

Notice:

Due to the Juneteenth holiday, there will be no membership meeting in June. The next meeting will be July 17 at 5 p.m.

Notice:

Per AFGE Local 987 administration officials: If you have received any communication from the AFGE National office – letter, text, email - about your membership status and you currently pay your dues via Direct Dues, E-Dues or for WG employees, payroll deductions, you do not have any reason to fear or have concern about the status of your membership. As explained by Local 987 Trustee/Treasurer Jeanette McElhaney and Local 987 Bookkeeper Linda Baxter, the National office inadvertently sent out the communication to those whose names they did not have on file. That has since been corrected by Local 987 sending the National its list of members. “So there should be no more letters (etc) coming to you,” they both said, adding: “However, if you do, please contact us at the Main Office at 478-922-5758.”

AFGE: Switch to E-Dues before it’s too late

By AFGE Leadership

You’ve probably heard by now that Trump is trying to destroy our union by stopping union dues from being deducted from members’ paychecks, therefore cutting off our financial resources. This was done to silence AFGE, a retaliation against our efforts to challenge this illegal workplace actions.

More than 150,000 AFGE members have made the switch to AFGE E-Dues. Making the switch gives us the power to control our own union membership and our resources without meddling interference from the administration.

If you haven’t yet made the switch to AFGE E-Dues, it’s not

Visit [Join.afge.org](https://join.afge.org) or [Join.afge.org/L0987](https://join.afge.org/L0987) or [local987.com](https://local987.com) to sign up for E-Dues

too late to sign up.

If you have already made the switch, we want to hear from you! Share a quick video with us about why it was important for you to make the switch to AFGE E-Dues. You can do so at: <https://www.afge.org/common-pages/e-dues/e-dues-video-testimonial/>

Your words can encourage your fellow AFGE members to sign up for AFGE E-Dues today!

Happy Father’s Day!

Make your gift “Union Made” in America! •

Clothing and Accessories

Carhartt  
New England Shirt Company  
Joseph Abboud  
Southwick  
Naturalizer Shoes  
Nunn Bush Shoes  
Red Wing Shoes  
Timex watches  
Union Boot Pro  
Art Craft Leather  
Horween Leather Co.  
Danner shoes  
Air Step Shoes  
Wage’s Silversmiths custom silver belt buckles

Tools

Armstrong  
Stanley Black & Decker  
Klein Tools  
Lawn-Boy

Skin and Personal Hygiene Care

Dove  
Old Spice  
Caress  
ChapStick  
Ralph Lauren cologne  
Grey Flannel cologne

Rapid Shave  
Lander personal care products

Sporting Equipment

NordicTrack  
American Athletic (Russell Brands)  
MacGregor Golf clubs  
Standard Golf  
Top-Flite golf balls

Cookware and Grilling

Thermador grills  
Weber grills  
All-Clad  
Anchor Hocking  
Cutco knives  
Fiesta tableware  
KitchenAid  
Durex Maverick barbecue tools  
Igloo coolers  
Whiskey  
Knob Creek  
Du Nord Craft Spirits  
Jim Beam  
Wild Turkey

- Courtesy AFL-CIO

EO after effects place GS employees in ‘abeyance’

By **DON MONCRIEF**  
Editor, The Union Advocate  
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“Abeyance.” In noun form it means to be in a “state of temporary disuse or suspension.” In law form it is “the position of being without, or of waiting for, an owner or claimant.”

Such has become the state for General Services Administration, GSA, employees. They are “not being recognized by the Agency,” said AFGE Local 987 Acting President Ron Hill. “The background on it,”

he explained, “was when President (Donald) Trump did the EO (Executive Order) to get rid of the collective bargaining unit, we had a temporary stay (but) instead of bringing everybody back under the agreement, they exempted GS employees from the Agency side citing ‘national security’ from the EO.

If that sounds questionable, Hill and the Local agree. “In so many ways in my opinion,” Hill said. “You’ve got the WGs out there working on aircraft. You would think that would be more of a national security than a GS.”

Regardless, right now, he continued GSs have to pay Direct or E-dues because the base’s not recognizing them, so they won’t do payroll deduction like they do for the WG employees.”

That’s just one problem. A second one, he continued, is when a GS employee files a grievance it’s being held in “abeyance” pending litigation; and it couldn’t be worse timing, he added, as it’s appraisal time.

“Just to clarify,” he said. “If you fall under the collective bargaining agreement

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JUNETEENTH

FREEDOM DAY | JUNE 19

A full two and a half years late

Juneteenth (short for “June Nineteenth”) marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed.

The troops’ arrival came a full two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday.

Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox Court House two months earlier in Virginia, but slavery had remained relatively unaffected in Texas—until U.S. General Gordon Granger stood on Texas soil and read General Orders No. 3: “The people of

Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free.”

The Emancipation Proclamation

The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, had established that all enslaved people in Confederate states in rebellion against the Union “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” But in reality, the Emancipation Proclamation didn’t instantly free any enslaved people. The proclamation only applied to places under Confederate control and not to slave-holding border states or rebel areas already under Union control. However, as Northern troops advanced

into the Confederate South, many enslaved people fled behind Union lines.

Juneteenth and Slavery in Texas

In Texas, slavery had continued as the state experienced no large-scale fighting or significant presence of Union troops. Many enslavers from outside the Lone Star State had moved there, as they viewed it as a safe haven for slavery.

After the war came to a close in the spring of 1865, General Granger’s arrival in Galveston that June signaled freedom for Texas’s 250,000 enslaved people. Although emancipation didn’t happen overnight for everyone—in some cases, enslavers withheld the information until after harvest season—celebrations broke out among newly freed Black people,

and Juneteenth was born.

That December, slavery in America was formally abolished with the adoption of the 13th Amendment.

The year following 1865, freedmen in Texas organized the first of what became the annual celebration of “Jubilee Day” on June 19. In the ensuing decades, Juneteenth commemorations featured music, barbecues, prayer services and other activities, and as Black people migrated from Texas to other parts of the country the Juneteenth tradition spread.

In 1979, Texas became the first state to make Juneteenth an official holiday; several others followed suit over the years.

In June 2021, Congress passed a resolution establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday; President Biden signed it into law on June 17, 2021.

- Source: History.com

The Douglas Factors; the appropriate response to misconduct

By **DON MONCRIEF**  
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The Douglas Factors. They are, per the Merit Systems Protection Board in Douglas vs. Veterans Administration, 5 M.S.P.R. 280 (1981), the “established criteria that supervisors must consider in determining an appropriate penalty to impose for an act of employee misconduct.” They number 12:

1. Nature and seriousness of the offense;
2. Employee’s job level and type of employment;
3. Employee’s past disciplinary record;
4. Employee’s past work record;
5. Effect of offense on employee’s ability to perform satisfactorily and effect on supervisors confidence in employee’s work ability to perform duties;
6. Consistency of penalty with that imposed on other employees for same or similar offense;
7. Consistency of penalty with Agency’s table of penalties;
8. Notoriety of offense or impact to Agency reputation;
9. Clarity with which the employee was put on notice of any rules that were violated in committing offense or was warned;
10. Potential for employee’s rehabilitation;
11. Mitigating circumstances surrounding the offense;
12. Adequacy and effectiveness of alternative sanctions.

“Nature and seriousness of the offense,” explained Francesca Gross, Esq., an EEO attorney for AFGE, during a recent webinar, would be in relation to “performance related issues”. “Employee’s job level and type of employment” is pretty straightforward, she said, what “grade, series,” et cetera the employee is.

The “Employee’s past disciplinary record” is pretty important in the process, she went on, “because I’ve seen cases

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AFGE



PRIDE

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER/QUESTIONING, INTERSEX, ASEXUAL & ALLIES.

June is PRIDE month. PRIDE Day is June 28.

AFGE PRIDE is a national program designed to support the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning, and others within the pride spectrum (LGBTQIA+) membership as well as their allies and to educate all of AFGE on the workplace and safety issues facing this community within AFGE and the Labor Movement.

Many of the goals of LGBTQIA+ members are the same as their co-workers; job security, opportunities for advancement, benefits, pay, and a respectful, dignified, and safe work environment are top priorities. Unfortunately because of homophobia and transphobia in the ranks of management and labor leadership, LGBTQIA+ union members frequently face specific barriers in receiving the same benefits and working conditions that other

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LOCAL SUPPLEMENT AGREEMENT

Robins Air Force Base and AFGE Local 987

Installment 3: Join us each issue as we do a refresher/reminder of the rights BUEs have under the Local Supplement Agreement signed between Robins Air Force Base officials and Local 987 officials. (Note: The entire LSA can also be found at local987.com.)

Article 3  
Alternate Supervisors  
3.1 General  
3.1.1 An alternate supervisor is a person designated in advance who will act

Special  
Know your rights. Know your LSA.

Employee Brief, etc.). In areas with Production and HR supervisors the Alternate Supervisor selection process will only be applicable for the Production Supervisor. An alternate supervisor will not have access to AF Form 971.

When the supervisor is present, the alternate shall still perform his / her regular duties and will perform no supervisory duties and receive no special privileges. Absence of the supervisor will include, and be limited to, times when the supervisor is on leave, temporary

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# Take on new hobbies in retirement

(StatePoint) Retirement should be relaxing, not boring. In fact, taking on new hobbies can keep your mind sharp and body vital as you age. Here are five ways to stay active in your golden years:

1. Join a gym: Joining a gym is one of the easiest ways to ensure you perform a mix of strength training and cardiovascular exercise. Doing both will help keep your bones and muscles strong and your heart and lungs fully functional. Don't forget to add in yoga and stretching to promote balance and agility.

If a gym is out of reach, see what other nearby opportunities are available for working up a sweat. Many towns and cities offer free and budget-friendly, community-based exercise programming.

2. Play music: There are numerous cognitive and emotional benefits associated with playing music. Whether you're a beginner just looking to pick up the basics or a seasoned musician with the hopes of performing in public, you can equip yourself to sound amazing with a high-quality instrument like the CT-S1-76 keyboard from Casio. Its 76 full-size keys and upgraded 13-watt bass-reflex stereo speaker system with surround effect lend it incredible sound quality and a dynamic playing experience, while its sleek, portable design makes it a joy to play anytime, anywhere.

In addition to remotely controlling the CT-S1-76, you can



iStock via Getty Images Plus

also use the Casio Music Space app to learn to play your favorite songs with downloadable MIDI files, interact with PDF scores, and much more.

3. Start a book club: It's always more fun to read books when you can discuss them with friends. From tackling the classics, to diving into non-fiction works that will challenge your perspective, to enjoying some easy, breezy beach reads, it's important that the other members of the group have the same reading goals as you.

So do a little leg work in advance to ensure everyone is on the same page.

4. Number crunch: You don't have to be in school to take up math as a hobby. There are plenty of recreational mathematicians of all ages who enjoy crunching numbers to work puzzles, compete in games, and uncover patterns in the real world.

To get into your mathemat-

ical groove and to support your hobby, use a graphing calculator such as the fx-9750GIII from Casio. Its over 2,900 functions, including random number generation, metric conversion and object measurement, make it a great tool for any mathematical project.

5. Learn a language: Learning a new language not only creates new neural pathways in the brain, it can be just the motivational ticket you need to finally visit that bucket list destination you've been dreaming of.

While formal lessons are great, you can help ensure your skills truly progress through conversation. Lean on services like Tandem to connect with a language partner.

By taking on new hobbies and expanding your interests, you can carve out a retirement that is active, adventurous and good for your body, mind and soul.

# Taking on the No. 1 threat to the yard of your dreams: Weeds

(StatePoint) If you're a homeowner who takes pride in your lawn, you know how big a headache weeds are.

To help you achieve the yard of your dreams, Exmark has partnered with Jason Creel, the owner of Alabama Lawn Pros, on a new video offering tips and insights into tackling weeds.

"I don't endorse a simple spray-and-pray strategy. Identifying weeds and understanding their life cycle is essential to using the right product at the right time and in the right amount," says Creel.

As broken down in the video, there are the major categories of weeds to be aware of:

Grassy weeds, like crab grass and goose grass may look like regular turf grass, but they're not nearly as uniform.

Broadleaf weeds, like dandelion and clover, stand out with their wide leaves, bright flowers and seed heads.

Sedges, like nutsedge, looks like grass, but instead have a solid, triangular stem without nodes.

Weeds can also be categorized by their life cycles:

Some weeds, like spurge, are annual weeds. They sprout, grow and die in one season. Then there are perennial weeds, like oxalis, also known as yellow wood sorrel, or nutsedge, and they come back year after year from that same root clump. It's also important to know if you're dealing with warm or cool season weeds. Warm season weeds germinate in the spring and die out in the fall and cool season weeds are typically going to germinate in the fall, mature the following spring and die out as the weather gets hot in the summer.

"These varying life cycles is



iStock via Getty Images Plus

why weed control is a year-round battle. But thankfully, it's not as difficult as it might sound," says Creel.

For most lawns, a pre-emergent herbicide application in the spring and then again in the fall is the first line of defense, however, the timing shifts every year, so for best results, watch the weather, not the calendar. If your weeds have already sprouted, that's where your post-emergent herbicides are going to come in. Whenever spraying any kind of herbicide, wear personal protective equipment and follow the label.

According to Creel, it's often a good idea to use pre- and post-emergent herbicides together, or to use a combination product to control different types of weeds. In every case, you'll want to rotate products to prevent resistance and ensure future success.

Of course, overall turf health should also be prioritized. Lawns cut weekly tend to have fewer weeds than lawns cut every other week, and if you let

your lawn grow too tall and cut off too much to save time, you risk weakening your yard. The rule of thumb is not to mow off more than one third of the blade. Remember, healthy yards fight off weeds more effectively, so keeping blades sharp and changing up mowing patterns regularly are essential.

For more insights, watch "Types of Weeds and What to Do About Them," a new episode of "Done-In-A-Weekend Projects," an original series from lawn care equipment manufacturer, Exmark. To watch the video, visit Exmark's Backyard Life, a unique multimedia destination focused on helping homeowners improve their outdoor living spaces. There you can also download additional tips and view other Exmark Original Series videos.

"Even with a good plan, weeds are very persistent. Spot-treat them as they appear, and keep your soil healthy, because strong, thick turf is the best natural defense against weeds," says Creel.

# TikTok videos use sad stories in fake donation request

If you've spent any time on social media, you may have come across ads or videos selling merchandise that claim to support a charity or a local cause.

Complete with older adults, adorable animals, touching music, and handmade products, these videos are part of a growing social media scam targeting animal lovers and kind-hearted donors.

How does the scam work? When scrolling on TikTok or another social media platform, you see a video showing an older adult asking for help. The video may say something along the lines of, "Please stay for 8 seconds to help my cat shelter from shutting down," or "Please don't scroll for 12 seconds to help my failing animal shelter."

You continue watching the video, which shows cats or other animals in a shelter. The video captions say that the person is struggling to keep their animal shelter open, so they are making cat slippers to help fund it. You see shots of the person in a craft store, cutting fabric, and then showing the final slipper product.

In the video description, you see a link to donate to the cause. You will be directed to a website to make a purchase, where it is unclear if the money is going to a charity.

These social media videos may be AI-generated or may include stolen videos or images from other accounts.

BBB received the following report on BBB Scam Tracker from someone who experienced this scam:

TikTok videos on an account called FlappyBirdUS of a little old man and his wife who "make cat toys to support their failing cat shelter"... when you order the toy to support them nothing ever gets sent to you they just take your money... all the videos are fake, AI generated nonsense ...selling cat toys in this case, cow slippers in another version"

BBB has tips to avoid donation scams:

## ACTIONS

From page 1

you can file a grievance under the MLA (Master Labor Agreement). If you don't fall under the collective bargaining agreement then you have to go through the administrative grievant process. We were under the agreement until Trump did his EO. Now we've been put in abeyance because even the Agency doesn't know which way to go at this point. Do they put it in collective bargaining? No, they're going

to put it in abeyance. Okay, can they do the administrative agreement? No, because they may still be under the bargaining agreement but until we find out they're just holding them in abeyance.

"We're trying," he said. "We're fighting for them but right now our hands are kind of tied in what we can offer them." Not that they aren't always available to answer questions and provide as much guidance as they can, he added.

"We have filed a lawsuit," he continued, that going

● Only do business with companies you know and trust. If you want to purchase a product or donate, do so through a reputable business or non-profit. If you want to buy something from a company you aren't familiar with, do plenty of research first.



Kelvin Collins

Look up the company name, website, and contact information. Read reviews on BBB.org and do a general search with the company's name and the word "scam." Don't skip this step, even if you're excited about the product. It's the best way to protect yourself from fraud and identity theft.

● Don't give in to videos that tug at your heartstrings. If you see one of these videos with kittens, puppies, or cows and want to make a purchase to support the cause, resist the urge to do so right away, even if the video relays a sense of urgency.

Intimidation and sympathy tactics are often used by scammers and are a red flag.

● Check to see if the charity is real on Give.org. For a charity to receive Accreditation, it must meet 20 Standards of Accountability covering everything from governance to fundraising. If the organization does not appear on Give.org, that does not mean it's not a real charity, but it can be a warning that you need to do more investigation.

Give locally. Contact your local or state animal shelters or other agencies directly and ask how you can support them.

For more information, read BBB's article, "Think twice before buying from these social media ads," for more information on products that claim to support a charity.

through the National office. "We won a temporary stay they couldn't get rid of the bargaining agreement. And now we're just waiting on the final answer from the Supreme Court to finalize what it's going to be.

He added, in regard to the big picture: "We were able to keep the TSA for a little longer this week (District Court Judge Marsha Pechman blocked DHS from dissolving its Union). We have a lot of little battles going on. We're winning them, but what we need to do is win the war."

## PRIDE

From page 1

union members get under the same contract. This is a matter of equal treatment and a cause that the union should take on.

**Goals of the AFGE PRIDE Program**

To help LGBTQIA+ members and potential members feel welcomed and valued in AFGE

To facilitate efforts by AFGE to oppose workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression

To provide educational support to the leaders and members of AFGE that will

ensure respect for all employees, including LGBTQIA+ federal and D.C. government employees

To promote best practices in the workplace to support LGBTQIA+ union members and encourage Locals to adopt them via contract language, union policies and union advocacy

To work within AFGE and the Labor community to organize support of equality and justice for the LGBTQIA+ community and their families

To engage the LGBTQIA+ community to support union campaigns for every member's rights at work.

Now, more than ever, we must use our collec-

tive power to protect and advance equity and justice for our 2SLGBTQIA+ siblings at work, in our union, and in the community. The rights of our siblings are under attack across our nation at every level of government.

Don't forget to register for these exciting virtual events (visit afge.org to sign up):

**AFGE PRIDE Monthly Meeting**

June 12, from 7-8 p.m.

**Union legislation fighting for the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities**

June 25 from 7-8 p.m.

**How to be an ally through representation**

June 26 from 7-8 p.m.



**Landscape architecture** is the analysis, planning, design, construction and stewardship of natural and built environments such as conservation areas, historic gardens and monuments, institutional and recreational settings, transportation corridors, private homes, etc. It requires advanced training and licensing.

- Brenda Weaver  
Source: www.asla.org

# THE UNION ADVOCATE

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

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Publisher  
**Houston Home Journal**  
Editor/layout and design  
**Don Moncrief**

the Department of Defense.

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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, photos, etc to don.moncrief@afgelocal987.org. For questions about story content, to pass on story ideas or to request coverage, please contact the aforementioned.

UNION MEMBERSHIP IS LIKE A GYM MEMBERSHIP.  
DUES ARE PAID TO BE PART OF THE GROUP WITH  
SIMILAR INTERESTS AND GOALS.

BUT, JUST LIKE A GYM, IF WE DON'T SHOW UP,  
INVEST OUR TIME - OR PARTICIPATE, WE DO NOT GET  
STRONGER!



# RESPONSE

From page 1

where people will say ‘I’ve been discriminated against because I’m, for example a female, but my male colleague has not been disciplined for this.’ But yet your male colleague wasn’t disciplined for this because this was his first offense but this is your fifth.

“And so of course the discipline is going to be harsher if you are farther along in the table of penalties or you have a past discipline record that is far stronger than the person you are alleging as your comparer. So, you want to be careful in highlighting someone as a comparer in particular if you are farther along or the complainant is farther along than the person who is compared when it comes to discipline or vice versa. You want to be able to show this is my first offense. That was their first offense. Or this was my second offense. This was their second offense and I still got published more harshly.”

An “Employee’s past work record,” Gross continued, could be important in the sense of someone resigning in lieu of termination. “If there were no potential issues at another employer,” she said. “That may or may not have been recorded in their record.”

The “Effect of offense on employee’s ability to perform satisfactorily and effect on supervisors confidence in employee’s work ability to perform duties” (No. 5), so basically this all sums up to say, Gross said, is: “What action the employee took. Part of a performance action or their failure to meet a performance. Does this have an impact on one, the overall work environment and two, the ability of this person to be trusted to perform the duties.

“But also in the way the supervisor has to work with the unit, work with the team, if you have this person who is deficient in performance or refusing to perform the tasks.”

Fellow AFG EEO Attorney Ericka Dorsey, Esq., added that this is one “where if you’re alleging let’s say retail and you have documented emails and awards and other documentation that shows that your supervisor is or has been placing confidence in you. You know, you’ve been like the go-to person. You have all your performance appraisals (and they) are satisfactory. Then this one incident. How does that change the history? You know, you’re looking at the holistically your whole federal service.

“So in that instance, you have documentation to show

you have consistently been an employee your supervisor has had confidence in and you have been able to perform your duties above and beyond. That is going to address the Douglas factor.”

She continued: “One thing I’ll just say is what the Agency’s do, the first proposed action, and then in the final decision, in the proposed removal they might say they’ve considered the Douglas factors and not break it down. One thing that, and it’s not legal advice, what we recommend is you go through each one since you have information. Because, let’s say it’s an issue of, especially retaliation or something where there’s a cover for the true reason they’re doing this, then let’s consider the real nature of the offense.

“Let’s say you’ve been targeted. My job is, let’s say you had to meet some sort of performance standard. Yes, I was late but my performance standards, my numbers never slipped. Or there’s an issue let’s say for disability. Yes, I have had significant leave but it’s actually tied to my failure to get a Reasonable Accommodation or I’ve had surgery. You want to detail what it is because if you look at what your job is, the type of employment, whatever discipline they’re proposing may not affect your ability to do your job.

“And you look at past disciplinary records, but just say I’ve worked for the Agency for 20 years. No, I’ve worked at the Agency for 20 years and when my boss is gone, I’m in charge. I’m the acting lead. I train the employees. You have to break down with explicitness because even if they don’t break down this, on appeal you will have this in the record.

“So where you can say my boss knows I’ve done this. My boss knows I’ve worked here for 20 years. You have to go back and address. You should go back and look at all of these different facts where you can provide litigating evidence. So even if they don’t change their proposal when they do the final, you have raised the foundation and put into your response all the documentation you may need when you appeal it. ‘Look I’ve laid all of this out here and they barely dismissed it, but your honor let’s see what I’ve put forth.’

“So yes, the Agency, I’ve seen often they will say we’ve seen it, but we’re not going to change a thing. But you have an opportunity to address each and every Douglas Factor and back it up. Not just with words but with documentation.”

“Consistency of penalty with that imposed on other employees for same or similar offense”

(No. 6), Gross said could be important if you knew someone who had a similar offense and they were not given the same penalty. For instance, she said, you were given 10 days for a particular offense and they were only given a reprimand – and, you both have the same stage/rank/status.

“Consistency of penalty with Agency’s table of penalties” (No. 7). “Every Agency should have some type of policy of how to implement (discipline), a chart or something to that effect,” Gross said. So, what you want to do, she said, is make sure the punishment is consistent with the offense but also with the Agency’s policy. “They shouldn’t be jumping to automatic removal when in the policy it says you get a verbal reprimand, a written reprimand and then a five-day suspension but then they’re taking you to automatic removal.”

No. 8, “Notoriety of offense or impact to Agency reputation,” alludes to the fact if the offense is more egregious, then the penalty is also going to be a lot more egregious. If it’s something that gets out, for instance in the media, she said, it could have a bad impact on the Agency’s reputation. “So if it were a violation of your security clearance and that could result in some sort of legal exposure or national exposure, that type of activity could result in a higher penalty because, one, of the offense itself and two, the impact on the Agency itself, but also that office. Especially dealing with some sort of national trust or some type of security clearance.”

“Clarity with which the employee was put on notice of any rules that were violated in committing offense or was warned,” No. 9, is also pretty straightforward, Gross said. “Let’s say you are being disciplined late. And say you’re late and now being given a notice of discipline for being 15 minutes late for work. ‘Well (you say), I was always consistently 15 minutes and have never been verbally warned. Never been verbally counseled. My supervisor just let it go. I do my work. I made up my time at the end of the day. Nothing ever happened.’ So, it’s the first time you’ve been put on notice, that something has been brought up, but you can show evidence. ‘Hey, this is an issue I’m facing and never received notice before. Never received verbal counseling.’

The counterpoint to that, she continued, was if there was verbal counseling what you would want to do is have it documented. For example, she said, the supervisor should send you an

email regarding the conversation – and if they didn’t, she “highly recommended” you send one to them by the end of the day.

“Follow up with the supervisor to say, ‘We met this day’ to discuss whatever it is, ‘my tardiness, being 15 minutes late, per our discussion I’m going to make up my tardiness at the end of the day. Make up my 15 minutes. Please affirm that my understanding of the situation is correct.’ Something along that nature so you are at least documenting if you are issued some type of warning, that you have some type of remedy where you are able to correct the action. You have some sort of documentation to support that.”

“Potential for employee’s rehabilitation” (No. 10), is also somewhat straightforward, Gross said, where the employer considers the offense, seriousness of it and/or other particulars and decides if it’s something that can be fixed/resolved so that the employee won’t continue to engage in that action.

“Also look at mitigation circumstances,” she said. “Let’s say it’s related to you having to take a certain medication and unfortunately an effect of that medication is that you may get sick every morning or every other morning you have to take your meds. You asked for a Reasonable Accommodation and one hasn’t been given. So, it’s something that’s outside your control.

“You’re late on an assignment, but ‘This was out my control’ and here is why. ‘I had to get approval from another office and it keeps coming in late.’”

Finally, “Adequacy and effectiveness of alternative sanctions,” No. 12, might consider things like what could be implemented instead of the 10-day suspension, five-day suspension or removal or termination.

Said Dorsey: “If when you’re talking about a first offense or a table, which is specific, where you go from a warning to removal and the Agency goes from zero to you’re out of here. Then some information you should get as the case moves through process is what other options were there and how could those have been effective. If you removed them, was that really within reason when seven other things could have done? One of the information gathering things you should be looking at is the penalty violation and the table warning for removal. Why zero to get out when all other things, especially if it’s a first offense, haven’t been considered?”


*Note: Continued next issue with the “Agency’s burden” and more.*

been made, employees selected will be ranked in ascending order and placed below the journeymen who have volunteered.

Alternate supervisors will be selected on a rotational basis according to position on the list. Any employee with a pending disciplinary action or letter of consideration for action will be exempt from alternate supervisor duty, as will union stewards since a conflict of interest may exist. It is understood that disciplinary action is not punitive but corrective; therefore, after the decision or dismissal of disciplinary action, the employee will be reinstated into the roster at his / her prior position after consummation of any disciplinary action or dismissal of disciplinary action.

An employee who has initially volunteered and later decides to decline to serve as alternate supervisor will not have an opportunity for reconsideration until the next FY.

If an employee is physically limited or otherwise unable to perform the full range of responsibilities of the alternate supervisor position, unless the limitations can be reasonably accommodated, the employee will not be considered at the time of eligible rotation. However, if the employee’s physical limitations and/or restrictions are lifted, the employee will be reinstated into the roster at his / her prior position.



## CAPITOL BEAT

GEORGIA POLITICS

### State tax rebates on the way

by Dave Williams - Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA – The checks are about to go out in the mail. The Georgia Department of Revenue will begin issuing one-time state income tax refunds to taxpayers this week, Gov. Brian Kemp announced Monday.

The General Assembly approved the rebate – the third this decade – during this year’s legislative session.

“Because we’ve managed our state’s resources wisely, we’re again able to return money to hardworking Georgians who know best how to use it,” Kemp said. “Along with our acceleration of the largest income tax rate cut in state history, this latest refund is just one more way we’re working to support the people of our state, their families, and their businesses.”

Single taxpayers and married people filing separately will receive a rebate of up to \$250, with \$375 going to heads of households and \$500 headed to married couples filing jointly.

The state issued previous one-time tax rebates in 2022 and 2023. Most eligible taxpayers who filed both 2023 and 2024 individual income tax returns in a timely manner, have paid into the system, and do not owe the state any taxes can expect to receive a rebate within the coming weeks.

Taxpayers can check their eligibility using the Surplus Tax Refund Eligibility Tool, available through the Georgia Tax Center, by inputting their tax year, Social Security or Tax Identification Number, and Federal Adjusted Gross Income.

### Ocmulgee Mounds to see upgrade

by Ty Tagami - Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA – After more than a century of trying, Georgia may soon get its first national park, as the state’s congressional delegation puts aside partisan differences to upgrade the status of ancient mounds in Macon.

That city, long a champion of promoting Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park into a major national attraction, has already begun adding street names in the language of the native peoples who dwelled there.

The Muscogee Nation, whose ancestors were forcibly moved to Oklahoma by the U.S. government in 1836, has collaborated on national park status, and would have a role in guiding its management.

The park idea has induced similar collaboration in a normally fractured congressional delegation. Thirteen of Georgia’s 14 Republican and Democratic representatives are co-sponsoring legislation that would convert the historical park into the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve. Georgia’s two Democratic U.S. senators are behind an identical bill in the Senate.

The current historical park would anchor the national park. Proponents would raise money to buy another 7,100 acres, expanding the attraction to about 10,000 acres. This addition would be a federally managed preserve with fishing and hunting.

That is downscaled significantly from the 80,000 acres once envisioned, but it would still have a major impact on the region, said Seth Clark, executive director of The Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative, the grassroots force behind this movement.

The preserve would guarantee a place for endangered and threatened species, said Clark, who, as mayor pro tempore of Macon-Bibb County, sees a massive boon for humans, too. Tourism would explode, boosting the economy, creating jobs and producing an estimated \$34 million in added tax revenue for the region, he said.

### State Rep. Jasmine Clark running for Congress

by Dave Williams - Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA – State Rep. Jasmine Clark, D-Lilburn, will challenge veteran incumbent U.S. Rep. David Scott, D-Atlanta, in next year’s Democratic primary, Clark announced Monday.

Clark, a microbiologist, said she wants to bring a science perspective to Democrats’ fight against Republican President Donald Trump’s agenda and to congressional Republicans who won’t stand up to the president.

“These are not normal times, and I cannot sit back and watch my community come under attack while our leaders in Washington fail to show up,” she said in a prepared statement. “I’m running for Congress to be a fighter for Georgia families, science and reason.”

Clark was elected to the General Assembly in 2018 and has survived two attempts by GOP House leaders to defeat her by redrawing her Gwinnett County district to favor Republican challengers.

After receiving a bachelor’s degree at the University of Tennessee, Clark earned a doctorate in microbiology and molecular genetics from Emory University and now serves as an assistant biology professor at Emory. She is a single mother raising two children.

Scott, who will turn 80 this month, was elected to the House in 2002 and is seeking his 12th term representing Georgia’s 13th Congressional District, which includes all of Rockdale County and parts of Gwinnett, DeKalb, Henry, Clayton, and Newton counties.

### Brian Strickland launches campaign for AG

by Dave Williams - Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA – State Sen. Brian Strickland entered the 2026 race for Georgia attorney general Tuesday, pledging to uphold Georgia’s conservative values against attacks from the Left.

“We’re proud to run on my reputation as a conservative fighter who knows to win,” Strickland said during a news conference at Liberty Plaza across from the state Capitol.

The Republican from McDonough was elected to the Senate in 2018 after serving in the Georgia House of Representatives since 2013. A lawyer, Strickland serves as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In that role, he has helped steer to passage Georgia’s strict abortion law and legislation targeting human trafficking and granting the right of Georgians to carry firearms without a permit.

Strickland also has helped champion the cause of mental health reform in Georgia, including a sweeping reform bill the General Assembly passed in 2022 that, among other things, requires insurance companies to cover mental health treatment at the same level as physical ailments. He said improving mental health care inside Georgia’s prison system has been a major part of criminal justice reform efforts launched by then-Gov. Nathan Deal during the last decade.

One other candidate in the race for attorney general, state Sen. Bill Cowser, R-Athens, filed paperwork in April indicating plans to run for the post.

# LSA

From page 1

duty, detail/loan, or attending a meeting out of the immediate work area.

Supervisors have the inherent responsibility to ensure the work areas are under proper supervision at all times. If the alternate supervisor is unavailable, the next alternate in rotation on the list will fill in as alternate supervisor and assume the duties thereof.

As soon as someone other than the supervisor is placed in charge, all employees, as appropriate, must be notified.

**Procedures**

**3.2.1** The rotation and duration of the appointment will be the same as the shift rotation in each work area or not more than 12 weeks for areas which do not change shifts. An alternate selected for the last period of the fiscal year will serve 16 weeks. Should a vacancy / vacancies occur on the alternate supervisor listing, supervisors will refer to the procedures outlined in paragraphs 1.1. and 2.3.

Normally, rosters will be established not later than the 1st day of October of each year with appointments posted. However, due to shift rotation and movement of employees to other positions, rosters may / will be established or updated each shift change or throughout the FY. New candidates to the shift

will be added to the bottom of the roster if candidates have already been identified for that shift. Individuals who actually serve in the supervisory position for more than 30 consecutive days are covered by Article 13 of the Master Labor Agreement. All time actually served will be documented in the TAA system or other system of record. Lists will be posted in each work area and will remain in effect until the start of the next FY.

**Procedures for Volunteers**

The most senior level journeymen (WG, GS, and Work Leader [WL]) employees who have at least one (1) year in the shop or time in grade and who desire to act as alternate supervisors may volunteer for this duty. Supervisors shall post a sign-up sheet within the immediate area. In administrative areas, where appropriate, supervisors may request volunteers by electronic means (i.e., e-mail – if an employee is interested in volunteering, he/she may reply in kind). The sign-up sheet shall remain posted for two weeks to allow all employees an opportunity to volunteer. Employees will be ranked according to the following criteria:

- Annual appraisal (must have received an overall rating of “pass” or “met”)
- SCD-LV by seniority
- Last 4 of the Social Security Number with the highest number taking precedence

**3.2.3** Supervisors in each area / shift will select the four most senior level journeymen employees from the volunteer list for alternate supervisor.

**3.2.4** If there are fewer than four volunteers, said volunteers may be used as alternate supervisors before having to “draft” journeymen within that specific shop/line as long as all employees in that shop / line are advised and aware of this action. Volunteers will be offered first opportunity to serve as alternate supervisor before having to “draft” employees since a “draft” is considered unfavorable.

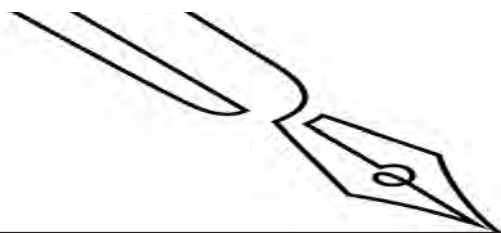
Volunteers have preference over journeymen who have been drafted and will be considered first in rotation.

**3.3** Procedures for Drafting. Normally, a draft will only occur when there are no volunteers. In the event there are no volunteers, the WL will be drafted first in areas where there are WLs.

If the WL is not available or if there are no WLs, then the supervisor will draft the journeyman employee based on the criteria in paragraph 1.1. to meet the requirement for alternate supervisor. At the end of the shift rotation, volunteers may be solicited again for that shop / line, prior to drafting another work leader and/or journeyman for the shift rotation.

If a journeyman volunteers, then paragraph 1.1. applies. Once “draft” selections have



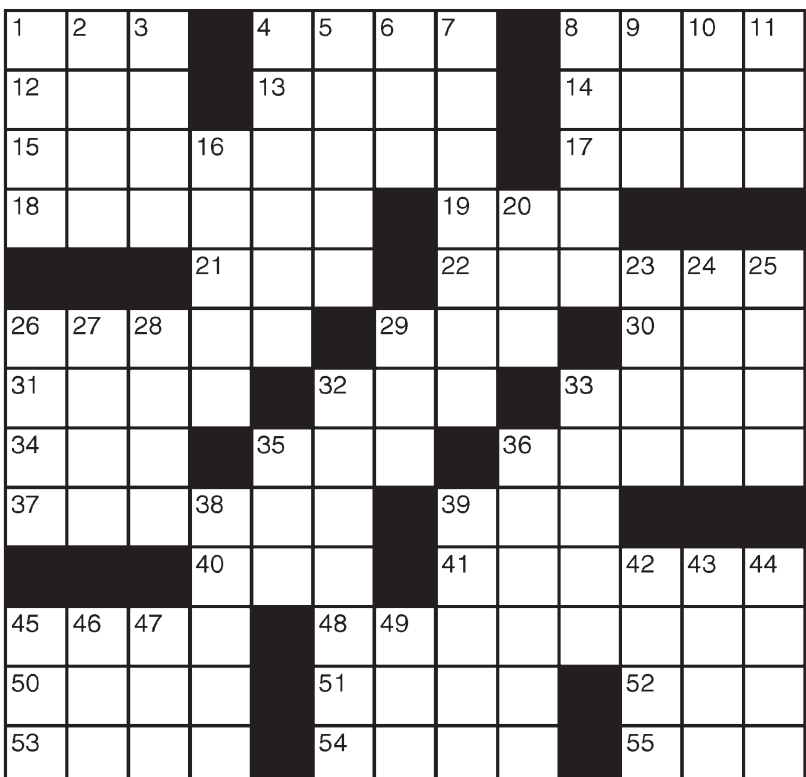


# Just for

## King Crossword

### ACROSS

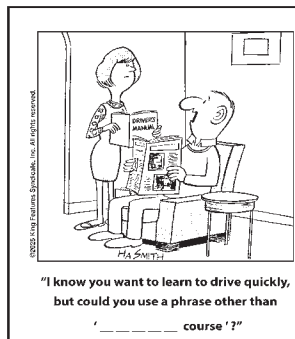
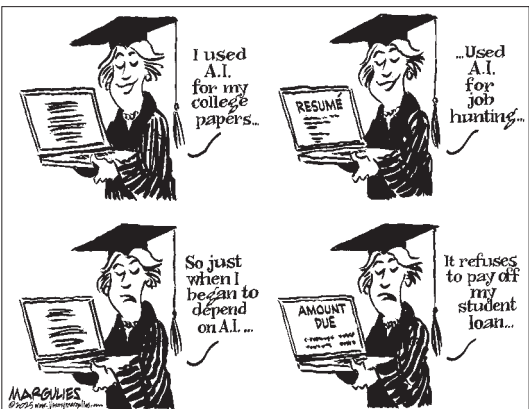
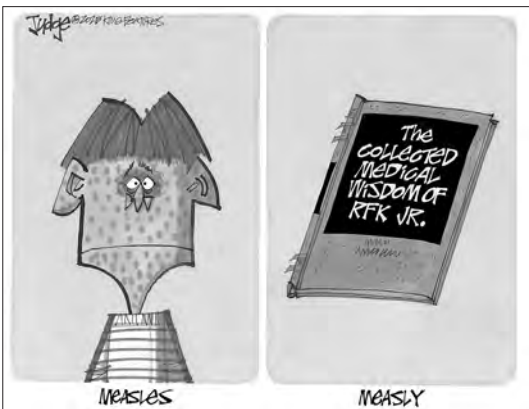
- 1 Science room  
4 Novelist  
    Waugh  
8 Baby carriage  
12 Mode lead-in  
13 "Break My Heart" singer  
    Dua  
14 Deserve  
15 Most spiteful  
17 Erte's style  
18 Naval rank  
19 Director  
    DuVernay  
21 Hosp. work-  
    ers  
22 Frasier's  
    ex-wife  
26 Hay bundles  
29 Transcript no.  
30 Dr. of hip-hop  
31 Spanish  
    cheers  
32 Espionage  
    org.  
33 Close  
34 "Diamonds"  
    singer  
35 Kilmer of  
    "Top Gun"  
36 Paper packs  
37 Severe  
39 "Great Expect-  
    ations" lad  
40 Hosp. areas  
41 Dodges  
45 Fresh  
48 California  
    island



- 50 March  
    Madness gp.  
51 Skater's leap  
52 Dijon denial  
53 Undecided  
54 Legendary  
    loch  
55 Donkey
- 6 Mini-albums,  
    for short  
7 Tree with pods  
8 Bicycle part  
9 "Norma —"  
10 Lob's path  
11 L-P link  
16 Corvette  
    quartet  
20 By means of  
23 Notion  
24 Streetcar  
25 Towel word  
26 Employer  
27 Landed  
28 Jet type  
29 Baseball's  
    Hodges
- 32 MRI's kin  
33 Neighbor of  
    Tibet  
35 TiVo precu-  
    sor  
36 Foes  
38 Hawkeye  
39 "For — sake!"  
42 Actress Merrill  
43 Eve's grand-  
    son  
44 Without  
45 Busy insect  
46 Sgt., for one  
47 Corn spike  
49 Chopper

### DOWN

- 1 Lingerie trim  
2 Cumming or  
    Bates  
3 Cave crea-  
    tures  
4 Sets straight  
5 Property  
    claims



### SCRAMBLERS

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

Lavish  
TANORE

Pucker  
SUPER

Real  
CULATA

Debase  
MASHE

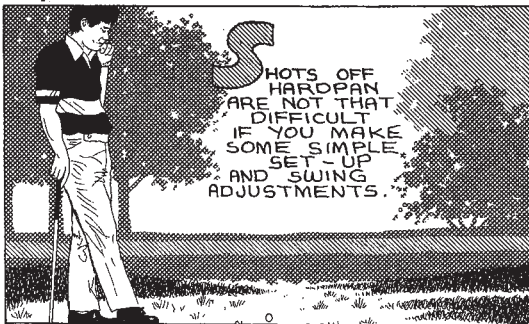
TODAY'S WORD

**CRASH**  
Today's Word

1. Ornate  
2. Purse  
3. Actual  
4. Shame

**SCRAMBLERS**  
solution

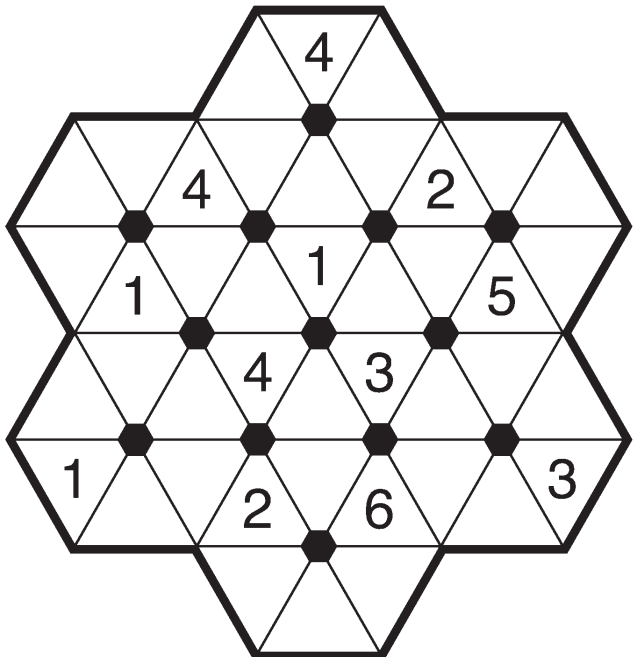
### Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



## 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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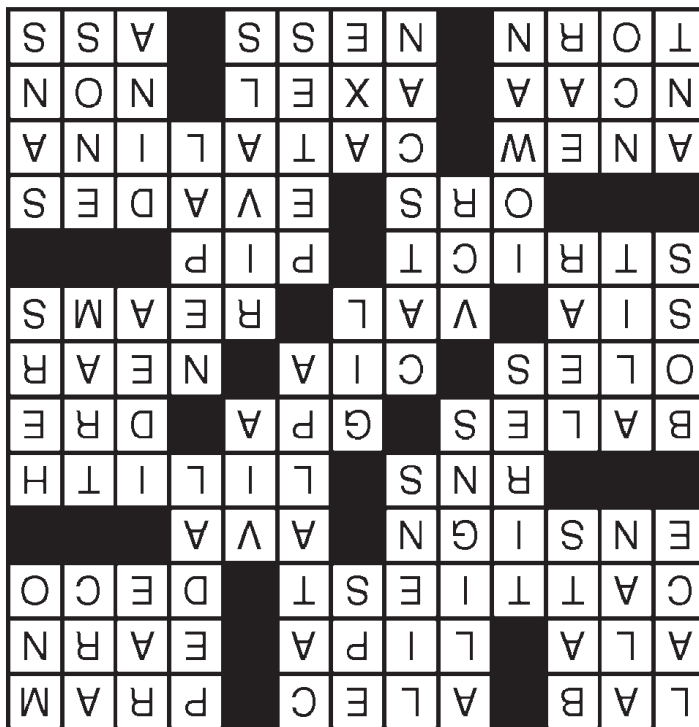
## Americanisms



"The world needs  
different kinds of minds  
to work together."  
— Temple Grandin

### Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

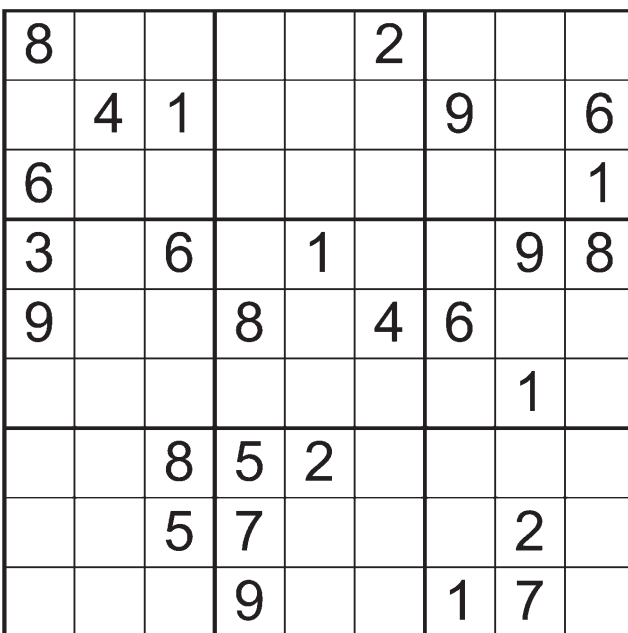


Solution time: 26 mins.

Answers

## King Crossword

## Weekly SUDOKU

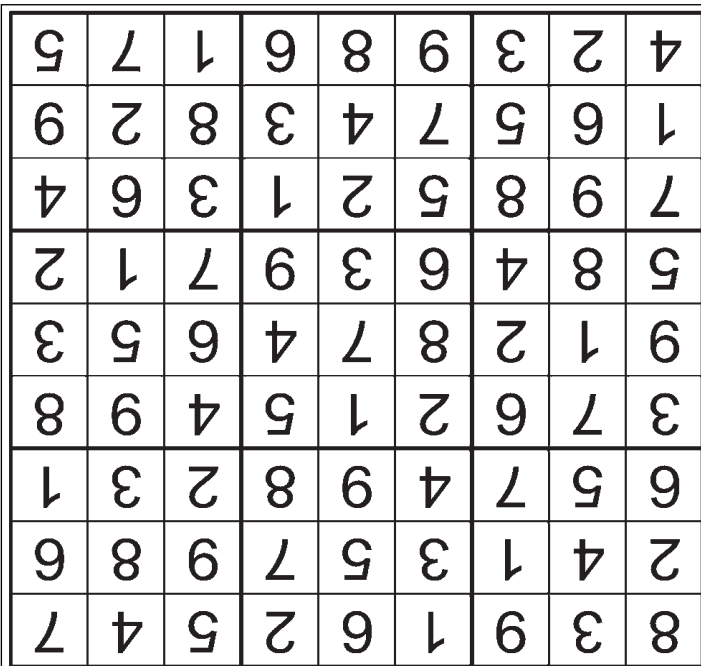


Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

### DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging  
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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Answer

## Weekly SUDOKU



# fun

## Amber Waves

HEY THERE, I SEE YOU FOUND SOME OF GRANDPA'S OLD COMIC BOOKS. THOSE HAVE SOME GREAT STORIES.

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"GOLLY GEE, DRAT, CRIPES"—IS THIS EVEN WRITTEN IN ENGLISH? AND THE PAGES SMELL FUNNY.

BARNEY GOOGLE AND SNUFFY

HEY !! QUIT HITCHHIKIN', LI'L TATER !!

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WONDER WHY YORE PET FROG SEEMS SO HAPPY ALL TH' TIME ?

IT'S SIMPLE, JAMEY !! HE EATS WHATEVER BUGS HIM !!

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## The Spats

ARE YOU A CAPITALIST?

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YES I AM!!! ...I NEVER USE LOWER CASE.

Sponsor this page. Call 478-733-9772.

GRIN & BEAR IT

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Y V A O V A N O B B A A A S O B

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answer

FEAR & KNIGHT

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## by Dave T. Phipps

## Out on a Limb

FUNNY "HA HA"...

PROPELLER HAT

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FUNNY "NEIRD"...

PROPELLER PANTS

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## by Gary Kopervas

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS POPEYE

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THANKS FOR THE MASK, OLIVE!

CAN'T HAVE HARDTACK LEARNING IT'S YOU.

GIT T' TH' RING, BRUTUS. THEY'S GONNA ANNOUNCE YA.

CAN I REALLY DO THIS? CAN I BE A WRESTLING VILLAIN?

COMING TO THE RING NOW FROM THE UGLY CITY OF HATESVERMAMA, TEXAS...

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## by Jeff Pickering

## TIGER

## by BUD BLAKE

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GO FIGURE!

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

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48 = 8 × 2 + 6

88 = 8 × 2 + 6

13 = 1 ÷ 7 + 9

35 = 5 × 4 + 3

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FEAR & KNIGHT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

ABC HYNLOU GNERI YEBT ♥LEBNEA SYO VYAN INUCT ♥BNO OGEYVA ♥VLOSA RHBE

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

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Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: V equals Y

Y QATUI NQTN TKNPU BTUO

ETH ZDVYLJ T LAE VPUO

QPKOAV NATB TLI KTWWYLJ

NQAB NQA UDRRTWP HTZUAH.

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# Simple Summer SNACKS

Sweet, easy recipes to solve warm-weather hunger

## FAMILY FEATURES

From lazy days by the pool to weekend road trips and everything in between, summer is packed with adventures. To keep your energy high for all those warm-weather activities, you'll need to keep sweet, delicious snacks on the family menu.

Make sure versatile, flavorful watermelon is always on your grocery list so you can enjoy it for breakfast, lunch, snacks, desserts, drinks and beyond. It easily fits your existing routines for morning smoothies and snacking on the go, or in make-ahead dishes you can serve when hunger strikes.

It's easy to cool off quickly on hot summer days with Watermelon Ice Pops, a simple, kid-friendly favorite made with watermelon and chunks of fresh fruit. Bursting with flavor, these frozen treats make snack time a cinch while tackling cravings, boosting hydration and supporting wellness in place of added-sugar treats.

For a light afternoon bite before the dinner bell rings, try this Watermelon Salad with Feta and Mint that offers sweet summer flavor without the hassle. Pairing long-time favorites in feta cheese and mint, it's a classic for a reason with delicious watermelon adding nutritional content.

Of course, as a kitchen staple to keep on hand throughout the year, watermelon is also perfect for

enjoying all on its own at home or on the go. Whether it's diced, sliced, balled or blended, you can toss it in a jar for a healthy, hydrating snack.

Cutting watermelon into convenient chunks is fast and easy so you can eat at home or toss in a to-go container to take to the office, beach or soccer practice. Just cut a grid pattern on the fruit and cubes will tumble out, ready to eat. Don't forget to wash and dry the rind on the watermelon before cutting.

1. Cut the whole watermelon lengthwise into quarters. Lay each quarter on its rind with the interior facing up.
2. Place the knife about 3/4 inch down from the peak of the wedge. Holding the knife parallel to the far side of the fruit and starting at the edge of the rind, cut a horizontal line across the fruit all the way down to the rind.
3. Place the knife blade about 3/4 inch lower and make the same cut. Repeat. Turn the fruit to the other side and make the same horizontal cuts.
4. Starting at the end of the rind, make vertical cuts straight down the rind, 3/4 inch apart all the way across.
5. Remove the cubes and serve or store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

To find more ways to serve watermelon this summer and all year long, visit [Watermelon.org](#).



## Watermelon Salad with Feta and Mint

Recipe courtesy of National Watermelon Promotion Board

**1/4 cup lemon vinaigrette**  
**4 cups cubed watermelon**  
**1/2 English cucumber, cut into 1/4-inch half moons**  
**1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced**  
**1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese**  
**2 tablespoons fresh mint, roughly chopped**

Drizzle vinaigrette in bottom of large canning jar. Layer with watermelon, cucumber, red onion, feta and mint. Cover tightly with lid and shake to combine. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

**Substitution:** Use Greek dressing in place of lemon vinaigrette.



## Watermelon Ice Pops

Recipe courtesy of National Watermelon Promotion Board

**1 watermelon chunks of fresh fruit (such as grapes, strawberries or kiwi)**

Puree watermelon and pour into ice pop molds. Drop in chunks of fresh fruit, insert caps and place in freezer. Serve when frozen.

# Upgrade summer lunches with nutritious twist on grilled cheese



(Family Features) When the kids are home for summer break, meal-prep becomes a must for busy families to ensure nutritious foods are on the menu. This summer, give your kiddos the fuel they need for all their warm-weather activities and adventures with a healthy twist on a childhood classic.

One bite into a grilled cheese sandwich and you're back in your childhood kitchen, bringing all the nostalgic vibes you can pass down to your little ones. Plus, with nearly endless combinations, there's a solution for everyone from classics to creative versions.

Fruit in a grilled cheese may not be the first idea that comes to mind, but these Blackberry Grilled

Cheese Sandwiches offer a juicy, slightly tart burst of flavor tucked between crunchy slices of bread. It's a sweet, savory lunch that's just funky enough to impress while putting fresh produce on your kids' plates.

"We love juicy blackberries - not just because they're delicious, but because they're packed with fiber," registered dietitian Tony Castillo said. "That fiber helps keep you full, supports gut health and keeps your energy steady. "Plus, blackberries are loaded with antioxidants and vitamin C, making them a true superfood. They're perfect for baking, savory dishes or just as a snack on the go."

Picky eaters have met their match with Chicken and Apple Grilled Cheese

Sandwiches. Tender shredded chicken meets tart apple slices, ooey gooey cheese and whole-grain bread for an unexpected twist that will have taste buds tingling.

With minimal ingredients and maximum flavor, they're ideal for busy weeknights or lazy weekend lunches.

If you're aiming to upgrade your cheesy sandwich arsenal, consider these tips from Healthy Family Project:

- \* Cook low and slow over medium-low heat so the bread reaches a crisp golden while cheese melts to perfection.
- \* Real butter or olive oil adds a level of crispiness and flavor.
- \* Experimenting with cheese can give sandwiches an extra boost. Cheddar is

the classic option, but mozzarella, gouda and brie bring newfound flavor profiles.

\* Look for the Produce for Kids or Healthy Family Project logo in your local grocery store to find brands dedicated to creating a healthier generation.

Serve up more delicious, kid-friendly lunches this summer by visiting [HealthyFamilyProject.com](#).

**Blackberry Grilled Cheese Sandwiches**  
Recipe courtesy of Healthy Family Project  
Prep time: 5 minutes  
Cook time: 10 minutes  
Servings: 2

**1**      tablespoon mayonnaise  
**1**      tablespoon stone-ground mustard  
**4**      slices whole-grain

bread  
**2**      slices provolone cheese  
**10-12**      blackberries, cut in half

Heat medium skillet over low heat. In small bowl, mix mayonnaise and mustard; spread on one side of each slice of bread. Place bread mayo-side-down in skillet. Top with cheese and blackberries. Add second slice of bread mayo-side-up. Cook 3-4 minutes per side, or until bread is toasted and cheese is melted. Repeat with remaining ingredients.

**Chicken and Apple Grilled Cheese Sandwiches**  
Recipe courtesy of Healthy Family Project  
Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes  
Servings: 4

**1**      tablespoon unsalted butter  
**8**      slices whole-grain bread  
**8**      ounces sliced rotisserie-style chicken breast  
**4**      slices sharp cheddar cheese  
**1**      apple, thinly sliced prepared salad, for serving

Heat large skillet over medium-low heat. Lightly butter one side of each slice of bread. Place bread butter-side-down in skillet. Top with chicken, cheese and apple slices. Top with slice of bread butter-side-up. Cook 2-3 minutes, flip and cook 2-3 minutes, or until cheese is melted. Remove from heat and cut in half. Repeat with remaining sandwiches. Serve with prepared salad. - Source: Healthy Family Project

