

Gulf Weekly

The community newspaper at the heart of Bahrain

March 5-11, 2026

GDNlife

BAHRAIN. OURS. YOURS.

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BAHRAIN STANDS TOGETHER

THE idiom, 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going' has acquired new meaning for us in Bahrain, in the last few days.

A hostile drone attack on the US Navy's Fifth Fleet in Juffair on Saturday set into motion a series of unsettling events. Following the US and Israeli strikes on Tehran, Iran launched missiles in Bahrain and the region, displacing individuals and families.

However, the kingdom came together as one, pulling out all the stops, as the community extended helping hands to those in need. People from all walks of life united in a show of unprecedented solidarity.

Our cover story this week highlights that same communal, empathetic spirit, showcasing some local groups and individuals who have been offering help during this time. Whether it is opening their homes to those who have had to flee to safety, or distributing food and basic necessities, the nation strides ahead with poise and grace.

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COMMUNITY HEROES
Bahrain unites
SEE PAGES 2-3



CALLING WRITERS!
BWC Competition
SEE PAGE 4



RELAXING AT HOME
Cosy films & books
SEE PAGES 4-5



PULSE OF POP
TV, music & more
SEE PAGE 6

When community



FOOD DRIVE
By MELISSA NAZARETH
melissa@gdnmedia.bh

BAHRAIN continues to uphold its reputation as a closely-knit, cosmopolitan community, with local groups stepping forward in a remarkable show of unity during this period of uncertainty.

Among them is the unregistered non-profit charity One Heart Bahrain, which has launched an emergency food aid initiative to support vulnerable individuals and families. In line with current safety guidelines, the organisation has adopted a 'Direct-to-Doorstep' delivery model, ensuring that goods reach beneficiaries without the need for volunteer intermediaries.

This approach minimises outdoor movement while respecting the ongoing security situation.

BAWA Food Trading Company, which is supplying goods at cost and repackaging wholesale items into customised family parcels, will also handle deliveries free of charge.

Lending the initiative a sustainable touch, recycled carrier bags will be used for deliveries wherever



SERVICE: Many individuals and groups in Bahrain are involved in food distribution for those in need

possible, in keeping with the charity's global One Heart Earth Stewardship Programme.

The standard ration package includes essentials such as rice, pulses and beans, salt, and oil. The cost of an individual package is BD7 for one person for one month and BD25 for a family of four for one month.

Those willing to donate can message @oneheart.

Lending the initiative a sustainable touch, recycled carrier bags will be used for deliveries wherever possible, in keeping with the charity's global One Heart Earth Stewardship Programme.

on *Instagram* to receive the supplier's BenefitPay and IBAN details, as well as other available package options. Those in need or anyone referring someone in need can contact the same channel for support.

While food rations are helpful for those who remain in the comfort of their homes, many individuals and families are currently

residing in relief camps scattered across the country.

Responding to this urgent need, the Riffa-based meal plan service Healthy Choices is distributing free, ready-to-eat meals to individuals and families who have been displaced and forced to leave their homes due to the current circumstances.

If you or someone you

know is in need, contact 39609346 and share the beneficiary's full name, location and address.

Complementing the food drive, a number of schools and other institutions have opened up their premises to shelter displaced families. One such group is Rajasthanis in Bahrain (RIB) – an unregistered non-profit and social group.

"Many of our generous members came together and rented rooms and villas in different locations in Bahrain to accommodate individuals and families away from the affected areas and high rise towers," RIB founding member Ramesh Dadhich

While food rations are helpful for those who remain in the comfort of their homes, many individuals and families are currently residing in relief camps scattered across the country. Responding to this urgent need is a Riffa-based meal plan service.

told *GulfWeekly*, adding that the service is open to people of any nationality or background.

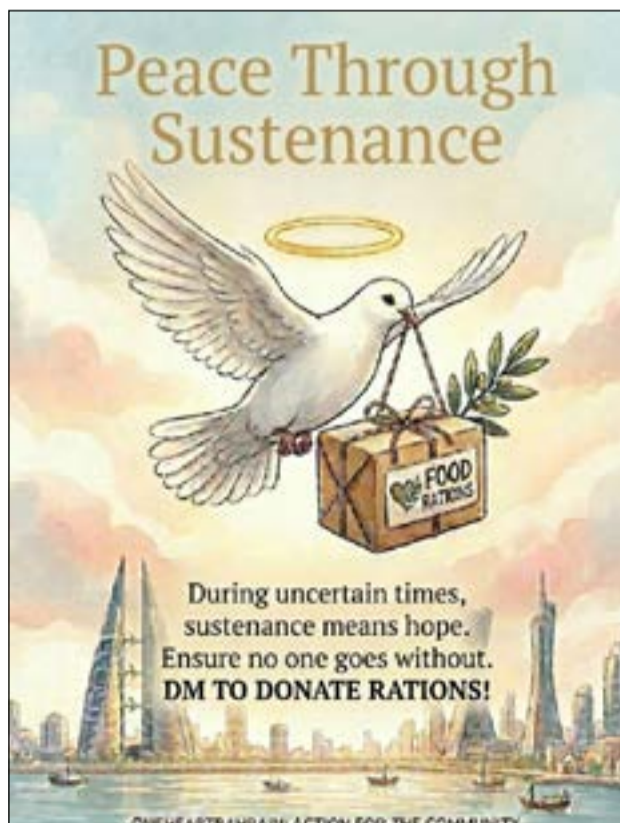
"Some of our members have also opened up their homes to people," added the group's executive committee member, highlighting that RIB was established with the spirit of service, cultural pride, and social responsibility.

The collective works to preserve the rich heritage of Rajasthan, a vibrant Indian state, while fostering meaningful engagement with Bahraini society.

Those seeking a place to stay can call Ramesh on 38405899.

RIB has also been circulating helpful messages on the community's channels, encouraging members to stay calm and obtain information and news only through official sources.

"We are also in touch with Rajasthani communities in neighbouring Gulf countries to streamline aid," Ramesh added.



DONATE: One Heart's poster



TOGETHER: RIB members during a past event

becomes a family!

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

COMMUNITY REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
naman@gdnmedia.bh

COMMUNITY spirit and food are keeping friends and families warm as kind-hearted souls open up their homes and hearts to evacuees and those in need across the kingdom.

GDN Media's sales director Alison Lillywhite is hosting 11 people who reached out in a moment of need, after Iranian strikes shook the kingdom this week.

While the sentiment can sometimes be sombre, Alison

‘ To be honest, it’s nice to have more people here, as it keeps us busy – even the cooking alone – we are hardly done with breakfast and we have to start planning for lunch and dinner. ’

and her family are making the most of the situation, and trying to keep the atmosphere light and fun as people buckle in to survive and thrive together.

“To be honest, it’s nice to have more people here, as it keeps us busy – even the cooking alone – we are hardly done with breakfast and we have to start planning for lunch and dinner,” she told *GulfWeekly*.

“On the first day, we cooked 21 scrambled eggs, and then kheema for lunch. And since people were working from home during the first few days, it has been quite lively as everyone found their own corner of the house from which to make their zoom calls.

“One of our family friends’ partner was even conducting music classes so there isn’t a dull moment.”

At Alison’s place, everyone has pitched in with cooking, grocery shopping, clean-up and other chores, sharing stories and adventures as they bonded over sirens and echoes of intercepted missiles in the sky.

The unexpected coming together of friends and



TOGETHER: Alison, second from left, having lunch with family and friends

family during this time also gave them an opportunity to get to know one another over board games and spur-of-the-moment late night deep conversations.

While getting used to culinary preferences like vegetarianism and a no-shellfish diet took some adapting, Alison, her husband Peter and daughters Hana and Alya have taken it in stride and even learned to prepare new dishes.

Even their cat Lilly, while initially restless, has gotten used to the bustle of the expanded household, though she does get irritated at times when her favourite sleeping spots are taken over by the new guests.

Meanwhile, in Saar, 49-year-old Juffair resident Simran Wagnani is staying at her friend Manisha Panchisia’s home, while the latter is out of the country.

Along with 34 others, ranging in age from one to 86, the long-time resident of Bahrain is also glad to have her community with her during these trying times.

‘ We have been making the best of it – most of us got through Covid-19 together so our community is close-knit. Fortunately, there is a supermarket nearby, and we have been getting food from there. ’

“When the strikes started and hit Juffair, we were distraught at first, and I reached out to my friend Anupam Kinger, who connected me with Manisha Panchisia who opened up her home in Saar for all of us,” Simran added.

“Although she is in Denmark and still trying to make it back to Bahrain because of the closed airspace, she was very kind.

“We have been making the best of it - most of us got through Covid-19 together so

our community is close-knit. “Fortunately, there is a supermarket nearby, and we have been getting food from

there. People come and go - some stay for multiple days, and some just for a few hours.”



CHILDREN: Entertaining themselves while at the new home



WELCOME: Simran, standing left, with friends at their temporary home



WRITERS: BWC members and guests at a past event

BAHRAIN Writers' Circle (BWC) is set to stage its first national writing and art contest, inviting the community to bring alive their emotions amidst the ongoing uncertainty in the kingdom, writes **Melissa Nazareth**.

The event, hosted in collaboration with local art studio Createit, coincides with the group's 15th anniversary this year and is open to Bahrain's residents.

BWC was established in 2011 by former resident and best-selling author Robin Barratt. Over the years, it has welcomed writers of all experience levels – from the novice to the novelist. Presently, it has up to 50 members from a wide range of nationalities including Australian, Bahraini, British, Canadian, Indian, Malawian, Mauritian, Russian and more.

Submissions in the form of personal reflections and artistic expressions are invited and can include poetry, prose, or artworks. No political content will be accepted.

Since the air strikes on Bahrain and the region, many have been experiencing anxiety, panic and helplessness. The sirens that go off without a warning and the looming threat of a drone attack or subsequent debris impact have taken a toll.

The contest is timely considering many studies online indicate that practicing creative writing or any form of art can lead to better mood regulation, lower stress levels and increase overall life satisfaction.

"Creativity and healing spring from the same

CREATIVE expressions

source," BWC and Createit director Saira Ranj told *GulfWeekly*.

"Whether through words or visuals, mark-making transforms struggle into strength by opening space for shared reflection," added the artist and marketing manager from Seef District.

"Both Bahrain Writers' Circle and Createit are championing the humanities and believe that the arts are responsible for activating reward networks within our brains ultimately fostering wellbeing. And so we offer an opportunity for all of us to engage about our Bahrain."

Written submissions must be between 100 to



DIRECTOR: Saira

500 words and can be in English or Arabic, the BWC has confirmed, nodding to its 'proud' identity as

a homegrown writing group. Art submissions can include paintings or visual representations related to the theme. Up to two entries per person are allowed, whether words or art. Entries must have a 'Bahrain connection'.

Sharing some prompts for the contest, BWC has invited those interested to consider questions like 'what is one lesson you have learned or are learning', and 'what might you have taken for granted that you now realise is valuable'.

Talking about the 'prize' for the contest, Saira said that the shortlisted entries will be showcased and promoted on BWC's website and social

media.

"We are in the process of finalising the judges, which will include founding members of BWC and external experts. There are ongoing discussions for the possibility to compile the 'winning entries' into an anthology. If we get sponsors, this is something we will definitely consider," she revealed.

Those interested to participate can send their works to submissions@bwcbh.com. Last date is March 31.

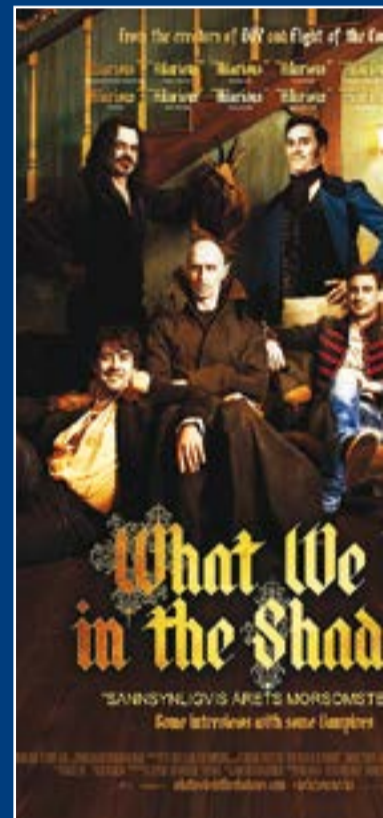
For more information, follow @bahrainwriterscirclebwc on Instagram.



POETS: Bards unite for a previous Colours of Life poetry festival

LET

FEW things are more comforting than spending a cosy night on your couch, watching a movie or two with the whole family or relaxing with a book. Especially if it is after an intimate and nourishing iftar meal with loved ones. Our resident pop culture connoisseur **Rima Alhaddad** compiles a list of 'cosy', lighthearted films and books to boost your spirits.



FANTASTIC MR FOX (2009)

DIRECTED by Wes Anderson, the stop motion animation follows the titular clever fox (George Clooney) and his wife Felicity (Meryl Streep). Driven by an existential crisis and sense of pride, he breaks a promise and raids his human neighbour's farms – an action that forces him to save his community from the farmers' wrath. Wes' films often gained praise for his unique visual style that is pleasing to the eye – using a limited colour palette, handmade frames and miniatures.

'S *unwind* INDOORS!



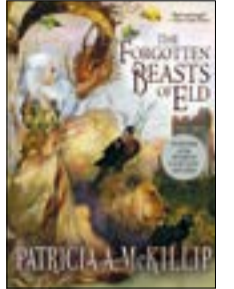
ARTY: The Yamadas in action

MY NEIGHBOURS THE YAMADAS (1999)

WHAT'S a cosy films list without a Studio Ghibli production! This slice-of-life comedy drama is a series of vignettes that follows the day-to-day happenings of the Yamada family. From losing a child in a department store to the relationship between father and son, coming of age and more, the adventures present a relatable picture of family life, showcasing their love for one another despite their flaws. Directed by Isao Takahata, the film is presented in a stylised, comic-strip aesthetic.

THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD (1974)

LYRICAL and poignant, this is an iconic fantasy fiction ripe for rediscovery. The story follows Sybel, who lives in the forest with a group of majestic and strange beasts. She is cold and withdrawn, caring nothing for other people until she is given a baby to raise. Sybel discovers that the world of man and magic is full of both love and deceit, and the possibility of more power than she can imagine. Patricia McKillip's dream-like prose makes all of the emotions feel sharp, clear and true.



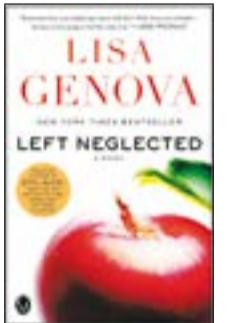
WHAT I TALK ABOUT WHEN I TALK ABOUT RUNNING (2007)

WORLD-RENOWNED Japanese author Haruki Murakami documents a major transition in his life – from the owner of a jazz bar to a long-distance runner. This is a journal, full of vivid recollections and insights, illustrating the magic that happens when a man decides to choose himself – despite the hardships. The wordsmith captures the intersection of his interests – running and writing – highlighting the eureka moment when he decided to become an author.



LEFT NEGLECTED (2011)

SARAH NICKERSON has the perfect family, a dream home and a thriving career. However, there are parts of her that she 'neglects', albeit unknowingly. Until one fateful experience forces her to face them. Now, as she wills herself to regain her independence and heal, Sarah must learn that her real destiny may in fact lie far from the world she imagined for herself. Lisa Genova waves an emotional tale that is sure to hit home.



WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS (2014)

THE mockumentary showcases the life of four vampire housemates, who share a flat in Wellington. The crew follows the ancient creatures as they navigate the 21st century, showcasing their day-to-day life. It includes the mundane like taking the bus into town to prowl the streets for people to kill, and their long-lived feud with werewolves. Directed by Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi, this is a lighthearted take on a genre that rarely gets comedic treatment.

THE HOLDOVERS (2023)

THE film is set in a 1970's New England boarding school, where curmudgeonly teacher Paul Hunham (Paul Giamatti) is forced to chaperone a handful of students who have nowhere to go during the Christmas break. He ends up forming an unlikely bond with the brainy yet troubled Angus Tully (Dominic Sessa), whose mother cancels a family trip to honeymoon with her new husband. Directed by Alexander Payne, this festive comedy is fun to watch any time of the year.

ANTASTIC MR. FOX

MONSTERS UNIVERSITY (2013)

THE coming-of-age Pixar animation and prequel to Monsters Inc (2001) follows college buddies James P 'Sulley' Sullivan (John Goodman) and Mike Wazowski's (Billy Crystal) as they go from rivals to best friends. The story explores their journey at the elite Scare Programme and their teamwork with misfits to win the 'Scare Games'. It also highlights Mike's ambition to overcome his limitations of being small figured. Directed by Dan Scanlon, the film hits home as it brings alive friendship, self-discovery and determination.

Disney PIXAR JUNE 21

THE DRAMA LLAMA (2022)

THIS wonderful book, suitable for tots up to five years, validates anxiety as an emotion. Alex Allen, like lots of children, is worried about dancing badly or getting a wrong answer in class. But every time he worries, a real-life llama appears! And the more Alex worries, the bigger the llama grows, which starts getting him into all sorts of trouble. This heart-warming and hilarious tale by Rachel Morrisroe offers some great advice in an easy-going style.



AN APPETITE FOR MIRACLES (2023)

AWARD-WINNING author Laekan Zea Kemp brings alive teenage angst in this young adult fiction. Danna Villarreal's grandfather is slowly losing himself as his memories fade, and Raúl Santos has been lost ever since his mother was wrongly incarcerated. When they meet, sparks fly immediately and they embark on a mission to heal her grandfather... and themselves. Because healing is something best done together—even if it does not always look the way we want it to.



The books are available on Amazon.

Pulse of Pop

AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY RIMA ALHADDAD

TREASURE HUNT



STAR: Harry performing on *Aperture* at the BRIT Awards in Manchester last month

ENGLISH singer and songwriter Harry Styles drops his new album *Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally tomorrow.*

The project is set to mark an electronic-inspired sound debut for the artist, as heard in the lead single *Aperture* released in January.

It has also been reported that the former One Direction member moved to Berlin, Germany, during the creation process to record a 'synthesiser-heavy album'. In an interview, the singer cited watching the American dance-punk band LCD Soundsystem perform live as inspiration.

"I saw them at a festival in Madrid, that was in like a car park, basically, and then I saw

them again at Brixton, and it was so joyous", he said.

"I think the inspiration from them came of like, 'oh, that's how I want to feel when I'm on stage'. And then that kind of led to the kind of music I was making," he added.

Harry's career began in 2010 as part of the boyband One Direction but the group announced an indefinite hiatus in 2016.

Harry released his debut solo self-titled album in 2017, which became one of the world's top-10 bestselling albums of the year. Harry is considered to be among the most successful solo artists to have emerged from a band.

The new full-length release marks his fourth, following *Fine Line* (2019) and *Harry's House* (2022).

TECHNO TUNES

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BRAIN-BUSTERS

Quizmaster and Radio Bahrain host Shannon Crockett, who has been entertaining people across the island with his brain-teasing quiz night sessions, has offered to put *GulfWeekly* readers' general knowledge to the test. Join in the fun every Thursday with Shannon's seven brain-busters.



- 1) What is the name given to a triangle where all sides are of different lengths and all angles of different size?
- 2) In what year did the Space Age begin?
- 3) In TV and film, who worked for the Townsend detective agency?
- 4) According to *Forbes*, what is the most valuable sports team in the world today?
- 5) What is the four-letter word in Italian cuisine for a meat-based sauce?

- 6) Measuring only 1/300th of an inch (85 micrometres) in length, which plant produces the smallest seeds in the world?
- 7) 'Trivia' comes from the Latin term for what?

- ANSWERS**
1. Scalene
 2. 1957
 3. Charlie's Angels
 4. Dallas Cowboys
 5. Ragu
 6. Orchid
 7. Crossroads



ESCAPADE: The Season 2 poster

THE second season of Netflix's *One Piece* releases on March 10

Based on Japan's ongoing 1997 manga series by artist and creator Eiichiro Oda, the new episodes will follow beloved Straw Hat Pirates Luffy (Iñaki Godoy), Zoro (Mackenyu), Nami (Emily Rudd), Usopp (Jacob Romero), and Sanji (Taz Skylar) as they travel to the Grand Line – a legendary stretch of sea where danger and wonder await at every turn.

There, they will visit bizarre islands, recruit more allies, and battle formidable new foes as they search for the world's greatest treasure.

The characters will also be seen venturing into



BELOVED: Tony Tony Chopper

the Grand Line via Reverse Mountain, a landscape familiar to fans of the original manga and ongoing anime. It is described as a 'visually striking peak where the Four Blues meet, flowing upward from the sides and meeting at the top to descend as one into the Grand Line'.

The new season is also set to introduce fan-favourite Tony Tony Chopper (Mikaela Hoover) – a loyal toddler-sized reindeer-human hybrid who serves as the pirates' doctor. With the ability to treat various illnesses, he aims to travel the world and accomplish his dream of curing any disease.

"What excited me about playing Chopper is the tug of war between his standoffishness and his huge heart," Mikaela said in an interview.

"He tries so hard to hide his emotions and put on a tough exterior, but underneath, he's a big softy, and his love can't help but come out.

"I believe there is a little Chopper in all of us. We all want to be loved and accepted. We go to great lengths to keep the people

that we love safe. There's a purity to his nature that reminds us of what's good in the world," she added.

Regarded by critics and readers as one of the greatest manga series of all time, *One Piece* holds various publishing records, including the highest initial print run for any book in Japan.

In 2015 and 2022, it set the Guinness World Records for 'most copies published for the same comic book series by a single author'.

It has received praise for its storytelling, expansive worldbuilding, art, characterisation, and humour.

The namesake ongoing 1999 animated TV series was the most watched TV show of the year in 2022.

THE English translation of Japanese mystery thriller *Strange Buildings* by Uketsu has hit the shelves.

Translated by Jim Rion, the book takes place in eleven strange buildings: a lonely hut in the woods, a murder house, a hidden chamber, a mysterious shrine, a home in flames and a nightmarish prison, with each one being a part of a puzzle leading to a horrifying revelation.

This is the second instalment of the *Strange Houses* series, which

WORDED MYSTERY

blends conventional prose with visual elements (drawings, diagrams, floor plans) that are presented as clues within the text.

Author Uketsu is a Japanese YouTuber and author of unknown identity who creates surreal short films and writes mystery and horror fiction.

He appears in public wearing a white papier-mâché mask and a black bodysuit and uses a voice changer to conceal his identity.

In an article, translator

Jim expressed his joy in presenting the anonymous writer's work to a broader audience, after discovering his *YouTube* videos in 2021 and getting hooked.

"I wanted to bring this very odd, very unusual oeuvre to English audiences, and I thought it would sell," Jim recounted.

"So, around the end of 2022, I put together a little sample of the debut book *Strange Houses* and author intro for (publisher) Pushkin Vertigo. Sometime in the spring of



PUZZLE: The book cover

2023, Pushkin told me that they had made a successful offer on Uketsu's two books," he added.

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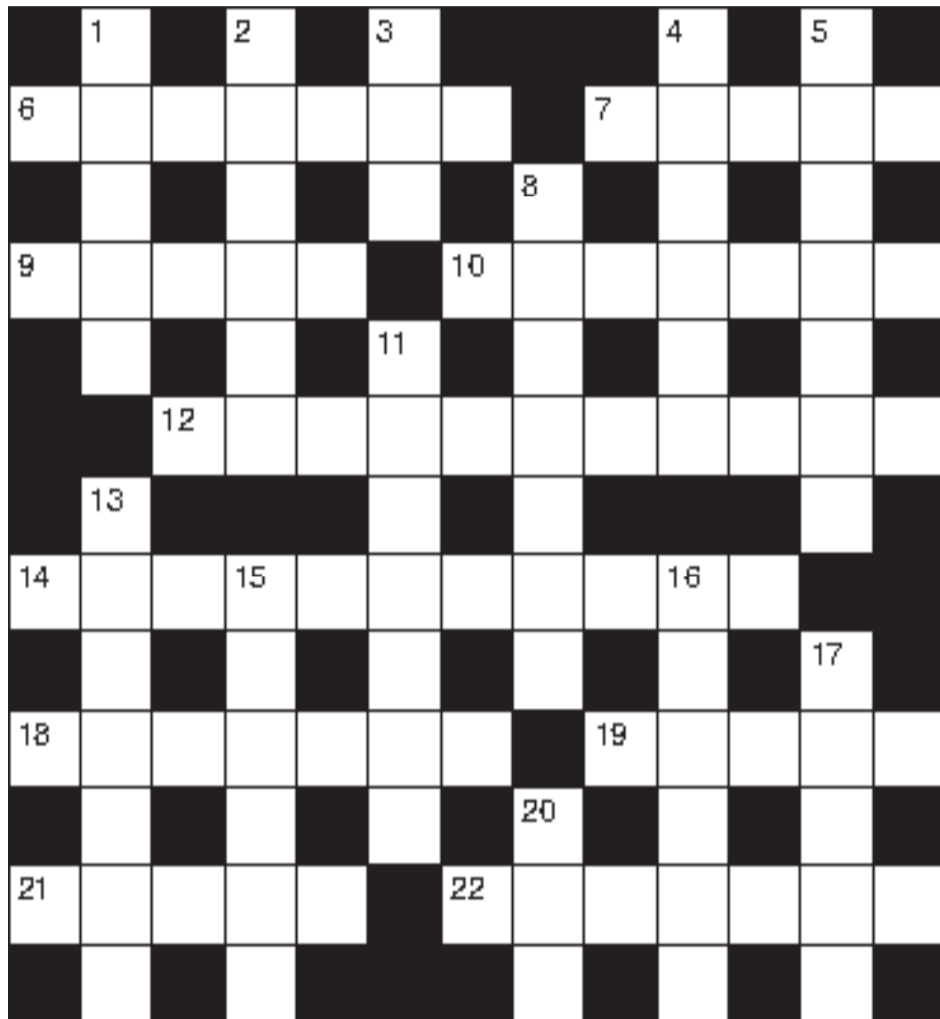
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Time Out



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crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

- 6. Copy (7)
- 7. Form (5)
- 9. Bisect (5)
- 10. Droll (7)
- 12. Dejected (11)
- 14. Eternal (11)
- 18. Squirm (7)
- 19. Recover (5)
- 21. Concur (5)
- 22. Assemble (7)

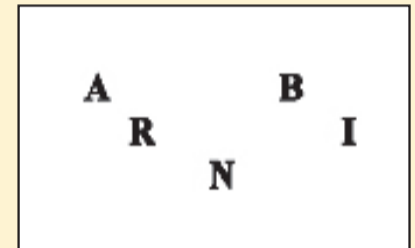
DOWN

- 1. Postpone (5)
- 2. Talented (6)
- 3. Perform (3)
- 4. Piercing (6)
- 5. Orator (7)
- 8. Disprove (7)
- 11. Attack (7)
- 13. Mean (7)
- 15. Tough (6)
- 16. Almost (6)
- 17. Put (5)
- 20. Enemy (3)

who, what, where, when

- WHO ... played Daisy Duke in the 2005 *Dukes of Hazzard* film?
- WHAT ... is heliology the study of?
- WHERE ... is the UK village in Cornwall that suffered flash flooding in August 2004?
- WHEN ... did Great Britain's Princess Anne marry Captain Mark Phillips in London?
- WHO ... wrote *The Female Eunuch*?
- WHAT ... flower is morphine obtained from?
- WHERE ... would you find Marcilly golf course?
- WHEN ... did Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman divorce?

just so



tough sudoku

So you think you're good enough at Sudoku to crack this baby? Remember, we were the first in the Gulf to bring you this bit of Japanese mayhem...so we don't kid around

Last week's sudoku

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

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

tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 1 Brightness; 7 About; 8 Mammoth; 10 Unerring; 11 Char; 13 Normal; 15 Horrid; 17 Able; 18 Constant; 21 Examine; 22 Ruler; 23 Resentment.

Down: 1 Broke; 2 Interval; 3 Humane; 4 Name; 5 Smother; 6 Calumniate; 9 Hereditary; 12 Construe; 14 Release; 16 Moment; 19 Allot; 20 Live.

JUST SO:

All eyes; Bend the truth; Dante's inferno; Hi fi.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN: Ralf Schumacher; VW Beetle; Venus; 1963; John Boyd Dunlop; Tenpin bowling; In the South Pacific; 1974.

Tough Sudoku

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