‘The King’s Men’ line up and dance

By Marcia Z. Siegal

“Kick, kick, tap, tap. Ten, two, three, four. Five, six, seven, eight … Do the rest – in line, in rhythm,” Paulette Chambers instructs the 10 male line dancers arrayed before her. The weekly class takes place at the Martin Luther King Older Adult Center in North Philadelphia. Her students call themselves “The King’s Men.”

Chambers has taught the all-male line dancing class at the center for several years. Under her tutelage, the men have learned a wide range of dances with evocative names, such as “Behave Yourself,” “City Stepping,” “Jump,” “Flashin’,” “Soul City Walk,” “Bus Stop,” “Wifey” and more.

“I went to a party and everybody was line dancing, so when the opportunity arose, I felt I had to learn. It’s a way to exercise, and I love it,” Bill Martin said.

• continued on page 20

Holiday Spice

Seductive scents invite customers to explore

By Linda L. Riley

Visitors inhale deeply as they enter Grassia’s Italian Market Spice Co., 949 S. 9th St., proclaiming it “intoxicating.” The scents of spices rise and blend together, flooding the senses and promising delicious things to come. The store carries more than 40 different spices and herbs and about 30 blends, which they create onsite.

“We’re known for our spice blends,” said Tina Grassia, who bought the store with her mother-in-law, Toni Grassia, in 1999. They’re carrying on a tradition begun in 1932, when a man and his two daughters first opened a spice shop at the site. And they’re making the shop their own.

“We made some changes – we brought in hot sauces, gluten-free products, jams and honey,” Grassia said. But it’s clear from the moment you walk in the door and take the first breath that spices are at the heart of this store.

The seductive aroma of spices once made them among the world’s most prized luxuries.

• continued on page 19

PCA celebrates 15 years of Milestones

In 2001, when Philadelphia Corporation for Aging began publishing this monthly newspaper, it was our goal to serve as a vital resource for older Philadelphians, providing coverage that would address their needs and interests.

For the first 11 years, we were fortunate to have as our editor Don Harrison, former deputy editor of the Daily News opinion pages and assistant managing editor and city editor of the Philadelphia Bulletin. He established high standards for professionalism and meaningful content, which we have continued.

Over the past 15 years, we have covered subjects practical, inspirational and entertaining. We thank you, our readers, for your interest and pledge to continue providing the essential news and entertaining features you have come to rely on and expect from Milestones.

Sincerely,

Holly Lange
President and CEO, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

• continued on page 19
By Constance Garcia-Barrio

Chill winds and early darkness may tempt us to stay inside nestled in an armchair, but our bodies must move — indoors or outdoors — to remain healthy, said Joanne Fagerstrom, 62, a licensed physical therapist since 1978. “Exercise strengthens your muscles and bones and promotes a sense of well-being,” said Fagerstrom, who says she healed herself from osteoporosis through an exercise regimen she designed and simple changes to her diet. “There are low-cost and no-cost ways to maintain muscle tone despite frosty weather, and minimize the loss of muscle mass that comes with aging.”

Prep for winter well in advance, Fagerstrom advises. “Try to join an exercise class that has a balance component to help you avoid falls on slippery sidewalks,” she said. “Balance is like a muscle. It improves with consistent practice. Grippers that fit over your shoes can also make walking on ice and snow safer. Trekking poles – available at REI and other sporting goods stores, and online – may help you continue your walking routine.”

When foul weather makes indoor activities the safest choice, you can still stay fit. Many exercises don’t require special equipment. “Standing on one leg can improve balance, but make sure you’re near a sturdy object that you can hold on to for safety, as needed,” Fagerstrom said. “Gradually increase the time as you stand on each leg.”

A storm may howl outside, but you can work on flexibility, a key component of balance, while you’re toasty at home. “Sit in a chair and circle your ankles first in one direction and then in the other,” Fagerstrom said. “That movement helps to keep your ankles flexible and strong.”

Stair climbing is a good way to build up your legs, Fagerstrom points out. “Leg strength has been closely correlated with healthy aging. You can set a goal to climb the steps a number of times each day, and then slowly add more times to challenge yourself.”

If you don’t have stairs at home, you can still work toward stronger legs. “Rise from a chair without using your hands,” Fagerstrom said. “This movement requires your legs to do all the work. Another approach is to stand with your fingers lightly touching the kitchen counter for balance, and then do mini-squats. Once again, you’re making your legs stronger.”

The winter blahs may creep in after days indoors and threaten to derail your exercise routine, but Fagerstrom suggests ways to meet that challenge. “Let a friend be your exercise buddy and report to him or her each day. You’re more likely to stick to your program if you’re held accountable. Consider wearing a pedometer to see how many steps you take each day, and then slowly add more times to challenge yourself.”

With these steps you’ll not only stay fit in winter, but you’ll be in better shape for spring’s outdoor fun.

Constance Garcia-Barrio is a freelance writer and author of a novel based on African-American history in Philadelphia.
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Spices that warm you: Cumin, coriander, turmeric are plants' seeds and roots

By Marcia Z. Siegal

Cumin, coriander, turmeric. Their very names evoke hot, exotic lands. Singly or in combination, these spices can be found in the curries and masalas of India, Moroccan stews, Mexican chilies, and the tangy hummus of the Middle East. Adding to their allure, all three are known as warming spices, because they contain compounds that tend to raise body temperature. With the spread of diverse culinary cuisines in the United States, cumin, coriander and turmeric are increasingly familiar in kitchens and eateries here.

Complex cumin

Notable for its pungent aroma, cumin can be used in seed or powdered form. Food historian and author Cynthia Clampitt described its flavor as “distinctively earthy, nutty, warm, a tiny bit peppery, complex and potent.” Known for its versatility, cumin is remarkably common, “adding flavor to everything from German sausage to chili con carne to Indian curry,” Clampitt said. Author of “Midwest Maize: How Corn Shaped the U.S. Heartland,” she blogs about food and travel at https://theworldsfare.org/.

Cumin is a signature ingredient of koma, a mild, creamy Indian curry sauce, and is also used in Indian chutneys. It’s also “great in anything with meat or beans – it adds a heartiness, makes things seem meatier,” Clampitt said. “It is the spice of choice in Moroccan food.” In Europe, cumin is used to spice certain cheeses, especially Dutch Leyden and German Münster, and cumin is burned with woods to smoke cheeses and meat. It is a pickling ingredient for cabbage and sauerkraut.

Cumin seeds and powder should be kept in a tightly sealed glass container in a cool, dark and dry place. Ground cumin or as turmeric as a preservative in mummification. “In the Middle Ages, cumin was a symbol of faithfulness. In Germany, for example, it was common for brides and grooms to carry a little cumin on their wedding day,” Clampitt said.

Sweet coriander

Coriander is the seed of the coriander plant. (In North America, the leaves of the plant are called cilantro, but throughout the rest of the world, they are called coriander leaves or green coriander.) Like cumin, coriander is available both whole and in powdered form. Some have described coriander’s flavor as light and sweet. Clampitt describes it as warm, a bit citrusy, and a little nutty. Coriander is commonly used in pickling, curries and in spice blends. “All those little round ‘balls’ you see floating in pickling juice and in corned beef — that’s coriander,” Clampitt said. Coriander makes a welcome addition to foods ranging from salad dressing to barbecue rub to cookies and other desserts. “It brightens some dishes and is absolutely essential for many cuisines,” Clampitt said. Coriander is used extensively in foods around the globe, from Mexico to the Middle East, to flavor soups, stews, sauces and broths. Among the dishes that feature coriander are Indian curries; Moroccan couscous; and, from Mexico, chorizo (spicy pork sausage); and posole (chicken soup). The spice also provides a flavorful accent for simple bean dishes. In these cuisines, the leaves of the coriander plant — sometimes described as tasting like parsley with a citrus zest — are often used for garnishing salads and soups and as a seasoning. Roasted coriander seeds, called dhana dal, are eaten as a snack in India, and are served after meals as a breath freshener.

Coriander seeds and coriander powder should be kept in an opaque, tightly sealed glass container in a cool, dark and dry place. Ground coriander will keep for about four to six months; the whole seeds will stay fresh for about one year. Some historical notes: Cumin is mentioned in the Bible as a seasoning for breads and soups, and was so valued that it was even used to help pay tithes to priests. The ancient Egyptians used cumin North America in the late 1600s and was one of the first spices cultivated by early settlers.

Bright turmeric

Sometimes referred to as the “queen of spices” and the “golden spice of life” because of its many reputed health benefits, turmeric has a distinct bright yellow-orange color. “Most Americans know it best as the stuff that makes yellow mustard yellow,” Clampitt said. She describes the spice as “earthy, warm, a little bitter if overused.”

Jacob (Jake) Lahne, assistant professor of food science at Drexel University, calls turmeric a “backbone spice” rather than a dominating flavor. It is a basic component of curry powder, giving the powder its bright yellow color, he says. Turmeric can be purchased in ground form or as turmeric root. It is fundamental to many Indian, Indonesian, Thai, Caribbean and other curries; calming teas; Moroc-

Medicinal uses

Like many spices, cumin, coriander and turmeric have long been believed to offer health benefits. However, none of these

*continued on page 16*
If the wind blows just right on Christmas Eve near St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral, you may catch a whiff of freshly baked Christopsomo, which means “Christ’s bread” in Greek, or you may hear Kalandra, Greek Christmas carols handed down from Byzantine times. The Sunday before Christmas you may see the Christmas Pageant and sample cookies like fluffy koulourakia, which have a twisted shape, and kourabiedes, butter cookies dusted with confectioner’s sugar and coated with toasted ground walnuts. The cathedral, 256 S. 8th Street in Olde City, has become not only a religious center but a treasury of Philadelphia’s Hellenic heritage.

“Greek was the first language of the ancient Christian church,” said Father Ambrose Bitziadis-Bowers, 51, the presiding priest and dean of St. George Cathedral and a historian of the ancient church. “The New Testament was written in ancient Greek.” The eastern (Greek) church and the western (Latin) church split in 1054, an event known as the Great Schism, due to theological and political disputes. Like other Greek Orthodox churches, St. George is governed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, Turkey. “The first Greek Orthodox church in the U.S. was established in Florida in 1768,” Bitziadis-Bowers said.

According to Bitziadis-Bowers, about 40,000 people of Greek heritage live in the Greater Delaware Valley. “We like to maintain the traditions of our ancestors,” he said. To preserve that heritage, church services and the church bulletin are in both Greek and English. In addition, St. George has afterschool classes for children that include Greek songs, folktales, handicrafts and dances. Children may also take language classes. In addition, a residence for seniors contributes to cultural integrity and preservation.

St. George offers Philadelphians a taste of its traditions at the annual Spring Greek Festival, usually held at the end of May. “We serve gyros; chicken roasted with lemon; salad with feta cheese and olives; moussaka, made by layering eggplant and spiced meat; and other Greek dishes, all healthy Mediterranean fare,” Bitziadis-Bowers said. “People also seem to like the baklava and the Greek donuts, which are fried balls of dough dipped in a mixture of honey and brown sugar and coated with crushed walnuts.” The festival also features Greek music, dancing and folklore. Vendors offer items like replicas of Greek jewelry and paintings.

A mini-festival in October, “Go Greek once a week,” invites the public in for authentic Greek food on Fridays. The festivals help raise funds to maintain the cathedral. Originally designed as an Episcopal church in 1821 by English architect John Haviland, who also designed the Walnut Street Theatre and the Eastern State Peniteniary, St. George was designated an historic site in 1964. Philadelphia’s Greek Orthodox community acquired the building in 1922. “The cathedral requires considerable maintenance and restoration,” Bitziadis-Bowers said. “For instance, the electric bill is almost $4,500 a month.

“St. George is open for tours about the architecture by appointment, but we welcome visitors to our services at any time,” Bitziadis-Bowers said.

Visitors may attend the services and December holiday festivities. The date and time for the Christmas Pageant has not been set. There is a service Christmas Day at 8:30 a.m. All services take place at 256 S. 8th St. For more information, call the church at 215-627-4389.

Constance Garcia-Barrio is a freelance writer and author of a novel based on African-American history in Philadelphia.
Caregiver support program helps with both concrete and emotional needs

By Alicia M. Colombo

George Green (not his real name), 64, has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), and is often referred to as “Lou Gehrig’s disease.” He affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. As the disease progresses, voluntary muscle action is affected, and patients eventually become partially or totally paralyzed. His wife, Greta Green (not her real name), provides round-the-clock care for her husband. George is entirely dependent on his wife to feed, clothe and bathe him. “She is so devoted. The way she cares for her husband is a true love story,” said Tanya Bril, service coordinator with PCA’s Caregiver Support Program (CSP), which provides the Greens with much-needed assistance. “With the help of respite care, she can spend time just being with him,” Bril said.

Bril has worked with the family for several years to provide emotional support and connection to resources, including monthly reimbursements for respite care and caregiving supplies. The expertise and support of a service coordinator who is trained in caregiving issues and concerns is often just as important to a caregiver as financial support.

When the Greens immigrated to America 20 years ago, they spoke limited English. A few years after coming here, George was diagnosed with ALS. Both language and cultural barriers presented a real challenge in caring for him. Greta had great difficulty in navigating the complex health care and social service systems. Bril has helped the family to overcome those barriers, and access services through PCA and the community. When the family first connected with PCA, the disease had already severely limited George’s mobility. He was bedbound, with a ventilator and feeding tube. At that time, he could communicate verbally, make limited hand gestures and be transferred out of bed. Now he is completely bed-bound and has lost the ability to communicate or to move his limbs.

Due to his condition, a respite worker is required before Greta can leave the home to shop and go to personal medical appointments. Respite care provides both time and peace of mind to caregivers. Greta can confidently leave her home, knowing that a care worker is there to dress her husband and attend to his other needs. She is also able to rely on respite so she is not always providing direct care, and can just relax and spend time with her husband.

Through CSP, Bril has helped provide services and support to dozens of caregivers during the past seven years. “I moved to the Caregiver Support Program from Long Term Care Options because I admire when people take care of others and wanted to support them in their efforts,” she said. “I can provide emotional support and help them access educational and financial resources. All of that really helps reduce the stress and burden on the caregiver.”

For information about PCA’s Caregiver Support Program, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

“Identifying information such as names, dates and other characteristics have been changed to protect the privacy of these individuals.”

Contact Alicia M. Colombo at acolombo@pcaphl.org.

National caregiver strategy proposed

A recent study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “Families Caring for an Aging America,” found that an estimated 17.7 million individuals in the United States are providing care and support to an older friend or loved one. It may be a parent, spouse, friend, or neighbor who needs help because of a limitation in their physical, mental or cognitive functioning.

The report provides an overview of family caregiving of older adults and its impact on caregivers’ health, economic security and overall well-being. It also examines the available evidence on the effectiveness of programs and interventions designed to support family caregivers.

Among other findings, it was determined that the circumstances of individual caregivers, and level of care they provide, are extremely varied.

• They may live with, nearby or far away from the person receiving care.
• The care they provide may be episodic, daily, occasional, or of short or long duration.
• The caregiver may help with household tasks or self-care activities, such as getting in and out of bed, bathing, dressing, eating, or toileting; or may provide complex medical care tasks, such as managing medications and giving injections. Or, the caregiver may be responsible for all of these activities.
• The older adult may have dementia and require a caregiver’s constant supervision.

Recommendations include implementation of job protections and expanded family leave for caregivers; funding for evidence-based caregiver services; development of federal policies that provide economic support to working caregivers; and ensuring that family caregivers are included in the planning and delivery of services by health care and long-term care providers. To learn more, visit: http://nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2016/families-caring-for-an-aging-america.asp.
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Poet draws from personal experience, writing to develop therapy technique

By Alicia M. Colombo

Ronald (Ron) Gilbert Pamell, 67, has taken a winding path through life, from writing rhythm and blues (R&B) songs to teaching to being a therapist. Through it all, his love of words has been the driving force. He began to express his feelings through poetry as a child. Over a lifetime of writing, his musings evolved into a way to use poetry as a therapeutic tool with others.

Parnell’s writing style has a uniquely lyrical quality. “I write poetry that rhymes because it’s more memorable. Everybody remembers their favorite song,” Parnell said. As a teen in the ‘60s, he was inspired by the legends of soul music, some of whom he came to know personally.

“I grew up next door to Stevie Wonder’s cousin, Damian Smith, in West Philadelphia on a tree-lined boulevard,” Parnell said. “I have known Mr. Wonder all of my adult life. He is very spiritually anchored; a musical genius; and a person very set of others. He has influenced my writing and taught me to be lyrically accurate and concise in my storytelling. I have watched and observed his personal interactions and treatment of all persons in an equal manner and learned to embrace that.” Wonder’s inspiration led Parnell to produce his own original music. “R&B in the ‘70s was all about love songs. I wanted to write something that had meaning on a deeper level,” he said.

In the late ‘70s, Parnell helped to start Rainbow Valley, an R&B band that opened for Frankie Beverly and other notable soul musicians. As songwriter, lyricist, manager and promoter, Parnell did not perform. Rainbow Valley experienced regional popularity for about a decade, and after they broke up, lead singer Ronnie Tyson went on to join the Temptations.

While Pamell never performed the music he wrote, he is a spoken word artist who enjoys presenting his poetry. “There was always some discussion afterwards,” Parnell said. “People asked me, ‘What were you trying to say? What did you mean?’ That got me to thinking.”

These dialogues sparked his inquisitive nature and led him to study the human mind and behavior, earning a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania. “I wanted to know why people do things. A degree in psychology gives you a sense of deciphering why people do what they do, why it is they say what they say – or don’t say,” he said. *continued on page 22*
Gateway HealthSM offers HMO plans with a Medicare contract. Some Gateway Health plans have a contract with Medicaid in the states where they are offered. Enrollment in these plans depends on contract renewal. Gateway Health Special Needs Plans are available to anyone with Medicare and Medicaid. Gateway Health complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Gateway Health does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.


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Holiday Spice

Ginger adds pungent and soothing spice to entrees, drinks, baked goods

By Alicia M. Colombo

Confucius is credited with the first written mention of ginger, in the fifth century B.C.E. It has been used medicinally for more than 2,000 years, and has been one of the quintessential flavors in both Asian and Indian cuisines for almost as long.

“Ginger packs tons of warm, pungent, peppery flavor that works well with meats and vegetables. The flavor of fresh ginger is more pronounced than dried, sporting heavy citrus, even acidic, notes,” says the Food Network Blog, which describes it as a “gnarly brown root that lives among the grocer’s Asian produce (and) has a flavor that is much better than dried, once you get to know it.”

In Asia, where the spice originated, fresh ginger is used in savory dishes, such as stir-fries, soups, sauces and curry dishes. But here in America, many people may only reach for the dried variety from the spice rack when making gingerbread cookies for the holidays. (The recipe on page 18 may inspire you to try different forms of ginger when baking.)

If unfamiliarity with the spice has kept you from experimenting, here are some basics.

What is ginger?

Ginger is a flowering plant that is native to China, but now is also grown throughout Asia and in parts of South America, Africa and the Middle East. The root or underground stem (rhizome) of the ginger plant can be consumed fresh, powdered, dried as a spice, in oil form or as juice. Ginger is a spice that is closely related to turmeric, cardamom and galangal.

Ginger adds flavor to foods and drinks without adding unnecessary sodium. Since it is often consumed in small amounts, ginger does not add significant quantities of calories, carbohydrates, protein or fiber.

Where do I get it?

You can find fresh ginger in the grocery store, Asian market or produce stand. Ground ginger will be located in the herbs and spices section of most grocery stores. When selecting fresh ginger, Bon Appétit magazine recommends looking for a firm piece with smooth skin that isn’t wrinkled, which can indicate dryness and age. It should have a fresh, spicy aroma. Fresh ginger needs to be peeled, then grated or sliced thinly before use. You can leave ginger at room temperature for up to five days. Wrapped tightly, it can be stored in the refrigerator for up to three weeks or frozen for up to three months.

What do I do with it?

Ginger pairs well with many different types of seafood, oranges, melon, pork, pumpkin and apples. Dried and fresh ginger can be used interchangeably for most recipes. One-eighth teaspoon of ground ginger can be substituted for one tablespoon of fresh grated ginger. Here are some suggestions.

Beverages

- Chewing raw ginger or drinking ginger tea can help relieve nausea, clear up a cold and warm you up. To make ginger tea at home, slice one tablespoon of fresh ginger and steep in a cup of hot water. Adding a slice of lemon or a drop of honey adds flavor and additional benefits, including vitamin C and antibacterial properties.
- Make your own ginger ale by combining freshly grated ginger, simple or agave syrup, and seltzer water. A shot of lemon juice is nice, too.
- Combine grated ginger with carrots, apples and lemon juice in a juicer or blender.
- In Yemen, ginger is added to coffee.

Fish and meats

- Ginger will help spice up any fish recipe. You could also pickle fresh ginger slices to serve with sushi.
- Combine grated ginger with orange juice and honey for basting a roast chicken or turkey.
- Combine ginger, soy sauce, rice vinegar, garlic and sesame oil for a beef marinade. Grill beef strips, then serve with steamed broccoli and brown rice.

Vegetables

- Sprinkle over vegetables before roasting.
- Simmer cubed butternut squash, chopped carrots and garlic in chicken broth. Add fresh ginger, salt and pepper, then purée for a delicious soup.

Baked goods

- Sprinkle some on your desserts for a nice contrast to the sweet flavor.
- Add a teaspoon of ground ginger to your pancake batter.
- Ginger pairs wonderfully with bananas (the foods are distant relatives), so add grated fresh ginger to banana bread or muffins.
- Ginger is also great with apples, so add it to homemade applesauce and apple pie. Combine ginger with apples and sugar, then simmer to make a compote for topping pancakes or desserts.

See recipes below and on page 11 and 18 for some of the many ways to use ginger.

Contact Alicia M. Colombo at acolombo@pcaphl.org.

Spiced beverages, hot and cold

Tea with turmeric, ginger and cardamom

(Serves 1)

This milky, maple-syrup-flavored tea will warm you on cold winter nights.

Ingredients:

1 cup water
1/4 tsp. ground turmeric
1/4 tsp. ground ginger
1/4 tsp. ground cardamom
2 tbsp. milk
Maple syrup to taste

Instructions:

In a small bowl, whisk lemon juice and honey to combine, then add to turmeric mixture. Chill. Serve over ice.

Source: Melissa Breyer at www.treehugger.com

Turmeric and cardamom tonic

(Serves 4)

Served over ice, this is a bright and refreshing drink.

Ingredients:

1 2-in. knob fresh turmeric, grated on a microplane or 2 tsp. dried turmeric
3 cardamom pods, crushed
1/4 cup lemon juice
2 tbsp. honey

Instructions:

In a small saucepan, combine turmeric and cardamom with two cups water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 10 minutes, then remove from heat. Strain the liquid through a fine sieve, and add 2 more cups water.

In a small bowl, whisk lemon juice and honey to combine, then add to turmeric mixture. Chill. Serve over ice.

Source: Elizabeth Shula at www.bonappetit.com
Moroccan chicken, onions & prunes

(Serves 4)

This recipe marries seemingly opposite flavors for a surprising result that is in a class of its own.

If you’ve never experienced cinnamon’s savory side, you’re in for a treat. Here it’s combined with cumin, ginger, garlic and cilantro.

This is a fairly quick and easy dish to make. It’s cooked entirely on the stovetop, and you can have a sweet and savory dinner on the table in half an hour. The combination of onions and prunes with the spices, lemon juice and honey makes a delicious sauce. Serve over rice to make the most of the sauce.

Ingredients:

- 4 skinless boneless chicken breast halves
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 ¼ cups chopped onions
- 2 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 2 cups low-salt chicken broth
- 1 cup pitted prunes
- 3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. honey
- Chopped fresh cilantro

Instructions:

Sprinkle chicken lightly with salt and pepper. (Omit the salt if you are on a restricted-sodium diet.) Heat oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken; sauté until brown and just cooked through, about 4 minutes per side. Using tongs, transfer chicken to plate. Add onions and garlic to same skillet. Sauté until onions begin to soften, about 3 minutes. Mix in flour, ginger, cinnamon and cumin; stir 1 minute. Gradually whisk in broth. Add prunes, lemon juice and honey. Boil until sauce thickens enough to coat spoon, whisking occasionally, about 8 minutes. Return chicken to skillet. Simmer until heated through, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Transfer chicken and sauce to platter. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve.

Source: www.epicurious.com

Cinnamon serves to unify the contrasting flavors of honey, being added above, and lemon, prunes and onions, to produce a delicious result.
December 2016

Sunday

4

5

Wednesday

6
Rubber Stamping Club & Card Making Class. Includes supplies. 2:30-4 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-844-7722. 

7
First Day of Winter

18
New Year’s Eve

25

27
African-American Journeys. 1 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-844-7722.

Thursday

1
Natural Health Demystified: Understanding Supplements. Safe & appropriate usage of nutritional supplements, potential medication interactions. 12:30 p.m. Center in the Hill. 215-247-6054. $

2
Clay Creations. Learn the art of hand building to create pottery. All levels. Supplies & tools provided. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. St. Anne’s Senior Center. 215-426-9792. (Dec. 9, 16, 23, 30) A December to Remember: Ornament Decorating. 1 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-844-7722.

3

Friday

10
Holiday Pop-Up Shop. Philadelphia-held holiday gifts, books, cards & more. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Philadelphia History Museum. 215-685-4510.

17
Chefs for Adults. All levels. Drop in from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. No registration required. Parkway Central Library, Lobby 215-368-5322.

Saturday

11
Hanukkah Begins at Sundown

14
AARP Driver Safety Course. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-844-7722.

23
Friday Night Lights. Holiday Garden Bathe all up in decked for the sea- sons during special evening hours. 4:30- 7:30 p.m. Morris Arboretum of the U of Pa. 215-247-8777. (Dec. 30) $

26
New Year's Eve

31
Philadelphia Orchestra's New Year's Eve Concert. Grammy-winning concert conductor Bramwell Tovey. 7:30 p.m. Kimmel Center. Tickets: 215-685-4833.

Christmas

25

Kwanzaa Begins

26
Winter Break. Explore fun holiday traditions & America’s history. Activities include colonial dress-up photo opps, 18th century games & interactive "Growing up, American Style" program. 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. National Constitu- tion Center 215-409-4600. (Through Dec. 31) $
Bread pudding with raisins
(Serves 8)
This is a sweet, warm comfort food that is easy to make and uses ingredients you probably already have in the house. It's also a good way to use bread that is starting to go stale. But if your bread is fresh, you can toast it slightly to get the right texture so that it is better able to absorb the custard.

Ingredients:
- 2 cups milk
- ¼ cup butter
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ cup raisins
- 6 cups bread, cubed or torn into small pieces (about 6 slices of challah, French bread or other dense white bread)

Whipped cream or vanilla ice cream, if desired.

Instructions:
Pre-heat oven to 350°F.
In a 2-quart saucepan, heat milk and butter over medium heat until butter is melted and milk is hot.
Mix together eggs, sugar, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl. Stir in bread cubes and raisins. Stir in milk mixture. Pour into an ungreased, deep round pan. Let it sit for up to an hour, so the bread can fully absorb the liquid.

Bake uncovered 40 to 45 minutes or until knife inserted 1 inch from edge comes out clean. Serve warm with whipping cream or ice cream if desired.

Source: www.bettycrocker.com
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Carrot soup with tahini and roasted chickpeas

(Serves 4)

Ingredients:
- 1½ lbs. carrots, chopped on a diagonal into ½-inch slices
- 3½ tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 qt. vegetable broth
- 1½ cups cooked chickpeas
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. smoked paprika
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- ½ lemon, cut into wedges
- ¾ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 4 tbsp. sesame tahini
- Handful of parsley, chopped

Instructions:
Preheat oven to 425°F. Line large baking sheet with aluminum foil, and toss carrots with 1½ tbsp. of the olive oil. Sprinkle with salt. Roast for 25 to 30 minutes. Stir carrots after 15 minutes.

Heat 1 tbsp. of olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add onions, and sauté for three minutes, or until they begin to soften. Add the minced garlic, coriander, and red pepper flakes, and sauté for two minutes longer, until the onions begin to caramelize.

Add the roasted carrots and veggie broth. Bring to a low boil, then reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, scatter the chickpeas on the roasting pan used for the carrots. Toss with remaining olive oil, cumin, smoked paprika, salt and pepper. Toss to coat evenly, then roast for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring halfway, until chickpeas start to get slightly crispy.

Place soup in a blender and puree until smooth. Return to pan, and squeeze in the juice of the lemon. Adjust salt, if needed. Spoon the soup into bowls. Top each with a spoonful of yogurt and 1 tablespoon of sesame tahini, as well as a handful of the roasted chickpeas. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

Source: www.allrecipes.com

Cumin-crusted salmon

(Serves 4)

Ingredients:
- 2 lbs. salmon
- 1½ tsp. ground cumin
- ¾ tsp. ground coriander
- ½ tsp. paprika
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper
- ½ tbsp. canola oil
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 medium lemon, cut into wedges

Instructions:
Mix the cumin, coriander, paprika and black pepper in a small bowl. Cut the salmon into 4 pieces and coat the strips with the cumin mixture. Place a large skillet over medium heat and add the canola oil. Gently place the salmon in the hot skillet and cook for about 5 minutes. Turn the salmon over and cook the other side for an additional 3 to 5 minutes until the fish is cooked through. Garnish with lemon wedges and serve.

Note: Salmon may also be grilled or broiled.

Source: Mayo Clinic

Cumin, coriander, turmeric

• continued from page 4

should be used medicinally without first consulting with your doctor.

Physician Andrew Weil, known for his writing on holistic health, says that cumin has been used throughout history to treat digestive upset. Clampitt says that cumin has also been used throughout the world to aid sleep and relieve congestion.

Coriander is replete with minerals, like iron, copper, calcium, potassium, manganese, zinc and magnesium; C and B-complex vitamins; and antioxidants. Rich in dietary fiber, it has been used for centuries to help with stomach and digestive ailments, Clampitt said.

Turmeric is garnering a lot of attention from the Western medical community, mainly because of its compound, curcumin, which has powerful anti-inflammatory properties and contains strong antioxidants. More than 3,000 publications dealing with the healthy aspects of turmeric have come out within the past 25 years. In ancient Indian Ayurvedic medicine, still practiced today, one of the names for turmeric is “jayanti,” meaning “one who is victorious over diseases.” Traditionally, the spice has been used to treat a variety of disorders. Turmeric is also key to traditional Chinese medicine.

See recipes above and on pages 10, 11 and 18 for ideas on how to use these spices.

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www.keystonevipchoice.com
Golden turmeric latkes & applesauce

(Makes 4-6)

Ingredients:

Sauce
- 1 tbsp. canola oil
- 2 tsp. grated fresh ginger
- ½ tsp. ground turmeric
- ½ tsp. ground cloves

Latkes
- 2 cups shredded peeled russet potatoes
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1-2 fresh green serrano chilies, stemmed and finely chopped
- 3 tbsp. finely chopped fresh cilantro leaves and tender stems
- ½ cup chickpea flour or unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. kosher or sea salt
- ½ tsp. ground turmeric
- 2 large eggs, slightly beaten
- 2 tbsp. canola oil, divided

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 200°F. Place a baking sheet in the oven.

To prepare the sauce, heat 1 tbsp. oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat. Add ginger and cook, stirring, until light brown and aromatic, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Stir in turmeric and cloves. Cook until the spices are fragrant, 30 seconds to 1 minute more. Scrape the spices into the applesauce in a small bowl and stir well to combine.

To prepare latkes, thoroughly mix potatoes, onion, chilies to taste, cilantro, flour, cumin, salt, turmeric and eggs in a large bowl.

Heat 1 tbsp. oil in a large nonstick skillet or griddle over medium heat. Place a heaping tbsp. of the potato mixture in the skillet and flatten with a spatula into a disk roughly 3 inches in diameter. Form as many latkes as you can in the pan without overcrowding.

Cook until golden brown and crispy on the bottom, 3 to 5 minutes. Flip and continue cooking until the other side is golden brown and crispy, 3 to 5 minutes.

Briefly drain on a paper towel-lined plate, then transfer to the oven to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining oil and potato mixture.

Serve the latkes with the seasoned applesauce.

Note: Chickpea flour, or garbanzo bean flour, is commonly used in Indian and Middle Eastern cooking. It's a gluten-free alternative to wheat flour.

Source: EatingWell magazine; recipe by Raghavan Iyer

Three-ginger cookies: Chewy & sweet

(Makes 1 dozen)

Spice up your holiday cookie exchange day with this low-fat treat with a tangy flavor that comes from ginger in three forms.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup butter or margarine, melted
- 1 tbsp. grated ginger root
- 2 tbsp. molasses
- ¼ cup fat-free cholesterol-free egg product or 2 egg whites
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- 2 tbsp. chopped crystallized ginger
- ½ cup chopped dates
- ¾ cup sugar

Instructions:

Mix sugar, butter, grated ginger, molasses, and egg or egg product in a medium bowl. Stir in flour, baking soda and ground ginger. Stir in crystallized ginger and dates. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours.

Spray cookie sheet with nonstick cooking spray.

Shape dough into 1½-inch balls. Roll balls in the cup of sugar. Place on cookie sheet. Flatten slightly with the bottom of a glass.

Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until only a small indentation remains when touched. (Cookies will be soft.) Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on wire rack.

Note: Crystallized (or candied) ginger is fresh ginger root cooked in a candy syrup and coated with coarse sugar.

Source: www.bettycrocker.com
**Scents**

*continued from page 1*

Ginger, cloves, coriander, turmeric, pepper and cinnamon are derived from the roots, seeds and bark of plants native to Asia. (See story on cinnamon below and on other spices throughout the issue.) European explorers risked their lives, and the wealthy staked their fortunes, in search of them. Spices were used as offerings to the gods, to anoint priests and to cremate or embalm royalty. But gradually, the globe grew smaller, travel became easier and spices became more widely available. Some are still used as incense or medicine, but most are now prized primarily for their culinary value.

Temptation can be sweet or savory

By Linda L. Riley

Cinnamon is a signature ingredient used in cuisines from Morocco to Mexico, in foods both sweet and savory, from cinnamon buns and pumpkin pie to soups and stews. Paired with sugar, it adds a sublime depth of both flavor and aroma to pies, cakes and puddings. Combined with tangy ingredients, such as tomatoes, onions, olives and lemons, its pungency enhances the flavor of meat or poultry.

Tree bark

Cinnamon is the inner bark of a type of evergreen trees native to Asia. There are more than 100 varieties of cinnamon, only a handful of which are the source of the spices used in cooking.

Cinnamomum verum, also known as “true” or Ceylon cinnamon, is native to the South Asian island nation of Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon. Other types include Indonesian, Saigon/Vietnamese and Chinese cassia, which are less expensive and are the sort most often sold in supermarkets in the United States.

“There are different kinds of cassia – we carry the Vietnamese, which has peppery undertones and has a stronger smell than the Ceylon, or true cinnamon,” said Tina Grassia, co-owner of Grassia’s Italian Market Spice Co. (See story on page 1.)

Among the shop’s cinnamon-blend offerings are a mixture of mulling spices, apple and pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon sugar, and Grassia’s own version of chai. “My chai is a little different,” she said. She uses more cinnamon than most blends, plus ginger, cardamom, clove, coriander and white pepper.

She also makes Ras El Hanout, an Indonesian spice with a kick used for a beef rub. In addition to cinnamon, it includes garlic, paprika, ginger, mustard and cayenne pepper. Her Bokhorat, or “Seven Spice,” includes cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg, coriander, cumin, paprika and Spanish black pepper. “It’s also used as a meat rub, or in a lamb or beef stew,” she said.

It’s most important when using cinnamon, she said, to make sure the spice is fresh. Older spices are not harmful, but their effectiveness diminishes over time. Store your spices and herbs in well-sealed containers in a cool, dark area. Freezing cinnamon and other dry spices is not recommended. To determine if a spice is fresh, rub it between your fingers and smell it – if the aroma is weak, it has lost potency. Try the recipes on pages 11 and 14 to explore both the sweet and savory uses of cinnamon.

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King’s Men

• continued from page 1

“Line dancing was always something I wanted to do, and I stayed with it. I like the friendship and camaraderie we have here,” Elbert Lowry said.

James Cauley joined the group four years ago. “I like the fact that the class is all men. I think it’s less inhibiting,” he said.

Always something new

At 88, William Tate is The King’s Men’s oldest member. His interest was sparked by popular line dances, like the “Electric Slide” and “Wobble Baby,” which he saw performed at clubs and parties. “It caught my eye. Everybody was doing it,” he said. “Line dancing keeps evolving, which is one more reason to keep learning. If you hear a new song, it’s a bet a new line dance will come out of it.”

As the men warm up for another dance, there is a feeling of expectation. They bend their knees, tap their feet, and snap their fingers. Some clap their hands. They are ready. Many wear matching navy blue T-shirts and caps emblazoned with “The King’s Men.”

The class continues. “Up, down, down, out; one, two, three, four. One, two, three, four,” Chamber calls out. “From here, you tap on your right foot. You might want to cha cha up. Let’s all try that: one, two, three and slide back. You step back on your left and slide on your right.”

“The guys in The King’s Men are a great group,” Chambers said. “They all approach line dancing differently. Some learn faster than others, but they are a good support team and help each other to learn. To become good at it, you must have the desire, and practice at home and at dance so- cials.”

The King’s Men are much in de- mand, performing at birthday and retire- ment parties, senior centers, and health fairs around the city. For more formal occasions, like the annual Spring Fling dinner dance The King’s Men sponsor at Swan Waterfall Caterers in South Phila- delphia, they are outfitted in matching tan suits. The Spring Fling is a ticketed event open to the public.

As the session comes to an end, Cauley, The King’s Men’s coordinator, broaches the latest request received – to perform at The Village, a family and children’s service center in Southwest Philadelphia. The pay, as usual, will be nominal. “What do we want to do about it?” Cauley asks the group. “Do we want to do this?”

“Yes,” the men answer unanimously. “We want to dance!”

The men’s line dancing class takes place on Wednesdays, from 1 to 2:30 p.m., at the Martin Luther King Older Adult Center, 2101-35 W. Cecil B. Moore Ave. The fee is $3 per class, and partici- pants must be members of the center.

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The deadline for older adults and people with disabilities to apply for state rebates on rent and property taxes paid in 2015 has been extended to December 31. The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65-plus, widows and widowers age 50-plus, and people with disabilities age 18-plus. The annual income limit is $35,000 for homeowners and $15,000 for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded. Property Tax/Rent Rebate claim forms (PA-1000) and related information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Revenue Department by visiting its website at www.revenue.pa.gov or by calling, toll-free, 1-888-222-9190.

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“You have to understand why something is happening in order to make things better,” Parnell said.

“When my son was born in 1985, I had to start being serious. That’s when I became a teacher. I never wanted to teach. My mother and three sisters were teachers, so I just gravitated to it,” said Parnell, who taught English and computers at Benjamin Franklin High School. The work schedule complemented his new parental responsibilities. “High school ended at 1:30, then I went to pick my son up from elementary school and we’d hang out for the day. When I was teaching, there were about 35 kids in each class, and they didn’t have the proper books. It was crazy, but it was also rewarding. I got to work with some really great kids.”

After 11 years, Parnell left teaching for a position at Belmont Behavioral Hospital in Philadelphia as an adjunctive therapy group facilitator. That was where his interest in applied psychology really blossomed. He now runs a weekly therapy group at the inpatient facility, where most participants voluntarily enter the program for up to two weeks. “I was surprised how many people either journal or do poetry,” he said. “Through the group sessions and spoken word presentations, I decided I could use my writing to elicit dialogues. I started to present some of my writings as a vehicle to start discussions.”

**The dialogue is the “medicine”**

“Therapy is just dialogue as medicine,” Parnell said. “If you think about where you are, then you also have to consider where you want to go and where you’ve been. The only constant is change. It’s up to you, whether you get better or worse. You cannot change where you are or where you’ve been, only where you will go next. There’s no cure for addiction or mental illness, but there is recovery. You can live a regular life.”

He said that years of group counseling work and personal life experiences have given him a unique perspective. His own son struggled with addiction following his military service in Iraq and Afghanistan. “After he came back, he had trouble coping. Even though you may know someone who is an addict or has depression, you do not know what another person is going through. It’s the difference between sympathy and empathy. An alcoholic can tell you, ‘Don’t drink. This is what it’s going to do to you.’ That will likely have more of an effect than your priest telling you not to drink,” he said.

Parnell has developed a therapeutic method, which he calls “Reflective Engagement,” using original poetry as a means of promoting dialogue between a patient and therapist. “Reflective Engagement empowers participants through self-examination and discussion of past circumstances,” he said. “It addresses relevant situations from the past that continue to affect the present. It’s an awakening — a path forward towards a questioning and consideration of possible solutions. It can often be epiphany-like in its nature. The method has been very well-received by clients and professionals who’ve employed it,” he said.

Successful therapy, he believes, takes a holistic approach to reach the right balance between medication and dialogue for each individual. “This is not meant to replace going to your private therapist for individual counseling. I think it’s a suitable vehicle as a therapeutic support method,” Parnell said.

He’s now working on a book about reflective engagement. “It’s basically about trying to give people who are in social services or psychology another tool to help them engage their patients in dialogue,” he said.

“The whole thing is to get people engaged in meaningful dialogue. A therapist can’t do any heavy lifting you have to go through it yourself. But the therapist needs to know what’s going on to be able to guide you into behavioral modification. Breaking through is the first step, and it’s often the most difficult,” he said.

“If you tell me how you feel and how those feelings make you do what you do, we can address it.”

You can read some of Ron Parnell’s poetry on his Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RonaldParnellPoetry.

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Milestones 23

Don’s Column

The changing nature of newspapers

By Don Harrison

Because of increasing frailty, I don’t get over to the Franklin Inn Club much anymore, and I miss it, but I did get to the annual summer picnic, at which I agreed to be a Thursday Roundtable speaker – at what was then a long-way-off date …

In October.

My topic? How about the changing American newspaper, one of the few subjects I know something about (though many public speakers don’t seem to be concerned about speaking beyond their expertise). That’s fine, fellow members agreed, so on that July afternoon, I just put it aside and …

Suddenly, it was October.

The presentation went well, however, because the subject was one I know well. I expressed concern about what seems to be happening. Although some old-timers are horrified by today’s newspaper, in many ways, it’s better than it used to be – more concerned with fairness, more attractive graphically, more sophisticated – yet it’s never been more mistrusted and more marginal in people’s lives.

The so-called mainstream press has become a scapegoat for our woes, rather than a symptom. And sad to say, it seems of little interest to younger people. Over the years, I’ve helped kids decide whether they want go in to journalism, but if a kid came to me today, I wouldn’t know what to advise.

For one thing, things are done differently in journalism today, and I’m afraid I’ve lost touch. And at the risk of sounding apocalyptic, I’ve no idea what the future will bring – will the daily newspaper even survive?

Skinny dipping

Big Brothers of Philadelphia used to be in a building on Van Pelt Street, between 20th and 21st, just north of Chestnut. It’s where I learned to swim. Headquartered elsewhere, the organization is now (as it should be) Big Brothers/Big Sisters, but then, it was for boys only.

In that pool on Van Pelt Street, we skinny-dipped. I don’t know why; we assumed it was because many of the boys’ families couldn’t afford to outfit them.

But that could hardly have been the reason male students at Penn swam in the buff in Hutchinson Gym Pool.

Women swam elsewhere, in swimsuits –

Or so I was told.

• • • •

Afterthoughts …

Dogs that bark at passersby must feel very successful; most passersby do, indeed, pass by.

• One of mankind’s great inventions is the banister.

• When I was in school, kids in the early grades, raising their hand to go to the bathroom, often had to specify “Number One” or “Number Two.” Why did it matter?

• Why have I resisted the cane? Why so unenthusiastic about the walker and similar “assistive devices?” Because it’s admitting I’m no longer what I was. But what is?

• One of the few good things about getting this old is the senior discount.

• Another new year coming – 2017! Who’d have thunk it?

Milestones Editor Emeritus Don Harrison served as deputy editor of the Daily News opinion pages and as an assistant managing editor and city editor of the Philadelphia Bulletin.

The Milestones Crossword

Keep Cool!

ACROSS
1 Dry stream bed
2 USSR sea
5 Arizona aborigine
9 Nasty bug
10 Seraglio room
14 Western state: abbr.
15 Stratford river
16 Comedian Murphy
17 Das Kapital’s Marx
18 Dickens’s Miss Trent
19 To sponge
20 Physical exertion
23 Schoolboy
24 Sailor’s chanty
25 City on the Hudson
27 Executed
29 Indigo dye
32 Shoshone Indian
33 Old song. Robin ___
35 Triton
37 Price list word
41 Get one’s dander up
44 Examination
45 Zoo sound
46 Disconnect
47 Cooler
49 Cut with a sickle
51 Te ___: Sp. lover’s avowal
52 Have title to
56 Threshold
58 Behave

DOWN
1 Stopped sleeping
2 NH summer resort
3 Newly come
4 Arctic abode
5 Persist tenaciously
6 ___ and out
7 Native of Poznan
8 Dental work
9 Newly come
10 Seraglio room
11 Confound
12 Cheroot
13 Pays attention
14 Physical exertion
15 Stratford river
16 Comedian Murphy
17 Das Kapital’s Marx
18 Dickens’s Miss Trent
19 To sponge
20 Physical exertion
23 Schoolboy
24 Sailor’s chanty
25 City on the Hudson
27 Executed
29 Indigo dye
32 Shoshone Indian
33 Old song. Robin ___
35 Triton
37 Price list word
41 Get one’s dander up
44 Examination
45 Zoo sound
46 Disconnect
47 Cooler
49 Cut with a sickle
51 Te ___: Sp. lover’s avowal
52 Have title to
56 Threshold
58 Behave

59 Where social graces are purveyed
60 By way of
64 Part of a fish hook
66 NM river
67 It sailed from Thessaly to Colchis
68 German philosopher
69 Colleague
70 Evening: It.
71 Crested mountain ridge
72 Beholds
73 So be it!

Solution

The solution for the crossword puzzle can be found on page 20.
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