Columns

July 4th memories and a favorite holiday recipe

Memories and Musings

By Cheri Sims

Next week is our July 4th celebration, which falls on a Tuesday this year, and for some lucky people it means a four day weekend. My cousin called to say they have a four-day weekend and have decided to bypass the traditional family gathering and leave Thursday afternoon and drive to Mackinac Island, Michigan. Somehow she was able to get reservations, at this late date, for July 4th at the Hotel Iroquois, where we stayed many times. Luckily, the Iroquois is just a short distance from the famous and beautiful Grand Hotel and even though the Grand is sold out she was able to get dinner reservations there for the night of the 4th.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Grand Hotel, the movie "Somewhere in Time" starring Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour was filmed there in 1980 and 1981 causing a rebirth of fame for the renowned coastal resort hotel and Island. The historic hotel was built in 1887 and has operated continuously since that time. At the time of opening the room rates averaged between $3.00-$5.00 per night and if you are lucky to reserve a room today that same room would cost between $300.00- $500.00 per night. The Musser family built the hotel and operated it for nine decades until selling it in 2019. The Grand still holds the distinction of having the longest porch in the world and having had the privilege of sitting in a rocking chair, on that beautiful white porch with red carpet and looking out ove the Straits of Mackinac, I can attest that it is pretty amazing.

A trip to Mackinac Island is a dream vacation from the boat ride (which is both scary and exhilarating) across the Straits to the quaint town, which still does not allow cars to be driven on the island and you can't help but have a great time. Horseback, carriage and bicycles are still the mode of transportation and it works quite well for them. Shopping is very "touristy" but it is fun to explore both the gift shops and the stores where the locals shop. You may have heard of Mackinac Island fudge and the original "Mackinac Island Fudge Co", which opened in 1887, is still the best in my opinion and I have eaten fudge from all the different shops.

The hotels are pretty pricey but even a day trip is worth your time. We experienced spring, summer and fall on the Island and it is at the top of our list of beautiful trips. We had hoped to go for a winter trip and the latest we were there was what they call closing weekend; all the hotels close for the winter because the straits freeze over and the only way to get there is by air or an ice boat. We were there on closing weekend, which is usually October 30th and the trip could have been a disaster because it rained all weekend but we loved it and we walked all over the island in the freezing rain. A steaming cup of hot cocoa and a huge piece of The Grand Hotel chocolate torte warmed us before the last leg of the bluff walk back to our hotel.

So what will you be doing for the fourth? I hope to meet friends at McCormick's Creek State park for a 1950's theme cookout. This should be really fun; we are cooking nothing but food from the 50's and most of the group has planned to wear 50's clothing. All of us were born in either 1946 or 1947 so we all call the 50's the best time of our childhood but I have to admit I have had a bit of trouble coming up with suitable attire. I found a pair of light blue "Burmuda" shorts and a white "Judy Bond" sleeveless blouse with a "Peter Pan" collar at a thrift shop and decided to wear them instead of going the "poodle" skirt route. A couple of the ladies already told me they were wearing "house dresses" and "poodle" skirts and I wanted to be different. When I showed my Mom what I plan to wear she thought I had found the clothes in her closet. I did find an old apron in her closet so I think I will take it with me as well.

I will be making my favorite 50s picnic salad, Ambrosia salad also called 5 cup salad and all day baked beans with hotdogs. I have never figured out why Mom called the beans baked beans because they are cooked all day, the day before serving, in a huge pot on top of the stove. Mom would start with 10 cans of Campbell's pork and beans, a half pound of bacon, a chopped onion, a bottle of catchup, 2 cups of brown sugar, a cup of "Karo" dark syrup, salt and pepper and enough water to cover the beans. She would cook them all day, adding water if needed. She would refrigerate it over night and the day of the picnic she would add a package of chopped hot dogs and simmer until the hotdogs were cooked. I have made my baked beans this way my entire life with or without the hotdogs. I am also taking a couple cases of orange pop and "Squirt" if I can find them. We used to mix the "Fanta" orange pop with the "Squirt" and make orange fizzies.

HAPPY JULY 4TH!

Ambrosia Salad

Mini marshmallows, 1 cup
Sweetened shredded coconut, 1 cup
Drained mandarin oranges, 1 cup
Drained pineapple chunks, 1 cup
Sour cream, 1 cup

In a large bowl, gently stir the following ingredients: drained mandarin oranges, drained pineapple chunks or tidbits, mini marshmallow, sour cream and coconut. It's ok to estimate the amounts of the ingredients.

Refrigerate for 12-24 hours to let the salad set up. https://www.theseoldcookbooks.com/.

Summer solstice signals season's start

In the night sky

By David Leake

Even with a bright Moon in the sky this week, there's still plenty of things to see in our summer sky. Venus and Mars are still in the west and only about three degrees apart. Venus is quite obvious, but you may have to search for Mars above and left of Venus. Further to the upper left of Mars about seven more degrees is the heart of our spring celestial lion, the star Regulus. Regulus will be slightly brighter than Mars. Just a bit south of the point straight up is the orange star Arcturus. And this evening, a waxing gibbous Moon is to the left of the bluish star Spica in the south after sunset.

The Moon will be full Monday evening, rising in the southeast as the Sun sets. July's full Moon is the "Buck Moon." Around this time, new antlers of buck deer push out from their foreheads. It was also often called the Thunder Moon or Hay Moon. It'll brighten our July 4th celebrations after sunset. Why not take some binoculars to the fireworks?

David Leake is retired Planetarium Director of Staerkel Planetarium at Parkland College and co-founder of the Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society, Inc.

PUZZLES

CROSSWORD CLUES

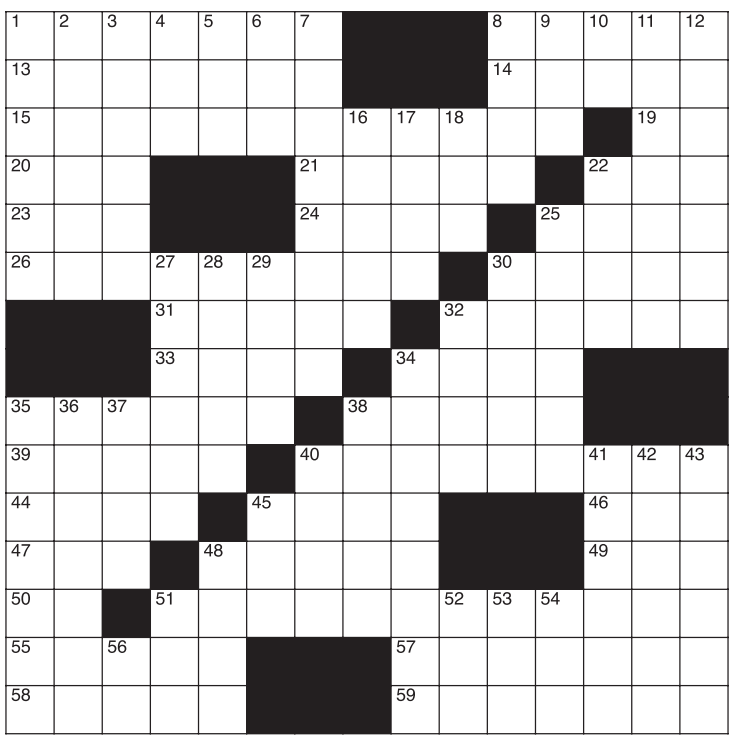
CLUES ACROSS

1. Excited movements
8. Soap opera actress Patsy
13. Unknowing
14. Dangerous mosquitos
15. Exaggerated and sensationalized
19. Military policeman
20. Touch softly
21. Wrap
22. A story of one's life
23. Midway between east and southeast
24. Toward the mouth or oral region
25. A list of dishes available at a restaurant
26. Changes the meaning of
30. Semitic Sun god
31. Sneaker parts
32. Capital of Zimbabwe
33. Breezed through
34. Partner to pedi
35. Becomes less intense
38. Bottoms
39. Tested
40. Vistas
44. Take care of
45. Traditional rhythmic pattern
46. S. African political party
47. Cologne
48. Men
49. The Science Guy
50. Gospel author (abbr.)
51. Act of signing up
55. Human feet
57. A very short time
58. Streetcars
59. Cuplike cavities

CLUES DOWN

1. A type of pool
2. Malaise
3. Seasoned
4. A pair

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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Weekly Horoscopes

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, you will likely be giving much thought to your future and strategies that may increase your financial security. Reach out to your network for advice.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, if communication has been difficult in the past, you will find that things change for the better in the days to come. You will gain a deeper understanding of others.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, useful information reaches you this week, which helps you make important decisions about your finances. Use this opportunity to make changes.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, a social gathering presents you with an opportunity to meet new friends who may become valued business contacts. Treat every introduction with care.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, you may be wondering what the next few months will hold for you. It is impossible to know all the details, but there are strong indications that there is a big change coming.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Career goals may come together even further this week, Virgo. This enables you to move into a position that will not compromise your needs or ideals.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, you want to make a new start but may just need a little push to get you moving. Thankfully, your mind is clear from distractions that normally might derail your plans.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, soul searching is to be expected due to the positioning of the planets this week. Once you figure out your true goals you may be surprised at what you discover.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Take time out from some of the exciting things that have been happening to you, Sagittarius. Figure out if you're satisfied in your career. You may decide to make changes.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

A new understanding with others comes from improved communication and more flexibility, Capricorn. Optimism and understanding will spill into all areas of your life.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Your mind is on family and those close to you right now, Aquarius. Any decisions you make in the weeks ahead will be focused on the priority people in your life.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

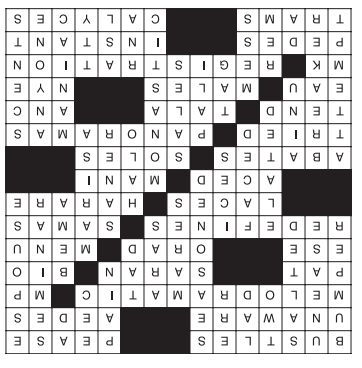
Information about investments and career potential may come to you soon. Take everything with a grain of salt until you can investigate.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

JUNE 25, Ricky Gervais, Comic (62)
JUNE 26, Aubrey Plaza, Actress (39)
JUNE 27, H.E.R., Singer (26)
JUNE 28, **Elon Musk**, Entrepreneur (52)
JUNE 29, Camila Mendes, Actress (29)
JUNE 30, Michael Phelps, Athlete (38)
JULY 1, Pamela Anderson, Actress (56)

5. Young male
6. Make a mistake
7. Experienced
8. It often accompanies injury
9. Old world, new
10. Commercial
11. Course of lectures
12. Promote
16. Female horses
17. Greek mythological figure
18. Small amount
22. Orthodox church altar
25. Actress Tomei
27. Excited
28. Looked directly at
29. Popular cold desserts
30. More reasonable
32. Disk above the head of a saint
34. Devoted to the extreme
35. Make an effort
36. It's in the surf
37. Member of aboriginal people of Japan
38. Discounts
40. Cliff in Hawaii
41. Extremely wild person
42. All persons
43. Aromas
45. Popular kids' game
48. A difficult situation
51. Popular Georgia rockers
52. It's in all living cells
53. Unspoken language
54. 'Talk to you' abbreviation
56. Influential lawyer

SOLUTIONS



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