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# Santa's Village returns to the UT Martin AG Pavilion December 11th-14th

MARTIN, Tenn. – Children of all ages will have the opportunity to tell Santa their Christmas wishes at the 41st annual Santa's Village, hosted by the City of Martin Parks and Recreation Department on Dec. 11-14 in the University of Tennessee at Martin's Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex. This free annual community tradition guides visitors through an enchanted forest of lights, carnival rides, a petting farm, a holiday market with more than 40 craft and gift vendors, and features meet-and-greets with Santa Claus and Elsa and Anna from the movie "Frozen." Santa's Village will be open from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday and



Decorations light up the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex at last year's Santa's Village event, a brilliant sight to enjoy each holiday season in Martin.

Friday, from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. There is no cost for admission, but there is a suggested donation of \$5 worth of nonperishable food items or new children's toys. These donations benefit WeCare Ministries of Martin. With the generous donations from the 2024 Santa's Village, the City of Martin Parks and Recreation Department donated over 26,000 nonperishable food items and canned goods, along with 26 jumbo bags of toys to WeCare Ministries in Martin. Parking for this event is available beside UT Martin's Hardy M. Graham Stadium off University Street. The upper and lower levels of the ag pavilion...

Continues on page 5

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# Classic holiday films the whole family can enjoy

Celebrants owe the joy of the holiday season to various components. Decor and gift-giving go a long way toward making December a joyous time of year. Holiday films also do their part to make the season so special. Many people have their own favorite holiday films, and the following are some that can engage viewers who are young or simply young at heart.

### “A Christmas Story”

Released in 1983, this warmly nostalgic, humorous film is a perennial favorite among families. It follows the story of Ralphie, who has his heart set on a very specific Christmas present: a Red Rider BB gun. Amidst wintry exploits and family drama, the true spirit of Christmas manages to shine through in this beloved film. Some of the subject matter can be off-color, and there

are some bullying scenes. So this is a movie best watched with children who are mature enough to make it through without being scared.

### “Little Women”

Based on the Louisa May Alcott novel of the same name, the 1994 telling of this classic follows the March sisters, who confront financial difficulties, romance and family tragedies in mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts. While it’s not a traditional Christmas movie, the importance of spending time with family around Christmastime is a core theme in this coming-of-age tale.

### “Klaus”

Perhaps not as well-known as other animated holiday flicks, “Klaus,” released in 2019, has a personality all its own. Postman Jesper, who is not making the grade at the postal academy, is sent to



work in a frozen town in the North, where he discovers a reclusive toy maker named Klaus. The unlikely duo ultimately team up to make and deliver toys and bring smiles to children’s faces.

### “Meet Me In St. Louis”

Starring the irreplaceable Judy

Garland, this movie musical focuses on four sisters who are awaiting the 1904 World’s Fair in their hometown, but learn that their father has accepted a new job and the family must move to New York beforehand. A Christmas miracle occurs and all is right in the end. Garland

sings a memorable version of “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” in the film, solidifying this as a holiday classic.

### “The Santa Clause”

This Disney film came out in 1994 and remains a family favorite.

When divorced dad Scott (Tim Allen) accidentally kills a man in a Santa suit, he magically becomes the next Santa. He must learn to cope with the ways the transformation to the man in red interrupts his normal life, eventually giving over to the magic of Christmas.

### “Emmet Otter’s Jug-Band Christmas”

Though this 1977 Jim Henson production is a television special and not a full-length feature film, Generation X likely remembers the heartfelt tale of a poor otter family who sacrifice prized possessions to have what’s needed to enter a talent contest. The goal is to win the prize money to buy special Christmas presents. Audiences get to enjoy narration by Kermit the Frog.

Films are a popular component that help to make the holiday season so special.

# Unique Christmas traditions around the world

Christmas celebrations span the globe. According to a 2025 report from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, there are roughly 2.6 billion Christians worldwide, a figure that undoubtedly contributes to the popularity of Christmas. Christianity continues to have the most adherents of any religion in the world, and the Christian population is expected to top three billion before 2050.

Christians bring unique cultural touches to their Christmas celebrations each year. Celebrations vary widely, and here’s a look at some notable Christmas traditions across the globe.

### Yule Goat

The Yule Goat is a Christmas tradition in Sweden. The goat is believed to be an invisible spirit that ensures that Yule preparations are done

correctly. A popular theory connects the goat to the Norse god Thor, who rode a chariot pulled by two goats.

### Krampus

While many people celebrate the benevolence of Santa Claus, some celebrate a much grumpier alter-ego of sort. Krampus is a man-goat, half-demon monster who punishes misbehaving children at Christmastime, says Britannica. He is the evil companion of St. Nicholas, and is believed to have originated in Germany. His name comes from the German word “krampen,” which means, “claw.”

### Christmas chicken

Christmas Eve is a popular romantic occasion for couples and families in Japan. In addition to gift-giving and a romance, many people choose to feast on a meal of KFC fried chicken and strawberry shortcake for dessert.

### Roller-skating to Mass

In the city of Caracas, Venezuela, it’s customary for Christmas Eve celebrants to roller skate to early morning Mass. Known as “Misa de Aguinaldo,” these special church services take place on the days leading up to Christmas, with the most festive held on December 24. On this day, the streets of Caracas are closed to automobiles, enabling revelers to cheerfully skate to church.

### Mumming

In Newfoundland, Canada, celebrants known as mummers dress in elaborate disguises featuring mismatched clothing and whimsical accessories. The mummers obscure their identities and visit neighbors’ homes during the 12 days of Christmas, performing songs, skits or dances while others attempt to guess their identities.



### Las Posadas

In some Hispanic regions, including Mexico, participants reenact Mary and Joseph’s search for shelter in Bethlehem through vibrant processions. They travel from house to house, singing traditional songs and requesting shelter only to be turned away until they reach a final home or church that will symbolically welcome them in.

### Spiderweb decorations

Individuals in Ukraine decorate their Christmas trees with artificial spider webs. This tradition is inspired by a tale of a poor widow and her children who didn’t have money for tree ornaments. Upon waking up on Christmas morning, they found their tree covered in sparkling, glimmering spider

webs that resembled tinsel. A spider had spun the beautiful display as thanks for finding shelter and warmth in the family’s humble abode. Today’s spider webs symbolize unexpected blessings and gratitude.

Plenty of unique touches set Christmastime celebrations apart across the globe.





Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St Nicholas soon would be there.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.  
And mamma in her ‘kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter’s nap.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below.  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer.

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name!

“Now Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! On, Cupid! on Donner and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!

Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!”

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.  
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
With the sleigh full of toys, and St Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a peddler, just opening his pack.

His eyes-how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow.

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.  
He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly!

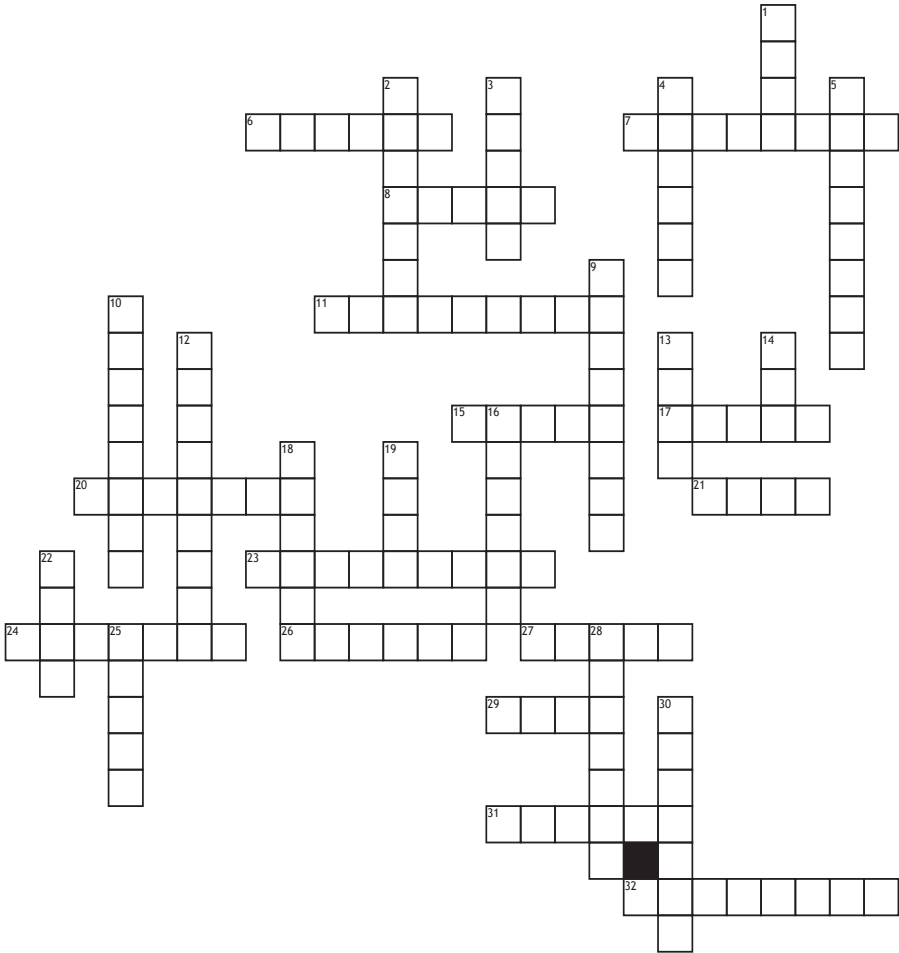
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself!  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk.  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose!

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But I heard him exclaim, ‘ere he drove out of sight,  
“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!”

Share this story with your family on  
Christmas Eve!

# Christmas Crossword



### ACROSS

- 6. Chocolate Christmas Calender
- 7. Office Mrs Claus
- 8. Australia does not have a \_\_\_\_\_ christmas
- 11. Red and White Christmas lolly
- 15. What Santa has and Gideon doesn't
- 17. Santa's Helpers
- 20. Dreamy Christmas singer - Buble
- 21. What Carolers do
- 23. Decoration under which you can kiss
- 24. Office Christmas tree decorations
- 24. The office Angry Elf
- 27. Seasons Greeting - ..... Christmas
- 29. Carrying out Marty's Fantasies daily - ... the Elf
- 31. Who Stole Christmas
- 32. What Christmas gifts are covered in \_\_\_\_\_ paper

### DOWN

- 1. Another word for present
- 2. Frosty the ....
- 3. Celebration
- 4. Christmas Door decoration
- 5. Month Christmas is celebrated
- 9. Rudolph the Red Nose ....
- 10. A sock that hangs by the chimney

- 12. Where Santa's workshop is located
- 13. Male Office Chief Elf
- 14. Pumpkin or mincemeat
- 16. Christmas Drink
- 18. Santa's Ride
- 19. What Santa gives to bad boys and girls
- 22. What goes on top of the tree
- 25. Jingle ....
- 28. Song - ..... Around the Christmas Tree
- 30. Action movie set on Christmas Eve



# UTM 125th Anniversary book now available for purchase

MARTIN, Tenn. – Published in time for the kickoff of the University of Tennessee at Martin’s 125th anniversary celebration, a book containing the history, memories and many, many photos throughout the timeline of the university and commemorating its quasiquicentennial is now available for purchase through the UT Martin alumni website at [alumni.utm.edu/125book](http://alumni.utm.edu/125book). “The University of Tennessee at Martin” contains historic documents, rare photos and personal stories that trace UT Martin’s roots from its 1900 establishment as the Hall-Moody Institute. Sam Richardson and Karen Elmore of UT Martin’s Paul Meek Library Special Collections department and Nathan Morgan of the UTM Office of University Relations

researched the book, an effort that took them deep into the university’s archives, campus administrative files and local community collections. The book includes captivating moments from the university’s history, featuring vintage photographs artifacts and memorabilia, including rare photos of Pat Head Summitt, one of the most noted names in women’s basketball history who played for UT Martin. The book was published last October by Arcadia Publishing as part of its Campus History Series and costs \$25 for each book. Richardson said he started gathering historical information about the university to follow up on Bob Carroll’s book, “The University of Tennessee at Martin: The First 100 Years,” which was published in 2000. “Since I had already

started digging into research and collecting materials for an Arcadia book, I took the lead, along with the help of Nathan Morgan and Karen Elmore, on writing about the early years of the university, including Hall-Moody, UTJC and UTMB,” he said. “I also worked on parts of the book and the chapter introductions. Nathan, with support from Karen and me, handled most of the section covering UT Martin’s more recent history. Karen was an invaluable part of the team. She helped us track down information and photographs and shared her deep institutional knowledge, which added so much richness and accuracy to the project.” Elmore said she wanted to take part in the project to help create a historical resource for the university.

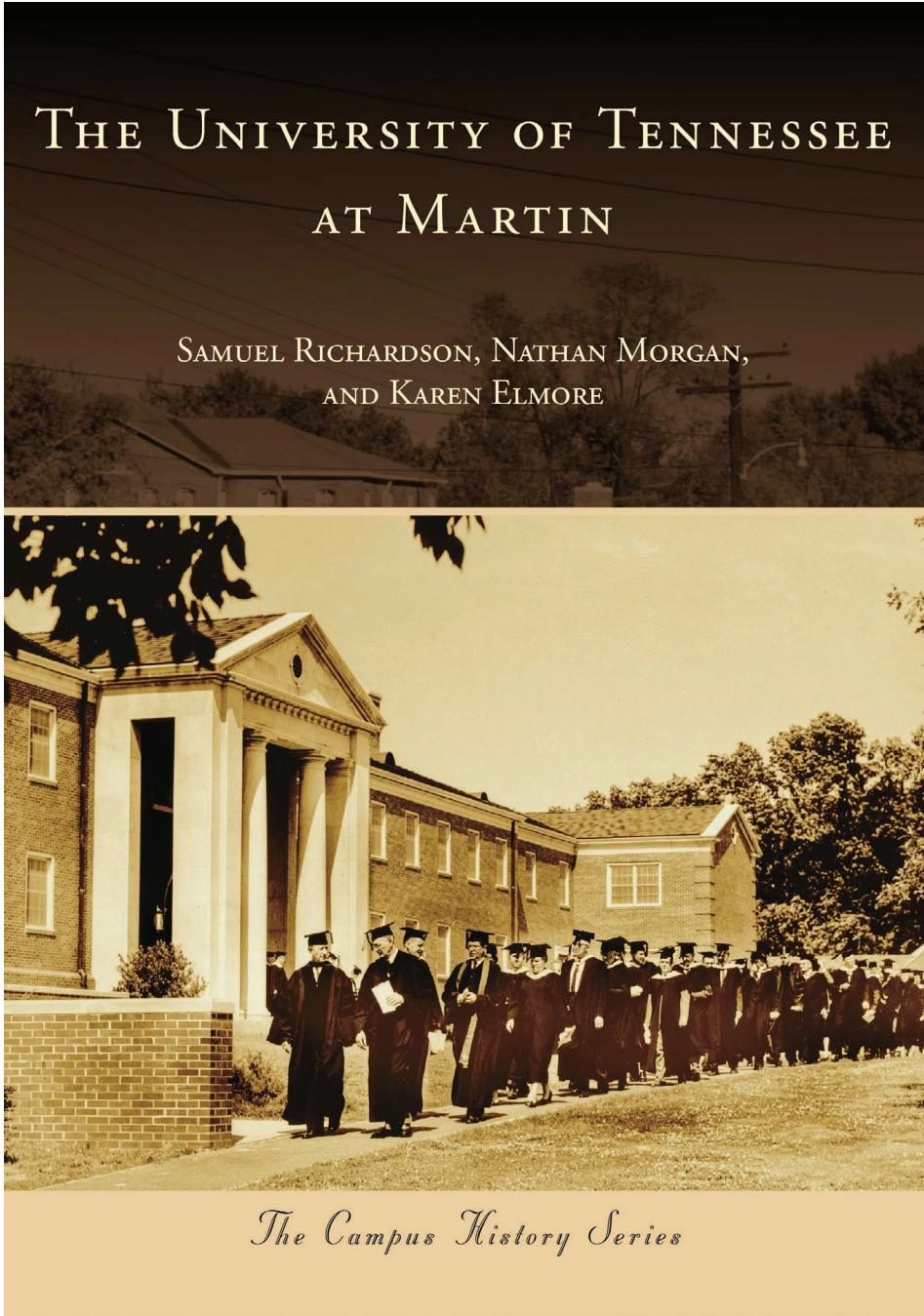


UT Martin staff members who researched information and gleaned through hundreds of photographs for “The University of Tennessee at Martin” publication are (l-r) Nathan Morgan of the UTM Office of University Relations and Sam Richardson and Karen Elmore, both of Paul Meek Library Special Collections and Archives. The book commemorates the 125th anniversary of the founding of UT Martin in 1900 as the Hall-Moody Institute.

“With the elimination of the yearbook and the Pacer student newspaper going digital for the most part, we have lost many resources to document the history of the university and our students,” she said. “I hope this book shines a light on all that we have accomplished. “Over the next quarter-century, I hope UT Martin continues to be a place where all students feel welcome, that we continue to grow, but don’t forget our roots.” Morgan, who serves as the assistant director for news and visuals in the Office of University Relations, said he appreciated the opportunity. “Being part of the team that put together the 125th anniversary book was such a great experience,” he said. “I’ve always loved history, and working at UT Martin has only made me even more interested in our own story. Getting to help with a project this meaningful really meant a lot to me. “I’m not going to lie; it was a lot of work in a short amount of time, but it was absolutely worth it. I’m proud of how the book turned out, and I hope our alumni and friends enjoy it as much as we enjoyed making it.” UT Martin’s

125th anniversary celebration will continue through October 2026. A list of

events can be found at [alumni.utm.edu/celebration](http://alumni.utm.edu/celebration).



“The University of Tennessee at Martin” commemorates 125 years of growth and development from the Hall-Moody Institute to UT Martin. The book is now available for purchase.

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# UT Martin, Gibson County special school district announce partnership

MARTIN, Tenn. – Students in the Gibson County Special School District will have more opportunities to earn college credits and broaden career options thanks to a new partnership between the special school district and the University of Tennessee at Martin. The partnership was announced Nov. 11 at Gibson County High School during an event attended by school administrators, faculty members and UT Martin officials. Eddie Pruett, director of schools, opened the program and described how Gibson County students can earn simultaneous credits in high school in partnership with the Tennessee College of Applied Technology Jackson and UT Martin. High school students enrolled in the special school district’s agriculture programs can accelerate progress toward a bachelor’s degree by taking courses with TCAT Jackson and expanded dual-enrollment course opportunities with UT Martin. This flexibility can come at a critical time for



(l, r) Todd Sheppard, principal, Gibson County High School; Kevin Turner, high school instructional supervisor and director, Career and Technical Education; Dr. Wes Totten, professor and chair, UT Martin Department of Agriculture, Geoscience and Natural Resources; Eddie Pruett, director of schools, Gibson County Special School District; Dr. Yancy Freeman, UT Martin chancellor; Lyndsey Norman, agriculture teacher, Gibson County High School; Erica Bell, executive director, UT Martin Regional Centers and Online Programs; Emily Pitt, director, Innovative School Model, and CTE coordinator; and Carly Robinson, career advising specialist.

certain students. “Something may happen in their life, and they need to just take that TCAT certificate and have a job,” Pruett said. “But then they may want to get back onto that ramp and go on and continue their four-year degree.” Pruett also sees the partnership improving the teacher pipeline to Gibson County through a special grow-your-own, dual-enrollment program. Students can earn up to 30 UTM credit

hours and pursue work-based learning opportunities, while getting paid to work in the classroom. Once students complete their UT Martin degrees, they can return to help fill the need for teachers in Gibson County. “What we’re able to do is identify high-potential students that have a love for learning and a love for kids and keep them in our local communities and keep them here working with our students,” he said. (more) GIBSON

COUNTY, PAGE 2 UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman followed Pruett in the program and told how access to education changed his own life as a first-generation college student and graduate. “This provides accessibility for students at this school to be able to take advantage of a

premium education through the TCAT and also, hopefully, continued education with UTM,” Freeman said. “So, this partnership advances two real main goals for us, overall.” The partnership also intends to reach younger students to create excitement for learning before they

reach high school. “We are committing to expanding STEM programs and hands-on learning for grades K-8, sparking curiosity, creativity and early exploration among our youngest learners,” he said. Freeman closed with a commitment that the partnership will benefit not only students but all of Gibson County. “It is not just good enough for us to enroll them (students),” he said. “We have to help them graduate, and then we want them to return to their community so that they can continue to provide value to their community overall. “Above all, this agreement supports our shared mission to serve West Tennessee by preparing the next generation of leaders, educators and innovators.” For information about the partnership, contact the UT Martin Office of Regional Centers and Online Programs at outreach@utm.edu.

## Santa’s Village Continued from Front Page

are only accessible inside the building by stairs. Accessible drop off points and limited parking will be available

on both upper and lower levels of the facility. For more information about Santa’s Village, visit [www.cityofmartin.net](http://www.cityofmartin.net).

[www.cityofmartin.net/santas-village-martin-tn](http://www.cityofmartin.net/santas-village-martin-tn). For more information about UT Martin, visit [www.utm.edu](http://www.utm.edu) or call 1-800-829-UTM1 (-8861).



Santa and Mrs. Claus pause for a photo while talking with visitors during last year’s Santa’s Village event. Talking with Santa is just one of the many fun and exciting features of the annual community tradition.

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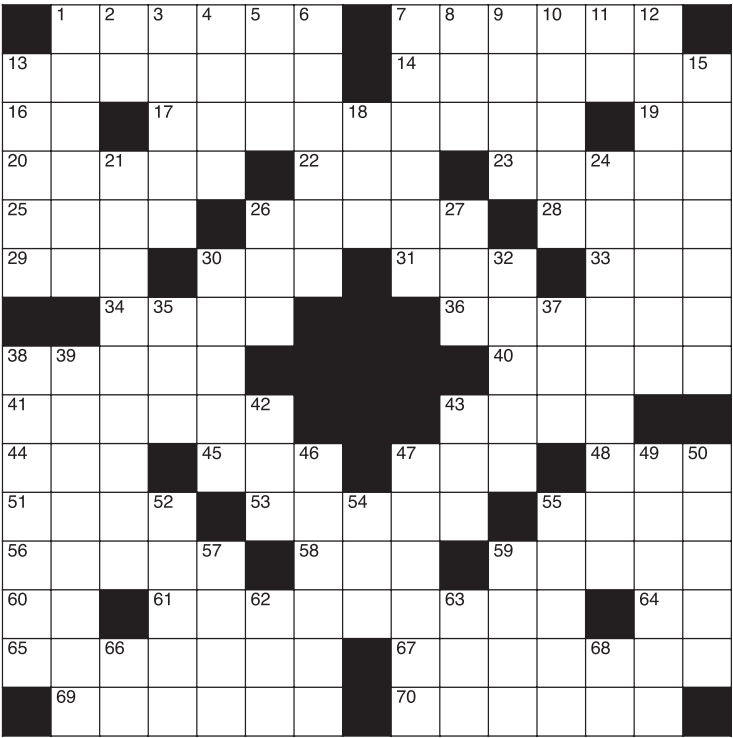
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Crossword Puzzle



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Spiritual leaders
- 7. A type of solution
- 13. Fortified wine
- 14. Edible mollusk
- 16. They precede C
- 17. A way to compare
- 19. Government lawyer
- 20. “Game of Thrones” actor Ciaran
- 22. The eighth month (abbr.)
- 23. Very willing
- 25. \_\_\_ ex Machina
- 26. Makes happy
- 28. Type of berry
- 29. A doctrine
- 30. Popular Dodge truck model
- 31. Dekagram
- 33. Naturally occurring solid
- 34. Company officer
- 36. Villains
- 38. Cricket frogs

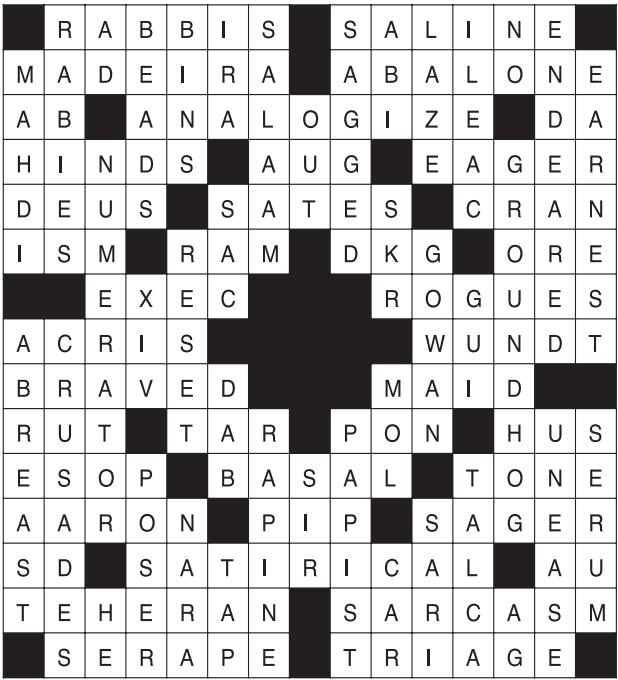
- 40. Influential German psychologist
- 41. Endured
- 43. A female domestic
- 44. You can get stuck in one
- 45. Cigarette (slang)
- 47. Fiber optics network
- 48. Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
- 51. Employee stock ownership plan
- 53. Belonging to the bottom layer
- 55. Sound
- 56. MLB legend Hank
- 58. Very attractive person
- 59. Late beloved sportscaster Craig
- 60. South Dakota
- 61. Mocking
- 64. Symbol for gold
- 65. Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
- 67. Humor
- 69. Shawl
- 70. Preliminary patient assessment

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Animal disease
- 2. Commercial
- 3. Necklace material
- 4. Containers
- 5. A way to save for your future
- 6. Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan
- 7. Dipped down
- 8. Head injury (abbr.)
- 9. Lay about
- 10. Intestinal
- 11. Opposite of yes
- 12. Caused to be loved
- 13. Spiritual leader of Islam
- 15. Businesslike
- 18. Not in
- 21. Number above the line in a fraction
- 24. An animal with its own day
- 26. Pouch
- 27. Swedish krona
- 30. Start over
- 32. Field flowers

- 35. Fourteen
- 37. A visual way to interact with a computer
- 38. Up-to-date
- 39. Campaigns
- 42. Touch lightly
- 43. “Boardwalk Empire” actress Gretchen
- 46. Violent seizure of property
- 47. Supporter of the Pope
- 49. Anxiety
- 50. Body fluid
- 52. One who’s faking it
- 54. Title of respect
- 55. Chilean city
- 57. City in central Japan
- 59. Silk garment
- 62. A form of dance
- 63. Automobile
- 66. The man
- 68. Justice Dept. head honcho

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Word Search

ON THE PROWL WORD SEARCH

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

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

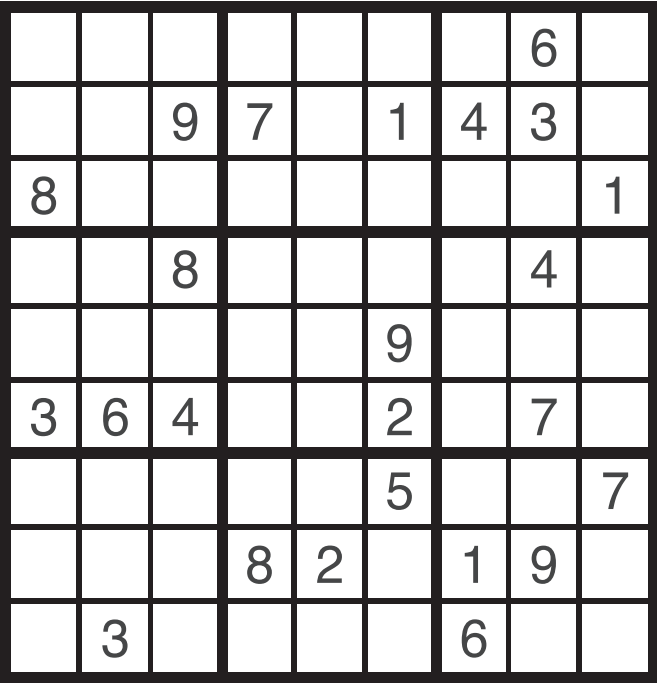
WORDS

- ABYSSINIAN
- CALICO
- CLOWDER
- DOMESTICATION
- FERAL
- HAIRBALL
- HISS
- KITTEN
- LITTER BOX
- MEOW
- PADS
- PERSIAN
- POST
- PURRING
- QUEEN
- SCRATCH
- SIAMESE
- TABBY
- TOMCAT
- TORTOISE SHELL
- WHISKERS

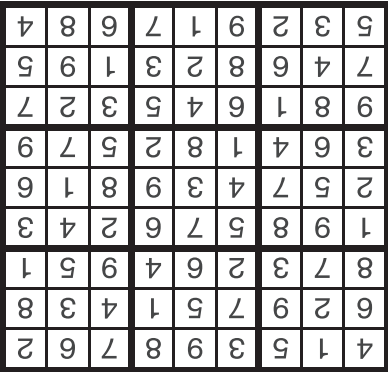
Sudoku Puzzle

How it Works:

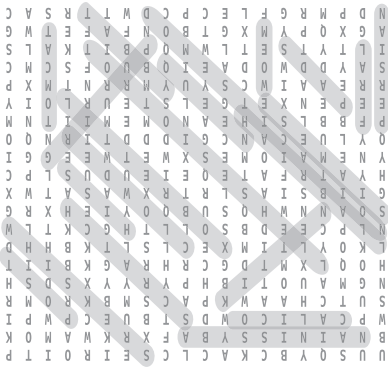
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle! Good Luck!



Sudoku Answers



Word Search Answers



Winter Jokes

What does a barbershop serve in winter? Cold cuts!

What kind of fish do penguins catch at night? Starfish.

What do you call a play or musical in the North Pole? Snow business.

What can you catch in the winter, even with your eyes closed? A cold.

What do you call a ghost in the winter? Casp-brrr.

What do you call a reindeer without eyes? I have no eye deer.

Crypto Fun



Solve the code to discover words related to cats. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 13 = S)

- A. 22 8 26 13  
Clue: Feet
- B. 6 1 14 4  
Clue: Touch with tongue
- C. 26 24 1 13 4 12 25 13  
Clue: Sensory hairs
- D. 22 2 19 20 14 12  
Clue: Jump upon suddenly

Answers: A. paws B. lick C. whiskers D. pounce

Wishing Everyone a Very Merry Christmas



# Show up with oil

By Teresa LeNeave  
leneave2@comcast.net

This week a friend who has been in the eye of the storm for some time, said, “I’ve reached my limit. I’m done.” In the Bible, when Jacob reached his breaking point, he took a stone that he used for a pillow, and poured oil on it. In the natural, that doesn’t make lot of sense, but it set the course of his life. After pouring oil on the stone, he made a

vow to God, “If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God” (Gen. 28:18-22). The big question is: how do we know we’ve reached our limit? The pressure is too great? We’re no longer willing to suffer the present pain and distress? You’re just worn

down and don’t have the fight to get back up? To be sure, there are lots of reasons we want to stop the bleeding, but the truth is we all have limits and there are some things we just won’t do. Whether it’s our unwillingness to continue or our lack of commitment, limits are real. Ironically, this same week, my pastor preached on limits. He said, “When pushed to your limit,

your limits change.” We change for many reasons. Sometimes when we reach our limit, we find we can go farther because we’re accustomed to pushing boundaries. We learned that as a child. As you know, every child is an expert at pushing boundaries. They don’t see limits and boundaries like we do. Other times we change our limits because experience changes us. As a

believer in Jesus Christ, we find our capacity for resilience is much greater than we imagined. Daniel sets limits on how far he would go for king Darius, the king he served under. Because Daniel refused to give up and change his position on God, he was thrown into a den full of hungry lions. The Bible tells us, because he wouldn’t bow to the king’s command, God intervened and the trouble he found

himself in only strengthened his resolve and trust in God. (Daniel 6) When we reach our limit, there is a safe place in God. The only thing to do when you’re in a tough place, is take that stone and pour oil on it. Maybe not literally, like Jacob, but spiritually dig in your heels and talk to God. Like Jacob, we need to show up with the oil. The power of God will fight the battle.

# I’ll be home for Christmas

By Brandon Bramlett  
Pastor - Bandana Baptist Church

*I’ll Be Home* for Christmas is one of the most pleasant and beloved songs of the Christmas season. Although its popularity was revived in recent years by artist Michael Bublé, the holiday classic was born back in 1924 when it was composed by J. Kimball Gannon, a graduate of St. Lawrence University in New York. However, Bing Crosby is responsible for causing Americans to fall in love with this enchanting oldie. During the 1940’s,

an unsettled and discouraged America heard his captivating voice sing the words,

*“Christmas eve will find me  
Where the love light gleams  
I’ll be home for Christmas  
If only in my dreams.”*

Americans resonated with these words because they were dreaming, not of a white Christmas, but of the day when their husbands and sons would come home from war in Europe and Japan. Our soldiers overseas wanted nothing more than to go home, and lonely mothers and



wives hoped for this as well. Nevertheless, as the nightmare of war raged on, the Christmas miracle

of going home for the holidays was an unfulfilled dream. Home is a Christmas symbol—being with family,


exchanging gifts, and eating ‘round the table. As another classic says, “There’s no place like home for the holidays.” However, many people cannot go home for Christmas, and maybe you can relate. Perhaps you are too far away to go home for Christmas. Maybe you have been ostracized from your home for believing in Christ, or for some other reason. It may be that your home is lonelier this year because you have lost family and friends in death. Maybe you have no home at all, like Naomi and Ruth of the Old Testament (Ruth 1:1-22).

The good news of Christmas is that you can have a home—a home in heaven—because Christ the Lord left His home in heaven. The Son of God came to earth, lived a righteous life, and endured God’s holy wrath to secure a place for you on Canaan’s happy shore. When you trust wholly in His finished work for your eternal salvation, He promises that you will have, “a house not made with hands, [but one] eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1b). And one day, your dream of going home to heaven will become a reality.

By Gary Miller

I live only a few hundred yards from national park property. Needless to say, deer roam my neighborhood. Every winter, if it snows or if we have an extended cold period, I feed deer in my front yard. It’s pretty neat to open your shades and see several deer munching away at the goodies I leave them. What I’ve noticed over the years is that there is always one doe among the herd, who is pushed away, run off, and not allowed close to the rest. This one doe ends up only getting a few kernels that she finds on the outskirts. Since I know this is going to happen, I always sling a little feed far enough away so she

can get a little of what the rest of the bullies are enjoying. This shun in the animal world is common. And unfortunately, it happens to humans as well. Let me give you another illustration. Sometimes a ewe will push away her newborn lamb. This may happen because she had twins or triplets, because the lamb is too small, or because they simply don’t bond. This lamb is called a bummer lamb. A bummer lamb will wander, cry, and slowly weaken, because without a mother’s milk and warmth, it can’t survive. When the shepherd notices this occurrence, he gathers up the lamb, brings it inside, warms it by the fire, bottle feeds



## The art of pretending

it, and literally holds it to his chest so it hears a heartbeat again. He becomes its source of life. After a week or so, the lamb grows stronger and eventually can be returned to the flock. But for the rest of its life, something special happens. Whenever the shepherd calls for his sheep, the bummer lamb is the first one to

run to him, because it knows his voice more clearly than all the others. It remembers who saved it.

The truth is, many of us would consider ourselves bummer lambs. Rejection has followed us throughout our lives. For some of you, rejection came very early in life. It came from parents,

family, or friends. I am especially thinking about those children who live their lives in foster homes. I have loved on these bummer babies myself and my heart breaks for them. The good news for all of us is this. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. And He takes in every bummer lamb, and loves them so much, they become the first to recognize His voice and run to His presence. The shepherd doesn’t love these lambs more than the others, it’s just that the ones who have been radically rescued never forget the One who carried them. They never forget the warmth, safety, and heartbeat of the One that told them they were loved and wanted. And because of that,

they stay close. Not out of fear, but out of gratitude.

No matter what your life has endured up to now, know that Jesus is your good shepherd, and He wants you, and He’s coming after you.

Gary Miller  
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Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 23 years.

He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men’s events for churches and associations. Stay updated on Outdoor Truths each week by subscribing at [Outdoortruths.org](http://Outdoortruths.org)





# UPCOMING AUCTION SCHEDULE

## LIVESTOCK, EQUIPMENT & HAY AUCTION TIMEWELL ILLINOIS AUCTION

**Tuesday,  
Dec. 9th  
9 AM CDT**  
684 1000N Ave  
Mt. Sterling, IL  
**Consign  
Today!**



## McLEANSBORO ILLINOIS AUCTION

**Thursday  
Dec. 11th  
9 AM CDT**  
684 1000N Ave  
Mt. Sterling, IL  
**Consign  
Today!**



## WINTER MT. STERLING AUCTION

**Thursday,  
Dec. 18th  
9 AM CDT**  
684 1000N Ave  
Mt. Sterling, IL  
**Consign  
Today!**



## WINTER WISCONSIN AUCTION

**Tuesday,  
Dec. 30th  
9 AM CDT**  
**Consign  
Today!**



*Consign Today For Any of Our Upcoming Sales!!*

**With a Local, Regional, National and International Bidder Network Your Items Will Garner The Attention They Deserve!!!**

**Scan for our App  
and up to date  
Auction schedule**



**Live, Onsite and Virtual  
with Multiple Platforms....**

