

Columns

Happy memories of old-fashioned cooking

My girlfriend and I spent a rainy night last week talking on the telephone and reminiscing about the way our grandmothers cooked in the 1940s and 1950s. It was quite fun to compare notes and the similarities of old-fashioned cooking even though our grandparents lived a hundred miles apart.

Tomato sandwiches, pickled hard boiled eggs and putting up vegetables and fruit were the food preparations our families had in common. However, her family never had potato and onion sandwiches and our grandmothers pickled their eggs with different recipes. Both families made tomato jam; my granny made sweet tomato jam and my friend's family made a spicy tomato jam.

My grandma followed the bread and butter pickle recipe for her eggs and even added cinnamon to the clove recipe. My friend's grandma used the white sugar and vinegar recipe with sliced onion and salt and pepper; this recipe is how my family makes refrigerator cucumber pickles but her family did not make fridge pickles.

We both vowed to try the other's recipe the next time we make pickled eggs. I do not can large quantities of pickled eggs so I generally just make a jar of six which I can keep in the fridge. Granny canned so many pickled eggs that one whole wall of the back porch was lined with shelves from floor to ceiling and held nothing but quart jars of pickled

Memories and Musings

By Cheri Sims



eggs. Granny raised chickens and grandpa loved pickled eggs so things just worked out that she would spend a whole day boiling eggs and the next day she would pickle and can them.

She used the ends and bits and pieces of the veggies to make piccalilli. I did not like piccalilli when I was a kid but my cousin made a batch a couple years ago and I really enjoyed it. Grandpa enjoyed spicy foods so granny always made double batches and canned some with hot peppers and some without. Granny pickled a lot of vegetables and I could not understand why because everything just tasted like vinegar to me but it was a way to preserve foods without refrigeration and I did not realize that when I was a kid.

Grandpa's favorite winter meal was mashed potatoes and a jar of pickled something. Here again, I did not realize that the pickled eggs and piccalilli were a substitute for a meatless meal, of which there were many. Grandpa also made his own sausage and granny would pickle a few jars for the winter. No one else in

the family would eat the pickled sausages including me.

The pickled sausages smelled rotten when the jar was opened and I was sure we would be poisoned by them. I did, however, eat the sauerkraut with the sausages canned in it. The taste was completely different and the meat did not smell spoiled but then how could one tell the difference since the kraut smell was so strong.

My granny had a special corn recipe she canned every year and I wish I the recipe. She would boil the corn on the cob with onions and after it cooled she would cut the corn off the cob and remix it with the cooked onions and canned it that way.

I do not know what other spices she used in the recipe and I have never found it on any of the canning websites. I am sure she put sugar in the recipe because it was a sweet-tasting corn.

In the summer, she would cook up big pots of fresh green beans with bacon and bacon fat, onions and potatoes, and later in life I discovered how her winter green beans tasted just as good as her summer

beans. She would can the fresh beans with bacon grease, but somehow the winter beans never tasted greasy.

Canning fruit was a big job in my grandparent's house; we lived with them until I was 5, so I got to enjoy the fruit picking and canning season that many of my friends never experienced. My grandparents had apple, peach, pear and cherry trees and a huge grape arbor, so granny and my aunts were very busy cooking and canning for days.

As I think of their labor intensive fall canning season I am overwhelmed at the thought of the picking, washing, peeling, cutting, cooking and canning

that went into making enough food for a family of seven to survive a long winter. The large, unheated back porch lined with shelves looked small by the time October ended and the whole porch was filled with quart jars of food.

My absolute favorite of granny's canning was the way she made cinnamon green apples on piecrust. She would cook the green apples (I have no idea what kind they were) with cinnamon and sugar until they were tender and thickened. Then she would roll out piecrust to the shape of her cast iron cookie sheet and spread the crust liberally with butter. Then she would spoon

the apple mixture over the top of the crust and sprinkle more cinnamon and sugar over the top of the apple mixture. She would then bake it in her old, black iron stove until the edges of the crust had browned.

After it cooled, she would spoon "dollops" (her word) of whipped cream over the pastry and topped the cream with cinnamon and sugar. WOW! My mouth is watering. I have made this many times but never was able to get it to taste as delicious as Granny's pastry tasted. I know why; no cast iron cookie sheet, no iron stove, no old fashioned green apples and no granny!

Happy memories!

Catch Mars while you can

The planet Venus, which has been present in our evening sky since the beginning of the year, passed between the Earth and the Sun last Sunday and now ventures into the morning sky. Early risers may get to see it low in the east early next week.

The Moon is "new" today so we'll start to see it in the evening sky later this week. On Friday evening, a thin crescent Moon can be found low in the west just after sunset.

Mercury will be below the Moon and Mars just to the left of the Moon. Use binoculars as the trio will set in the west not long after the Sun sets. This may be your last chance to see Mars this year, though it

In the night sky

By David Leake



doesn't pass behind the Sun from our point of view for three months!

This Saturday brings us another open house at the CUAS Observatory, located southwest of Willard Airport. Let's hope for clear skies See cuas.org for details and join us! If the weather is uncertain, you

can call our hotline number at 217-351-2567.

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

NFL hopefuls define the meaning of pressure

Pressure pushing down on me

Pressing down on you no man ask for

Under pressure - that burns a building down

— David Bowie & Queen

I have been feeling a bit under the gun at my "real" job lately. By real job, I mean the one where I'm not dumping whatever strange notions that enter my "unique" thought pattern into this column every week.

I'm talking about the one where I'm helping students get their academic journey at Parkland started.

It's back to school time, after all, and my office is seeing a steadily increasing influx

of panicked folks who have waited until the eleventh hour to get their ducks in a row. Truthfully, I tell people that my ducks aren't in a row, but at least they're usually swimming on the same pond, so I get it. It is tough to get everything together and make a huge commitment like attending college.

Then, I started watching a little pre-season NFL football action, and it dawned on me that the pressure I face is nothing compared to the pressure that these young men are facing.

These fellas are playing for the sort of contract that will change the lives of them and their families forever.

Truthfully, it's not the

Hook, Line and Sinker

By Tony Hooker



sort of generational wealth that the stars of the league make, and those players were standing on the sidelines in cool sweatshirts for the most part. As an example, during the game I watched, the Ravens star QB, Lamar Jackson recently signed a \$260 million contract that has over \$135 million in guaranteed

money. That's generational wealth and it has been well earned.

Now, compare and contrast that with Nolan Henderson, an undrafted rookie free agent QB from the University of Delaware. Nolan was with the team for one month and one day, earning around \$3500 for his efforts. Had he stayed on the

roster until opening day, his salary would have gone up to \$875,000, a one thousand percent increase over his training camp wage.

During the preseason, NFL teams can keep 90 players on their roster, mostly to fill in for the established stars during the game. By Aug. 29, that number must be reduced to 53, which means that over 1,000 players will have their NFL dreams extinguished, at least temporarily. So, each mistake they make in practice or preseason games could be the thing that keeps them from that nearly \$1 million payout.

Now that's pressure. The sort of pressure that having to deal with a spooked 18-year-

old potential college student can't even compare to.

People sometimes question why I pay such close attention to meaningless pre-season games in which stars barely play, if at all. That's the reason. I am enthralled by the struggles that those players near the bottom of the roster are going through. The difference between making it or not couldn't be any starker. They're either getting per diem of 1,000 bucks a day, or they're working in retail or something, just a total reversal in life for the player and his family. It's a cruel reality, but it's also fascinating, and I love watching the effort being put forth.

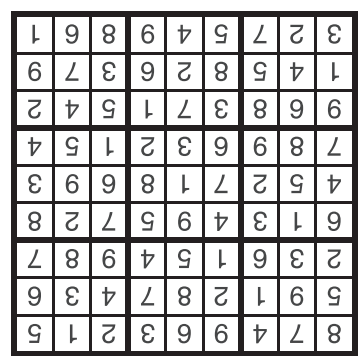
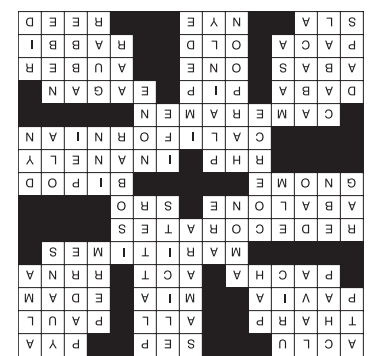
CLUES ACROSS

- Civil rights organization
- Calendar month (abbr.)
- Monetary unit of Burma
- Twyla __, US dancer
- Everything included
- "Antman" actor Rudd
- Italian city
- Nowhere to be found
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
- Turkish officer
- Perform on stage
- Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
- Canadian coastal provinces
- Furnishes anew
- Edible mollusk
- No seats available
- Garden figurine
- Two-legged support

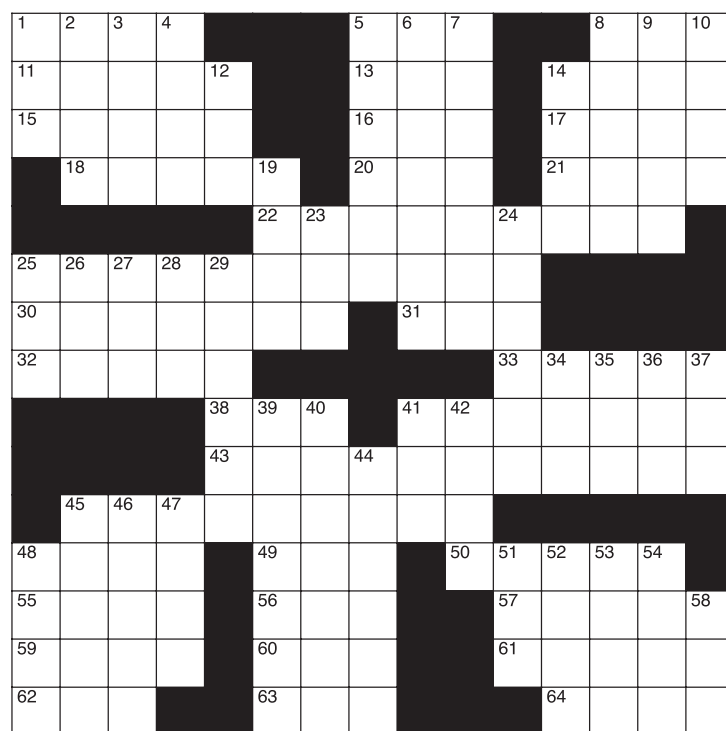
CLUES DOWN

- Defunct US energy company
- Fellow
- Rest here please (abbr.)
- In a silly way
- One from the Golden State
- Photographers
- Native religion in parts of China
- Dickens character
- Broadway actress Daisy
- Ancient Greek sophist
- Undivided
- Daniel __, French composer
- Nocturnal S. American rodent
- Rusty
- Jewish spiritual leader
- Patti Hearst's captors
- Popular global holiday (abbr.)
- Tall, slender plant

SOLUTIONS



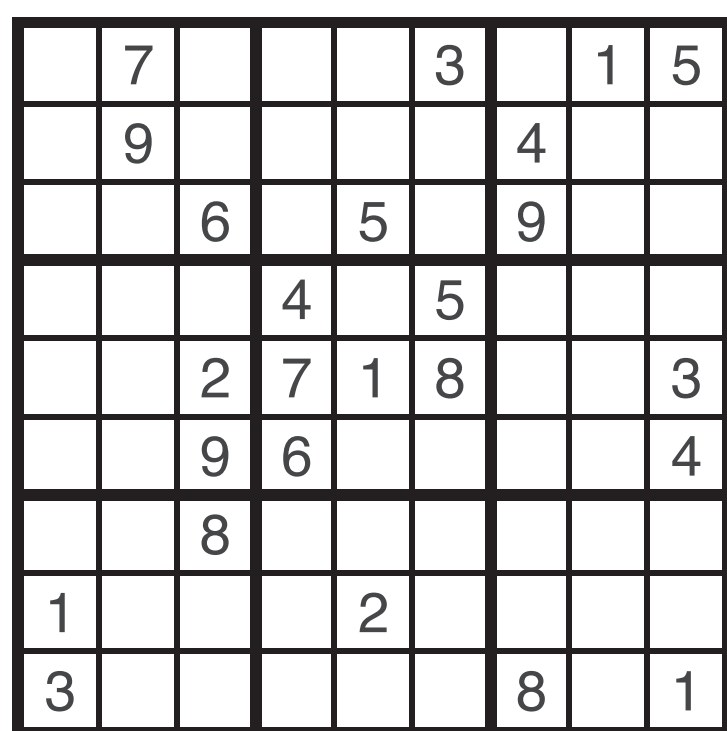
CROSSWORD



- It's issued from volcanoes
- Type of acid
- Winged nut
- Arouses
- Things are served on it
- San Diego ballplayer
- Currency and a Chinese dynasty
- __ mater, one's school
- Exclamation that denotes disgust

- Hairstyle
- Supreme ancient Egyptian god
- They __
- Connecting line on a map
- Mock
- One point north of due east
- Chinese philosophical principle
- Type of tree
- Persuade to do something

SUDOKU



- A place for travelers to rest
- National Gallery of Art designer
- Panamaniaan province
- Field force unit (abbr.)
- Whalers' tool
- Simply
- Nigerian City
- Not one
- Obstruct

- Political plot
- Manila hemp plant
- Dough made from corn flour
- Fishes by letting the bob fly
- Swiss river
- Plant that makes gum
- A French abbot
- One point east of northeast
- Get free of