

# Good News

JULY 2021



## Don't kiss chickens

New fowl advice from the Centers for Disease Control is evidently necessary. Don't kiss chickens, they say. Not even snuggly little chicks and ducklings. It seems that kissing fowl has foul consequences.

According to the New York Times, the warning is due to a salmonella outbreak linked to backyard poultry, with 163 illnesses and 34 hospitalizations in 43 states.

Keeping poultry at home in a backyard coop is fine, according to the CDC, but owners should wash hands for 20 seconds after contact with birds and related supplies and not allow small children to touch them.

While stories abound about people who have a chicken as a pet, those who have owned chickens as a hobby may not be inclined to kiss them anyway. "They can be jerks," said one coop owner.

## Lumber prices rise as production ramps up

Anyone looking to build or renovate a home has quickly encountered the latest sticker shock item: lumber.

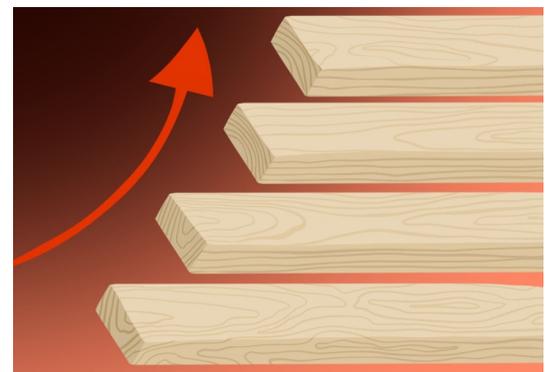
Lumber prices have tripled in the past year, adding nearly \$36,000 to the cost of a new home. In late April, the National Association of Home Builders said the price of framing lumber was approximately \$1,200 per thousand board feet -- compared to \$350 per thousand board feet in April 2020.

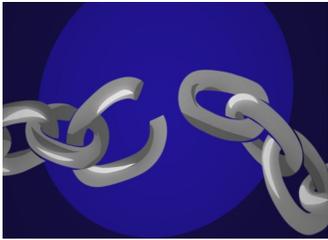
What happened? A number of things. Consumer demand went up last year as people who were stuck at home undertook DIY projects in droves. Lumber mills shut down early in the pandemic.

As they reopened, they ramped up production and are running at full capacity, according to the Wall Street Journal.

And there were other factors already at play, including increased demand from millennial buyers in their home-buying peak, record low interest rates and international trade policies. All of these elements and more combined to create the jump in prices.

Consumers are handling the price increase in a number of ways, including delaying projects or reducing square footage, as well as looking for savings in finish materials or appliances. Now that wood production has increased, experts expect prices to come down, though perhaps not back to pre-pandemic levels.





## Supply chain woes still stall production

The microcomputer shortage is still stalling production and delivery of new cars, phones and even dishwashers, causing prices to rise, experts say.

It's just one of the latest issues affecting the global supply chain, which experienced a variety of challenges over the past year and a half.

The microchips at first affected new car prices, but the pinch has now spread to consumer electronics, whose popularity surged during the pandemic.

Although tech companies were initially able to purchase semiconductors that the closed-down car factories couldn't use, both industries are now in line for the chips and supply can't keep up with demand.

Other supply chain issues include transport -- the shipping industry hasn't had enough containers, which drove transport prices up.

Food prices climbed 3.5 percent from March 2020 to March 2021. Gas prices are also on the rise.

Some challenges, like those with the chips and in

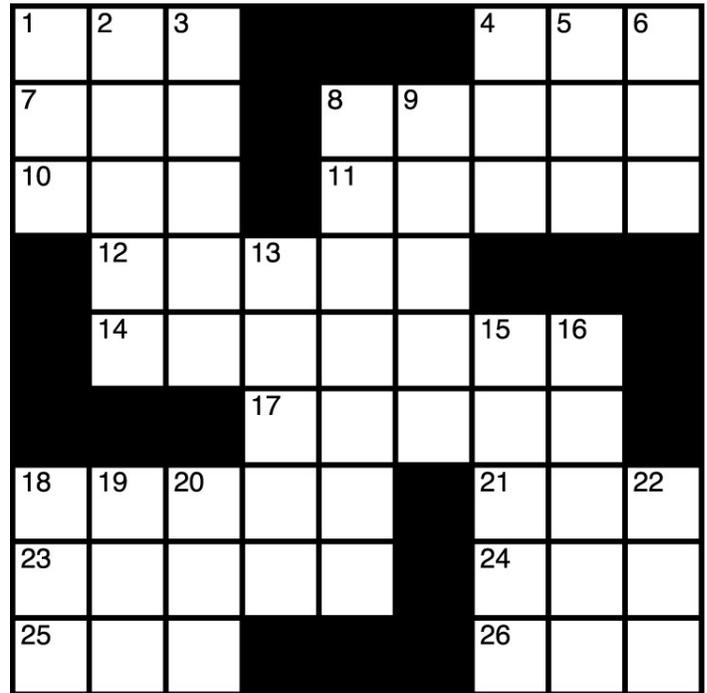
## Scary Stingers

### Across

1. Bro's sib
4. Pindaric lines
7. Roleplay
8. An assembly of witches
10. Court
11. Approves
12. \_\_ Ray, film
14. Skidded
17. Nigerian monetary unit
18. Pretend
21. Globe
23. Impatient
24. Genetic material
25. Bustle
26. Double curve

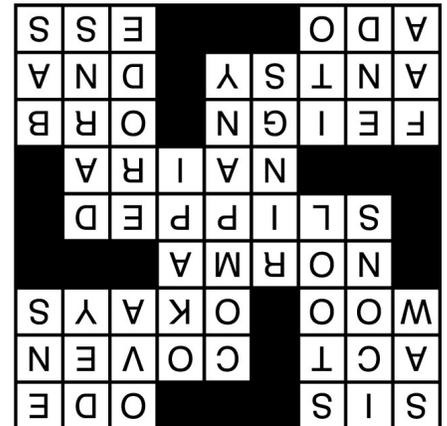
### Down

1. I came, I \_\_, I conquered
2. Images
3. Bar seat
4. Egg cell
5. Actress Susan \_\_
6. USNA grad
8. Business
9. Giraffe's cousin
13. Jewelry
15. Eat away



16. Mends socks
18. Flying gr.
19. Terminate
20. Japanese prime minister
22. Undergraduate degs.

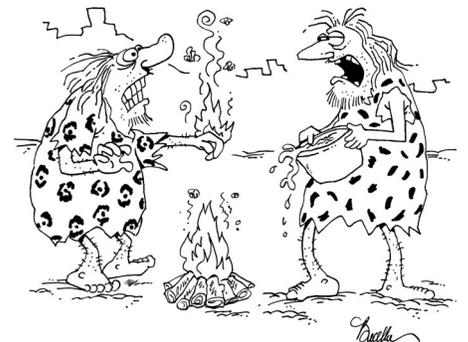
*The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.*



the lumber industry, can be attributed to more than just the pandemic -- tariffs and extreme weather among them -- though most experts agree that the pandemic has amplified or accelerated those issues.

The good news?

Although lumber and microchips may be in short supply until 2022, many supply chain problems are beginning to ease up, in part due to factories reopening and employees returning to work.



"Are you the party who called tech support?"

## The national happy march satisfies the urge to conduct the band

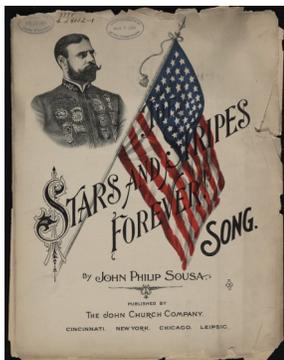
If you are older, you may not have heard it for a while. If you are younger, you may never have heard it.

Either way, on July 4, find *The Stars & Stripes Forever* and listen. You'll want to conduct the band with abandon and smash the air cymbals. It's a giant, jubilant march, with stirring lyrics which, for fun, you can also substitute for a duck song (Be kind to your web-footed friends...).

John Philip Sousa -- Marine, musician and band leader -- was returning to the United States from a vacation in Italy in 1896.

It was Christmas Day and from the deck of an ocean liner, he heard the march in his head.

"Suddenly, I began to sense the rhythmic beat of a band playing within my brain," Sousa wrote in his autobiography *Marching Along*. "I did not transfer a note of that music to paper while I was on the steamer, but when we reached shore I set down the measures that my brain-band had been playing for me, and not a note of it has ever changed."



The song repeats melodies in sections, called strains, using different instruments to repeat and lead. So the song begins with a hearty introduction by the horns with great smashing on drums, followed by the melody. Woodwinds repeat, and later, the famous response of the piccolos. The trombones thunder in with a bold counter melody.

While it is the official national march of the United States, the tune has also been adopted by soccer fans in the UK, sung as 'Here We Go,' once called a working class march.

One strange *Stars & Stripes Forever* fact: Circuses in the early 20th century loved to fire up the crowd with march music, but they never played *The Stars & Stripes Forever*. This tune was a secret signal, only played when a life-threatening disaster was imminent. When they heard it, emergency personnel would quietly disperse the crowd, not always successfully.

### Whispers of SBA COVID-19 fraud abound

In a dark bar, one guy whispers that all you have to do is make up a business and get \$10,000.

Years earlier, in an office, a man with a drug problem has a failing business and misrepresents his business on SBA loan papers after Sept. 11, 2001.

Two years later, he is in federal prison. That is the real case of Jeff Grant, a former lawyer, who told his story to *Entrepreneur* magazine.

He issues cautions: Don't lie to the SBA and don't think that the rules are suspended in times of emergency. Grant says that even state unemployment websites give written instructions on how to mislead the government. Don't lie about your location. Don't misuse the money.

In the case of current SBA loans, lots of restrictions apply. Beware that loans over \$25,000 require collateral. Don't spend SBA money on personal debts.



## The magical story of Romeo still tugs at Alaska's heart

A magical thing happened in Juneau, Alaska, 18 years ago, and as with most magical things, some people loved it and some hated it. But it's a true story of a solitary wolf who wanted to be friends.

His name was Romeo, a black wolf who is now a legend. He was a rare creature: Wild but friendly, alone and in search of friends, a player of games, a curious visitor and, ultimately, a target.

This story began in 2003, when Nick and Sherrie Jans were walking their dogs across a frozen Alaskan lake. Suddenly, a black wolf appeared. Jans wasn't surprised. He had seen wolf tracks in the snow. But now their labrador broke free and ran to the wolf. While the couple held their breath, the dog slid across the ice toward the wolf ... and then? Wolf and dog sniffed and bowed in that iconic canine way. It was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

During the next six years, Romeo visited his dog friends, appearing frequently, sometimes disappearing for weeks at a time. The humans didn't feed him, but Romeo played with their dogs, dancing and chasing -- and scaring up a controversy.

Not everyone welcomed a wolf in the neighborhood. Someone tried to trap him, another tried to poison him. His human friends rallied to protect him.

Speculation arose that he was a wolf without a pack because his mate had been killed. Maybe his mate had been the pregnant wolf killed by a car around the same time Romeo appeared.

Whatever Romeo's story -- no one really knows -- in September 2009, he disappeared and never returned. Romeo's friend Harry Robinson discovered that Romeo had been shot at point-blank range -- easy to get close to a friendly animal. Robinson tracked down the killers.

Sorrow and anger roiled the community. Jans, a wildlife photographer and expert on the Alaskan wilderness, wrote a book, *A Wolf Called Romeo*, detailing the incredible story. (Web: [nickjans.com](http://nickjans.com))

Today, after a seven-year struggle, a memorial is finally displayed at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center, where you can see Romeo, relaxed and noble and ready to play with your dog.



Dogs can suffer in scorching heat. Dogs need walks every day, but be sure to protect them so they don't get overheated or burned.

1. Look for shady and grassy routes.

You and your dog will both enjoy sunny days, especially if you make sure not to walk the dog on blistering hot sidewalks. If blacktop and concrete are hot enough to burn your feet, it burns just as hot on your dog's unprotected pads. A walk shouldn't be torture.

2. Bring water.

You and your dog need to stay hydrated. For long walks, collapsible dog water bowls are lightweight and the perfect way to give your dog a drink during the outing. If you can't bring water along, be sure to immediately offer water after a walk.

3. Flat-faced breeds overheat easily.

According to BeChewy, French bulldogs, boxers and pugs need extra care because their short snouts make panting less effective, thus overheating the dog. Senior dogs also need water and a cool place to rest and walk.

4. White dogs need sunscreen.

Dogs with short, white fur can get sunburned and it hurts just as much as your sunburn. Apply sunscreen to their backs. Dog-friendly sunscreen is available.

5. Never leave a dog or any animal outside with no water.

When dogs drink, they lift water into their mouths with their tongue. A little saliva stays in the water bowl. So the bowl can appear somewhat full, but it isn't fresh. Make sure dogs have fresh water at all times. No dog should be tied outside during the hottest days of summer.

