

HERKIMER
Country Editor
Serving the Valley for 53 Years

JANUARY 1, 2021
Delivered by the
U.S. Postal Service
518-673-3237
Volume 10 Number 29

Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful. Psalm 147:1



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Arc Herkimer honors employees' fifth anniversaries

Arc Herkimer is honoring all employees who have worked at the agency for five years. During a typical year, employees would celebrate with a luncheon; however, due to the ongoing pandemic, employees were given gift certificates for lunch, in addition to their service awards.

Staff celebrating five years of service include: Craig Moulton, Lisa Carpenter, Michael Kokoszki, Shayna Huyck, Gina Massaro, Pauline Brownell, Kody Newman, Jodie Pollard, Laken Dawson, Jenifer Lyon, Larrissa Youngs, Joseph Riesel, Monica

Conklin, Sean Dibble, and Jennifer Murphy.

President/CEO Kevin Crosley said, "Our employees work hard every day to accomplish our mission of empowering people with disabilities and enriching lives throughout our community, and we want to show them how much they are appreciated."

If you are interested in a visit visit www.archerkimer.org and browse our various employment opportunities.

Robotic dogs and cats help seniors combat loneliness

by Tyler Manning,
Independent Record

HELENA, MT (AP) — Even during normal years, many senior citizens face a constant struggle with loneliness and isolation. And both issues have been exacerbated in the time of COVID-19.

With social isolation now being encouraged and in some cases required to help prevent the spread of the virus, Helena's Area IV Agency On Aging is utilizing a new tool to help seniors combat loneliness: robotic pets. These uncanny creatures take the form of battery-powered dogs and cats, which stimulate the same parts of the brain as real-life pets.

Jim Marks, program director for Helena's Agency On Aging, said he discovered the potential of these robotic pets through research by the organization's nationwide counterpart.

"Studies show that older people latch onto them," Marks told the Independent Record. "It's a feel-good, do-good kind of thing, but there is actual substance to it."

Margie Copenhaver, an 83-year-old resident of Eagle Manor in Helena, got her robotic pet, named Muffie, in early December.

"Muffie is good company," Copenhaver said. "Muffie talks to me and I talk to her. She is a cutie."

Copenhaver didn't experience the same kind of loneliness that some seniors might while living in isolation. She spends a significant portion of her time at the manor watching television or crocheting. However, Muffie now keeps Copenhaver company while doing these activities. Copenhaver converses and laughs with Muffie as the two interact, clearly enjoying her time with the pet.

"I've always had dogs. I had a Pomeranian that lived to be 20 years old," Copenhaver said. "I wouldn't want a real dog, because my eyesight is not so good and I'd have to take it outside."

When the robotic pets first arrived at Eagle Manor, Copenhaver would come down to the main desk every day to see them, said on-site manager Carla Adair. Once the agency gave the go-ahead for the manor to give out the pets, Copenhaver was one of the first to receive one.

"She is the prime example of what these animals do," Adair said. "They bring joy."

The robotic pets even pass the test with other animals. Michelle Mathot, education and outreach coordinator at Agency on Aging, said her own dog is taken aback when interacting with the robotic pets. Copenhaver said she put Muffie on the phone with a friend's dog, and that dog kept barking back at Muffie.

Mathot said the animals are a good distraction for seniors when they feel agitated. Marks said these pets are truly designed for seniors who experience dementia or Alzheimer's. However, Marks and Mathot said the pets

also help alleviate the stress of the seniors' caregivers, because they can help make their job easier.

"It's about a senior sitting there alone and having something to pet," Mathot said.

According to Marks, the tactile touch of the pets is a big part of what stimulates the brain receptors. These pets are helping combat one of the biggest challenges the agency is currently facing.

"A lot of research has come out of the pandemic. All the AOAs in the country are focused on combating isolation," Marks said. "I think once we look back

on the pandemic in retrospect, what we will see is that the non-COVID-related deaths are spiking."

According to Marks, stress-related deaths and suicides are higher than ever due to isolation amid

the pandemic.

The agency is also working on other initiatives as well, such as giving iPads to more technologically-inclined seniors and plastic discs with tactile patterns that put the brains of se-

niors to work by triggering mechanoreceptors.

These were funded through the CARES Act. The Agency On Aging is an organization within the Rocky Mountain Development Council.



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- We have over 40 different sites throughout Herkimer County
- We have several different divisions throughout the community
- We support over 700 people with disabilities in Herkimer County

Mohawk Valley Rotary Club completes annual food drive and raises \$2,300 to donate

The Mohawk Valley Rotary Club has completed its Annual Food Drive and has donated \$1,150 to both The Salvation Army of Herkimer and Catholic Charities of Herkimer County. For the past four

years, the Mohawk Valley Rotary club has been hosting an annual food drive during the months of November and December. This year members of the club collected food from the community and were

also generously supported by two area companies.

Hannaford Supermarkets in Herkimer donated \$2,000 in gift cards to the Rotary Club to help support both The Salvation Army of Herkimer and

Catholic Charities of Herkimer County. "During these times of uncertainty, it's important that we all pull together to help one another," said, Gail Scalise, manager of Hannaford Supermarkets in Herkimer. The Genesis Group of the Mohawk Valley sent the club \$300 to contribute towards the drive as well. "Ensuring that everyone has enough to eat during the winter months, especially children and seniors, our most vulnerable population, is a responsibility we share as a community. We need to come together and make access to food a priority, we are thankful to both Hannaford Supermarkets and The Genesis Group of the Mohawk Valley for helping us make our drive successful again this year," said Elyse Enea Bellows, Rotary Club Secretary.



The Salvation Army of Herkimer (L-R) Lisa Gollegly, Lt. Heather Purvis, Elyse Enea Bellows, Casey Bayes and Bob DeCarlo.



Catholic Charities of Herkimer County (L-R) Lisa Gollegly, Elyse Enea Bellows, Rae Raffel- Maxson, Casey Bayes and Bob DeCarlo.

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Overcoming the mask

Tips for communicating through COVID-19

(Family Features) It can be challenging to communicate through masks, 6-feet of social distance, physical barriers and other factors due to COVID-19 that have changed daily life.

For people with hearing loss, this is an especially challenging time. In a telling sign of increased hearing difficulty, usage of online hearing tests increased 500% since the pandemic began.

"With COVID-19 and masks, everyday tasks are a source of frustration, such as asking a question at the grocery store deli or talking to someone from behind a customer service desk," said Bill Schiffmiller, a lifelong hearing aid user and founder and CEO of Akoio, a hearing wellness company. "It's a triple threat because masks reduce the loudness of the voice, muffle pronunciation and eliminate visuals like facial expressions and lip reading."



Data shows people who can't hear others begin to stay away from other people, and social isolation can lead to anxiety and depression. People who have trouble hearing also tend to have higher hospitalization rates and longer hospital stays, according to research published in "JAMA Otolaryngology."

Among those 55 and older who have hearing loss, 58% don't use hearing aids. In the past, statistics have shown people waiting up to seven years before getting a hearing aid from the time of diagnosis. However, the communication challenges posed during COVID-19 are driving some to address their hearing sooner than they may have otherwise.

Help someone hear you better

- Consider the mask you're wearing. Clear masks provide a visual difference, helping with lip reading and facial expressions. The plastic in clear masks, however, can muffle sound too much for some. According to audiologist Dr. Shivani Patel, high-frequency hearing loss is common, making female voices difficult to hear. In this situation, research has found standard medical masks tend to transfer sound best. Try different masks to see what works for you.

- Minimize background noise. Music, construction, other conversations, heaters and fans can make it challenging to communicate when wearing a mask.

- Avoid "cavernous" rooms. An environment with mostly hard surfaces, such as a large meeting room or

gymnasium, offers minimal sound dampening and can make hearing comprehension more difficult.

- Maintain eye contact. Look directly at the person you're speaking to and speak clearly, helping him or her read some of your facial expressions. When using video conference services, look directly into the camera in a well-lit room and ensure you have clear picture quality to help with lip reading.

- Be patient. Remember the increased challenges people with hearing loss are facing now. If communication becomes too challenging through a mask, have a backup plan such as pen and paper or a smartphone note-taking app.

When you're having trouble hearing

- Talk to your friends and family. Tell them what you're experiencing and be clear and direct in expressing your thoughts and feelings. Ask whether they have noticed your hearing troubles and listen to their feedback.

- Describe specific instances and circumstances when your hearing is affected most. Armed with this knowledge, friends and family can help you manage

various situations.

- Determine a plan of action. Set an appointment to have your hearing checked by an audiologist. If you wear a hearing aid, be sure to carry extra batteries. Notice ways to adjust your environment to reduce background noise.

- Make hearing wellness a priority. Data shows hearing is important to a person's mental and physical wellness, and untreated hearing loss can have multiple health consequences.

Find more hearing resources, downloadable guides and an audiologist finder at akoio.com.

Source: Akoio



Published weekly on Friday by Lee Newspapers
6113 St. Hwy. 5, Palatine Bridge, NY 13428

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Calendar of events

NOTE: Calendar items must be submitted by Tuesday prior to the publication date to be included in the Calendar of Events. Entries may be emailed to cfeditor@leepub.com

January 21 p.m. or sold out Emmanuel Epis- Little Falls. Call 315.717.9462.
Chicken and Biscuit dinner 4-7 copal Church, 594 E. Albany St., Free local delivery only in the city.

Area Church Services

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**DOLGEVILLE
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32 Spencer St.
Sunday School 9:30 AM
Sunday Worship 10:30 AM
Tuesday Bible Study 7 PM

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH OF DOLGEVILLE
Pastor Len Byerly
12 Van Buren St.
Morning Worship 11-12:30 PM
Lunch 12:30-2 PM
Afternoon Worship 2-3 PM

**DOLGEVILLE UNITED
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Church Phone 429-7381
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Dolgeville @ 11 AM

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Sunday Worship 10:30 AM
Mid-week Service Tuesday 7 PM

**UNITED LUTHERAN
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Worship 11 AM

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Mass 9 AM Sunday

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Sunday Mass 8 & 10:30 AM

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Sunday School 9:15 AM
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Sunday School 10 AM

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September - June

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Afternoon Bible Study 1:30 PM
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& Prayer Meeting 7 PM

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VHS is the recipient of Herkimer High School Students' Holiday Cheer

Heather McCutcheon, Herkimer High School art teacher, and her Studio Art and Graphics students spread good cheer by creating holiday greeting cards and 3D printed snowflakes and ornaments for Valley Health Services' residents.

McCutcheon says, "I am instilling in my students how nice it is to do good for others." The students represent grades nine through twelve and all were equally engaged in such a project.

McCutcheon delivered the cards and decorations on Friday, Dec. 18, to Valley Health Services.

"On behalf of the residents of Valley Health Services, thank you, Herkimer High School for thinking of us," says Lisa M. Betrus, President. Happy holidays to you and your families.



Josie V., 9th grade, working on greeting card.



Items created by Herkimer High School art students.

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Yes, your poinsettia can survive after the holidays

Bold when you buy them, poinsettias can wither as winter goes on.

It might be because of how they were treated. If they were exposed to cold drafts or perched by a heat vent, or if they sat in a cold car through too many errands, the leaves could turn yellow and fall off—even before the holidays or not long after.

Native to Mexico, poinsettias favor bright light and warm conditions.

"You need to find a location in your house that provides good light. Six hours of bright light are necessary every day," said Uttara Samarakoon, an assistant professor at Ohio State ATI in The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

The biggest mistakes people typically make are not providing enough light, watering them too

much or too little, and keeping them near heating or air conditioning vents, said Samarakoon, coordinator of the Greenhouse and Nursery Management Program at ATI.

After the holiday lights are boxed up and the tree is carried into the attic, poinsettias can still thrive. Given the right care, poinsettias should last at least a couple of months, if not indefinitely.

"Many people ask the question, 'Can we grow them after Christmas?' It is possible, but you may not get the bright, showy leaves like those of plants grown in greenhouses," Samarakoon said.

Outside of greenhouses, getting poinsettias to turn red again can be a challenge. They start out red when you buy them but eventually turn to green and won't go red again unless they get



enough darkness, because poinsettias require short days for flowers to bud. Starting in mid-September, poinsettias need at least 12 hours of darkness daily, Samarakoon said.

That can be tough with all the lighting in the house and outside at night. On the other hand,

indoor light levels can be too low for flowers and bright colors to develop, she said.

Samarakoon offered some other tips for keeping your poinsettia thriving:

- Place the poinsettia inside where it will have good light, at least six hours of bright light per day, ideally from sunlight.

- Keep it where the temperature is between 60 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Check if the plant needs water by pressing your finger into the soil about two inches deep. Water only if the soil is dry two inches down.

- Remove the foil or plastic wrapper, so the poinsettia never sits in water. You can return the wrapper after the plant is no longer draining water.

- Try to keep your pets away from poinsettias. The milky sap can irritate their skin and mouths.



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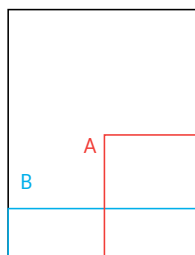
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Giving at Christmas



Mary Tubia and Friends delivered gifts and cookies to The Mohawk Homestead during the week of Christmas. Mary Tubia organized the donations and got an outpouring of responses. Pictured is Heather Urtz, making the delivery to The Mohawk Homestead. This is the second year Mary has organized the Christmas donation.
Photo courtesy of The Mohawk Homestead



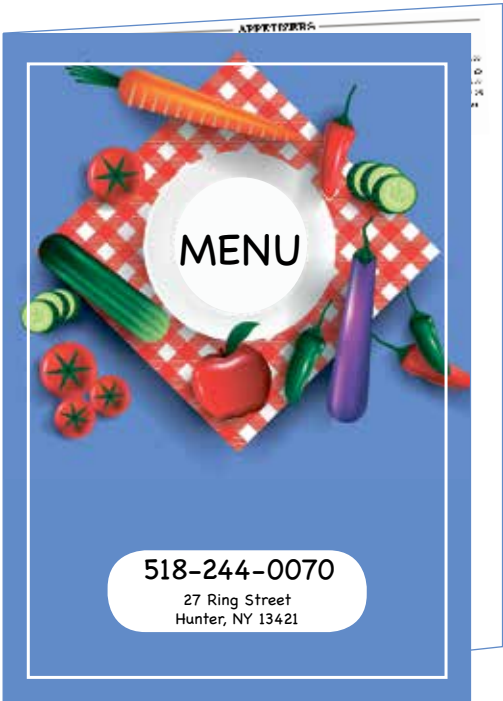
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To your good health

by Keith Roach, M.D.

Learn right way to use a cane

Dear Dr. Roach: I have Parkinson's disease, and balance is an issue. I have been using a cane on the right side, my weak leg side. I have seen videos that say a cane should be used on a person's uninjured side. I tilt to the right and catch my balance without cane support in most cases. Which side do you suggest I use for better and faster movement? — J.C.A.

Answer: A cane is normally used on the "good" side, the side opposite of the one that needs support. However, I refer every patient with a cane to a physical or occupational therapist, since the cane should be the proper type, the proper height and used in the correct hand. Also, people need to be instructed on how to use it properly. Up to 70% of people with canes don't use them properly, and as such won't get the help they could be getting. Almost half of people will abandon them. A skilled therapist can help you get the most benefit from the cane.

I have read that canes with built-in laser lights can be particularly helpful for people with Parkinson's. This might

be something to look into as well. These are valuable for people with "freezing" of gait.

Dear Dr. Roach: You put my life into disarray as I read your column on the risk of recurrence with respect to breast cancer! I promptly grabbed my retired pathologist husband, and he was floored also. He accessed respected medical sites online, and we cannot find any stating that "women with estrogen receptor positive, progesterone receptor positive and HER2 negative tumors are more likely to experience recurrence." What research are you looking at?

I was told by my breast surgeon, oncologist and radiologist that I am in the best possible position with breast cancer. If this is an actual error, you'll have a whole nation of readers and breast cancer survivors in an anxious state and the phones of providers ringing off the hook. Please tell me that this was a misprint. — T.W.

Answer: It is not a misprint.

The issue is that risk factors for late recurrences are different from overall prognostic findings. Because fortunately late recurrences are relatively rare, they don't have a major effect on overall

prognosis, which is where I think you and your husband may be looking. Specifically, triple-negative tumors (ER negative, PR negative, HER-2 negative) have a worse overall prognosis, but survivors have a low risk of recurrence if they get through the first five years.

I am putting some of the original research onto my page at facebook.com/keithroachmd1.

I must note that there are more sophisticated genetic markers that can help predict recurrence. My column lacks space to go into those, but your oncologist can speak to you about them.

I am sorry your life is in disarray. I don't mean to increase your anxiety. Perhaps it would help if I noted that according to one of the studies I am posting, recurrence rate in the 20 years after diagnosis is only 1.4% per year for ER+ women with no lymph nodes positive for cancer.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Chihuahua dog missing for 5 years in California is found

POMONA, CA (AP) — A Chihuahua dog named Sweet-Pea who went missing five years ago in Southern California has been found and is back home.

The tiny dog was reunited with her owner on thanks to microchip identification, KNBC-TV

reported recently.

Sweet-Pea went missing in the city of Compton in 2015. The Inland Valley Humane Society found her about 30 miles away in the community of Covina.

Sweet-Pea appeared to have been well-cared for

during her long absence, KNBC-TV reported. There were no immediate details disclosed about where the dog stayed while away from her owner.

Having Sweet-Pea back "means the world to me," owner Ursula Lopez told KNBC-TV.



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Nobody is more passionate about animals than pet owners - and that's why Country Editor is introducing its new Pet Pals section! Every month, we'll be bringing you heartwarming stories, tips, tricks, educational and entertaining news and stories - and photos of your fuzzy friends. We'll share our news with you, and you can share your best snaps of puppies and kitties (and others!). We'll print as many as space will allow.

You'll also learn about local businesses that offer services and necessities so you can pamper your pets. Find out about groomers, trainers and toy providers through Pet Pals!

For more information, contact members of our Editorial Department - Joan at jkarkwren@leepub.com, or Courtney at cllewellyn@leepub.com.

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1 Doctrine

4 Commotions

8 Mid-May honorees

12 Cattle call

13 "Arrivederci"

14 "So be it"

15 Wordplay specialists

17 Hindu royal

18 Locate

19 Piece of cheesecake?

20 Subsequently

22 Reedy

24 Concoct

25 Good news for bargain hunters

29 Bard's "always"

30 Unrefined

31 Id counterpart

32 Ruins

34 Touch

35 Cincinnati team

36 Gets up

37 — Valley (California ski resort)

40 Family member

41 Cather's "One of —"

42 Expensive seafood

46 Platter

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47 Between jobs

48 Carnival city

49 Remain

50 Ball-bearing items

51 Agent

7 "Mayday!"

8 Leatherneck

9 Mideast nation

10 Options list

11 Use scissors

16 Gush forth

19 Snapshots

20 Sleeping, perhaps

21 Release

22 Cafeteria stack

23 Greet the villain

25 Motivate

26 "— Dictionary"

27 Chills and fever

28 Deteriorates

30 Staff

33 In poor taste

34 "— She Sweet?"

36 Strategic tricks

37 Turfs

38 Resign

39 — Major

40 Competent

42 Illuminated

43 Rhyming tribute

44 Tear

45 Tofu base

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Santa's beard is longer. 2. Santa's boots are black. 3. Brick pattern is different. 4. Car wheel is black. 5. Boy's coat has pocket. 6. Santa's beard is longer.

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WMVUSRQONMKJIAK

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: HUMOROUS ANECDOTE

- Airline

Car brand

Coffee shop

Color
- Dessert

Holiday

Kind of book

Magazine
- Movie

Pet

Season

Song
- Sports team

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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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: N equals H

WDKFWP, KNF LDTCTF ZV

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Five tips for winter travelers

(Family Features) Because of the pandemic, fewer Americans are taking to the skies, but a significant number likely plan to hit the roads to visit friends and family during the winter months. Whether a few towns over or a couple states away, many drivers will travel interstates, which are major logistics corridors often dominated by commercial trucks.

According to the United States Census Bureau, there are approximately 3.5 million people working as truck drivers in the U.S. From keeping grocery store shelves stocked to delivering those next-day packages, professional truck drivers impact lives with the freight

they move and serve an important role in keeping the economy running.

Professional truck drivers are also experts when it comes to planning travel. From mapping out a route to maintaining their vehicles and even practicing a healthy diet, many truck drivers are road trip experts.

Caron Comas is a professional truck driver for Variant, a subsidiary of U.S. Xpress, one of the nation's largest trucking companies. Highly trained, she's driven trucks for 17 years and her expert insight can aid the average automobile driver planning to hit the roads this winter.

"It's important that the average driver give trucks plenty of space on the road," Comas said. "People can forget we're generally handling 75 feet of tractor and trailer, which can weigh 80,000 pounds. We can't stop on a dime like automobiles, so increase distance when merging in front of trucks and avoid slamming on your

brakes."

Comas suggests following these tips on the road and before you travel:

- Don't follow trucks too closely. If you can't see a tractor trailer's mirrors, the driver can't see you.

- Schedule vehicle maintenance before your trip. Have your oil changed and ask the experts to check your tire pressure and other important fluids to help assure you're driving safely and efficiently.

- Carefully plan your route. If driving through big cities, consider fluctuations in rush hour traffic. For more remote locations where there may not be regular food or gas, plan for when you'll need to stop along the route.

- Stay hydrated and nourished. Before setting out, eat a healthy meal and drink plenty of water. For the drive, pack healthy, non-perishable snacks like granola, fruit or nuts along with bottled water. For longer trips with kids, consider a small cooler for sandwiches, string cheese or yogurt.

- Be overly prepared. Keep a few blankets, a flashlight, a first-aid kit and an extra pair of shoes in your car. If you experience car trouble, make sure you can stay warm until help arrives.

Keep in mind the global pandemic. Check each state's quarantine requirements that you'll be traveling to or through, wear a mask when in public and follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines when traveling.

For more travel tips, visit usxpress.com/news.

Source: U.S. Xpress



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975 Rentals
980 Restaurant Supplies
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1075 Snowblowers
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Announcements

Announcements

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Wednesday, Dec. 30th • 5:00 PM
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Announcements

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TRIPLE SPEAR \$625
BUCKETS 72" \$958
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For Rent

FOR RENT: Nice 2 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath mobile home set up in quiet park out on Creed Road, Mohawk, Rent \$750. leatherstockingmhp@yahoo.com or see more details at leatherstockingmhp.com Text only to 315-723-4270

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Heating

Logging Equipment

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30 words - \$5.60	31 words - \$5.70
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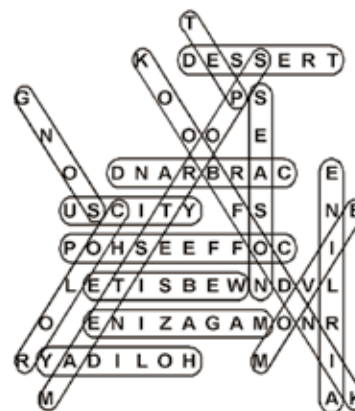
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 27 mins.

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

WHAT'S YOUR
FAVORITE — ?



GRIN & BEAR IT



"Wait a minute! You're not my husband!"

— Weekly SUDOKU —

Answer

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

CryptoQuip

answer

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worrying a lot more often.
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Fort Plain, NY 13339
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brushed with eggs.
Crust: Flour, all vegetable shortening,
milk, water, sugar, vinegar, sea salt.

HOMEMADE
**Strawberry
Pear Jam**
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CROOKED CABIN
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518-538-2440
BLACK GARLIC
All Natural Ingredients:

★ MORNING STAR PASTRIES LLC
19 River St., Fort Plain, NY 13339
Blueberry Pie
Ingredients: Non-GMO whole blueberries, water,
evaporated cane juice sugar, non-GMO apple cider vinegar,
sea salt.
Crust: Non-GMO unbleached and unbromated flour,
non-hydrogenated transfat free BBS shortening,
baking powder. Brushed with natural eggs.
No Preservatives • Keep Refrigerated
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Stratford Town Lights

A Christmas Lights competition in Stratford took place on Dec. 19 with winners announced on Dec. 20. Amid the pandemic, Christmas spirits were high with over 20 homes participating in the event, the only stipulation was that homes must be lit for a few hours each night from Dec. 20 – 27 for the community and visitors to take a drive and look at their displays.

Four winners were announced with Assemblyman Robert Smullen and Organizer Tiffany Rutkowski presenting the winning awards - gift certificates for the winners to the East Canada Stop and Shop (aka the “town” store). First prize went to Christopher Blood and family. Their display had over 15,000 lights and took over 100 man-hours to set up. Second place to Butch and Tammy, third to Charlie and Elsie Goodwin and Most Creative went to the “Gingerbread House” by Mackenzie Miller.

“People were just glad to enter, no prize necessary,” stated Rutkowski, also a councilwoman in the town. “I’m glad I wasn’t a judge, there were so many different and creative entries, something for everyone. We have live animals, cartoon characters, music, Santa and nativities. Rutkowski noted, “Maybe this will become a yearly event.”

Maps of participating homes are located at: East Canada Stop and Shop and the Stratford Town Hall and a few small businesses locally. A few fun facts: Stratford’s last census had only 610 residents. It shares its boundaries with both Herkimer and Fulton Counties and is part of New York’s Adirondack Park.



Tiffany Rutkowski (L-R), Assemblyman Robert Smullen, Christopher Blood and family. The Blood family won first prize. Photos courtesy of Tiffany Rutkowski



Second place winners (L to R): Tiffany Rutkowski, Butch and Tammy, Assemblyman Robert Smullen.



Third place (L to R) Assemblyman Robert Smullen, Charlie Goodwin, Tiffany Rutkowski and “Sage” Rutkowski.



Most Creative: “The Gingerbread House” (L-R): Assemblyman Robert Smullen, “Grinch” and Tiffany Rutkowski.



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