

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

1

Approach boldly

7

Word with fixed or net

13

Purple-hatted Nintendo character

15

Mildew, e.g.

16

Little Italian toasts

18

One choice at a dry cleaner

19

Say but not really mean

20

English town known for its mineral water

22

Historical event that acquired its name almost two decades after it ended, in brief

23

Car once promoted with the slogan "It's Your Money ... Demand Better," informally

24

Joy of television

25

Windjammer, e.g.

26

33-Down platform, for short

27

Deceived, maybe

28

Retreats

29

Move around from here to there

31

Unhelpful response to "Why?"

32

Rabbit food?

33

Pats (down)

34

Progresses slowly

35

Something chewed over

38

Sections of history

39

Has legs

40

Something to climb in a WWE match

41

"Stop! We get it!"

42

Rube

43

Literature Nobel

44

People whose flag depicts the Lion of Judah

46

Animal that sleeps while floating on its back

48

University of California campus locale

49

"The Ultimate Trivia Destination," per its website

50

Moves in the shadows

51

Parts of cassette players

DOWN

1

"Really, now!"

2

Actress Lombard of classic Hollywood

3

"Above the ____, as high as heaven itself?": Shak.

4

Ejects

5

Villainous group of science fiction

6

____ Fridays

7

Can't stand

8

Dis

9

"The only ____ is mediocrity": Martha Graham

10

Inghredient in meringue cookies

11

No. 1 on BBC's list of greatest 21st century TV series

12

Comics

14

"This work is getting to be too much"

17

Apple skins?

21

Buildings that aren't water-resistant

24

"La Cousine ____" (Balzac novel)

25

Overly wise, say

27

Feels thirsty

28

Gives accolades

29

Edges

30

You can see right through them

31

Phenomenon of experiencing something as strangely new even though one has experienced it before

32

Designate, as funds

33

Series of mental blocks?

35

Retail giant that opened its first store in Seattle in 1983

36

Persuade to pay more than originally intended

37

Popular farm vehicles

39

Falls short, say

40

Lead-in to active

42

American in Paris?

43

Certain earring

45

Poetic

47

Some courses for honor students, for short

Puzzle by Aidan Deshong and Akshay Seetharam

9/13

CAROLYN HAX

How to deal with in-laws' fat-phobic comments



BY CAROLYN HAX
tellme@washpost.com

Carolyn Hax is away. This was previously published.

Dear Carolyn: My mother- and sister-in-law are truly wonderful family whom I care about, but they're obsessed with size as though it means health. On every occasion we've gathered, body talk occurs a lot. It seems to be a factor of their bond: their "too low" body fat percentages; whispering about large people seen in public; shock at big or pregnant people wearing bikinis; diagnosing family with diabetes on size alone; etc.

These women are extremely educated in the health, nutrition and medical fields. They're also each half my weight and eight inches shorter. Up until now, I've ignored these comments or tried to deflect any blatantly fat-phobic talk while silently hoping they haven't noticed I'm not like them.

But, I gained 15 pounds during the pandemic and it is noticeable. I am already dealing with a lot of self-hatred over it and knowing what my mother-in-law really thinks of bodies over a size 10 is draining. What are some ways I can keep sane

LEXICO®

9-13

Start at the double hexagon. Spell solutions to the clues below by winding your way through the grid. You can backtrack to use letters more than once. Each new word starts with the last letter of the previous word.

A

S

E

V

Y

T

R

I

F

O

N

E

M

1. Change back

2. Corolla car maker

3. Make up for sins

4. Hostile parties

5. Font embellishment

R

A

S

and defend myself and others subtly, without feeling as if I'm arguing with professionals on something I'm not doing great at myself?

— Walrus Among Otters

Walrus Among Otters:

People can be educated and still be wrong, blind, obtuse, or stunted.

And gosh, walruses are my favorite funny animal but please don't do that to yourself.

This may be too much to ask, but I hope that on your next encounter with their body talk, whenever it comes and at whatever weight you are when it comes, you will say your piece: "You may not realize how often you talk about body size. I do, though — and as someone who has a very different body size, shape and type from all of you, I have found it difficult to hear talk of bodies like mine as a problem. You are truly wonderful family and I care about all of you so much. I just hope you will consider what these conversations sound like to me."

If they are indeed in "health, nutrition and medical fields," then they are bringing attitudes to their work that aren't

healthy for an array of patients. If you don't think you're worth sticking up for, then stick up for those patients — though, for the record, I think you are completely worth sticking up for, and I really hope you do it.

Readers' Thoughts:

— I wouldn't even mention myself or how I feel. "I don't know if you've noticed, but you talk about other people's weight A LOT. Why do you care so much about other people's bodies?"

— I'm sorry you're going through that, letter-writer. If it's any consolation, people who sit around and obsess over other people's weight, bodies, and diet choices probably don't have a healthy relationship with their own bodies or food. In other words, they're the problem, not you.

And yeah, I'm a 6-foot-tall woman who was gifted with peasant birthing hips. I am of average weight. I work out 4-5 times a week and do my best to eat healthy. I could lose 80 pounds and still not be under a size 10. Your relatives, frankly, don't sound like very educated or nice people.

With 'Weather Hunters,' Roker brings the rainbow home

BY LAUREL GRAEBER
NYT News Service

Years ago, Al Roker was on a lakeside walk with his two youngest children when the family noticed a rainbow. His excited preschool son pleaded with him to capture it as a Mother's Day gift for their mom. Although Roker had to explain that this colorful surprise couldn't be plucked from the sky, the incident helped seed an idea.

It reminded Roker, the longtime weather anchor for the NBC morning show "Today," of what he had observed throughout his career. There are "two things I think kids are most fascinated by in weather, our everyday kind of weather," he said recently at the New York City headquarters of "Today," part of which he also co-hosts: "Why is the sky blue, and what is a rainbow?"

He began to think about making a children's series about the weather. For years, teachers had been telling him that no subject interested elementary school students more than his own specialty. He just needed time and the right conditions.

Fast-forward almost 20 years, and Roker is finally about to take rainbows into children's homes, as well as clouds, thunder, lightning, windstorms, hail and even a looming hurricane. These all play starring roles in "Weather Hunters," a new animated television series he created, which premieres on Monday.

The first PBS Kids show



THEA TRAFF/ NYT

Al Roker, who has long anchored the weather report on the NBC morning show "Today," is pictured at his office in New York on Aug. 12. Inspired by a funny request from his children years ago, Roker's new animated series for PBS Kids teaches young viewers about clouds, thunder and the ingredients of a rainbow.

devoted to meteorology — along with a healthy dose of earth science — it explains not only familiar occurrences but also what Roker called "gee whizzy" phenomena.

"We found a few quirky mysteries that I love," Dete Meserve, the series' showrunner, said in a video call. Those include the "sailing stones" of Death Valley, California,

which appear to move under their own power (weather forces actually propel them) and the pink snow at high elevations in Utah, which gets its color from algae.

The series, which Roker developed with Carin Greenberg, an executive producer, is "really trying to take weather as a way to be curious about all things that are elements

in nature," Meserve said.

The show focuses on the Hunters, a family of weather investigators modeled after Roker's own. (His adult two daughters and son, as well as his toddler granddaughter, Sky, appear in a digital photo album on display in his office.) The series' voice cast, which includes actors LeVar Burton, Holly Robinson Peete and Sheryl Lee Ralph, features Roker as Al Hunter, the genial dad. Al "is an incredibly good-looking bald Black TV weatherman," he said with a chuckle. But Roker, who is 71 and has a desk treadmill in his work space that he eagerly demonstrated later, added, "He's actually younger and thinner than I am."

While Al creates weather reports that his wife, Dot, produces, the spotlight belongs to the Hunters' middle child, Lily, an inquisitive 8-year-old. She frequently embodies the scientific method, devising theories and testing them. Her 11-year-old sister, Corky, helps by documenting nature with a video camera while their little brother, Benny, 5, draws what he observes.

Many of the children's investigations are rooted in questions young viewers might have: Why do my glasses fog up outdoors? Why do leaves turn color in the fall? In one episode, the Hunter kids learn what a watershed is when melting snow carries away one of Benny's toys.

Roker, who approves the series's scripts but doesn't write them, said he was most proud of the

thought process that "Weather Hunters" encourages: "Create a hypothesis and then either prove it true or not, and if it's 'not,' then what? What's the explanation?"

The weather-obsessed Hunters also rely on a character whom you might call their spirit guide: Wallace Reed Hunter, the children's deceased great-grandfather. Burton — known to today's kids for his mystery podcast, "Sound Detectives," and to their parents as host of the PBS classic "Reading Rainbow" — voices the role, which brings a rich vein of Black history to the series.

Viewers learn that Great-Grandpa Wallace, a TV newscaster who appears in flashbacks and on old videos, served his country as a meteorologist for the Tuskegee Airmen, the all-Black unit of the World War II Army Air Forces. Roker said he had named the character after Wallace P. Reed, a real officer with the Tuskegee weather detachment.

"No one's going to be able to watch this without going, 'Oh, I didn't know that,'" Meserve said. In one episode, on a day when rain is forecast, Lily discovers an anthill's residents plugging holes in the dirt and butterflies hiding in rocky crevices. This leads her to wonder whether the creatures can sense an approaching storm. (Yes, they can.)

The series investigates such subjects unhurriedly. Whereas many children's shows consist of two 11-minute stories, "Weather Hunters," explores a single plotline for 22 minutes. One 44-minute special, airing late in the 40-episode first season, takes the Hunters to the wettest, the driest, the hottest and the coldest places on Earth. It's one way the series subtly

advertises to climate change.

"Weather Hunters" adopted the longer format after PBS Kids observed its success with another science show, "Wild Kratts."

"The team felt like it would be nice to give this series that same breathing room," said Sara DeWitt, senior vice president and general manager, PBS Kids.

Robinson Peete, who voices Dot Hunter, said that she "couldn't imagine better timing" for the series, which she sees as a kind of cultural counterweight at a moment when the federal government is ending diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, as well as eliminating multiple avenues of scientific research.

"I think it is going to have a very positive impact on not just kids of color and families of color, but on everyone," she said.

"Weather Hunters" is also premiering after Congress canceled all federal funding for PBS. This development is not affecting the series's rollout — it will be accompanied by digital shorts and online games — but DeWitt said she hoped the show would "help people see the importance of noncommercial television for kids." Its fall season, she added, offers "work that is inspired by what we know kids want to learn."

And who isn't curious about why it snows, how fog develops or the perfect recipe for a rainbow?

Roker, who gives that recipe in an episode inspired by his family's long-ago walk, said: "That's the idea of the show — here's stuff that we maybe don't think about, we take for granted. And here's the explanation, and it's like, 'Wow.'"