

# Weekend REVIEW

Weekly GulfTimes, Friday, July 27, 2007

## Standing tall

**J**OY Wyler thinks dwarfs pretty much got missed in those sensitivity training sessions held in workplaces routinely. Race? check; religion? check; sexual orientation? check. Short-statured people ...

"Everybody still loves a good midget joke," says Wyler, who lives in Prairie Village, Kansas. She's three feet four inches tall. When she was born in 1955 in southwest Missouri, doctors told her parents not to get too attached because their child would die soon.

When she didn't, folks later said the dwarf baby was the biggest thing to hit town since 'Ol' Doc So-and-So had a baby born with only one ear.

Wyler surprised again by excelling in school and then graduating from college and law school, dispelling the stereotype that dwarfs are "slow."

She worked as a medical technician and later an attorney. She is now an ordained minister and director of a four-state district of Little People of America.

"I may be half the size of others, but I am not half the person," she likes to say. "But still today people think they can tell so much about me and others like me by the way we look."

Her good friend Largo Callenbach tells about the time the two were in a restaurant when, after Callenbach had ordered, the waitress asked, "And what would your little friend like?"

Callenbach was taken aback. Did the question presume Wyler couldn't read or for whatever reason couldn't order on her own?

"Gosh, I don't know," Callenbach said, after a moment, "Why don't you ask her?"

Let's pick up Wyler's story with the thick block of wood on the floorboard of her car. Her grandfather gave it to her when she started to drive so she could rest her foot on something. She's 52 now, so that old block of wood has been around the block a few times.

It shows she wanted to go places. It shows she wanted to do things on her own. It shows she was willing to adapt to her big world.

And it shows she loved her grandfather because surely some company makes a shiny, government-approved foot stabilizer that she could buy — probably even one to match the interior of her Toyota station wagon — and finally toss that big hunk of scuffed-up wood that Grampa probably cut in a barn with a crosscut saw.

Wyler drove to college with her foot on that block of wood. And later to law school. Now she drives every day to Unity Village, where she works as a minister.

"Some people see me and assume I'm disabled," Wyler says on a recent morning while she sips tea in a coffee shop. "I guess I would like to think that I've shown people I'm pretty capable of doing about anything."

Anything?

**'I may be half the size of others, but I am not half the person,' Joy Wyler likes to say. DONALD BRADLEY reports on the spunky short-stature achiever**



Joy Wyler gets a hug from her son, Victor, after helping him move into an Overland Park duplex, in Kansas City, Missouri, in April this year.

"Well ... I don't think I could play in the NBA (National Basketball Association)." Call her a good lawyer, a great mother, an inspiring minister. But be advised: Don't tell Joy Wyler she is the littlest person you've ever seen. "Is there a prize for that?" she's likely to ask back — she has done this before. "Because she's done this before."

Well, fair to say most high school girls don't get to date the six-foot-seven captain of the basketball team, but Wyler and the boy had a lot in common: They both got stared at a lot, and both had a hard time buying clothes.

Beyond that, Wyler has experienced family estrangement. She has worked all her life and been turned down for jobs she thinks she should have gotten. She's raised two children and lost one. Her daughter changed majors. She owns her home, and it looks pretty much like any other except for more step stools.

She was the first person I ever saw who was like me," she says. "I was this bright, precocious child, and I was going to do whatever I wanted to do — and he was a grown-up. "And he was selling pencils. "I was terrified. This was my future!"

But then little Oscar, a dwarf who drove the Wiernermobile for Oscar-Mayer, came to town for a store opening. Apparently the man was a bit of a crusader, always on the lookout for dwarfs because he wanted to help those children. Somebody told him about Joy, and the two talked. He told

her to dream big, ignore the slights and stares, and he encouraged her to do whatever she wanted. Yes, he was the driver of the Wiernermobile — not exactly positioning himself to win the Nobel Prize, but still he was convincing, and in love. He was a beau of normal height, and they had great times together. She thought he was the one.

"Then his father told him he would rather him marry a (disparaging and offensive term for a black person)," she says. "He chose his family, so I guess I had better insight into him, but, of course, I also had a broken heart."

The pencil seller, Rejection. Lost love. And worst of all, the day in 1985 when she lost a baby, Sarah, to sudden infant death syndrome.

Joy Wyler was big enough to get past those and keep going. Kim Mattox, a paralegal, worked with attorney Wyler at Children's Mercy Hospital. On top of being quite good at her job, Wyler was a joy to work with, Mattox remembers.

"She was as quick-witted as they come, and she had this wonderful, soulful side to her," Mattox says. "People would come to her

heartbreak. Romance, though, is an area that she prefers not to talk about because she thinks it is the topic that the public is most voyeuristic about when it comes to dwarfs. But she did share one story of being young and in love. He was a beau of normal height, and they had great times together. She thought he was the one.

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"She was as quick-witted as they come, and she had this wonderful, soulful side to her," Mattox says. "People would come to her

for counselling — and I don't mean legal counsel. I mean personal counselling, and that wasn't even her job."

Mattox wasn't surprised in 2001 when Wyler gave up law and entered seminary. When she wants to do something, she doesn't stand back. She adapts and conquers.

Joy Wyler looked around a coffee shop for a place to sit. The closest was a high bar table with tall stools. "Well, not there," she says.

Thirty years ago Star Magazine profiled Wyler, then a 22-year-old recent college graduate. In that article she talked about the discrimination and ridicule faced by dwarfs daily in American society. She took some blame herself.

When she was new to Kansas City and needed money, she took a part-time job playing a leprechaun in a band. She danced around in a green satin suit and tossed "magic dust" at the audience.

Not her proudest moment. But in recent interviews Wyler says some major areas have improved since that earlier story.

First, the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has been more diligent in responding to cases brought by dwarfs.

Second, the Americans With Disabilities Act improved access issues. For example, lowering countertops and buttons in elevators.

But, as head of the Little People of America chapter, she says there is still a long way to go in access to life insurance and health care. Dwarfs are more susceptible to orthopaedic problems and spinal stenosis.

Regular exercise would help, but dwarfs, like everybody else, don't get as much as they should. "I try to walk," Wyler says, "but I'll run only if somebody yells 'Fire!' and then I ask how close."

But she sees some improvement in entertainment media, specifically the 2003 movie *The Station Agent*, which tells the story of a dwarf who, upon losing his best friend, takes his loneliness to a remote community only to be befriended by an eclectic duo who needs nursing.

The movie starred four-foot, five-inch Peter Dinklage. It perhaps didn't rise to the social message of box office, of *Philadelphia*, *Rain Man* or *Driving Miss Daisy*, but it did show dwarfs in very human terms of spirit, frailty and resilience.

Dinklage also plays linguist and mathematician Arthur Ramsey on the science fiction TV series *Threshold*, available on DVD. It's not a token role; he's an integral member of the *Threshold* team.

The public has improved, too. Wyler thinks, but says too many people are still quick to stare, laugh and flaunt insolence. On a recent shopping trip, Wyler and her 20-year-old daughter, Kari, an adoptive wife, were in the checkout line when the clerk heard Kari refer to Wyler as "Mom."

"Did you say 'mom'?" the surprised clerk asked.

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A new way to tone up

Page 4  
Mango chutney



Joy pushes a shopping cart into an area Price Chopper for groceries. In Prairie Village, Kansas. What might seem routine to many people poses challenges for little people, such as shopping for groceries.



Joy and her daughter, Kari, look at frozen vegetables as they prepare to make dinner, at their Prairie Village, Kansas home. Except for the step stools, Wyler's kitchen is equipped like most others.



Joy talks with mothers during a Little People of America Easter egg hunt at Meadowlark Park in Prairie Village, Kansas in March.

"Yeah," Kari answered. "You mean, she's your mother?" the clerk persisted. Kari nodded. "Your real mother?" the clerk asked again. Wyler couldn't hold back: "Are there a lot of pretend mothers that come in here?" The clerk appeared annoyed. "Well, no, I guess not."

Kari and Wyler held their laughter until they got outside. "That's what we have done our whole lives," Kari says.

Kari attends Johnson County Community College and hopes to be an elementary teacher. "You're real mother?" the clerk asked again. "Are there a lot of pretend mothers that come in here?"

Probably because Joy Wyler put her foot on Grampa's block of wood and went out into the world years ago and found that strength of heart is more important than length of leg. "I found out that I was ... enough," Wyler says. "I guess that's what I would like for my kids — and for that matter anyone else — to know: "We are all enough." — The Kansas City Star/MCT

### WORKPLACE



## Research — an overlooked secret of business success

By Rebecca Jordan

**L**OVE research. I'm one of those people who enjoys googling obscure facts and sifting through library catalogues. A geek, if you like. Research is an essential part of working life, especially if you are setting up your own business. Not doing your research can be embarrassing at best, disastrous at worst.

Last week I got a call from someone trying to sell me search engine optimisation services. The approach wasn't bad until the salesman informed me in a slightly gleeful tone that one of our websites wasn't coming up on any Google searches.

I said that was odd, as I was online at that point and our website was coming up at the top of the first page.

I asked him what keywords he had been searching under. It turned out he had been typing "publishing services" which is probably what we were listed under about five years ago. I suggested that next time he called

someone and announced in doomsday terms that their website was rubbish, he actually looks at it first.

People fail to do the most basic research. One contestant on the Britain's Next Top Model reality show was asked who her favourite fashion photographer was.

She couldn't name any! I know they aren't competing to be Britain's Next Top Rocket Scientist, but surely if you want to be a model it helps to have done more research than just admiring Kate Moss's hotpants.

When I read a CV from a graduate that says that the reason they want to work for us is their passion for travel, I can tell that they haven't researched what we actually do.

Needless to say, the CV goes in the "not if you were the last job applicant on earth" pile.

Good research is about lateral thinking. Usually you will either need to locate a specific piece of information within a large amount of information, or you start with a small amount of

information and then have to find out more.

Some people's brains can't cope with either. To search through a large amount of information takes time and patience. Getting bored when the information you need doesn't appear instantly isn't going to work.

Likewise, expensive research where you start with a snippet which you have to develop into in-depth knowledge cannot be done overnight (no matter how much coffee is involved).

Research takes time, which is something that most of us are short of. Even the information superhighway needs navigating slowly, otherwise you can miss what you are looking for.

Plus, of course, the Web is full of information that, to put it politely, will need verifying.

Whether you are writing a CV or pitching for a contract, finding out facts, and getting them right, is crucial. Many people seem to think that research, and acquiring new information, is something that you just

do at school or university.

Even then, you only need enough information to be able to answer specific questions.

Once out in the real world, you can blag your way through the world of work quite effectively without learning anything new at all.

But you will never be a great employee doing this, and you certainly won't be able to set up your own business.

Research isn't just about finding out what other people think or know. It is also a means of developing your own ideas. New ideas. And that's what really makes a great employee, and an innovative business.

If people researched more, and talked less, the world would be a better place. The next time someone at work announces that a market is dwindling, or costs are up across the board, or they made the last cup of tea, ask them what they are basing that statement on. Have they done their research? — Guardian News & Media

CASE FILES

# Noonday killer of Nuremberg

**Klaus Gosmann had planned his most daring and profitable crime, but a small mistake landed him in gaol for the rest of his life**

THE killer sat by the window of his tiny furnished room overlooking the rooftops of the Bavarian city of Nuremberg and opened his blue leather-bound diary. Adjusting his glasses he wrote: "At midday on August 15 I shall commit my most daring and profitable crime — the kidnaping for ransom of the movie star Elke Sommer. She is coming to visit her mother in a village not far from here.

"While she is my captive, we can no doubt spend our time pleasantly. I foresee no difficulty but I must work out the details with care. A man of intelligence can commit bold crimes with ease and go unpunished, as my career has shown."

It was hard to argue with that. The man writing his diary had already become an evil legend in Bavaria. He had killed six victims during robberies and had escaped without anyone witnessing the crimes.

The routine was invariably the same. A neatly-dressed young man would approach a bank, ask to see the manager, force him to open his private safe, take the money, kill his victim with an automatic

revolver and walk calmly out of the bank.

Over the months — in the summer of 1962 — a sketchy description of the killer had been built up by Bavarian police in his early 20s, of slight build, with fair hair, wore a dark suit and glasses. But who he was — and where he would strike next — remained a mystery.

But they also uncovered a bizarre fact: the killer always struck at noon — when church bells in towns and cities rang out, drowning the sound of gunshots.

Banks tightened their security, and every day as the noon bells rang out, businessmen turned nervous eyes towards their doors ... would the young man with the cold eyes behind his spectacles decided to call on them today?

But the noonday killer had now another target — 23-year-old German movie star Elke Sommer, who had co-starred with heartthrobs like Peter Sellers and Paul Newman and was Germany's top-ranking glamour-girl.

In the summer of 1964 she had arranged to stay for a month with her mother in a village 30km from Nuremberg.

And it was here that the noonday killer planned to abduct her and demand a \$2m ransom.

But that was some weeks away and in the meantime he had plans for robberies and more killings. In fact he would never carry out his plan to kidnap the movie star ... a 37-year-old Nuremberg housewife would see to that.

One August Saturday in 1964, Frau Margarethe Steger was browsing through the racks of summer dresses in the city's Brennickmeyer department store when she saw a dress she liked and putting down her handbag she unhooked the dress from its rack.

While holding it up to a mirror she glimpsed a flash of movement behind her and turned to see a neatly-dressed young man in glasses pick up her handbag and walk rapidly away.

Her reaction was quick and dramatic. "Thief, thief," she screamed. "That man has stolen my handbag." Her voice was so shrill and piercing that it cut through the noontime peeling of bells which had just begun.

It alerted several shop-assistants who began to chase the thief through the crowded store, shouting to others to block his escape.

The young man fought his way through thick crowds and plunged down a staircase only to find his way blocked by a thickset man with a briefcase. Instantly the fugitive whipped out a gun and fired at point-blank range. But by some miracle the shot went into the briefcase instead of the man.

The young man took advantage of the confusion to bolt for the door, his pursuers at his heels. In the street, a maintenance engineer from the store tried to grapple with the man but fell grasping with two bullets in the chest.

By now two policemen, alerted by the shots, had rushed to the scene and confronted the bag-snatcher who now took another gun from over his coat and fired at the officers with both of them. One jammed before it could



Klaus Gosmann ... in custody.

do any harm and the other spurred three shots which struck the pavement. An instant later police had him on the ground, his wrists and ankles securely manacled. The noon killer was caught at last.

But who was he? He refused to say anything and there were no identity papers in his pockets but there was a rent receipt bearing the address of a furnished room near the business district.

Two detectives went to the address and described their prisoner to the elderly landlady. "He has lived in a small room at the top for several months," she said. "His name is Klaus Gosmann. I don't know much about him."

The name meant nothing to the detectives, either. When they visited the room they found it was small and neat with little in it apart from a few clothes. Then in a drawer, they found two revolvers, one with the name "Eliak" carved on the butt.

They also found a diary with a blue leather cover containing meticulous entries going back several years. As they leafed through the pages they realised they had inadvertently caught the man they had been seeking for years — the noon-time killer of Nuremberg. The diary referred to six previous murders — and plans to kidnap Elke Sommer.

His capture by the police had come just in time. Entries in the diary revealed that Gosmann was the son of a wealthy middle-class family and his father had been an officer in the German army. He had also been a gun collector and young Klaus developed a passion for firearms.

At University Klaus read Nietzsche and other philosophers and developed a theory that a man had the right to do whatever he liked. Guns gave him a feeling of power and superiority. He had committed his first murder at 19 — shooting dead a man and wife who had failed to give him the money he wanted.

When police failed to solve the case, Gosmann decided they were stupid and came to the conclusion that an intelligent man who planned his moves carefully could make a good living from crime without much risk of being caught.

So a year later when he wanted to buy a flashy BMW sports car, he committed his first bank robbery. Armed with the information from the diary Detective Chief Inspector Hans Daugher was ready to question the suspect but at first sight the 26-year-old quiet courteous man seemed anything but a killer.

At first he denied everything, but when shown evidence that his guns were

responsible for all the noon killer's murders he shrugged his shoulders and remarked: "In view of the evidence you have I suppose there's not much hope for me."

He then dictated a long statement admitting seven killings but it was not until July 1967 that Klaus Gosmann was finally brought to trial.

But his defence lawyers were determined to make a fight of it. Dr Hans Bader claimed that the murder confessions had been forced out of his client under duress and called Gosmann's mother who provided alibi for her son for most of the days when killings had occurred.

The jury weren't convinced. They found Gosmann guilty on all counts. Sending him to gaol for the rest of his life, the judge, Dr Karl Kristel, told Gosmann: "You set yourself up as an arbiter over the life and death of others. You were without conscience or sympathy. People were inanimate objects to you. You simply swept them away with your pistol shots."

Klaus Gosmann never showed any remorse for his crimes. His only regret that he had not been able to carry out the kidnaping of Elke Sommer. "I would have enjoyed that," he told a guard in gaol. "She was always my favourite movie star". — Tony James Syndication

STYLE

## Cutting edge tips for razor users

By Thorsten Wiese



Most men agree that shaved legs are a must when wearing a skirt or dress. And even more skin shows in the summer when bikinis and swimsuits are worn on a regular basis. For years women have been using razors — both electric and disposable — to shave off unwanted hair, and not just on the legs.

But a lot of care must be taken to ensure that skin irritations don't destroy the flawless look.

Surprisingly, men have noticed that the furry bear-look is out and now are shaving more than just their facial hair. Dermatologist Günthild Kratzsch of Leipzig, said: "Around 80% of women under age 50 shave." Among men, shaving the armpits, chest and groin area has become more common. It used to be that only athletes, particularly swimmers and cyclists, who wanted to cut milliseconds off their times shaved their legs. Now the smooth look for men has spread to a broader group. Among men under 30 about half shave their legs and other parts of their bodies.

Bernhard Roetzal, a fashion expert from the town of Vettweiss near Cologne, confirms the trend. "Male fashion models usually shave their entire bodies," he said. Older people might still find it odd, but "it hasn't been an issue for a long time," he added.

The development is also supported by data from companies that make razors and other shaving-related items. A study conducted by the Emnid Institute in Hamburg for the Dutch company Philips, a leading maker of electric razors, indicates that part of the body men most typically shave — apart from the face — is the groin. In the study 67% of men asked said they regularly shave that area. The chest, armpits and neck are less commonly shaved, according to the study.

Both men and women know about skin irritations resulting from shaving. They are aggravating, especially because a shave should produce a well-groomed look. "Sensitive skin suffers the most from shaving," said Kratzsch. "Many small sores result because the skin's protective surface is scraped off."

Bacteria can enter more easily through these openings in the skin and the result is red spots that can become infected. "Each hair has a sebaceous gland," said dermatologist Linda Duhn of Bernau near Berlin. These glands can become infected and after the legs and bikini zone are shaved, typically there are small brown dots left on the skin. "It is something for which some people are predisposed," said Kratzsch.

But hygiene also plays a role. Prior to shaving certain measures should be taken, including making sure the blades of the razor are clean. In addition, the skin should be clean and free of sweat. The best time to shave is after showering.

To protect the skin and avoid irritations such as pimples, applying a cream or lotion after shaving is recommended. It's also important to avoid strong sunlight and salt water or chlorinated water after shaving. Shaving leaves behind a lot of entry points for bacteria and swimming exposes the skin to a lot of bacteria, Duhn said.

How often the legs, chest and bikini area are shaved is up to one's individual taste. "There are people who tolerate shaving well and they can do it as often as they like," said Duhn. "It is equally an individual decision whether shaving with water or with an electric razor is more pleasant for the skin." One person does better with this method, while another with that. — DPA



Frau Margarethe Steger ... alarm bells.

**Lettuce and its water**

Q. I am addicted to snacking and all my good intentions get lost when I think about eating salt and vinegar chips. How can I get out of this bad habit?

— Shalini F

A. Many of us have our own favourite foods or snack-attack foods that we really find hard to resist. One of the problems is that when we start to think of these goodies our imagination runs riot and tells us how wonderful the snack will taste. Try this exercise: The first step is to identify your food cravings.

- Shalini loves crisps. They are her comfort food.
- She will eat up to three packets a day which is playing havoc with her weight and is far too much salt for her body.
- To control her imagination when she thinks of crisps she thinks of a food that she hates most.
- Every time you think of your favourite snack, link it with your feelings for a food that you really detest, like smelly Brussels sprouts.
- When Shalini thinks of crisps she thinks of them as covered in green Brussels sprouts.
- Do you really want to eat them now? No I don't think so.

Queries? E-mail: [Alva.GulfTimes@NaturalHealthlines.com](mailto:Alva.GulfTimes@NaturalHealthlines.com). Back issues of *Shalini's* are available at [www.naturalhealthlines.com](http://www.naturalhealthlines.com)

## HEALTHY LIVING

# Need a fast tone up? Have your fill on Power Plate

By Jan Jarvis

THERE'S a hot vibrating training machine on the market, and it's shaking up everyone from Madonna to the Dallas Mavericks. The Power Plate promises to tone muscles, improve strength and increase flexibility with just three 15-minute workouts a week. At 20 to 50 vibrations a second, it shakes up the entire body, causing all those muscles to contract at lightning speed. Spending 15 minutes on the Power Plate is, according to the manufacturer, like working out for an hour at the gym without all that sweat and strain on joints.

The \$10,000 Power Plate is nothing like the vibrating belts that were trendy in the 1960s. This modern-day device is used mostly by athletes, who say it improves speed, balance and coordination. The rich and famous have also given it a whirl, and some fitness buffs have found a place for the 300lbs Power Plate in their homes.

Here are the facts about the Power Plate:

- Power Plate uses whole body vibrations to improve muscles' strength and tone and bone density.
- The benefits are supported by scientific data showing immediate improvement in blood circulation, according to the manufacturer. Other measurable outcomes include increased bone density, reduced pain and faster recovery from injury. The makers of the Power Plate say it also accelerates fat loss, decreases pain, improves joint function, builds muscle tone, reduces stress, increases circulation, enhances immune functions and increases metabolism.
- Other perks include anti-ageing benefits such as improving hormone levels and enhancing collagen production.
- Kay Smith, a Pilates instructor who owns the device, calls it the "ultimate anti-age machine" because it builds bone density as well as

increases flexibility, strength and muscle tone. She saw measurable results after about eight months. It also helps heal sports injuries faster, increases circulation and reduces pain. Best of all, users don't walk away from a workout feeling exhausted.

The device should not replace your cardiovascular fitness programme, said Jennifer Campbell, an exercise physiologist. It may be great to add variety to your routine or to challenge different muscles, but don't trade in your treadmill. Its main purpose is core training or strength enhancement. You still need an aerobic programme.

The Power Plate creates vibrations that cause instability throughout the body. The body then stabilises itself, unconsciously, using the muscular system. This constant muscle action is what makes training effective. Users typically spend 10 to 15 minutes doing squats, lunges and other moves. As the device vibrates, muscles contract and you can feel the tingle up your legs, spine and neck.

In the 1960s, Soviet cosmonauts used similar technology to combat bone and muscle degeneration caused by zero gravity. In 1999, a Dutch Olympic trainer introduced the technology, resulting in the development of the Power Plate. It became available in the United States in 2000, but only through direct sales or a website.

Madonna, Clint Eastwood and Sean "Diddy" Combs reportedly use it. And athletic teams are using it, including the Dallas Mavericks, San Antonio Spurs, Chicago Cubs and Anaheim Mighty Ducks. Casey Smith, head athletic trainer for the Mavericks, said some players use it for warming up and after soft-tissue injuries.

- Dina Cominos said her arms looked more toned after three times on the device. "It helps you get in shape quicker and easier," she said. "You get off of it and your muscles quiver just like when you work out hard." After 10 times, she said the results were impressive.
- Smith says the proof is in her bone density, which increased by 3.5%. In a 24-week study by Power Plate of 90 post-menopausal women, the subjects increased their strength by as much as 16% in the upper leg muscles. Bone density at the hip increased 1.5%. The group also showed an improvement in postural control and balance. A weight-training group had no significant improvements.
- Skip it if you are pregnant, have cardiovascular disease, recent wounds from an operation, an acute hernia, severe diabetes, epilepsy, severe migraines, pacemakers, tumours or retinal problems. — MCT



Friday, July 27, 2007

# Leisure 3

## BIRTHDAYS FROM JULY 21 - 27, 2007

**WEEKLY WINNER**



**Meshaal Muejeb**  
24.7.2000



**N V Sreenivas**  
21.7.2005



**Mishaal Habib Shaikh**  
25.7.1997



**P Gautam Reddy**  
25.7.1996



**Kline Keith**  
26.7.2000



**Joshua Fernandes**  
26.7.2004



**Juwairiya Atiq**  
27.7.1999



**Abeer Atiq**  
27.7.2003



**McDonald's Head Office - 436003/132**  
Suhaim bin Hamad St restaurant - 435401/431  
Rayyan restaurant - 4815779  
The Mall restaurant - 4678111

**Souq restaurant - 4417691**  
Markhiya restaurant - 4863703  
Landmark Mall restaurant - 4862543  
City Center restaurant - 4854706

**M**ANY happy returns of the day to all the Young Gulfers who have celebrated their birthdays this week. We hope to add a little to the cheer with great prizes and giveaways courtesy of McDonald's.

Congrats to weekly winner Meshaal Muejeb. The weekly winner gets coupons for four Happy Meals and four Value Meals from McDonald's. The monthly winner can host a free birthday party for up to 15 guests at McDonald's. The coupons can be collected from the McDonald's head office, from Ms Dona (Tel:436003/32). The winners of McDonald's collectibles for this week are: N V Sreenivas, Mishaal Habib Shaikh, P Gautam Reddy, Kline Keith, Joshua Fernandes, Juwairiya Atiq and Abeer Atiq.

For further details, contact McDonald's Restaurant at Suhaim bin Hamad St on Friday, between 6-6.30pm. Please submit coupons by Sunday. Entries without the coupon will be disqualified.

## YOUR STARS

**IF YOUR birthday falls this week, you have plenty of catching up to do at work, because quite a few colleagues are away on holiday. Take care of your health, and attend to home improvement projects whenever convenient.**

**Aries Mar 21-Apr 20**

**BE INQUISITIVE** about unfamiliar circumstances. Finish up any correspondence by early afternoon. You can accomplish the most if you travel for business purposes. Your doubt could lead to insecurity, which will reflect negatively on your work or home.

Lucky day this week: Friday.

**Taurus Apr 21-May 21**

**TAKE** matters in hand when it comes to dealing with clients or colleagues. Club memberships or donations could be expensive and prove unnecessary. You will probably have to defend your mate. Go after your goals.

Lucky day this week: Saturday.

**Gemini May 22-June 21**

**ENJOY** the company of relatives this week. Try not to get backed into corners. Re-evaluate your situation. You will learn a great deal about yourself if you go somewhere secluded. But don't lose touch with reality.

Lucky day this week: Friday.

**Cancer June 22-July 23**

**EXPECT** some flak from your partner for indulging too much in a pet cause. Invite friends over rather than spending money on outside entertainment. Opportunities to pamper yourself may unfold. Spend some time on yourself.

Lucky day this week: Monday.

**Leo July 24-Aug 23**

**SELF-DECEPTION** regarding your own worth may lead you down the wrong path. Direct your energy wisely. Do not allow colleagues to hinder your ambitions. You will learn a great deal from the foreigners you meet. You may be inspired to make a few changes yourself.

Lucky day this week: Friday.

**Virgo Aug 24-Sep 23**

**YOU** may have problems with those you live with. Changes to your self image will be to your benefit as long as you don't over-pay. You can expect insincere gestures of friendliness this week. Don't let your family put demands on you.

Lucky day this week: Saturday.

**Libra Sep 24-Oct 23**

**YOU** can make money if you pursue your own business. Involvement in groups will be favourable and lead to valuable information. You have been stagnating for some time now and you need a change of pace. Disharmony will result in a lowered vitality. Stress may result in illness.

Lucky day this week: Tuesday.

**Scorpio Oct 24-Nov 22**

**DO NOT** over-expand if you have your own business. Don't back down but don't ignite the situation. Use discretion in your dealings and refrain from making verbal promises of any kind. Your lover may disappoint you; estrangement will follow.

Lucky day this week: Monday.

**Sagittarius Nov 23-Dec 21**

**OBSERVATIONS** will be far more productive. You can convince anyone of anything. Attempt to face key issues with lovers or problems could escalate. You might find that delays will cause setbacks and upset. But don't give up on that cause yet.

Lucky day this week: Thursday.

**Capricorn Dec 22-Jan 20**

**THIS** is not the best day to visit relatives who get on your nerves. Make money using your ingenuity and creative talent. When the work is done, they may serve you for a change. Don't be afraid to confide in friends regarding a personal problem.

Lucky day this week: Sunday.

**Aquarius Jan 21-Feb 19**

**DON'T** bother trying to make someone you live with see your point of view. You should make special plans for you and your lover. Don't overspend on items for your home. Your high energy should be spent pleasing your mate, and not in irritating them.

Lucky day this week: Sunday.

**Pisces Feb 20-Mar 20**

**YOU** may need a good friend to lean on. Your ability to dazzle others with your unique and innovative ideas will attract attention. Try to visit friends or relatives you don't get to see often. Work quietly at your own goals and don't worry too much about the future.

Lucky day this week: Monday.



**Garfield**



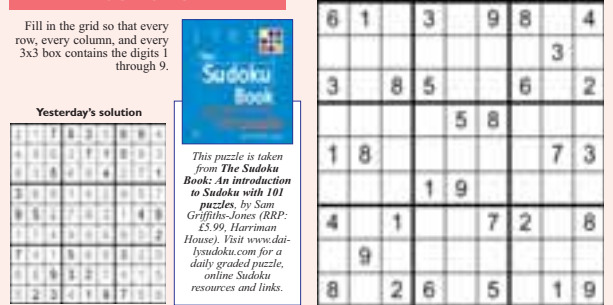
**POOCH CAFE**  
BY PAUL GILGIGAN




**FRANK**  
By Dave Coverly

## SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.



**Yesterday's solution**



*This puzzle is taken from The Sudoku Book: An introduction to Sudoku with 101 puzzles, by Sam Griffiths-Jones (RRP: £5.99, Harriman House). Visit www.dailysudoku.com for a daily graded puzzle, online Sudoku resources and links.*

## DOUBLE CROSSWORD

### CRYPTIC CLUES

**ACROSS**

3. Cautious about system of training (9)
8. A case for some more tuition in needlework (4)
9. Make a beginning by discounting industrial action? (6,3)
10. Resident finishing game of chess (6)
11. Footprints of climbers all leading initially towards the centre (5)
14. Cancel a deduction for every year (5)
15. Whittish fencing post (4)
16. Golfing connections (5)
18. Praise twofold return (4)
20. Bring force to bear on newspapers (5)
21. Flower Poles get in wages (5)
24. Extremist letters and article in drinking-spot in Eastern market (6)
25. When the duty copper might make timely intervention? (7,3,4)
26. Design aircraft without tail (4)
27. Man and where he lives go into top gear (9)

**DOWN**

1. B. Leader is strangely attractive (9)
2. Application of one of the four rules by the judge? (7,2)
4. Engagement in palmy days? (4)
5. Company tune in to capital (5)
6. Part of shoe of ace up in highest spot (6)
7. Responsibility can be something of a boon usually (4)
9. Not moving yet (5)
11. Imaginary liking (5)
12. Recover near the end of the game from the side (9)
13. Fresh run of paper for the papers (9)
17. Traps fish (5)
19. Made a ruinous rush, perhaps (6)
22. Bores when not drunk (5)
23. Formerly in concert (4)
24. Fish hits a low tone? (4)

### QUICK CLUES

**ACROSS**

3. Shoulder-bag (9)
8. Worry (4)
9. Indocent (9)
10. Madness (6)
11. Cut (5)
14. Text (5)
15. Ease (4)
16. Clathe (5)
18. Thoroughfare (4)
20. Trophy (5)

**DOWN**

21. Flatten (5)
24. After (6)
25. Bare (9)
26. Revolution (4)
27. Canteen (9)
1. Carving (9)
2. Chief (9)
4. Absent (4)
5. Expunge (5)
6. Tremble (6)
7. Association (4)
9. Chide (5)
11. Expand (5)
12. Devout (9)
13. Escort (9)
17. Rapidity (5)
19. Signify (6)
22. Happening (5)
23. Fortnightly (4)
24. Carry (4)

**Yesterday's solution**

**QUICK**

Across: 1 Mask; 3 Barbecue; 8 Real; 9 Research; 11 Intoxication; 13 Genial; 14 Flagon; 17 Incandescent; 20 Combined; 21 Owen; 22 Eandering; 23 Edit.

Down: 1 Marriage; 2 Smarten; 4 Amores; 5 Breathless; 6 Cargo; 7 Echo; 10 Excavation; 12 Instinct; 15 Gleaned; 16 Adhere; 18 Named; 19 Ache.

**CRYPTIC**

Across: 1 Rate; 3 Projects; 8 Tear; 9 Argument; 11 Friendliness; 13 Eagles; 14 Clever; 17 State of siege; 20 Ice-skate; 21 Mant; 22 Sideral; 23 Aged.

Down: 1 Ratified; 2 Teasing; 4 Rarely; 5 Journalist; 6 Cheese; 7 Sets; 10 Undertaker; 12 Arrested; 15 Viewing; 16 Porta; 18 Tweed; 19 Ties.

# 4 Etc...



▲ Kendall Falkinburg, nine, holds Twinkle, a Pegasus Webkinz.

▲ Chloe Thomas, eight, of Bluffton, South Carolina, owns 34 Webkinz. She started collecting the plush toys after receiving one as a present from her aunt.

## Cute, in a techno way

Technology-driven stuffed animals are driving millions of kids Webkinz crazy, writes MAUREEN SIMPSON

EVERY morning, eight-year-old Chloe Thomas checks to see whether any of the 34 pets that line the top of her bunk bed need to be walked, cuddled or fed. And when she does, the animals – including a tree frog and a unicorn – come to life in their own specially designed rooms, eat a gourmet breakfast like French toast or fruit salad and decide whether to spend the day hitting the clubhouse or just staying at home instead.

The plush playthings, you see, are not your average teddy bear.

They are Webkinz, wildly popular, technology-driven stuffed animals that don't require batteries or even a computer chip to function – just a tag with a code and a kid like Chloe with time on her hands.

Welcome to the latest version of "Why didn't I think of that?"

The toys, which cost between \$10 and \$15, were introduced by the privately held Ganz Corp just over two years ago and recently received the 2007 Toy of the Year Award from the Toy Industry Association.

By supplying owners with a secret code they can use to register their animal online, Ganz has managed to

score the perfect combination of a toy children can play with both on and off the Web.

The stuffed animals have become so popular that stores across the United States can't keep them in stock for more than a week, and entrepreneurs on eBay are able to sell the hard-to-acquire and "retired" Webkinz for up to three to four times the original value.

Roughly 50 different versions of the animal are listed in the Webkinz catalogue right now.

"We'll get our shipment, put them out immediately and within a week, they're gone," said Shawna Browder, manager at a Hallmark store. "We've had to put them under lock and key now and it's crazy. We have them in a glass case so people can see what we have, but because they're so popular, we don't want any walking out the door."

Mark Postlethwaite, who owns a card and gifts store, said the first 20 calls of the day at the store are almost always about Webkinz. Parents and

grandparents from all over the US have called in search of a specific animal in the collection. Carriers are listed on the Webkinz website.

"It's just a huge deal," he said. "But it makes sense. It's not like a Beanie Baby, because it has function. It's educational and teaches kids how to manage money."

The idea might sound laughable, until you take a tour of the virtual pet planet.

At Webkinz World, proud prepubescent parents like Chloe officially adopt a virtual version of their pet by inputting their unique code. Educational games and trivia quizzes allow them to earn KinzCash they can use to buy food, clothes and furniture for their pet.

Meters keep track of how happy, healthy and hungry the virtual animals are on a scale of 1 to 100, and chat areas – that are safeguarded to ensure children's safety – make it possible for friends and their pets to connect.

Offline, kids still can kick back with

the stuffed, furry versions of their friends and play games the old-fashioned way.

"It's pretty much the first thing I do in the morning," Chloe said of logging onto www.webkinz.com. "I feed them and play games to earn money. This morning, my job was gem mining. You'll get like \$200 for every job you do, but you can only do a job every eight hours."

To date, after buying a swimming pool and patio furniture, stocking the bathroom and outfitting 34 bedrooms with their own themes, the soon-to-be third grader has saved \$7,240 in KinzCash.

Her favourite purchase was a \$600 Hippo on a Half Shell painting that now hangs in Cameo the Chihuahua's room. She's waiting to add a chocolate lab and beagle to the brood and has a record number of orders for more Webkinz joins the family.

"My rule is that every new Webkinz I get sleeps in my bed for 10 days so that it can get used to sleeping at my

### TREND

## Green mangoes, great chutney

By Carole Kotkin **RECIPE**

MANGO season is time to take advantage of the abundance and cook a batch of chutney. Bottled versions are available in the supermarket, but from-scratch chutney is so much more appealing.

Chutney is a cross between a relish and a savoury jam. It can vary in texture, be sweet or tart and range in spiciness from mild to very hot. Peeling and chopping the fruit is the only real labour. Then you throw the ingredients into a pot and simmer until the flavours meld and the sauce thickens. The recipe is highly forgiving, so feel free to adapt it to your own tastes, adding more of what you like and less (or none) of what you don't.

**Green Mango Chutney**  
Ripe mangoes also work in this recipe. If you don't have tamarind puree, substitute 2 teaspoons each lime juice, molasses and Worcestershire sauce.

- Ingredients**
- 3 cups vinegar
  - 1 cup fresh orange juice
  - 4 large unripe mangoes, halved, pitted, peeled and sliced
  - 2 cups dark brown sugar
  - 1 cup white sugar
  - 2 tablespoons tamarind puree or juice
  - 2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger
  - 1 garlic clove, peeled and minced
  - 1 cup minced onion
  - ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
  - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
  - 4 whole allspice berries
  - 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
  - 1 cup raisins (preferably golden)
  - Salt and freshly ground pepper

**Method**

Bring the vinegar and orange juice to a boil in a large saucepan. Add mango and simmer, covered, 15 minutes. Stir in the sugars, tamarind, ginger, garlic, onion, pepper flakes, cinnamon, allspice and nutmeg. Bring it back to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, 30 minutes.

Stir in raisins and simmer about 25 minutes more, until thick and jam-like. Remove it from the heat, taste for seasoning, and add salt and pepper if you like. Spoon it into screw-top jars, let it cool before capping them, and refrigerate. Makes about 4 cups. – *The Miami Herald/MCT*



A long simmer thickens this mango chutney.

### FILM REVIEWS

## Bond trader bonds with nature

**FILM:** *A Good Year*  
**CAST:** Russell Crowe, Albert Finney, Marion Cotillard, Abbie Cornish, Tom Hollander  
**DIRECTION:** Ridley Scott

IN *A Good Year*, a selfish and greedy urban yuppie becomes seduced and saved by a pastoral setting and a pretty woman who lives there.

Does the theme sound familiar? There's nothing surprising in Ridley Scott's version, gorgeous photography and strong acting keep the formula from becoming stale.

For those who don't mind pictures that fall into predictable rhythms, *A Good Year* represents a pleasant diversion.

A London bond trader, Max Skinner (Russell Crowe) is the type of guy who thinks it's cute to call his subordinates 'lab rats' and doesn't mind breaking the law if it can make him a killing on the market.

One day, he receives word that his once-beloved uncle Henry (Albert Finney) has died. Because there is no will, Max, as his closest living relative, inherits his entire French estate, which includes a dilapidated villa and a vine-

**English**

yard. Max's intention is to sell it as quickly as possible for the best price he can get, so he travels to France to put things in order.

There, assailed by memories of summers past and beguiled by the beauty of feisty Fanny (Marion Cotillard), he begins to lose his focus.

Enter Kristy (Abbie Cornish), Henry's illegitimate daughter, whose appearance introduces a problem.

Max has to sell the place – and fast – before she realises that she's the actual heir.

Crowe's bad-boy reputation serves him well in establishing Max as a jerk.

The transformation to a younger version of Henry is believable because it happens gradually.

There's a connection between Crowe and co-star Cotillard, allowing us to accept this relationship.

Albert Finney is in top form in the small but crucial role of Max's childhood mentor.



## Short and sweet entertainer

**FILM:** *Bheja Fry*  
**CAST:** Vinay Pathak, Rajat Kapoor, Ranvir Shorey, Sarika, Tom Alter, Milind Soman  
**DIRECTION:** Sagar Ballary

A SMALL idea gets stretched into a full-length feature film in *Bheja Fry*, as a talented ensemble cast takes up the challenge of not letting viewers know who the joke is on.

Vinay Pathak plays Bharat Bhushan, an aspiring singer who works as a tax inspector. Rajat Kapoor plays Ranjeet Thadani, a record company executive who is on the lookout for his 'idiot' – an unsuspecting wannabe who will prove his 'talent' to the exec's gang of friends every week at a party.

Bharat Bhushan gets chosen, and is on the way to Ranjeet's house.

It so happens that this is the very day Ranjeet's singer wife



Sheetal (Sarika), has decided to leave her husband.

And Ranjeet has a bad back too. Stuck with the eager, but irritating Bharat Bhushan at home, Ranjeet watches his carefully crafted life fall apart. Excellent acting by Vinay Pathak carries this short story ahead. His expressions are typical of the eager beaver showbiz debutante's portraying.

Though we never do really get to dwell on the reason for Sheetal's dissatisfaction, *Bheja Fry* knows when to put a full stop. Recommended.

Also out this week: *Good Boy, Bad Boy*, starring Emraan Hashmi and Tusshar Kapoor. Two chalk and cheese fellows get swapped in college, and then the somewhat tacky fun begins ... Directed by Ashwini Chaudhry. – **Critical I** (Cassettes courtesy: King's Electronics. Tel: 4374012)

### Hindi

## Cena, the indestructible

**FILM:** *The Marine*  
**CAST:** John Cena, Kelly Carlson, Drew Powell, Robert Patrick  
**DIRECTION:** John Bonito

STUFF really blows up in *The Marine*. Following the career path of WWE champion Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, wrestler John Cena takes on the role of a super action hero.

Highly trained and fresh from an Iraqi battle zone, John Trilon (Cena) has been discharged after disobeying orders when he single-handedly rescued three fellow officers from a group of kidnappers.

Now the war vet is stuck behind a desk working as a security guard in a large office building.

However, his civilian life takes a turn when a gang of trigger-happy jewel thieves kidnaps his wife, Kate (Kelly Carlson) during a petrol sta-

tion stop. While the fuelling station burns in the background, John pulls an injured state patrolman out of his cruiser and heads after the escaping criminals.

Barrelling down the highway, the speeding car tear through heavy traffic and nearly clip a crew of construction workers before one of the vehicles crashes over the side of cliff.

From there, snakes, alligators and a long stretch of marshlands add to the tension as the bandits try to escape on foot.

But John, armed with a huge assault knife, tracks the heist leader (Robert Patrick) and his dwindling group of thugs.

He gets blown out of no less than three exploding buildings but emerges unscathed.

Any guess where John will be able to save his wife in the film? The suspense could kill you. – **Prakash Maroo** (DVDs courtesy: Falcon Home Entertainment. Tel: 4446636)



## Life lessons from an irritated friend

**CARTOON:** *Strawberry Shortcake: Get Well Adventure*

THE spunky Strawberry Shortcake and her friends whip up a storm to cheer up their friend Honey Pie Pony, who has accidentally hurt her left foreleg while jumping across a wooden fence en-route on her adventure to a distant land called Marshmallow Marsh.

Things are not easy though. Honey Pie Pony constantly whines and groans about her injury.

This only makes it harder for Strawberry Shortcake and her friends as they try all means available to make their friend feel better – from baking to puppet shows and magic tricks.

Tempers threaten to flare but the saviour of the day is none other than the affable Strawberry Shortcake who engages the group in rounds of song and dance as well as story-telling late into the night.

The movie's plot is deliciously simple and makes for easy understanding for its predominantly young viewers. The use of bright,

cheery colours in the cartoon also makes it visually appealing.

Honey Pie Pony is a good reflection of what some of us may do in a similar situation – we care only about ourselves and fail to acknowledge others' efforts, taking them for granted.

(DVD courtesy: Falcon Home Entertainment. Tel: 4446636)

**Animated walk down memory lane**

**CARTOON:** *Sonic X Vol 1*

SONIC the hedgehog returns to do battle with his nemesis Dr Eggman in this first volume (four episodes) of a 78-episode anime series.

Both sides are once again out to prevent the other from finding the seven chaos emeralds.

The ones however, remains on the blue speedster and his friends to find them before the scientist who plans on using the crystals to build his evil robot empire.

The face-off, however, takes place in the human world.

A misfire by Eggman's robots during Sonic's attempt to save his captured friends causes an explosion that brings about a warping of time and space, transporting them all to Earth.

Besides reuniting with his own friends, Sonic also befriends a boy and his geely-looking grandfather along the way; the duo proved a big help in battling the comically obese Dr Eggman as he sought to take over the world.

The story ends in typical fashion as good triumphs over evil – Sonic beats Eggman and recovers one of the crystal emeralds on Earth.

However, the inability of Eggman's robots in posing a strong enough challenge to the fastest thing alive perhaps robs the viewer of the thrill of having sat through the action.

A good walk down memory lane for nostalgia seekers. – **Daniel Ong** (DVD courtesy: Vanille Qatar. Tel: 4369305)