



# Life with a Willing Heart

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Columnist

## The ballad of the grocery store dad

Some people think they handle stress well. Reality usually tells them otherwise. You know what I'm talking about, right? Every once in a while you come across that one person who claims nothing stresses him or her out and you think, "Give me a break. You must not have children."

Case in point:

The other day I went on a solo trip to the grocery store with my children. We needed groceries and I needed to get the children out of the house, both for their benefit and their parents'. So we saddled up "The Batmobile," as we call our black Honda minivan, and headed for the sprawling metropolis of Redmond, because "Redmond is always less busy."

We landed at the market and, just my luck, it was about as crowded as Costco on a Saturday afternoon.

One child was pushing a little-person cart with a long pole on it that had a white flag at the top which said, "Customer in training," and the other child was continuously failing to sit on her bottom in the grownup cart while she attempted to grab anything she could reach, saying, "Look at this, Daddy!" Meanwhile, being the little farm enthusiast that he is, the one pushing the little-person cart kept touching all of the produce and placing it in his cart while I wasn't looking.

Right off the bat the stress level is high.

Not too long into our visit, the one pushing the little-person cart got bumped into by another child and he immediately became quite sad. It wasn't too long after this point that dear old dad's aging body said, "Threat level mid-night. Get to a bathroom calmly and quickly."

Great.

Do you know what it's like to have a panel of children observe you in the handicapped stall while, well... Honestly, the look of worry on their faces almost made me question if I was having a bigger problem than I realized. Even the YouTube video I had going on my phone in an attempt to distract them wasn't enough.

Something deep in my soul knew it wouldn't be the last disaster of the trip.

We had more things on our list and after the, "Daddy, can I have a doughnut" requests were past, we finally made it to the checkout line. The child who had been pushing the little-person cart was trying his best to help load the groceries onto the conveyer belt and he stacked a few cartons of berries we had picked out. Unbeknownst to me, as I was unloading my own cart, the one on top didn't quite arrive in a secure position.

Sure enough, that last disaster struck and the said carton of berries hit the floor. Viewing it as an opportunity instead of a disaster, the child who had been pushing the little-person cart dove to the floor and began scooping the blueberries into his mouth like a drug addict whose last bag of goods fell out of his pocket as he's being dragged into the police station.

We held up the line of people behind us as an employee cleaned up the mess. As I finished loading the grocery bags into our carts the clerk sympathetically looked at me and asked, "Do you need some help out?" As patiently as I could, I said, "No, we're fine, thanks."

We made it to The Batmobile and lit out of there like robbers escaping the scene of their crime.

You see, I am one of those people who gets stressed out pretty easily. But oddly enough, there have been several points in my life where, despite the chaos which would normally incite panic, I have been able to step up and make it through the situation. And as insignificant as a trip to the grocery store might sound, it was one of those moments. It helped me realize that despite the everyday craziness of life I was happy to be alive and out with my kids. As we drove home I couldn't help but reflect on these events and laugh.

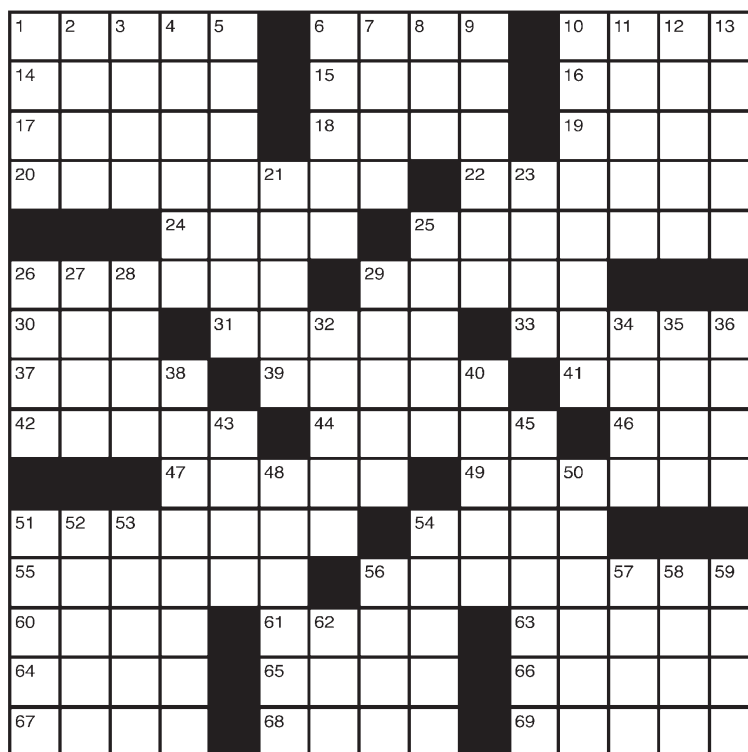
That being said, I'm never leaving my house again.

# The Nugget Newspaper Crossword

By Jacqueline E. Mathews, Tribune News Service

- ACROSS**
- 1 Run after
  - 6 Tardy
  - 10 Hole-making tools
  - 14 \_\_\_ it up; makes merry
  - 15 Candid; frank
  - 16 Outer garment
  - 17 Skillful
  - 18 Make airtight
  - 19 Sharpen
  - 20 Bothered
  - 22 Per person
  - 24 Arden & Plumb
  - 25 Berated
  - 26 Part of the foot
  - 29 TV's "\_\_\_ of Fortune"
  - 30 Heavy weight
  - 31 Striped animal
  - 33 Ways and \_\_\_ Committee
  - 37 Fly high
  - 39 \_\_\_ the way; goes first
  - 41 Clubs or hearts
  - 42 \_\_\_ food cake; spongy dessert
  - 44 Embezzle
  - 46 \_\_\_ boots; Jean-Claude Killy's footwear
  - 47 Dirtiness
  - 49 Man at the plate
  - 51 Peter and Annette
  - 54 The one and the other
  - 55 Tops
  - 56 Fatherly
  - 60 Scoop holder
  - 61 Part of a kite
  - 63 Baton \_\_, LA
  - 64 Invites
  - 65 Black\_\_\_ peas
  - 66 Mountains of South America
  - 67 Nap
  - 68 NL team
  - 69 City in England

- DOWN**
- 1 Applaud
  - 2 Conceal
  - 3 Abbrs. in some addresses
  - 4 Group of seven
  - 5 Actor Emilio
  - 6 Suffers defeat
  - 7 Ridiculed
  - 8 Soothing drink
  - 9 Intertwine
  - 10 \_\_\_ heel; one's vulnerable spot
  - 11 Wined & dined
  - 12 Steel-tipped spear
  - 13 Spirited horse
  - 21 Fight off
  - 23 "Evangeline" or "Trees"
  - 25 Window covering
  - 26 "\_\_\_ deal!"; cry of agreement
  - 27 Middy
  - 28 Obstacle
  - 29 Anger
  - 32 Outperforms
  - 34 Smallest continent: abbr.
  - 35 Athletic shoe brand
  - 36 \_\_\_-crazy; tired of confinement
  - 38 Plant new trees in the woods
  - 40 Wooden shoe
  - 43 Uplifting tune
  - 45 Football pass
  - 48 TV anchor Holt
  - 50 King's seat
  - 51 Actor's award
  - 52 "\_\_\_ Were the Days"
  - 53 Sty cries
  - 54 Loses hair
  - 56 "The \_\_\_ Piper of Hamelin"
  - 57 Unclothed
  - 58 Elderly
  - 59 Not as much
  - 62 Certain vote



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 1/27/16

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