

Columns

Spinning the nightly 'Wheel of Misfortune'

One of the fun and fascinating things about growing into the gray age is never knowing from day to day what part of your body is going to rebel. It's like waking up every morning to a game show called Where Do I Ache Today?

We should develop odds for us old people so we can at least wager on our own discomfort. You might think I'd have the inside track to bet on my own pain, but if you knew the night before where you were going to hurt tomorrow, where's the fun in that?

Ramblin' Man By David Porter



Maybe there could be a series of wheels we could spin. Category one is a type of pain. Does it burn, bruise, bleed or blister? Then we spin the "where wheel" — arms, legs,

torso, head, hands or feet? Is it an external or internal pain? And where does the pain level fall on the Richter scale?

If our combined spins accurately predict tomorrow's

aches and pains, we should get free Medicare for a year. Or a new car.

If we knew where these bumps and bruises came from, we might be able to prevent them. I can't remember where I set my glasses down; do you think I'm going to remember where I smacked my elbow?

Sometimes, I have a pretty good idea why my back aches or my legs are sore. It usually has something to do with physical work the day before. And that is why I try to avoid physical work.

Other times, it's not clear at all. You just wake up with it. It's awfully hard to sprain your arm in your sleep, but I've done it.

Today's malady is on my shoulder. I thought it was just a patch of dry skin, but today, it looks more like a friction burn.

We're all familiar with rug burns even though the days of earning them are long gone. That's what it looks like: a rug burn. I don't remember skidding shoulder-first onto a rug lately. Or hoisting anything

heavy. I don't shoulder enough responsibility for it to leave a mark.

It's just one of those great geriatric mysteries. I'll spin the wheel of misfortune again tonight and see what tomorrow brings.

© Copyright 2022 by David Porter who can be reached at porter@ramblinman.us. I hope it's not constipation again. No, Pat Sajak, I don't want to buy a vowel; I want a viable bowel. 2023 Best Humorous Column, National Newspaper Association.

Red cabbage an unusual addition to jelly recipe

I have written of a few of my kitchen mishaps, and now I have one to share that comes from Barb Kahl of Greenfield. She tells of one experience with making her own jelly.

"Having a variety of berries in my freezer, I decided to throw them all together and make Very Berry Jelly. I sent my husband out to the garage to get the berries. He told me he found a package of blueberries in the freezer and did I want them in the jelly. We decided to leave them in the freezer. My berries were frozen with no liquid so we put them in a big pan and put a little water on them. When I stirred them

I thought I had too much water, so I told Ed to go out to get the blueberries and we threw them in. Next time I stirred it, I found out it wasn't blueberries, it was red cabbage! I went on and made 6 batches of jelly and it was the best jelly I ever made! My family, friends and neighbors all loved it."

Barb, I am so glad your jelly turned out so well in spite of the cabbage! I wonder if you told people there was cabbage in the jelly before or after they tried it... Thank you so much for sharing this story.

I recently tried a new recipe for brined pork chops that turned out pretty good. When

I made this, I halved the recipe as I was only fixing two pork chops, and it was plenty of brine. This recipe calls for bone-in pork chops.

Brined Pork Chops

- 1 gallon water
- 1 cup kosher salt
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 c. garlic cloves, smashed
- 1/4 cup whole peppercorns
- 4 bay leaves
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- butter, at room temperature

In a large saucepan, combine all the ingredients except the butter. Bring to a boil, cook for 10 minutes uncovered. Let cool to room temperature.

Let's Cook By Linda Hoskins



Place pork chops in a large plastic bag or bowl. Add the brine. Refrigerate for at least 12 hours up to 24 hours.

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Place a cast iron skillet (or oven proof skillet) in the oven to get very hot. Place skillet on stove over medium heat, sear

pork chops both sides until a medium to crust forms. Place in the oven for 8 to 10 minutes until the meat thermometer reaches 145 degrees. Place butter on hot chops, spread evenly. Let rest for 8 to 10 minutes.

The above recipe does call

for a lot of garlic. I did not have enough garlic on hand, so I used about half of what it called for. Because I did that, I mixed some garlic powder into the butter before basting the chops. The pork chops had a nice flavor with a touch of sweetness. This won't be my favorite way to fix chops, but it is nice for a change from my usual recipes.

If you have a recipe or funny story to share, please send it to letscook@heraldpubs.com or mail to Mascoutah Herald, PO Box C, Mascoutah IL 62258. Thanks and as always, Happy Cooking!

Paying the bill can involve gamemanship

It seems to me to be an age-old dilemma. When several friends or family members go out to eat, how do you ask for the check? Sometimes, the people I am with have no problem explaining to the waiter/waitress how the check should be divided, and my fellow diners will point to their spouse and say, "My check is separate and will include me and her" (while pointing to his wife). I have several friends who have been very successful in business and have accumulated sufficient funds to be able to pick up the tab before I can raise any objection and they pride themselves on helping the less fortunate (me).

There are times when two couples or several guys go out together and agree to split the bill in half, with each person

So there I was By Pete Buckley



(or one person from each couple) handing over a credit card to have the restaurant utilize their math skills to make the necessary adjustments.

When I worked in Chicago, there would be times when a lot of law enforcement officers (8-10) from various agencies assigned to a task force would meet for lunch or dinner after a long day. Some hungry officers would suggest we pay by doing a "New York Split." A

New York split is when a group of people (usually guys) get together at a meal and decide to split the meal ticket evenly between however many people ate. This would lead some task force officers to order large meals of steak and potatoes with shrimp cocktail and maybe Baked Alaska for dessert because it was likely that this person would be paying less than they normally would since there was a good chance

several members of the group would order less expensive food or lesser amounts of food.

I distinctly recall one poor Chicago Police Officer (who apparently did not understand what a New York split was) ordering a tuna sandwich and a glass of water and his bill was \$35. He was so mad that he almost took out his handgun and fired a few rounds through the roof.

Recently, a good friend named Gene, and his wife, visited us here in Central Illinois and we went out to dinner. This guy is my best friend who attended high school with me and became my roommate in college. Gene is smart as a whip and after graduation, he worked his way up to become the president of an insurance

company and wound up living in a high-rise condo on Chicago's Gold Coast. Over the years I have known him, Gene has bought me approximately one million meals and I suspect that he includes me as a dependent on his income taxes.

I made a vow to myself that no matter what, I was going to pay for his dinner when we went out to eat. After arriving at the restaurant and being shown our seats, I excused myself, telling Gene that I was going to visit the restroom. However, I surreptitiously made a beeline for our waiter, a 17-year-old kid who looked like Tatum Channing.

After telling Tatum my plan, he agreed to place the bill for this evening's festivities in my hand after the meal was finished. Feeling smug, I went

back to our table and gorged myself since I had no feelings of guilt, knowing I would be paying for the meal. Well, at the end of the meal, Tatum came smiling to our table and announced in a loud voice that we should take our time finishing our meal, but whenever we were ready, we could pay the check and, with two hands, he laid down a silver tray containing the bill on the table between me and Gene.

I was speechless, and as a grunt escaped from my mouth, Tatum glanced at me, and immediately realized his mistake, forgetting everything we had talked about. I attempted to retrieve the tray. However, by this time, Gene had already snatched the check and placed his credit card on the silver tray. One million and one.

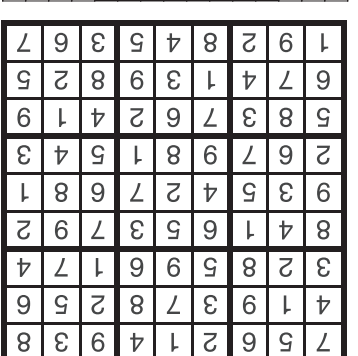
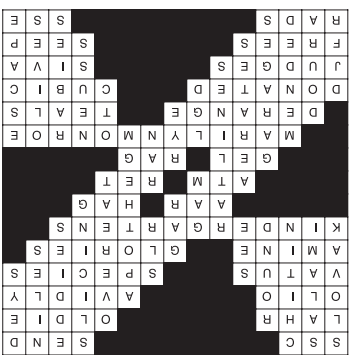
PUZZLES

CROSSWORD CLUES

CLUES ACROSS

1. Outsourcing (abbr.)
4. Post
8. German city on edge of Black Forest
10. "___ but goodie"

SOLUTIONS

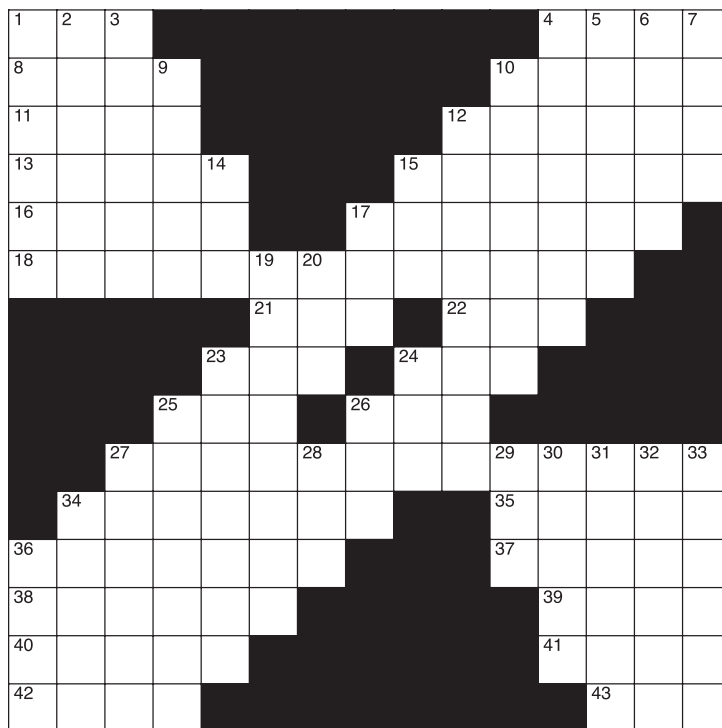


11. Spiced stew
12. Passionately
13. Monetary units
15. Group of living organisms
16. Organic compound derived from ammonia
17. High honors
18. 5-year-olds' classes
21. Swiss river
22. Old woman
23. Cash machine
24. A way to soak
25. Hair product
26. Deride
27. "The Blonde Bombshell"
34. Cause to become insane
35. Bluish greens
36. Supported with money
37. Type of equation
38. Court officials
39. Indian god
40. Rids
41. Leak slowly through
42. Units of ionizing radiation
43. Midway between south and southeast

CLUES DOWN

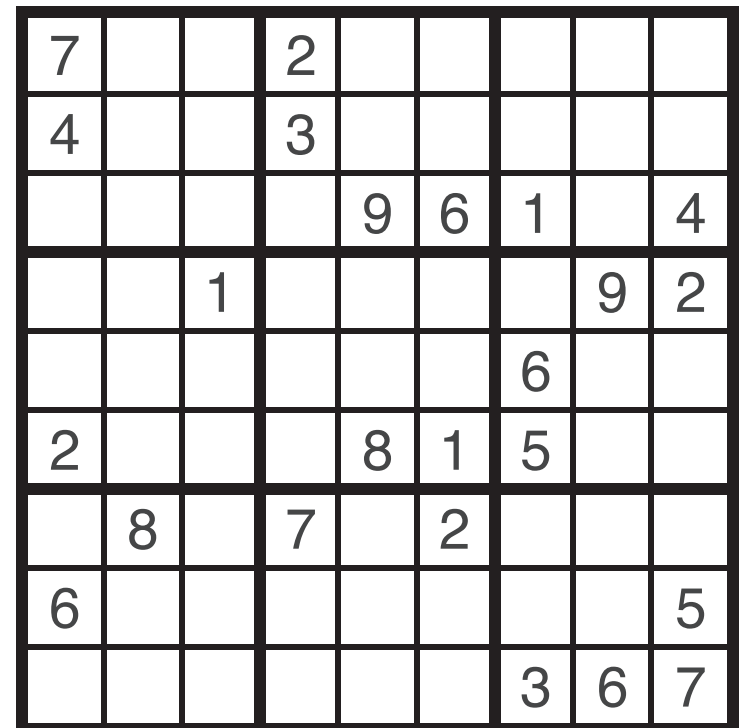
1. Native of Slovakia
2. Deli meat

CROSSWORD



3. Fibrous substance in fungi
4. Cutting
5. Vedder and Van Halen
6. Horror comic novelist
7. Rulers of Tunis
9. Shaped like a circle
10. Make a pig of oneself
12. Aphorism
14. Witness
15. Single Lens Reflex
17. Freshwater North American fish
19. Nautical ropes
20. Leg (slang)

SUDOKU



23. Pokes holes in
24. Moved quickly on foot
25. Fix-it shops
26. Type of bread
27. Repaired
28. Synthetic diamond (abbr.)
29. Type of drug (abbr.)
30. German city along the Rhine
31. Animal disease
32. Martini necessities
33. Get away from
34. Village in Mali
36. Djibouti franc