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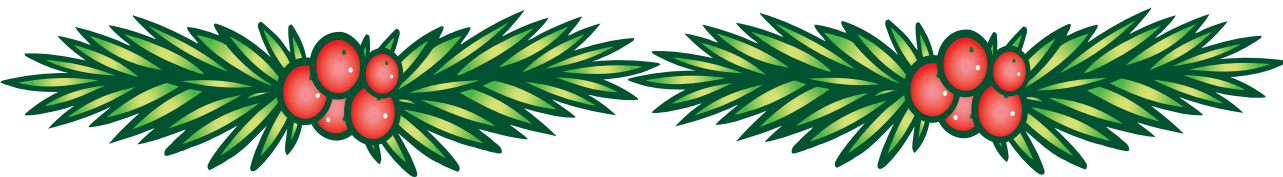
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7		9						8
						5		4
	3		2		8			7
			1		5			3
					9			
4				6				5
3			8	5				9
	8							5
		6		9	2			

Level: Advanced

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

Level: Intermediate

SUDOKU

Fun by the Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test! **Here's How It Works:** Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

UNDER THE WEATHER WORD SEARCH

G A X P A E N I A R G I M H C H P O S F
M I K S X Z L R G M L Z T O W E M E S V
T V N T G V I T E B O A W U V C L A S N
E G V R R N R C D Z D L P H F B L T B C
E S X E P E R T U S S I S B I M B D P O
D I U P C W S T G V C R A S S O G H A T A
I T M T A V R P R K X Z S N S I O R H R A
S I B H Z T C I I R X I E N S A O T O L
E T Z R N G O H K W M L F S S O H X H G
A A K O E I V O M S L E E I K R O S D U
S P N A U M I O N A C N T W I P U N L B
E E E T L M D A R T L E O T L R K K O H
A H X D F N R K I L S R I A H K W S C C
G N C W N T F O I R M S S T P P F P N A
E C O L I Z U I S S E M C H B I C L O M
D N V H M S N G P W O T Z V I R U S M O
F B N I X P G D S S A T I C U A H H X K M T
K X E T H D A K I N T W U A E L B T O S
T N N P X G L S K P A I N V B S O G C C
M G F E T U B E R C U L O S I S U Z I O

WORDS

- ARTHRITIS
- BACTERIA
- COMMON COLD
- COVID
- DISEASE
- E-COLI
- FUNGAL
- HEPATITIS
- HOOKWORMS
- ILLNESS
- INFECTIOUS
- INFLUENZA
- MIGRAINE
- PAIN
- PARASITE
- PERTUSSIS
- SALMONELLA
- STOMACH BUG
- STREP THROAT
- THRUSH
- TOXOPLASMOIS
- TRANSMISSIBLE
- TUBERCULOSIS
- VIRUS

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

CLUES ACROSS

- Miller beer variety
- Member of people inhabiting Bering Sea islands
- Stomach
- Investment vehicle
- Fictional soccer coach Ted
- Irregular in botanical parlance
- Cease standing
- "American Horror Story" actress
- Grow milk teeth
- Plant parts
- Snow house
- Most contemptuous
- Note to repay
- Old English
- Wings
- Financial institutions
- Parks and Lopez are two
- Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
- Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- Give off
- Semitic alphabet letter
- Farm state
- Actress Sarandon
- Back parts
- Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
- Touchdown
- One point north of due east
- Refurbishes
- Silver and Dogg are two
- Former Tigers catcher Alex
- Type of envelope
- Seriously considered
- Unhappy
- Past (archaic)
- Asian wild dog
- Old English letter
- Young domestic sheep
- Football players need to gain them
- Witness

CLUES DOWN

- Dormant Peruvian volcano
- Norwegian composer

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	
14				15							16				
17				18						19					
20				21					22						
23							24	25					26	27	
		28					29				30				
31	32						33		34	35	36			37	
38					39	40							41		
42					43						44	45			
46		47	48						49			50			
51					52	53	54				55			56	57
			58								59				
60	61								62	63				64	
65									66					67	
68									69					70	

- Indicates location
- Pubs
- Unable to walk easily
- Electronic warfare-support measures
- World leader
- Midsection
- Jewish calendar month
- Urological condition
- A small quantity of anything
- Mountain Time
- Affirmative
- Word element meaning ear
- Carried away
- Short-billed rails
- Newborn child
- Sword
- Groups of people
- Prickly, scrambling shrubs
- Become less intense
- Polishes
- Indicates position
- Songs sung to one's beloved
- The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
- Insects
- Israeli politician
- Pre-digital
- Roaming
- Ambience
- Brew
- Late
- Make ecstatically happy
- Semitic alphabet letter
- Blend
- Dash
- Self
- Exclamation of satisfaction
- Hill or rocky peak

CRYPTO FUN

☉ * ☼ ☽ ☿ ♀ ♁ ♂ ♃ ♄ ♅ ♆ ♇ ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓

CRYPTO FUN

☽ ☾ ♁ ♀ ♁ ♀ ☽ ☼ ☽

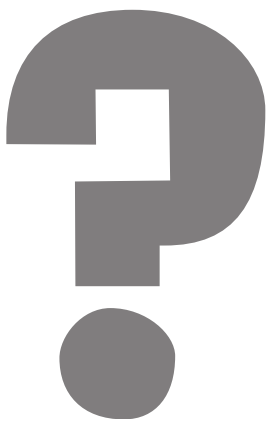
Solve the code to discover words related to cold and flu. Each number corresponds to cooking. (Hint: 6 = E)

- A. 5 25 8 10 10 20 6 5**
 Clue: Runny nose
- B. 10 6 7 6 17**
 Clue: Elevated temperature
- C. 24 9 11 6 5**
 Clue: Body soreness
- D. 14 24 20 24 8 5 6**
 Clue: Unwell

Answers: A. sniffles B. fever C. aches D. malaise

Riddle me this...

Riddle: What is full of holes but still holds water?



Answer: A sponge.

Slices of life

Don't be afraid of the 'C' word



By **JILL PERTLER**
Columnist

My journey through grief has been a public one, laid out for you here on these pages. Many of you have walked with me through the healing process, and for that I'm thankful.

It's funny (in a not so funny way) the things that help us heal. For me, much of the healing process has been lead by creativity – quite literally.

During the last four years, I've given myself lots of grace. Some of that grace involved the power to tap into my creative juices in whatever way felt right at the moment. In that, I became a Jill of all trades (or artistic endeavors).

I poured paint onto canvas, wax into candle forms and lye into liquid to make soap. I sculpted with cement, plaster, clay and stones. I twisted and tied rope, pool noodles and chicken wire. I built tables, trays, shelves and lamps. I embellished with glass, glitter and gold. Plus I've gathered heaps of random craft supplies, but that's another article.

Some of my projects look

good, most didn't. Many were failures, but within the mix I was healing and learning.

Somewhere along the way, a kind friend asked if I might be able to share some of my hobbies with others. And in that, the student became the teacher.

What a gift that has been. Helping others tap into their own creative spirit is invigorating, rewarding and fun. But within these instructive endeavors, I've found that not everyone finds solace in creativity. In fact, there are those who believe they were born without the creative gene. They've even told me so. More than once. "I'm not creative."

I'd like to challenge that.

We are all creative; I'll even take that one step further: we are all artistic.

Some people embrace and

excel at these qualities more than others, but practicing creativity benefits every single one of us – much like exercise, a healthy diet, kindness and gratitude do.

Some people love exercising. They couldn't live without it and in many instances they are very good at it. I am not one of these people, but that doesn't mean the habit of exercising doesn't bring me great benefits.

The same goes for creativity. It does for the brain what exercise does for the body.

Creativity helps you think outside the box. Just yesterday, I took two perfectly good cardboard boxes and made a kitty bed with them. This task required math computations, spatial skills, textile manipulation and a whole lot of duct tape.

Creativity reduces stress.

When you are focused on art, you cannot focus on the negativity in your life, even if it does involve an upcoming car repair. Creating art makes you forget about the everyday – even if just for a moment

in time and that moment is priceless.

Creativity can boost communication. "Do you think this looks more turquoise, teal, or green?" Will solicit responses on numerous levels.

Creativity promotes flexibility and can increase your adaptability to change. When you want to paint your background color in turquoise, but only teal is available, you learn to make it work – or make an extra trip to the craft store.

Creativity can give your life purpose and meaning. If the meaning of life isn't defined by a magnetic succulent garden "planted" vertically on your refrigerator, I don't know what the meaning of life might be.

Finally, creativity can help you, me – all of us – live a longer and healthier life. It's true! If you purchase more craft materials, the gods of the universe understand you must use them all before you leave this earth. Therefore, the acquisition of craft supplies – and creativity by

association – increases your lifespan.

It's almost like creativity is the answer to many of the problems you've been facing. It's a release and an outlet that provides respite from the everyday problems of the everyday world.

Plus, at the end of it all, you might find yourself with a brightly painted canvas or

a brightly lit holiday wreath.

I, personally, give a thumbs up to that. (Just don't look at my thumbs, they're most likely all full of paint.)

Jill Pertler is an award-winning syndicated columnist, published playwright and author. Don't miss a slice; follow the Slices of Life page on Facebook.

On the garden path

Holiday cacti add weeks of color and enjoyment

Add weeks of colorful flowers and decades of enjoyment to your indoor plant collection with holiday cacti. Dress one up with a decorative basket, container, or foil wrap and give it to a favorite gardener or holiday hostess. You'll find a variety for sale at your local garden center or florist.

The plant sold as a Christmas cactus may in fact be a Thanksgiving cactus. The true Christmas cactus blooms later and has small segments with rounded edges. The Thanksgiving cactus, though often sold as the Christmas cactus, has toothed or jagged segments and typically blooms earlier. To add to the confusion, there are hybrids of the two that bloom in between these.

Fortunately, their growing requirements and care are essentially the same so the plants will do fine no matter the name on the label. Keep your flowering holiday cactus in a cool bright location to extend its bloom time for as long as four to eight weeks. Avoid hot and cold air drafts, moisture stress, and other environmental changes to reduce the risk of bud and flower drop.

These holiday cacti are epiphytes that naturally grow on trees in the rainforests of Brazil. They all prefer bright indirect light, high humidity, and thorough watering when the top few inches of soil begin to dry. Don't overwater but don't let the soil dry completely. Water a bit more often when the plant is in bloom.

Grow them in an organic well-drained potting mix for best results. Water thoroughly and pour off any excess water that collects in the saucer to avoid root rot. Reduce maintenance and improve the growing conditions with the help of gravel trays. Place a layer of pebbles,



By **MELINDA MYERS**
Columnist

decorative stones, or marbles in the saucer or bottom of the foil wrap or basket. The pot will be elevated above any excess water collecting in the pebbles. As this water evaporates it increases the humidity around the plant.

Fertilize with a dilute solution of flowering houseplant fertilizer once it finishes blooming and throughout spring and summer as needed. Grow your cactus in a north-facing window or back from an east-

or west-facing window where it receives bright indirect light throughout the year. Too much sun turns the leaf segments dark red.

Don't be anxious to move these plants to a bigger container. They prefer to be somewhat pot-bound and can remain in the same pot for years.

Encourage a new flush of flowers with cooler night temperatures around 55 to 60 degrees and slightly drier soil. An uninterrupted dark period will also help promote flowering.

Next fall, start the dark treatment in early October to get holiday flowers. Cover the plants or move them to a location free of artificial light, indoors or outside, each night for 14 hours and provide

bright, indirect sunlight each day. Any interruption in the dark period from outdoor, street, or reading lights can delay or prevent flowering.

See CACTI, Page 4

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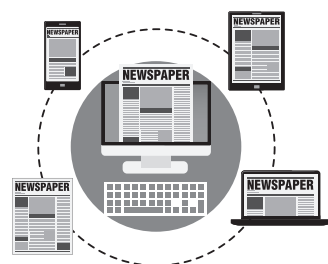
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MELINDA MYERS PHOTO The Shopper

The Thanksgiving cactus has toothed or jagged segments and typically blooms earlier than the Christmas cactus. Both are good options for holiday décor or gifts as the colors should last weeks.

• Cacti (Continued from page 3)

Make this the year you add holiday cacti to your indoor plant collection and consider purchasing a few for friends and family. These easy-care flowering beauties will brighten indoor holiday décor and everyone's mood.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses* "How to Grow Anything" instant video

and DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment TV* and radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine. For more information, visit www.MelindaMyers.com.

Page 2 puzzle answers

PUZZLE 1

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

PUZZLE 2

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

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I	G	L	O	O	S	N	O	O	T	I	E
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B	A	N	K	S	R	O	S	A	S	B	A
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G A X P A E N I A R G I M H C H P O S F
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T V N T R G V I T E B O A W U V C L A S N
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T N N P X G L S K P A I N V B S O G C C
M G F E T U B E R C U L O S I S U Z I O

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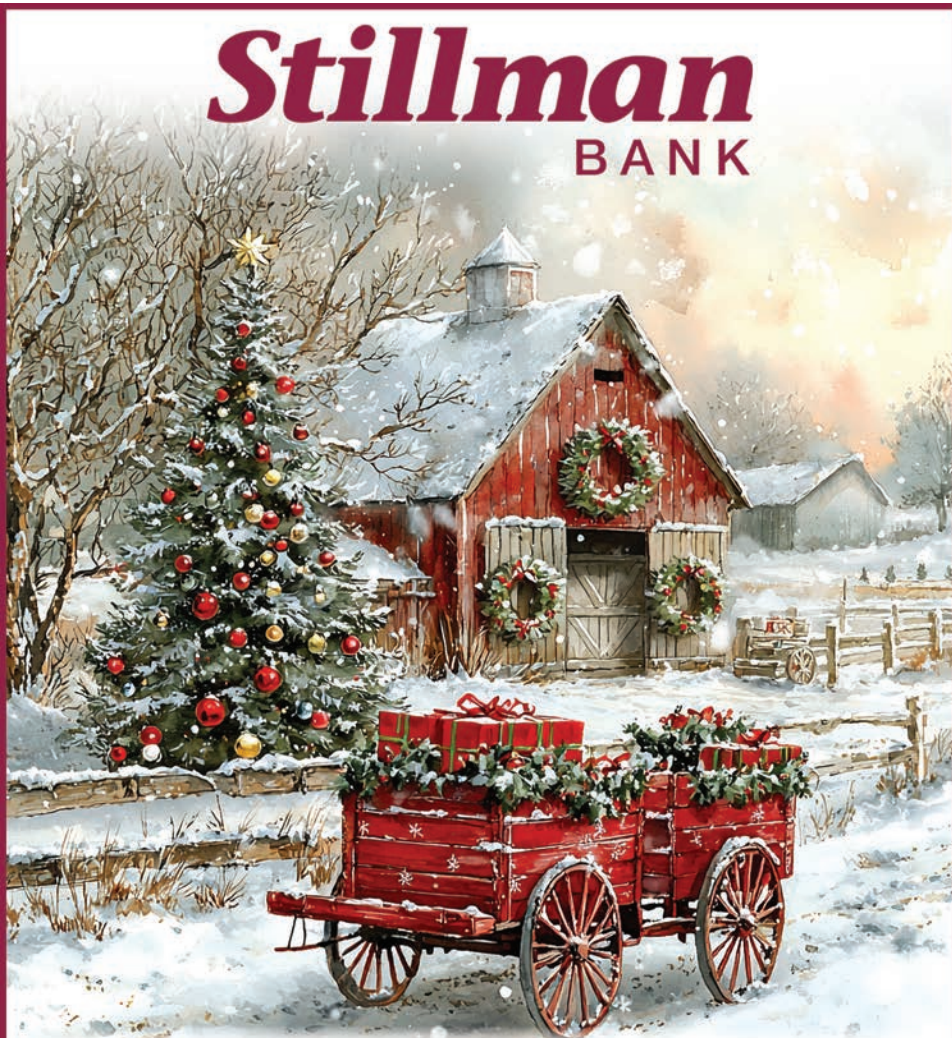
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AUCTIONEER: LYLE LEE, IL State License #440.000200 / WI #2863-52

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AUCTION OPENS: SATURDAY, DEC. 21 at 8 A.M.

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The Classified deadline will be Friday, Dec. 27 at 10:00 A.M.

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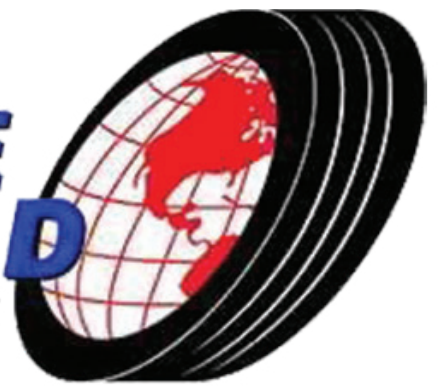
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