

No longer tipping the scale: TOPS encourages healthy choices

By TAMMY MALGESINI
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Barbara Buckwalter is a bit of a cheerleader for Hermiston TOPS Club #OR 9110.

TOPS, which stands for Take Off Pounds Sensibly, encourages people to make healthy choices in reaching appropriate weight goals.

The Hermiston woman, who currently serves as the group's weight recorder, rallies support for fellow club members. In addition, Buckwalter has a few things to cheer about herself. More than a dozen years ago, she attained her target weight and now has KOPS status — Keep Off Pounds Sensibly.

Buckwalter's sometimes over-the-top enthusiasm gets a royal laugh from other club members. Several years ago she said she would dye her hair purple if the group had no weight gains for two weeks in a row. Earlier this month, Buckwalter made good on that promise — using a rinse in her hair. At a recent meeting, she wore a stocking cap — finally unveiling her purple locks when the group sat down to convene its first meeting of 2020.

"Our group has done really well," Buckwalter said. "There are ups and downs, but our yearly average weight loss per person is 9.24 pounds."

Hermiston resident Silke Clough, who currently serves as the club's leader, said Buckwalter and others in the group provide positive reinforcement and support in her weight loss journey. Over the years Clough, who is now 73, has focused on exercise, such as walking and hiking, as well as intermittent dieting, in her efforts to lose weight.

Although she became a KOPS about 10 years ago, Clough has since tipped the scale too much to maintain that distinction. To remain a KOPS, a member's weight can fluctuate up to 3 pounds above or 7 below their target weight.

"It's not uncommon to have some ups and downs," she said. "You just have to get back with it and stay focused. I won't give up."

Identifying as a KOPS for more than a decade, Buckwalter said she continues to attend meetings for ongoing support and to encourage others. Years ago, she learned that if she wasn't proactive with her weight, she would yo-yo back and forth with gaining and losing.

"I need to stay accountable to the scale and to other people," Buckwalter said.

Club co-leader Roma Hall is all too familiar with the ups and downs. However, the Hermiston woman is on top of the world these days, as she's lost more than 130 pounds since November 2018.

Hall, who along with her son,



TOPS member Marie Naugher stands on the scale on Tuesday during the weekly weigh-in as Barbara Buckwalter records the weight and calculates pounds lost or gained.



Hermiston TOPS member Donna Southwell exults on Tuesday morning after her weekly weigh-in as Sandy Cliff prepares to give her a high five.

Russell T. Hall, and a good friend, Patricia Womelsdorf, started the local TOPS group in November 1994. In recent years, Hall's son and friend died from heart attacks, both attributed to obesity.

"After that, I was scared," Hall said. "I thought, 'Hey, I'm going to die' ... and that's what got me."

Several doctors had recommended that Hall consider having bariatric surgery. TOPS supports weight-loss surgeries if they are medically necessary.

Prior to the surgical procedure, Hall was taking nearly 20 medications, including insulin and three different high blood pressure pills. These days, she's down to five. In addition, Hall had ambulation difficulties, suffered from back pain and was facing a possible organ transplant if her kidney function continued to deteriorate.

The benefits of losing weight,

Hall said, are numerous, including simple things like being able to walk rather than using an electric scooter when grocery shopping. Also, she is much happier with choices when looking for new clothes. Local stores, Hall said, just don't carry very many pretty things for overweight women.

"I just feel so much better," she said. "Since my surgery, I've changed how I eat. I can eat anything I want, just in moderation."

However, things like potato chips, licorice and pastries are too tempting. Recognizing them as trigger foods, Hall avoids having them around.

TOPS Club Inc., which was established in 1948, refrains from paying celebrities to endorse its program. According to its website, it also doesn't "promise quick fixes or promote unrealistic images of

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



Barbara Buckwalter records each member's weight during the weekly weigh-in and calculates pounds lost or gained. Buckwalter recently dyed her hair purple to make good on a promise to dye her hair if the group had two weeks in a row of not gaining.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

IF YOU GO

WHEN: Tuesdays, 8-8:30 a.m. weigh-in; 8:45 a.m. meeting
WHERE: Landmark Missionary Baptist Church, 125 E. Beech Ave.
INFO: 541-580-8668, theotherbarb02@gmail.com
ONLINE: www.tops.org



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

The Hermiston TOPS member who loses the most weight each week receives the "Naked Woman Trophy" (on the right) and the second-place loser gets the Topsis trophy imprinted with the words "Honey, take it from me ... you look fabulous."

the 'perfect' body." Instead, TOPS weighs in on a person's overall health. And, while they don't guarantee weight loss by merely attending meetings, they do offer support as people work toward attaining healthy weight goals, which are established by the member's doctor or health care professional.

The program has changed over time. Some past techniques may have included the member with the most weight gain during the week being required to take a ceramic pig home with them.

"Back in the day, they did things differently," Buckwalter said. "There's no shaming these days."

Clubs utilize incentives to help in motivating members to stay on track with weight goals. Contests can result in winners receiving cer-

tificates, charms, prizes or cash awards. After the weekly weigh-in, results are announced and the top "loser" of the week gains possession of a traveling trophy for the remainder of the meeting.

The meeting agenda includes announcements, the singing of motivational songs and presentations about health-related topics. The idea is to build camaraderie to support each other.

"We're not just a weight loss group, we're more like family," Hall said. "We're there for each other no matter what you're going through."

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539.

CRYPTOQUIP

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: Z equals L

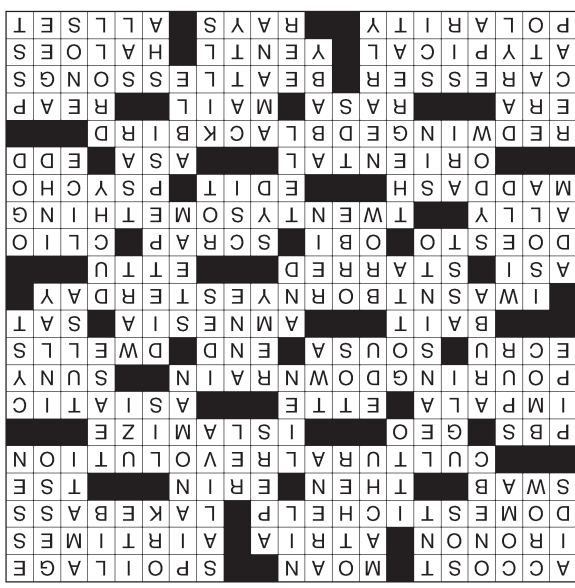
CR P FKY NVPZZM ZCJVQ ZKGEYCEY

PNKGEF HBV SBPNR, SKGZF MKG

APZZ CH P FKAJQBGEF?

call it a dockshund?
round the what, would you
if a dog really likes lounging

Answers
CryptoQuip



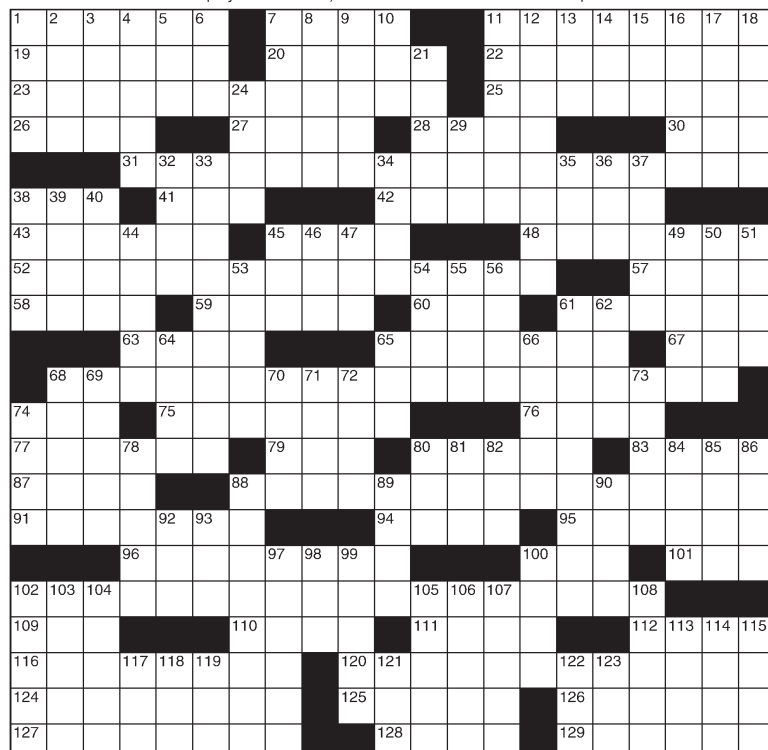
Answers

Super Crossword

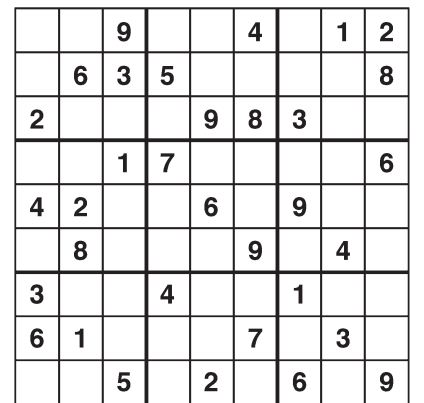
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SUPER CROSSWORD: 6 FROM THE FAB 4

- ACROSS**
- 1 Approach intrusively
- 7 Lamenters' sound
- 11 Process of going bad
- 19 Attach with heat, as a patch
- 20 Heart sections
- 22 When shows are broadcast
- 23 Butler or maid
- 25 Fish also called a largemouth
- 26 Mop
- 27 At that point
- 28 CNN anchor
- 30 China's Mao
- 31 1960s reform
- 38 "Sid the Science Kid" network
- 41 Tracker maker, once
- 42 Convert to the Koran's religion
- 43 Chevy model
- 45 Suffix with towel
- 48 Korean, Thai or Chinese
- 52 Precipitating heavily
- 57 Big Apple sch.
- 58 Off-white
- 59 March composer John Philip
- 60 Cease
- 61 Lives (in)
- 63 It lures fish
- 65 Loss of memory
- 67 Posed (for)
- 68 "Stop thinking of me as so naive"
- 74 "— recall ..."
- 75 Headlined
- 76 Dying words
- 77 Inflicts upon
- 79 Honshu sash
- 80 Small piece
- 83 Ad biz prize
- 87 Collaborator
- 88 Person in the third decade of life
- 91 Frantic scramble
- 94 Correct copy
- 95 Hitchcock classic
- 96 Light blue avenue in Monopoly
- 100 Neat — pin
- 101 Announcer
- 102 American flier with scarlet patches
- 109 Special time
- 110 Tabula —
- 111 Postal letters
- 112 Get in return
- 116 Person petting
- 120 What the last words of 23-, 31-, 52-, 68-, 88- and 102-
- 124 Unusual
- 125 1983
- 74 Final non-A.D. year
- 5 "Mayday!"
- 6 Blast source
- 7 — Picchu (Peruvian site of Incan ruins)
- 8 Alternative
- 9 Game venue
- 10 Zip
- 11 Mouth liquid
- 12 Billy Joel hit
- 13 Planet Mork came from
- 14 Suffix with social
- 15 Ad —
- 16 Rarer violin
- 17 Undercoat for painting on wood
- 18 West German city
- 21 People who mimic
- 24 "What's — ya?"
- 29 Brother or aunt. Abbr.
- 32 Tangelo trademark
- 33 Tilts one's body toward
- 34 Bank claim
- 35 Fleur-de- —
- 36 Israeli arm
- 37 Poke fun at
- 38 Conduit
- 39 Coll. hotshot
- 40 Motivate
- 44 Island near Venezuela
- 45 College Web site suffix
- 46 Set- (sharp fights)
- 47 Old United rival
- 49 Oklahoma oil city
- 50 Mosaic work
- 51 Certain skin bulge
- 53 "You — see this!"
- 54 — Martin (cognac)
- 55 British queen
- 56 "Beware the — of March!"
- 61 Coke Zero alternative
- 62 Witch's blemish
- 64 Secy., e.g.
- 65 Moreover
- 66 Vapor
- 68 Land in water, in Italy
- 69 Use, as a tool
- 70 Sweat of one's —
- 71 "Kill — killed!"
- 72 Hold in check
- 73 Small state ruled by a sovereign
- 74 Eve's man
- 78 Actor Max von —
- 80 Rocker Barrett
- 81 CBS drama
- 82 Turn rancid
- 84 Pet parasites
- 85 With a sharp picture, for short
- 86 Hymn start
- 88 Epithet for Alexander
- 89 Be a ratfink
- 90 Alexis I, e.g.
- 92 Jackie's hubby #2
- 93 Offense
- 97 Almost
- 98 Six-pt. plays
- 99 Cry like —
- 100 Amply skilled
- 102 Rundown
- 103 Bards' Muse
- 104 Singer Hall
- 105 Oven maker
- 106 Spiteful
- 107 Passes idly, as time
- 108 Dryly funny
- 113 Slaughter of baseball
- 114 James with a Pulitzer
- 115 Discreet call
- 117 MPG monitor
- 118 Chaplin's title
- 119 — fi flick
- 121 Always, poetically
- 122 Oldies group — Na Na
- 123 "Tonka" star



SUDOKU



Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

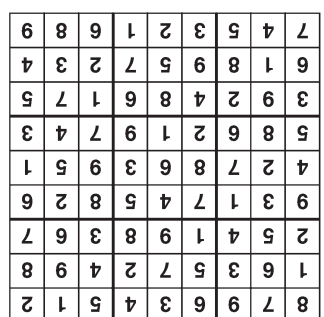
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK ★ ★ ★ ★



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Answers

Weekly SUDOKU

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