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m a g a z i n e

JULY 2021



CALLING ALL PET OWNERS!

It's time to enter our Annual
Cutest Pet Photo Contest!

See page 13 for details and prizes

plus: hello, happy mama: Lisa Elzy Watson of Casa Esperanza *pg 18*
beat the heat with blueberry popsicles *pg 12* picking the perfect preschool *pg 10*

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Kern County Family Magazine is published twelve times a year by Skyline Publishing & Event Promotions of Kern County

Kern County Family Magazine is available free at more than 700 locations including libraries, grocery stores, retail stores, childcare centers, schools, hospitals and other outlets.

Subscriptions by mail are \$17 per year and must include a check:

KERN COUNTY FAMILY MAGAZINE

1400 EASTON DR., SUITE 112

BAKERSFIELD, CA 93309

Deadline for advertising and calendar information is the 10th of the month preceding.

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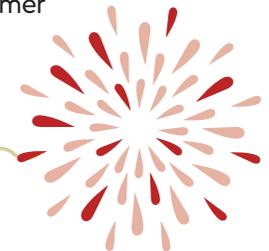
Cover Contest: Calling all Pet Owners! Enter your pets in our Annual Cutest Pet Photo Contest!

Contest sponsored by Fur and Feathers Luxury Pet Resort, Grocery Outlet (Brimhall & Jewetta location) and Gregory D. Bynum & Associates



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Vaun Thygeron,
Contributing Writer

This July seems completely different from last year – for many reasons. First of all, my boys get to play sports! My rising Sophomore is already in the middle of football practice for Liberty High School's fall season. And my soon-to-be senior (stifled cry) is traveling to all kinds of lacrosse tournaments. I am so thankful they get to play this summer because being part of a team and learning from a great coach helps our children succeed in life.

I read a quote once that said, "A good coach can change a game, a great coach can change a life." I have seen this proven over and over again with not only great coaches, but teachers, mentors, leaders, and bosses. My sons recently had to say good-bye to their Mustangs Lacrosse coach, one of the best coaches they've ever had, as he relocated to Missouri. Even though he won't be on the field coaching them next year, the lessons he taught them will still be in play. Throughout the years, he was not just preparing the boys for their lacrosse games, but he was teaching them to become great men.

Kern County has no shortage of people making a difference in others' lives. In this month's "Hello, Happy Mama" article, on page 14, **Lisa Elzy Watson** shares her personal mission of faith, hope, and life through Casa Esperanza, "Hope House." This non-profit will give women, with or without children, a place to stay and a helping hand modeled after the Alexandria House in Los Angeles. Located at the corner of Panorama Street and Haley Drive, the house is being remodeled and will have its soft opening in 2022. You can find out more about Casa Esperanza at www.esperanzabakersfield.org.

For your monthly dose of humor, Julie Willis writes in her Humor At Home article, "**Yes Day: Outsmarting the Smart TV**," about how having a family day, even if you don't say "yes" to everything, can still be a beautiful day where family memories are made – together! To find out what they did as their version of the family fun, Netflix-original movie, "Yes Day," turn to page 16.

Sometimes during the summer months our routines relax and become non-existent, especially adhering to a normal meal plan. Callie Collins wanted to help give you some ideas to keep family mealtime a priority with the article, "**Family Dinners: 11 Ways to Make Meals Happen, Even in Summer**," on page 12. The ideas range from making it a family affair to changing up the environment and providing interesting, distraction-free memories.



ENTER NOW!

It's that time of year again for **KCFM's Cutest Pet Photo contest**. You can submit dogs, cats, birds, fish, farm animals, or anything that is legal to own in the state of California. All you have to do is upload your pet's cutest photo and fill out a short form at <http://bit.ly/2021kernpets> and then encourage all your friends to vote (once per day). For complete details, turn to page 13.

July is such a fun month when we can enjoy all kinds of water activities, sports, play dates, and fireworks! Just remember that whatever you're doing, there are always little ones watching you and learning from you. Whether you are an official "coach," mentor, or a friend – you can make an impact on someone's life.

Happy Birthday America!



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Standard Middle School Receives the State and National Forum Schools to Watch Award

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond recently announced that Standard Middle School was the only new school included as one of the 31 high-performing California middle schools that have been recognized by the 2021 California Schools to Watch Program. Due to COVID-19, the nationally recognized event for 2020-2021 recipients of the National Forum Schools to Watch was rescheduled to June of 2022 in Washington, D.C.

“We are honored and excited to receive this designation during the challenges of the pandemic,” says Susan Denton, Standard Middle School Principal. “Our staff is committed to providing excellent learning opportunities and to removing barriers to learning for our students. We are proud of the work we have done to expand academics and enrichments as well as social emotional supports for our students. Whether in person or virtually, we strive to provide an excellent, well-rounded education as we value the whole student and strongly believe in relationships. We live and breathe our district motto, ‘We Care!’”

An additional 30 existing schools reapplied to the program, demonstrated their sustained progress, and have been re-designated as 2021 California Schools to Watch. Fruitvale Junior High School was also included on the list in part due to its outstanding forensic medical science program that allows students to experience science hands-on and use their skills of analysis, inquiry, and observation.

“Congratulations to these schools for building systems that support all students in believing in themselves, discovering their individual interests, and working toward their academic, life, and career goals,” Thurman says. “These schools are outstanding examples of how educational innovation and a dedicated school community can keep students engaged and learning through a critical stage in their K-12 journey.”

Summer Movies in the Park

Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, family, and friends to the Movies in the Park that will begin at dusk Friday nights in July, approximately 7-10 p.m., showing in various parks around Bakersfield. Due to Covid19 restrictions, snacks will not available for purchase and participants will be asked to maintain 6-foot social distancing rules. These events are free to the public.

See Happenings on page 19 for film calendar!

For more information, please visit www.bakersfieldcity.us.

Local Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County Awarded \$55,000 to Fuel Young People's Bold Ambitions

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County recently received a \$55,000 grant from the Taco Bell Foundation to support more than 150 teens in the Bakersfield community. The funds will go toward career/college prep sessions, mentoring, summer jobs, etc., and other programs that educate and inspire that next generation of leaders.

“We are honored to partner with the Taco Bell Foundation in championing the educational dreams of our young people,” said Zane Smith, Executive Director of Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County. “The vision we share with the Taco Bell Foundation is one in which every young person has access to quality education and the resources they need to create good.”

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County is one of more than 400+ youth-serving organizations that will receive a portion of the \$10 million in grants being presented by the Taco Bell Foundation this year. The grants are an example of the Taco Bell Foundation’s mission to fuel young people’s boldest educational ambitions.

For more information, please visit www.bgclubsofkerncounty.org.

Donations Needed at M Street Navigation Center

With summer in full swing, it brings hot weather and an influx of new residents to the M Street Navigation Center, 2900 M Street, which also brings a need for personal care items. Adult men and women reside at the M Street Shelter, a partnership between Kern County and the Community Action Partnership of Kern, learning to move past life barriers, including low job skills, mental health issues, and addiction, and into housing and employment. Your donation can help provide them with the self-esteem to move in the direction of self-sufficiency.

M Street needs donations of men’s underwear sizes XL-5X, women’s underwear and sports bras of all sizes, unisex socks, slippers, and flip flops. Donations may be dropped off at the shelter on Fridays between 1-5 p.m.

Learn more about the center at www.capk.org/m-street-navigation-center/





Readers Respond:

Conserving Local Resources

July is the perfect time to assess household usage of local resources. We asked our readers for their advice on conservation. Here are some of your ideas and best practices for our shared community!

Q. How can Kern County residents help conserve local resources?



Support local farmers markets.
- Kimberley Devalle

Plan vacations closer to home to conserve gas/fuel. Water yards and gardens every other day to save water.
- Dianna Coryell

I think Kern County residents can help conserve local resources by doing their part a little bit at a time. This sets us up for attainable goals so we're not overwhelmed. - Marisol Segura



Conserve water, make sure you do not use big appliances during peak hours, and recycling. - Doris Reyes



Kern residents can save resources by continuing to work from home instead of powering up big office buildings. - Skyler O'Neill

Hang laundry out to dry when the sun is out. Don't turn the oven on during hot days. Keep fans on during the day, and shades down over the windows.
- Sheila Lemburg



By leaving an area better than you found it,—pick up litter on a hiking trail, clean up your spot at Hart Park before you leave, respect our land and our wildlife.
- Cari Cowling

One thing that my daughter's school did that was extremely effective was making it a game for everyone. Not only was it easier to explain the reasons to conserve, but also, the whole family was more involved to do so. We've also been showing my daughter online our energy usage using PG&E's dashboard and our water usage so we can compare what we did each month and what the results were.
-Kat Clowes



By planting drought tolerant gardens/landscape.
- Mary Gonsalves




Try to avoid using plastic bottles as much as possible, for example buying bar shampoo and conditioner so you don't have those big bottles!- Janae Hansen

Five Ways to Prevent Mosquito Bites this Summer

Mosquitoes can be a pesky problem every summer, but this year may see a bumper crop. An unusually high number of summer's least favorite flying pest may be due to increased spring rains and fewer people in public spaces, with more standing water left undisturbed. Isolated cases of Zika, West Nile, and Chikungunya have been reported in California, but the daily annoyance of bites is what affects the majority of the population.

While old wives' tales abound with varying methods to keep mosquitoes away, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend proven strategies.



Here are five ways to ward off mosquitoes this summer:

- 1. Mosquito-proof your home:** Use screens on doors and windows. Pour out trash cans, flowerpots, birdbaths, planters, toys, tires, buckets and other sources of standing water where mosquitoes may lay eggs. Change pets' water daily and clean their bowls with soap and water at least once per week. Turn on air conditioning when possible.
- 2. Take care with other sources of exposure:** Cover baby cribs and strollers with mosquito netting. Avoid perfumes or scented lotions when going out.
- 3. Consider specialty plans:** Talk with a gardening specialist about mosquito-repelling plants, which are more cost-effective than citronella or other outdoor fixtures like candles and torches. Traps or other systems may be needed if you own a pool.
- 4. Cover up:** Wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants may be the last thing you want to do when July temperatures top 100 degrees F, but less exposed skin means fewer tissue surfaces mosquitoes can land on. They can still penetrate most cloth but some kinds are better than others, including treated clothing and certain fabrics sold as anti-mosquito. Spraying regular clothing with repellent is also recommended.
- 5. Repellents:** The effectiveness of natural repellants has not been tested or verified. Never use repellent on an infant younger than 2 months of age and follow all package instructions, especially when applying sprays to children. Instead of aiming a bottle's nozzle directly at a child's skin, spray the product onto your hands and apply by transferring it to him or her. Use an EPA-regulated repellent. It should contain one of the following components:
 - DEET
 - Picaridin
 - IR3535
 - Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE)
 - Para-menthane-diol (PMD)
 - 2-undecanone

See the CDC's full list of travel advisories addressing mosquito-borne illnesses and more prevention tips here: www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dvbd/media/stopmosquitoes



Enjoy 8-A-Day

Clinical research is now recommending individuals eat a serving of eight strawberries a day to reap some hefty benefits that are likely to improve heart and brain health, reduce risk of some cancers, and better management of type 2 diabetes.

A serving of 8 strawberries also fulfills the recommended value of vitamin C for an entire day. Vitamin C not only plays a role in immune function, but it helps form vital parts of your body like blood vessels, cartilage, muscle, and collagen in bones. It also helps your body absorb iron from plant foods and is an antioxidant that fights free radicals believed to be linked to heart disease and cancer. www.californiastrawberries.com

Did you know?

According to the American Cancer Society, recent research has found that sleeping problems associated with cancer treatment persist in almost 40 percent of cancer survivors for up to five years after diagnosis. Survivors experiencing difficulty sleeping after successful cancer treatments can discuss their issues with their physicians, who may recommend certain sleep aides or strategies to increase patients' chances of getting more restful sleep.

Are Gap Years Good?

A study from the Gap Year Association found that 77 percent of students who take a gap year do so between high school and college. Parents may not know how to react when their soon-to-be or newly minted high school graduates bring up the idea of taking a gap year, but additional findings from the GYA's "National Alumni Survey" might inspire parents to look at gap years more positively. For example, a survey of the findings of which were based on the responses of hundreds of American and Canadian citizens who had taken gap years in the past found

- 98 percent of respondents indicated their gap years helped them develop as a person,
- 96 percent felt their gap years improved their self-confidence
- 84 percent of respondents felt that they acquired skills to be successful in their careers during their gap years
- 73 percent of survey respondents felt their gap years increased their readiness for college
- 57 percent said their gap years helped them determine what they wanted to study in college.



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Child's Play: Five Tips to Help You Choose the Perfect Kern County Preschool

Although fall may still feel far off, planning for the 2021-2022 school is well underway. Spring enrollment has already taken place for next year's preschool classes, but it's not too late to consider finding placement for your toddler. The need for early decisions often comes as a surprise, especially for first-time parents.

Getting familiar with nearby school options and their enrollment deadlines will help narrow your choices. It is also important to define what you are looking for in early childhood education. Are you seeking a set curriculum and a punctual routine-based schedule? While most preschools do include some academics with fixed hours, their approach otherwise varies.

From nature school hosted outdoors to Montessori and other specific methods, our community benefits from unique approaches that can be the perfect fit for your child. Less formal settings that include free play are also an option.

Community Connection for Child Care (CCCC) is Kern County's only preschool resource and referral agency. CCCC describes itself as "a child development and family services agency dedicated to providing options, education, and support to children, families, child development professionals, and the community." Find more information at <https://kern.org/cccc/>.

Choosing the perfect preschool depends on your parenting style, childcare needs, and, most of all, your unique child.



Here are five tips to guide your preschool search:

Check licensing status and read previous violations: Not unlike daycares, preschools are required to be licensed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Criteria to evaluate sanitation standards, teacher-to-child ratios and other metrics help ensure that preschools maintain optimal conditions for young children. Find full reports, including complaints and history of violations, at http://bit.ly/CDSS_preschool.

Visit the classroom: Even with COVID-19's new standards of reduced capacity and social distancing, preschools should welcome parent tours, classroom observations, and in-person trial days. "Come play with us!" should be a common theme. Whether you spend half a day or half an hour, take the time to go in person before settling on a specific school. Meet the director, talk with teachers, and take your time in the space where your child could be spending a significant portion of their early years. While schools certainly prefer parents to schedule a tour, dropping by unannounced can give you a better sense of how a typical day goes.

Ask about standard practices: Make a list of questions before you go. In addition to your own need-to-know queries, be sure to inquire about these important topics:

- What is a typical day like in the classroom?

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- What is your average teacher-child ratio?
- How are your teachers selected and are they professionals with degrees?
- What is teacher turnover like here?
- How are your curriculum standards developed?
- What key skills or major concepts will children have gained after completing the academic year?
- Is a nap mat required? Are safe sleep standards followed?
- Does a child have to be potty trained to attend or just working through age-appropriate progress?
- How are allergies handled at school?
- How long is recess and how many recesses are incorporated into the day?
- What paperwork is required to complete enrollment (i.e. birth certificate, vaccine records, etc.)?

Verify total cost: Double-check monthly fees, which may have increased during the pandemic. Be aware of enrollment fees. Asking for the first and last month's tuition in advance is also a standard practice at many preschools, in addition

to supply fees. Seemingly small expenses can add up. Ask in advance what additional fees can be expected throughout the year, such as uniform requirements, field trips costs, class portraits or mandatory contributions to charitable causes. A portion of your tuition may be tax deductible; do not hesitate to ask office staff for full disclosure of financial aspects related to attending. An available scholarship or subsidy may surprise you.

Have a second option or third in mind: As with many parenting decisions, the ability to be flexible is also important when it comes to preschool. Even when enrollment is readily available, having a second or even third designated choice that checks the boxes for budget and quality can minimize frustration later if your first option isn't working out.

Choosing a preschool may not feel like child's play during the selection process, but it is a worthwhile effort with outstanding benefits. Social, academic, and developmental progress are part of almost every school setting. No matter which preschool you choose, cheers to your choice.



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11 Ways to Make Family Dinners Happen, Even in Summer

Gathering around the table isn't just for holidays and special occasions.

Besides the obvious goal of providing for everyone's nutritional needs, meals are a perfect time to reconnect. Getting everyone around the table can be a challenge with summer schedules.

Seasonal activities, lack of appetite, and not wanting to cook on hot days that turn into uncomfortably warm evenings can all be reasons to skip dinner together.

thefamilydinnerproject.org lists numerous benefits of connecting at mealtimes, including lower rates of obesity, depression, substance abuse, and eating disorders, in addition to higher consumption of fruits and vegetables, healthier eating patterns into adulthood and improved family communication.

Here are 11 ways to make family dinners happen this summer:

1. Plan meals and go grocery shopping together. Putting time toward an activity gets everyone involved and teaches life skills like checking expiration dates, how to choose ripe produce, and basic budgeting.

2. Get kids into the kitchen. Involve children in the cooking process to continue those life lessons, including measuring, safety, and cooking basics.

3. Assign a day to each family member. Making one person responsible for the day's main meal helps spread around the responsibility. Closely supervised cooking

for ages 6 and up can help get a meal on the table.

4. Announce the menu. If your family is reluctant to turn up for dinner, make it something everyone looks forward to with a favorite meal or new main dish to try.

5. Try a zero heat meal. Salad, cold cuts, gazpacho: keep the heat out of the kitchen for a fresh taste you won't mind preparing.

6. Change the format. Meals don't have to be a traditional fork and knife place setting. Try a sandwich buffet or charcuterie board.

7. Go outside. Find a shady place and spread a picnic blanket. Try dinner at a local park instead of your own yard.

8. Eat dessert first. Pique kids' interest by serving dessert first on Friday nights.

9. Turn off distractions. Family members may be hesitant to gather around the table if electronics are too distracting. Put phones into a basket before dinner and eat without TV in the background.

10. Keep the conversation pleasant. Family dinner is not always the time to trot out difficult issues. Try reviewing thorns, leaves and roses, i.e., the worst, most interesting, and best details of each person's day.

11. Try, try again. Changing your routine is not always easy. If your family is not receptive to one strategy, keep trying.

CHILL OUT!

And try these blueberry oatmeal... popsicles? (Yes, they're delicious!)

July is National Blueberry Month, and blueberries are ripe and ready! These easy to make popsicles are chock full of healthy goodness, but taste like a treat. It's hot out there! Why not start off the day with a popsicle for breakfast? (Plus you'll have happy kids, and that's double the treat for you!)



Blueberry Oatmeal Yogurt Popsicles

Prep time: 5 minutes | Cook time: 2 minutes

Total time: at least 3 hours to freeze | Serving size: makes 10 popsicles

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup quick cooking oats
- 1 cup whole milk (or dairy free milk)
- 1 1/2 cups fresh California blueberries, divided
- 1 small banana, mashed (about 1/4 cup)
- Pinch of sea salt
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 16 ounces vanilla yogurt

Instructions:

1. Place oats and milk in a microwave bowl.
2. Smash the blueberries with a potato masher and add 2/3 of the mashed blueberries to the bowl with the oats, reserving the remaining blueberries.
3. Add the banana to the bowl along with the sea salt. Whisk well to combine and microwave for 2 minutes.
4. Remove from the microwave, and let cool until the mixture is luke-warm. Stir in remaining mashed blueberries and the honey.
5. Spoon one tablespoon of the blueberry oat mixture into the bottom of each popsicle mold and tap mold on the countertop to flatten mixture evenly. Spoon one tablespoon of vanilla yogurt onto the blueberry layer. Tap mold again. Repeat, alternating blueberries and yogurt until the molds are full.
6. Top with the lid and popsicle sticks. Freeze until solid, at least a few hours or overnight.

Recipe courtesy of www.agirldefloured.com and www.calblueberry.org



Calling all pet owners in Kern County!

We know you think your pet is the cutest around—here's your chance to prove it! Our annual pet photo contest is looking for the cutest pets in Kern County and we want your entry!

The dog days of summer are here, but our contest is not limited to canines. This year's contest is open to beloved family members with fur, fins and feathers. If it's legal to own in the state of California, we'll be happy to include your pet photo submission. Pigs, rabbits, hamsters, and horses: we want to see them all!

Enter our Cutest Pet Photo Contest! Here's how it works:

1. Enter your pet by filling out a short form and uploading your pet's photo at <http://bit.ly/2021kernpets>
2. Return to the website daily between July 16-26 to place your vote! One email can vote only once per day.
3. The three photos with the most votes will be named First, Second and Third Place Winners.

The winners will be announced via Kern County Family Magazine social media the week of Aug. 1.

GRAND PRIZE

- Deluxe care package from Fur and Feathers Luxury Pet Resort
- \$100 gift card to Grocery Outlet on Brimhall & Jewetta
- \$100 Gift card to Temblor Brewing Company courtesy of Gregory D. Bynum & Associates

2ND & 3RD PLACE PRIZES

- \$50 gift card from Fur and Feathers Luxury Pet Resort
- \$50 gift card to Grocery Outlet on Brimhall & Jewetta
- \$50 Gift card to Temblor Brewing Company courtesy of Gregory D. Bynum & Associates

ABOUT KCFM'S 2021 CUTEST PET PHOTO CONTEST SPONSORS:

Fur and Feathers Luxury Pet Resort

3329 Allen Road, Bakersfield
furandfeatherspetresort.net

Pam Shockley is the proud local owner of the Allen Road location of Fur and Feathers Luxury Pet Resort. A registered veterinary technician, Pam had more than 20 years of clinical experience, including 10 years of emergency care, before opening the business in 2006. She is used to seeing dogs, cats, birds, guinea pigs, lizards, potbelly pigs and other household pets each day.



Pam Shockley with Fred and Flossie

Boarding, daycare and grooming are the main services offered. A staff of 28 takes care of the animals, with procedures in place to ensure their individual needs are met.

Two 4,800 square-foot buildings at the corner of Allen and Meacham Roads make it possible for animals to be housed with ample space to enjoy grassy areas and supervised play. Dogs experience outdoor play times four to five times per day in designated groups classified by compatible characteristics like size and breed.

"We see dogs literally pulling their owners through our doors from the parking lot because they are so excited to come in and play," said Pam. "Socialization is so healthy and important for them. It can absolutely build their confidence and lets them learn how to play with other dogs. They are inherently social animals. During this time of quarantine, with less social contact overall, many dogs have only seen their owners and been in their new homes. Dogs really need to know how to be with other dogs."

Pam's previous experience with medical issues helps inform the oversight the facility offers when working with dogs in need of consistent, specialized care due to conditions like diabetes or during post-operative circumstances. She also feels strongly about educating the public on the issue of kennel cough, which can be similar to the concept of a cold for dogs that spreads during social interaction with other dogs. The importance of the bordatella vaccine to aid in prevention is key.

Pets are an important part of Pam's life at work and at home. She is the proud owner of a Doberman, a Collie, a Pomeranian-Chihuahua mix and a new poodle puppy, in addition to two cats, two cockatoos and a blue fronted amazon that sings "God Bless America." She is also a mother of two and a grandmother of two, with plans to open a new location in Yuba City later this year.

Fur and Feathers Luxury Pet Resort is known for attention to detail and optimal care of animals, which makes the business an ideal provider for our Cutest Pet Contest grand prize.

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11200 Brimhall Road at Jewetta Ave.
 Derek and Amanda Steitz, Grocery Outlet
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Derek and Amanda are the proud owners of Buster Brown (R) and Boo Bear (L).

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Family since 2021, we deliver superior customer service to our community. So come in and see for yourself. It might seem like a dream, but we guarantee the savings couldn't be more real.

Greg Bynum

Greg Bynum, local entrepreneur, has made our Temblor Brewing prize possible for each winner. See more about Temblor at temblor-brewing.com

Bynum, Inc. is a full service real estate company specializing in real estate development, architecture, appraisal-analysis, consultation, property management and brokerage services in Bakersfield and surrounding areas.



Mary & Greg Bynum with Golden Retriever, Sonny

Hello, Happy Mama: Lisa Elzy Watson shares her personal mission of faith, hope and life through Casa Esperanza

Editor's note: Lisa Elzy Watson would like to dedicate this article to Constance, the mother who gave her life, and Carolyne, the mother who taught her how to live life.



which allows them to get the training they need to get a job and also produce enough income to not only move into a permanent home but sustain it by making more than minimum wage, which we know is not a livable wage.”

Women considered for residency must be referred by designated agencies and meet a series of predetermined conditions, including interviews and review of their personal history on a case-by-case basis. They cannot be in a state of active addiction or working through substance abuse rehabilitation, nor fleeing from domestic violence within the past 12 months, conditions intended to contribute to the home's safety and stability, particularly given that many of its future occupants will be children.

Working, going to school, or both, is required of the women, who can stay for up to 24 months. Other conditions, such as attending money management classes, helping prepare meals, and keeping the property clean, must also be met. Each mother must also care for her own children, who are housed in her room. A percentage of wages earned while living at Casa Esperanza also goes to maintaining the home; part of those earnings are also essentially held in trust so the women can access their funds at a later time as a way to save up for permanent housing and independent living.

Funding is made possible through annual fundraisers, private donors, contributors who match funds through community donations, and grants to the organization as a 501(c)3. Most recently, the Give Big Kern initiative hosted this past May raised more than \$38,000.

“We believe in helping people who want to help themselves...coupling rights with responsibilities helps women to get their feet under themselves. If you are willing to make lasting change, Casa Esperanza can help you find gainful employment, get your children into school, get your oneness with yourself, and move on.”

-Lisa Elzy Watson

Lisa is a firm believer in women's ability to provide for themselves and their families with the right community support in place. An educator by training, she has witnessed progress through an incredible variety of life roles and experiences. The founder of LightWave Education, a literacy and leadership program for students in grades one through 12, she also implemented Freedom School, a summer enrichment program focused on helping children find a love for reading. One of her first mentor teachers, Peter Fenn, helped connect Lisa with the Casa Esperanza team; he

Lisa Elzy Watson's life experiences have centered around service to others. Telling her story without mentioning women and children, teaching and leading, faith and hope is impossible. More accustomed to advocating for causes than including herself in the story, Lisa was eager to share her involvement as a board member with local non-profit Casa Esperanza.

“There are people out there who simply need a hand. This is not about throwing money at you and hoping. This is about putting tools in place so a woman who is down on her circumstances can be a productive member of society,” said Lisa. “I know it can happen in Bakersfield.”

The idea for Casa Esperanza began in 2014. A dedicated group of Kern County women came together and modeled the concept after the Alexandria House in Los Angeles, which serves women in similar situations.

The name, “Hope House,” refers to the concept of it being a transitional setting that leads to a better life path.

“These services are for women who find themselves in difficult situations. They may or may not have children,” said Lisa. “The goal is to instill confidence, courage, and strength so a woman who is currently homeless can come to be gainfully employed and living in permanent housing.”

Families with children are the fastest-growing segment of the population experiencing homelessness, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless. Kern County also ranked ninth in homelessness out of California's 58 counties before 2020, as listed by Kern County Superintendent of Schools data.

An estimated 97% of homeless students move up to three times in a single school year and 40% attend at least two different schools. Learning loss from disruption, including the issue of non-transferable high school credits, also contributes to generational poverty, as students living with instability are more likely to fall behind their peers or even drop out of school.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, seven out of 10 families were one paycheck away from homelessness, as reported by the American Aid Foundation, with new figures pending. Single women who are head of household and the family's only wage-earners find themselves without feasible housing options at a higher rate than married couples.

While she credits faith as having a key role in her personal life, Lisa described Casa Esperanza as faithful but not tied to any particular religious affiliation despite partnerships with local churches and religious leaders.

“We believe in helping people who want to help themselves,” she said. “Coupling rights with responsibilities helps women to get their feet under themselves. If you are willing to make lasting change, Casa Esperanza can help you find gainful employment, get your children into school, get your oneness with yourself, and move on.”

Situated at the corner of Panorama Street and Haley Drive, the house has seven bedrooms, which allows for six women to stay, with or without children, and a resident manager. The property, which was formerly used as a foster home, is currently being renovated.

Dave Packard Custom Homes is helping with many of the necessary repairs: replacing flooring, cabinets, and the HVAC system, adding fencing to the property, and making the yard a great space for children are all part of what has to happen before the program launches.

A soft opening with two or three participants is likely to take place in the first quarter of 2022.

“It's the perfect home for what we're doing and those renovations will restore it to its original glory,” said Lisa. “The house is directly across from Bakersfield College, which is ideal because our participants can enroll in certificate programs,



Before and After: Casa Esperanza's newly purchased home (above); (below) Artist rendition of finished and remodeled Casa Esperanza.

Images from esperanzabakersfield.org.



People could send in their guesses. The number was low and I thought 'What am I doing here?' So my friend and I felt like kind of big fish in a small pond in Detroit. Looking at it, our friends and family said 'If anyone can make it, it's you two.' We hopped in the car and decided to go for it."

Lisa stayed in the area and flourished. Her friend has since relocated but continues to be a successful professional, too. Motherhood has been a key part of Lisa's life as well; her daughter is now a third year student at Harvard Law, where she is president of the Black Student Activities Association.

"I stay busy," Lisa said with a laugh. She continues to also be involved with Laborers of the Harvest and the Shar-On Corporation in Taft, which distributes food to people in need who do not have access through traditional distribution channels.

"I feel like it's my obligation and my honor to live a life of service," she explained. "My faith really is what keeps me going. I am just grateful."

Lisa said she owes that sense of how to love God and how to love others to her mother and offers this advice to other moms: "You don't have to put your dreams aside because you had children. You might have to approach them differently, but live your dreams, so your children can understand how to live theirs."

She also recommends what she calls "true self-care" by taking time out each day for an internal pause.

"You have to give yourself a few minutes, wherever you find it during your day. A moment of joy to reconnect to your yes, to all you have said 'yes' to in your life. You said 'yes' to motherhood. You said 'yes' to commitments. We can lose ourselves in all of the activity but find joy in those moments. Remember why you said 'yes,'" she offered. "Also, make quiet time happen with a child to ground them and let them know they are safe."

Lisa has dedicated her life to helping children feel safe, secure, and cared for at home, in the classroom, and in the community. She plans to continue as a Casa Esperanza board member and looks forward to seeing women and their children find success, security, and happiness.

Find more information about Casa Esperanza at <https://www.esperanzabakersfield.org/>.

felt it would be a good fit, as his mother, Kathy Fenn, served on its board.

"When a position came up, she told me to do it," said Lisa. "I decided I really loved what they do, the Casa Esperanza concept and how they would approach it, including a really smart way to do the finances. All the ingredients are there."

Lisa said she is drawn to service because when she reflects on her life, she considers how much people gave to her while growing up.

"I remember community enrichment programs," she said. "When it became my turn, I asked 'How can I give back?'"

The concept of community has always been clear to Lisa. When her sister went through a difficult time with the end of her marriage as a newly-single mother to three small children, she recalls how others rallied around her. With that help, she graduated college, became a professional, raised her children and is now a church elder.

Lisa graduated from the University of Michigan and set her sights on creating structure for children to learn. She and a friend decided to leave their area, however, and move to California.

"It was the coldest winter at that time on record in the state of Michigan," she said. "I think it was 1992. I remember reading in the newspaper one day, there was a contest, 'How many hours of daylight will we have in February?'"

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http://bit.ly/july_happymama



Yes Day: Outsmarting the Smart TV

We decided to have a family Netflix night. We picked a night. We picked a movie. We made popcorn.

There was just one problem: We have a smart tv. That thing isn't very smart.

Or maybe "smart" refers to what the user must be in order to get the thing to work. The only thing we can ever do on our smart tv is watch DVDs. (And yes, there are people who still watch DVDs. Four of us.) After 30 minutes of trying to get the movie to play on the not-very-smart-"Smart-tv," we watched it on our PC. By then, the mood was just about killed, and all the popcorn and candy were gone. At last, we sat huddled in front of the computer, ready for movie night. Well, not exactly "huddled." More like my husband and children squished onto the loveseat that they had dragged in front of the computer while I got to sit on a dining room chair. (Which was fine. No one was climbing all over me.)

The movie was "Yes Day." The kids, of course, thought the premise was the best thing ever: The parents say "yes" to whatever the kids want for an entire day. Imagine the chaos (ahem, I mean fun) that could ensue when the family overindulges on ice cream for breakfast, leaves the windows down as they go through the car wash, and the mother gets arrested for fighting with another patron over an oversized, stuffed pink gorilla at Magic Mountain. My children wondered when we could have our own yes day.

My husband and I, on the other hand, looked at our spoiled children and said with our eyes, "What are they talking about? Every day around here is a yes day." Our children live in the twenty-first century. They have running water and electricity. And toys and books and parents who work from home. What could they possibly think we ever say "no" to?

After we had watched the movie—and had the appropriate family discussion about the lessons the kids in the movie learned—I asked my kids this very question. "Every day around here is 'yes' day," I said. "What do we say 'no' to?"

Oh, they could answer that question, all right:

No, they cannot have ice cream for breakfast. (True.)

No, they cannot stay up all night. (Also true.)

No, they cannot skip showers.

No, they cannot skip school.

No, I will not get in the pool with them when it is under a hundred degrees outside or below 84 in the water. (I know. Killjoy.)

No, they cannot eat butter by the spoonful. (Well, there was that time when Samantha was 16 months old and ate all the butter out of the dish at Luigi's before we noticed the pile of wrappers she had been discreetly dropping under the table. We have been very careful about butter since dealing with the diaper disaster that led to.)

And, *no, we do not let them drive.* (Good grief. They are 8 and 10.)

My husband and I decided that we could, however, use a family day. All four of us. Together. For the whole day. Not a yes day. Just a family day.

For Family-Yes-Day-That-Is-Not-Really-"Yes Day"-Day, we did normal activities—gardening, swimming. But we did everything together. With no electronic devices.

I even went in the pool (a performance I am unlikely to repeat in the near future), so it seems the kids were not the only ones to learn a lesson from the film. No thanks to the smart tv.

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KERN COUNTY FAMILY MAGAZINE *daily happenings* THE **BEST** LOCAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS!

Our printed version of the calendar has been edited for space. For more details about these events or activities not listed please visit www.kerncountyfamily.com

Every Saturday in July

F St Farmers Market

Bakersfield's Longest Running Certified Farmer's Market featuring Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, Pork, Honey, Handmade Soaps, Baked Goods, Jams, Jellies & More!!

Accepts cash, card & EBT. Social distancing practiced throughout the market.

Come and meet your local Farmers and Craftsmen and buy local, buy fresh! Chat with the people who grow your food and the craftsmen who hand make their products while supporting local businesses.

City Center

3201 F St, Bakersfield

(661) 342-4671

Time: 7:45am – 12pm

www.visitbakersfield.com/events-calendar/valley-farmers-market/

Every Saturday in July

Lakeshore Farmer's Market-Wofford Heights

We have some great farmer's markets in Kern County, and this is another one. Give your whole family the gift of fresh fruits, vegetables, and homemade goodies. Drive up the hill for some amazing finds on Saturdays.

7466 Wofford Blvd

Wofford Heights CA 93285

(760) 417-9575

Time: 9am – 1pm

Ongoing Each Monday

Hoffmann Hospice Grief Support

HEALING HEARTS (Parents that have lost children)

This is a particularly difficult time to experience the death of a loved one. Hoffmann Hospice Grief Support groups are led by trained grief counselors. The meetings are free and open to all. You do not need to have a loved one on our service to attend.

Space is limited, reservation required for all groups. Please call (661) 410-1010 to schedule.

Mondays via ZOOM (online group)

Bakersfield, CA

(661) 410-1010

Time: 5:30-6:30pm

www.hoffmannhospice.org/grief-support-groups/



July 3

Fireworks Celebration Sponsored by the Shafter Chamber of Commerce

The Celebration is FREE to the public – Donations are welcome. Proceeds to benefit the Shafter Chamber of Commerce and will be used to offset the cost of the fireworks show.

Gates open at 6:00 p.m. The Fireworks Show will begin at 9:00 p.m. with a welcome, presentation of the Flag Salute, National Anthem and Invocation. Zambelli International will present a Fireworks Spectacular at Dusk with a colorful aerial ending with a Grand Finale of color that will light up the Shafter sky.

NO ALCOHOL OR BBQ'S ALLOWED
Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Funnel Cakes, Shaved Ice, and more available for purchase!

Shafter High School

(Recreation Field)

526 Mannel Ave, Shafter, CA

Time: 6 - 10pm

www.shafterchamberofcommerce.com/community-calendar

Low-Cost Pet Vaccine Clinic for Dogs

The City of Bakersfield Animal Control division hosts a monthly clinic at parks within the city. The clinics provide access to the community for rabies vaccinations, licensing and micro-chipping. A license must be purchased at the same time as the Rabies vaccination.

FREE Microchips are available to all currently licensed dogs (chip registration is included).

Silver Creek Park

7011 Harris Road

Bakersfield CA 93313

661-832-7387

Time: 9am – 12pm

www.bakersfieldcity.us/gov/depts/animal_care_center/clinics.htm

July 4

All-American 4th of July Festival

The City of Tehachapi has announced the return of the All-American 4th of July Festival on Sunday, July 4th, 2021.

The event begins with the All-American from 7-11am and the American Legion will once again host the Wall of Valor honoring local service men and women while the City of Tehachapi will conduct a flag-raising ceremony and National Anthem at Noon. Food vendors will be available at the park from 11 AM to 4 PM with the Tehachapi Valley Wrestling Club hosting the beer garden as part of their annual fundraising efforts. The evening will culminate with a fireworks spectacular originating from the north side of Tehachapi Municipal Airport at 9 P.M.

Philip Marx Central Park

Mojave & E Streets

Tehachapi, CA

(661) 822-2200

Time: 7am-10pm

www.liveuptehachapi.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=556

July 10

Second Saturday

If you're looking for a fun and walkable weekend on the town, look no further — Second Saturday's monthly weekend gathering brings businesses and the community together in Downtown Bakersfield to explore fun new opportunities! From yoga & art to deals & popups to good eats & coffee, there's something for everyone.

Bakersfield, CA

Email: hello@bakersfieldsecondsaturday.com

Time: 9am – 8pm

www.bakersfieldsecondsaturday.com



July 20

United Way of Kern County 30th Professional Development Conference

For 29 years United Way of Kern County has hosted a professional development conference for members and directors of nonprofit organizations and way makers. This year, United Way of Kern County will host its 30th Annual Professional Development Conference for a wider audience in need. It includes community and health-based organizations, along with elected city officials and individuals who want to make a positive impact where they live. The conference allows for individuals to network and share plans and collaborate to better serve the community.

(661) 834-1820
Time: 7:30am-3:30pm
uwkern.org/conference/



Bakersfield Marriott
801 Truxtun Ave, Bakersfield CA

Summer Movies in the Park

Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, family, and friends to the Movies in the Park that begin at dusk on Friday nights (approx. 7pm-10pm). **These events are free to the public.** For more information, please visit www.bakersfieldcity.us.

Friday, July 2

The Emperor's New Groove
Wilson Park, 2400 Wilson Road.

Friday, July 9

A Dog's Journey
Silver Creek Park, 7011 Harris Road

Friday, July 16

Little Giants
Mesa Marin Sports Complex, 10315 CA-178

Friday, July 23

Toy Story 4
River Walk, 11298 Stockdale Highway



DO YOU HAVE A LOCAL EVENT SPROUTING UP?



Our Happenings section is dedicated to bringing the most current events to you, but we need your help! You can submit your calendar events at

kerncountyfamily.com

"Submit Calendar Event" can be found under the Calendar tab. Please submit calendar events by the 10th of each month prior to ensure we have enough time to consider your event.

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PAGES 22-23

ACTIVITY CORNER ANSWERS

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- 1. Grates
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- 8. Deer
- 9. Gathers

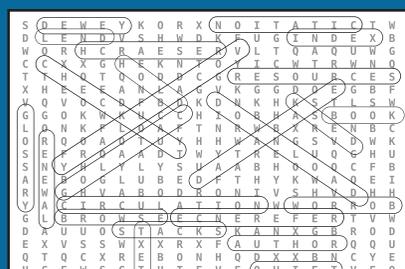
DOWN

- 1. Grilling
- 2. Table
- 3. Poultry
- 6. Fear

SUDOKU

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

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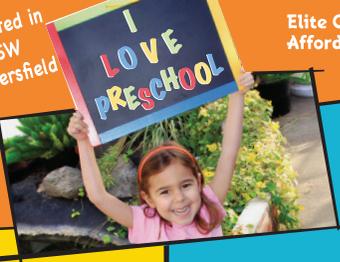
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AUTISM SOCIETY

Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism
Kern Autism Network

"Autism Society Chapter-Kern Autism Network provides support, awareness, information and education to families and the public throughout Kern County"



Have a safe and Happy 4th of July!

Coming Soon, our events will resume after the summer break, stay tuned.

We are dedicated to helping families and adults with autism during these times of uncertainty and have face masks available, so please contact us if you are in need. Please see our website www.kernautism.org or our Facebook page for the latest updates and subscribe to our newsletter for further information.

Covid-19 Resources <http://www.autismsocietyca.org/ca-affiliates.html>

EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM:

- Delayed language development
- Repetitive language
- Little or no eye contact
- Repetitive mannerisms
- Inflexible routines or rituals
- Preoccupation with object parts
- Little interest in friendships

SERVICES OFFERED:

- Monthly Parent Support Groups
- Adults on the Spectrum Support Group
- Law Enforcement Trainings
- Autism/Asperger Workshops-Seminars
- Local Resources, Community Projects
- Camps & Activity Scholarships
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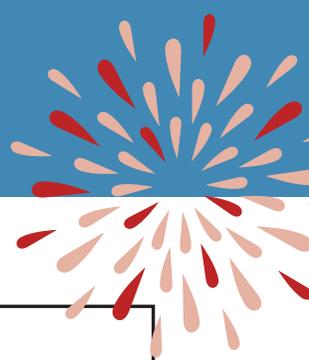
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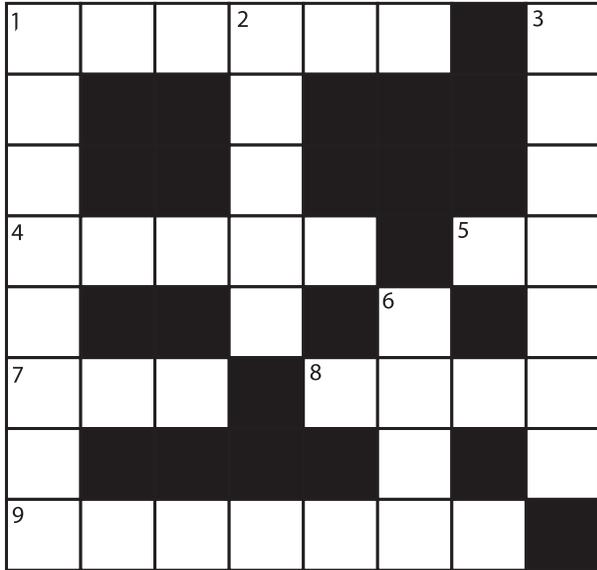
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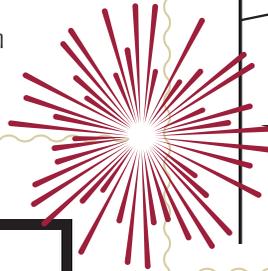
ACROSS

1. Metal frames on a grill
4. Cup-shaped spoon
5. Midwestern state (abbr.)
7. Writing fluid
8. Venison
9. Comes together

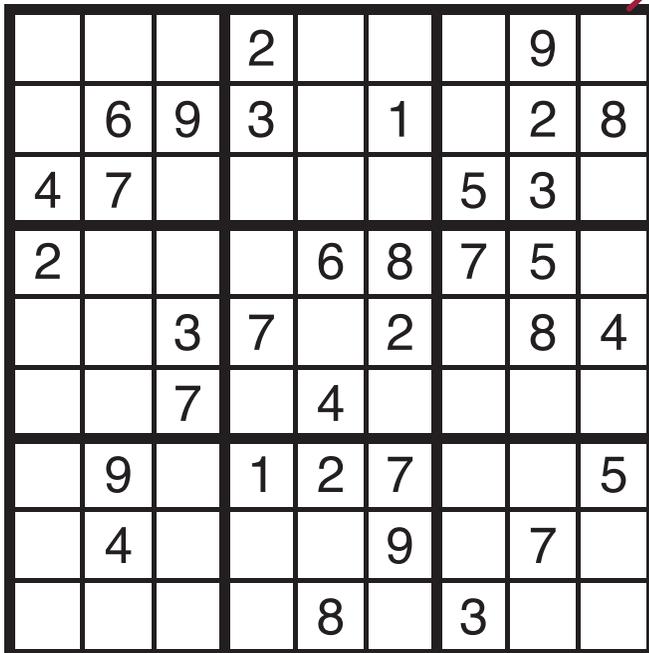
DOWN

1. Cooking food over a flame
2. Place to eat a meal
3. Chicken or turkey
6. Unpleasant emotion

Color Fun



Sudoku



Level: Beginner

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

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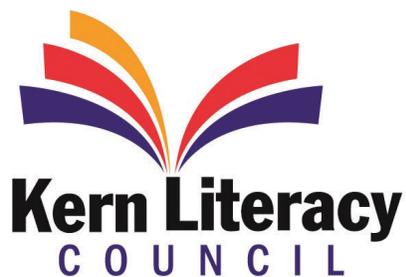
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Summer reading is THE key to school success in the fall. With books, you can be at the zoo in the morning, the ocean in the afternoon, and Solla Sollew at bedtime. Many summer programs support reading and even give away free books. Libraries can be your family's best friends—in person or online.

Check out www.kernliteracy.org and click on Summer Reading to see all the options. For assistance, call our office at 661.324.3213.



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LIFE

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

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