THE NION DVOCAME

Local 987

Proud to make America work

April 2, 2025

Town hall

AFGE Local 987 and community leaders will host their second Town Hall April 16 at 6 p.m. in the Civic Center. Discussion will include issues affecting federal employees and the community.

FEEA launches layoff loan program

By AFGE Leadership

During this incredibly difficult time for federal workers the Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund has launched its Layoff Loan Program.

Even with careful planning, federal employees facing recent layoffs can find themselves in a vulnerable financial position. Unplanned, out-of-pocket expenses can lead to significant hardship, potentially forcing them to rely

See PROGRAM, page 3

AFGE issues strong rebuke

to EO targeting unions

By AFGE Leadership

American Federation of Government Employees National President Everett Kelley today issued the following statement in response to President Trump's latest executive action attacking the collective bargaining rights of over one million federal employees:

"President Trump's latest executive order is a disgraceful and retaliatory attack on the rights of hundreds of thousands of patriotic American civil servants—nearly one-third of whom are veterans—simply because they are members of a union that stands up to his harmful policies.

"This administration's bullying

"This administration's bullying tactics represent a clear threat nt just to federal employees and their unions, but to every American who values democracy and the freedoms of speech and association."

- AFGF President Everett Kell

- AFGE President Everett Kelley

tactics represent a clear threat not just to federal employees and their unions, but to every American who values democracy and the freedoms of speech and association. Trump's threat to unions and working people across America is clear: fall in line or else.

"These threats will not work. Americans will not be intimidated or silenced. AFGE isn't going anywhere. Our members have bravely served this nation, often putting themselves in harm's way, and they deserve far better than this blatant attempt at political punishment.

"AFGE is preparing immediate legal action and will fight relentlessly to protect our rights, our members, and all working Americans from these unprecedented attacks."

Fast facts: Federal sector collective bargaining:

Federal unions cannot negotiate over pay, benefits, or hiring/firing decisions.

Unlike private-sector unions, federal unions are limited to bargaining over conditions of employment - not wages, benefits, or classifications, which are set by law and Congress.

Federal employees are prohibited by law from striking. See REBUKE, page 3



tion and growth (opportunities it offers)."

Next, second from left, is Full-time Steward David Dunn. Dunn has been in this position for a month. In it, he works grievances, researches and reviews arbitration cases. He also assists with phone calls and walk-ins, researches and submits information requests coordinates DTBs and does miscellaneous organization/filing of case files and related documents. He studies and reviews

and laws and does other duties as assigned.

Dunn also serves members

policies, procedures, guidance

member during various processes - grievances, proposals, et cetera - providing information from the Local/District/ National as it is made available, offering assistance and guidance to questions from members about policies, procedures, news and more.

He has been a member of AFGE for three years, joining because, "I felt it was important

to contribute to the work that AFGE was doing to protect us workers, and I also wanted the opportunity to help in any way

Center is **President Ron Hill**. Hill has been in this position for five months, but he also served in it once before for a year and nine months.

In his position, he said he oversees Local matters and rep-

resents BUEs. That includes negotiating the Master Labor Agreement. He has been a member of AFGE for more than 20 years, joining after seeing its results first hand. "I filed a grievance and won on overtime. I was happy with the representation and was asked to be a

steward. I said, 'Yes'."

To his left is Vice President
of Maintenance James

Watson. Watson has been in that position for a year.

As VP of Maintenance, he said his duties are to "advise and assist the president and vice president in discharging their duties." He is in charge of Labor-Management relations and "shall attempt to settle all

disputes in maintenance areas.
"I'm also responsible for appointing stewards in mainte-

nance areas," he said, "and all bargaining and grievances in

the maintenance area."

He serves by "defending the contract and laws that are in place to protect peoples' rights. I represent them in collective bargaining, grievance procedures, arbitrations, MSPBs and EEOs ... By being an educa-

tor, organizer, mobilizer and **See WORKING, page 3**



jmac@afgelocal987.org.

WFP webinar focuses on women's mental health

By DON MONCRIEF

Editor, The Union Advocate don.moncrief@afgelocal987.org

With March being Women's History Month, the AFGE Women and Fair Practices Department hosted three workshops. The last of those was focused on women's mental health. It featured Alicia Loncar as its guest speaker. Loncar, who serves as a Labor Liaison and National Well-being Lead for Kaiser Permanente, began by soliciting from those in attendance the things that cause them stress. (Note: She has served in this role for nine years. Prior to that, she worked for 18 years in the labor movement with SEIU Local 99, a union that represents LAUSD classified school employees, and the California State Employees Association. She also has an MBA from UCLA Anderson School of Management.) Their answers ranged from one won-



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

dering if she would get Social Security (with reports in the media of politicians warning it was in jeopardy) to uncertainty to "adulting" to the news.

Another said constant changes in life and at work were causing her stress. For another it was the "destructive" policies of the Trump administration and DOGE.

of the Trump administration and DOGE.

Signs of stress, Loncar said, included: Experiencing their heart racing, headaches, not enough sleep, being unable to

sleep, migraines, tension/aches

"zoning out", being in a bad mood, "outbursts", eating too much, et cetera. "Why is it important we

in the stomach, being grouch,

"Why is it important we notice this," she asked. "It's important you know what your stressors are. It's different from one person to the next but what are you stressed about? How do you know that you're stressing out."

are you stressed about? How do you know that you're stressing out."

Because, she continued, "Sometimes when we're consumed we may not be able to

notice. And it's important we be

change. We have to know when to tap out. This is the body's way of raising that red flag and saying to you that you need some help. Either you need to help yourself or reach out and get some help."

Letting it go unchecked, and

able to notice these things? It's

then letting it continue to affect you, she said, could/would lead to long-term affects.

"Women have a higher rate of depression and anxiety and other psychological disorders," she said. "Stress increases your blood pressure and your heart rate and headaches and migraines. Which are more common in women than men. Women are more prone to gain weight gain than men (when stressed). To incur bowel problems, like Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Women can have a harder time getting pregnant. Premenstrual syndrome is more intense when you

re intense when you See HEALTH, page 3

Assistance program supports civilian wellness

By TIFFANY SCOFIELD
Air Force Materiel Command

When life gets overwhelming, it can be a challenge to know where to go to find support. For Department of the Air Force civilian employees, the Employee Assistance Program exists to help.

The EAP offers comprehensive support services for civilian employees to help in managing personal and work-related challenges. The program, accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, includes access to confidential counseling, work-life resources, and crisis assistance that can enhance individual well-being and job performance.

"EAP is part of my toolbox," said Dr. Janice Barnes, Prevention and Response Branch Chief, Air Force Reserve Command Headquarters. "It has consistently been a reliable resource for me, both as a supervisor and as an employee."

Here's an overview of the various resources available:

Counseling: Individuals are eligible for six confidential, non-clinical counseling sessions per issue. Sessions can be conducted in person, over the phone, virtually, or via chat, offering flexible options to suit your needs.

Work-Life Services: EAP assists with everyday work-life needs by providing referrals to local community resources in areas such as education, child-care, eldercare, support groups, healthcare resources, and more.

Additionally, EAP provides valuable resources including scholarships, health and wellness information, and other beneficial services.

Financial Services: Individuals are entitled to three



The Employee Assistance Program is a free benefit for Air and Space Force civilian employees that offers a wide range of services to support and meet the various needs of employee's lives. The EAP is available for employees and their spouses, dependent children, domestic partners, household members and students. (Courtesy Estella Holmes)

30-minute financial phone consultations annually. These consultations can address a wide range of topics, including budgeting, spending plans, debt management, college planning, student loans, home buying, estate planning, marriage, growing families, retirement, and taxes.

Legal Services: Individuals are entitled to one free 60-minute consultation per issue, either by phone or in person with an attorney. Additionally, discounts are available for services beyond the initial consultation.

Supervisor Resources: Critical Incident Response is available during times of need and can provide individual management consultations, resources, and support.

When an individual calls EAP to access services, they are greeted by a representative and offered personalized support. The representative will connect individuals with the appropriate EAP services customized to meet their needs.

There are also many resources available on the EAP website. Accessing these confidential services is simple and convenient.

Civilians and household members can reach EAP at 866-580-9078. For more information, visit https://www.resilience.af.mil/Workforce-Resource/ and click on Civilian EAP for more information.

How to pick the right plants for you location

(StatePoint) When planning your yard or garden, you likely focus on the what and the where. After all, a beautiful plant in a prime location enhances curb appeal and even bragging rights.

You may pay less attention though to understanding how your location, or plant hardiness zone, impacts your garden's success. To help ensure your plants don't just survive, but thrive, the experts at lawn care equipment manufacturer Exmark are sharing the following insights about plant hardiness:

What is plant hardiness?

Plant hardiness is the secret sauce of any healthy outdoor space. Plant hardiness is the ability of a plant to survive adverse growing conditions such as drought, flooding, heat and cold

Have you ever watched with frustration as a late-season temperature dip leaves your beautiful buds with a serious case of frostbite? Plant hardiness zones were developed to help landscapers, gardeners and lawn care enthusiasts avoid this heartache.

American farming contrib-



Photo source: (c) DavidPrani / iStock via Getty Imag Plus

utes billions of dollars to the gross national product annually, which is one reason why the USDA has long monitored weather data. If determining when the average final frost may occur for every region in the country is worth billions, what could that same knowledge mean for your garden?

Well, choosing plants with

hardiness levels appropriate to specific planting zones gives you the best chance of cultivating healthy, beautiful plants.

What is my growing zone?

The United States is divided into 13 zones. Zones 1-6 being the coldest, and 7-13 the warmest. Zone 1 averages -60 degrees F while zone 13 never drops below 70 degrees F. A general guideline is to plant anything designated for your zone or lower, but never higher. Know what zone you live in and make a point of checking the tag on the back of the plant or seed pack before planting.

Perennials versus annuals
There's a reason you see palm

See PLANTS, page 3

Harness the power of walking

(Family Features) A walk isn't just good for your body; it's a simple, powerful way to care for your mind and soul. Physical activity, like walking, reduces stress, boosts mood and promotes overall well-being.

Yet physical activity levels

in the United States continue to decline, a trend threatening both mental and physical health.

Less than half of adults and

fewer than 1 in 5 children in the U.S. get the recommended amount of physical activity needed for heart health, according to the American Heart Association's 2025 Heart & Stroke Statistical Update.

National recommendations call for children to get at least

one hour of physical activity each day, but the latest statistics show less than 19% of children in the U.S. achieve that target.

Meanwhile, less than half of adults get the recommended 150 minutes or more of weekly physical activity. What's more, according to

data from a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1 in 4 U.S. adults sits for longer than eight hours each day, which can have negative consequences on physical and mental health.

For decades, the American Heart Association has championed the importance of physical activity in communities across the country through events

like National Walking Day on Wednesday, April 2. These tips and information can help you understand how a brisk walk can make a world of difference for heart health and mental clarity.

Benefits of physical activity
Staying active is one of the

best ways to keep your mind and body healthy.

The physical health benefits

may be obvious, but research suggests physical activity can also help bring more joy to your life. According to the 2019 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, people who get the recommended amount of

See WALKING, page 3

Impostor scammers target consumers, businesses

Buying an automobile or heavy equipment of any kind is a major purchase. Don't let scam groups fool you into handing over your cash.

Since 2022, Better Business Bureau received over 200 reports of consumers attempting to purchase a vehicle or other heavy equipment online, only to run into a scammer impersonating a reputable seller.

Additionally, BBB collected another 140 com-

plaints reported directly to us, to attorneys general, tip lines and other sources. When pooled together, the reports revealed a pattern of fraudulent websites, where scammers claim to sell all kinds of vehicles - sedans, trucks, SUVs, classic cars, boats, ATVs and even farm equipment - at attractive low prices.

These websites can look especially legitimate

by cloning the original websites of real busi-

ness in the auto and equipment sales industries.

Businesses may have their pictures, design and

products copied wholesale, with only the contact information swapped out with the scammer's information.

Those who are in the market for one of these vehicles need to be extra vigilant, as these supposed sellers always claim their vehicles and equipment must be shipped, not allowing buyers to check the legitimacy of the vehicle or equip-

Scammers organize, create convincing fakes

ment in person. And once money is handed over,

the fraudsters disappear.

Many of the reports to BBB show scammers creating increasingly realistic, believable websites. And many of these websites appear to be tied together, indicating organized groups may be behind these frauds.

By examining the scam websites and registration, BBB was able to track clusters of websites with shared domain name servers. One server, located in Lithuania, was home to nearly 30 different websites reported to BBB. These fakes claimed to be located throughout the United States, impersonating businesses in Alabama, Minnesota, North Dakota and Ohio.

They claimed to be typical auto sellers as well



Kelvin Collins

as purveyors of classic and vintage cars, farm equipment and general agricultural machinery.

Another name server, located in Iceland, was home to almost 20 more fraudulent sites, with additional locations in Tennessee, Nevada and South Carolina. While

many of the websites appeared to sell similar products, some also claimed to sell heavy machinery and construction equipment.

When a shopper stumbles upon one of these sites, the losses can be significant.

Greg in Wyoming told BBB he was planning to buy an RV online from a seller in Minnesota. The vehicle was for sale for a great deal at \$14,000, and the seller, calling himself Marcus, promised to ship the vehicle across the country for free. Greg paid half of the price, planning to pay the other half upon delivery, which was never made.

Business reputations can suffer as scammers thrive

As people may lose thousands of dollars to scammers, business reputations are at equal risk. The impersonation can lead to poor reviews from customers who believe that the legitimate business is stealing. Over the last few years, businesses have spoken out about being impersonated, recounting the harsh effects it can have on their livelihood.

One business owner, Doug, whose business was impersonated recounted his experience with BBB. In September, Doug and his wife, who repair and sell parts for motor homes, received messages from people who said they were showing unusual inventory online compared to what Doug's business usually stocked. The couple realized that someone was impersonating their business, stealing pictures of the shop, their address and nearly everything else about

See IMPOSTOR, page 3

Medal of Honor spotlight

Civil War crew of USS Agawam

By KATIE LANGE

DoD News

The Medal of Honor was created during the Civil War, a conflict that divided the nation and led to the distribution of 1,525 of the new medals to service members for their heroism.

Nine of those medals were bestowed upon some of the gunship USS Agawam's crew members, whose brave actions kickstarted the First Battle of Fort Fisher, in North Carolina. For most of the Civil War,

For most of the Civil War, Fort Fisher saw very little combat, but that changed in late 1864 when the Union wanted to capture the last port the Confederacy held on the Atlantic Ocean.

The first part of the Union plan involved several sailors serving aboard the Agawam. The Agawam itself was undergoing repairs, so its crew was temporarily assigned to take over the USS Louisiana. Their goal: to pack the old steam ship with tons of explosives and use it as a bomb. Union naval leaders planned to blow it up in a move they thought would level part of the fort or

at least dislodge its guns. Late on Dec. 23, 1864, to

prevent detection by the enemy, the Louisiana was towed into shallow waters by another vessel, the USS Wilderness. It steamed to within about 200 yards of the beach in front of Fort Fisher.

Once it was in place, the crew lit an elaborate fuseand-clockwork system and then built fires in the propeller shaft, according to Fort Fisher's historical website. The commander threw down an anchor with a short scope to make sure the ship got as close to the beach as possible. The men then abandoned the Louisiana and were pulled in a smaller ship to the Wilderness, which sailed about 12 miles from shore, where the rest of the fleet was located.

Unfortunately, an undertow and offshore breeze pulled the Louisiana off its course, according to Fort Fisher's website. So, when the ship exploded less than two hours after it was abandoned, it caused no damage to the fort.

Fires could still be seen burning there the next day,

The only thing the explosion did was

alert the Confederate service mem-

bers of an imminent attack, which led

to a battle that the Union eventually

retreated from.

but the fort's walls were still standing. The only thing the explosion did was alert the Confederate service members of an imminent attack, which led to a battle that the Union eventually retreated from.

While the Louisiana mission proved to be a complete failure, the nine men who volunteered for it earned the Medal of Honor for their bravery. Those men are:

Gunner's Mate Charles

Seaman Dennis Conlan Boatswain's Mate William

Boatswain's Mate Charles Hawkins

awkins Fireman 2nd Class Villiam Hinnegan

William Hinnegan
Capt. of the Afterguard
Robert Montgomery

Master-at-Arms John Neil Fireman 2nd Class

Charles Rice Seaman James Roberts

Seaman James Roberts
Of the nine men, only two
— Rice and Conlan — were

born in the U.S, and all were between the ages of 23 and 31. All of the recipients received the newly minted Medal of Honor on May 12, 1865, while

the newly minted Medal of Honor on May 12, 1865, while aboard the renovated Agawam off the coast of New Bern, Connecticut. Meanwhile, Fort Fisher

Meanwhile, Fort Fisher eventually fell. The Second Battle of Fort Fisher in mid-January 1865 was won by the Union, effectively cutting the Confederacy off from all global trade and supplies. The Civil War ended three months later.

UNION ADVOCAME

Published by the American Federation of Government Employees Local 987, Warner Robins, Georgia. Contents of The Union

Advocate are not necessarily the official view of AFGE Local 987, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of the Air Force or The Document Company.

The appearance of advertis-

The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts, does not constitute endorsement by The Union Advocate, AFGE Local 987 or the Department of Defense.

Publisher

Houston Home Journal

Editor/layout and

design

Don Moncrief

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, nationality, age, marital status, physical or mental health, political affiliation, or any other non-merit factor for the pur-

chaser, user or patron.

Editorial content is edited,
prepared and provided by AFGE

Local 987. Submitted news and editorial content/photographs are welcome - applicability to AFGE Local 987's mission to be determined by the discretion of the editor and/or president.

Please submit articles, pho-

Please submit articles, photos, etc to don.moncrief@afgelocal 987.org. For questions about story content, to pass on story ideas or to request coverage, please contact the aforementioned.

REBUKE

From page 1

Under 5 U.S.C. § 7311, federal workers are legally barred from striking, and doing so can result in termination and a ban from federal employment.

3 Nearly one-third of federal employ-ees are veterans.

Many federal workers are former service members who bring leadership, discipline, and mission commitment to their civilian roles. Stripping their bargaining rights is a betrayal of that service.

Collective bargaining is governed 4 by the Civil Service Reform Act of This bipartisan law created a structured

process for federal workers to address workplace issues without disrupting government operations.

5 Unions improve agency performance—not hinder it.

Collective bargaining helps resolve conflicts early, reduces costly litigation, improves retention, and boosts morale-all of which support better public service.

Removing bargaining rights opens the door to abuse.

Without union representation, employees-especially whistleblowers and veterans—lose vital protections from retaliation and political interference.

Federal unionism has broad histor-•ical support. Presidents from both parties—Reagan,

Clinton, Bush, Obama—have upheld the right of federal workers to union representation. ###

The American Federation of Government Employees is the largest federal employee union, representing 820,000 workers in the federal government and the government of the District of Columbia.

member," he said.

He has been a member of

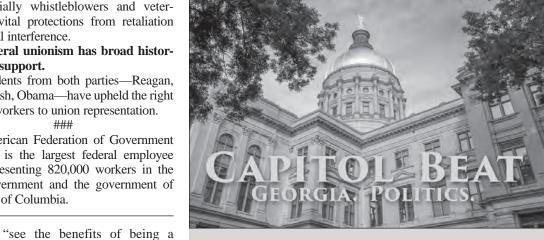
AFGE for 16 years. In fact,

he was a member of a trade

union even before he became

an employee on Robins AFB.

"I just like helping people," he



Page 3

Cellphones banned in public elementary, middle schools by Ty Tagami

ATLANTA - Children and adolescents won't be able to use personal cellphones in public schools starting next fall after the General Assembly overwhelmingly supported banning the devices in elementary and middle schools.

House Bill 340 passed the Georgia Senate Tuesday 54-2 after the state House of Representatives passed it with strong bipartisan support in early March. Gov. Brian Kemp will soon decide whether to sign the measure. So kids and parents will need to mentally prepare for the technology that tethers them to each other be severed during the school day.

The "Distraction-Free Education Act" requires schools to develop policies that allow parents to reach their kids, for instance, by calling the principal's office, and it provides exemptions for students with disabilities or medical conditions that require them to use a cellphone for learning or for health reasons, such as checking their glucose level.

But starting in July 2026 all other kids would have to hand over or lock up their device from the first bell of the school day until the final ring. The ban applies even during emergencies, when experts testified that cellphones pose a dangerous distraction, even if parents wish they could still contact their children during, say, a

The crackdown comes amid growing global concerns about the effect of technology and social media on children.

State Senate gives locals extra leeway on property tax relief by Dave Williams

ATLANTA - Legislation giving Georgia cities, counties and school

districts until April 30 to decide whether to opt out of offering a property tax break voters approved last fall cleared the state Senate Tuesday. Georgians passed a constitutional amendment last November prohibiting local governments and school districts from raising residential property assessments in a given year by more than the annual rate of inflation, even if a home's market value has gone up more.

Supporters argued the constitutional change would offer homeowners more certainty in their property tax liability year to year. But the legislation prompted concerns among local government and school district officials anxious to protect a key revenue source funding their operations.

Last year's measure gave those local governments the ability o opt out of the measure if they filed an opt-out resolution with the Georgia secretary of state's office by March 1 and held at least three public hearings. This year's House Bill 92, which the Senate passed 52-2 on Tuesday, extends that deadline to the end of next

The House passed the bill last month with just one "no" vote.

But it went through a series of changes when it got to the Senate. House Bill 92 moves back to the House next to weigh in on the changes made by the Senate.

Senate transgender sports bill advancing through House

by Ty Tagami ATLANTA – Transgender student athletes would be banned from female sports under two bills in the Georgia legislature, and the

version from the state Senate has taken the lead. A committee of the Georgia House of Representatives passed Senate Bill 1 Tuesday after it was amended to mirror some elements of the version from the House of Representatives, which awaits a Senate hearing. Both measures passed their own cham-

bers largely along party lines. The Senate version now carries the same title as House Bill 267, which was named after Riley Gaines. She became a flag bearer for the movement to ban transgender athletes born male from female sports after she lost a swimming championship to a transgender athlete in 2022. SB 1 was not amended to copy HB 267 in one very big way though: the House bill would alter most of Georgia law to read "sex" where the word "gender" is used. SB 1 would only do that

in relation to school and college sports. Rep. Josh Bonner, R-Fayetteville, the chief sponsor of HB 267, signaled House collaboration with the Senate when he called the

new version of SB 1 a "commonsense compromise." Before the vote, the committee took public testimony that was consistent with what lawmakers have heard previously. A lawyer

for Frontline Policy Action, a Christian advocacy group, testified that her organization helped write both the House and Senate versions of the legislation and supported SB 1, as did a representative of the Georgia Faith and Freedom Coalition. Transgender people are an exceptionally small demographic.

The Williams Institute at the UCLA law school estimates there are 1.6 million transgender people ages 13 and older in the United States, including nearly 22,000 in Georgia, of whom 3,400 are

State Senate panel sets deadline for Willis to testify by Dave Williams

ATLANTA - The state Senate committee investigating Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis' role in prosecuting President Donald Trump for interfering in Georgia's 2020 presidential election is giving her until May 10 to testify before the panel.

The Senate Special Committee on Investigations' Republican majority voted 5-2 along party lines Wednesday to set that deadline for Willis to comply with a subpoena to appear as a witness. If she fails to appear, the committee plans to ask a judge to set a

deadline for her to testify. The committee initially subpoenaed Willis last spring, but she

argued the subpoena was unlawful and went to court to block it. A Fulton Superior Court judge upheld the legality of the subpoena in December.

Josh Belinfante, a lawyer hired by the panel, told committee members Willis' lawyer – former Gov. Roy Barnes – has said she wouldn't be available to testify until late next month or early in May, citing her travel and trial schedule. While lawyers for the two sides agreed March 10 that she would submit documents the

Barnes argued during a court hearing in December that Senate Barnes further asserted that the committee lacked the authority legitimate legislative purpose.

Belinfante countered that investigating Willis' handling of the election interference case might show existing state laws govern-

ing the hiring and compensation of district attorneys in Georgia

are inadequate and need changing.

to subpoena Willis, a power he said rests only with the full General Assembly. He also contended the subpoenas did not serve any

commission requested, Belinfante said he has yet to receive them.

WORKING

From page 1

HEALTH

From page 1

long-term stress."

it was 4.9.

political activist." He has been a member of

AFGE for 17 years, joining because, "I believe the Union gives you a voice and helps pro-

have increased stress levels. And it could

decrease sex drive. That could happen with

Not all stress is bad, she added, but also

added it was important to know. She also

said they were not alone. In a 2023 survey

by the American Psychologist Association

of both men and women, women rated their

stress level on average to be 5.3. For men

Women are also more likely to report

needing more support to manage stress.

Women ages 18 to 23 are also more likely

to feel completely overwhelmed by stress.

"So you're not alone," she said. "Women

do have more stress than men. The source

of stress? Well women have to juggle a lot

of roles such as caregiver and homemak-

er. Women are often not only expected to

manage their own emotions but also the

emotions of those around them. Which can

"Women also experience gender dis-

crepancies and pay gaps and limited career

advancement opportunities, and in terms of

financial concerns, women are more likely

to report health and stress to these issues

and they often feel consumed by many

She continued: "Women tend to internal-

ize stress where men externalize stress. And

then there are social expectations. Your

family has expectations. You have expec-

tations and that balancing of those expecta-

tions can cause a lot of stress. Women wear

Again, she said, it was important to know

what the stress points were because it was

your body's way of saying pay attention.

Something's not going right and you need

"When these things arise we often want

to do something about them, but it's import-

ant to note that noticing is taking action. It's

but the first step. Because like I said before

Loncar continued with a list of aids help-

Resiliency was one. Resiliency is some-

a lot of hats and that can be stressful."

worries and family responsibility.'

be exhausting and stressful.

It also give you a seat at the table, which brings me to one of my favorite quotes: 'If you don't have a seat at the tabe, you're probably on the menu'." Finally, is Vice President

tect you from unfair and unlaw-

ful practices from Management.

At-Large Michael Ferguson.

He has been in that position for six years. His duties include helping members in six areas on Robins AFB: AAFES, DeCA, DHA, NAF and Admin areas (i.e. Bldg. 300, 301) and AFRC.

He also serves by helping

members on grievances, EEOs MSPBs and with helping them

thing that helps women recover from stress, she said, repeating what she said was a favorite phrase of hers: "Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you respond to it. It's not that you get knocked down but do you get back up?

"And resiliency is something that helps us recover. It's the capacity to recover from stress and trauma but also not just on the individual level. As a community. You're in community right now (on the webinar) and in work you're in community. It's so important to come together help each other.' Elements of resilience, she said, include

mindfulness and stress awareness. There's also sense of purpose and meaning, selfcare and personal relationships. "Resilient people don't let adversity define them. They find resilience in moving toward a goal beyond themselves by perceiving pain and remaining hopeful. That difficult times are temporary. There are options." Attributes is another aid. She defined it

as being flexible and adaptable by viewing change as an opportunity and a challenge instead of seeing them as a threat. "If you view something as a threat, even

if it isn't, you're more likely to experience a sense of fear in response. Fear prevents us from challenging ourselves and growing." Purpose is also an aid, especial during

this difficult time, she said. "Purpose can help and it comes from knowing your core values. Do you believe in honesty, courage? It's important to tap into these core

"What do you believe in? Do you believe in gratitude, courage? So it's imp to tap into these. No two people have the same. It's really based on your life experience, cultural, it's something that motivates you.

"And so, what are the things that motivate you? I should do this. I should do that. Make sure they're in with your core values. Connection. This is where community is so imp. Having that connection with friends, family, groups, a higher power. And it's not necessarily about quantity but quality. Also, you may want to exit some friendships. Some friendships may not be feeding you.'

Hope, she said, is to motivate, to persevere toward a goal. Even, she said, if you were skeptical that that positive outcome "Psychologists tell us hope involves an

said matter-of-factly.

activity and a can-do attitude. To believe that we have a pathway to our desired outcome. So positivity is important. It's also important to fight to keep yourself motivated to fight especially with all the uncertainty you're experiencing." Ways to prevent stress, she continued,

ing," she said. "One doctor said, 'I don't even call it exercise. Just start moving. Endorphins can really help. Sleep, seven to nine hours, will also help,

yourself, listening to music, reading, getting organized.

"Reflect on what are your sources, maybe even journal about it. Reflect on what you're grateful for. Studies have shown that concentrating on gratefulness can really change your outlook and can really make you happy.

on. "Focus on the present. Stay in the present. Practice accepting what can't be changed. If you can't change the situation, change how you react to it. Be kind to yourself. Don't allow yourself to dwell on the negative. Sometimes tune out so you're not stressed out."

Read out to others if you need to, she added. "If you keep doing all the things we talked about and are still having problems, reach out. Reach out to family or professionals and get help."

for Reward, Establish, Share and Trust. Do something for yourself, reward. Establish, or set boundaries. "It's important to say no to a request outside of your boundaries,' she said. "Off duty. If you're off duty (for example), say no. Be respectful but don't be apologetic."

a friend, she said, or partner or professional and then finally, "trust your support network and refer people elsewhere if you're Lastly, the biggest one is having hope. too tired or emotional and trust yourself."

PLANTS From page 2

it is important to notice."

ful in dealing with stress.

to do something.

trees in Sarasota, Florida, not Saginaw, Michigan. When it comes to perennials, it's not about when the first frost is, but how cold it gets, and whether that plant can survive and thrive

through winter. Plant hardiness zones are less important however when it comes to annuals. Because these plants are only meant to last one growing season; waiting until after the average first frost date will save you from having to re-plant. Know that even if your plant survives the frost, it may never match the photo you saw advertised at the nursery.

Planting zone rule of thumb Plant hardiness zone maps are, well, all over the map.

Consider the number assigned to your zip code as a starting point. You may live right at the break between one zone and the other. When in doubt, guess too low, rather than too high. In the South, the heat stress a plant not made for the conditions. Your particular geography can also affect your hardiness zone, like if you live on a hill or in a

episode of "Backyard Smart," an original series from lawn homeowners improve their outdoor living spaces.

For more insights, check

physical activity are less likely to experience depression. Regular physical activity enhances your mood, sharpens your mind, improves sleep and boosts overall well-being, all while reducing the risk of disease and

How to be more physically active

Exercise as simple as a brisk walk can put a major spring in your step. It can even

boost with these tips:

get moving. Spending time outdoors has been shown to reduce stress, promote a sense of belonging and improve mood. It's even better if you can enjoy the sunshine outside, which can improve mood, boost your immunity and help you get some vitamin D. Invite a family member or friend along

with you. It's good for them, it's good for you and it's good company all around. Instead of wondering if you'll move

today, explore how you'll move. A walk, a dance or a stretch all count. **Getting pets involved**

Pets are part of your family, and they can help you get healthy together. Pets provide a

fun reason to spend more time outside and get the exercise needed to reduce the risk of disease later in life. Getting moving along with your pet adds

more exercise to your routine, which means living longer, reducing risk of dying from heart attack or stroke, reducing risk of diabetes, reducing stress and even boosting your overall happiness and well-being. Exercising with your pet can also mean

yourself meeting other dog owners in your area on a walk or at the dog park. Learn more about how simple habits like walking can support your overall health at

enjoying more socializing. You may find

heart.org/MoveMore. Source: American Heart Association

true prices

whenever possible

Call a business and ask if you can see the car in person Resist high-pressure tactics

Pick up a vehicle yourself

urging quick action Use secondary sources to research a business' legitimacy

Avoid sharing personal information with unknown

sources

Be wary of too-good-to-be-While FEEA can't replace lost income

13,000 no-fee, no-interest loans to help feds make ends meet during hardships, and we're here to support those recently affected by layoffs.

Visit https://feea.org/our-programs/lay-

on a long-term basis, it can offer eligible federal employees confidential, no-fee, no-interest loans to help temporarily with

Since 1986, FEEA has provided over

off-loans/ for application instructions.

was to eat right and exercise. "Get movshe said. As will stretching, taking time for

"Reflection" is also important, she said.

Add "perspective" to the list, she went

Finally, REST, and acronym that stands

Share your concerns and frustrations with

out the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, and watch "Find Your Plant Hardiness Zone," an

> care equipment manufacturer, Exmark. To watch the video, visit Backyard Life, which is part of a unique multimedia destination with a focus on helping

Exercising outdoors is a great way to From page 2

WALKING

depression and increasing both the quality and longevity of life.

energize you to finish other tasks at hand, whether it's cooking or running errands. Give your daily physical activity level a

IMPOSTOR From page 2

their business. Doug reached out to search engines in an attempt to stop the

website from showing up when customers looked for his business, but he struggled to get the In the following months, Doug

website taken down. received thousands of emails

From page 1

PROGRAM

on high-interest loans, default on debts, or even consider personal bankruptcy.

to the incident.

Know the red flags of vehicle and equipment seller scams: The price is significantly

from frustrated customers who

believed he had scammed them.

The scammers also inundated

him with threatening messages

and calls. Doug said it is impos-

sible to calculate the loss of busi-

ness and is now planning to close

the business, in large part due to

the stress and difficulties related

seller BBB tips to avoid vehicle and equipment seller scams:

below market value

upon vehicle delivery

of a vehicle

Owner cites an overly per-

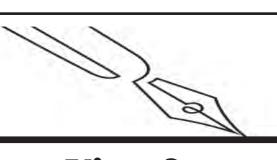
A seller will not allow you

Money must be sent to a

sonal reason they need to get rid

to see the vehicle and insists

third-party recommended by



Just for

King Crossword

13

26

49

55

58

16

18

32

ACROSS

1 Menagerie 4 Embedded

12

15

25

31

36

45

48

54

57

22

46

23

- spies 9 "Frontline"
- airer
- 12 Year in Spain

- 13 Empathic
- words
- 14 Land in la mer
- 15 Unfortunate soul
- 17 "Wham!" 18 Ga. neighbor
- 19 Tabloid subiects
- 21 Cal (baseball's "Iron
- Man") 24 Scored 100 on 25 Buckeyes'
- sch. 26 Crater edge
- 28 Succinct
- 31 Shakespeare title starter
- 33 LAPD alert
- 35 Peruse 36 Sasha's sister 58 Trudges
- 38 With it, once
- 40 Summer mo. 41 Norms (Abbr.)
- 43 In a morose way
- 45 Concludes by 47 Tank filler
- 48 Zodiac cat
- 49 Precinct
- canine
- 57 New England cape
- 59 Apply cream

54 Fiddle stick

55 Ten - (long

56 Flying saucer

odds)

- **DOWN** 1 Microwave
- 2 Yoko from Tokyo
- 3 Tic-tac-toe win
- 4 Bette in
- "Beaches"
- - © 2025 King Features Synd., Inc.

region

19

24

34

43

47

27

38

50

33

42

- short 7 Writer Jong
- 8 Choose
- 9 Fantasy
- 10 Shapeless mass
- 11 Stitches
- 16 '60s Atty. General
- 20 Lusty look
- 21 Meander 22 Actress
 - Fisher
- 23 Earns

5 South Pacific 27 Speedometer stat 6 Restroom, for 29 Biblical king

10

29

52

30

14

17

40

56

59

20

35

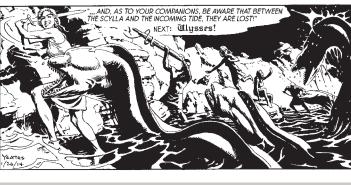
44

39

- 30 Jittery 32 Poses
- 34 Imploring
- 37 Conforms
- 39 Locales 42 Pub seat
- 44 Employ 45 Exile isle
- 46 Inert gas
- 50 Brit's restroom
- 51 Flop 52 One - kind
- 53 Sailor





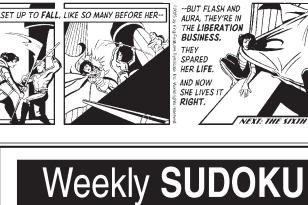






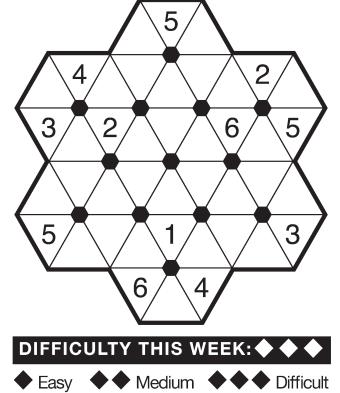


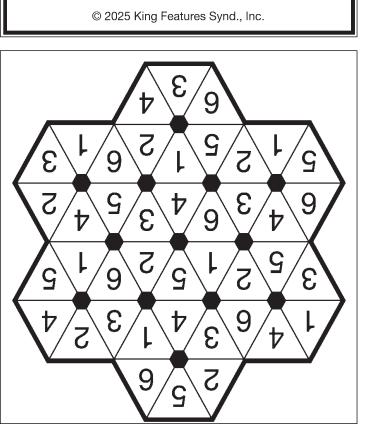


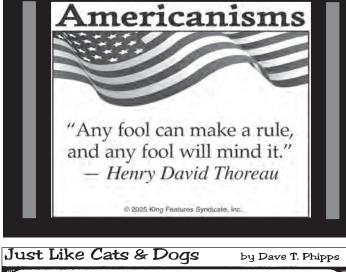




puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.







PLACED HER

OF FLASH

IN MY TWENTIES I LOOKED SO MUCH BETTER! NOWADAYS MY REFLECTION LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING IN A FUNHOUSE MIRROR. River

В	A	D		S	9	0	٦	S		Ν	N	A
0	П	\supset		П	Ζ	0	0	Τ		Μ	0	B
G	0	П	H	0		٦	0	Ъ		0	Ш	
			S	A	വ		Ι	A	S	П	Ν	\exists
Т	٦	M	\cap	٦	വ		S	П	Ι	S		
G	\cap	A		Ь	\exists	Н		A		٦	A	Μ
D	A	П	R		B	Ъ	A		S	٦		A
\Box	S	Я	\Box	Ι		M		Я		\cap	S	0
		П	\Box	<u>ဂ</u>	A		Ν	П	К	Ъ		Ш
S	В	\exists	٦	\exists	С		A	٦	\exists			
W	0	Ъ			_	٨	\Box	П	Я	0	0	Ь
\exists	٦			3	ш	A	0			0	N	A
S	B	Ъ		S	Ξ	٦	0	M		0	0	Z

Solution time: 22 mins.

Answers King Crossword

8 5 7 4 1

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

Answer

Meekly SUDOKU







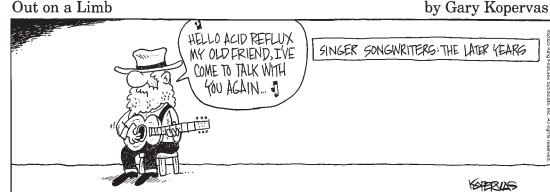
JUST BUGS AND WORMS. \bigcirc



by Dave T. Phipps



Out on a Limb



BARNEY GOOGLE AND

HAPPY EASTER







THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS



DUVALL COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

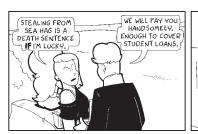




by BUD BLAKE





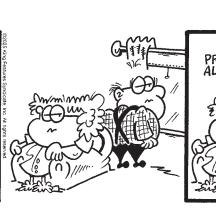






DEBT-FREE L AND HIREABLE.





by Jeff Pickering YOU PRETTY MUCH ALREADY ARE.



GTIGER









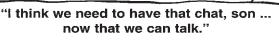
7 = 21

9

セ







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

PLYADO

and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

- 5기

= 51 48 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ©2025 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

	2		87		L
	=		=		=
LG =	3	×	8	+	6
	ı		×		ı
6 =	2	ı	G	+	9
	-		+		+

SUSWERS

X

Go Figure!

By:rj NEH PUMEST ♥ LERFI MEAF PEMCAN ♥ RMA ECFL ♥ ERNSO **♥**EAL HEIRUM **▼** ATHEC **♥**ITNH

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 (f v) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.







3

SUSWEL



over there. He's burly recognizable. You really can't miss that heavy, muscular guy sitting ausmer

CryptoQuip

CryptoQuip

for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error. Clue: I equals Y

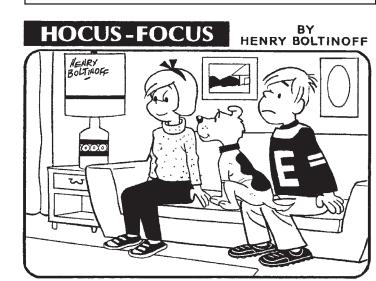
This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands

ITE FGOQQI HOS'M JZUU MWOM

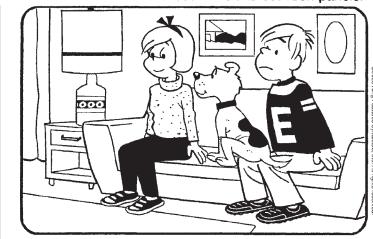
WGOCI, JEUHEQOF VEI

UZMMZSV TCGF MWGFG.

WG'U DEFQI FGHTVSZAODQG. ©2025 King Features Synd., Inc.



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



5. Curtain is shorter. 6. Design on lamp is different. 3. Stripes on sleeve are higher, 4. Spot on dog's back is smaller. Differences: I. Drawer handle is different. 2. Picture is reversed.

Spring cleaning for your fridge: A flavor-packed stir-fry

By PATTI DIAMOND

pring cleaning isn't just for closets and garages -- your fridge could use a refresh, too. Instead of letting halfused veggies or leftover meat linger, turn them into something delicious with a stir-fry. This quick, easy meal transforms leftovers like roast veggies, steak, pork or chicken into a satisfying dish without wasting a thing.

Think of stir-fries as a blank canvas for getting creative with what you have on hand. The formula is simple: Start with a starch like rice or noodles, saute aromatics like onions, add your protein and veggies, then slather everything in a scrumptious sauce. Best of all, you can use whatever leftovers you've got -- whether remnants of last night's roast or that last lonesome pork chop. Stir-fry turns odds and ends into a delicious meal.

To make your stir-fry truly shine, the secret is in the sauce -- homemade stir-fry sauce, to be exact.

Homemade stir-fry sauce is a total game-changer. It's than store-bought options, but it's also customizable to your taste. With just a few simple ingredients, you can create a sauce that brings flavor and excitement to any meal. It pairs perfectly with veggies, meat, tofu, shrimp or whatever proteins you have on hand, and it's a great way to use up those random leftovers. Plus, making it yourself means you control the ingredients, so it's healthier and budget-friendly. Keep a jar on hand, and you'll always be ready for a quick, delicious

not only cheaper and fresher

Flavor bomb stir-fry sauce Yield: 1 cup sauce; 4 serv-

Total Time: 5 minutes

1/4 cup low-sodium soy

1/2 cup low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth

- 1 tablespoon cornstarch 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil 1 heaping teaspoon fresh
- ginger, peeled and grated or finely minced
- 1 heaping teaspoon gar-

lic cloves, grated or finely minced

Whisk all the ingredients together. Adjust the ingredients to your preference. Add to your stir-fry and cook for 3 minutes to thicken. Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container for up to a

Leftover luxe stir-fry Yield: 4 servings

Total Time: 20 minutes 3 cups rice, quinoa or noo-

dles (your choice of starch) 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided

1 small onion, sliced 1-2 cups leftover protein (chicken, beef, pork, tofu,

etc.) or raw protein 4-6 cups mixed vegetables (e.g., broccoli, bell peppers, spinach, bean sprouts)

3 eggs, scrambled (option-

1 cup stir-fry sauce (recipe included)

If you're not using leftover starch, cook your rice, quinoa or noodles according to package directions.

Heat 1 tablespoon vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and stir-fry for 2-4 min-

Turn your fridge leftovers into a vibrant, flavor-packed stir-fry in minutes (photo courtesy www.JasonBoblentz.com). utes. If using leftover protein, and cook until tender. Add reheat with the onion and set quicker-cooking vegetables aside. If using raw protein,

Add the remaining 1 tablespoon vegetable oil to the skillet. Start with slower-cooking vegetables (e.g., broccoli, carrots, cabbage)

cook it through before set-

ting it aside.

(e.g., spinach, bean sprouts) near the end, cooking until just wilted. Scramble eggs in starch. a bowl and add to the skillet. Break them up as they cook. Combine everything: Add protein back into the pan

Drizzle with the flavorful stirfry sauce, cook for 3 minutes to thicken the sauce and serve over your choice of

With endless possibilities, stir-fry will clean out your fridge and create a fresh, flavorful meal in no time.

(c) 2025 King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich in flavor, light on the wallet: Meet Mujadara

By PATTI DIAMOND

ich in Flavor, Light on the Wallet: Meet Mujadara

Are you ready for a culinary journey to the Middle East? Buckle up, buttercup, and bring your taste buds, because today, we're making Mujadara (moozha-DAH-rah), a simple, satisfying dish of lentils, rice and caramelized onions that prove frugal can also be

fabulous. Mujadara has been enjoyed across Lebanon, Jordan and Syria for centuries, and for good reason. It's hearty, flavorful and budget-friendly. Traditionally known as a "poor man's meal," don't let the name fool you -- as with most "peasant food," this dish is so comforting and delicious, it'll make you feel like royalty. Think of it as the Middle Eastern equivalent of mac and cheese: cozy, familiar

and always a hit. At its core, Mujadara is a lesson in culinary alchemy. A handful of pantry staples -- lentils, rice, onions and spices -- transform into something far greater than the sum of their parts. The secret? Those deeply caramelized onions. They add a richness that takes this humble dish to the next

For this version, I've opted for brown rice over white to boost the nutritional value, though white basmati works too. Just check the recipe notes for adjustments. The lentils provide protein, the rice offers fiber, and the onions bring an irresistible depth of flavor and sweetness that ties it all together.

Mujadara is best served with a dollop of yogurt or a drizzle of tahini sauce, a scattering of fresh herbs and, if you like a bit of heat, a spoonful of your favorite spicy sauce. You can enjoy it hot, warm or at room temperature, making it an excellent make-ahead meal.

Mujadara (Lentils and Rice with Caramelized Onions)

Yield: 4 generous servings Total Time: 45 minutes

- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon ground
- 2 teaspoons Kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 5 cups water
- 1 cup brown basmati rice, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup brown or green lentils, rinsed and drained
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive
- 2 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup sliced green onions, divided
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro or parsley, divided

Plain yogurt, for serving (or tahini sauce for a vegan

In a large saucepan, combine garlic, bay leaves cumin, 1 1/2 teaspoons salt and black pepper with water. Bring to boiling over medium-high heat.

Stir in the rice, reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

After 10 minutes, add lentils and stir. Return to a simmer, cover and cook until liquid is absorbed and grains are tender (about 20-23 minutes).

Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until deeply caramelized and crisp at the edges (about 20-30 minutes). Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate and sprinkle with remaining

When the lentils and rice are done, drain excess water if needed, remove bay leaves and mash garlic cloves against the pot's side. Add 3/4 of the green onions and cilantro, fluff with a fork and adjust seasoning.

Transfer to a serving dish, top with caramelized onions and garnish with remaining green onions and herbs. Serve with yogurt or tahini

Diva Tips - Rice Swap: If you use white basmati rice. cook the lentils first for 10 minutes before adding the rice to ensure both cook evenly.

Whether you're looking for a nutritious meatless meal or just want to expand your global recipe repertoire, Mujadara is a musttry. Simple, satisfying and steeped in tradition, it's proof that the best meals don't have to be complicated -- or expensive.



and heat for 2-3 minutes.

(photo courtesy www.JasonBoblentz.com).

🜒 WHY UNION DUES MATTER — AND WHY YOU NEED TO JOIN NOW 🖤 Protect Your Job. Protect Your Voice. Protect Your Rights.

AFGE | American Federation of Government Employees

What Your Union Dues Do:

Union dues aren't just a fee — they're your investment in power. They fund the tools we need to fight for YOU:

Contract Negotiations

Better wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Legal Defense

Protection against unfair treatment, removals, and policy violations.

Training & Education

Know your rights. Strengthen your workforce skills.

Political Advocacy

We push back on laws and executive orders that hurt federal workers.

Operational Strength

Your union stays ready, responsive, and resourced.

🚨 THE URGENCY IS NOW

TRUMP'S MARCH 27 EXECUTIVE ORDER + OPM MEMORANDUM

This administration is:

- Slashing official time for union reps
- Weakening grievance and appeal rights
- 💸 Undermining dues deduction
- Eroding employee protections
- This is a direct attempt to silence your voice in the workplace.

💥 WHAT CAN STOP THIS? MEMBERSHIP. SOLIDARITY. PARTICIPATION.

When we stand together, we protect one another.

🣂 JOIN. PAY DUES. STAND UNITED. Visit AFGE.org to JOIN or CONTACT your local AFGE union office.

Don't wait until your rights are stripped away. Join your union today. Protect your tomorrow.

Visit us on the web: local987.com the-union-advocate.com