# **PIGEON POST**

# Keeping you informed & involved April 2022

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We are curious and social creatures by nature and the news helps us make sense of the world and connect with the local, national and international community - so it's no wonder we're drawn to it.

But the relentless cycle of negative news can send

our stress levels soaring, particularly if we have memory issues, explains Professor Catherine Loveday on page 7. Check out her tips on how to reduce our anxiety.

On a lighter note, we have some brilliant vintage film posters on page 10 and you can take a culinary trip down memory lane with our wartime recipes. Do let us know if you have any favourite childhood dishes.

Plus all the usual crafts, puzzles, exercises and personal stories.

Have a good month!

*Helen Newman* Chief Executive Age UK Barnet



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# **NUTRITION BITES**



#### CHOOSE FROZEN FOR YOUR FIVE A DAY

Frozen fruit and vegetables are a budget-friendly way towards your five a day. 'We are all familiar with the versatile frozen pea, but many other vegetables and fruits can be used from frozen in soups, stews, and smoothies,' says cookery volunteer Kato. 'Not only do frozen fruits and vegetables retain all the nutrients found in fresh ones, but they are often far cheaper.' This means you can enjoy the powerful nutritional punch of berries all year round at a more affordable cost. Leftovers for all the tasty dishes below can be kept in the fridge for three days, or frozen in portions.



**Berry smoothie** - In a blender, add together 1 cup frozen berries of your choice,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup frozen (or fresh) banana, 1 cup milk, or milk substitute, or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plain yoghurt and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk, and 1 tbsp honey. Blend until smooth – add more liquid if you want a looser consistency. Experiment with different combinations.

**Mango lassi** - In a blender, add one cup of frozen mango, 1 cup of plain drinking yogurt or kefir, and 1-2 tsp of chopped fresh ginger. Blend until smooth. Add 1 tsp of a sweetener of your choice (honey, erythritol, maple syrup, sugar) if the mango is not very sweet.





**Berry coulis** - Add together 2 cups of frozen mixed berries of your choice, 2 tbsp of sweetener (sugar, honey, or sugar substitute), and 2 tbsp water in a small pot. Bring the mix to the boil and simmer for 10-15 minutes until all the fruits are soft. Blend in a food processor if you prefer a smooth texture. Mix in 1 tsp lemon juice. This coulis can be served warm on deserts (pancakes, cheesecake, ice cream) or cold on yoghurt and in porridge.

**Spinach lasagne** - Defrost 500g of frozen leaf spinach (*not chopped*) in the microwave or in a pot on the stove. Meanwhile, gently fry 1 chopped onion, 2 chopped garlic cloves in 1tbsp of olive oil. After 5 minutes add ½ tsp each of dried parsley, oregano and basil to the onion mix, and fry further until soft, about 10 minutes in total. Add a can of chopped anchovies (you can use the olive oil for frying the onions) and 2 cans of chopped tomatoes, and gently



simmer for about 20 minutes. When the spinach has defrosted, drain and then use your hands to squeeze out all the water. Mix with 200g ricotta cheese and 1 tsp of nutmeg. In an oven dish, put down a layer of fresh or dry lasagne pasta sheets, a layer of tomato sauce, and a layer of spinach, and repeat. Top with grated parmesan, and bake in an oven preheated at 200°C for 15-20 minutes, until the cheese is golden.



**Easy broccoli soup** - Gently fry 1 chopped onion, 2 chopped ribs of celery, 2 chopped garlic cloves, ½ cup of frozen or fresh carrots, and 2 tsp dried parsley (or fresh) in 2 tbsp of olive oil, until soft (about 10 minutes). Add 500g of frozen broccoli florets and 1 litre of vegetable or chicken stock. Boil for 15 minutes, and then blend with an immersion blender until smooth. Serve topped with grated stilton or strong cheddar.

## SCAM ALERT

#### 🔑 THE LATEST SCAMS



**Medical alert systems scams -** People are phoned up and told they might be entitled to a free medical alert button from Medical Alert Systems. The caller knows the name of the person and says that the offer is for vulnerable adults who are at risk of falls. This is a scam. Never give out personal details whether on the phone, or email, or text.

**Fake gardeners -** We have recently had reports of people stating they are gardeners charging older residents large sums of money for very basic work. Please be vigilant and aware and report suspicious behaviour by phoning101.

Please be aware of people offering services at the door - they are unlikely to give good service and value or guarantee their work.

Age UK Barnet has launched a new scams prevention and support programme for older people in Barnet. Please get in touch with us on 020 8203 5040 if you would like to know more about protecting yourself from a scam or if you have been a victim of a scam and need some support or advice.

## 🧈 BOOK GROUP



Each month we review the book that we read in the Age UK Barnet book group hosted by volunteer Kato. The book we read was Where the Crawdads Sing, by Delia Owens, which was recommended by David

We had a very lively discussion at our February book club meeting. The story captures the coming of age experiences of a girl, Kaya, who was abandoned by her family at the age of six, to survive on her own in the swamps of North Carolina. Delia Owens is also a wildlife scientist, and writes beautifully about the lush natural world in which Kaya grows up, and how she is shaped by her relationship to the living things around her. We all highly

recommend the book. David, in particular, was very moved emotionally by the character of Kaya, which is testimony to the power of Delia Owens' writing and storytelling.

Next time we'll be reading **The Little Red Chairs** by **Edna O'Brien** and we'll be meeting up on Tuesday 26 April (3-4pm)

Want to join our book group? We meet once a month at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT. Contact Helen on **0738 446 6840**.

## 🥪 ECO CORNER

## Volunteer Katharine continues her a mission to save the planet and suggests making soups from your leftovers.

Yesterday I concocted a soup from: • The final small bowl of multi-spiced lentils which had sort-of evolved over 2-3 days • A cup of defrosted tomatoes in heavy sweet mustard vinaigrette • A few spoons of leftover fried garlic rice • A teaspoon of surplus dry coriander seeds, ground up • A cup of mature vegetable water as thinner • A little handful of fresh coriander, finely cut.

Honest to goodness, folks, it was the best bowl of soup I have ever made! Deep chilli-hot layer upon layer of complex flavours.

It was a random product of being unable to throw away ANY food. It is frozen in plastic boxes or, if tiny amounts, in little bowls in the fridge. Even the water in which I cook potatoes/veg is saved and reused to cook the next veg, and the next. It builds up a superb taste.

Not everyone would have enjoyed that soup, but never mind. You can create your own masterpieces with what you haven't eaten. (Just check that things haven't 'gone off'). Be brave: throw in assorted leftovers, shake in spices, snip garden herbs, add grated cheese, crushed garlic. Keep tasting and adding. And you will be amazed!

Some day I will try to recreate the soup - but can I ever recapture that taste-bomb?

## OVER TO YOU! YOUR LIVES, YOUR STORIES....



If you have any poetry or funny stories you would like us to include, put pen to paper And send it to us at **Age UK Barnet Letters Page, Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT.** 

### POETRY CORNER - Biscuits by Brian Bilston

Enjoy this ode to biscuits, one of the poems read out in our last poetry sharing session. Our next poem sharing session is on Monday 25 April at 3.30pm. For more information and the zoom link email <u>helen.nicolaou@ageukbarnet.org.uk</u> or call her on 07384 466840.



How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. Splendorous hobnobs, bourbons, custard creams arrive unbidden in my nightly dreams and occupy the waking thoughts of days. I love to dunk thee in my cup of tea at breakfast time and at elevenses, at three o'clock and half-past sevenses, and at supper time thou dost comfort me. Thou art there for me and never grumble, thou make me feel like I'm not a misfit, thou dost pick me up whene'er I stumble. For thee, the whole of my life I'd risk it, for I love the way that cookies crumble



#### **MEET THE READERS! - Archie from Whetstone...**







# OVER TO YOU!

laptop.

## YOUR LIVES, YOUR STORIES!

Each month our reporter Linda Jackson has a lovely chat with one of you readers and shares your stories with the rest of us. This month Linda chats to our IT volunteer Karim who she'd met before when he helped her get to grips with her

Karim has a friendly, relaxed and patient approach, and helped me a great deal. One would have thought his life had always been on an even keel, but as I found out when I interviewed him this had not always been so.

Karim is now 65 years old. He has two sons from his first marriage which ended in divorce, and two step children from his second marriage. As yet there are no grandchildren, but his children live fairly locally, and he sees them regularly.

Karim was adopted soon after his birth by a childless professional couple with the same mixed race background as his own. Karim always knew he was adopted but considered his adoptive parents as his parents and they lived a comfortable middle class life until Karim turned ten.

Unfortunately, about this time his mother became ill and his father was unable to cope with her illness and looking after a small child, so when Karim was twelve he was sent to boarding school. This was not a happy time for him. He was racially abused and bullied. This did not cease until he was obliged to face up to his bullies, and had to "beat up" the chief bully. It helped that he was good at games and eventually became head of school. He never told his parents about the bullying as he did not want to upset them.

#### **Reaching out**

After university Karim decided he would try and make contact with his birth mother, but received a negative reply. He left it for a time and then tried again with the same negative result. There followed a number of unsettled years when he tried ten different jobs to find out what was right for him. Some years ago he set up a printing business with his present partner. Nowadays he still owns half the business, but has stepped back from running it full time. Karim has always enjoyed sport, and played a variety of games in the past, and is a proficient skier. He and his wife love walking, especially with their dog, and Karim fishes. He enjoys cooking, especially Indian food. About six years ago Karim's wife Amanda decided that Karim would benefit by finding out about his birth mother. With his agreement, she did all the research into the background of his adoption, which was complicated. Karim attributes to Amanda the happy resolution to this story. They gathered up all the information and photographs about his present life, and sent it off through an intermediary. He met his half sister, and eventually his birth mother agreed to see her son. He met this little old lady, who held out her arms to him, and accepted him completely. He said she only lived a year or so after that, and he was able to be with her a great deal of that time.

Nowadays Karim says he has time on his hands. He helps with several Age UK Barnet initiatives including the Shopping Service where he shops for a disabled lady once a week, the Handyperson Service, and the Help with Digital Inclusion sessions (where I met him). Karim says he does not expect anything back from all this time he gives, but is glad to make a difference to people who may be struggling with their lives. However, at present he says he has never felt happier. I asked him the reason why this should be, and he said the chief reason he is so happy is that he is now sharing his life with the person he wants to be with most - his wife Amanda, his "soulmate". No wonder he looked so happy and relaxed when I met him. I am glad life is good for him now, and I think he deserves it.





## **RECIPES FROM THE WAR YEARS....**

Here we take a look back at some of the recipes used during and just after the second world war. Let us know if you try any!



Ingredients

Cooking time 15 mins Quantity 4 helpings

4 medium sized herrings 1/2 oz margarine 1 teaspoon made up mustard 1 teaspoon vinegar 1 teaspoon Worcester sauce Pinch salt 1 tablespoon sugar 1/4 pint water 1 onion 1/2 teaspoon pickling spice



#### Method

Split the herrings and take out the backbones. Cream the margarine, add the mustard, vinegar, Worcester sauce, salt and sugar. Spread with the water, onion and pickling spice. Simmer gently for a good 10 minutes. Serve hot or cold. Mackerel may be cooked in the same way, but they will take slightly longer.





Try to arrange with neighbours to share ovens. One day one neighbour could cook two or three joints, another day, someone's milk pudding might be tucked into a not quite full oven, or a cake baked while a casserole is slowly cooking. While you are doing this, you are not just helping each other, you are helping the Miners who work to provide our fuel.

## GINGER HONEY BUNS (1945 ish)

Ingredients Cooking time 12-15 mins Quantity 12-14 cakes

8 oz (225g) self-raising flour or plain flour sifted with 2 teaspoons baking powder 1/2 - 1 teaspoon ground ginger 2 oz (50g) margarine 2 oz (50g) sugar 2 tablespoons clear honey 2 oz (50g) sultanas or other dried fruit 1 fresh or reconstituted dried egg Little milk or milk and water

#### Method

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Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F), Gas mark 6. Grease 2 baking trays. Sift the flour, or flour and baking powder, with the ginger. Rub in the margarine, add the sugar, honey,

dried fruit, and egg. Mix well. Gradually add enough milk, or milk and water, to make a sticky dough that stands up in peaks. Put spoonfulls on the baking trays and bake in the preheated oven for 12-15 minutes, until golden and firm. Cool on a wire rack.





## WELLBEING



#### A WHEN THE NEWS GETS TOO MUCH

'News is important and keeps us connected and helps us know where we are in the world,' says Catherine. 'But sometimes when there's a lot of bad news around a specific topic, it can create feelings of anxiety and become incredibly difficult for people.'

First there was Covid-19, then Ukraine... this constant news cycle - on TV, radio and in the newspapers - can be overwhelming. 'It's not great for any of us but is even worse for people with memory issues or mild dementia because the more protected parts of the brain respond to repetition,' says Catherine. 'So anything repeated lots of times is likely to stick when other things don't. This means the negative news could end up completely dominating their thoughts.'

It can also be more of an issue for people who live alone and for people who don't have daily tasks to focus on. 'If your memory isn't as good or if you have a relatively empty day, you don't have other memories to provide context and balance, says Catherine. 'This means the news will have a bigger impact.'

If you have a good functioning memory or an active, busy life, you will be making memories of other nice things that have taken place during the day. This provides balance and helps to dilute the news.

That said, the Ukraine crisis – and the threat of war – has been particularly frightening for a lot of older people, many of whom were born during or soon after WW2.

'This can make the crisis seem more relatable and more real,' says Catherine

#### How to reduce your anxiety

We should accept the emotions that go with it. 'It's perfectly normal to be upset by stories of suffering,' says Catherine.

Try to limit the amount of time we spend on the news. 'We are compelled as human beings to care about other people and want to know what's going on but we need to be disciplined about how much time we



**Don't watch the news before bed if you have trouble sleeping.** With or without memory issues, this will be the last thing you remember before you drop off.

Accept that there's a limit to what we can do. 'That means we're not going to be any more helpful to those suffering in this conflict by watching more of it,' says Catherine. 'There's a point at which it's serving no useful purpose to know more.'

Hang on to the good bits of news and the positive stories of human compassion that come out of a crisis. 'As we age, we tend to get more optimistic, so tap into this,' says Catherine.

**Provide balance.** Focus on the good things happening in your day. 'And for people living with dementia, encourage engaging activities such as reminiscence work - anything that will keep people present and focused,' says Catherine.

## • •

#### Quote of the month!

A fantastic way to describe what it feels like when your memory fails you, from Sid, one of the participants in our Sporting Memories group "My memory is like the tide coming in over the sand, my words sink into the sand and disappear – some to resurface and I remember, others, lost forever".





# PUZZLE TIME....



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#### **GEMSTONE WORD SEARCH**

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Amber	Garnet	Sapphire				
Amethyst	Jade	Sardonyx				
Aquamarine	Malachite	Topaz				
Beryl	Moonstone	Turquoise				
Citrine	Opal	Zircon				
Diamond	Pearl					

	ACROSS						
1	Female singing voice (7)						
5	Embellish (5)						
8	Requirements (5)						
9	Seemliness (7)						
10	Aerial (7)						
11	Faint-hearted (5)						
12	Figure of speech (5)						
14	Health centre (6)						
18	Toy bear (5)						
20	Eastern (anag) (7)						
22	Make bigger (7)						
23	Hospital worker (5)						
24	Mountain lakes (5)						
25	Rather old (7)						
	DOWN						
1	Open-toed shoes (7)						
2	Fold in fabric (5)						
3	Armoury (7)						
4	Severe trial (6)						
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Tales (5)

Mistake (5)

# EASY CRAFTS



#### PAINTED PEBBLES



#### What you will need

- rocks (quite obviously)
- red paint (acrylics work out great) you can buy this paint from the £ shop or Flying Tiger
- paint brush (we love sponge brushes)
- black permanent marker or black white paint
- wiggly eyes





#### Ladybird

Start by washing the rocks to remove any dirt or dust they might have on. Dry them. Once dry color them red, depending on the color you might need to paint the stones with a few layers of paint. You can use either a paint brush or cut up sponge to do this.

Once the paint is dry draw a straight line along the middle of the rock with a black permanent marker or paint. Color the head black (this will be easier with paint), we used a Sharpie to draw the details but it wasn't as effective for coloring in the head so we used another permanent marker (Stabilo). Draw the 7 or more dots on the wings – these little bugs can have many, many dots.

Stick on two wiggly eyes. Alternatively you can paint them on.

#### You don't have to stop there! Here are a few more ideas for you to try....



# **NOSTALGIA PAGE**



## VINTAGE FILM POSTERS

As this is the season for the Oscars - do you remember watching any of these films and where you first saw them?



















JULIAN BLAUSTEIN · ROBERT WISE · EDMIUND H. NORTH 20. merun



# **HOW CAN WE HELP**



### HOW CAN WE HELP?

For advice about benefits, grants, housing and money concerns, phone our **Later Life Planning Service** on 020 8432 1417.

For scams advice and support, call our **Scams Prevention Service** on 0208 432 2217

Would you enjoy a regular chat over the phone with a friendly volunteer? Try our **Befriending Service** on **020 8432 1416** 

For essential jobs in the home please phone our **Handyperson Service**\* on 020 8150 0963. Some jobs such as changing a lightbulb are free of charge.

Unable to get out to the shops and cannot shop online? We have a **Shopping Service**\* for people who need a light weekly shop. For more info, Tel **020 8150 0963** 

**Living Well Dementia Hub—dementia adviser service** and **day opportunities** for people living with mild to moderate dementia and their carers. Phone 020 8203 5040. Our **Dementia Befriending Service** offers companionship—phone 020 8150 0967.

Laptop Loan Service – short-term loans to get people set up online. Tel 020 8203 5040.

**Finding your Feet Service** – for those who need confidence to get out and about again, we can match you with a short-term walking buddy. Phone 020 8150 0963.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

#### TALK Memory changes in older age: when do we need to worry

When? Tuesday 26 April 6pm - 7pm

Where? The Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT

**Cost?** £5 donation on the door

Our memories fail us all now and again but when is it a problem? And when is it nothing to worry about? Neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday shines a light on this fascinating topic.

To book a place please contact Teresa on 07502 989 403 or email teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk

#### JUBILEE JAMBOREE

A community celebration for young and old Saturday 11 June 2022 – 11am – 4pm at The Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT

\* Live music & entertainment \* Bar and food \*Afternoon tea \* Tombola and raffle \* Plant stall \* Craft activities and games for the whole family \* Make a crown competition

£2 entry (on the door). Afternoon tea: £3 (prebook). To prebook afternoon tea, please phone Teresa on **07502 989 403**.

# IMPORTANT INFO ON PENSION & BENEFITS

#### An important note from our later life planning manager Jesse about state pension and benefits:

'If you're coming up to pension age and are in receipt of means tested benefit, you must inform the relevant benefit agencies, including the Department for Work and Pensions and your local benefit department, to report a change of circumstances,' says Jesse This is because your income will change to state pension once you reach state retirement age. 'People must do something about this - otherwise they risk their benefits being suspended or stopped,' says Jesse. 'We have spoken to people who are in a great deal of stress, particularly those on disability benefits, because their benefits have been stopped!' For more information contact Barnet council on **0208 359 2000**. Contact our Later Life Planning team on **020 8203 5040**.



## HEALTH AND WELLBEING



### STRESS RELIEVING NECK MOVES

Relax shoulders, look straight ahead, slowly tilt your head backwards and hold for five seconds, then slowly tilt your head forwards and hold for five seconds. Do this five times







Relax shoulders, face forwards, slowly tilt your head to the right until you feel the pull on the left side of your neck, hold for five seconds and then slowly tilt to the far left until you feel the pull on the right side of your neck, hold for five seconds. Do this five times.







### BODY OWNER'S MANUAL - VINTAGE EDITION!



## In the first of her new column our trustee Gillian Jordan (left), a retired physiotherapist talks about how every little counts when it comes to exercise.

Experts often tell us we need to do at least 150mins of strenuous exercise week or 10,000 steps a day! Well, that's all very well for some, but not all and if a task looks beyond reasonable expectations, people just won't do it! But recent guidelines from the UK Chief Medical Officers suggest that, among older people, even small increases in the amount of physical exercise we do can be beneficial. Interestingly, the activity most recommended is to improve sitting to standing ability.



So look back on your average day – how long do you spend sitting? How often do you stand up? Walk around? Is it possible that you could increase your stand-up sit-downs? At least every hour is a figure often suggested; another hint is to stand up and sit down two or three times rather than just once. Also look at the quality of the way you do it – do you rely on your arms to push you up? Could you concentrate on gradually using your legs more with less weight going through your



arms? Never do anything that does not feel safe, but with practice you will find that as this becomes easier other activities too will improve.

# AGE UK BARNET



## BRAIN BOOSTERS - Spring has sprung

## This month's flexible thinking challenge from Michelle Reshef, founder of Dementia Prevention UK focuses on getting outside again and looking at the different meanings behind words.

It is spring already - have you noticed? Trees and flowers are blooming and days are getting longer so go outside, take your time and smell those lovely flowers! Being outside, experiencing nature is very important to our brain health, boosting our mood and lowering our stress levels.

Once you get back inside, we have a new brain teaser for you. Make a list of words that are spelled the same but have different meanings. Here are some examples: **SPRING** is a season but also is an elastic object that stores mechanical energy. When used as a noun, a **BAT** could be a winged, nocturnal animal or a piece of sporting equipment used in baseball. It can also be used as a verb when a player goes up to bat during a baseball game. The word **FAIR** has a few meanings when used as different parts of speech. When used as an adjective, it can describe someone as agreeable, but it can also describe someone who has light skin or hair. As a noun, a "fair" is typically a local event that celebrates a certain person, place, or historical moment. The word **LEAD** could be the verb that means to guide someone or something, while the noun version of the word pertains to the metal.

Looking forward to seeing what you come up with. Encourage your family to join on this game too. Let us know who got more words.

Dementia Prevention UK is a charity committed to providing you with knowledge, support and tools to prevent dementia. For more information, email Info@dementiapreventionuk.com or get in touch with us at Age UK Barnet on 020 8203 5040.

# COMMUNITY FOCUS



#### Each month we chat to a different local community group and this month Liz (left) from The Good Neighbour Scheme for Mill Hill and Burnt Oak tells us a bit about what they do.

We are a small local charity supporting older people in both the Mill Hill and Burnt Oak area. Many of our clients live alone and are often isolated from their families as they have moved away or circumstances have changed.

We offer several services to help our clients to continue to live independently and to have a social life. We are very lucky to have our own mini bus Bluebell which we use for many of our activities.

We run a weekly shopping bus service to a local supermarket. We collect our clients from their homes and take them to the store, so people can choose their own shopping rather than rely on others. They get their trolley and off they go - and afterwards they meet in the café for a cup of something hot and

a piece of cake. What they enjoy most is the chat!

On most Tuesdays and Thursdays we run lunch clubs in Mill Hill and Burnt Oak. We offer a hot two course meal with copious amounts of tea and coffee. We often combine these lunch clubs with an event and at the moment we are planning our Platinum Jubilee party.

Other services we offer are befriending, lifts to hospital or other appointments, footcare clinics, a limited gardening service, shopping service and general help and advice. For more information phone **020 8906 3340 or e**mail Good.neighbours@yahoo.co.uk







If you have enjoyed this newsletter, please let us know. Just drop us a line at Pigeon Post, Age UK Barnet, Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT.



A farmer finds all his cows frozen in the snow. He prays for help and a woman appears.

She waves her arms over the cows



and they immediately defrost. "Thank you" the farmer cries, "are you magic?", "No" she said "I'm Thora Herd!!".

WE ALL KNOW THAT MIRRORS DON'T LIE... I'M JUST GRATEFUL THAT THEY DON'T LAUGH.



#### **SUDUKO MODERATE P8**

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



**CROSSWORD ANSWERS P8**