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IN FOCUS With Colvin Law

September/October 2019

Inside This Issue

International Sudoku Day

Solve Your Favorite Math Puzzles!

International Sudoku Day brings puzzle and math lovers together to enjoy the perfect in-between! Specifically chosen on Sept. 9 by the World Puzzle Federation, this holiday is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the beloved 9x9 puzzle game.

HISTORY OF SUDOKU

One of the first mathematical puzzles was published in La France, a French newspaper, in 1895. However, the puzzle we now see in newspapers, sudoku books, and newsletters wasn't invented until 1979 by Howard Garns. Originally published in Dell Pencil Puzzles and Word Games magazine, Garns named it "Number Place." It was later given the name "sudoku" in 1984 when it was published in Japan. However, the puzzle didn't catch the interest of Americans until 2004, when it began to be regularly published in newspapers.

INTERESTING FACTS

The name "sudoku" is short for the Japanese expression "sūji wa dokushin ni kagiru," which translates to "the numerals must remain single." In Japan, sudoku quickly became very popular, mostly because it's so much easier to play than other puzzle games like crosswords. Sudoku continues to be a popular puzzle choice in Japan where, according to Sudoku.com, over 600,000 sudoku magazines are purchased every month.

OBSERVING SUDOKU

Celebrating this holiday has never been easier! Grab a sudoku book, magazine, or newsletter and start solving! The best thing about sudoku is that the puzzles can be done anywhere: while you're enjoying breakfast, during a lunch break at work, or while you're relaxing at home. They can also be done in one sitting or over an extended period of time. Filling out a puzzle doesn't have to be an individual task, either. Challenge family or friends to see who can finish a sudoku puzzle the quickest or work on one together.

Pick up a few sudoku puzzles today and start solving!

Apple, Mowers, and Moore's Law

It's hard to fathom, but this past summer marked the 50th anniversary of the moon landing and man's first steps on the moon. I wasn't quite old enough to remember and was getting ready to take my first steps on earth myself. As the years have passed, that iconic black and white footage of Neil Armstrong's "small" step would become just as familiar to me as it has to every American. A half a century later, I can pull that same lunar video up on a computer that fits in the palm of my hand — an act that has more to do with the Apollo 11 mission than you might think.

In 1969, the first computers took up entire rooms and had a fraction of the computational power we enjoy today. Part of the reason for this is that these old models used vacuum tubes to process data. But, when it came time to design the lunar lander, it quickly became clear that even the smallest of these tubes would be unsuitable for space travel.

In Palo Alto, California, NASA found a solution. There, a startup company known as Fairchild Semiconductor was perfecting a cutting-edge development in the 1960s: silicon processors. Smaller and lighter than their vacuum tube alternatives, these "chips" were ordered en masse for the Apollo project, kickstarting a revolution we're still witnessing today.

The space agency's high demand for silicon chips made Fairchild Semiconductor's head of research and development, Gordon Moore, realize this demand was only going to grow. Soon, many industries would want smaller, lighter, and faster computers. This led him to draw up what we now call Moore's Law, which theorized that the number of transistors in a chip will double every two years. This prediction in 1965 would prove true for decades.

The computer the Apollo 11 utilized to land on the moon was a marvel of its time, with four 16-bit registers, 2 kilobytes of memory, and 32KB of storage. But just 15 years later, these capabilities were woefully obsolete. I know because, by this time, I was a teenager who desperately wanted a computer.

In the '80s, it was exciting to grow up around the beginning stages of the personal computer age. By that point, Moore's Law was more than bearing out to be true, and the possibilities seemed endless. Several junior high school friends and I actually took classes at the local university to learn more about computers (and play some very early video games). Naturally, I wanted one of these machines myself, but, when I asked my parents, the message was clear: "If you want it, get it yourself."

> "NASA's cutting-edge machine on the Apollo 11 could be surpassed by a small white box of circuits bought by a teenager with mowing money."

So, I started mowing lawns. I cut the grass at the local post office, our church, and a few homes and saved up every penny. Eventually, I was able to buy my very own Apple 2C for around $1,500 (that's around $3,100 in today's money). It was no small feat, but here's the thing: I'd just bought a computer with 64 times the processing power of Apollo's guidance computer. In just 15 years, NASA's cutting-edge machine on the Apollo 11 could be surpassed by a small white box of circuits bought by a teenager with mowing money.

And today, the divide is even more extreme. The iPhone many of us carry around in our pockets has upward of 1,300 times the processing power of the Apollo 11 computer. In fact, the flight computer crashed multiple times on the way to the lunar landing site because it couldn't run the radar, navigation, and process Buzz Aldrin's inputs all at once. While scrolling through Wired Magazine's excellent article on the subject "Mission out of Control," my phone could be streaming a podcast, tracking my GPS coordinates, counting my steps, notifying me of work emails, and alerting me it's close to dinner time all without breaking a sweat.

Could you imagine what would happen if computer scientists had stopped at the Apollo 11's 2Ks of processing power and called it a day? After all, it got us to the moon. How much more computing power could the average human possibly need? But that's not how we as humans look at the horizon. We've never been satisfied to sit back and look at the night sky. So long as we see the stars, we're going to be shooting for them. I wonder what life will be like on the 100th anniversary of that fateful landing.

Signing off,

–John Colvin

Our Constitution Protects Us

From the Government Deciding the Value of Lives

The Civil Justice Act was passed in 2011 by Tennessee lawmakers after special-interest groups and their powerful and well-connected lobbyists pushed for an act they simply labeled as a "cap on damages." While a "cap on damages" sounds like something to protect one from harm, make no mistake. The damages referred to are the harm done to people, and the act does nothing to limit the harm. Instead, the act limits recovery and accountability. The special-interest groups and their army of lobbyists that descended upon our Tennessee State Capitol promised Tennessee legislators savings on insurance with the passage of the act. However, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners reports that our Tennessee insurance rates have not decreased but have risen as much as the rest of the country's.

A recent editorial appearing in newspapers across our state reminds us that 40 years ago, automotive executives sold cars with gas tanks that caught fire in even low-speed accidents. The executives knew about the danger before the cars hit the market. They decided it was more profitable to settle court cases when people died than to install safety equipment to prevent fires. The cost of that safety equipment was about $10 per car. Juries told the executives that putting profits over people's lives was unacceptable. Not only do we see this mindset in the manufacturing of products but even in nursing homes, when nursing home executives raise profits by cutting their nursing staff even below the minimum under federal regulations. Fewer caregivers translates into less time to provide patient care, resulting in increased patient harm.

Again, it is juries enshrined by our Constitution who must hold this mindset accountable.

The mindset of calculating profits by predicting the cost of hurting people is exactly what the so-called "Civil Justice Act" enables. The act targets victims who suffered extraordinary harm. It does not care if the victim is a 19-year-old breadwinner who has lost both legs or a single mother who cannot care for her young children because she is now confined to a hospital bed. Where harm is the worst, the act protects wrongdoers from full accountability.

The Constitution grants limited powers to the government and guarantees certain rights to us, as citizens, in order to protect us against abuse by an overreaching government. One right enshrined in our Constitution is that we, as citizens, will be judged by our peers, not by government officials. That is why our Constitution explicitly states that the right to a jury trial cannot be violated.

The Tennessee Supreme Court is due to review the Civil Justice Act. Hopefully, our Supreme Court will join other states that have decided laws like the Civil Justice Act violate constitutional rights. Let's stand together and keep our constitutional rights — like the right to a jury trial — from being taken away by special-interest groups who have decided the government knows better than its citizens.

Fall in Love With These Views

The Best Autumn Sights in Tennessee

Fall is coming to Tennessee along with all its vibrant colors. So why not set aside some time to get out and enjoy one of life's simple pleasures: marveling as the leaves become beautiful collages of red, orange, and gold. You may already have a favorite spot to sit and enjoy the autumn, but, in case you don't, we've put together a few of our favorites.

Generally, leaves change at higher elevations first, so in general, the mountainous locals of East Tennessee are your best bet for surrounding yourself with fall colors sooner rather than later. Middle and Western Tennessee will reach their peak colors near the end of October, rainfall depending.

EARLY OCTOBER

- The Cherohala Skyway
- Lookout Mountain
- Albright Grove
- Andrews Bald
- Mount Le Conte

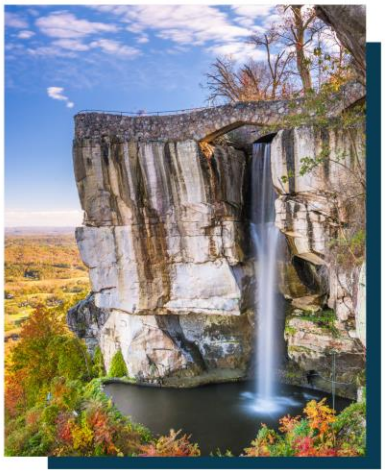
MID-OCTOBER

- Cumberland Plateau
- Roan Mountain State Park

LATE OCTOBER

- Montgomery Bell State Park
- Savage Gulf State Natural Area
- Natchez Trace State Park

If you have a favorite spot we missed, we'd love to hear from you! We'll make sure it's featured next fall!



Classic Apple Crisp

Inspired by Food Network

Ingredients

Filling:

- 5 lbs. Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and chopped
- 1/4 cup pecans, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tbsp lemon juice

Topping:

- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 6 tbsp chilled butter, cut into pieces
- 1/4 cup pecans, coarsely chopped

Directions

1. Heat oven to 350 F.
2. In a mixing bowl, mix all filling ingredients together. Transfer to individual serving ramekins.
3. In a different mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, cinnamon, and salt for the topping. Mix in butter until it forms lumps roughly the size of a pea, then stir in pecans. Sprinkle topping over filling.
4. Bake for 35–40 minutes, let stand for 10 minutes, and serve.

SUDOKU

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