger every day. Bowls will also be available for purchase online. Reserve your time in-person shopping time slot online. Lawrence Arts Center, 940 New Hampshire, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

LAWRENCE

ci.ovationtix.com/35591/production/1093742

FEB 12

KAW VALLEY SEED FAIR - 13TH ANNUAL

Please bring your saved seeds or packaged seeds to share at our exchange tables. We typically have envelopes available, but bringing your own is a great idea as we sometimes run out. Please bring containers, envelopes, or baggies to donate, especially if you do not have seeds to share. Sharing is exactly what makes this event a great success every year. Douglas County Fairgrounds, 2110 Harper St., 8:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

LAWRENCE



Meals on Wheels serves hot, nutritious meals to homebound seniors in Shawnee, Jefferson, and Douglas counties through home-delivery and congregate meal sites.



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AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

No need to share! With this recipe, everyone gets their own (mini) chocolate cake

By America's Test Kitchen
Tribune Content Agency

1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon salt

Flourless chocolate cakes are rich, fudgy, and intensely chocolaty. Instead of using flour or leaveners for structure, like most other cakes do, these special cakes rely on a combination of eggs and cornstarch. As the cakes bake, the eggs puff up in the oven, giving them lift. The cornstarch creates a kind of glue to keep the texture smooth. Bonus: these cakes are naturally gluten-free! Happy New Year, indeed.

Individual Flourless Chocolate Cakes

Makes 6 individual cakes

Vegetable oil spray
1 cup (6 ounces) chocolate chips
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces
1/2 cup (3 1/2 ounces) sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
3 large eggs
1/4 cup (2 ounces) water

1. Adjust oven rack to the middle position and heat oven to 275 degrees. Spray the inside bottoms and sides of six 4-ounce ramekins with vegetable oil spray. Place ramekins on a rimmed baking sheet.

2. In a large microwave-safe bowl, combine chocolate chips and butter. Heat in the microwave at 50% power for 2 minutes. Stir mixture with a rubber spatula to combine. Return to the microwave and heat at 50% power until melted, about 2 minutes.

3. Use the rubber spatula to stir until well combined and shiny, about 30 seconds. Let chocolate mixture cool for 5 minutes.

4. In a medium bowl, whisk sugar and cornstarch until combined. Add eggs, water, vanilla, and salt; whisk until combined.

5. Add sugar mixture to cooled chocolate mixture and whisk until smooth. Transfer batter to a large liquid measur-

ELLE SIMON



You can make this seemingly fancy dessert up to two days ahead of time.

ing cup. Pour batter evenly into greased ramekins (ramekins will be about three-quarters of the way full).

6. Bake cakes until edges are set but centers still look wet, 20 to 24 minutes. Gently shake the baking sheet. If the centers of the cakes look very liquidy and jiggle a lot, bake the cakes for 1 to 2 more minutes. When the centers of the cakes jiggle slightly, remove the baking sheet from the oven. Place the baking sheet on a cooling rack and let cakes cool on baking sheet for 30 minutes.

7. Cover each ramekin with plastic wrap and use a fork to poke small holes in top of plastic. Refrigerate until cakes

are cold and firm, at least 1 1/2 hours. (Cakes can be refrigerated for up to two days.)

8. Remove cakes from the refrigerator and let them sit at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving. Top with whipped cream or berries, or dust with confectioners' sugar, if desired. Serve.

- For 25 years, confident cooks in the know have relied on America's Test Kitchen for rigorously tested recipes developed by professional test cooks and vetted by 60,000 at-home recipe testers. See more online at www.americastestkitchen.com/TCA.

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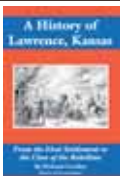
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MY PET WORLD

Training, adapting, and compromising: It's how we live with dogs

By **Cathy M. Rosenthal**
Tribune Content Agency

Dear Cathy: My letter is in response to Carol in Massapequa regarding her new dog's bathroom habits. I also had a dog for 16 years who would take long walks and wait to relieve herself in the backyard. Carol may appreciate this during the winter. I can let my dog into the backyard to relieve herself (without having to go outside in wintry weather). She's been house trained since four-months-old and never had an accident in the house.

My dog also has other particular habits. She will only eat out of her own food and water dishes, and she loves to sleep on an old bathmat. So, we take her dishes and bathmat, which she sleeps on in the car or wherever we are staying, when we travel with her. With

a little patience, she could end up with a puppy as great as ours. -- Janet, Rego Park, New York

Dear Janet: Puppies (and kittens) are so much fun, but it does take time to help them adjust to living in our homes. There are three main ways we can help them adjust: train them, adapt to them, or compromise with them. In Carol's case, training her dog to relieve herself during leashed walks works best for her lifestyle. She wants to take her dog on long walks and doesn't want to worry about getting her home in a hurry to relieve herself.

In your instance, Janet, you adapted to some of your dog's quirks and interwove them into your lifestyle. Not having to walk your dog to relieve herself is a plus for you. You know her habits and make sure you bring her food dish and water bowl when you

travel. By getting her used to sleeping on a bathmat, you have trained her to be comfortable on that mat, regardless of where you are on the world. (Having something familiar and part of her every day routine is very comforting for a dog when away from home.)

When not training our dogs to perform a certain behavior or acquiescing to one of their peculiarities, pet owners learn to compromise with them. This is when a behavior is something you can live with, but only if you tweak it a bit. For example, I once had an 80-pound dog who wanted up on the living room couch. I allowed him on the family room couches, but not the living room couch because that's where visitors sat. I know he understood because he never got on the couch during the day. But at night, as soon as I feel asleep, I could hear him climbing on the living room couch. I would get up and ask him to get down, but as soon as I started to fall sleep, he would sneak back on the couch again. In this instance, we needed a compromise that worked for both of us. So, I trained him to get on the couch, but only if there was a blan-

ket on it. He understood that and did not get on the couch again unless there was a blanket on it. By compromising, we both got our way, and he seemed happy I "heard" him.

It's wonderful that you understand your dog and can accommodate her wants and needs. She is eager to please you as well. This is what it means to be in relationship with a companion animal.

- *Cathy M. Rosenthal is a longtime animal advocate, author, columnist and pet expert who has more than 25 years in the animal welfare field. Send your pet questions, stories and tips to cathy@petpundit.com. Please include your name, city, and state. You can follow her @cathymrosenthal.*

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RICK STEVES' EUROPE

Venice's cicchetti crawl

By Rick Steves

Tribune Content Agency

One of my favorite European memories is the joy of a pub crawl in Venice—a reminder of the fun that awaits in this popular destination.



Rick Steves

Venice entertains millions of visitors during a normal year. It's particularly crowded with day-trippers when several cruise ships are in port. On a trip a few years ago, I was told by a Venetian friend that these days, almost every restaurant caters to the tourists. Then, with a sly smile, he added, "But there are still the cicchetti bars."

Cicchetti (pronounced chi-KET-tee) are the local appetizers that line the counters of little pubs all over Venice at the end of each workday. My favorite meal is what I call "The Stand-Up Progressive Venetian Pub-Crawl Dinner." In a town with canals

and no cars, pub-crawling is easy and safe—perhaps safer if you know how to swim. Tonight I'll visit a series of these characteristic hole-in-the-wall pubs, eating ugly-looking morsels on toothpicks and washing it all down with little glasses of wine. I look forward to the local characters I'll meet along the way. Cicchetti bars have a social stand-up zone with a cozy gaggle of tables. In some of the more popular places, the crowds spill happily into the street.

Venetians call this pub crawl the giro d'ombra. Giro means "stroll," and ombra—slang for a glass of wine—means "shade." It dates back to the old days, when a portable wine bar scooted with the shadow of the Campanile bell tower across St. Mark's Square. That wine bar is long gone, but the cicchetti bars remain, tucked away in the perpetual shade of the back streets.

While Venice is, it seems, sinking in tourist crowds, I'd bet 90 percent of those tourists gather along the glitzy shopping streets between the Rialto Bridge and St. Mark's Square. To find a characteristic cicchetti bar, you have to wander. I don't worry about getting lost—in fact, I get as lost as I can. I

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

RICK STEVES; RICK STEVES' EUROPE



At cicchetti bars, you can assemble a meal.

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Rick Steves

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

remind myself, “I’m on an island and I can’t get off.” Even though there generally aren’t street names, when I want to find my way, I simply look for small signs on the corners directing me to the nearest landmark (e.g., “per Rialto”).

The cicchetti selection is best early, so I start my evening at 6 p.m. It’s in the far reaches of Venice that I bump into the thriving little bacari (as the local pubs are called). I ask for “un piatto classico di cicchetti misti da otto euro” and get a classic plate of assorted appetizers for EUR8. I sample deep-fried mozzarella cheese, gorgonzola, calamari, and artichoke hearts. Crostini (small pieces of toasted bread with a topping) are also a favorite, as are marinated seafood, olives, and prosciutto with melon. Meat and fish (pesce) munchies can be expensive, but veggies (verdure) are cheap. Bread sticks (grissini) are free for the asking.

Part of the attraction is the funky decor. There are photos of neighborhood friends here for a family party, St. Mark’s Square the morning after a wild Pink Floyd concert, Carnevale masks evoking a more mysterious past, and of old-time Venice, proving that people may change, but the buildings remain essentially the same.

Venetians kick off the experience with an aperitivo, a before-dinner drink. Know your options. A blackboard usually lists several fine wines that are uncorked and available by the glass. Most nights, I get a small glass of house red or white wine (ombra rosso or ombra bianco). Tonight, I’m in the mood for an Aperol spritz—it makes me feel more local.

A man asks me, “Le dispiace se mi siedo qui?” (Do you mind if I sit here?) before sitting down next to me. It occurs to me that’s a handy, polite phrase for making new friends. He orders a drink and food. When his plate of fish arrives, he picks up one of the tiny fish, delicately tied in a loop. Holding it by the toothpick that harpoons it, he looks at it lovingly, says, “Sei il mio piu bel ricordo” (“You are

my most beautiful souvenir”), and pops it happily into his mouth. Pushing over his plate, he offers one of the fish to me.

Connecting with people makes a pub crawl more fun: You can meet an Italian, learn some Italian, eat better...and collect your own beautiful souvenirs.

- Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes *European guidebooks*, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours. This article was adapted from his new book, *For the Love of Europe*. You can email

Rick at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

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PAINTING WITH WORDS

Love

Poet: Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Poem: "Love"

In last year's February issue, I talked about a romantic poem written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning called "How Do I Love Thee?" However,



Tom
Mach

there was another poem written by her simply called "Love." Although both carry the same theme, the latter emphasizes the nature of love from a woman's perspective.

In that previous column I said very little about the poet's background, but an understanding of Elizabeth's personal history may help us understand her poetry. Born in England in 1806, she was the oldest of 12 children. Her father made a fortune from sugar plantations in Jamaica. Educated at home, Elizabeth soon began writing. At 14, she developed a lung ailment that plagued her for years to come.

Despite that and having suffered a spinal injury a year later, she read the classics, learned Hebrew and Greek, and became active in Bible studies in her church. However, because of her father's mismanagement of his business, he resigned from those operations and moved his family to London.

After her brother's death, Elizabeth became an invalid and recluse and spent the next five years in her bedroom at her father's house. At 38, she produced a volume of poetry entitled simply as "Poems." Elizabeth developed a relationship with another poet, Robert Browning, and they fell in love and married, much to the chagrin of her father, who never spoke to her again.

Her poem "Love" was written to show the reader how she felt about love. When Robert was away she and Robert exchanged letters. In her poem she looks upon the sun as the brightness in her life and the sea as her serenity when she thinks about her lover. However, in her poem she doesn't assign a gender to either of the two lovers. Elizabeth believes love is universal and profound. It is also eternal as implied in her line: "Love in sooth, as nature's magnet-heat rounds pole with pole." The word "sooth" means truth and it is

forever, like a magnetic force of nature. Here then is her poem:

Love

By Elizabeth Barrett Browning

*We cannot live, except thus mutually
We alternate, aware or unaware,
The reflex act of life: and when we bear
Our virtue onward most impulsively,
Most full of invocation, and to be
Most instantly compellant, certes, there
We live most life, whoever breathes
most air
And counts his dying years by sun and sea.
But when a soul, by choice and conscience,
doth
Throw out her full force on another*

*soul,
The conscience and the concentration
both
Make mere life, Love. For Life in perfect whole
And aim consummated, is Love in sooth,
As nature's magnet-heat rounds pole
with pole.*

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HUMOR HOTEL

Learning Spanish for all the wrong reasons

By Greg Schwem

Tribune Content Agency

I have vowed to make 2022 the year I learn a second language, a goal I will achieve for purely selfish reasons.

I should already be bilingual, as it would place me in the company of, by some estimates, more than 40% of the world's citizens who can converse in something other than their native tongues. Alas, in my 59 years on earth, I can only marvel at those folks in foreign countries I visit, so adept in their skills that they automatically address me in English when they see me approaching. How do they know? Apparently, I give off a "lazy American" vibe from a distance.

How shocked and impressed would they be when I instead began the conversation in French? Or Italian? Or most likely Spanish, since I plan to spend some time in Spanish-speaking countries this year.

Learning a second language so I could fluently travel the world was the plan back in high school, when I studied German, a four-year academic pursuit that, due to laziness in subsequent years, has left me with the ability to order a beer in Munich but little else.

Several years ago, while preparing to give a speech in Poland, I sought guid-

ance from my Polish neighbor, Stan, a fun-loving individual known for raucous outdoor parties in which he and his relatives sit on the patio and happily converse in their native language for hours, pausing only to refill their glasses with vodka. He was happy to help when I asked how to say, "What a beautiful country you have."

"Write it down," I requested. "Then I'll say it back to you aloud a few times until you're certain I have it right."

Stan complied and listened while I butchered the sentence, offering pointers until he was satisfied at my diction. Feeling confident, I asked for more.

I asked how to say, "I had a delicious meal last night." Stan's brother took the pen and paper and translated, assuming the role of tutor while I doubled my Polish language skills.

As I walked home, my smugness turned to nervousness and then terror as I wondered if my jovial, vodka-addled neighbor and his brother were not playing the mother of all practical jokes on me.

"How do I know he was telling me the truth?" I asked my wife. "That I'm not going to walk on stage next week and say, 'My nostrils are coated in chocolate.'"

"Stan wouldn't do that to you," she replied.

"Were you at his last party?" I countered. "I think I'll just use Google Translate."

I ended up doing neither, beginning my presentation in English, and apologizing to the audience for my lack of manners.

Now I want to be the "Stan" of my friend group; the guy everyone turns to when a language situation arises. I will conceal my skills as if I were carrying a weapon used only in emergency situations. Meaning, when my friends and I take a boy's trip to Mexico and we are struggling to communicate with the waitress, I will raise my hand, calmly say, "I got this" and then order for the entire group in Spanish. My status among the group will rise instantaneously; who would dare lob insults at the one member who holds the key to communication? I won't buy a beer for the remainder of the trip.

See my reasons? I'm not learning Spanish because I'm polite; I'm learning it because I'm cheap.

Of course, my boys trips don't occur with the frequency necessary to master the language. So, I will have to find fellow Spanish speakers who will indulge me as

I slog my way through a new vocabulary. My now-grown children claim to know Spanish, although I have never heard either speak it around the house.

There is a Mexican restaurant near my home. I could converse with the staff, but that would require ordering, and paying for, food. Most restaurants don't have a "Just talking" section.

I WILL master this language, as have always been a big believer in setting goals and achieving them. Once this column is finished, I plan to open my Spanish language tutorial app and practice a bit. Today I will learn to say, "I am trying to understand your beautiful language. Please be patient."

Or maybe I'll learn, "My butt makes noises when I walk." Just in case my friends ask for some tips.

- Greg Schwem is a corporate stand-up comedian and author of "Text Me If You're Breathing: Observations, Frustrations and Life Lessons From a Low-Tech Dad" and "The Road To Success Goes Through the Salad Bar: A Pile of BS From a Corporate Comedian."

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♥ K Q 6 3

♦ K 7 4 3

♣ J 10 7 3

SOUTH

♠ K 4

♥ J 7 5 4

♦ A Q 9 6 2

♣ A Q

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1NT	Pass	2♥*	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All pass

*Transfer to spades

Opening lead: Ten of ♥

Today's deal is from a duplicate pairs game in Australia. South was Australian expert Paul Lavings.

Lavings won the opening heart lead in dummy, perforce, and led a low spade to his king, winning the trick! He led a spade back toward dummy and played low from dummy when West played the 10. He "knew" that the ace was in the East hand and he

was hoping it was now singleton. He was gob-smacked when East showed out. Had West captured the king with the ace at trick two, Lavings would have led a spade toward the dummy later and played the nine if West followed with the two. This would have been a routine safety play guaranteeing only two trump losers. West now seemed certain of taking three spade tricks but Lavings did not give up.

West shifted to the 10 of diamonds after winning with the 10 of spades. This went to the jack, king, and ace. Lavings ruffed a heart in dummy, cashed the eight of diamonds, and crossed back to his hand with the queen of clubs. West and dummy both discarded clubs on the queen of diamonds. Lavings ruffed another heart in dummy, reducing dummy to the same trump length as West, and led a club back to his ace.

In this three-card ending, dummy had the queen-nine of spades and the king of clubs. Lavings led the nine of diamonds and West could do no better than to take one spade trick no matter how he defended. Despite West's brilliant play, Lavings made five for an excellent score.

(Bob Jones welcomes readers' e-mails: tcaeditors@tribpub.com)

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PUZZLES & GAMES

CROSSWORD

Across

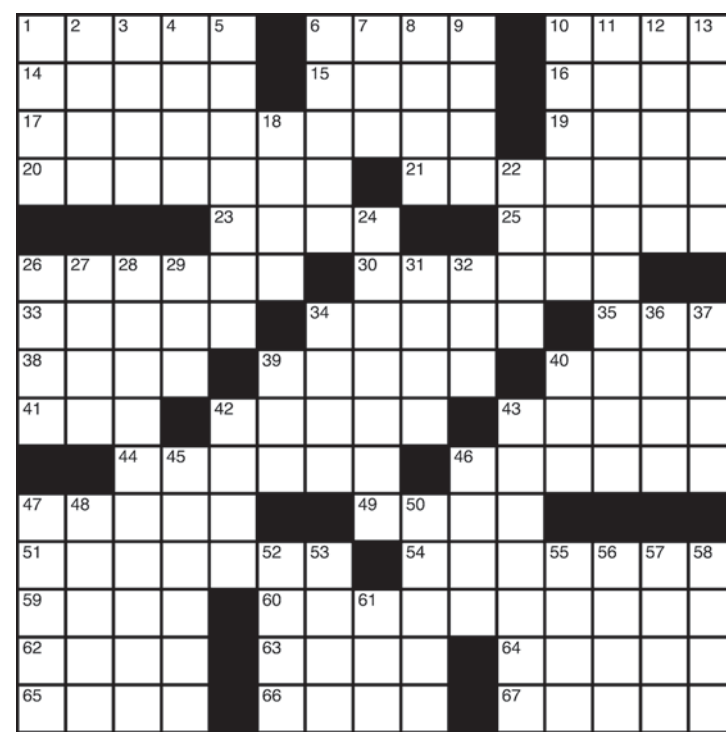
- 1 Hand-dyeing method
- 6 Alaskan malamute team's burden
- 10 ___ Field: Mets' home
- 14 Lose strength
- 15 Attire for Caesar
- 16 Closely related
- 17 "Really!"
- 19 Pinball flub
- 20 Metal-shaping tool
- 21 Defame verbally
- 23 Fifth Avenue retailer
- 25 Final word
- 26 Even though
- 30 Low-cost and inferior
- 33 Early synthetic fiber
- 34 Pinch, as piecrust
- 35 D.C.'s nation
- 38 Kilt-wearing family
- 39 Hotel visitor
- 40 Soon, to a bard
- 41 Rogue computer in "2001"
- 42 Uses a fireplace tool
- 43 Sci-fi robot

- 44 Really rich
- 46 With dexterity
- 47 Davis Jr. of the Rat Pack
- 49 Pig's meal
- 51 Source of maple syrup
- 54 One of 12 at the Last Supper
- 59 Straight from the mouth
- 60 "Really!"
- 62 Subside
- 63 Cleveland's lake
- 64 Carried in a bag
- 65 The "S" in CBS: Abbr.
- 66 Gets hitched
- 67 Reaches across

Down

- 1 Deep choir voice
- 2 Share a boundary with
- 3 "Gone With the Wind" estate
- 4 Checklist detail
- 5 Represses, as emotions
- 6 Storied baby-bringing bird
- 7 Gehrig in Cooperstown

- 8 Dairy case dozen
- 9 Roald who created Willy Wonka
- 10 Bit of shuteye
- 11 "Really!"
- 12 Scrabble pieces
- 13 Emcee's lead-in
- 18 In apple-pie order
- 22 "Hurry!" on a memo
- 24 Windbags' speeches
- 26 One of two in McDonald's "M"
- 27 In ___ land: spaced-out
- 28 "Really!"
- 29 A billion years, in geology
- 31 Tire leak sound
- 32 911 responder: Abbr.
- 34 Pickled veggie
- 36 Gardener's bagful
- 37 Warhol of pop art
- 39 Thor or Zeus
- 40 Comics bark
- 42 Forks over
- 43 Kicks out of the country
- 45 Brunch fare made with 8-Down
- 46 Dimwit
- 47 Stashes in a hold
- 48 Assortment
- 50 Shoe strings
- 52 Not very many



- 53 Skin opening
- 55 Word on an octagonal sign
- 56 Brit's goodbye
- 57 Legal claim on property
- 58 Comes to a halt
- 61 Get ___ of: dump

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

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CARTK

○ ○ ○ ○

CATHH

□ □ □ □

WRANOR

○ □ □ □ ○ ○

DEMLOU

□ ○ ○ □ □ ○

○ ○ ○ ○ - ○ ○ - ○ ○ ○ ○

Check out the new, free JUST JUMBLE app

THE HUMANS FOUND THE ALIENS TO BE VERY SENSIBLE AND ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

SCRABBLE GRAMS

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PAR SCORE 270-280
BEST SCORE 353

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition.

For more information on tournaments and clubs, email NASPA - North American SCRABBLE Players Association info@scrabbleplayers.org. Visit our website - www.scrabbleplayers.org. For puzzle inquiries contact scrgrams@gmail.com

FIVE RACK TOTAL _____
TIME LIMIT: 25 MIN

Row 1: E1, E1, I1, O1, R1, Z10, H4

Row 2: O1, U1, P3, G2, R1, M3, D2

Row 3: A1, O1, O1, L1, F4, B3, F4 (Triple Word Score)

Row 4: A1, E1, O1, P3, M3, T1, H4 (2nd Letter Double)

Row 5: A1, A1, I1, I1, L1, M3, R1

RACK 1

RACK 2

RACK 3

RACK 4

RACK 5

Answers to all puzzles on page 26

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

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

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

JUMBLE ANSWERS

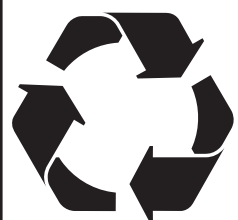
Jumbles: TRACK, HATCH, NARROW, MODULE

Answer: The humans found the aliens to be very sensible and -- DOWN-TO-EARTH

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SCRABBLE GRAMS SOLUTION												
H ₄	E ₁	R ₁	O ₁	I ₁	Z ₁₀	E ₁	RACK 1 =	69				
G ₂	U ₁	M ₃	D ₂	R ₁	O ₁	P ₃	RACK 2 =	63				
B ₃	O ₁	F ₄	F ₄	O ₁	L ₁	A ₁	RACK 3 =	95				
A ₁	P ₃	O ₁	T ₁	H ₄	E ₁	M ₃	RACK 4 =	67				
A ₁	I ₁	R ₁	M ₃	A ₁	I ₁	L ₁	RACK 5 =	59				
PAR SCORE 270-280								TOTAL	353			

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MY ANSWER

The Bible speaks of having a pure conscience

From the writings of the Rev. Billy Graham

Tribune Content Agency

Q: My grandmother is always telling me that if I make the wrong choice in life my conscience is going to always be looking over my shoulder. She knows a lot about the Bible but she said it was up to me to find it. Does the Bible really say something about a person's conscience? - W.G.

A: The Bible is God's textbook of revelation and speaks of having a pure conscience (1 Timothy 3:9). This is only possible when our minds are surrendered to the Lord and when we put into practice His commands and promises.

In God's great classroom there is an expansive library called Scripture. It speaks of nature and conscience and says God's law is "written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them" (Romans 2:15). It is so wonderful to think that God actually speaks to warn us when we are wrong, and to bless us when we do right. This may be a "still small voice" that will not let us go until we settle in our hearts what is right according to Him. We must never

silence that inner voice—but always check what we believe according to God's Word.

Conscience is the detective that watches the direction of our steps and decries every conscious transgression. It is a vigilant eye before which each imagination, thought, and act is held up for either censure or approval. There is no greater proof of the existence of moral law and the Lawgiver in the universe than this little light of the soul.

And we must remember that the human conscience is reliable only when it is guided by the Holy Spirit. This is a blessed gift that He gives to those who love and obey Him.

- This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.

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MAYO CLINIC

Avoiding pain while working at a desk

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I have been working at home for the past year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. My work requires me to be on a computer much of the day, and over the past few months, I've noticed more frequent headaches, and pain in my lower back and sometimes my neck. Could my workspace be contributing to my pain? If so, how can I fix it?

ANSWER: The number of people working from home has increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. With more people working from home came an increased number of people reporting neck pain and back pain.

Sitting and working at a desk—perhaps a makeshift one—is one of the most common causes of this type of pain. Taking time to review and redesign your workspace can alleviate discomfort, whether you work at home or in an office.

First take notice of your computer or workstation. Often, I find that people try to accommodate to the technology rather than the other way around. For instance, many people strain to see a computer monitor that is too far away, too low, too high, too small or too dim. This compromises good posture.

The average human head weighs almost 12 pounds—the equivalent of a bowling ball. When your neck is bent to 45 degrees, your head exerts nearly 50 pounds of force on your neck. In

addition to straining joints and muscles in your neck and shoulders, the pressure affects your breathing and mood.

To alleviate this stress, redesign your workspace to encourage well-aligned posture. You can improve the ergonomics—the efficiency and comfort level—of a typical workstation in many ways.

Start by answering these questions.

Is your monitor positioned so you can see it well without straining?

Consider these tips:

- Raise or lower the monitor or your chair so your eyes are level with the top of the screen. If you wear bifocals, you may need to lower the monitor another 1 to 2 inches.

- Move the monitor closer or farther away so you can easily read the screen.

- Increase the font size you use.

- If using a laptop, link to a larger monitor.

- Are your mouse and keyboard positioned so you don't have to reach up to use them?

- Lower your desk height or raise your chair so your forearms are parallel to the floor or pointed slightly downward and your wrists are not pointing

either upward or downward.

Do you keep frequently used tools within close range to minimize reaching?

Consider these tips:

- Keep your mouse nearby, and regularly change it from one side of your body to the other.

- Use a headset if you talk on the phone frequently.

- Find shortcut keys you can use while typing.

- Use a document holder so you don't have to look down frequently.

Does your chair allow you to maintain the normal curves in your spine, such as the curve in your low back?

Raise your chair so you're not sitting straight up at a 90-degree angle, but rather with an angle of 115 to 120 degrees between the torso and thighs.

When you're seated, do your feet touch the ground?

Consider using a stool if you've elevated your chair and your feet no longer reach the ground. Also, maintain a couple of inches between the back of your knees and the chair.

If your chair has armrests, do they allow your shoulders to relax?

Consider lowering or getting rid of the armrests so your neck and shoulders can relax downward.

Check your posture

Have someone take a picture of you at your workstation and check to see if you are in a well-aligned posture, which means:

- Your eyes are looking straight.
- Your neck is not bent.

- Your forearms are parallel to the floor.

- Your low back is in its natural curve.

This can provide another perspective to help you make adjustments.

Talk to your employer, as well, to see if additional items can be provided to assist you, if necessary, such as a standing workstation or a sit-stand desk. The latter setup allows you to raise and lower the height of your computer and peripherals.

Consider these best practices

Also consider these best practices to support good health and posture:

Set a timer and get up every 30 minutes. Take a walking meeting, stand or exercise during a conference call, or hand-deliver a message when you would normally email it.

Follow the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes, give your eyes a 20-second break by focusing on something at least 20 feet away.

Being mindful of healthy work habits can go a long way to reducing neck and back pain, as well as creating a more positive work experience. - Jill Henderzahn-Mason, P.T., D.P.T., Mayo Clinic Healthy Living Program, Rochester, Minnesota

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