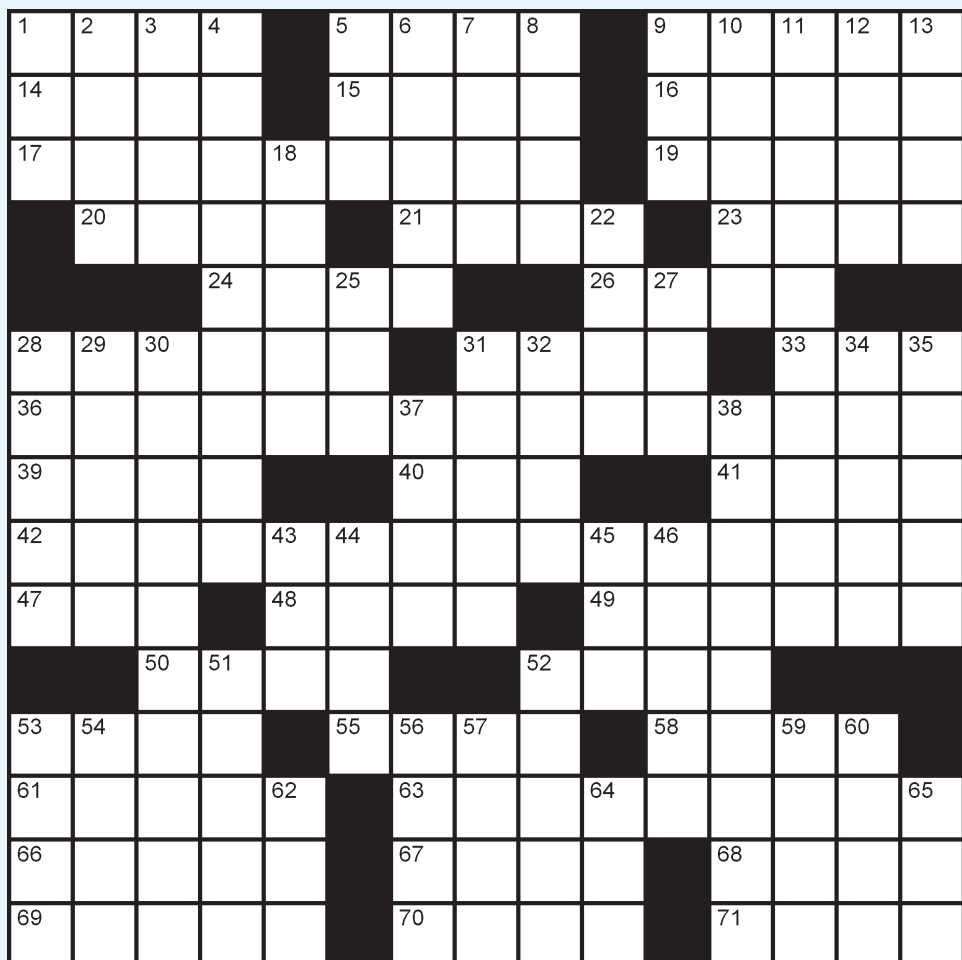


Fill in the Blanks by Howard Barkin

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS**
- 1 Off in the distance
 - 5 Scary giant
 - 9 Hangs in there
 - 14 Big name in pineapple
 - 15 Swamp menace, informally
 - 16 Greek leader?
 - 17 -
 - 19 Gymnastics gold medalist Kerri Baron's title
 - 20 It may mean "Pet me!"
 - 23 Opera princess who loves Radames
 - 24 Payment promises
 - 26 Rhinoceros part
 - 28 Daisylike flowers
 - 31 Slightly cracked
 - 33 Spy org. that split up in 1991
 - 36 -
 - 39 "___ it snappy!"
 - 40 Stretch of history
 - 41 Sci-fi princess who loves Han
 - 42 -
 - 47 CIA's predecessor
 - 48 Grape or tomato holder
 - 49 Floppy-eared hound
 - 50 Last word of a prayer
 - 52 Donate
 - 53 Drink at a sushi bar
 - 55 "Catch ya later," in London
 - 58 Children hunt for them annually
 - 61 Double checkers?
 - 63 Commonly misused adverb, or how to read the clues to 17-, 36- and 42-Across
 - 66 Like the best-case scenario
 - 67 Swear to
 - 68 Minute ___ (juice brand)
 - 69 Like the screws in eyeglasses
 - 70 Achy
 - 71 Pros at saving lives
- DOWN**
- 1 The second word of this clue, e.g.: Abbr.
 - 2 Fair's opposite
 - 3 Additionally
 - 4 Pet that may be "golden"
 - 5 Condition with rituals, briefly
 - 6 International bakers' units
 - 7 Flower on a float
 - 8 Automatic response to a call?
 - 9 ___ Vegas Aces
 - 10 Wedding site
 - 11 Parts of a fire safety system
 - 12 Ungraceful landing sound
 - 13 Multiseason show's storyline, perhaps
 - 18 Love to pieces
 - 22 Alphabetically first of the five W's
 - 25 Seabees' org.
 - 27 "... man ___ mouse?"
 - 28 Have the intention of
 - 29 Iranian leaders, once
 - 30 Protests during the national anthem
 - 31 Button on an electronic contract
 - 32 Rock icon Jett
 - 34 Tour leader
 - 35 Monster
 - 37 Marine bird
 - 38 Its final score may be 20-21
 - 43 The night before
 - 44 "You ___ lyin'!"
 - 45 ___-Wan Kenobi
 - 46 Seesaw on a decision
 - 51 "Will & Grace" Emmy winner
 - 52 Mullally
 - 53 Swamp menace, informally
 - 54 Comedy sketch
 - 56 "Sad to say ..."
 - 57 Pioneering DVR
 - 59 Glitzy rock style
 - 60 Cut, as a well-taped box
 - 62 Crafty
 - 64 Lamb's mother
 - 65 Three-ft. measures

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021 Mars/Pluto Earth Sign Trine



We are all doing what we need to do to flesh out a given role. The plot is being revealed with each interaction; you are every bit as able to steer it as anyone else involved. Yes, the larger context is hard to change, but the Mars and Pluto situation reminds us that with consistent action in any particular direction, change is inevitable.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Someone is expecting you to pull a rabbit out of your hat, and can you blame them? You've done this trick before to astonishing effect. Now for the key question: What's in it for you?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll get props. These are probably deserved, but you won't feel that way. Even if you think you haven't earned this respect and admiration, don't deflect it. A simple thank you is all that's needed.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Go with the momentum. Resist the urge to make a thing perfect or start over the "right" way... this is just fear talking. Keep going; you'll be able to build on what you have. Work what's working.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There's the reason why you like each other, and then there's the *real* reason why you like each other, and they are seldom the same reason. The relationship will thrive in awareness and service of the real reason.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The title of a poem by Paige Lewis reads, "In the Hands of Borrowers, Objects Are Twice as Likely to Break." The notion holds true today, so be neither a borrower nor a lender.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You are needed for your talents. In some ways, you are indispensable. And while it feels good to do something that another cannot, it's also a lot of responsibility that could get burdensome if held for too long.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It's absolutely brilliant to have something, and it's absolutely brilliant to not have it. Each is its own kind of brilliance. Not worrying about a loss or gain... that's liberation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Now, more so than last week, you get attached to the thing you do routinely. Use this to your advantage by adding that one thing you want to be a part of your daily life.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Someone you admire is having a regular roller coaster of a time lately. Following someone so unpredictable is an adventure that, in a weird way, makes you feel grounded by comparison.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). What clear and poignant observations have you – and now for someone to tell them to... it's true they would be wasted on someone close to you. For now, preserve and save them just for you.

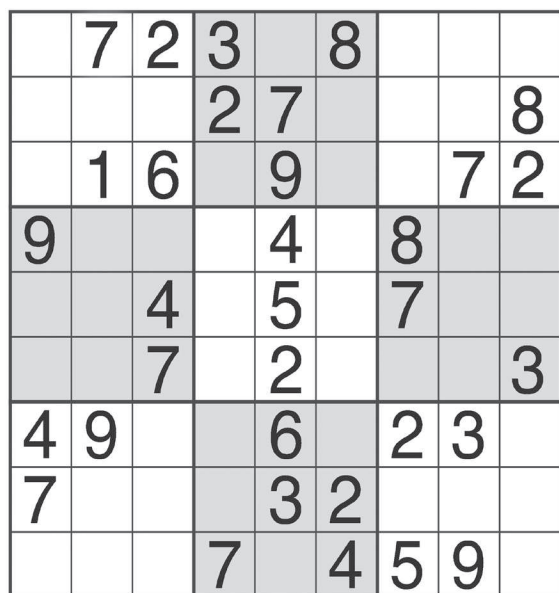
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Animals don't have leisure time, because they have no delineation between what they *have to do* and *get to do*. It's all just what they're doing. You'll benefit from an animalistic approach, reducing mental noise caused by definitions.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There are aspects of you, caused by your sensitivity, that you sometimes want to change. There's nothing wrong with these parts of you, but they make certain situations more difficult. Instead of changing, create workarounds.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (FEBRUARY 24). You didn't think it was a burden at the time, and yet a responsibility will come to its natural ending place, and suddenly, you're free to enter an era of discovery and exploration. It's as though the color dial has been turned up in your worldview and life comes at you with overdue vividness and excitement. Cancer and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 18, 44, 38 & 9.

Universal SUDOKU

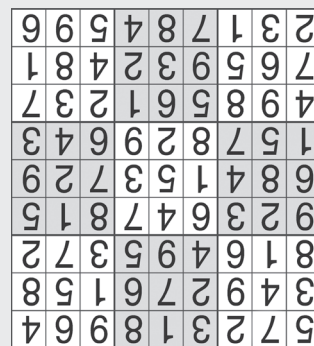
Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

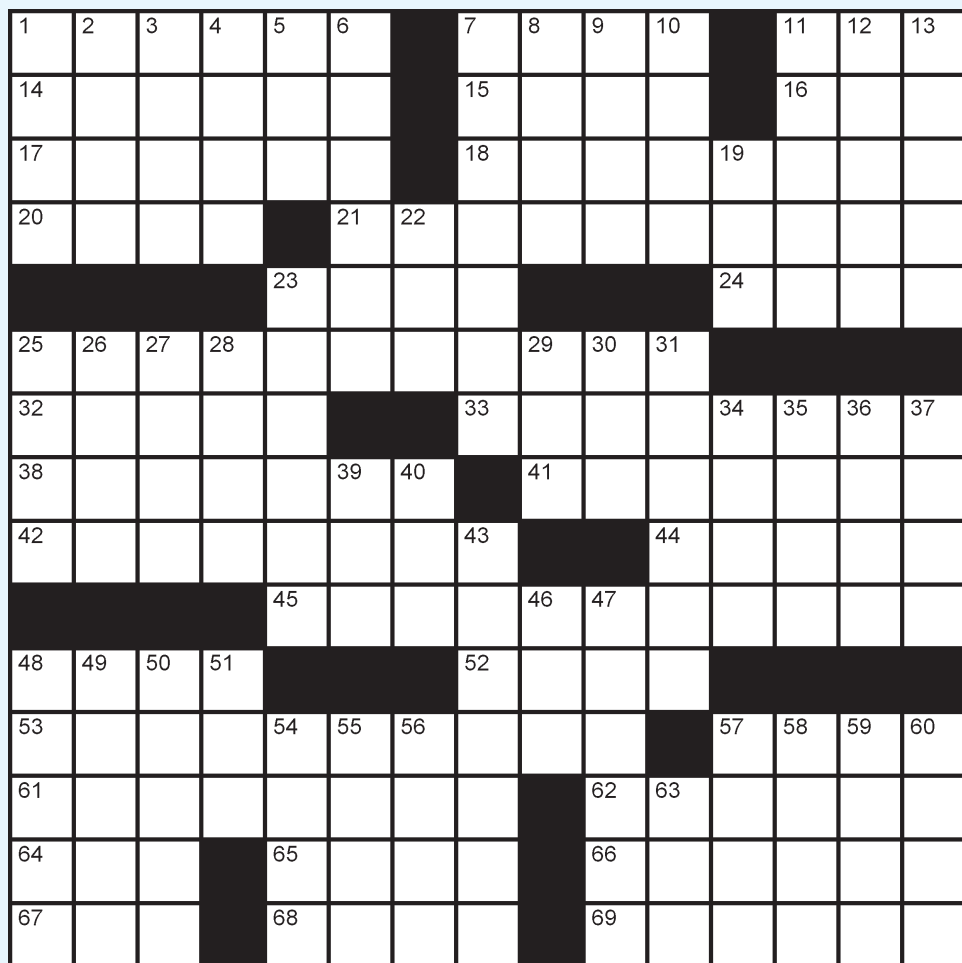


SOLUTIONS



Bite Encoding by Jesse Goldberg

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS**
- 1 Agreement
 - 7 When doubled, a Hawaiian fish
 - 11 Hoover ___ (Colorado River structure)
 - 14 Haitian religion involving sorcery
 - 15 Hugh Laurie's boys' school
 - 16 Former quarterback Manning
 - 17 Waiting one's turn
 - 18 Rustic home
 - 20 University official
 - 21 Isn't thorough when cleaning an ashtray?
 - 23 Shortly, in poetry
 - 24 They sometimes clash
 - 25 Closed-down arena?
 - 32 Chatty bird
 - 33 When required
 - 38 Word after "public" or "popular"
 - 41 TV schedule slot
 - 42 Takes revenge
 - 44 Trap, as by a winter storm
 - 45 Glowing alien of Jabba's species?
 - 48 Headliner
 - 52 IRS experts
 - 53 Where one might get a dog?
 - 57 Was aware of
 - 61 Conspiring (with)
 - 62 Discomfort
 - 64 Actress Seydoux or Thompson
 - 65 Raise one's voice
 - 66 U-Haul truck, for one
 - 67 Hosp. areas
 - 68 Poetic tributes
 - 69 Forgo cooking ... or, read with spaces after the second and fourth letters, a theme hint
- DOWN**
- 1 Fanatical
 - 2 Certain ice cream holder
 - 3 Carbonated drink
 - 4 Thor's father
 - 5 "Anchorman: The Legend of ___ Burgundy"
 - 6 "Crime ___ pay"
 - 7 Philanthropist Gates
 - 8 On the summit of
 - 9 Big pigs
 - 10 Machu Picchu builder
 - 11 Eliminate glitches from
 - 12 Samuel of the Supreme Court
 - 13 After-dinner candies
 - 19 Prez known for his top hat
 - 22 RVer's stopover
 - 23 More pale
 - 25 Pollution portmanteau
 - 26 Overdone publicity
 - 27 Army group
 - 28 Prepares, like leather
 - 29 "This ___ test"
 - 30 Prefix with "verse"
 - 31 Deserves
 - 34 Scratch the surface?
 - 35 "Mon ___!"
 - 36 Issue forth
 - 37 Bumper concern
 - 39 Large reproductive cells
 - 40 "The Simpsons" character who says "hi-diddly-ho"
 - 43 Coins that cost more than seven cents each to make
 - 46 Mimic
 - 47 Inherent character
 - 48 Welcoming expression
 - 49 Piano technician
 - 50 He has the world at his fingertips
 - 51 GPS suggestion
 - 54 Hellmann's spread, informally
 - 55 Like good Scotch
 - 56 Regulation
 - 57 Superman, aka Clark ___
 - 58 Defense org. since 1949
 - 59 Birthright seller in Genesis
 - 60 Mark from a paintball fight, say
 - 63 Teachers' org.

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021 Venus Catches a Fish



Take a picture and you're a photographer. Paint it and you're an artist. Keep a journal and you're a journalist. Do it once and you get the title in the short term. Make a lifestyle out of it and you could go pro. The jury is still out on which is better. The Venus passage into artistic Pisces suggests you try it all while the creative vibes are flowing.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You didn't get all that you wanted. It's better this way. Some degree of hunger keeps things exciting. Hunger causes action. Overindulgence causes lethargy and is generally unattractive.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). People pick up on your signals whether or not you are consciously aware of what they are. Know yourself and be empowered. Ten minutes of honest reflection will do it. Relationships transform as your intention does.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). What good is your charm if you are not using it to forward your purposes? You didn't exactly wake up this morning knowing what those purposes were, but it's OK. You can make up for lost time by getting clear on it now.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The reason you haven't met the goal yet is that you're not totally sure you're ready. In the back of your mind, there's fear as to the responsibilities that go with the prize. Grab on anyway. Don't borrow tomorrow's problems today.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). These circumstances are not inherently entertaining. This fun you're having, that's all you. Know it. Own it. Claim it. The world is your playground and people love being around you because of your unique way of being in it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Good conversation leads to even better things – a deal, a friend, a meaningful and possibly life-changing exchange. Your communication skills are a golden ticket.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). To enjoy a thing fully, you

must empty your mind of fantasies, assumptions, prejudices and expectations in all directions. Into that void will flow experience in which you can revel in

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You've tended toward criticizing and directing yourself lately, and an amazing thing happens when you stop that. Chaos doesn't ensue. Everything gets done. The vibes simultaneously elevate and relax.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You do quite a lot in a day and yet you find, when your head hits the pillow, you still want more. There is more, right? The question sticks with you even after you've closed your eyes to sleep. Ambitions fill your dreams.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The words, "I love you," can only be interpreted inside of context. Consistently loving behavior reflects one meaning, and if these words are unsupported by such things they could mean literally anything.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're dedicated to work. You manage time well, and you're conscientious. It's when your high standards of performance extend to those around you that you realize how much you need to team patience with your other virtues.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Though you may turn to other worlds as a fun escape, you do not wish to have the lives of others, only to make your own more brightly reflect your heart and ideas.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 25). In the same way you can turn the mighty sun on and off with a flick of your eyelids, you can change the trajectory of a relationship with tricks of the mind. This you'll do often and well, finding ways to think of things that give you power and options, and then exercising that potential to create one magnificent outcome after another. Virgo and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 12, 22, 4, 44 and 18.

Universal SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆



SOLUTIONS

