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Merry Christmas

Welcome to the December edition

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas.

Christmas will be just around the corner by the time this reaches you. So here's hoping you're all stocked up with goodies and gifts to see you through the festive season.

It can be the most wonderful time of the year, but it can also be the loneliest. If you have time why not try reaching out to any local people who live on their own to see if they'd like a cup of tea and a chat. However you spend your Christmas, here's hoping you have a lovely time and wishing you all a happy and healthy 2025.



Zoe Reece

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community events



Santa's Christmas Cracker

20-24 December, The Core Theatre Solihull

Father Christmas is busy making toys, Dotty the Elf is decorating the Christmas tree and Dasher the Reindeer is getting presents onto his sleigh - but then they meet a lost penguin who has never even heard of Christmas... This 45-minute family show is particularly suitable for 2-7 year olds and afterwards each child gets to meet Father Christmas and receive a specially wrapped present. For tickets please visit www.thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk



Back to the '60's Party Night

10 January, Nailcote Hall

Join in for a night of fun, flair, and funky beats as they transport you back to the

fabulous 1960s with DJ Franco. Dust off your bell-bottom and put on your platform shoes for an evening filled with dancing, laughter, and nostalgia. Their Party Nights include a three-course dinner and DJ. For tickets visit www.nailcotehall.co.uk

Young Voices

13 - 17 and 29-31 January and more, bp pulse LIVE (formerly Resorts World Arena)

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Bee Gees Tribute Night

15 February, Shirley British Legion

Prepare for a night of nostalgia and timeless tunes as they pay homage to the iconic Bee Gees with their Bee Gees Tribute Night. Join in the fun at Shirley British Legion for an unforgettable evening celebrating the music and legacy of one of the greatest bands in history. Tickets from www.ticketsource.co.uk

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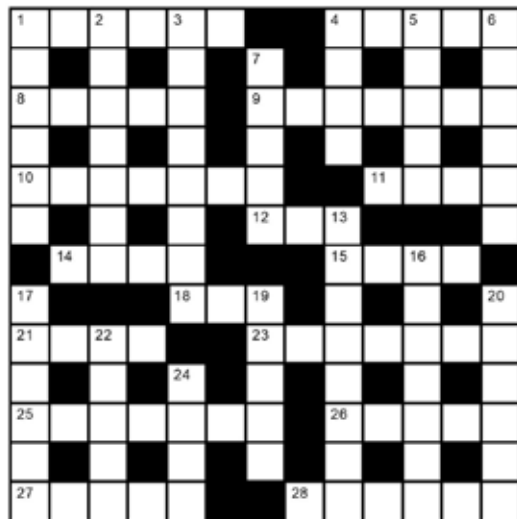


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crossword



clues

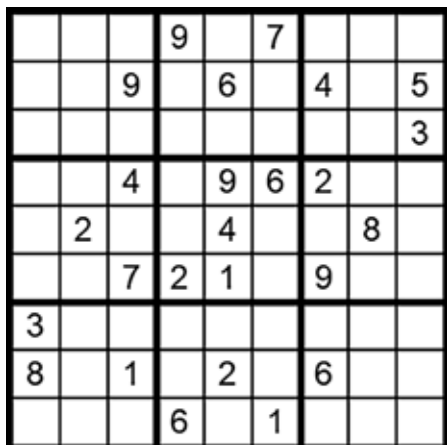
Across

- 1 Contribute, give (6)
- 4 Demise, end (5)
- 8 Jeopardy (5)
- 9 Sank the Titanic (7)
- 10 Distinctly (7)
- 11 Indian dress (4)
- 12 Deceive (3)
- 14 Sung in church (4)
- 15 Reveal, display (4)
- 18 Fasten, attach (3)
- 21 Idol, venerated image (4)
- 23 Wander aimlessly (7)
- 25 Gift (7)
- 26 Modify (5)
- 27 Appoint, nominate (5)
- 28 Affluence, riches (6)

Down

- 1 Portray, illustrate (6)
- 2 Baby's room (7)
- 3 Forgiving, lenient (8)
- 4 Means of losing weight (4)
- 5 Stadium, amphitheatre (5)
- 6 Scottish meat pudding (6)
- 7 Resin used to make gramophone records (5)
- 13 Heighten, intensify (8)
- 16 Weirdo, eccentric (7)
- 17 Small alcoholic drink (6)
- 19 Barren, deserted (5)
- 20 Walking aid (6)
- 22 Very overweight (5)
- 24 Loaned (4)

answer on page 14



how to play sudoku

It's simple!

Fill in the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box, contains the numbers 1 through to 9 with no repetition. You don't need to be a genius. These puzzles use logic alone. Watch out! Sudoku is highly addictive.

answer on page 14

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Surviving Christmas!

Tips for managing 'trickier' guests this festive season.

Whether its Uncle Gary, who prides himself on his radical honesty, or Aunt Sally who makes passive aggressive digs at your cooking, handling poorly behaved relatives at Christmas is challenging. It's helpful to have a few strategies in your back pocket so you can navigate the festive season without strangling anyone.

Set Boundaries Early -

Before the event set clear boundaries with relatives who may be troublesome.

Politely express your desire for a peaceful holiday and outline any behaviours that might disrupt this. For example, let them know you'd prefer to avoid controversial topics like politics or conspiracy theories at the dinner table.

Redirect the Conversation

- If things start to veer into uncomfortable territory, try steering the conversation towards safer, light-hearted topics. Ask about holiday plans, recent hobbies, or festive film recommendations. Anything to keep the mood light and avoid potential landmines.

Stay Positive - Focus on



the enjoyable parts of the gathering and people who make you feel happy and relaxed. Sometimes laughter really is the best medicine, and a little holiday cheer can go a long way in smoothing out those tricky family moments. And if all else fails, tell yourself it's just one day, and next year you can always 'forget' to invite them!

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Christmas Gifts with a twist

With Christmas approaching, finding the perfect gift can be a challenge, especially when you want to avoid the ubiquitous bubble bath and socks. Here are some unusual but meaningful Christmas gift ideas that are sure to delight and surprise your loved ones this holiday season.

Personalized Star Maps -

These maps show the exact alignment of the stars on a significant date in the recipient's life, whether it's their birthday, an anniversary, or another special occasion. Star maps make for stunning wall art but also carry deep sentimental value. They serve as a reminder of a cherished moment, making them both thoughtful and unique.

Experience Gifts - Experience-based gifts have become increasingly popular as most of us concede we own too much 'stuff.' They can be tailored to the recipient's interests, whether they're adventure seekers or food lovers. For someone who values experiences over material possessions, this type of gift shows that you've thought carefully about what would make them happiest, whether that's a cooking class, hot air balloon ride, or a wine tasting tour.

Subscription Boxes - For a gift that keeps giving beyond



Christmas Day these curated boxes can cater to all kinds of hobbies and tastes. Whether your recipient enjoys gourmet snacks, skincare products, books, or gardening, there's a subscription service for them. Subscription boxes add an element of surprise, as the recipient gets to enjoy their gift over time, reminding them of you with each delivery.

Charity Donations in Their Name - For those who value giving back, consider making a charitable donation in their name. This gift is both thoughtful and impactful, as it helps a cause that's meaningful to them. Many organizations offer the option to send a personalized card or certificate, informing the recipient of the donation. Whether it's supporting animal welfare, environmental initiatives, or community projects, this is a great way to make a difference while honouring someone's values.

Customized Art Pieces - This could be anything from a hand-drawn portrait of their pet, a

family illustration, or a map of their favourite city. With many artists offering bespoke services online, you can find a style that perfectly suits the recipient's taste. This kind of art is not only beautiful but also deeply personal, ensuring it will be a cherished keepsake for years to come.

DIY Gift Kits - These allow the recipient to make something themselves. These kits come in a variety of options, from making candles or soap to brewing their own beer or planting a mini herb garden. DIY kits are interactive, engaging, and give the recipient a sense of accomplishment. Plus, they can enjoy the finished product long after the holidays have passed.

Finding a gift that's both unusual and thoughtful doesn't have to be difficult. The key is to select something that reflects the recipient's personality and interests. These gift ideas go beyond the ordinary, offering a unique way to show your loved ones how much you care this Christmas.



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Crossword Solution
from page 8

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

Sudoku Solution
from page 8

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