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Readers Weekly  
Nationwide  
February 23rd,  
2026

# TIDBITS

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## TIDBITS READS SOME FAVORITE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

by Kathy Wolfe

This week, Tidbits explores the history of several memorable and beloved children's books.

- British author Michael Bond conceived the idea of Paddington Bear from a teddy bear he saw on a shelf in a London shop on Christmas Eve, 1956. He purchased the bear, of which he said, "it looked rather forlorn," as a gift for his wife. The bear inspired him to write a story, which he finished in 10 days. Bond designed the bear wearing a blue coat and a red floppy hat, always carrying a jar of marmalade in his suitcase. As Bond lived near Paddington Station, he named the bear Paddington. In the story, the bear is discovered at the station by the Brown family, who saw a label around its neck reading, "Please look after this bear. Thank you." Bond had conceived the idea of the label for the bear after seeing hundreds of European Jewish refugee children arriving in London during World War II and being evacuated to the English countryside, all bearing tags around their neck with their name and address. There have been 29 Paddington Bear books about his adventures across London, with the final one published a year after Bond's 2017 death. There are several Paddington statues scattered across the city, the most notable one in the station itself, and another in L. London's Leicester Square.

(story time cont. on page 2)

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bookmark?  
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# CHILDREN'S BOOKS

(cont. from Front Cover)

• Author illustrator Don Freeman had a vision of a picture book with a character that roams a department store after hours, and created “Corduroy” the bear in 1968, giving him that name because it was his son Roy’s nickname. In his story, the stuffed bear sits on a shelf for months waiting for someone to take home, but his green overalls are missing a button which makes him less than perfect. After hearing the mother of a little girl named Lisa pointing out the missing button, once the store closes, Corduroy sets out on the search for a button in various departments. His quest ends when a night watchman sets him back on the shelf. But the next morning, Lisa is back with money from her piggy bank and takes him home, where she sews a new button on his overalls. Don Freeman penned a sequel “A Pocket for Corduroy,” which was published in 1978, but unfortunately, Freeman had passed away before he could see it in print.

**TIPBITS**  
**NUGGET OF KNOWLEDGE**  
 The name Janette Sebring Lowrey is not well-known, but one of her books certainly is. “The Poky Little Puppy” was the best-selling children’s book of the 20th century, with 15 million copies sold between 1942 and 2001, more than any Dr. Seuss favorite. It was also the one-billionth Little Golden Book printed.

75 years  
 Still Golden



• “Babar the Elephant” stories had their origins in a story that French author Jean de Brunhoff’s wife Cecile invented for their children. When the mother of the young African elephant is killed by a hunter, Babar escapes the jungle, making his way to a city, where he is helped by the “Old Lady,” who introduces him to civilization and clothes him in a bright green suit. When the jungle’s King of the Elephants dies of eating a poisonous mushroom, Babar returns and is crowned as the new King. The first “Babar” book was published in France in 1931, with the English version following in 1933. Jean de Brunhoff wrote and illustrated seven “Babar” books before his tragic death at age 37 from tuberculosis. His son Laurent took over the series, writing 37 more stories from 1948 to 2017.

(cont. on page 3)



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## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

(cont. from page 2)

• Stan and Jan Berenstain met at a Philadelphia art school during World War II, and following their marriage in 1946, they had a joint career in cartoon illustrating and creating cover art for magazines such as "McCall's," "Good Housekeeping," and "The Saturday Evening Post." In 1962, their first children's book, "The Big Honey Hunt," featuring a family of bears that lived in a treehouse in Bear Country, was published. Hundreds of titles followed, with stories inspired by the experiences of their own family, all designed to help children navigate through life's challenges, including fear of the doctor, of Kindergarten, and ghosts. The books taught honesty, kindness, responsibility, safety, and other family values. Following the death of Stan and Jan, their son Mike took over the series and continues to release Berenstain titles. There have been more than 400 titles, with 260 million copies in 23 languages in print. The books have been adapted into two different animated TV series, five TV specials, and 19 video games, and have even had their likenesses featured on postage stamps.

• P. D. Eastman had worked in Walt Disney's animation department, Warner Brothers' cartoon unit, and as an artist for the "Mr. Magoo" series before becoming the author of 21 children's books, including "Go, Dog, Go!," "Big Dog... Little Dog," and the beloved favorite "Are You My Mother?" Published in 1960, "Are You My Mother?" is the story of a hatchling bird looking for his mother. The bird hatches while Mother Bird is seeking food, and goes looking for her, asking a kitten, a hen, a dog, and a cow if they are his mother. He then moves on to inanimate objects including a boat, an airplane, and a steam shovel that finally deposits the bird back into the nest. Eastman was a protégé of Dr. Seuss, who enlisted him to write for Seuss' "Beginner Books" series.

• After viewing a documentary about Admiral Byrd's Antarctic expedition in 1932, Richard Atwater was inspired to pen a children's book he called "Ork! The Story of Mr. Popper's Penguins." Before he could wrap up the manuscript, the 42-year-old Atwater suffered a stroke in 1934, which left him unable to speak or write. His wife Florence revised the manuscript and entitled it "Mr. Popper's Penguins," the story of a humble house painter living in 1930s Stillwater, Minnesota. After listening to a radio program about an Admiral's Antarctic adventures, Mr. Popper sends him a fan letter. The Admiral responds by sending Mr. Popper a live penguin. The Popper family cleans out their icebox and houses the penguin there, but after a time, the penguin, Captain Cook, becomes lonely. A female companion seems to be the answer, and before long, there are 12 penguins to feed. The story continues with Mr. Popper's attempts to train his penguins as circus performers due to dwindling finances.

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• In 1942, Western Publishing released 12 new children's books under the series name "Little Golden Books." Each book contained 42 pages, printed in either two or four colors. The first offering included such favorites as "Scuffy the Tugboat," "Three Little Kittens," "This Little Piggy," "Nursery Songs," and "Mother Goose." Within five months, 1.5 million copies had been sold. The price was 25 cents and remained so until 1962, when it was raised to 29 cents. Over the years, fairy tales and bedtime stories expanded into popular characters such as Mario, Sonic the Hedgehog, Barbie, Disney princesses, and Thomas the Tank Engine. The price of a Little Golden Book is now \$5.99.



This week, Tidbits invites you to explore the origins of the most popular puzzle of all times, conceived by a 30-year-old Hungarian in 1974.

- Erno Rubik was working at the Academy of Applied Arts and Crafts in Budapest, Hungary in 1974, attempting to help his students understand 3D objects by developing a mechanical puzzle of moving parts. He had spent months experimenting with wood and paper blocks, rubber bands and paper clips before settling on a cube with nine colored squares on each side in six different colors – red, green, yellow, orange, blue, and white.

- The cube was held together by an internal pivoting mechanism that enabled each of the layers to turn independently to mix up the colors. The object of the cube was to return each side to just one color. Rubik did such a good job of creating a difficult puzzle, he had no idea how to solve it himself, and it took him a month to figure it out. In his words, "I was without any background for that, because I was the first who tried."

- Rubik applied for and was granted a Hungarian patent for his "spatial logic toy" that he called the "Magic Cube" in 1975. It appeared in Hungarian toy stores in 1977 and it was licensed to be sold by Pentangle Puzzles in the U.K. in 1978. When the cube was featured at an international toy fair in 1979, it was noticed by an entrepreneur and marketer, Tom Kremer, who presented the idea to the U.S. company, Ideal Toy. The Rubik's Cube was released internationally in 1980, and was an immediate success.

- The Rubik's Cube started out with a 3 x 3 x 3 design, and has expanded to 4 x 4 x 4 and 5 x 5 x 5 versions. The total number of potential arrangements of the standard Rubik's Cube is about 43 quintillion.

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February 15th, 2026

Go Figure!

answers					
3	-	1	÷	2	= 1
+		+		+	
6	-	4	×	8	= 16
+		÷		-	
7	-	5	+	9	= 11
=		=		=	
16		1		1	

- In 1981, the Rubik's Cube was the cover story in "Scientific American," and was called "one of the most amazing things ever invented for teaching mathematical ideas." It was Erno Rubik's belief that his invention would appeal to people with science, math, or engineering training, and was astounded that its effect was so widespread.

- Because there is a certain sequence of movements to be performed in successive order, most people could only solve one or two sides. As a result, several books and tutorials were published on how to do it, including 1981's best-selling "The Simple Solution to Rubik's Cube," which sold upwards of 6 million copies. In 2020, Erno Rubik published a new book "Cubed: The Puzzle of Us All," in which he details the cube's development and its massive success and impact on the world.

- The world's first international Rubik's Cube championship occurred in 1982 in Budapest, introducing the concept of "speedcubing," the practice of solving the puzzle in the shortest time possible. That first contest resulted in a winner with a time of 22.95 seconds. There are now many speedcubing competitions worldwide. The world record is 3.05 seconds for a 3x3x3 cube.

- The Knoxville, Tennessee World's Fair held in 1982 boasted the world's largest Rubik's Cube, which stands 10 feet (3.048 m) tall and weighs 1,200 lbs. (544.3 kg). This cube can still be seen inside the city's Convention Center.

- Erno Rubik's patent expired in 2000, paving the way for knock-offs to appear, particularly from Chinese companies. The Cube remains the world's best-selling puzzle game as well as the world's best-selling toy, with estimated sales exceeding 500 million since its launch.



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### By the Numbers

This week, Tidbits revs up to study the data on the number of cars around the world.

\* How many cars are there in the world? As of the close of 2024, there were about 1.475 billion vehicles on Earth, with about 19% of those in the United States. North America has about 359 million vehicles, 710 vehicles per 1,000 people, 24% of the world's total. Asia has 543 million vehicles, and Europe claims 413 million.

\* There are approximately 132.8 households in the United States, of which 121.6 million have a car, and more than 10 million households have no car, about 8%. In 2025, there were about 298.7 million registered vehicles in the U.S., up from 296.6 million in 2024.

\* Northeastern U.S. states, including New York, Massachusetts, and New Jersey have the nation's lowest car ownership statistics. Only 29% of New York households own a car, only 58 registered vehicles per 100 people. The state of Montana has the most vehicles per 100 residents in the nation, 184 registered vehicles per 100, more than triple the rate of New York, nearly two vehicles per resident. South Dakota and Wyoming round out the top three for most registered vehicles per 100 residents. Now contrast these figures with the number of vehicles in Africa's Democratic Republic of Congo - about 4 vehicles per 1,000 people and Pakistan with 20 per 1,000 population.

\* There is only one country in the world that registers more than one car per person. The tiny nation of San Marino, a landlocked country completely surrounded by Italy, has a land area of just over 23.5 square miles (61 sq. km), and a population of 34,042. Yet this fifth-smallest country in the world has about 1,300 vehicles per 1,000 people, more than 1.3 per person.

\* When the rates of vehicle ownership are determined, "Cars in the U.S." includes cars, trucks, SUVs, and vans. America's best-selling vehicle for the past 49 years has been the Ford F-series truck, with sales approaching 1.6 million trucks for the year 2025. Compare this figure with the Chevrolet Silverado, with about 285,000 units sold.

\* And what about the world's largest automaker? It's Toyota, which corners over 11% of all global car sales. Toyota's best-selling car for 2025 was the Rav 4, with sales of over 2.1 million cars through October 2025, the world's top-selling vehicle. It was followed closely by the Toyota Corolla at 1.9 million units. Overall in history, the Corolla has had more sales than any other vehicle, with sales upwards of 50 million cars since its introduction in 1966.

\* From the inception of the Ford Model T in 1908 until production ceased in 1927, the Model T had experienced sales of more than 15 million cars during its 19 years. On February 17, 1972, Volkswagen rolled its 15,007,034th Beetle off the assembly line, breaking a record held by the Model T for 45 years. In 1981, the Beetle became the first car to reach the milestone of 20 million units sold worldwide



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In 1994, the company revealed its "New Beetle," five years before the original prototype was discontinued. When Volkswagen ceased production of the Beetle in 2019, upwards of 23 million Beetles had been sold. The Corolla bypassed the Beetle in 2021.

\* Volkswagen continues to be #2 in global sales, but is solidly in first place in Europe, with a market share of about 25% there.



**TIDBITS Laughs!**

What king of medieval England was famous because he spent so many nights at his Round Table writing books?  
**King Author!**



February 15th, 2026

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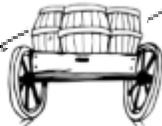
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answer

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**THIS WEEK'S  
CELEBRITY  
BIRTHDAYS**



Drew Barrymore	02/22/75
Emily Blunt	02/23/83
Barry Bostwick	02/24/45
Sean Astin	02/25/71
Michael Bolton	02/26/53
Chelsea Clinton	02/27/80
Jason Aldean	02/28/77

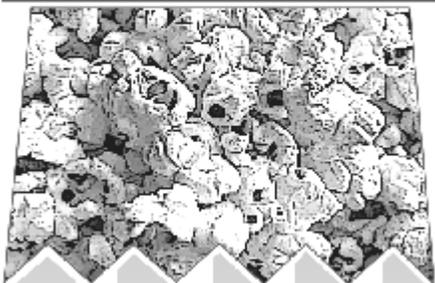
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**Fun Fact**



**Popcorn** is popular at theaters, sporting events, amusement parks, and everywhere else people gather. Most of the world's corn production used for popcorn is in the United States. 25 states grow corn, mostly in the very fertile areas of Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Minnesota and Indiana.

Source: [www.nal.usda.gov](http://www.nal.usda.gov)

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**Salome's Stars**



**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19) Yours is one of the most potent good-luck signs of the Zodiac. And this week you'll get some news that reinforces why this is so. A loved one shares in the good tidings.



**TACIRUS** (April 20 to May 20) There's an underlying sense of anger that makes the Divine Bovine see red. Deal with it now before it explodes so that you can avoid more problems from the fallout.



**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20) Even if you don't expect to make a career move anytime soon, investigating an upcoming offer will certainly pay off. Travel arrangements also need to be made soon.



**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22) A friend from the past returns and makes an unsettling demand. Don't allow your emotions to take over. Deal with the situation openly and honestly.



**LEO** (July 23 to August 22) A workplace problem needs more attention before it can be settled. Meanwhile, your financial picture improves, and someone's surprise revelation creates an unusual reaction.



**VIRGO** (August 23 to September 22) Being the sixth sign of the Zodiac makes you more selective than most folks. But you might need to be a mite more flexible about a long-deferred matter.



**LIBRA** (September 23 to October 22) The blame game could get out of hand. All accusations need to be weighed carefully in order to determine what is true and what is potentially harmful innuendo.



**SCORPIO** (October 23 to November 21) A new job could be within your grasp. Be patient and allow the decision-making process to work itself through. On another note, spend more time with loved ones.



**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22 to December 21) Sometimes you might feel like you're not getting your share of life's good things, but prospects open up this week that could make you feel otherwise.



**CAPRICORN** (December 22 to January 19) Patience and understanding finally enable you and a loved one to work out your pesky problems once and for all. Good luck!



**AQUARIUS** (January 20 to February 18) Expect good news from someone whom you thought had forgotten you. This could lead to a change that you had earlier considered but then set aside.



**PISCES** (February 19 to March 20) A romance that seems to be floundering needs tender, loving care if you hope to rescue it. In addition, be prepared to change travel plans as new information emerges.



**BORN THIS WEEK:** You can bring various elements together to create something new and wonderful. No wonder you're considered the Celestial Chemist!

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**February 15th, 2026**

**Stickelers Answer**

The answer is 40293. Take each number, reverse it and add it to itself to get the next number: 45 + 54 = 99. 99 + 99 = 198. 198 + 891 = 1089. 1089 + 9801 = 10890. Repeat these steps and you will arrive at 40293.

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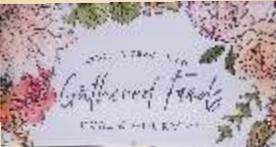
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**Southern start**  
 In Texas, Georgia, Florida and other southern states, February is the start of garden season.

- It's time for southerners to plant root vegetables, including carrots, beets, and onions sets. Plant your peas if you haven't already, and get your cabbages, kales, and broccoli in the ground.
- Cut back ornamental grasses and dead stalks on perennials.
- Transplant snapdragons and pansies. Direct seed poppies and sweet peas.
- Give the compost pile a flip.

Brenda Weiser  
 Source: www.bhg.com



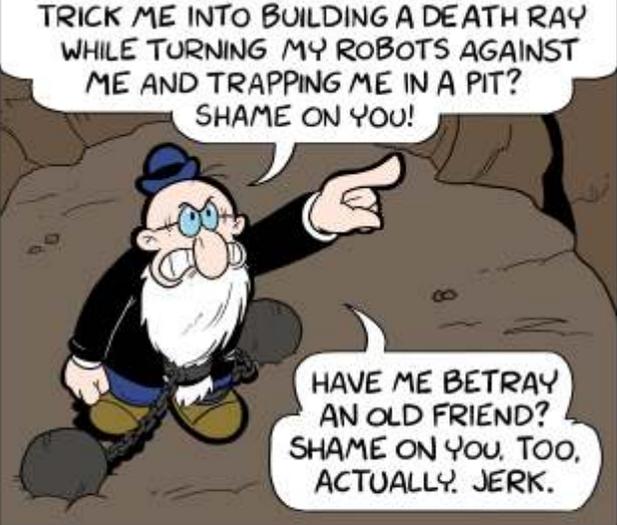
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HAVE ME BETRAY AN OLD FRIEND? SHAME ON YOU, TOO, ACTUALLY. JERK.



I'M BETTING YOU WON'T DO IT 'CUZ YOU DON'T KNOW HOW!



ALAS, VANITY. MY ONLY TRUE WEAKNESS.

I'VE COMPUTED OVER A THOUSAND WEAKNESSES FOR YOU, PROFESSOR.

MAKING MOUTHY, KNOW-IT-ALL ROBOTS... MY OTHER ONLY TRUE WEAKNESS.

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\* **On Feb. 23, 1885**, John Lee went to the gallows in Exeter, England, for allegedly murdering Emma Keyse, a rich older woman who'd employed him. Insisting he was innocent, he was nonetheless convicted and sentenced to hang. However, the lever to release the floor beneath his feet malfunctioned and he didn't drop. Baffled authorities sent him back to prison for the next 22 years, though his death sentence was commuted. Upon his release, he emigrated to America, leaving the cause of his reprieve unsolved.

\* **On Feb. 24, 1961**, the first 15 students received their Bachelor of Hamburgerology degree (not a traditional academic one!) from McDonald's Hamburger University, aka the "Harvard of Fast Food."

\* **On Feb. 25, 1837**, Vermont blacksmith Thomas Davenport received the first U.S. patent for an electric motor. He insulated the wires with strips of fabric from his wife's silk wedding dress (cut by his wife, and with her full approval).

\* **On Feb. 26, 1968**, Allied troops who'd recaptured the imperial capital of Hue from the North Vietnamese during the Tet Offensive found the first mass graves in Hue. Communist troops who had held the city for 25 days had massacred about 2,800 civilians whom they identified as sympathizers with the government in Saigon, and one authority estimated they might have killed as many as 5,700 people in Hue.

\* **On Feb. 27, 1935**, 6-year-old rising Hollywood star Shirley Temple received the first-ever kid-size "juvenile" Oscar, measuring about half the height of a full-size Oscar.

\* **On Feb. 28, 1982**, the J. Paul Getty Museum became the most richly endowed museum in the world when it received a \$1.2 billion bequest left to it by the late J. Paul Getty. A good portion of the endowment went to construct the Getty Center, a six-building complex on a hilltop in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles.

\* **On March 1, 1960**, the first-ever Playboy Club opened its doors in downtown Chicago. Female servers known as "bunnies" were subject to the rules of a 42-page manual threatening demerits for offenses ranging from chewing gum to unkempt bunny tails.

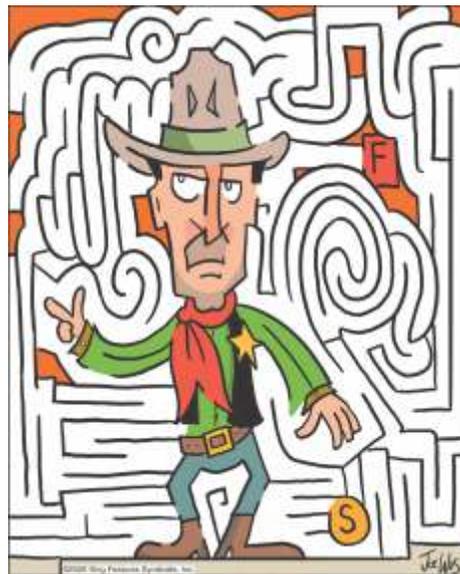
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					Hash house
					Brought on
					Where to find a Baggins
					Top

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## SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦♦

♦ Easy   ♦♦ Medium   ♦♦♦ Difficult

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## BINGO

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## Weekly SUDOKU

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦

♦ Moderate   ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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## GO FIGURE!

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers below only once.

	+		×		=	36		
-		+		+				
	+		+		=	17		
×		-		×				
	+		+		=	15		
=		=		=				
10		11		10				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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## Even Exchange

by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1	Elongated square	B	Amber tea	O
2	Big Ben's home	T	Fence	P
3	He of Importance	A	Grumble softly	U
4	Get used to	A	Take as one's own	O
5	Greasy grunge	M	Complain	P
6	"Purple Rain" artist	I	Carrot	A
7	Nile or Amazon	S	Reporter Gershwin	A
8	Multitude	D	Trigger or Secretariat	S
9	Tailor's work	D	Intimidation	T
10	Pair of Brothers	W	Petals	N

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**SCRAMBLERS**  
Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

King  
HICLAP [ ] [ ] \_ \_ \_ \_

Inset  
ALIYN [ ]

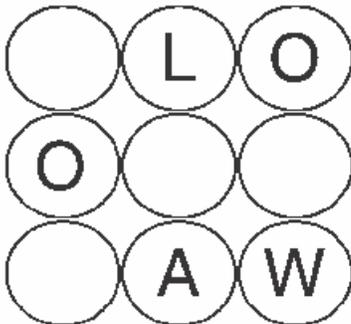
Weight  
REDBUN [ ] \_ \_ \_ [ ]

Felnt  
ODDEG [ ] [ ] [ ]

**TODAY'S WORD**  
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

"First they fill you with chicken, then \_\_\_\_\_."

**WORD SPIRAL**



Fill in the missing letters to reveal the nine-letter word that starts at one of the four corners and moves clockwise around the perimeter before ending in the center.

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**KNIGHT MOVES**

A	A	E
L		C
D	S	O

Unlock the power of chess to find the eight-letter word of the day. Choose your starting letter carefully, then move around the square in a one by two fashion to get to the next letter.

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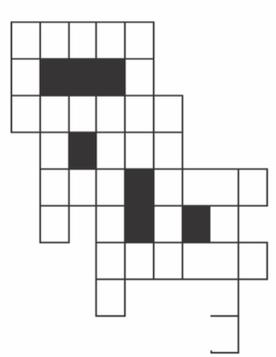
**STICKELERS** (pic)  
by Terry Stickels

Match these baseball greats with their teams (the team where each played most of his career.)

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Ty Cobb           | a. Washington Senators |
| 2. Honus Wagner      | b. Pittsburgh Pirates  |
| 3. Christy Mathewson | c. Detroit Tigers      |
| 4. Walter Johnson    | d. St. Louis Cardinals |
| 5. Rogers Hornsby    | e. New York Giants     |

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**FEAR & KNIGHT**  
By rj Johnson  
DOUBT? ...OR DARE!



AMN  
ARTLEE  
♥NOLRE  
♥ATHE  
PRITMO  
SDI  
VAAL  
HDTIC  
♥APL  
♥HERVIS  
PLIME  
♥DERU

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Each string's word is either across or down to know if twelve strings together.

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**CryptoQuote**

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, and so. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

CIVNMC YU VYBN LSMNT.  
TSJ OSM'IC DIZN CS DIZN  
USLN CS CIVB IGSJC YC.  
— HJVNU ANMIAO

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**February 15th, 2026  
 Puzzle Answers**

**KNIGHT MOVES**  
 Answer

A 5	Y 8	S 3
I 2		L 6
L 7	C 4	F 1

**FISCALLY**

**SCRAMBLERS**  
 solution

1. Agenda; 2. Hoard;  
 3. Gleam; 4. Rapid

**Today's Word  
 LADDER**

**TIDBITS QUOTE**

*"When something bad happens you have three choices. You can either let it define you, destroy you, or you can let it strengthen you."*

~ Dr. Suess

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**Promotional Toys**

Promotional toys have been a popular form of advertising for a long time. The doll pictured here is Bandy, an advertising mascot created for General Electric in the 1920s. Bandy promoted their radios; his name comes from the "big band" jazz music that was popular at the time, even if his colorful uniform and tall hat might be a better fit for leading a marching band.

This example, complete with his baton, sold for \$504 at Donley Auctions. Bandy dolls were 18 inches tall, made of wood and composition with jointed limbs, and appeared in shop window displays with General Electric radios. They were made by the Cameo Doll Company, known for familiar figures like Kewpies and Betty Boop dolls. Designer Joseph Kallus created many of their dolls. His designs for Bandy and his fellow radio advertising mascot, RCA's Radiotron, may have been based on work by illustrator Maxfield Parrish, who designed promotional posters and calendars for General Electric that are highly collectible today.



**Q** I have a picture, probably a lithograph, of a young girl done by a 14th-century artist from Italy. There is an inscription on the back of the picture: "Florentine Master / A Young Lady / About 1460 / Museum Berlin." The picture was passed down to me from my English-American grandmother who traveled widely after having her seven children. She traveled alone throughout Europe and South America during the 1930s. I would love to know the picture's value, other than aesthetic.

**A** Your picture is a copy of a famous portrait from the Italian Renaissance. Sometimes called "Profile Portrait of a Young Lady," it has been copied by many other artists, printed on decorative pieces like ceramic plates and reproduced as a color or black-and-white print. It appears in the reference book "The Picture History of Painting" by H.W. Janson and Dora Jane Janson, first published in 1957. The original painting was acquired by the Gemaldegalerie in Berlin in about 1898 and is still displayed there. The museum attributes it to Piero del Pollaiuolo, who was active in Florence, Italy, in the 1400s, but some historians believe it was painted by another artist, possibly Piero's brother Antonio. Your grandmother may have purchased her copy as a souvenir during her travels in Europe. The Gemaldegalerie licensed copies painted in oil on plywood in the early to mid-20th century. One sold at a European auction a few years ago for the equivalent of about \$750 in U.S. currency. Vintage prints sell for less, about \$100 to \$200.



**TIP:** Repainting an antique doll's head never adds to the value.

**CURRENT PRICES**

**Shaving mug**, occupational, woodworker, in shop, multicolor scene, gilt lettering, marked, T & V Limoges, 3 1/2 inches, \$60.

**Lamp**, electric, banker's, green shade, cased glass, metal base, fluted column, ridged dome foot, scalloped edge, c. 1920, 7 1/2 x 11 inches, \$175.

**Railroad**, poster, London & Northeastern Railway, family on beach, "An East Coast Tonic," canvas mount, frame, England, 43 x 53 inches, \$1,720.



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**HOCUS-FOCUS** BY HENRY BOLTINGOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Tail is smaller; 2. Arms are longer; 3. Pocket is different; 4. Tail is different; 5. Parrot is longer; 6. Rabbit's ears are moved.



## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- \* The cubicle got its name from the Latin "cubiculum," meaning bed chamber.
- \* When your "inner voice" speaks in your head, it triggers small muscle movements in your larynx.
- \* Harriet Tubman was the first woman to lead a U.S. military raid.
- \* Java junkies, take note: The American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5 handbook classifies caffeine withdrawal as a mental disorder.
- \* A newborn blue whale gains about 200 pounds a day during its first year.
- \* Jim Henson made his first Kermit puppet using his mother's old coat and two halves of a ping-pong ball.
- \* Sometimes it snows on Mars, but the snowflakes are made out of carbon dioxide, not water. The flakes don't fall, but create a fog-like effect.
- \* Australia is home to approximately 170 kinds of snakes, including some of the world's most venomous. The good news? Snake bites aren't common and are rarely fatal. One study estimated that snake bites account for just two deaths per year in Australia.

- \* Scottish band the Bay City Rollers chose their name after sticking a pin in a map of America, which landed on the city Michigan.
- \* Actor Benedict Cumberbatch is the second cousin, 16 times removed, of King Richard III, whom he portrayed in the 2016 BBC miniseries "The Hollow Crown."
- \* Members of the Secret Service's Presidential Protection Division always travel with bags of blood in the motorcade in the event a transfusion is needed.
- \* Wisdom teeth serve no purpose. They're left over from hundreds of thousands of years ago. As early humans' brains grew bigger, mouth space was reduced, crowding out this third set of molars.
- \* One of Walt Disney's first art jobs was drawing cartoons for a local barber in exchange for haircuts.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "Friends are the siblings God never gave me." -- Mencius

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**TIDBITS**  
**ONE MORE FACT**

Beatrix Potter's first commercially published work was "The Tale of Peter Rabbit," released in 1902. The following year, Peter Rabbit was the first fictional character to be made into a patented stuffed toy. Potter's books have sold more than 250 million copies.

February 15th, 2026

### Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

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\* "Jazz up your pancakes by adding pureed frozen blueberries or strawberries. It turns the mix either blue or red, and it's fun for the kiddos." -- V.R. in Florida

\* "Purchase colorful laundry baskets for each child in your home. In the evening, you can have the child find all his or her stray items, put them in the basket and then put them away. In our house, the kids also use their basket to hold anything they need for school the next day -- backpack, coats and outerwear, even boots. We stack the baskets by the door and nothing gets left behind." -- P.W. in Missouri

\* Tissue boxes have so many uses after they are emptied of tissues. Try lining one with a plastic grocery bag and keeping it in your car for stray trash. Or you can use it to corral all those plastic grocery bags until you need them, just stuff them in one at a time. Lastly, and probably my favorite, cut out doors and windows to use as a house for a toy. Imagination makes the possibilities endless.

\* "To make an eraser for our dry-erase board, I cut a washcloth in half and folded it into a rectangle. Then I used a magnetic chip clip (with a strong magnet) to hold the open ends of the cloth. I can use the magnetic clip as a handle and it's stored right on the board." -- D.I. in Arizona

\* To distinguish all the cords plugged into a power strip, write the appliance name (TV, game console, etc.) on a plastic bread tab, and attach it to the cord at the plug. A quick look at the power strip and you can unplug any appliance without having to follow the cord through the jungle behind your entertainment center!

Send your tips to:

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"I can't say enough about the side effects!"

February 15th, 2026  
Puzzle Answers

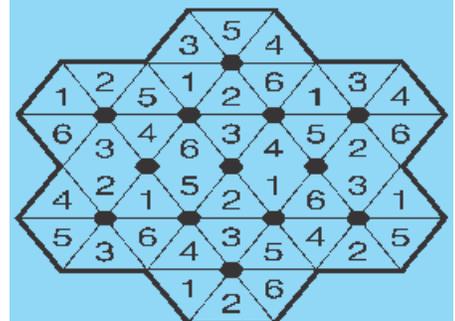
**King Crossword**  
Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

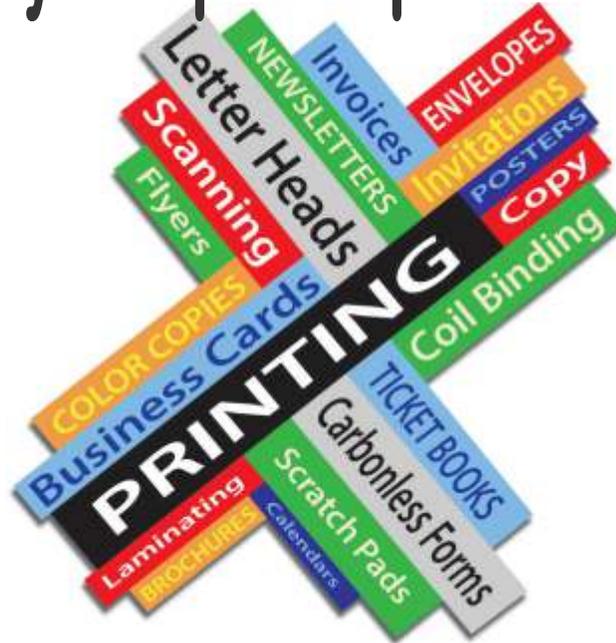
L	E	G		I	M	A	M	B	A	L	I
I	S	U		N	O	T	I	O	D	C	S
E	P	A		K	E	E	L	S	O	V	E
V	O	C	A	B		K	O	I			
				S	L	O	P	S	N	U	B
H	A	S	H	O	V	E	R		G	N	A
E	C	O		T	U	N	A	S		I	R
R	A	F	T		M	A	K	E	O	V	E
B	I	T	E	R		L	E	C	H		
				T	A	B		U	M	A	M
S	T	A	R	T	O	V	E	R		L	O
S	I	M	I		N	I	L	E		V	O
T	E	A	S		D	I	M	S		A	D

SNOWFLAKES

solution



# The Copy Shop Computer Corner



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## Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps



February 15th, 2026  
Puzzle Answers

Word Spiral  
Answer  
HABANEROS

### CryptoQuip answer

Needing a much longer utensil to cut a large hunk of meat, a man declared "Knife's too short."

### Even Exchange

Donna M. Pettman

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Filly, Folly   | 6. Detour, Devour |
| 2. Waiter, Walter | 7. Liston, Listen |
| 3. Racket, Rocket | 8. Harpo, Harps   |
| 4. Sloth, Cloth   | 9. Gamet, Gamer   |
| 5. Morse, Mouse   | 10. Alion, Allon  |

## Americanisms



"We never know the love of a parent till we become parents ourselves."  
— Henry Ward Beecher

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## Holidays & Observances This Week

02/22	George Washington's Birthday
02/23	Iwo Jima Day
02/24	National Dance Day
02/25	Rubber Ducky Day
02/26	Levi Strauss Day
02/27	International Polar Bear Day
02/28	National Tooth Fairy Day

## VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

### TWO VERY DIFFERENT SCAMMERS

Scammers come with varying motives, intelligence levels – and with different intentions. While it's disturbing that anyone steals from the VA, it's twice as bad when the scammer is a veteran. Here is a guy, a veteran, who claimed he was disabled and couldn't work due to service-connected injuries; he therefore received VA disability benefits. You'd think he would stay home, being so disabled, but instead he used his benefit money on luxury international vacations, worked out several times a week, ran his own business and had a very active lifestyle. His scam netted him nearly a quarter of a million dollars before he was stopped. After pleading guilty to 10 counts of theft, he was only sentenced to 18 months in prison (not long enough) and will have to pay back the money as well as a \$20,000 fine. Then there's the young computer hacker who broke into the U.S. Supreme Court 25 times, as well as the VA health system computers and AmeriCorps, by using stolen login credentials. Bragging about what he'd done, he took screenshots of someone's personal information and posted it all online. Then, using other stolen credentials, he got into the VA's "MyHealthEver" website and grabbed his victim's personal information – and posted it online. Among other pieces of information, he got the victim's name, email address, phone number, home address, date of birth and the answers to three security questions. For other victims he was also able to get (and post) information about citizenship status, Social Security number, veteran status, blood type and list of medications prescribed.

For all this fraud against others, leaving them shocked and feeling violated and at risk for identity theft, he could get a mere one year in prison (not long enough) and a \$100,000 fine. It appears that he didn't try to sell the information, that he only wanted the bragging rights for his hacking.

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**BARNEY GOOGLE AND SNUFFY SKIT**

Panel 1: SNUFFY: I THOUGHT HENRY GOT PROMOTED UP TO TH' OFFICE !!

Panel 2: BARNEY: YEP, BUT HE COULDN'T QUITE CUT IT !!

Panel 3: SNUFFY: SO HE GOT SENT BACK DOWN TO TH' MINERS !!

Panel 4: BARNEY: PACK YORE BAGS, BARLOW!! YA BEEN TRADED !!

Panel 5: SNUFFY: WHAT ?!!

Panel 6: BARNEY: YEP ! AN' T WUZ ONE'A THEM BIG BLOCKBUSTER TRADERS TOO !!

Panel 7: SNUFFY: HOOTIN' HOLLER'S TRADIN' YA TO PINEY CREEK FER THREE HOGS, FIVE COWS, TRUITY-FIVE CHICKENS...

Panel 8: BARNEY: AM A FIDDLE PLAYER TO BE NAMED LATER !!

Panel 9: SNUFFY: BRIGHT !! IF ONLY TH' DADBURN WORLD WORKED THAT WAY !!

## STAN SMITH'S TENNIS CLASS

# VOLLEY FOOTWORK

On volleys, it's important not to just stand there waiting for the ball. Good footwork will make your volley easier to hit. Don't be flat-footed, but keep your weight on your toes and evenly balanced on both feet.

Instead of standing and reaching, try moving your feet. This will get your body weight moving into your shot – adding power to your volley – and you'll reach shots more quickly, without having to lunge.

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by Matilda Charles

### Almost Hacked!

I received a text message from a company I do a lot of business with, this time thanking me for my recent order and saying the automatic payment would be made that night as soon as I verified one little piece of information. I hear from them frequently, and have for many years. When I heard from them again, in that text message on my phone, I didn't think much about it at first. I went to press the link in the message ...

Wait, I said to myself, that company doesn't have my cellphone number. They only have my email address. They couldn't have sent me the text message. At the last minute I pulled my hand away and did not click that link.

I called the company in question and asked if they had sent me a text message about an order. No, they said. I asked for the fraud department, beginning to panic.

The man on the other end of the call was professional, and fast, firing off a lot of questions, but most especially asking if I had clicked the link. No. After asking several more questions, he determined that I was safe – this time.

The moral of this little story is, for me, to slow down! I was all too willing to jump right ahead with what I thought was a genuine text message from a company I know. I won't make that mistake again.

Some hints:

Don't do banking or any kind of internet business on your cell-phone.

Keep a throwaway email address for the times you are in contact with companies.

And most of all, do not click any links in text messages unless you are one hundred percent certain you know who sent the message.

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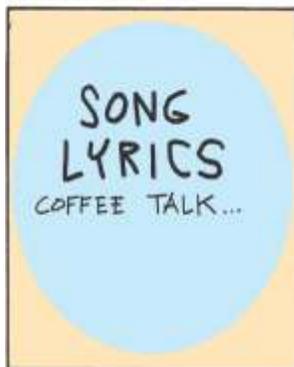
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### Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



### TIGER



by BUD BLAKE

# King Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
		18				19		20				
21	22				23		24					
25				26		27		28		29	30	31
32			33		34		35		36			
37				38		39		40		41		
			42		43		44		45			
46	47	48				49		50				
51					52		53				54	55
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

## ACROSS

- 1 Canine cry
- 4 Dalai —
- 8 Sultry Horne
- 12 Uncle, to Juan
- 13 Bard's river
- 14 401(k) relatives
- 15 Provider of free groceries
- 17 Lapel jewelry
- 18 Fawn's mom
- 19 Norme resident
- 21 Nuanced
- 24 English cathedral city
- 25 100%
- 26 Poseidon's realm
- 28 Follow
- 32 L-Q bridge
- 34 Cover
- 36 Gear teeth
- 37 Avid
- 39 Kauai souvenir
- 41 Last (Abbr.)
- 42 Conducted
- 44 Justice Antonin
- 46 Movie promo
- 50 Sprite
- 51 Campus mil. group
- 52 Eats for parakeets
- 56 Jazzy James Braxton
- 57 Singer
- 58 French assent
- 59 Twain hero
- 60 Jazz legend
- 61 ER workers

## DOWN

- 1 Justice Dept. agency
- 2 2016 Olympics city
- 3 Gourmand's online journal
- 4 File stickers
- 5 Director DuVernay
- 6 "— Lisa"
- 7 Bracelet site
- 8 Feign singing
- 9 Composer Satie
- 10 "Peter Pan" dog
- 11 Professional gp.
- 16 Speck
- 20 Pub pint
- 21 "Ditto"
- 22 Forearm bone
- 23 Snaky fish
- 27 Be sick
- 29 1997 Vanessa Williams film
- 30 Hybrid fruit
- 31 "Come —usted?"
- 33 Louisiana symbol
- 35 — Moines
- 38 Seminary subj.
- 40 Stranded during a blizzard
- 43 Unpaid bills
- 45 TV alien
- 46 Not kosher
- 47 Indian flatbread
- 48 Envelope abbr.

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Answer in  
March 1st  
Issue

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

AT THIS POINT I THINK MY BODY SHOULD BE DONATED TO SCIENCE. ACTUALLY, IF I KEEP IT UP, MAYBE SCIENCE FICTION.



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