

Oakhurst Oracle

TIS THE SEASON

Submitted by Claudia Schmidt, President | Oakhurst Community

Volunteer Appreciation: On Oct.22, we held our volunteer appreciation dinner. Volunteers are vital to the success of our association. Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers for their yearlong involvement and dedication to our community. We are grateful for your willingness to give your time, energy and talent! Not only does your work support our organization, it supports our entire community. [Bill and Janet Poppe](#), we are appreciative of your invaluable volunteer services and contributions to the Architectural Review Committee. Your selfless dedication, hard work, and expertise have significantly benefited our community, and we are grateful for your support. Bill and Janet closed 97 of 119 submitted modifications and closed this year 31 of last year’s mod submissions. The major mod types are solar panels, fences, exterior color changes and roof replacements. What an accomplishment! [Special thanks go out to Kevin Lilek and Dan Nave, our Recreational Chairs](#). Kevin and Dan, we are so grateful for the meticulous work you consistently deliver. Your attention to detail and thoroughness are invaluable assets to our community. The board is not able to make improvements or solve problems if we do not have a team of volunteers to assist us in our efforts. Thank you to all of you!

2025 Annual Assessment: At the last general OCA meeting of 2024, we approved the 2025 budget. Single-Family and Townhome owners, please look out for your annual assessment statement of the OAKHURST Master Association. The annual assessment of \$345 is due January 1, 2025. If for some reason you do not receive your annual assessment statement by January 31, then please contact Cynthia our property manager at OAKHURST@ciramail.com or call her at 847-944-0080 Ex.4433.Tenants, if you receive a statement addressed to your landlord, please contact our property manager Cynthia.

Parking Reminder: We have been getting several complaints of vehicles parked in the driveways that are too large to fit in the garage. If the vehicle will not fit in the garage, then it may not be parked on the driveway for more than 24 hours; rather, it must be parked on the street and is subject to the City of Aurora parking ordinances.

Snow in the Forecast? Just a refresher: The City of Aurora is responsible for snowplowing of City streets throughout Oakhurst (this does not include parking and garage areas of the sub-associations). Keep in mind that your vehicles must be moved from the street to allow for snow removal. Failure to do so may result in the City of Aurora towing your vehicle. The sidewalks shall be shoveled before students walk to school/bus! The mailbox shall stay clear of snow piles. All traffic participants shall be respected at all times - walk and drive safely!!

Holiday Lights and Decorations: These may be displayed from November 15th through January 31st, but may not be illuminated after January 15th. The take down date may be extended at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors due to weather conditions.

**The Oakhurst Board of Directors wish you a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!
Please take care of yourself and each other!**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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OAKHURST COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Tuesday, September 23, 2025
including Annual Meeting/Election

Tuesday, October 28, 2025
including Volunteer Appreciation

The meetings will be held at the
Aurora Fire Station 8
located at 3770 McCoy Drive @ 7PM.

**ALL HOMEOWNERS ARE
WELCOME TO ATTEND**

ORACLE SUBMISSIONS



Send stories, articles, news to share, youth listings and classified ads such as for sale, lost and found to Bernie Biernacki at MBierna409@aol.com, 630-820-8414

**DEADLINE IS THE 26TH OF
EACH MONTH**

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING DEADLINE - 15TH

COST-EFFECTIVE & NO CONTRACTS TO SIGN

Call Amy at 630-963-9100 or
amy@allegranaperville.com
www.allegranaperville.com



DO NOT BEGIN ANY EXTERIOR WORK WITHOUT WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM THE OAKHURST MODIFICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE!

If you plan to start new exterior construction or alterations, please complete an Architectural Modification Application which can be found on the Oakhurst website and submit this completed form to our Property Management company for approval by the Review Committee before you begin exterior work.

Please contact OAKHURST@ciramail.com or customer service at 866-473-2573.

OAKHURST COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

Updated July 2024

ELECTED BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Claudia Schmidt, President	claudia.oakhurst@gmail.com
Simonne Primo, Vice President	sprimo2014@gmail.com
James Valastro, Treasurer	jgvalastro@gmail.com
Cathy Lawler, Secretary	fife08@gmail.com
Paul Santucci, Director	pjsantucci@gmail.com

(2) Multi Family OPEN POSITIONS

SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS

Ashbrook

Bernie Biernacki*	630-820-8414
Doug Lucas	630-585-1028

Aspen

Charlotte Dockstader*	dockstdr@sbcglobal.net
Mark Davis	630-464-0535

Autumn Meadows

Jim Valastro*	jgvalastro@gmail.com
OPEN POSITION	

Breckenridge

Darren Miller*	920-517-7822
Margaret Stokes	630-926-8107
	4oakhurstagain@gmail.com

Carriage Estates

Barb Garitty*	630-870-9042
	bmgaritty@aol.com
Patricia Davis	kellyketurah@yahoo.com

Inverness

Linda Grula*	630-585-8694
Mike Marion	630-585-5935
OPEN POSITION	

Mayfair

Bill Poppe*	630-978-1314
Paul Santucci	630-236-9963

Stanfield

Kathy Lengiewicz*	kathylengiewicz@sbcglobal.net
OPEN POSITION	

Summerfield

Debbie Basak	630-851-1624
Bill Bernard*	630-240-1052
OPEN POSITION	

The Woods

Patrick Sweeney*	sweenz1284@yahoo.com
OPEN POSITION	

Wild Meadows

Steve Bosco*	630-898-9457
OPEN POSITION	

OAKHURST PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

RealManage
650 Warrenville Road, Ste. 400, Lisle, IL 60532
Cynthia Jakkargari | Property Manager
630-474-5700
oakhurst@ciramail.com | oakhurstcommunity.org

AURORA POLICE OFFICER REP. - ERIC RAPPA

630-742-4351 | rappae@apd.aurora.il.us

MULTI-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS

Autumn Lakes Condo Association

Bob Garland*

Country Homes of Oakhurst Association

Scott Jones* jonescr@gmail.com

Heather Glen Association

Jason McLinsay* mclindsayjason@yahoo.com

The Townes of Oakhurst Homeowners Association

Anthony Monteleone* monteleone.ajm@gmail.com

The Townes of Oakhurst Condo Association

VACANT

Hawthorn at Oakhurst

Manager* 630-820-9399

Abington Woods

VACANT

* Voting Representative

OAKHURST COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES

Architectural Modification

Bill Poppe, Chairperson | 630-978-1314

Landscape

Claudia Schmidt, Chairperson | Claudia.oakhurst@gmail.com

Recreation

Dan Nave, Co-Chair | dnave48@gmail.com
Kevin Lilek, Co-Chair | kclilek@sbcglobal.net | 630-692-1243

Traffic

Patty Smith, Chairperson | 630-341-1176

Oakhurst Oracle Newsletter

Bernie Biernacki, Editor | MBIerna409@aol.com | 630-820-8414

For Oakhurst Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, and Forms go to:

- <http://oakhurstcommunity.org/rules-guidelines-and-forms/>
- Log into your www.CIRANET.com Resident Portal and use the following path: Community Information > Documents > Documents Archive > Forms or Policies.

WORKING YOUTH DIRECTORY

NAME	PHONE	SERVICE	NAME	PHONE	SERVICE
ABINGTON WOODS			INVERNESS		
Isabella Helmick	630-476-2424	B-C,P	Frank Sedlak	612-968-3497	P
Kevin Lubinski	630-770-2254	B,MH,P,Y,O,V	Hanna Zhang	630-340-9229	B,MH,P,T (Elementary to middle school math, Chinese (Mandarin) reading, writing and speaking, playing piano and violin intermediate level)
AUTUMN MEADOWS			MAYFAIR		
Sarah Holsman	331-725-9111	B, P, MH, V	Rebecca Bessey	224-275-0506	B-RC, V MH
Lauren Mitchell	773-454-9022	B, P, MH, V	Lilly Clemm	312-257-7939	P, V
BRECKENRIDGE			Kevin Clemm	312-257-7939	B, P, O, V
Bridget Lachat	630-236-7920	B,MH,P	Juliana Filapek	331-684-5984	B,P,MH
COUNTRY HOMES			Katie Mikes	630-886-1215	B, P, V
Matthew Crane	630-222-1266	MH, P, Y, O, V	Alyssa Tukker	630-687-0442	B, P, MH, V
FORESTVIEW			STANFIELD		
Amariah Scott.	630-618-6213	P, V	Isabelle Sweeney	331-575-6575	B CPR/1st Aid Cert
HUNTERS GLEN			SUMMERFIELD		
Chelsea Dean	630-962-9708	B,Y,MH,V	Johnny Bizon	630-898-4702	P, Y, V SR
Lauryen Pfilbsen	630-730-4043	B,P,T 3rd gr & under	Hannah Buckner	630-585-6312	B,MH,P
INVERNESS			Lauren Heidenrich	773-392-5604	B-RC,MH,P,V
Matilda Baka	630-605-3733	B, P, T	Aidan Krenek	630-360-6363	P, Y, O, V
PJ Bartzan	703-862-1414	B,Y,V	Ashley Murray	630-375-9101	B,P,V
Arianna Escandon	908-296-5709	P	THE WOODS		
Alexis Gottschalk	630-851-5169	P,MH,O,V	Kyle Labrecque	312-718-0965	Y, V, SR
Marissa LoBue	630-209-2375	B,MH,P,V	Emma Steinbauer	630-449-9448	P, Y, V, SR
Marissa Martin	630-667-8296	B,MH,P,V	WILD MEADOWS		
Lexie O'Brien	847-274-9695	B (RC),P,V	Abi Swanson	630-346-9136	B-RC, MH, P, V
Amberlynn Pranaitis	630-605-8200	B (RC/B), MY,SR			
Remington Rook	630-585-6788	B,P,MH,O			
Jacob Sims	630-699-1599	Y,O,V,SR			
Grace Sims	630-699-6451	B-RC,MH,P,V			
Lydia Sedlak	612-968-3497	B, P			

PARENTS — PLEASE UPDATE YOUR CHILD'S INFORMATION IN THIS WORKING YOUTH DIRECTORY!

NOTIFY MBIerna409@AOL.COM TO ADD, CHANGE, OR DELETE A WORKING YOUTH LISTING.

The Working Youth Directory is a service for youth, ages 12 and above, living in the Oakhurst community.

Parents: If you wish your child to be listed in this directory, please email MBIerna409@aol.com. Include your child's name, address, neighborhood within Oakhurst, home phone number of a parent who will be responsible for fielding requests, and the service(s) you permit your child to provide. Be sure to talk with your child about personal safety before listing in this directory.

Each monthly issue of the Oracle is posted online to the community association's website, www.oakhurstcommunity.org.

B-RC: Red-Cross Certified Babysitter, B: Babysitter, MH: Mother's Helper, P: Pet Sitter, Y: Yard Help, O: Odd Jobs, V: Vacation Watch, SR: Snow Removal, T: Tutoring

ALDERWOMAN PATTY SMITH'S CORNER



Alderwoman 8th Ward • SmithPC@aurora.il.us • 630-341-1176
Facebook Patty Smith Alderman Ward 8

CITY OF AURORA APP

Did you know the City of Aurora now has an APP to guide you through our constant growing exciting downtown. Download DESTINATION AURORA and you will find your ultimate guide to the vibrant city of Aurora! The menu in the APP offers Dining & Drinks, City Events, Parking Locations, and Lodging. These features will make your experience in Aurora as enjoyable and convenient as possible.

AURORA OPENS A NEW ITALIAN RESTURANT

Giardino Trattoria & Pizzeria had a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 12 N. River St., in the historic Hobbs Building in Aurora. Giardino's will offer a family-friendly and garden-inspired atmosphere, reflecting its name, which means "garden" in Italian. Its menu will showcase wood-fired pizzas crafted using traditional methods and fresh ingredients. The restaurant also will feature a wide range of Italian dishes, with a focus on fresh, handmade pasta prepared daily in-house. Giardino will be open for lunch and dinner.

THE 18TH ANNUAL CITY OF AURORA FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

A MILE OF SPARKING LIGHTS! A MONTH OF MAGICAL NIGHTS! The largest free outdoor drive-through holiday light display in the region - returns for its 18th year with dazzling displays and merry music that will delight children and adults. The Aurora Festival of Lights opens on Friday, November 29, and runs through Sunday, December 29, each night from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Philips Park, 1000 Ray Moses Drive [Enter on Smith Blvd. at Fifth Ave.] Visitors will enjoy a mile of spectacular lighted displays from the comfort of the car while listening to holiday songs on a closed-circuit radio station. This popular free holiday drive-thru features crowd-favorite displays like jumping reindeer, ice skating bears, old man winter, howling wolves, the holiday golfer, Santa's toy factory, and fields of gigantic snowflakes, along with new displays. Gather the family, bundle up, jump in the car and make holiday memories. More than 50,000 vehicles visited the festival last year. Admission is free, but visitors should register for an entry ticket at <https://www.aurora-il.org/2408/18th-Annual-Aurora-Festival-of-Lights>.

CHRISTKINDLMARKET AURORA

Brighten up your holidays and enjoy a cherished tradition with a visit to the Christkindlmarket at RiverEdge Park in Aurora, Nov. 22 – Dec. 24! The German-style outdoor market has become a popular event for those looking to socialize and experience unique shopping, some cheerful live entertainment, and original food and beverages. This free event features international and local vendors serving up a diverse range of treats along with a festive schedule of holiday-themed happenings to keep friends and family engaged and interacting.

Regular Hours:

Thursdays: 11am – 7pm

Fridays & Saturdays: 11am – 9pm

Sundays: 11am – 6pm

Special Hours:

December 16 – 18: 11am-7pm

December 23: 11am-7pm

December 24: 11am-4pm

WINTER IS HERE

As I write this newsletter, we have yet to have an accumulative snowfall. It's only a matter of time before Old Man Winter sets in. Drive safely and cautiously during winter weather. Remember the City of Aurora clears primary streets first. Residential streets are cleared after snow stops. For a 3-inch snow fall the COA tries to have all streets cleared within 12 hours. More than 3 inches of snow will take longer. Although the plows do not purposefully push snow into driveways while clearing, this will occur for our streets to be cleared. Ways you can help:

- Remove all vehicles from the roadway during snowfalls of 2 inches or more.
- Stay back 100' from snowplows and do not pass them during operation.
- Never shovel snow into the street.
- Be a good neighbor and shovel the sidewalks in front of your house and help kids get to the bus or walk to school.
- Use caution.

If you wish to check on the progress of snow clean up, you can contact Street Maintenance at (630) 256-3680.

WINTER STREET PARKING It is unlawful for any vehicle to remain parked on any City Street after a snowfall in which there is an accumulation of 2 inches or more. The reason is simple, snowplows cannot clear the snow to the curb with vehicles in the way. Violators of this ordinance can and should be ticketed and/or towed at the owner's expense. If your street experience problems with vehicles remaining parked on the street during a 2 inch or more accumulation, please contact the Aurora Police non-emergency number (630) -256 5900 and/or City of Aurora property standards (630) -256 -3700 and file a complaint.

I hope you find this newsletter informative. If ever there is a topic you would like to discuss or address, please let me know. Thank you to those who have taken the time to reach out to me with neighborhood suggestions and concerns. My door is always open, and your feedback is welcome. I can be reached at 630- 341- 1176 or pcsmith@aurorail.org. To stay updated on ward 8 information follow me on Facebook at Patty Smith Alderman Ward 8.

It continues to be my honor and privilege to serve you the residents of Ward 8.

*Warmest Thoughts & Best Wishes
For a Wonderful Holiday and
Happy New Year*

The OAKHURST property management kindly asks our OAKHURST single-family & townhome homeowners to sign up on their Resident Portal.



Members of community associations managed by RealManage have access to their robust Owner/Resident Portal. This helpful and convenient tool puts a wealth of information and resources at your fingertips, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Owner/Resident Portal main page contains Homeowner Quick Links with shortcuts to commonly used features, answers to frequently asked questions and can pay you annual assessment.

Before you can use the Owner/Resident Portal, you first need to register your account. To register and create your account on the Owner/Resident Portal, visit the portal on the RealManage website and click on the green "Homeowner & Resident Portal Login" button. This will bring you to the login screen. On your first visit to the portal, click on "Don't have an account?" to create your new account. Each property may have a maximum of two (2) accounts, allowing up to two household members to each have their own unique log in.

Create your user account by entering your Account Number, Check Digit, Email Address, and Password of your choice. Your Account Number and Check Digit can be found on your initial Welcome Letter, or on any billing statement, you receive from the OAKHURST Community Association. If you are unable to locate your account information, please contact our property manager Cynthia for assistance at 847-944-0080 Ex.4433.

After creating your account, check your email for a registration confirmation email with the subject line "CiraNet Portal Registration". Click on the confirmation link to activate your account. If you have spam protection, the email may be in your spam/junk folder. The link will take you back to the Login page where you can log in with your email address and the password that you created.

Logging in: You can get to the login screen to the Owner/Resident Portal via any of the following URLs:

OWNER/RESIDENT PORTAL
www.realmanage.com/homeowner-help-center
www.ciranet.com
www.ciranet.com/residentportal

**WESTERN DUPAGE
LEGAL SERVICES, LLC**
REAL ESTATE ATTORNEYS

John Felton, Attorney
OAKHURST RESIDENT SINCE 1992

(630) 205-4347
jrfelton@outlook.com



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10138 BODE RD, UNIT A | PLAINFIELD, IL

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN ARROWEAD INDUSTRIAL PARK:
2 MILES WEST OF RT 59 OFF 95TH ST AND WOLFS CROSSING
OR 3/4 MI EAST OF EOLA RD AND WOLF'S CROSSING

MONDAY - FRIDAY: 7:30AM - 5PM
CLOSED WEEKENDS & HOLIDAYS

(630) 904-6300

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FOR SALE 4573 Garritano	FOR SALE 2236 Beresford	FOR SALE 278 Oak Creek	UNDER CONTRACT 3721 Bailey	UNDER CONTRACT 1459 Crimson
UNDER CONTRACT 1579 Alder Creek	UNDER CONTRACT 3742 Bailey	UNDER CONTRACT 1381 Alder Creek	UNDER CONTRACT 1386 Carolyn	UNDER CONTRACT 4121 Klatt
SOLD 678 Lincoln Station	SOLD 601 Grant	SOLD 274 Oak Creek	SOLD 8646 Foxborough	SOLD 1139 Heron
SOLD 943 Sumner	SOLD 612 Wellner	SOLD 197 Wrenwood	SOLD 1399 Carolyn	SOLD 240 Oak Creek



Shane Halleman

Live & Love Local Broker

630.417.4037

ShaneHalleman@johngreeneREALTOR.com
1311 S. Route 59, Naperville, IL 60564

CHECK OUT MY REVIEWS



Zillow



Google

- Top Producing Aurora Agent
- Member of John Greene Realtor's \$200 Million President's Club
- Over 725 homes sold Lifetime
- Proud Aurora resident for 18 years



Not intended to solicit properties for sale. Information contained herein is not guaranteed and is subject to change without notice.





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 Naperville, IL 60564
630.723.6333

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\$89.99
**CHILDREN
 EXAM**
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 *AGE 16 AND UNDER

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 DENTAL IMPLANT
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\$1500 OFF
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 *SOME RESTRICTIONS
 MAY APPLY

* SOME RESTRICTIONS MAY APPLY.
 ALL OFFERS EXPIRE 06/30/25

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 Dental Smiles of Joliet • 2410 W Jefferson St, #108 • Joliet, IL 60435 • 815.744.4443
 Tranquil Dental • 3450 Montgomery Rd, Unit #8 • Aurora, IL 60504 • 630.499.5555



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Not valid with other offers or
prior services. Expires 06/30/25

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and Digital Scan

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prior services. Expires 06/30/25

FREE
Second Opinion
Consultation

Hyline Dental
Not valid with other offers or
prior services. Expires 06/30/25

\$109⁹⁹

New patient exam
x-rays & regular cleaning
some restrictions apply

Hyline Dental
Not valid with other offers or
prior services. Expires 06/30/25

\$475

In-office
Zoom Whitening
some restrictions apply

Hyline Dental
Not valid with other offers or
prior services. Expires 06/30/25

\$69⁹⁹

Emergency exam
& one x-ray

Hyline Dental
Not valid with other offers or
prior services. Expires 06/30/25

Happy Holidays Oakhurst!

Our Closed Sales over the last 12 months in Oakhurst and Brentwood Estates



2431 Angela Lane



2217 Cheshire Drive



774 Wintergreen Court



3124 Anton Circle



164 Forestview Court



2812 Breckenridge Circle



2730 Carriage Way



678 Waterbury Drive



Wait till you see what's coming soon next year!!!!

Holiday Trivia Time!

Which popular Christmas beverage is also called "milk punch?"

The movie Miracle on 34th Street is based on a real-life department store. What is it?

Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree?

What was Frosty the Snowman's nose made out of?

What U.S. state is home to the town of Santa Claus?

Eggnog
Macy's
Germany
Newton
Indiana

Wishing you a warm, safe and joyous holiday season!



Jennifer Drohan
Lead Real Estate Broker
JDroHomes@kw.com
(630) 292-2696



THE PUZZLE PAGE

Castles

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

- | | | |
|------------|------------|---------|
| ARCHER | FEUDAL | NOBLE |
| ARMOR | FORTRESS | PALACE |
| BARON | GREAT HALL | QUEEN |
| BATTERING | HONOR | REALM |
| RAM | KEEP | REIGN |
| BATTLE AXE | KINGDOM | ROYALTY |
| CREST | LADY | SERF |
| CROWN | LANCE | SHIELD |
| DRAGON | LORD | SWORD |
| DUKE | MAIDEN | TOWER |
| DUNGEON | MANOR | TURRET |
| DYNASTY | MOAT | WALL |
| EMPIRE | | |

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

Jolly Chapeaus

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			

Across

- Goulash
- Short quick run
- Prefix with legal
- Canyon effect
- Coffee dispensers
- Net lining of a hat
- Self-control
- Have a bite
- Recuperative resort
- Fertilizer chemical
- Sing the praises of
- Pride member
- Director Preminger
- Give for a while
- Trawling equipment

Down

- Egg on
- Weight allowance
- Coastal raptors
- Blighted area
- Two-day Olympic event
- Antioxidant berry
- Give the cold shoulder

- Romance novelist Victoria
- Scoundrel
- Hockey legend Bobby
- Cleveland's lake
- Long, long time
- Fill to the gills
- Golf stroke
- Commotions

S	T	E	N		D	N	E	L
O	L	L	O		N	O	I	L
D	U	V	L		V	E	R	U
A	P	S	H		T	A	L	H
					T	A	E	
T	N	I	A		R	T	S	R
L	U	L	C		S	N	R	U
O	H	C	E		A	R	A	P
H	S	A	D		W	S	T	E

The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

December Sudoku

How to solve sudoku puzzles

No math is required to solve a sudoku. You only need logic and patience.

Simply make sure that each 3x3 square region has only one instance of the numbers 1-9. Similarly, each number can only

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

	5		6	8	1	4		
					5			7
2		6						
	6				3		5	
		2		4		6		
	8		9				1	
						9		1
5			8					
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appear once in a column or row in the larger grid. The difficulty on this puzzle is medium.

THE RECOVERING WRITER

A BAOBAB IN THE MIRROR

By Ann E. Funck

Ann E. Funck writes wry commentary on real life stories... She writes funny from Oakhurst.



The night before our excursion, I laid out my feather-weight chambray pants and my new off-white blouse with the a/c sleeves/eyelet for the hot weather. The next afternoon, I pulled on the pants and tucked in the blouse ending my formerly hour-glass, though aging, figure. In the mirror, my bod was a gigantic trunk – with no waist whatsoever. Every angle looked the same: a barrel that had morphed into a total sequoia.

I was utterly speechless about my image, phoning my friend Ellen during my whine, which included: “I’m late and can’t go out in public like this!” (I’m never completely speechless.)

“Just yank on some black pants and a top. We’re waiting!” Ellen said. I also heard the mumbled, “A baobab tree.” “Whaaa?” I said.

Eventually, I looked up that tree. There are many varieties but only one shape that resembled mine. The tree is found in Africa, Australia, and Madagascar, is quite slow-growing and long-lived. Some photos look like mature bonsai trees. In the island country of Madagascar, there is a baobab tree that is claimed to be one thousand years old. Several of the trunks are gigantic, appear swollen, and resemble a barrel. . . .

Did someone invent a camera a thousand years ago? Who can prove that tree’s age?

If I inhaled, I had several bulbous rolls blooming. Even standing, with my arms overhead, my waist had definitely disappeared. The photos matched my mirror image. I had never heard of the baobab tree before. Legend has it that “the devil plucked up the baobab, thrust its branches into the earth, and left its roots in the air.”

My fine, fly-away hair resembled the misty greenery topping of the trees in some of those Googled photos.

Consider another “tree” that I knew nothing about: the saguaro cactus of the Arizona desert. It also has nocturnal flowers as fascinating as the large, white flowers of the baobab. And both tree types are often pollinated by bats (let’s hear it for the bats!) and can store much water in their trunks; they both are succulents in that way. The baobab’s fruit, when ripe, hangs like “dead rats by their tails.”

Now, that’s a sight that would give anyone sore eyeballs! And here I was going to mention, eventually, a holiday tree that gives a bejeweled glow to every face around it. But this rat-tail sight is the opposite of any glowing vision of a holiday tree.

However, locals call the baobab tree “The Tree of Life.” They have used the fruit and other parts for culinary and medicinal purposes. The fruit can produce a healthy soup. Whether or not we ever taste the soup, we have to admire the ingenuity of the people harvesting the goofy-looking fruit and making the soup.

Boosting the immune system, the fruit reduces fever and improves digestive health. Emphasis on digestive health is a current concern of us Americans obsessed with using probiotics . . . Whatever happened to Tums?

Would you believe that Amazon carries the organic fruit powder (gluten-free) and “African baobab seed oil” for hair and skin? This oil is advised for use on the body, lips, and nails. What oil isn’t?

The tree’s seeds are also for sale – if you are a patient gardener and can include the tree in your will.

How could I not have heard of this intriguing tree? Shapeless, skinny, or bulbous, the tree is a wonder. And my friend Ellen had heard of the tree and knew when to use it.

I have watched with interest the documentary of a Burkina Faso hero. Where in the heck is Burkina Faso? This country is landlocked in West Africa. The capital is Ouagadougou.

For 47 years, this man, whose name is less pronounceable than the capital, has planted baobab trees. For several years, he has planted 400 trees each year. Children help him, as well as adults. He began planting mango trees but learned that many people did that, so he chose to go in a different direction. I had heard of Burkina Faso, which is, in itself, remarkable.

This man tells us in the documentary that tradition says that whoever plants a baobab tree will die. He notes that his father never planted a baobab tree but died. What logic!

Regarding what I thought was my stunning ensemble, I returned the off-white blouse to Old Navy. I told the clerk that the blouse was too short to tuck in properly (true!), especially with my arms raised above my head while trying to get a flattering gander. That definitely was a failure.

I did not get into detail about the baobab tree; the clerk was way too young to have heard of it. For the rest of this year, I have avoided pulling on those chambray pants with the silver-studded front pockets and string tie. Maybe I will never.

Fifteen years of Ann’s monthly true tales are in a book titled, A CHEAP SEXY CAR & More Serious Humor. Entertainment for everyone. It is now only \$10 — a perfect gift of humor! For a copy, please email her at rfunck222@msn.com.

WINTER GARDENING GUIDE

Everything you need to know about cold-weather planting.

The gentle fall of winter's snow provides the perfect backdrop to a cozy, crackling fire—nature's magic is a seasonal delight. But for outdoor gardens, an extreme chill and heavy snowfall can be downright frightful. To help your plants thrive in freezing temps, it's important to find the right varieties and keep them well-fed and properly maintained. Read on to learn all about cold-weather planting.

Cold-Friendly Plants

Though many floras prefer to sit out the winter months, plenty enjoy this time of year. Plants that are excellent for winter gardening, are cold-weather friendly, and stay green year after year include kale, ferns, hostas, evergreens, and Brussels sprouts.

When To Plant

New plants need time to mature to withstand the first hard freeze. While plants purchased in a container may already be more developed, seed packets will indicate the number of days needed to reach maturity. Determine the approximate date of the first hard freeze, then count backward by the number of days required for mature growth. Plant accordingly to guarantee sprouts have ample time to grow before the freeze.



Kale

A healthy and hardy plant that lives best during wintertime, kale can survive in temperatures as low as 5° F. Plant leafy or ornamental kale whenever you'd like—it's one of the few plants that can grow well into winter, when little else can be harvested.



Ferns

Believe it or not, ferns are among the oldest plants in the world. Depending on your location and plant variation, they may retain their vibrant color during the colder months, especially in more southern regions.



Hostas

These decorative and easy-to-grow plants fill large areas and come in various colors and styles, making them a great choice to add beauty and interest to your space.



Evergreens

This group of plants is a natural pick for winter wow. Ideal for the garden's dormant areas, evergreens offer a scrumptious scent and lovely shade of green all year long.



Brussels Sprouts

A cruciferous plant, Brussels sprouts are of the same species as broccoli and kale. Grown for their edible buds, their quality doesn't suffer after a winter's freeze. In fact, Brussels sprouts welcome frost, often turning sweeter after a good chill.



Tips for Winter Garden Maintenance

Beautiful, green winter flora and fresh vegetables grown in your own backyard are a testament to your hard work. To help you succeed:

Plant hardy varieties.

Look for cultivars specifically bred for winter gardening so they can tolerate intense weather.

Mulch.

Apply two to three inches of organic mulch to keep soil moist and insulate plants.

Blanket plants.

Lightweight row covers or cloches can protect plants from frost and cold wind, while allowing in warm sunlight.

Water wisely.

Water at least once weekly until the ground freezes to help plants take root before winter dormancy and keep roots growing.

Prep your soil.

Ensure soil for new plants includes a mix of compost or other organic matter, and fertilize your trees and lawn.

Watch the weather.

Be prepared to take action if you expect severe weather. Bring potted plants in and protect outdoor plants from harsh conditions.



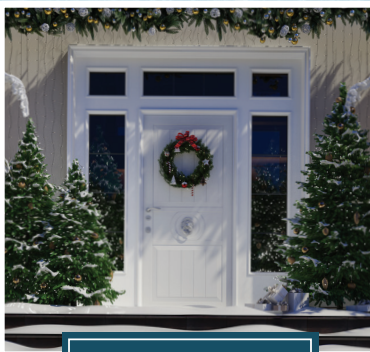
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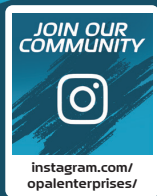
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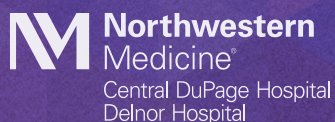
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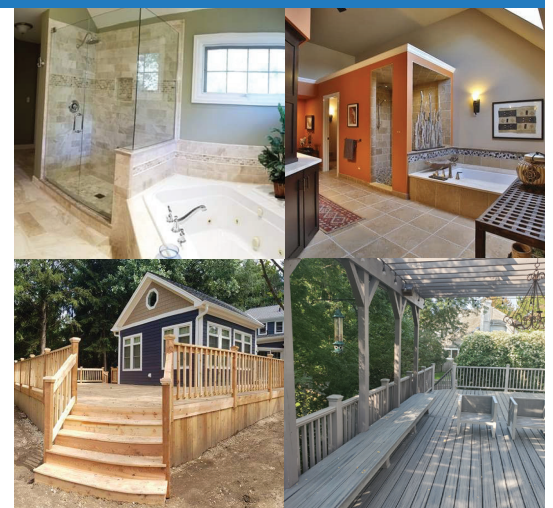
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