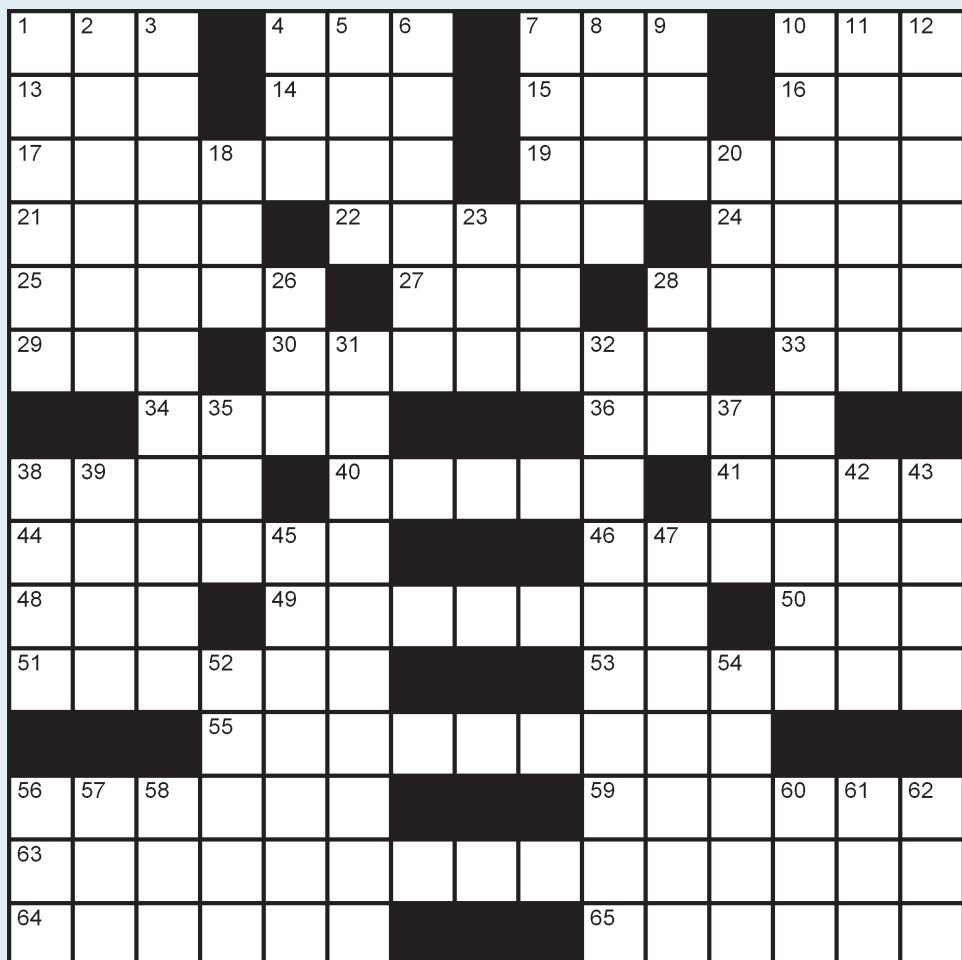


Sandwiched In by Jack Murtagh

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS
1 'u CANNOT b serious!
4 Weird AI's '\_\_\_ to a Superhero'
7 Bird that may screech
10 Bird that may screech
13 Rapper \_\_\_ Kim
14 Checkmate your opponent, e.g.
15 Animal that sounds like you?
16 Pal of Pooh
17 23andMe offering
19 Chicken strips
21 Baby food, essentially
22 Graceless
24 Oxen harness
25 On the ocean
27 Couples' cruise ship?
28 Not just happen once
29 'I know kung fu' speaker, in 'The Matrix'
30 Dangerous current
33 Black \_\_\_ (covert missions)
34 Got out of Dodge
36 'Assuming that's correct ...'
38 Baby 15-Across
40 Forestland units
41 Gave the go-ahead
44 An empty seat is reserved for him at a Seder
46 Mouthwatering stuff?
48 The whole shebang
49 Hunt down
50 Grab a bite
51 Muslim ascetics
53 Big name in private planes
55 Event for debutantes
56 Honeydew relative
59 Graduate of Barnard or Spelman
63 People go under while on top of them
64 Scrub, as digital evidence
65 Former sections of SATs
DOWN
1 Dad
2 It passes in 60 seconds
3 Pairing with 10-Down
4 Need to pay
5 Part of DJ
6 Lure into crime
7 Bouncy watercraft
8 Fills with wonder
9 Money in Kobe
10 Stackable snacks depicted in this puzzle's grid ... and whose middle layer is spelled by the grid's uncrossed letters
11 Generate, as a lather
12 Proverbial weepers
18 Start of many book titles
20 Ombre liquid
23 Child's macaroni creation
26 'I know you \_\_\_, but what am I?
28 One who monitors traveling?
31 University in Pocatello
32 Break away
35 Prez who established Medicare
37 It precedes la
38 Maple part on the Canadian flag
39 Spaghetti \_\_\_ carbonara
42 'Dear \_\_\_ Hansen'
43 Numbers to crunch
45 Tightrope walker, e.g.
47 Iris rings
52 'That matters to me!'
54 Oscar season oversights
56 Fish known for its liver
57 Yoshi : dinosaur :: Donkey Kong : \_\_\_
58 Salt, to a French chef
60 Scholarly style org.
61 Napoleonic marshal (anagram of 9-Down)
62 A male one is called a jack (from)

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021 Sun Square Neptune



The future is bound by certain rules, one of them being it cannot bring more of the same. Change is the very nature of the future. It may move us slowly, imperceptibly even, but move us it will. Today, it's not hard to see the direction because the shove is swift and sure. This cosmic service announcement was brought to you by the sun square Neptune.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). What you love will come alive in your world, influencing how you behave, your future plans and the company you keep. You'll feel a real connection to a new aspect of your interest, or new interest entirely.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). When you have someone to share a pleasure with, the joy will double up on you. Meet with people who think like you and appreciate the same things.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Steer clear of anything involving justice. Unless you are paid to judge, it will not serve you to offer advice. You can offer support, love and a safe place to land without offering an opinion.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Most people are sophisticated enough to know how to talk and behave in various settings with you. There are those who will break the rules. Your gracious handling will not be appreciated in the moment, but in time, they'll get it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Money can't buy intelligence, and dollars don't add up to savvy. But what money can buy is experiences to teach the willing student. You'll bring astute awareness to the classroom of life.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Just as parents chasten the ones they love most, it seems you are being scolded by the fates. You can take this as proof positive that you are a beloved child of the universe.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). This used to be your adventure time. That you've gotten used to it doesn't mean it's time for a new adventure, but a deeper one is certainly called for.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Stay away from questions like, 'What's the point?' 'Why?' 'What does it mean?' Queries like these will only send you on a circular path when you would really rather go somewhere new.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). One thing not to do is confuse power with control. The boss may not know what the inner workings are, and those with their hands on the joystick may not reflect the motives of an entire organization.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). To throw good effort to the unappreciative is a waste. Then again, you don't know until you do it and get nothing back. When you focus on a worthy candidate, you'll get back everything you put in and more.

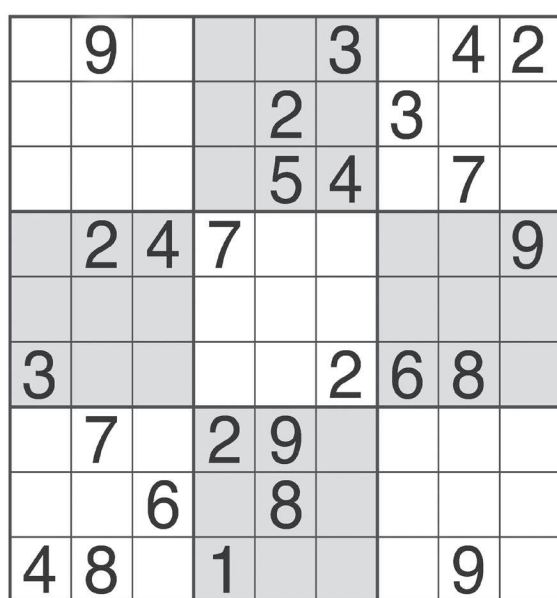
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You could gather more information but it wouldn't make you any more prepared. Your best guess is good enough. This is as certain as you'll be. Move on with what you know.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're interesting to someone and because of this, you're being observed. Don't worry about projecting an image; you're living it. You are who you are.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 12). In gaming matters, you level up skills and advance your station. Many of your purposes are as far away from the world of competition as can be. To score poetry and soul, love and art would be a reduction of joy and potential. Your expansive mind and dancing spirit create beautiful relationships in such realms. Leo and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 8, 11, 4, 38 and 13.

Universal SUDOKU

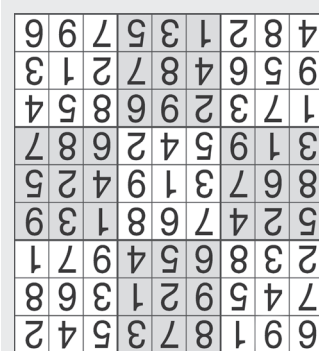
Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

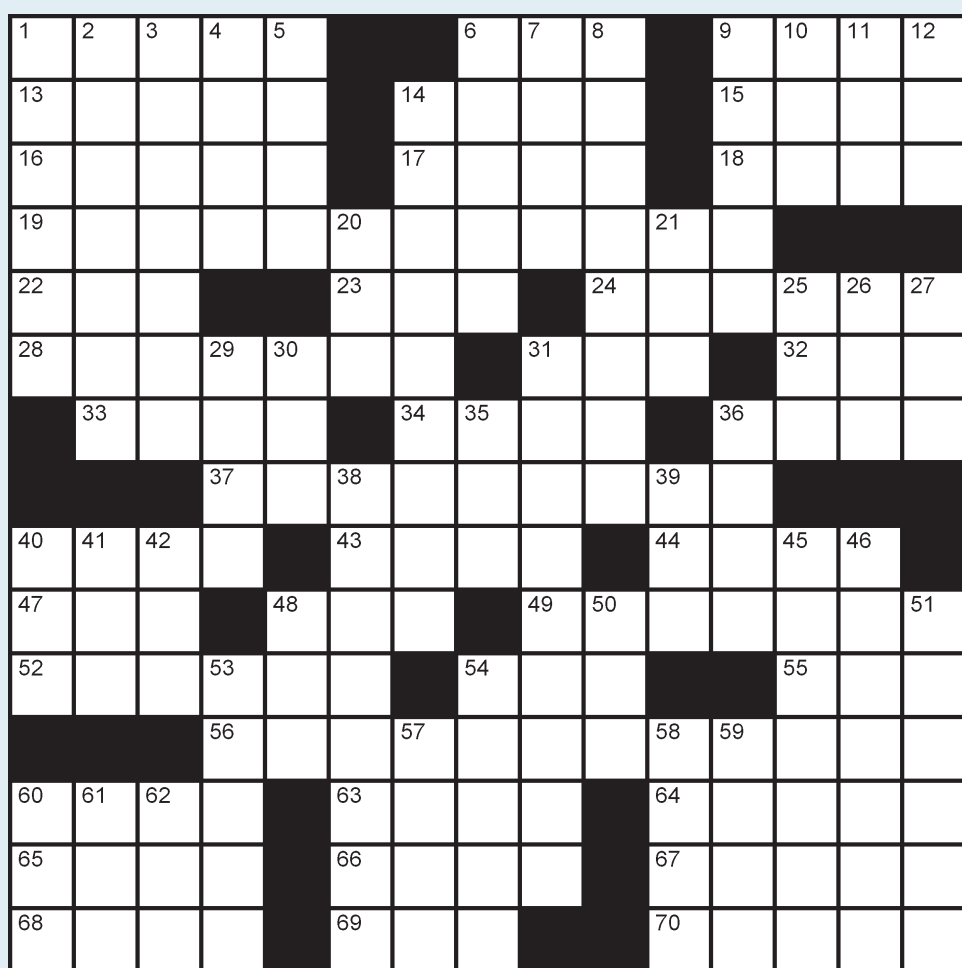


SOLUTIONS



International Numbers by Paul Coulter

Universal Crossword edited by Amanda Rafkin



- ACROSS
1 World's highest capital city
6 Note between fa and la
9 Low-end instrument?
13 Ancient counting devices
14 Caffeine-rich nut
15 \_\_\_ wolf (independent person)
16 ESPN host Katie
17 Modify, like a paper
18 Sunburn soother
19 Lysol, Clorox and Pledge, to a German language learner?
22 GPS guess
23 Photo \_\_\_ (media events)
24 Continues
28 Puts back on eBay
31 Chitchat
32 Commotion
33 Ding on a fender
34 Grad
36 Did extremely well on
37 Coors, Miller, Dos Equis, Corona, Modelo, Lagunitas, Sapporo and Bell's, to a French language learner?
40 Warty critter
43 Luxury brand hidden in 'Jedi order'
44 Brand with a swoosh logo
47 Row, row, row your boat
48 Saturated \_\_\_
49 Kerl of 'The Americans'
52 Not broadcasting
54 That guy's
55 Mood music?
56 Oxygen, hydrogen and helium, to a Spanish language learner?
60 Barking marine mammal
63 Go yachting, perhaps
64 Cellphone notification
65 Smurf with a white beard
66 City where Taj Mahotsav is celebrated
67 That's a plus!
68 Dance and painting, e.g. 'Absolutely!'
70 Name akin to Matthew
DOWN
1 Spacecraft on a planet's surface
2 Scrubbed, like a launch
3 Rhyming pub order
4 Berry whose name is 3/4 vowels
5 Metal in many daily vitamins
6 Fountain drinks
7 Lena of 'Chocolat'
8 Near the end of a sports match
9 World-weary learner?
10 'You've got mail' ISP
11 \_\_\_Caps
12 'I told you so!'
14 Perseveres
20 Place to park
21 Burglarize
25 Cuttlefish's ink holder
26 Tribute poem
27 Nonverbal approval
29 Far from pixelated
30 'Rugrats' dad
31 Like some low-budget films
35 Wall St. takeover
36 Flea market caveat
38 'It seems to me ...'
39 Colleagues of M.D.s
40 Also
41 Buffoon
42 'Woof' relative
45 Most astute
46 Stately source of shade
48 Christmas conifer
50 Apply
51 Was defeated by
53 Earth, bound?
54 People who get what's coming to them?
57 Stuffing herb
58 Palindromic address
59 Idina's role in 'Frozen'
60 Place to get a Tok-Sen massage
61 Body part that's 'lent'
62 Fitting

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2021 Mars and Mercury at the Punchbowl



Mars joins the party in expansive Sagittarius, and Mercury slides into Capricorn, the sign of designated drivers. It's the birth of actionable ideas. One person's imagination can produce wonders. Once a big idea is born, it's forever part of the world. 'An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come.'

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Do you feel like the only sane one in the room? You bought a ticket to the circus, and these are the clowns. Sit back and enjoy, then make a quick departure before the tiger act arrives.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You will make alliances to benefit you and yours. It could be as simple as a friendly conversation or as complex as a legal agreement, the implications of which will be relaxation and leisure.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You can't believe all you hear around the proverbial watercooler, and that goes double when the 'watercooler' is social media. One out of 10 stories will be false. Enjoy them but don't act on them.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Do the others know where you stand? Dare to express your opinion even when it doesn't appear to be a popular one. An honest difference is better than a dishonest agreement.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). If you've ever had a dream you didn't want to wake up from, you know that illusion can be the sweetest pleasure. Your imagination is so active now, and your daydreams have brilliant potential application to the real world.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). In the normal function of relationships, people project their hopes and wishes on each other. Later, with a more accurate picture of what the person is actually like, some of it won't fit. So, how versatile are you?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). When you're the strongest, you'll step up. When there's another who knows more, you'll back down and learn. With the honest assessment of strengths, everyone will be raised.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your gifts are meant for sharing. You'll go where things seem more interesting, or problematic even, because that's where your smarts will be most useful.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You've the freedom to walk away from what's misaligned with your principles or purposes. There are many in the world who don't have the luxury; when you exercise your rights, you do it for them, too.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Consider giving your message to someone else to deliver. Familiars will respond better to someone from the outside. The proverb says, no one is a prophet in his own land.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your taste is exquisite but it's a hard thing to prove without a tangible expression. If you can't yet afford what you want, collect pictures from magazines to make a vision board.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're unlikely to take part in events without contributing something that makes a difference. You may not be aware of what exactly that difference is, but rest assured you're a force for good.

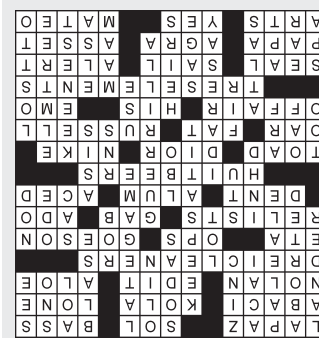
TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 13). This solar return sees you make good on your potential, lift your group and introduce new hopes and dreams. Three standout events will serve as memory-making markers on the journey. Alliances will be solidified, though note that you don't have to totally agree to unify and make a difference together. Cancer and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 29, 10, 4 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

