

Labor Day wedding too much work for out-of-state aunt

DEAR ERIC: One of my two daughters is getting married in a very small ceremony in August. It so happens to be on Labor Day weekend. Her sister and her fiancé's sister are planning a brunch the following day to celebrate this union.

R. Eric Thomas
Asking Eric



My own sister lives in Florida. When I emailed her (and our brothers) about this event, she responded immediately that, since it is Labor Day weekend, she wouldn't be attending as she doesn't go anywhere on major holidays due to crowds and potential flight delays.

I am beyond sad and disappointed. It seems she is prioritizing her comfort over this joyous occasion. I don't know how to express this to her, if at all. She is something of a control freak, who doesn't take criticism well at all.

Do I simply let it go, or do I say anything and, if so, what? — Sad Sister

DEAR SISTER: I understand the logic of not wanting to travel around major holidays. Your sister does have other options, though. She can come early, if her work allows for it, for instance. She can travel some or all of the way using means of transportation that aren't planes. Or she can make the trek for family.

Obviously, all of these things are still her prerogative. She may have already thought through the options and still decided to decline. I understand why this is hurtful to you — it's a small ceremony and she's close family, so her presence would be missed.

There are ways of talking about this without it coming across as criticism. Start by expressing what you feel — you want her there, you're sad she can't make it, et cetera. And then ask a question — is there any way that we can make this work? Would you like my help to make this easier?

An open-ended question allows her the option of engaging or shutting it down. Whereas a criticism would make her feel more boxed in. She may still choose to stay home, but by having a conversation with her that starts with your openness to hear her and respect her opinion, you may find a solution that's not too laborious.

DEAR ERIC: A 20-something neighbor we have known since the age of three has recently come out to my husband and me as transgender. We have embraced and accepted "Sara" and are glad she feels able to be

her authentic self to us. Sara's parents, with whom she lives, are unaware of her transgender identity. Often when her parents leave the home for work, Sara will dress in skirts or dresses and walk across our street to visit with my husband and me (we are retired).

We have encouraged Sara to inform her parents of her identity and have advised her to have an exit strategy should the reveal have a negative result. Our concern is for how our neighbors, who we genuinely love, will take the fact that we knew about their child's transgender identity before them. We have told Sara that we will not "out" her to her parents, but neither will we lie if we are asked.

While we are grateful Sara felt free enough to share with us her identity, this secret is heavy on us whenever we speak to our neighbors. How should we handle the eventual disclosure that we knew long before they were told? — Mums the Word

DEAR MUMS: It's so important that anyone who is sharing a new, potentially vulnerable part of themselves has a safe space to feel seen and cared for before they tell the world. I hope her parents eventually see this as an extension of your love for their whole family.

In the interim, check in with Sara about your anxiety. It's not her job to manage her parents' emotions about this, nor is it yours, but being on the same page about the heaviness of the secret may help to unburden you. It may also help to reframe. By providing modeling acceptance for Sara, you're helping her — and eventually her parents — normalize the kind of security that she deserves in order to thrive.

Reading your letter, I grew curious and potentially concerned that by walking across the street in a dress, Sara runs the risk of another neighbor telling her parents before she's ready. This is something it may be worth talking with her about.

When you do have a talk with your friends, lead with love and with empathy. Acknowledge that it may be hard for them to find out you knew before them. It's a vulnerable conversation, but vulnerability is not a weakness. Be patient with them, be consistent and clear about your care for them, and be steadfast in your love for Sara. That's the message that will outlast the initial shock.

Send questions to R. Eric Thomas at eric@asking-eric.com or P.O. Box 22474, Philadelphia, PA 19110.

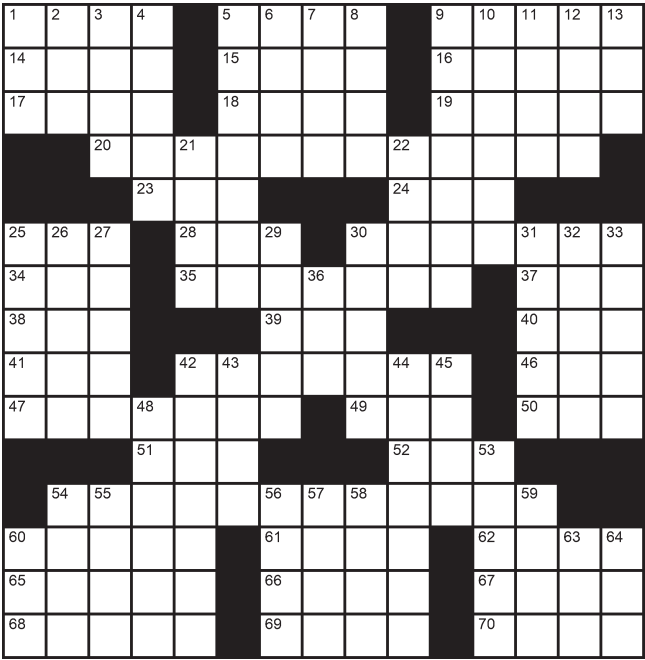
CRYPTOQUOTE

One letter stands for another. In this sample — **AXYDLBAAXR** is **LONGFELLOW** — A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

U X O N R K C I Q N J C U C R K C
Q I C N R C V R Q D O R N W X Z W C
L Z F B A Q D J C N W Z R K C I
E C I V Z W : K C G C B D C J C A D W
U C . — S D U J N B J N W Z

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 As well
 - 5 Performs like Eminem
 - 9 Synagogue leader
 - 14 High jump
 - 15 Don't include
 - 16 Cameo shapes
 - 17 Border
 - 18 City near Phoenix
 - 19 Restaurants' lists
 - 20 "Wicked" star: 2 wds.
 - 23 ___ Arbor, Michigan
 - 24 Insurance company bailed out in 2008
 - 25 Blonde shade
 - 28 Baby skunk
 - 30 Toughens, as metal
 - 34 Poseidon's realm
 - 35 Bratwurst, for example
 - 37 Orchestra's spot
 - 38 Game, ___, match
 - 39 "Uh-uh"
 - 40 Broad street: Abbr.
 - 41 Look over
 - 42 Shish kebab sticks
 - 46 Sales agent, for short
 - 47 Corn plant parts
 - 49 Morning moisture
 - 50 6-point plays: Abbr.
 - 51 ___ at a time
 - 52 Spot for a pet cat
 - 54 Film venue: 2 wds.
 - 60 AM/FM device
 - 61 Boxing match
 - 62 Price
 - 65 Reporting to
 - 66 Certain
 - 67 Samoa's capital
 - 68 Birds' homes
 - 69 Leave it to the ___
 - 70 Loch ___ Monster



Created by Stella Zawistowski

6/26/25

- 4 "Tosca." for example
- 5 Nadia Comaneci's homeland
- 6 "You said it!"
- 7 Leaning Tower of ___
- 8 Male deer
- 9 Lettuce variety
- 10 Get even for
- 11 Musical group
- 12 Clear sky's color
- 13 2023 sci-fi film: Abbr.
- 21 Pen liquids
- 22 Told
- 25 Good thing
- 26 "Bye!": 2 wds
- 27 Can't stand
- 29 Songs to sing
- 30 Oohed and ___
- 31 Separated
- 32 Dwelled
- 33 Parts of a process
- 36 Tool with teeth
- 42 Many AARP members
- 43 Painter Paul
- 44 Pertains

Today's solution

S S E N S O R d S L S E N
V I d v e r n S r e d n n
I S O C I N O B O I d v r
R e l v e h l e i a o w
d v l e n o
S d l m e d s t e s s v l
p e r s r e m e k s e l e
e l a v h v n l e s
I p e g v s n v s v e s
S l v e n n v l i k h s v
g i v n n v
e d n v r g v n v i r v
S n v w y s e w e g d e
S l v a o l i w o p d o e
I g b v r s d v r o s l v

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6/26/25

- 45 Whack with the hand
- 48 The first "S" in USSR
- 53 Pie nut
- 54 Horse's hair
- 55 ___ and ends
- 56 Recipe measurement: Abbr.
- 57 1/24 of a day
- 58 Coin used in Paris
- 59 Double Dutch equipment
- 60 Go fast on foot
- 63 Aunt, to mom
- 64 Professors' helpers: Abbr.

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

HOROSCOPE

JUNE 26

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Make choices guided by logic rather than emotion. Avoid collecting things you'll never use. When someone points out your mistakes, take it as a chance to grow — correcting errors can teach valuable lessons for the future.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You may sense pivotal changes ahead, but turning insights into action might require a partner's guidance. Stay focused and avoid distractions to keep your work aligned. Be sure you fully understand all essential requirements.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Network to boost your income. Staying connected with friends and business contacts might be the key to advancing career and finances. Reach out when you have the clarity and inspiration to make those connections count.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Honesty and sincerity can build friendships and impress key figures. If you feel underappreciated, improve your self-validation game. Professional advice can help prioritize your best interests; group gatherings could highlight your wisdom.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You could be in top form today, showcasing skill in financial strategy and business planning. A knack for uncovering truths and being a creative thinker can be razor sharp. Don't let a mis-aligned social scenario deplete funds.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) The missing parts of a conversation can be where problems and issues are hidden. Instead of reacting, discuss thoroughly and fill in the gaps to clarify the situation. What was heard may not have been what was said.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You can shine and win admiration anytime, remember the competition is only to be your best self. The most worthwhile people judge you by how you treat loved ones, honor promises, and follow social norms, not by possessions.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Your cheerful attitude and friendly vibe may be hard to dampen today and your creative side could be enhanced. Do a deep dive on details to avoid squandering money needlessly. Always be fully accountable to maintain trust and respect.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) A warm conversation can do wonders. Clear up misunderstandings in a calm chat by focusing on shared goals. A significant other or kindred spirit may offer a soothing presence and truly grasp your deepest creative needs.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Someone may target your vulnerabilities with precision, remind yourself that doing harm is ignorance, an unhealed flaw in their character, and stand strong. Process emotions before they cloud your judgment and lead to reactive decisions.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Cooperation on the job can be a clear route to success. Do your fair share and hopefully others will do their share as well. Your attention may shift to accumulating power as you focus on money making activities.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Harness both logic and creativity to achieve brilliance. Your ability to recognize hidden themes and subtle nuances gives you a unique awareness. Lead with empathy, ensuring that business decisions create opportunities for everyone to benefit.

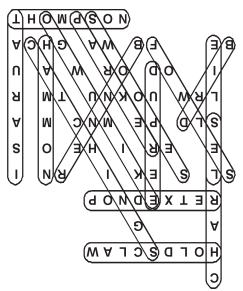
Sudoku solution

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

Jumble solution

feet hat, he looked — "FEDORAHEAT"
When he put on his grandfather's vintage soft
SALAD LIMBO MYSELF GROCCER

Sleuth solution



SUDOKU

How to play: Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LASDA
BIOLM
LYSMFE
CRREOG

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Answer "here:"

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

SPORTS SLEUTH

WNBA ALL-TIME SCORING LEADERS

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

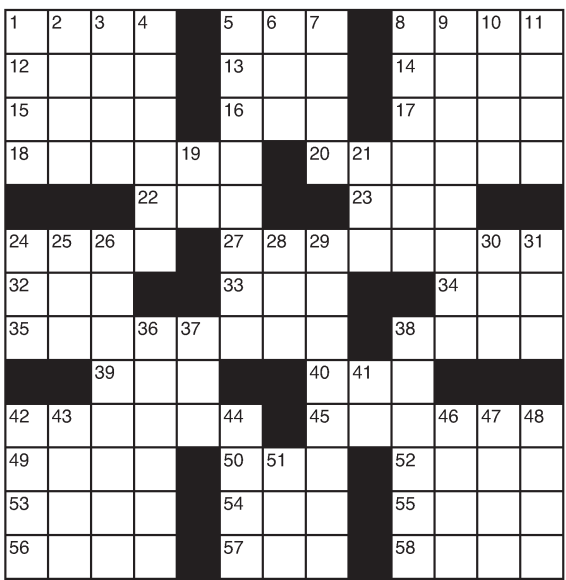
Wednesday's unlisted clue: BEYOND

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.
Thursday's unlisted clue hint: CENTER BRITNEY —

Bird	Dupree	Leslie	Swoopes
Bonner	Fowles	Ogumike	Taurasi
Catchings	Hammon	Parker	Thompson
Charles	Holdsclaw	Pondexter	

SHEFFER CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pear-shaped fruits
 - 5 Chum
 - 8 Mayberry moppet
 - 12 Booty
 - 13 Brit. record label
 - 14 Air outlet
 - 15 Oklahoma tribe
 - 16 Quarter-back
 - 17 Sicilian
 - 18 Brady volcano
 - 19 Sushi
 - 20 Pack
 - 22 Ran into
 - 23 Oklahoma city
 - 24 Siestas
 - 27 Entreated
 - 32 Multi-purpose truck
 - 33 Sugar suffix
 - 34 —
 - 35 Seed of a palm tree
- DOWN**
- 19 Village People hit
 - 21 "Friendly skies" co.
 - 24 Gist
 - 25 Noshed
 - 26 Cat food purchaser
 - 28 The Spartans' sch.
 - 29 Funnel-shaped flowers
 - 30 Historic period
 - 31 —
 - 36 Papa Hemingway
 - 37 Golfer
 - 38 Dapper
 - 41 Bell or Barker
 - 42 Loony
 - 43 Popular layered cookie
 - 44 Two-way
 - 46 Weaver's device
 - 47 Idle of Monty Python
 - 48 Crème —
 - 51 Away from SSW
- Solution time: 24 mins.**



Cryptoquote solution

MY FATHER GAVE
ANOTHER PERSON: HE BELIEVED IN ME. — JIM
ME THE GREATEST GIFT ANYONE COULD GIVE
VALVANO