

Christmas traditions around the world

Compiled from websites

Philippines
Giant Lantern Festival: In San Fernando, families gather to admire large, colorful lanterns that symbolize hope and unity during the season.

Iceland
13 Yule Lads: Children eagerly await visits from the 13 Yule Lads, who leave gifts or potatoes based on their behavior, adding a playful twist to the holiday.

Japan
Christmas Fried Chicken: Many Japanese families enjoy Kentucky Fried Chicken on Christmas Eve, a tradition that began with a successful marketing campaign in the 1970s.

Norway
Hiding Brooms: On Christmas Eve, Norwegians hide their brooms to prevent witches from stealing them, a custom rooted in folklore.

Germany
Advent Calendars: The Advent season is marked by festive markets and the tradition of hiding a pickle ornament in the Christmas tree, where the child who finds it receives an extra gift.

Italy
La Befana: On January 5th, children await La Befana, a kind witch who delivers gifts, marking the end of the Christmas season.

Greece
Christopsomo: Families bake a special bread called Christopsomo, which is decorated with a cross and shared among family members as a symbol of unity and blessings.

Germany
The Advent season is marked by enchanting Christmas markets, where families gather to enjoy festive food, drinks, and handmade crafts. A unique German custom involves hiding a pickle ornament deep within the Christmas tree and the child who finds it on Christmas morning often receives an extra gift or gets to open the first present. The 'Christkind' (an angelic figure) is often the traditional gift-giver instead of Santa Claus.

Belarus
The Belarussian festival of Kaliady dates back to pagan winter solstice celebrations. Meaning "calendar," Kaliady encompasses three important dates: two Christmas dates of Dec. 25 and Jan. 7, and New Year's Day in between. In a nod to its Soviet past, Belarus puts more emphasis on New Year's than on a religious holiday. Nevertheless, some cherished traditions remain. Grandfather Frost ("Dzied Maroz" in Belarussian), often accompanied by his granddaughter Snegurochka, arrives bringing

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A steward of the people

Jonathan Lee joins Local 987 staff as full timer

By **DON MONCRIEF**
Editor, The Union Advocate
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“I want to be a steward of the people. Help the people and bring knowledge to the people.”

That’s Jonathan Lee’s highly condensed mission statement. Lee is the latest to join AFGE Local 987’s staff as a full-time steward.

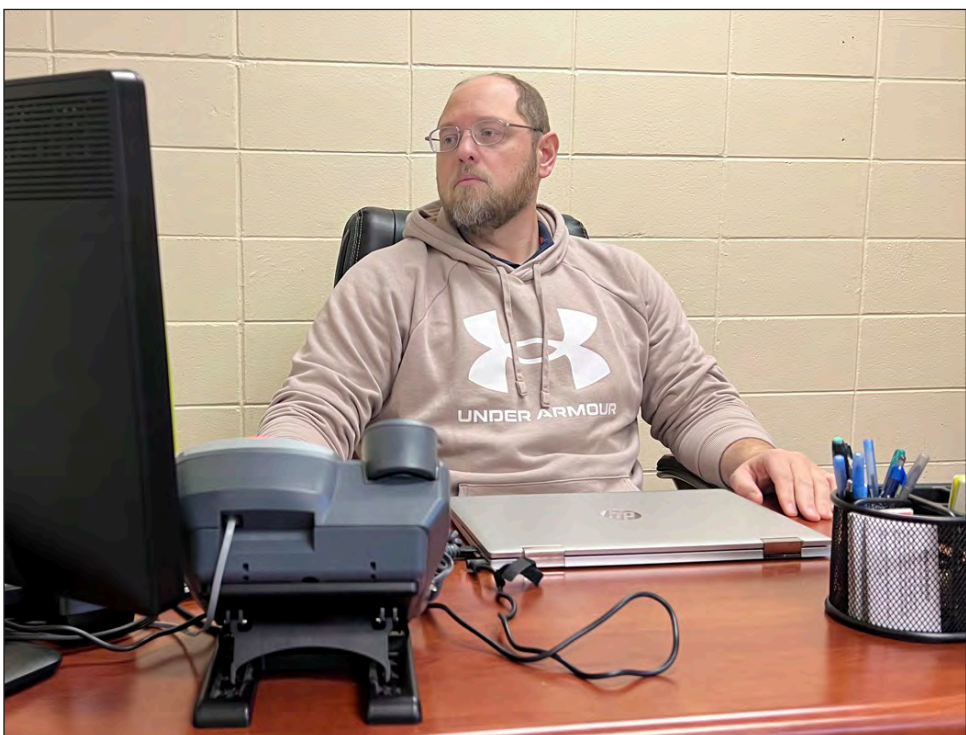
Lee was born in Dublin, Georgia, and raised in Eastman. Among other accomplishments in high school, he was the left tackle for a Dodge County football team that went 10-0 during the regular season and went on to win the state championship. After graduation, he did a little college – working to major in business; today he is back in college where he was voted “Best in Class” last semester and is a straight A’s student. He also worked for a communication company – running cables for phones and that sort of thing. When the company dissolved, he went to work for his father who ran a successful sign shop; his mom was a pretty much lifetime schoolteacher.

Around about 2004 he, as part of the coop program, got the call to work on Robins AFB. He’s been there since. His entire career, he said, has been in sheet metal – CMXG – with experience fabricating repairs on the F-15, C-130, running electrical, “pushing foam”, et cetera.

Life was good. And then it wasn’t. Some years in, the father of two hurt his back. On the job, but he said management refused to acknowledge that. He said he went through “a lot of stuff” with it – hard-hearted supervisors and such - but he finally

just decided to have the surgery he needed “out of pocket. I just wanted to make it (his condition) right,” he said. He added: “I just, after getting messed with so much, (said), ‘I’m going to join’”

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AFGE Local 987 Full-time Steward Jonathan Lee studies case files.

Two items of request:

1) We don’t always get notified when one of our brothers or sisters has passed.

2) We don’t always receive notification when one of you has reached a milestone in your federal career? 10 years, 20 years, 30?

In either case, would you drop us a line at Theunionadvocate@gmail.com

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In memory

Phillip Morris
Member since
Feb. 24, 2025



SAVE THE DATE

Membership meeting

Local 987 will have a membership meeting Dec. 18 at 5 p.m. It will be held at Union Hall, located at 1764 Watson Blvd. Membership will be verified. You can make updates to your contact information by calling Union Hall at 478-922-5758 or by emailing Linda Baxter at linda@afgelocal987.org or Jeanette McElhaney at jmac@afgelocal987.org.

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members make them a better job applicant. For Federal Agencies that are Avue clients, members will be able to apply directly on-line, learn immediately whether they meet basic qualifications, and track their progress 24/7. The online AVUE process is fair, objective, transparent, and provides “on the merits” consideration of all interested candidates.

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For agencies that are not yet Avue clients, members are able to automatically generate and print a hard copy resume from a “base profile” maintained on line. In addition, the site provides our members with a wide range of expert information with respect to the entire spectrum of employee relations, EEO, Civil Rights, and other workforce management issues.



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New report exposes the limits of plastic recycling

(StatePoint) Have you tossed plastic into a recycling bin recently? There’s a large chance that material won’t be recycled.

That’s according to a new report, which finds that after decades of being touted as a solution to pollution, plastic recycling is not all it’s cracked up to be. The report also highlights the growing scientific consensus on the health risks and economic costs of plastic pollution.

“Merchants of Myth,” the Greenpeace USA report, uncovered that less than a quarter of the most commonly produced types of plastics – found in items like bottles, jugs, food containers and caps – is actually recyclable.

Moreover, plastic recycling rates in the United States have been cut in half since 2014, from 9.5% to roughly 5-6% today, due to recycling access gaps, as well as infrastructure and technical limitations at recycling facilities. Up to 43% percent of U.S. households lack access to basic recycling services, and participation in recycling is actually decreasing.

Meanwhile, only 12% of national municipal recycling facilities are even capable of processing common consumer plastics. Despite the small amount of plastic recycling actually taking place, the public pays to collect and sort plastics, while most of it ends up burned or dumped in landfills.

Researchers say that the plastic industry, retailers, prominent plastic-reliant brands, and related trade associations are retracting their sustainability commitments while continuing to rely on single-use plastic packaging.

And with global plastic production projected to triple by 2050, voluntary measures made by corporations won’t be enough.

“Sufficient change will only come with regulatory intervention and with politicians holding corporations accountable. Instead of investing in real solutions, the plastic industry, and corporations that rely on plastic, have poured billions into public relations campaigns making false claims about the recyclability of their products to avoid bans and reduce public backlash,” says John Hoyer, Greenpeace USA oceans campaigner director. “My sincere hope is that a year from now, no one with any credibility is still talking about a circular economy for plastic, and that we are united in focusing on reducing plastic production and use.”

To read the report, visit [greenpeace.org](https://www.greenpeace.org). “The plastic crisis grows worse every day we fail to act – for biodiversity, environmental justice, human health and our climate. It’s time to stop pretending we can recycle our way out of it,” says Hoyer.

Quit vaping to improve your dental, overall health

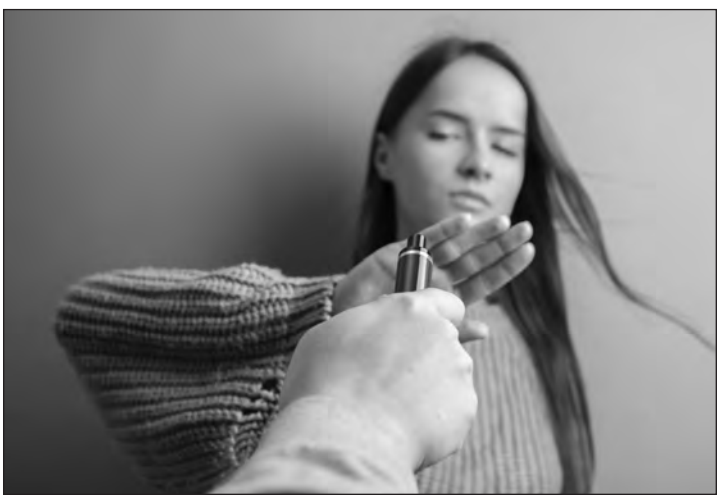
(StatePoint) Did you know tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable illness and death in the United States? While some forms of tobacco may be marketed as less harmful than others, the truth is that there’s no safe tobacco product. Each one threatens your dental and overall health, including e-cigarettes.

E-cigarettes (or vape pens) are used by around 8% of people in the United States and have been the most commonly used tobacco product among American youth for the last decade. Results of the 2024 National Youth Tobacco Survey show that almost 6% of middle and high school students use e-cigarettes and more than 1 in 4 youth e-cigarette users reported vaping daily. These are concerning statistics because e-cigarettes contain harmful substances like nicotine and cancer-causing chemicals that put the user’s health at risk. Youth who vape may also be more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future.

“There’s no ‘better for you’ cigarette out there in the marketplace. Whether you choose to vape or smoke, you still risk becoming addicted to nicotine, which can negatively impact your oral and overall health greatly over time,” said American Dental Association (ADA) dentist, Mirissa Price, D.M.D.

Here’s what to know about vaping, and why you shouldn’t use e-cigarettes.

Vaping is breathing in the aerosol (or vapor mist) created by an e-cigarette. The aerosol



iStock via Getty Images

is formed when the e-cigarette’s battery heats up the liquid (or e-juice) inside its special cartridge. The liquid in this cartridge often contains nicotine, along with flavorings and other chemicals that can be harmful when inhaled.

Nicotine is the highly addictive substance found in tobacco. It’s known to affect brain development related to memory, attention, and emotional regulation in children, teens and young adults, and can cause illness — and in severe cases, coma or death — if swallowed. Average nicotine strength in e-cigarettes has increased with vaping’s popularity, and research shows that it’s now double the amount of nicotine inhaled from a pack of cigarettes. Even cartridges claiming to be nicotine-free have been shown to contain some nicotine.

Other harmful substances that have been found in vape cartridges include chemicals

known to cause cancer; heavy metals such as nickel, tin and lead; and small particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs.

Vape pen batteries can heat the liquid to 400 degrees F in seconds. Cases of people being hurt by e-cigarettes exploding or causing fires inside their mouths have been covered in the news. Using a high heat setting can turn the aerosol more yellow, which could result in tooth discoloration, and make the aerosol stickier so that it remains on your teeth for a long time.

A study published in The Journal of the American Dental Association found a correlation between people who vape and people with untreated cavities, but more research is needed to know if the cavities are caused by vaping.

If you already vape, quitting today will improve your health. Visit [MouthHealthy.org/vaping](https://www.MouthHealthy.org/vaping) for more information, along with helpful resources.

Tips for dealing with holiday pop-up shops

During the holidays, many retailers set up temporary pop-up shops or booths to sell their merchandise. This allows shoppers to browse unique holiday gifts and other merchandise in person.

However, alongside the holiday cheer, BBB hears from consumers who run into problems with these temporary retailers.

The BBB receives complaints each year about temporary retail locations and pop-up shops. Consumers report everything from poor-quality merchandise to online purchase scams when ordering from the pop-up retailer’s website. They also report having difficulty obtaining refunds after temporary stores have closed their doors.

Keep these tips in mind if you choose to buy from one of them:

- Ask how long a store will operate. If you are buying from a seasonal store, ask whether it will be open after the holiday and whether it will accept returns when the season is over. If not, consider buying elsewhere or taking more time to be sure the item is exactly what you want before making the purchase.

- Review purchase policies. Determine the company or vendor’s refund and return policies before you buy. If shops cannot offer concrete commitments on how they will handle any potential problems you may have with their products or services, reconsider doing business with them.

- Be careful when placing orders. If the pop-up shop offers to place a special order for an item you’re looking for, take extra steps to ensure it is legitimate. Before placing the order, ask the seller for their contact information and confirm it works. Get details on how you will receive the order and when you should expect it to arrive and ask for a receipt and/or a copy of the order confirmation. Pay with a credit card so you have additional protection in case you never end up receiving the item.

- Pay attention to quality. Occasionally, pop-ups sell counterfeit products, so be cautious when purchasing designer goods or the latest “must-have” gifts. Prices that are dramatically lower than



Kelvin Collins

regular retail stores may be a red flag that the items are either stolen or counterfeit.

- Know the terms of any product or service guarantees. If you are purchasing anything that comes with a manufacturer’s warranty, ask how you will be able to get the product serviced if needed.

- Guard your personal information. For small items, you might be better off paying in cash, so you don’t have to share any personal information. Just be sure you understand that you probably won’t have any recourse if something is not right. For larger items, paying with a credit card can provide additional protection if there are problems and the retailer disappears. Make sure you hang on to the receipt to match it against your credit card statement.

- Consider whether the gift is for a hard-to-please recipient. If you are planning a gift for someone who might need or want to return it, consider buying from a retailer with a long-standing business, strong reputation, and well-established return policies, instead of a pop-up shop.

- If shopping online, do your research first. If you are interested in trying a new or unfamiliar online merchant, do your research. Ask the company for its physical location (address and phone number) so you can check its BBB Business Profile at [BBB.org](https://www.BBB.org).

Check to see if the business is BBB Accredited so you know whether dealing with a trustworthy business. Online purchase scams are very common during the holidays, so if you’re unsure about a retailer, look for online reviews and search for any scams. Remember that deals that seem too good to be true are often scams.

- Shop around. Pop-ups often focus on unique or high-quality gifts that you may not find elsewhere, but some are simply mini versions of discount retailers, offering holiday-themed goods that may be available for less at a traditional retailer.

Medal of Honor spotlight

Army 1st Lt. Richard Shea Jr.

By KATIE LANGE
DoD News

Army 1st Lt. Richard Thomas Shea Jr. was a decorated U.S. Military Academy distance runner who could have been an Olympian but instead decided to fulfill his obligation to the Army by serving during the Korean War. He lost his life during a dayslong battle there, and his courage and leadership led to a posthumous Medal of Honor.

Shea was born Jan. 3, 1927, in Portsmouth, Virginia, to Mary and Richard Shea Sr. He grew up on a farm with two brothers, Robert and William, who both served during World War II.

As a child, Shea liked riding horses and swimming when he wasn’t helping his family on the farm. He was also an altar boy for the Catholic Church.

Shea was a smart and popular student at Churchland High School in 1944. He was the senior class president and graduated second in his class.

After attending a few semesters at Virginia Tech University, Shea decided to enlist in the Army in 1945, serving in the 53rd Constabulary Regiment



Photo courtesy defense.gov

Army 1st Lt. Richard Shea Jr.

in Nuremberg, Germany, as World War II came to an end. While there, the young soldier became interested in running cross-country and started competing in races.

When Shea returned to the U.S. in 1948, he received an appointment to attend the U.S. Military Academy and quickly became one of West Point’s great distance runners. During his tenure at the school, he won 16 major championship races and set seven academy track records. He was ranked among the country’s top runners and even beat Olympic gold medalist Horace Ashenfelter in the steeplechase — a footrace of 3,000 meters over hurdles and

a water jump.

Shea was eventually invited to join the U.S. Olympic track team, qualifying for the 1952 games in the 10,000-meter race, according to West Point. However, he rejected the invitation so he could go right into service as a soldier.

Shea graduated with honors from the academy in June 1952. Around the same time, he married Joyce Reimann.

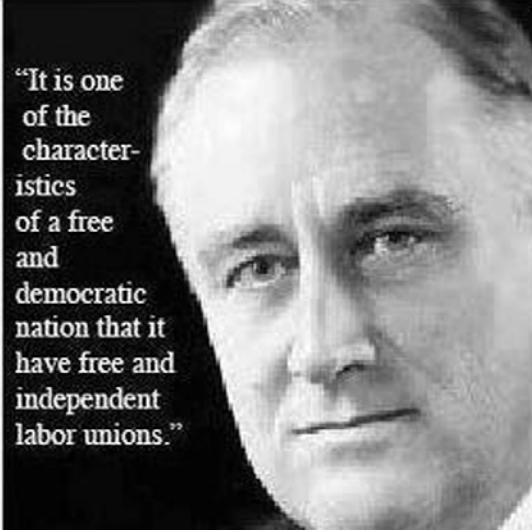
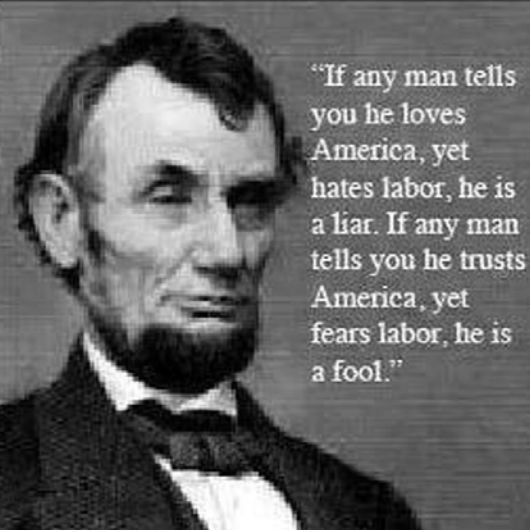
About a year later, Shea was sent to Korea, where the U.S. and United Nations forces were at a stalemate with North Korea in a battle to contain communism. Shea was assigned to Company A of the 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He had only been in the country a few weeks before he gave his life for the cause.

On the night of July 6, 1953, Shea was serving as his company’s executive officer near Sokkoga, Korea. The soldiers were reinforcing defensive positions on what was known as Pork Chop Hill when they were attacked by a much larger enemy force.

Shea immediately moved to the area that was most threatened and began organizing and leading a counterattack. In the bitter fighting that ensued, he killed two hostile soldiers with his trench knife. According to his Medal of Honor citation, Shea calmly moved among his soldiers, checking their positions and urging them to hold firm as they continued to fight throughout the night.

Despite heavy enemy losses, the hostile forces were determined to push forward.

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THE UNION ADVOCATE

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

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Printer
Houston Home Journal
Editor/layout and design
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TRADITIONS

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presents for the children.

Bolivia
Bolivia is predominantly Catholic, so the religious aspect of Christmas is very important to the people there. On Christmas Eve, in towns across the country, large processions carry a heavy altar with a statue of Jesus through the streets. After midnight Mass, families return home to a large Christmas meal of picana — a stew made with chicken, beef, and pork.

Costa Rica
Christmas is a cherished occasion in this beautiful tropical country. To celebrate, Costa Ricans often create elaborate nativity scenes in their yards and wreaths made with cypress and red coffee berries. After midnight Mass, known natively as “misa de gallo,” or “mass of the rooster,” families enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner of tamales wrapped in plantain leaves and accompanied by the ubiquitous salsa Lizano.

Democratic Republic of the Congo
Big musical events and long nativity plays demonstrate the Congolese people’s love of the- atrics and Christmas. The play

begins with the biblical story of creation and goes right through to King Herod and the slaughter of the innocents.

Egypt
Egyptians celebrate Christmas on two different dates: Dec. 25 and Jan. 7 (for Coptic Christians, who make up more than 90% of the Christian population in Egypt). During Advent, Coptic Christians adhere to a vegan diet for 43 days to honor the holy nativity fast. Then, on Christmas Eve, they enjoy a great feast. For non-Coptic Christians, presents from Baba Noël (“Father Christmas”) come on Dec. 25.

Greenland
Trees imported from Denmark are lit up on Dec. 23 and Moravian stars shine brightly in the windows of homes in this Arctic country, where the sun does not rise all winter long. During the season, children go door to door singing carols, and on Christmas Day everyone in the village receives a gift. That evening, women enjoy being waited on by the men, who stir the food and serve them hot coffee. Plenty of roasted seal, whale, and reindeer meat are on the menu, with cobbblers and Danish pastries for dessert.

Hong Kong
Hong Kong is a vibrant and

beautiful city, and the residents really know how to celebrate. WinterFest is known throughout the world as one of the largest outdoor holiday celebrations and puts everyone in the Christmas spirit. During Winterfest, which runs from late November to early January, the West Kowloon Cultural District is transformed into Christmas Town, featuring a giant lit tree, a village of holiday-themed “Santa lodges,” and art and musical activities. The city’s many skyscrapers also have holiday designs on their facades made with Christmas lights.

Japan
While New Year’s is Japan’s biggest holiday, the Japanese have adopted a theme for Christmas that centers on love. Couples celebrate the holiday with a romantic dinner and stroll along decorated streetscapes. Interestingly, “Ode to Joy,” the prelude to the last movement of Beethoven’s “Symphony No. 9,” has become a universal carol throughout the country, likely introduced to Japan by German prisoners of war during World War I.

Malta
This tiny island country in the Mediterranean may be small, but the Maltese celebrate big at Christmas. The holiday culmi-

nates with midnight Mass, at which a child is often chosen to deliver the sermon, a tradition called . Leading up to Christmas, you will see elaborate cribs, or presejju, displayed in churches and private homes depicting nativity scenes. These are often surrounded by tufts of gulbiena, long white grasses cultivated in dark cupboards in late November. On Christmas Day, everyone gathers for a big meal of baked chicken or pork and imbuljuta tal-qastan — a hot chestnut and cocoa soup.

Mexico
Mexico is rich in Christmas tradition, with festivities occurring nonstop from Dec. 16 to Jan. 6. Mexicans erect elaborate nacimientos (nativity scenes), and children often dramatize parts of the Christmas story during “posadas,” a celebration that takes place on the nine nights leading up to Christmas. Posada parties include lots of games to play, goodies to eat, and piñatas to break.

The Netherlands
When it comes to visits from the “jolly old man in the red suit,” The Netherlands is a double winner. St. Nicholas, or Sinterklaas, arrives bearing gifts on Dec. 5, while Santa Claus, or Kerstman, arrives on the evening of Dec. 24 with even more treats!



National economic headwinds blow through Georgia, though job outlook steady for now

by Ty Tagami - Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — National economic headwinds driven in part by politics will continue suppressing Georgia’s economy while raising the risk of recession, says a new economic forecast from a business think tank at the University of Georgia.

The 43rd annual prediction by the Selig Center for Economic Growth rates the risk of a recession in Georgia at pretty much a coin toss.

“In short, Georgia’s economy will struggle, and it would not take much to tip into recession,” says the report, out this week.

It places the odds of a recession in Georgia at 49%.

The forces on the state economy are largely the result of policies in Washington, as President Donald Trump’s tariff war blunts national economic growth, which the report placed at 1.3% rather than the potential 2%. Job growth will likely remain subpar, its authors predicted.

“We’re expecting another year of slow economic growth. The rate of growth will be very similar in 2026 to what we experienced in 2025, but there is a higher risk of recession,” Jeffrey M. Humphreys, the main author, said in an interview.

Given the uncertainty in the economic and political environment, fewer projects are in the pipeline, said Humphreys, the director of the Selig Center. “The biggest headwind is of course the trade war. And then the second biggest headwind is more restrictive immigration policies.”

Georgia depends more on international trade than the average state, so the tariff troubles have been taking a greater toll here.

Atlanta, with a highly diverse economy, depends less on global trade than other large metro areas, so is less exposed.

But smaller communities with economies based more on production and international trade are feeling that ill wind.

The economies of coastal Brunswick and Savannah, for instance, rely heavily on shipping through their major ports. And North Georgia industrial communities — Dalton with flooring and Gainesville with food and machinery production — are also affected, as they move product through those ports to international consumers.

The job market has been stable, if lackluster.

The unemployment rate remained at 3.4% in September, the same as in August, according to the Georgia Department of Labor. That was a percentage point below the national average, though it meant more than 180,000 without jobs.

The job market has been cooling through the year though.

Previously, employees could hop between jobs to boost their wages.

Now, employers have the upper hand, Humphreys said. And that should last into next year.

“The labor market has barely been adding any jobs at all,” he said. “We’re only expecting about a half a percent job growth next year, so basically the labor market has stalled out.”

Even so, consumers have been propping up the economy.

November tax revenues were up 0.9% last month compared to November a year ago, according to the Georgia Department of Revenue.

Income tax collections fell but were counterbalanced by rising sales tax revenue, with motor fuel tax receipts up a whopping 53%, or \$70 million.

Despite the uncertain economic outlook, people who have jobs feel secure in them, the Selig Center report said.

Household finances are generally in good shape with manageable debt, due in part to a housing shortage that has buttressed home values. Houses are pretty much worth the mortgage note, so home loans are not at risk of sinking underwater like in 2008.

And many were lucky enough to lock in historically low mortgage rates a few years ago, though rising property tax and insurance rates have been nibbling away at buying power.

For those with less fortunate timing who did not find an affordable home, the report did not offer good news.

Housing costs are expected to remain out of reach next year due to a variety of factors behind an abiding shortage. The tight labor market means fewer homeowners are moving and selling. Tariffs have driven up costs for construction materials. And the Trump administration’s policies on immigration have pinched the construction industry’s labor supply.

“Since we do not expect these negative factors to change very much in 2026,” the Selig Center said, “the homebuilding and real estate industries will remain in recession.”

LEE

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the union.’.”

Time went on. He hurt it again. Again, he said on the “same asset” (piece of equipment). This time management, he said, tried to make him a gate guard. The kiss of death, he had heard. “My understanding is that’s how they try to push you out if you get hurt.”

Fortunately, joining the union came into play and paid off. James Watson, the Vice President of Maintenance, was already familiar with his ability to write ... that’s one of the things he said he enjoys doing and was/is, part of a network on social media that have the same interest; where they talk and consult, et cetera ... and asked him if he was interested in joining the staff.

He was. He did. “When James asked me to come and work grievances, it just kind of came natural,” he said. “Nothing professional, but I was already part of some Facebook groups centered around writing. (He’s also an avid reader – anything from fantasy to non-fiction.) So, I had already consulted with artists and writers on some things. Done a lot of ‘world building’ for my own books. Never published anything or stuff like that but joined mostly as a hobby.”

The bottom line: “When asked to write I could write.” Enjoying “doing research and things like that,” helps. To date he has worked “Demand to Bargain” cases, “grievance” cases and been a part of arbitrations – including one that he said last nine hours. “Anything that comes across my desk and I can get some experience on,” he said of the whole. “I’m all about that. It’s the best way to learn the process.”

In retrospect, Lee’s rise to stewardship has always been a foregone conclusion. For starters there was what his parents taught him: Dedication, hard work, sacrifice.

Then there was the unfortunate lesson learned from family.

“I watched after my grandparents passed away on both sides of my family. There was a huge land dispute on both sides. People are vying for everything. Just people going nuts.

“Your whole life you’re brought up one way and then you see people act in that way and I asked myself is that the kind of person I want to be?” It wasn’t, he concluded.

Then there was the friend who committed suicide. “That really sparked my attention toward management overstepping their bounds,” he said. “Almost every day (they were on him). They kind of really ... I’m not going to say drove him to it, but they didn’t really help like they should have.

“He wasn’t coming to work every day, but still, you’ve got somebody in that situation, you should want to help. You don’t want to push someone to do that.”

He added: “And after the fact, management made a couple of remarks like, ‘Well, my conscious is clear.’ Things like that. I was like, ‘Is that really something you want to say after someone has done that?’ Things like that.

“I guess my feelings and everything, people should have a little bit more compassion for people going through things. Because everybody is going through something.”

Add longevity at Robins AFB into the mix.

“You see a lot of things in 23 years,” he said. “When I joined Robins, I was pretty naïve. I hadn’t been through some of the stuff people out here had gone through. Working out here it kind of makes you real-

ize what people are going through and how bad some people have had it. A lot of times it’s just an education level that separates people from each other, and this (now being at the union) has given me a great education on how things work.”

Like for example, he said, you do everything you can, you’ve got a “legitimate” case, but management “rolls the other way. You don’t understand why. You’ve just got to go with the facts and go through them.

“You’ve kind of got to draw your feelings back a little bit. Feelings can really sway the case in the wrong way. On everybody’s side. Kind of. I guess the term they use here is ‘backstreet lawyer’ and that’s what it seems to be. A lot of reading the MLA (Master Labor Agreement), LSA (Local Supplement Agreement. A lot of U.S. Code and regulations and all of that.”

Lee said he is willing to work long, hard and diligent for anybody – to serve in any way he can – but there is a caveat he’d also like to offer. His hope, he said, is that people will get involved in the process so they can help themselves as well.

“Because it doesn’t really take me to win your case,” he said. “You can win it all on your own if you just do some due diligence. The real thing that’s hurting Robins is people have no idea what their MLA says. (Or Local Supplement Agreement or the U.S. Codes or regulations, he also mentioned prior to that.) I think everybody should take the time to read it and get educated on it. It would save me, and them, a lot of time.

“When I first started I didn’t know a lot about it. And the more I learned, the better off I was. I think everybody should be the same way.”

That’s just his highly condensed mission statement talking: To be a good steward and bring knowledge to the people.

HONOR

From page 2

At dawn, they made an all-out attempt to overrun defending troops.

But Shea’s men were ready. They charged forward to meet the challenge and drove the enemy back. That afternoon, Shea integrated more soldiers from another company into the unit to reinforce their stance. Soon after, he and about 20 men again charged the enemy.

Shea was wounded in this attack, but he refused to be evacuated and continued to lead the counterattack. According to his citation, “When the assaulting element was pinned down by heavy machine-gun fire, he personally rushed the emplacement and, firing his carbine and lobbing grenades with deadly accuracy, neutralized the weapon and killed three of the enemy.”

Shea kept his men in place and had them hold their position throughout the night. On July 8, the enemy attacked again.

Despite suffering more injuries, Shea launched another forceful counterattack. He was last seen in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy before being reported missing in action.


A few weeks later, an armistice was signed, ending hostilities in the country.

According to a 1955 article in the Norfolk, Virginia, newspaper, The Virginia-Pilot, Shea’s body was found on Nov. 12. He was returned to the U.S. and buried in Olive Branch Cemetery in his hometown, June 9, 1954.

Shea’s courage and leadership were a huge inspiration to those with whom he served. On May 16, 1955, his widow received the Medal of Honor on his behalf during a ceremony on the parade grounds in Fort Myer, Virginia.

The Army community continues to honor Shea’s heroics. In 1958, West Point dedicated its track and field complex in his honor. It remains named Shea Stadium to this day.


A display honoring Shea was also erected outside his high school in 2008.



JOIN AFGE IN 4 EASY STEPS


STEP 1:

Go to www.joinafge.org




STEP 2:

Select your Agency and Local Number




STEP 3:

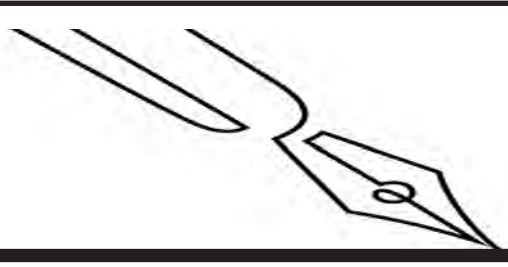
Fill out the one-page membership form and click “Join”



STEP 4:

If you’re a new member, select a rebate campaign and fill out the brief form (local participation may vary)





Just for

King Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Touse
5 Resistance unit
8 Prego rival
12 Bickering
13 Zodiac animal
14 Pub orders
15 Tabula —
16 Sheer fabrics
18 Santiago resident
20 Playful sea critter
21 Mormon church, for short
22 Top card
23 Army bigwigs
26 Scolding
30 "Humbug!"
31 Cooking fuel
32 French pronoun
33 Upbeat
36 Rose protector
38 Weeding tool
39 Spanish gold
40 Parlor pieces
43 Bar exercises
47 Trailblazing congresswoman
Shirley —
49 Power co. supply
50 Suffix for million
51 "Levitating" singer Lipa

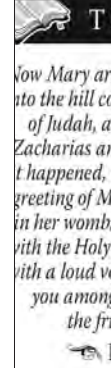
1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18					19				20			
				21				22				
23	24	25				26				27	28	29
30					31					32		
33				34	35				36	37		
				38				39				
40	41	42				43				44	45	46
47						48				49		
50						51				52		
53						54				55		

- DOWN**
- 1 Artist Chagall
2 Beehive State
3 Spanish ayes
4 Stable enclosures
5 Killer whales
6 Virtuoso violinist Hilary
7 2001, to Cato
8 Traveled the rapids
9 Oodles
10 Hereditary unit
11 Cold War initials
17 Central points
19 Asner and Harris
22 Sounds of relief
23 Telly network
24 Fan's cry
25 Sashimi fish
26 Automobile
27 "As I see it," in a text
28 Fish-fowl insert
29 Tom Collins liquor
31 "My word!"
34 Stages
35 Ritzy
36 Part of TNT
37 Truthful
39 "Holy cow!"
40 Con job
41 Columbus' home
42 Evergreens
43 Crossword hint
44 — Bator
45 Lima's land
46 "Shoo!"
48 Quirky



Solomon's Seal

"Solomon's Seal" is the common name for a number of species in the genus Polygonatum. These plants display broad, alternating leaves and many clusters of bell-shaped flowers that dangle along each stalk. They prefer rich, moist, well-drained soil, partly or fully shaded. They are drought-tolerant once established, have few insect or disease problems, and are not favored by deer. Beside their use as garden plants, they are used medicinally, and also prepared as food. —Brenda Weaver



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"

LUKE 1: 39-42

Five Spot™

Enthusiasm

S	O	U	N	D

Solve each row by replacing one letter from the answer above or below and scrambling to make a new word. When complete, the top and bottom words will have no letters in common.

Large body of water

Soak

A nit that was not picked

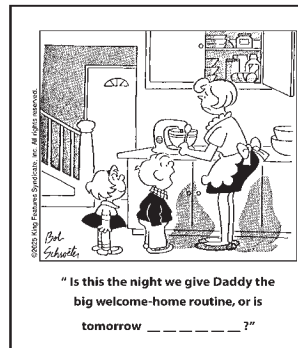
What you're trying to do

Obscures

Breathing

E	A	I	L	V
S	L	I	E	A
E	A	L	O	S
E	S	U	O	L
E	S	U	O	D
D	N	U	O	S

Solution



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!

Ged
TIDEY

Fold
PLATE

Rouse
WEAKO

Hint
LIMPY

TODAY'S WORD

SCRAMBLERS

PAYDAY

Today's Word

3. Awake; 4. Imply

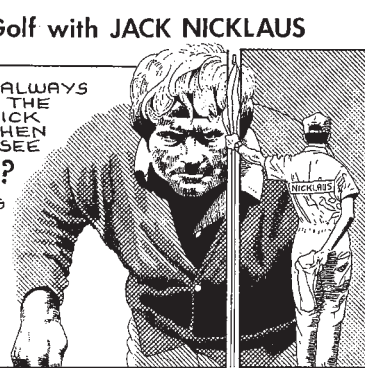
1. Delity; 2. Pleat

Solution

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

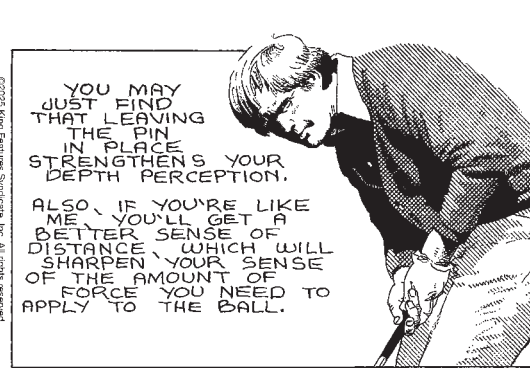
DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE THE FLAGSTICK REMOVED WHEN YOU CAN SEE THE HOLE CLEARLY?

TRY LEAVING IT IN PLACE AND HAVING IT ATTENDED ON PUTTS 30 FEET OR MORE.



YOU MAY JUST FIND THAT LEAVING THE PIN IN PLACE STRENGTHENS YOUR DEPTH PERCEPTION.

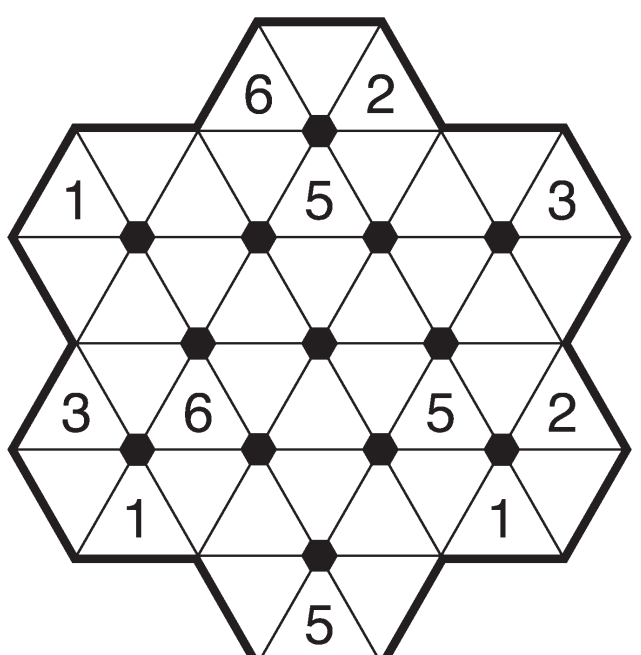
ALSO, IF YOU'RE LIKE ME, YOU'LL GET A BETTER SENSE OF DISTANCE, WHICH WILL SHARPEN YOUR SENSE OF THE AMOUNT OF FORCE YOU NEED TO APPLY TO THE BALL.



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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Americanisms



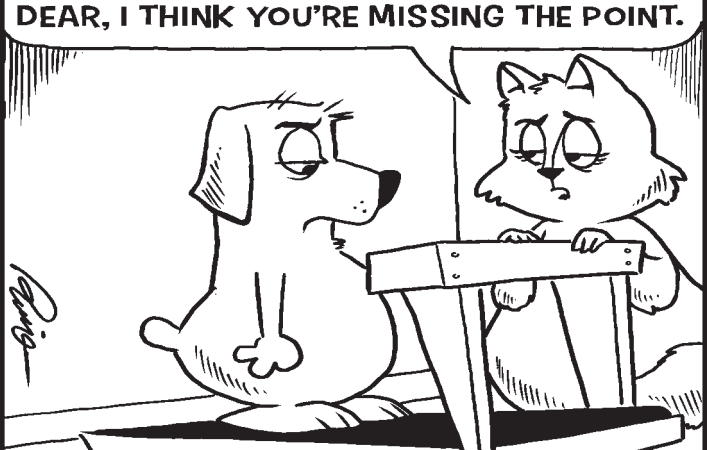
"To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle, every cubic inch of space is a miracle."

— Walt Whitman

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

NO, THERE'S NOT A "DOWNHILL SETTING." DEAR, I THINK YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT.



Weekly SUDOKU

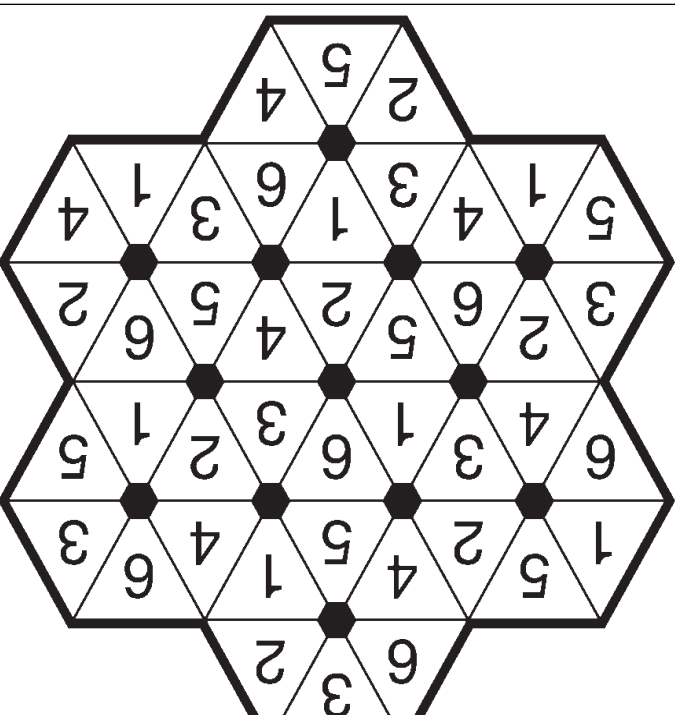
6	8		3		1	7		5
					9		8	
						3	1	4
8		1	9					
	3					5	7	
	2	5	7		3	1	6	9
	4		2	3				7
3		7	1		5	8		
2			6	7	4	9		

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

Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

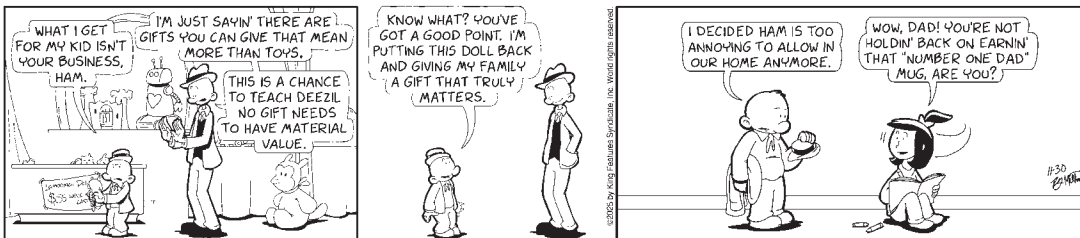
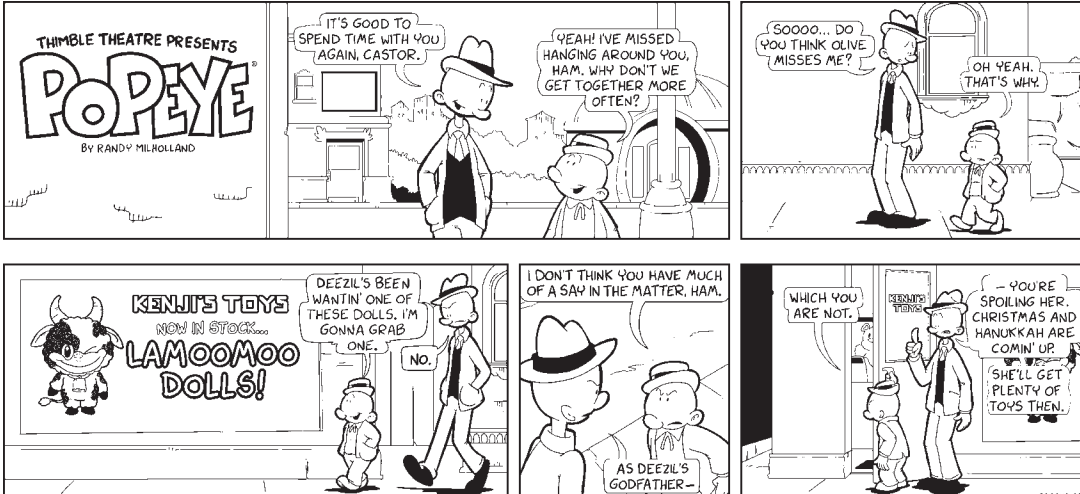
King Crossword

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

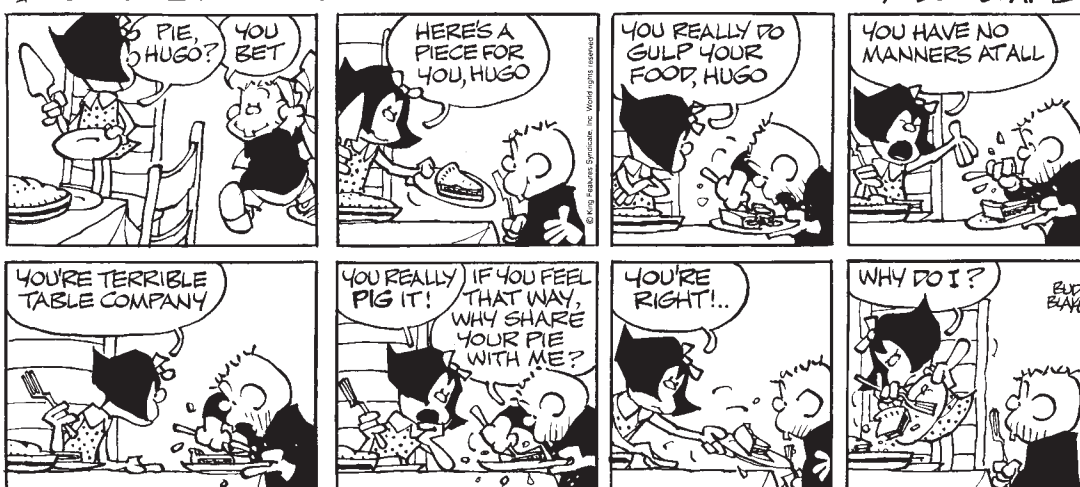
Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

by Gary Kopervas



by BUD BLAKE



Hand is moved. 4. Collar is missing. 5. Stripe is added to
eve. 6. Book is smaller.

Declaration about a firefly or ladybug that prefers ascending surfaces: It's an uphill beetle.

HOW TO CHOOSE, CARE FOR A LIVE HOLIDAY TREE

(Family Features) Though artificial Christmas trees have come a long way, few things compare to the fresh scent and natural beauty of a live tree.

Whether your family picks out a real tree as an annual tradition or this is your first time considering a live tree for the holidays, this guidance can help you choose the right one and care for it throughout the season.

1. Measure Your Space

Before you head to your local tree farm, measure the ceiling height where you plan to set up the tree, subtracting the amount of room your star or topper will account for. Similarly, measure the width to ensure the tree doesn't encroach too much on furniture or traffic flow.

2. Choose the Right Tree

While the options can be overwhelming once you're among the field of available trees, consider what shape would fit best in your space: Do you want a fuller or slimmer tree to fit a tighter space?

Is a uniform shape without large gaps in the needles important or do you need stronger branches better equipped for handling heavier ornaments?

Don't forget to also consider trunk size - and consider bringing your stand with you to ensure your preferred tree fits - as trees with short or crooked trunks may be unstable.

3. Inspect for Freshness and Quality

To ensure a safe, long-lasting, beautiful tree throughout the holidays, look at it from all angles and inspect the needles and branches. Needles should be green, not dry or brittle, and firmly attached to the branches, which should be flexible and not snap easily.

If you run your hand through the branches and they break or needles fall off, it may be wise to look at other trees.

Remember, if your tree has been cut too early, it may sit too long and dry out before Christmas arrives, so try and buy your tree as close to setup time as possible.

4. Set Up with Care

Before placing your tree in the stand, make a fresh cut about 1 inch from the base of the trunk to open the pores for water absorption. Place it away from heat



Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

5. Plan for Disposal

Once your tree has dried out - branches may be brittle and lots of needles may have fallen off - it's time to remove it. Remove all decorations then check to see if your city offers tree recycling or chipping service.

Many offer these services for free for a limited time after the holidays but may require you to drop the tree off or cut it into smaller pieces for pick up.

Find more seasonal advice to make the holidays safe and festive at eLiving-today.com.

Set yourself up for safe winter driving

(Family Features) Waiting for the first snow or ice storm to hit puts you and your tires behind the curve when it comes time to get behind the wheel.

Preparing your vehicle and brushing up on smart winter driving tips helps ensure you arrive at your destination safely, no matter the weather.

Consider Winter Tires

When temperatures drop below 45 F, winter tires maintain flexibility and road grip, contrary to all-season tires that don't perform as well in these conditions. Winter tires are designed for better traction and stopping power in ice, slush and snow.

Change Out Seasonal Wheels and Rims

Swapping summer or all-season tires for winter ones will ensure your vehicle has the best traction possible, but that's just part of the story. Slippery, wet and icy roads mean vehicles tend to skid and lose control, striking curbs and other objects that scratch, dent and scuff. Snow and winter wheels are a smart way to protect summer rims from snow, ice and road-clearing chemicals like salt.

Protect Offseason Tires

It's important to protect your offseason tires from below freezing temperatures, sunlight, moisture and other harsh weather conditions. Consider Discount Tire's Tire Hotel service, available at select locations, where stores help preserve the condition of tires, handling tire rotations, inspections and maintenance when it's time to change the winter tires back.

Maintain Target Air Pressure

The impact changing temperatures have on your tire pressure can create numerous issues, including poor handling, worse gas mileage, excessive wear and overloading. Prevent problems by checking your air pressure at least once a month when your tires are cool and before any long trip. For every 10 F in ambient temperature change, tire air pressure changes 1 PSI (pound per square inch). That means you need to check your tires more frequently as temperatures fluctuate and settle into lower winter levels.

Check Tread Depth Regularly

Your vehicle's tread depth plays a vital role in traction, which can affect your safety while driving in winter conditions. To ensure you have ample tread, stick a penny upside-down in a tread groove. It's time to replace if Lincoln's head is visible. You can also visit your local Discount Tire store for a free tire safety check.

Practice Good Tire Maintenance

Taking care of your tires ensures you get the longest life and best wear. Most experts recommend rotating your tires every 6,000 miles. Knowing the age of your tires, which can be found by looking at the DOT number stamped on their sidewalls, is important since tire rubber becomes harder and more brittle as it ages, increasing the risk of failure.

Choose Tires Wisely

Selecting the tires that are best suited for where you drive, how you drive and what you drive helps protect you and your passengers, ensuring your vehicle is prepared for winter weather. When shopping, consider using an online tire guide like Treadwell, which provides personalized recommendations on the best tires for your driving needs. Find the tool online at DiscountTire.com/Treadwell.

Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

BUY. SELL. SWAP

FOR MEMBERS ONLY.

IF YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING TO SELL SOMETHING - OR A NUMBER OF ITEMS - OR SWAP FOR SOMETHING IN PARTICULAR, AFGE LOCAL 987 IS HERE TO HELP YOU CAN ADVERTISE THOSE ITEMS AND/OR WHAT YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR IN THE UNION ADVOCATE. EMAIL THE PARTICULARS TO THEUNIONADVOCATE@GMAIL.COM. (MEMBERSHIP WILL BE VALIDATED UPON RECEIPT.)

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let's get to cooking and eating!