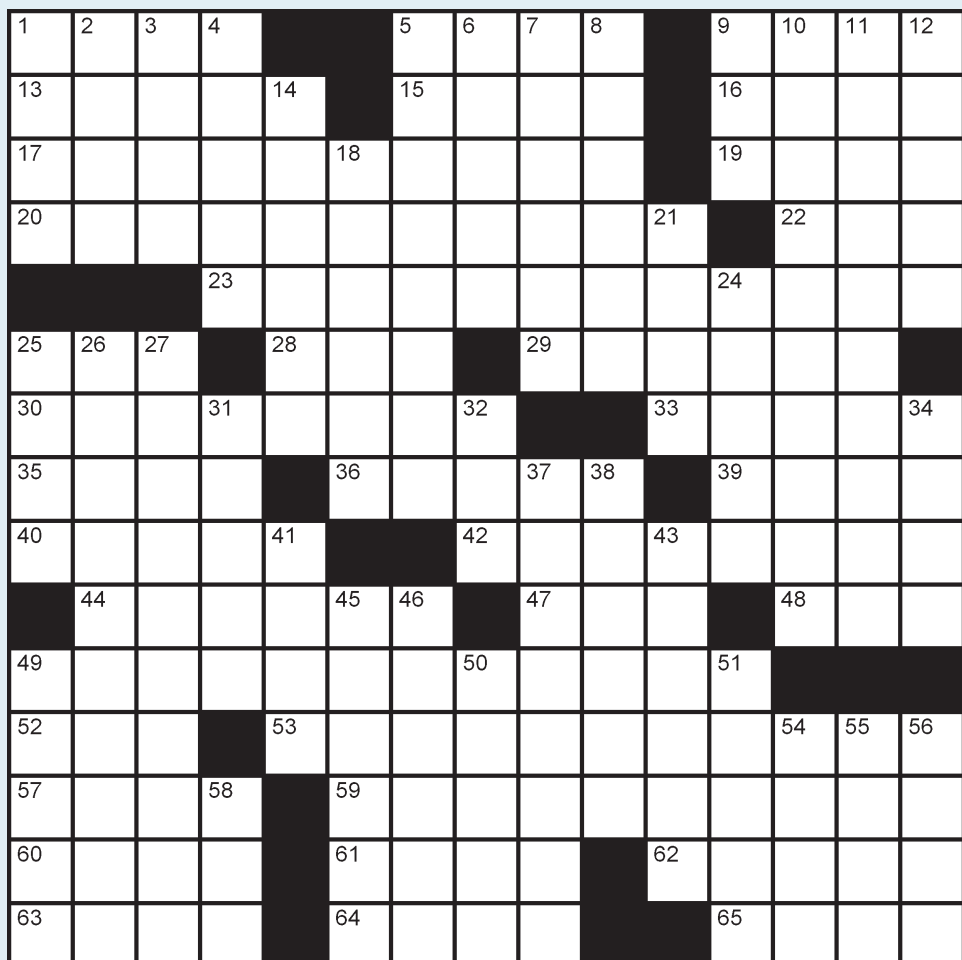


Universal Freestyle 9 by Adam Aaronson

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS
1 Place onto a self-checkout machine
5 Scottish hats
9 Petri dish gel
13 Angels' headgear
15 Cookie with a Lady Gaga flavor
16 Snap, Crackle and Pop, for one
17 Cuban-born 'Knives Out' star
19 'May' or 'march,' at times
20 Cocktail invented to prevent malaria
22 ___Pen (lifesaving item)
23 Top shooter at a basketball game?
25 Prez known for honesty
28 Fish in unadon
29 'All right, phew!'
30 Obsesses over a celebrity, say
33 ___ & Young
35 Circular current
36 Sandwich nobles
39 One spelling for a conical Cree creation
40 Leading question?
42 She sells certain shells by it
44 Smells in restaurants
47 Minor criticism
48 'Neither a borrower ___ a lender be' ('Hamlet')
49 Facilities covered by blast doors
52 End of a nonprofit's URL, often
53 Reader of Engadget or Gizmodo
57 First man in the Bible
59 Rodent that barks
60 What many a trans person changes
61 Sewing lines
62 '90s fitness phenomenon
63 Pirates' approvals
64 Humanities' counterpart, briefly
65 In a wink
DOWN
1 Layered hairdo
2 'Pretty please?'
3 Turing with a namesake test
4 Greet nonverbally
5 What may stop you from spilling the beans?
6 Protective gear
7 Will, if possible
8 Super cool
9 Dune rider's transport, for short
10 Gumbo garnish
11 High-end Apple earbuds
12 American ___ (Wisconsin's state bird)
14 Martial arts teacher
18 Stick (to)
21 ___-free eggs
24 Arizona-to-Utah direction
25 Not that many
26 Good time to change locks?
27 Sci-fi novel featuring aliens known as buggers
31 Sandwiches with tzatziki
32 Fourth-year students: Abbr.
34 Stadium level
37 Ideology behind the October Revolution
38 One may shuffle around a deck
41 Send forth
43 'Cut that out!'
45 First Hebrew letters
46 Confidential
49 Disney heroine who meets the demigod Maui
50 'Aw, what a ___'
51 Bundle of grain
54 Creative spark
55 Arcing shots
56 Quartet of showbiz awards
58 Month, in Mexico

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2022 Power Alignment in Capricorn



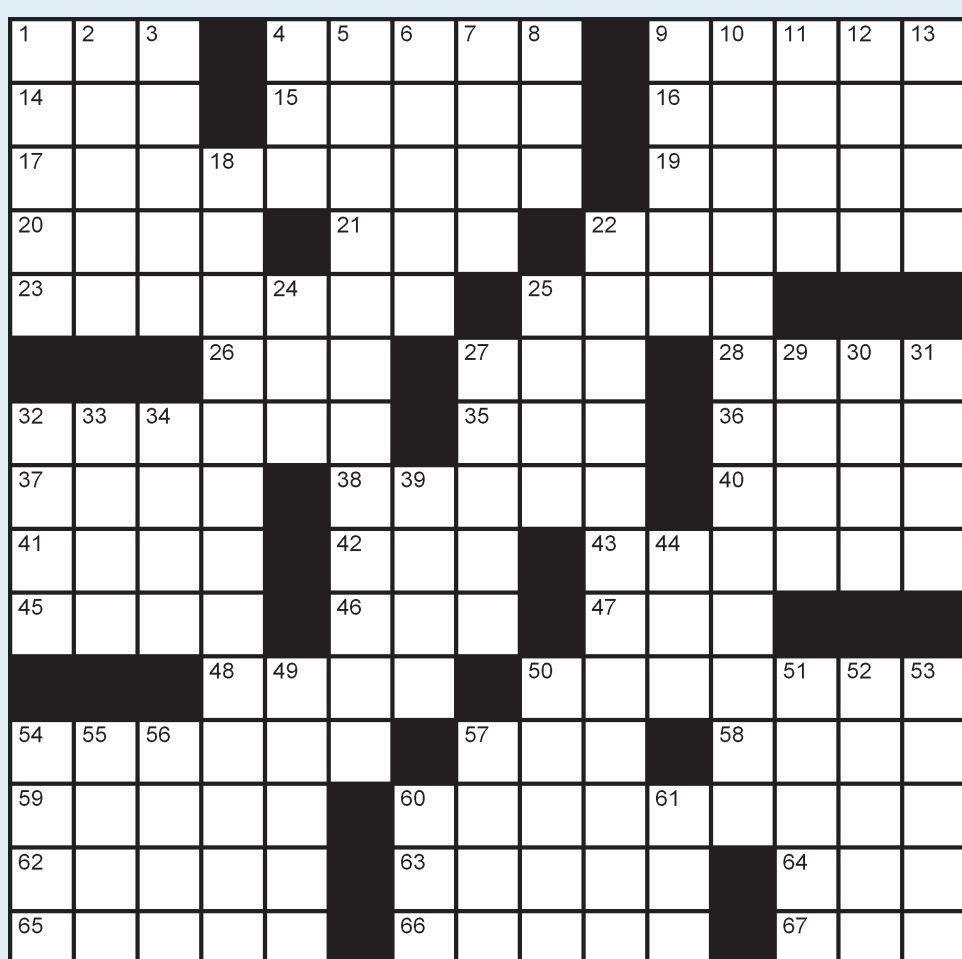
Every living system has a power structure, a circuitry to deliver the vital energy to every necessary part of the whole. Jellyfish, families, daffodils and corporations are all organized to move energy in a particular way. You don't have to understand it to be affected by it, but it helps, as this lunar conjunction of Venus, Mars and Pluto points out.
LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The intensity is turned up and you'll channel it positively and appropriately. When you apply yourself to a worthy activity, you excel -- although you might be initially attracted to a superhuman know-it-all type.
SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). A group of like-minded people will fascinate you with their intense concentration of energy. This will be an influence tempered by your own research and knowledge, which is becoming extensive lately.
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Experience has taught you what you're good at. You know your own tricks and what you could pull off if you practiced a little more. It will benefit you to put the time in. Practice makes perfect!
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Many stay in a situation they don't like because, as bad as it is, the problems involved are already known. You've chosen to explore the unknown instead, which will be a supreme and well-earned benefit to you.
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Specific thoughts and habits will help you achieve the level of success and fulfillment you so deserve. You already sense what they are, and reinforcement from a mentor or friend will seal the deal.
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Over time, ignoring a part of you will eventually force you to notice it. For instance, pushing yourself too hard to work all the time may lead to a cold, so that you are forced to relax and take a personal day.
TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 27). You will live daringly. Even when afraid, you will find the strength to overcome it. Powerful people admire your courage. Decide where you want to be this time next year; a mentor will help you get there. Friendships and fun are the spring themes. Love is found on a getaway. Summer will bring financial success. Libra and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 3, 33, 28 and 49.

Universal SUDOKU
Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.
2/26
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

Top Chef by Alan Massengill and Andrea Carla Michaels

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS
1 D.C. lobbying group
4 Bitter-smelling
9 Jousting's wear
14 'A long, long time ___'
15 'Word on the street is ...'
16 Easy to con
17 Where Harvard is located
19 Welsh poet Thomas
20 Islamic ruler
21 Where pub goes go?
22 'French' dog
23 Additional helping
25 Shore roar
26 Reddi-___
27 Kangaroo's pouch, e.g.
28 Prepare, like flour
32 Flat, in geometry
35 Annoy
36 Bruins' campus
37 Celestial instrument
38 Media mogul Winfrey
40 In shouting range
41 Megastore
founded in Sweden
42 Expected, as a baby
43 Like a no-show
45 Ballerina's jump
46 Hilton Garden ___
47 'Ain't happening!'
48 Things to brood over?
50 High Navy rank
54 Twisted, or cool
57 Up to, in ads
58 ___ Inch Nails
59 Lead character in 'First Blood'
60 Shorter or cleaner version of a song
62 Brainstorming outputs
63 Modify for the better
64 Outback bird
65 Twinges of guilt
66 Chunk of cheese
67 Agent, informally
DOWN
1 Acts like a stereotypical expectant father
2 Best-effort performance
3 Improv performer
4 Scuba tank supply
5 *Young phenom
6 Mulligans
7 'Othello' bad guy
8 Nickname hidden in 'gold record'
9 Both/either conjunction
10 *Cheery person
11 Not so hot?
12 Indianapolis Motor Speedway's shape
13 Descartes who said 'Cogito, ergo sum'
18 *Recyclable lunch holder
22 *Hockey dexterity
24 Actress Vardalos of 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding'
25 '... nobody doesn't like ___ Lee'
27 Fire truck's noisemaker
29 Drink with a Cotton Candy flavor
30 Custardy treat
31 Filled treat
32 Punxsutawney groundhog
33 One of over 10,000 in Minnesota
34 Surveyor's measurement
39 'Tequila mockingbird' and 'whiskey business,' e.g.
44 Emeril catchword
49 Shiny finish
50 Lent a hand to
51 Cyclist or equestrian
52 Japanese film style
53 Abate, as rainfall
54 Hold firmly
55 Nothing, in Madrid
56 Prayer-ending word
57 Hardly risque
60 Like some crunchy vegetables
61 Inspired poem

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2022 February's Closing Song



February's final day aligns the moon with Mercury, the communication planet, then Saturn, the planet of lessons. It's a signal to choose your words carefully -- not to avoid trouble or sound smart or open sesame but to honor your own expression. What you want, how you feel and all you do is very specific to you, and your words should be, too.
ARIES (March 21-April 19). What feels arduous and static at the beginning will prove to have its own powerful momentum once it gets going. You're on the right track; you just need to build it out a little more.
TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The one who finishes first is not the winner. The winner will be determined by some other criteria more subtle and strange. For instance, the one who involves the most senses while listening.
GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Many times a day, you have feelings you don't act on. Your maturity allows you to separate yourself from your emotions so you can try to understand them without identifying too strongly with them.
CANCER (June 22-July 22). The minimum you expect from yourself is to add value. Ultimately, your goal is to multiply the good fortune of those around you. You'll do it, especially by spreading a positive message to a large number of people.
LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Being brave is your specialty. You'll make the cold call, introduce yourself to a stranger or risk rejection in another way. You'll put yourself out there and create opportunities.
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The memorized pitch, the skillful presentation... You admire these displays but are not particularly influenced by them. You prefer people to speak naturally and candidly, which you'll get today.
LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You do not have proof of your ability in a certain field, yet you feel deep down in your being that you can and will do whatever it takes to succeed.
SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You're good for the morale of a group. You're funny. People lighten up around you. You can make things happen with indirect suggestions of the sort that won't trigger people's defenses.
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There are no insignificant mysteries in life. Investigate the subject that interests you. An answer to some minor problem might be the solution to what ails the world.
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). No one wants to spend their time fake laughing. Luckily, you won't have to. Funny people will solve more than one problem for you today. They keep you from boredom while answering the call of the moment.
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Rather than attacking the problem head-on, take a sideways look at it; the new slant leads to a breakthrough. You will be rewarded for your brilliant thinking.
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Proceeding through fear takes courage. But sometimes it's better not to give yourself a chance to be afraid. Just move. If everyone pondered the possible consequences, we would have fewer heroes.
TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 28). Welcome to a sociable year of harmonious relationships. Embrace your delights but also the bothersome things, as there's a huge opportunity hiding inside a persnickety problem. As you learn how to change things, you'll pick up valuable skills. Group work is favored. A dream will spring to life. Gemini and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 17, 8, 33 and 41.

Universal SUDOKU
Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

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