

Donna's Day

Creative family fun
by Donna Erickson

'What's in a Word' Family Game

What do you think of when you hear the word "table"? In your mind, do you see the large rectangular piece of furniture in your kitchen? Your fourth-grader might picture a multiplication chart, and your sixth-grader a list of contents at the beginning of a book.

Each person's frame of reference develops from a perception of things based on the information we know and the things familiar to us. In a typical family, it's not unusual to find one person's frame of reference totally opposite from another's, which often leads to the familiar, "I don't understand where you're coming from!"

Here is a fun word game to help the whole family appreciate differences in perception.

Give each family member a piece of paper and a pencil, and five minutes to write down all of the pictures that pop in his or her mind when a particular word is heard. Then compare lists. For example, try the word "copy" and see what comes up. Did you write that it means to duplicate on a machine? Maybe Grandmother wrote copy

means to draw, trace or write the same thing over. If Dad is a newspaper writer, copy is the words or manuscript he writes. If Mom is a police officer, to copy means to understand.

Or, think of the various meanings of the word "key." In addition to figuring out "key" meanings to this game, one person might be dreaming of the warm weather in the Florida Keys this time of year, while another who plays an instrument thinks of the musical key of a favorite song. A key to a road map helps understand its symbols, and a car key gets you on the road.

Discuss factors that may have made your definitions different, such as the person's age, work or school environ-



ment. Continue with other words. As you become more aware, encourage your children to explore the difference in cultures of people in the community, whether they embrace a religion different from yours, speak a language other than English or come from another country.

Find more recipes and family fun at www.donnaerickson.com. Write to Donna at Info@donnaerickson.com

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Comfort foods

Made fast and healthy
by Healthy Exchanges

Creamy Cherry Banana Pie

You'll hear lots of praise when you serve this pie. It's sure to be a "keeper" in your recipe file!

- 1 (4 serving) package sugar-free vanilla cook-and-serve pudding mix
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 12 maraschino cherries, quartered
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans
- 1 (6-ounce) purchased short bread pie crust

- 1 cup sliced (1 medium sized) banana
- 1/2 cup reduced-calorie whipped topping

1. In a large saucepan, combine dry pudding mix, dry milk powder and water. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens and starts to boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla extract, cherry pieces and pecans.

2. Spread 1/2 cup of hot pudding mixture into bottom of pie crust. Arrange banana slices evenly over pudding. Spread remaining pudding mixture over bananas.

3. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Cut into 8 pieces. When serving, top each piece with 1 tablespoon whipped topping.

• Each serving equals: 186 calories, 6g fat, 3g protein, 30g carb., 183mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Starch, 1 Fat, 1/2 Fruit.

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Good Housekeeping

Best Brownies

- 1/2 cup butter or margarine (1 stick), cut up
- 4 ounces unsweetened chocolate, broken into pieces
- 2 ounces semisweet chocolate, broken into pieces
- 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- Salt
- 1 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease 9-by-9-inch metal baking pan; line with foil, extending foil above edge on 2 sides. Grease foil.

2. In 3-quart saucepan, heat butter and chocolates over medium-low heat until melted, stirring frequently. Remove saucepan from heat; stir in sugar and vanilla. Add eggs; stir until well-mixed. Stir flour and 1/2 teaspoon salt into chocolate mixture just until blended. Stir in nuts, if using. Spread batter in pan.

3. Bake brownie 25 to 30 minutes or until toothpick inserted 2 inches from edge comes out almost clean with a few moist crumbs attached. Cool in pan on wire rack.

4. Cut cool brownie into 4 strips; cut each strip crosswise into 6 bars. Makes 2 dozen brownies.

TIP: We love these brownies with just about any nut. If you're craving more chunks, add 1 cup of dried cherries, raisins or chocolate chips to the batter.

• Each brownie without nuts: About 150 calories, 8g total fat (5g saturated), 2g protein, 19g carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 38mg cholesterol, 100mg sodium.

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Good Housekeeping

Macaroni and Cheese With Beef

- 1 tablespoon light vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 2 cans (15-ounce) tomato sauce
- 3/4 package (16-ounce) mostaccioli or ziti macaroni
- 1 package (8-ounce, 2 cups) shredded Cheddar cheese

1. In a 12-inch skillet over medium heat, in hot vegetable oil, cook onion and green pepper until tender. Stir in ground beef; over medium-high heat, cook until pan juices evaporate and meat is browned; spoon off fat, if any.

2. Stir in tomato sauce and 3/4 cup water; heat to boiling. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and simmer 25 minutes to blend flavors.

3. Meanwhile, prepare macaroni as label directs; drain.

4. Stir macaroni and cheese into beef mixture until cheese melts. Serves 6.

• Each serving: About 590 calories, 27g total fat, 89mg cholesterol, 1140mg sodium.

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

COVID Isolation Affects Our Mental Health, Too

COVID hits seniors hard. Many of us have underlying medical conditions that make a diagnosis of COVID very risky in terms of recovery. But the lockdown from the pandemic has another risky side: mental health disorders.

Whether we're living at home, in a retirement center or a care facility, our isolation has been very stressful.

A survey conducted in June concluded that seniors were less negatively affected than other age groups when it comes to mental health. They say we have better emotional regulation, which means we don't react as strongly to negative events.

But the study was done when we were only a few months into this new way of living. (Even the study mentions that as a caveat.) Now eight more months have passed. Holidays without family. Missed doctor appointments. We've had to take a crash course in online chat to be able to see and talk to friends and family. Our regular meetings and social outings are canceled. The news has been a daily onslaught of the increasing numbers of positive cases and deaths.

A more recent study from Portugal unearthed the truth, however. After reviewing 41 pieces of research from around the world, scientists concluded that "anxiety, depression, poor sleep quality and physical inactivity" have been prevalent among seniors during our lockdowns.

If you're struggling, ask for help. In some communities, hotlines have opened up to deal with this kind of stress. Look online for "mental health hotline" and your state. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention set up a web page in December. Search online for "CDC Coping with Stress" and look at all the offerings on the page. There is a national helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). Or you can just pick up the phone and dial 211. It's a referral for community services. Stay safe.

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VETERANS POST

by Freddy Groves

Sarge's Attic Dormitory

I slid through the backdoor of the coffee shop and found Sarge discussing the lease with four new guys — homeless veterans moving into the upstairs dormitory.

"And now we come to the most serious clause of this lease agreement," he was saying. "Theft. I'm a real hard case about theft, and I have my own definition of it."

He looked around the room and the guys were watching him warily.

"If you take a magazine off another guy's dresser, read it and put it back, you've committed theft, in my eyes. Theft of trust. You do not touch another man's stuff, ever."

Half an hour later, we all piled out the back door to a rental truck full of furniture and hauled bed frames, mattresses, dressers, lamps, nightstands and large cartons up the narrow staircase.

Sarge stood at the top of the stairs like a drill instructor interior decorator, ordering the furniture placed in exact spots he'd marked out on the floor with blue duct tape. I popped open the boxes and the men took sheets, blankets, pillows and towel sets. In short order, the room was ... beautiful. Three of them flopped onto their beds, groaning with comfort. One guy refused: "I won't touch it until I have a shower." Sarge cocked his thumb at the bath at other end of the finished attic and the guy took off, cradling his armload of towels like they were gold.

Later, Sarge and I stood in the cold outside the back door, the first snowflakes of the next storm swirling around us. "I hope I selected right," he said. "I originally thought I'd bring in six guys, but I wasn't sure about two of them. These four seem like the best combination for success. I hope they get along."

We heard thundering on the stairs as his formerly homeless renters came down to the kitchen to fix themselves some dinner. There was a lot of loud chattering — and laughter.

Sarge smiled.

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Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

• On **March 13, 1781**, English astronomer William Herschel discovers Uranus, the seventh planet from the sun. It was the first discovery of a new planet in modern times, and the first to be made using a telescope.

• On **March 10, 1876**, the first discernible speech is transmitted over a telephone system when inventor Alexander Graham Bell summons his assistant in another room by saying, "Mr. Watson, come here; I want you."

KOVELS® Antiques & Collecting

By Terry and Kim Kovel

Table, or Art?

When is a pile of rocks considered art? An unusual table made of glass and "stone" was offered in an Andrew Jones auction in Los Angeles, with an estimated price of \$2,500 to \$3,500. It didn't sell, but other related sculptures by the artist, Woods Davy (1949-), have sold from \$1,000 to \$7,000. He first collected natural stones and turned them into sculptures without altering the shapes. Then he started making "stones" that look like they came from a riverbed using concrete, metal and glass. He positions them in impossible, strangely balanced shapes, which are held together by concealed steel rods and adhesives.

This table is 22 inches high with a round glass top 42 inches in diameter. Poking through the glass is a rock with its top 28 inches from the floor. He used old natural forms in a new unbalanced way, which is known as postmodernism. That is the name of an unusual period of art developed in the 1950s that fuses past styles with the look of modern magazines, films and other unexpected sources. But is this just a great table? Or is it art?

Q. I have a wooden table that is marked "Larkin Soap Company." Does that mean it was used in the company office or was it made by a soap company? How old is it?

A. John D. Larkin (1845-1926) worked for a soap factory in Buffalo in the 1860s. He became a partner and moved with the company to Chicago. He met and married a girl from Buffalo, and they moved back to their hometown in 1875. There he started his own company, John D. Larkin, and sold "Sweet Home" soap. By 1881, he had a full line of related products and gave a free colored picture card with each bar of soap. Cards were not enough, so he started giving better premiums including, hand-



This is both a table and a work of art made after 1950. It was estimated at \$2,500 to \$3,500 at a 2019 auction in California.

kerchiefs, towels, dishes and even furniture. The desk was the gift with 10 dollars' worth of soap. Soap sale changed by the 1940s, premiums were no longer popular and the company closed in 1962. Your table was made from 1899 to 1904 when the company name matched the label on your table.

CURRENT PRICES

New Martinsville lamp, flowering vine, opaque mottled pink, chimney shade, brass collar, c. 1904, 8 x 3 inches, \$45.

Red Wing Pottery water cooler, No. 8, cobalt blue stripe, metal handles, 17 x 11 inches, \$155.

Sextant, brass, ebonized wood, ivory inlay, oak case, Spencer, Browning & Co., 12 inches, \$340.

Inkwell, silver gilt, crystal, seated woman, knight's helmet, grapevines, repousse, Austria, 1800s, 6 x 7 inches, \$780.

TIP: Sniff the photo album you plan to use to old photographs. If it smells, it probably is made of vinyl or some other unsafe material. Don't use it. It will discolor the photos.

Looking to declutter, downsize or settle an estate? Kovels' Antiques & Collectibles Price Guide 2021 by Terry and Kim Kovel has the resources you're looking for.

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Still, a spider invasion is not much fun to deal with. Look for something that is attracting spiders to your home. Do you have wood or leaves piled up against the foundation? Are there cracks in the foundation? Is your basement or attic damp? How clean are your HVAC vents and ductwork? Addressing the source of the problem can cut down quite a bit on the number of spiders invading your house.

As for Jameson being bitten by a spider — if you are concerned, do the same thing you would do when checking for evidence of fleas or ticks. Every evening put Jameson on your lap and run your hand over his coat, backwards. This lifts the hair away so you can see his skin. A spider bite on a cat will look similar to a spider bite on a human. If you do see a spider bite on Jameson, the best thing to do is observe. If he is behaving normally, not distressed or pawing/licking the bite, he's probably fine. If you have any concerns, contact his veterinarian.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.



Paw's corner

by Sam Mazzotta

Invading Spiders Endanger Cat

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: For some reason this winter, my new house has been invaded by spiders. They are building webs in every corner of the house and basement, and every day I'm knocking down another web with my broom. I'm worried about my cat, "Jameson," being bitten by a spider. What do I do if this happens? — Janine S., via email

DEAR JANIE: I'm a huge fan of spiders, because they are one of nature's best pest control services, trapping and disposing of many other tiny critters. They probably have much more to fear from Jameson than the other way around, because housecats see spiders as interesting prey.

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• In 2008, two sisters from Virginia sold their Illinois-shaped corn flake on eBay for \$1,350.

• One of the first diet books, "The Art of Living Long" by Luigi Comaro, came out in 1558 ... and is still in print.

• In the movie "Psycho's" iconic shower scene, Alfred Hitchcock achieved the sound of stabbings by knifing through a casaba melon. He even had his crew audition multiple varieties of melon to get the perfect tone.

• Folks who enjoy collecting ties are known as grabatologists.

• The mostly unknown second and third verses of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" reveal the song was originally written as a feminist anthem about a woman wanting to go see a baseball game rather than go on a date to a show.

• Cinderella's shoes were made of fur, not glass, in the tale's original version.

• Overdo it on the garlic or onions and need to freshen your breath? Try roasted coffee beans instead of gum or mints. Israeli scientists have found that coffee can inhibit the bacteria that leads to bad breath, but if you prefer drinking it to chewing, you'll do best to take it black.

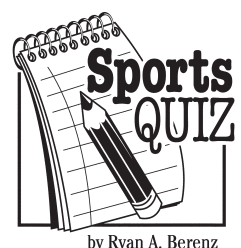
• German chocolate cake was named for an American baker, Samuel German.

• "Scurryfunge" is an old English word meaning to rush around cleaning when you see company is on their way over.

• In the Middle Ages, the "shrew's fiddle" or "neck violin" was used to punish those who were caught bickering by linking them face-to-face, forcing them to talk to each other. They weren't released until their disagreement was resolved.

Thought for the Day: "I had a new vision in front of me, and I always feel that if I can see it and believe it, then I can achieve it." — Arnold Schwarzenegger

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Sports QUIZ

by Ryan A. Berenz

1. What World Golf Hall of Famer won 82 LPGA tournaments — including 13 major championships — from 1955-69?

2. Bryce Harper, Jeff Bagwell, Jimmie Foxx and Andre Thornton are tied for what Major League Baseball record?

3. What NHL team ended a 54-year championship drought with a 4-3 Stanley Cup Finals win over the Vancouver Canucks in 1994?

4. In what league did the London Monarchs, Frankfurt Galaxy and Barcelona Dragons compete in from 1991-92?

5. What acclaimed sports documentarian's film credits include "Jesse Owens Returns to Berlin" (1968), "Wilma" (1977) and "100 Years of Olympic Glory" (1996).

6. In 1942, right-handed pitcher Hiram Bithorn became Major League Baseball's first player to hail from what island?

7. A 1989 Pro Bowl wide receiver for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the 1990 NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year for the Chicago Bears share what name?

Answers

1. Mickey Wright.
2. Walks in a game (6).
3. The New York Rangers.
4. The World League of American Football.
5. Bud Greenspan.
6. Puerto Rico.
7. Mark Carrier.

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