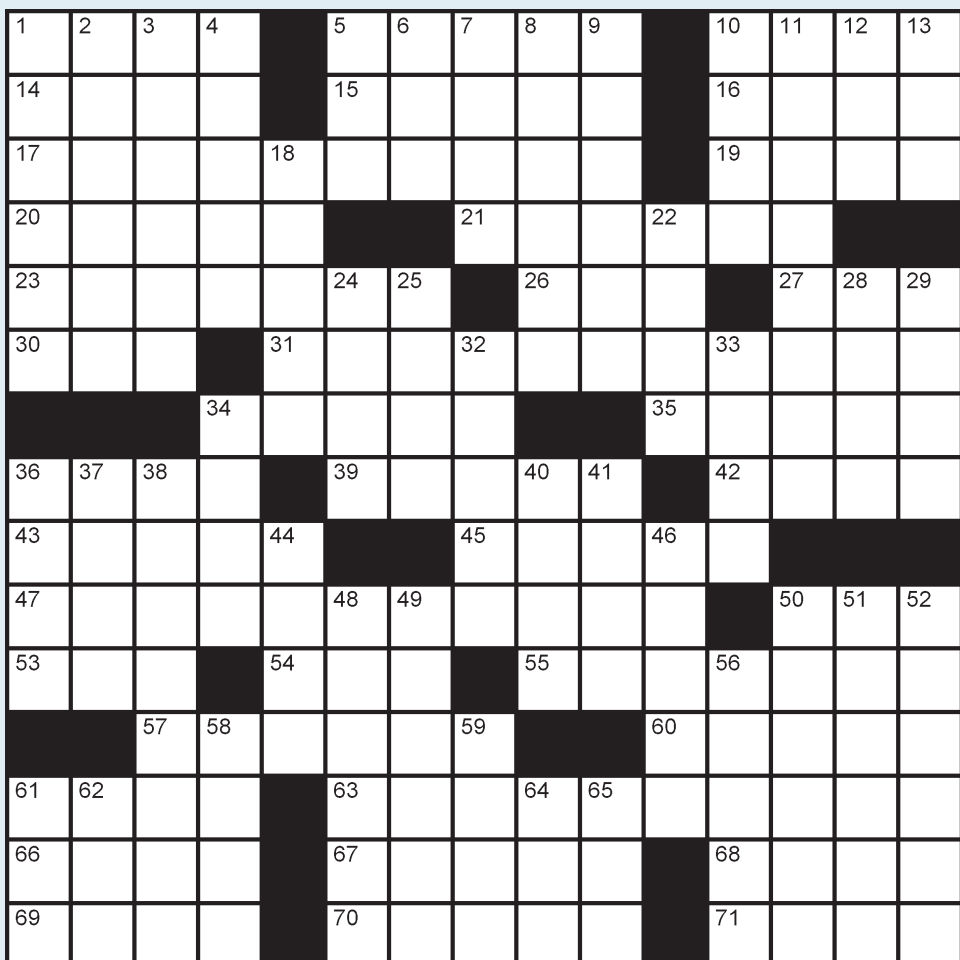


Preoccupation by Gary Larson

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS: 1 Unaccompanied at a party, 5 Where people get their starts?, 10 What's about a foot?, 14 Contented cat's sound, 15 Unreactive, 16 Rest in a hammock, say, 17 Actor who plays a clergy member in commercials?, 19 Thing, 20 Words of agreement, 21 Very virtuous people, 23 2002 rom-com whose protagonist donates \$40 billion, 26 Reggae cousin, 27 Donkey, 30 Org. with a list of popular baby names, 31 Census Bureau office manager?, 34 Popular payment app, 35 Plants in a dry place?, 36 Kitty starter, 39 Pieces of furniture in green rooms, 42 Does and bucks, 43 Home Depot rival, 45 Steer clear of, 47 Spot on a major team?, 50 Tractor-trailer, 53 Butterfingers, 54 Operated, 55 Suffragist Susan B., 57 The "A" of CIA, 60 Sphere of influence, 61 It may have a soft shell, 63 Forklift operator for pillow factory?, 66 Gave the once-over, 67 Host the show, 68 Romance fiction award, 69 Extremities, 70 Processes, as a chip card, 71 Reason to study, DOWN: 1 Involuntary jerks, 2 Houses with steeply pitched roofs, 3 Naval fleet, 4 Ingrained dirt, 5 Nintendo console, 6 Add-___ (extras), 7 New York team with a bridge in its logo, 8 Chicken serving, 9 Ball alternative, in softball, 10 Narrow opening, 11 Cajun condiment, 12 Cheer at a futbol game, 13 "A Nightmare on ___ Street", 18 Nephew's sibling, perhaps, 22 One definitely won't share weed with you, 24 Puts on, 25 Japanese sport in a ring, 28 Web location, 29 Commotion, 32 Like Jack Sprat's diet, 33 Anti-DWI org., 34 Political second banana, for short, 36 Purina brand, 37 Writer Ephron, 38 Deceitful, 40 Nike competitor, 41 In the near future, 44 Upset, 46 First class, informally?, 48 Tool that produces wood dust, 49 ___ Tax (unlucky Monopoly player's first landing space), 50 Band aide, 51 Coastal features, 52 One may lift weights for hours, 56 Valentine symbol, 58 Mount Olympus dwellers, 59 Feminist community org., 61 Thing in a golfer's pocket, 62 Writer Rand, 64 Homer's frenemy, 65 French word within "Miserables"

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2021 Jupiter in Socially Responsible Aquarius



In the weeks ahead, with Jupiter gliding through the early stages of socially responsible Aquarius, two kinds of responsibility will be served. One will be presented on the obvious platter, and you'll see what you're taking on. The other will come sneakily, without presentation, so you'll hardly realize the agreement you're making. Stay keen to both.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll be the one who brings everyone together. Does knowing they will influence one another for better and worse make you reconsider your guest list?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Trials are your best teachers. You'll find strength that affirm your strength and resourcefulness. Fellow earth signs Virgo and Capricorn prove worthy team members.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Nonproductive stretches can be uncomfortable or even alarming for movers like you. Don't fight it; ride it. Something excellent will come out of the break, and it actually won't put you behind at all.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Not all boundaries are meant to keep others out. Often the fences and limits provide a much-needed sense of order. Lay down a few rules to give structure to today's uncharted territory.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Everyone falls. Whether you fall down, fall short or fall for the tricks and traps of a wild world, there's only one thing to do -- pick yourself up and walk on with the lesson in your pocket.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). "Just be yourself," they say. Meanwhile, "yourself" isn't the easiest person to "just be," when you're in the process of exploring and becoming. So instead, experiment and be whoever you want to be in the moment.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You cultivate an atmosphere of emotional safety around you. People sense you'll take care of them and make their lives a little easier, maybe even momentarily delightful. No wonder you're popular.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). It requires courage to take a chance. Give yourself credit for assuming a risk, carrying it and being big enough to accept the consequences, whatever they may be.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Maybe the mystics and geniuses are right about life being an illusion. The question is what to do about it. Can you dream differently? What would it take to pierce the perception that entraps you?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Stimulating environments engage the mind, but when they go on for too long, the imagination suffers. Creativity needs the breathing room that only boredom can provide. A dull stretch is the precursor to inspiration.

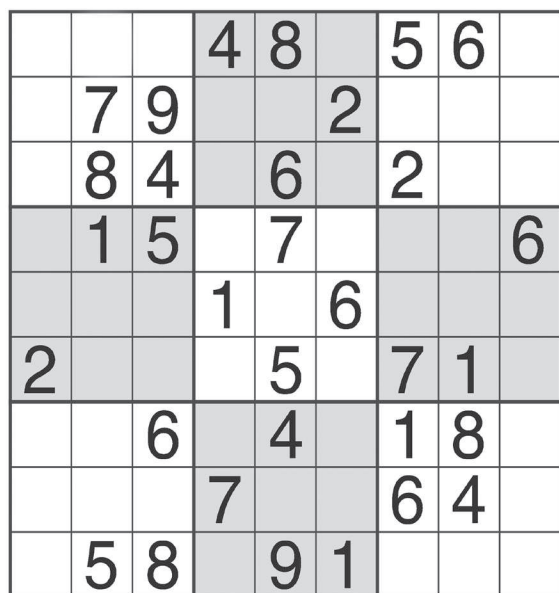
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Boasting, posing and posturing is the behavior of insecurity and underconfidence. You get the best out of yourself and others by offering the remedy of kind attention and acceptance.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The relationships you cherish the most will be the ones that demand something of you and afford you the opportunity to emotionally expand. When it comes to love, you get what you put in.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 28). Never have you been more purposeful. You prefer the sort of power that comes from skills honed over time and earned merit. And yet, when you visit the person at the top and are granted a game-changing position, take it! This is either part of the payoff for your work or an advance payment for what you will do soon. Virgo and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 40, 26, 38, 10 and 5

Universal SUDOKU

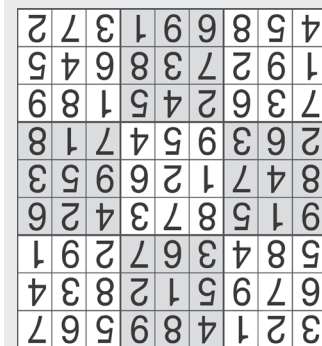
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

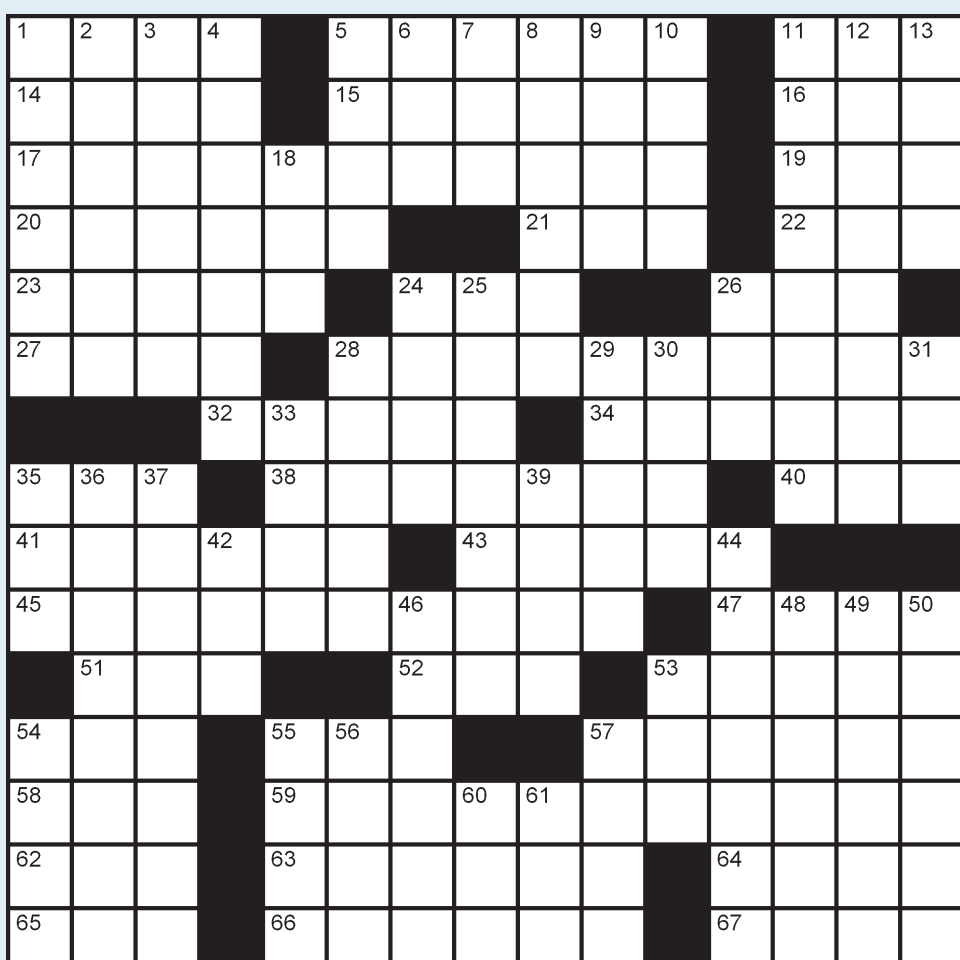


SOLUTIONS



Sports Center by Julian Lim

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS: 1 Went down a chute, 5 Way to a freeway, 11 It might be part-time, 14 Sugar stalk, 15 Document signed before a stunt, 16 One, in Cancun, 17 "Harris, to Biden, in 2020", 19 Tex-___, 20 "Head over heels" and "hand over fist", 21 Keg outlet, 22 Practice, as a trade, 23 Meal that may feature tempura, 24 Dietary amt., 26 Letter before omega, 27 "The ___ of Glory" (Lady Gaga hit), 28 "Carnival's setting, 32 Medieval workers, 34 Better ventilated, 35 ___ milk, 38 "Pairing on a fight card, 40 Stab or go, 41 "To life," at a bat mitzvah, 43 Labyrinths, 45 "Outing for two couples, 47 Like flan, 51 A, in Cannes, 52 Heart of a winner?, 53 "That's ___" (Dean Martin love song), 54 Drug made from a fungus, 55 Spray used before sauteing and "hand over fist", 57 Floral Van Gogh subjects, 58 Grazed, say, 59 Dramatic baseball maneuver, or what you can do within each starred answer to form two words/phrases?, 62 It was in orbit for 15 years, 63 Definitely will, after "is", 64 Ascended, 65 Machines in some labs, 66 Assigned a job to, 67 Is in the hole, DOWN: 1 One who takes things down, 2 Extolled, 3 One of nine in baseball, usually, 4 Signifies, 5 Dominates, to gamers, 6 Worn-out horse, 7 Periphery, 8 Top-grossing movie of all time (2009), 9 Photographer's prefix for "data", 10 Gear up (for), 11 Parachutist's apparel, 12 Short zinger, 13 Squarish, 18 "Just my 2 cents," in a text, 24 Life ___ (inflatable vessel), 25 iPod predecessor, 26 Lead-in to "que", 28 Freeze-___ (still image), 29 Paramedic's roll, 30 Like a red strawberry, 31 Word before "cell" or "spell", 33 "___ and the Detectives", 35 Aged, 36 Kind of guitar, 37 Speaks with a booming voice, 39 Tops of Santa costumes, 42 Nickname that anagrams to "Bea", 44 Part-time athlete, 46 Shows reluctance, 48 Proceed leisurely, 49 "Summer Nights" musical, 50 "Of course! Of course!", 53 Verb that sounds like its middle letter, 54 Genie's place, 55 Subtle summons, 56 Blue-green, 57 Polo shirt brand, 60 Cartoon squeal, 61 Summer, to a Parisian

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

THURSDAY, JULY 29, 2021 Mars Opposes Jupiter Under Leo's Watch



Under these Leo aspects, our ideas of what a relationship should be continue to conflict with our heart's impulses, preferences and leanings. We wonder if we can bring this heart and mind discord to a settlement. Probably not -- not today at least. You're better off welcoming the tension.

"The heart has its reasons which reason knows not of." -- Pascal

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You don't always have to know what you're doing, or how to do it, to successfully execute your purpose. Intention comes with its own intelligence and it will serve you well today. Head on into the thing!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). To focus on your favorite interest to the exclusion of all else isn't exactly healthy, but greatness is often tinged with such obsession and achieved through a process of imbalances righted.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The thing that gets your back up isn't all bad. Anger can be a creative resource, or it can be a distraction keeping you from more important work or, even more important, fun. So, which is it?

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You are moving ever-forward, driven by a mix of curiosity, need, responsibility, loyalty and ambition. It's good fuel, but you also require the very practical energy provided by proper nutrition. Look into new choices in that regard.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You're a magnet for talented people, and you spot them even when they are not performing the thing they are so talented at. Your own talents are activated and grow in the atmosphere you create together.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It helps to have an awareness of the price paid by those who went before you. Mentally touching on that history -- the integrity and sacrifices of remarkable people -- will shield you from the vulgarity and idiocy so common today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're known to politely decline invitations, and now you'll take that skill to the next level by saying no in such a way as to also compliment people, letting them know how much you like them, even if you can't do all they want.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You make plans, and you stick to them. The same loyalty and follow-through applies whether orchestrating for yourself or for others. Integrity is a 360-degree virtue.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Explaining has a way of complicating things. If there's a lot to explain, maybe there's something wrong with the procedure itself. Take a few steps back, and ask yourself if there's a simpler way to accomplish the aim.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Words are organizing tools. Wordless ideas are also organizing tools. Work from both directions. You'll get your head straight by talking or writing things out, and you'll get your words straight by thinking and feeling things through.

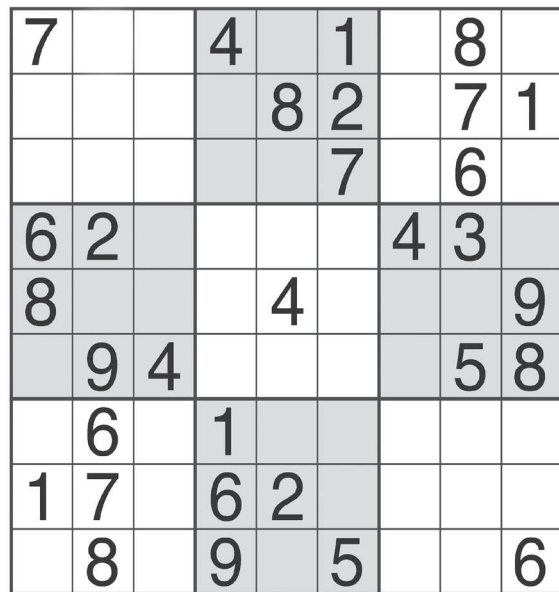
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). A voice is a powerful tool. Making the most of it is a responsibility most people are not aware enough to claim. You seize the opportunity, educate yourself on pressing issues and choose your words carefully.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your idols keep you sharp, but so do your rivals. Today, you may find your rivals the more motivating of the two, as the fuel they provide will be immediate, readily available and abundantly flowing.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 29). Your best is more than good enough; you believe it, live it and leverage it into ever-more useful achievements, ones to the great benefit of you and others alike. Oddly, though you've never been better at realizing your potential, you are also somehow becoming increasingly selfless, as you become the work and ideals you endeavor. Libra and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 1, 39, 50 and 44.

Universal SUDOKU

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



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆



SOLUTIONS

