Anticipation

Mars could have enough molecular oxygen to support life, and scientists figured out where to find it. P2-3

CONCLUSION: Modern-day Mars may be more hospitable to oxygen-breathing life than previously thought.
From Mars with hope

A new study suggests that salty water at or near the surface of the red planet could contain enough dissolved O2 to support oxygen-breathing microbes, and even more complex organisms such as sponges, writes Deborah Netburn.

“Do the right thing. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest.”
— Mark Twain

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— Vlada Stamenkovic, Earth and planetary scientist
Modern-day Mars may be more hospitable to oxygen-breathing life than previously thought.

A new study suggests that salty water at or near the surface of the red planet could contain enough dissolved O2 to support oxygen-breathing microbes, and even more complex organisms such as sponges.

"Nobody thought of Mars as a place like aerobic respiration would work because there is so little oxygen in the atmosphere," said Vlada Stamenkovic, an Earth and planetary scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory who led the work. "What we're saying is it is possible that this planet that is so different from Earth could have given aerobic life a chance." As part of the report, Stamenkovic and his co-authors also identified which regions of Mars are most likely to contain brines with the greatest amounts of dissolved oxygen. This could help Nasa and other space agencies plan where to send landers on future missions, they said.

The work was published in Nature Geoscience.

On its surface, the planet Mars is not what you would consider a hospitable place for most Earthlings. Here on Earth, 21 percent of our atmosphere is made up of oxygen — thanks to the abundance of plants and other organisms that create oxygen as a byproduct of photosynthesis.

The Martian atmosphere, on the other hand, is made up of just .145 percent oxygen, according to data collected by the Mars rovers. With no plants to make O2, the miniscule amount of oxygen on Mars is created when radiation from the sun interacts with CO2 in the planet’s atmosphere.

In addition, Mars’ atmosphere is extremely thin — 160 times thinner than Earth’s atmosphere.

In addition, the temperature at the surface frequently drops to minus 100, making it extremely difficult for liquid water to exist on the planet’s surface.

Pure liquid water would either freeze or evaporate away on Mars, but salty water, or brines, could remain in a liquid state or at just below the surface of the planet, the authors said. That’s because water mixed with salts has a lower freezing temperature than plain water. (That’s why those unfortunate people who live in cold climates use salt to melt the ice on their sidewalks.)

In the first part of the paper, the authors use computer models to show that water mixed with salts already present on Mars could be stable in a liquid state or near the surface.

Once the authors were convinced that these liquid brines could exist, their next step was to determine how much dissolved oxygen they could absorb from the atmosphere. "If there are brines on Mars, then the oxygen would have no choice but to infiltrate them," said Woody Fischer, a geobiologist at Caltech who worked on the study. "The oxygen would make it everywhere."

To calculate how much oxygen the brines might absorb, the researchers had to consider their chemistry, as well as the temperature and air pressure at the Martian surface. Brines will absorb more oxygen when the temperature is lower and the air pressure is higher.

Their results showed that modern Mars could support liquid environments with enough dissolved O2 to support oxygen-breathing microbes across the planet. They also found that the oxygen concentrations would be especially high in brines found at the polar regions, where temperatures are cooler.

So far, this work has been done through computer modelling. But experts still said that the study looks robust.

"The best studies that rely on models for their results conduct a thorough review of the possible variables that can influence the model output," said Kathleen Mandt, a planetary biologist at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. "This study does a good job at exploring a range of possible outcomes."

What the study doesn’t do, however, is prove that there are indeed brines on Mars.

"What we know is that theoretically there should be brines on Mars, and that they would be able to dissolve enough oxygen to be biologically useful," Stamenkovic said. The next step, he said, is two-fold.

He hopes that researchers here on Earth will do experiments to put oxygen-breathing microbes in the brines that could occur on Mars to find out what type of chemistry they do and whether they can thrive. The other step would be to send a lander to Mars that can look for brines from the shallow to the deep subsurface.

"Amazing work has been done by Nasa to look for evidence of past habitable environments," he said. "I am a big promoter of looking for current habitable environments, and we can do that by starting to explore if there is liquid water on Mars."

To that end, Stamenkovic is working to develop a new tool, no bigger than a shoe box, that could be used to find water on Mars and determine its salinity, no digging necessary.

He calls it TH2OR. — Los Angeles Times/TNS

“Amazing work has been done by Nasa to look for evidence of past habitable environments,” says Vlada Stamenkovic. “I am a big promoter of looking for current habitable environments, and we can do that by starting to explore if there is liquid water on Mars”
Some drugs widely prescribed for treating high blood pressure could be associated with an increased risk of lung cancer, found a study published in The BMJ.

The study, led by Professor Laurent Azoulay at McGill University in Canada, found that angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor drugs (ACEIs) to lower blood pressure are associated with an increased risk of lung cancer compared with the use of another group of blood pressure drugs called angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs).

The risk is particularly elevated among people using ACEIs for more than five years and increased 31 per cent in patients who used ACEIs for more than 10 years.

The drugs work by blocking an enzyme which narrows blood vessels, and raises blood pressure.

Although the magnitudes of the observed estimates are modest, the researchers point out that ACEIs are one of the most widely prescribed drug classes, “so these small relative effects could translate into large absolute numbers of patients at risk”.

To understand the association, published in the journal The BMJ, the team analysed primary care records for nearly one million patients who started taking a new antihypertensive drug between 1995 and 2015.

Patients were at least 18 years of age, with no previous cancer, and were followed up for an average of 6.4 years, during which 7,952 cases of lung cancer were identified (a rate of 1.3 per 1,000 persons).

After taking account of factors that could potentially influence the findings, including age, sex, weight (BMI), smoking status and history of lung diseases, use of ACEIs was associated with an overall 14 percent increased risk of lung cancer.

Earlier the researchers estimated that the risk of lung cancer could be through the build-up of protein-like chemicals called bradykinin and substance P in the lung. These chemicals have been found on lung cancer tissue, and bradykinin may directly stimulate the growth of lung cancer.

However, previous observational studies examining this association are limited and report inconsistent results.

Being tall can increase cancer risk, says study

Taller people could be more at risk of developing cancer, claimed a new study that examined over a million people.

The report, published by the Royal Society, showed that for each 10 cm of increased height among women, there was a 13 percent increase in cancer risk.

For men, the number was 11 percent.

For every 10 cm increase in human height above the average used in the study of 5 ft 7 in for men and 5 ft 3 in for women, there is a 10 percent greater risk of that person getting cancer, the BBC reported, adding that a person’s risk factor depended on their exact height.

“If 50/500 average height women got cancer then 60/500 tall (178 cm) women would be expected to get cancer. If you consider a very tall woman, say 6 ft 2” (188cm), then you’d expect 65/500,” Leonard Nunney from the University of California, was quoted as saying.

Further, the study examined 23 types of cancers and increased height was found to be a risk factor in 18 of them. Of 18 cancer types analysed in both men and women, four pancreas, oesophagus, stomach and mouth/pharynx showed no apparent increase with height.

One type of cancer that did not show any risk associated with height was cervical cancer, which, according to Nunney, has been associated with HPV infections.

Skin cancer, on the other hand, showed the highest risk increase. This could be due to an increase in growth hormones that can cause an increase in cell division rates, leading to the kinds of larger mutations seen in skin cancers. For the study, the team compiled data from four large-scale studies on 23 cancer types in the UK, US, South Korea, Austria, Norway and Sweden.

Healthy lifestyle linked to reduced stroke risk

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, which includes quitting smoking and reducing weight, can help people at high genetic risk to decrease their chance of suffering a stroke.

The study, led by researchers from the University of Cambridge in the UK, showed that the risk of stroke was 35 percent higher among those at high genetic risk compared with those at low genetic risk, irrespective of lifestyle.

However, an unfavourable lifestyle was associated with a 66 percent increased risk of stroke compared with a favourable lifestyle, and this increased risk was present within any genetic risk category.

A high genetic risk combined with an unfavourable lifestyle profile was associated with a more than two-fold increased risk of stroke compared with a low genetic risk and a favourable lifestyle.

The study, published in the journal BMJ, included 3,06,473 white men and women aged between 40 and 73 years who had no history of stroke or heart attack.

Adherence to a healthy lifestyle was based on four factors: non-smoker, diet rich in fruits, vegetables and fish, not overweight or obese (body mass index less than 30), and regular physical exercise.

Among the lifestyle factors, the most significant associations were seen for smoking and being overweight or obese, the researchers said.

Moreover, across all categories of genetic risk and lifestyle, the risk of stroke was higher in men than women.

This is an observational study so no firm conclusions can be drawn about cause and effect.

However, the researchers noted that their findings “highlight the potential of lifestyle interventions to reduce risk of stroke across entire populations, even in those at high genetic risk of stroke.” — IANS
Excercise can help boost memory

Researchers have identified a naturally occurring bone hormone that can potentially reverse memory loss in the ageing brain through exercise.

The study on the hormone osteocalcin lends new insight into how lifestyle changes that affect the body, such as exercise, could positively affect the brain. “Nearly everyone will experience age-related memory loss in their lifetime, so it is incredibly important to understand its causes and identify ways to mitigate it,” said Eric R Kandel, Professor at the Columbia University.

“With today’s study, we are not only building a detailed understanding of how age-related memory loss originates in the brain, we’ve shown how osteocalcin interacts with key proteins in the brain to boost memory.”

For many years, memory loss was treated as a singular disorder. But scientists have now begun to realise that Alzheimer’s disease, begins in a part of the brain called the entorhinal cortex, which lies at the foot of the hippocampus.

On the other hand, age-related memory loss, begins within the hippocampus itself, in a region called the dentate gyrus, Kandel said.

Kandel’s team identified a deficiency in a protein called RbAp48 protein, a significant contributor to age-related memory loss but not Alzheimer’s. The protein levels decline with age, both in mice and in people.

In a series of experiments, reported in the journal Cell Reports, the team found that RbAp48 controls the expression levels of two other proteins regulated from osteocalcin.

If RbAp48 function is inhibited, osteocalcin infusions have no effect on the animals' memory. Osteocalcin needs RbAp48 to kick start the process.

These findings also provide further evidence that exercise may be the best way to stave off or even treat, age-related memory loss in people.

Studies in mice showed that moderate exercise, such as walking, triggers the release of osteocalcin in the body. – IANS

Lack of good oral health may up hypertension risk

Besides a healthy lifestyle and diet, dental health also plays a significant role in triggering high blood pressure (BP), according to a new research.

People with healthier gums were found to have lower blood pressure and responded better to BP-lowering medications, compared with individuals who have periodontitis, serious gum infection that damages gums and can destroy the jawbone.

Importantly, poor oral health was found to interfere with blood pressure control in people diagnosed with hypertension.

They were 20 percent less likely to reach healthy BP ranges, compared with patients in good oral health. The findings stressed that patients with periodontal disease may warrant closer BP monitoring, the researchers said.

“Physicians should pay close attention to patients’ oral health, particularly those receiving treatment for hypertension, and urge those with signs of periodontal disease to seek dental care,” said Davide Pietropaoli, a post-doctoral student from the University of L’Aquila in Italy.

“Likewise, dental health professionals should be aware that oral health is indispensable to overall physiological health, including cardiovascular status,” Pietropaoli added.

For the study, published in the journal Hypertension, the team examined more than 3,600 people with high BP. The target blood pressure range for people with hypertension is less than 130/80 mmHg.

Patients with severe periodontitis were found to have systolic pressure (top number) that was, on average, 3 mmHg higher than those with good oral health.

“Patients with high blood pressure and the clinicians who care for them should be aware that good oral health may be just as important in controlling the condition as are several lifestyle interventions known to help control blood pressure, such as a low-salt diet, regular exercise and weight control,” Pietropaoli noted. – IANS

Stress can impair memory

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People more stressed out during middle-age are more likely to suffer memory loss and have a reduced brain size, say researchers.

The study found that people with higher levels of cortisol, a hormone linked to stress, performed worse on memory and other cognitive tasks than peers of the same age with average cortisol levels.

The higher cortisol in the blood was also associated with smaller brain volumes.

“Cortisol affects many different functions, so it is important to fully investigate how high levels of the hormone may affect the brain,” said lead author Justin B Echouffo-Tcheugui, from the Harvard University.

“Memory loss and brain shrinkage were found in the study’s middle-age participants before the onset of any symptoms,” Echouffo-Tcheugui added.

For the study, reported in the journal Neurology, the team included over 2,000 adults in their 40s and 50s, who were then examined for fasting blood cortisol levels and brain volume, as well as memory and thinking skills. They also underwent magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to measure brain volume.

“In our quest to understand cognitive ageing, one of the factors attracting significant interest and concern is the increasing stress of modern life,” said Sudha Seshadri, Professor at University of Texas.

“One of the things we know in animals is that stress can lead to cognitive decline. In this study, higher morning cortisol levels in a large sample of people were associated with worse brain structure and cognition,” Seshadri said.

The researchers suggested that it is important for physicians to counsel people with higher cortisol levels on ways to reduce stress.

COUNSELLING: The researchers suggest that it is important for physicians to counsel people with higher cortisol levels on ways to reduce stress.

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Studies in mice showed that moderate exercise, such as walking, triggers the release of osteocalcin in the body. – IANS

Counselling: The researchers suggest that it is important for physicians to counsel people with higher cortisol levels on ways to reduce stress.
**Keto diet is helpful for losing weight**

The best part about being a culinary professional is that you get to meet so many different people and share their experiences with different diets and get feedback directly about their eating trends. Recently I met a foodie, who was on a ketogenic diet and that inspired me to write about this relatively new diet, unknown to many people.

Ketogenic diet also known as ‘Keto’ diet is a low carb, high-fat diet that offers many health benefits. In recent studies, this diet has been proven to help you lose weight and improve your overall health.

Keto diet has also been proved to be beneficial against diabetes, cancer, epilepsy and Alzheimer’s disease.

This diet involved drastically reducing carbohydrates and replacing it with fat. This reduction in carbs puts your body into a metabolic state called ‘Ketosis’, during that your body becomes incredibly efficient at burning fat for energy. It also turns fat into ketones in the liver, which can supply energy for the brain. Ketogenic diets can cause massive reductions in blood sugar and insulin levels. This along with increased ketones has numerous health benefits.

With any diet plan you must stick to list of foods – to avoid any food that is high in carbs. Here is a list of foods that need to be reduced or eliminated on a ketogenic diet.

**Sugary foods:** Soda, fruit juice, smoothies, cake, ice cream, and candy.

**Grains or starches:** Wheat-based products, rice, pasta, and cereal.

**Fruit:** All fruit, except small portions of berries like strawberries, and blueberries.

**Beans or legumes:** Peas, kidney beans, lentils, and chickpeas.

**Root vegetables and tubers:** Potatoes, sweet potatoes, and carrots.

**Low-fat or diet products:** These are highly processed and often high in carbs.

**Some condiments or sauces:** These often contain sugar and unhealthy fat.

**Unhealthy fats:** Limit your intake of processed vegetable oils and mayonnaise.

**Sugar-free diet foods:** These are often high in sugar alcohols, which can affect ketone levels in some cases. These foods also tend to be highly processed.

**Now what you are allowed to eat in keto diet. You should base most of your meals around these foods.**

**Meat:** Red meat, steak, sausage, chicken and turkey.

**Fatty fish:** Such as salmon, trout, tuna and mackerel, king fish.

**Eggs:** Look for pastured or omega-3 whole eggs.

**Butter and cream:** Look for grass-fed whenever possible.

**Cheese:** Unprocessed cheese (cheddar, goat, cream, blue or mozzarella).

**Nuts and seeds:** Almonds, walnuts, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, and chia seeds.

**Healthy oils:** Primarily extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil and avocado oil.

**Avocados:** Whole avocados or freshly made guacamole.

**Low-carb veggies:** Most green veggies, tomatoes, onions, and peppers.

**Condiments:** You can use salt, pepper and various healthy herbs and spices.

It is best to base your diet mostly on whole, single-ingredient foods. Whatever diet plan you would follow, there will always be negatives along with the positives. It is important to understand them and minimise the side effects to gain maximum benefits. Mainly the side effects are observed during the initial phase. ‘Keto flu’ is often observed during the initial weeks of starting this keto diet.

Keto flu includes poor energy and mental function, increased hunger, sleep issues, nausea, digestive discomfort and decreased exercise performance.

To minimise this, you can try a regular low carb diet for the first few weeks, to teach your body to burn more fat before you eliminate carbs. Keto diet also changes the water and mineral balance of your body, so adding extra salt to your meals or taking mineral supplements can help.

Note: One most important thing to note is to consult your doctor before you indulge in any diet plan to carefully analyses if the plan is suitable for you without any drastic side effects.

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**Skillet chicken with goat cheese**

**Ingredients**
- Chicken breast 500 gm
- Goat cheese 4 tbsp
- Olive oil 1 tsp
- Broccoli, florets ½ cup
- Asparagus 3-4 stalks
- Garlic 2-3 cloves
- Tomato, chopped 1 cup
- Milk ¼ cup
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper to taste

**Method:**
Wash and cut the chicken into 1-inch cubes and sprinkle salt and pepper and keep aside.

In a heavy bottom skillet heat oil over medium heat, sauté chicken over medium high heat for about a minute.

Add chopped garlic and stir in.

Asparagus spears to the skillet and keep aside.

Add some moisture to cook the chicken until no longer pink.

Remove from skillet and keep aside covered with aluminium foil to keep aside.

Grill small broccoli florets and asparagus spears to the skillet and cook over medium high heat for about a minute.

Add chopped garlic and stir in tomatoes, milk and cheese, cook covered over medium heat until cheese begins to melt.

Stir in chicken and stir well to combine all the ingredients.

Adjust the seasoning and serve hot, with some additional cheese on top.

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Chef’s Special

Chef Tarun Kapoor, Culinary Masterchef, USA. He may be contacted at tarunkapoor83@gmail.com
The bizarre test mission before the first moon landing

By Christina Horsten

The signs were there from the beginning. On October 11, 1968, there were very strong winds at Nasa’s launch pad at Cape Canaveral, Florida. The launch of the Apollo 7 mission looked far from certain. But Nasa officials were insistent – the launch must take place. “I finally yielded, with great concern, “ said crew commander Walter Schirra later on, according to a recent report in Air & Space magazine to mark the 50th anniversary of the mission.

There was a great deal at stake. About a year and a half earlier, three astronauts had been killed in a fire during on-the-ground testing of the Apollo 1 space capsule. The Apollo 7 mission was the first in a series of actual launches leading up to the first moon landing the following year. And it was set to be a career-defining moment for the crew of Schirra, Donn Eisele and Walter Cunningham.

But all did not go according to plan. “When I heard ignition, it developed a real violent, shaking sound. At lift-off, I could barely see the darn clock. I thought the world was coming to an end,” Schirra said.

Eisele later wrote, “The spacecraft shook and rattled furiously. I thought the Command Module was going to snap right off the top of that Saturn.”

The launch was successful, but the problems began soon afterwards and continued throughout the flight, creating tensions between the crew and the mission controllers on the ground. Schirra came down with a cold and quickly infected the other two crew members. Because of the zero-gravity conditions in space, the stuffiness in the astronauts’ heads was much harsher than it would have been on the ground. They felt tired and irritable much of the time – and that was evident in their communication with mission controllers on the ground.

Schirra in particular became rebellious and was constantly arguing about the workload, especially about the regular rocket thrust tests that the crew were supposed to carry out. “I wish you would find out the idiot’s name who thought up this test. I want to find out, and I want to talk to him personally when I get back down,” he once barked into his microphone.

The problems kept coming. The food, consisting of dehydrated fruit salad, French toast, chocolate drinks, chicken salad and gingerbread, was “too much and too sweet” for the astronauts.

The toilets malfunctioned, creating nauseating conditions in the close quarters. None of the astronauts slept well during the mission. The tensions only worsened when ground controllers tried to get them to perform additional tests that were not on the schedule.

The public didn’t get wind of any of this. For the first time, there was a TV camera on board for the purpose of live transmissions back to earth. The three men smiled into the camera and held up a sign thanking people for their support. For Nasa, it was a public relations coup, with the transmissions later awarded the Emmy television prize.

But behind the scenes, the tensions between the crew and the ground controllers worsened, with constant arguments about the workload and who was in command. It all continued right up to the day when the capsule was supposed to make its return to earth, when the astronauts refused to wear their helmets.

Because their heads were still clogged up from their colds, they were worried that with the helmets on they would not be able to breathe properly and might risk rupturing their ear drums. But the ground controllers ordered them to wear the helmets, for fear that during the shock of re-entry and landing, the crew members necks would break.

“Wally, I am ordering you to put on your helmet,” Chief Astronaut Deke Slayton at mission control radioed to his colleague. Schirra refused. “Deke, you can come up here and put it on.”

The landing, after 10 days, 20 hours, 9 minutes and 163 orbits, was successful. Without the helmets. But Slayton quickly pulled Schirra aside to have a word with him. The mission had been a success, everyone at Nasa agreed. The many tests had produced important data and information. But staff relations had been poisoned.

For the three astronauts, the Apollo 7 mission was their last time in space. Eisele died in 1987, Schirra in 2007. Cunningham is 86 years old.

“To this day, Apollo 7 is still the longest, most ambitious, most successful first test flight of any new flying machine ever,” Cunningham said later. – DPA
**WRINKLE-REDUCING SKIN CARE**

**TIPS**

- Outer skin layer is the epidermis, made of hardened skin cells that form a protective layer for the body.
- Next layer is the dermis, which contains collagen and gives skin elasticity.
- The innermost layer is the hypodermis, which consists mostly of fat.

Wrinkles form on outer two layers. Epidermis thins and loses ability to hold moisture, creating fine lines. In the dermis, collagen deteriorates and loses the ability to support the skin.
SKIN TIPS FOR REDUCING WRINKLES

HYDRATE
Keep your skin hydrated with a
moisturizer that contains cholesterol
and fatty acids, and avoid moisturizers
with a lot of water.

“95% of wrinkles are due to sun exposure.”
—DORIS DAY, M.D., NEW YORK
UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

QUIT SMOKING!
Smoking damages many parts of your
body, including your skin, by slowing the
flow of oxygen.

GET YOUR REST
During sleep, your skin has time to recu-
perate and can add longevity to collagen
in your dermis. Sleep on your back to
avoid pressure on your skin.

DRYNESS
Cold weather can also dry your skin.

FATTY ACIDS
Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty
acids found in olive oil, flaxseed and
many fish (and fish oil supplements)
help keep skin moisturized.

ANTIOXIDANTS
Antioxidants found in avocados, pome-
granates and green tea extract help
repair damaged skin.
Two debut novels focus on families in crisis

Families under life-altering stress are the subjects of two novels, C Morgan Babst's *The Floating World* and Melanie Hobson's *Summer Cannibals*. By Colette Bancroft

When families face disasters, the stress can reveal the strength of their bonds – or the weaknesses. Families under life-altering stress are the subjects of two impressive debut novels, C Morgan Babst's *The Floating World* and Melanie Hobson's *Summer Cannibals*.

Babst is a New Orleans native, and her deep knowledge of that unique city is the beating heart of her first novel, which is set in the aftermath of the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina.

The novel's main characters are the members of the Boisdoire family. Father Joe is an artist, mother Tess a psychologist. They have two daughters, both in their 20s, fiercely independent Del, who has moved to New York to work in the art world, and Cora, whose emotional fragility has kept her dependent on her parents, although she has her own home in New Orleans.

The Boisdoires' family tree, Joe's side black, Tess' white, reflects much of the city's complex racial and social history. Their present is all about what Katrina has wrought, as Joe thinks: "Damage was normal now: The bathtub ring around the city, the misplaced houses and overturned cars. Their furniture all crammed into the Dobies' house, their boxes in the storage barn. He and Tess were not speaking to each other, and Cora was not speaking at all. The thoroughness of the destruction almost kept you from remembering what had been destroyed."

His family teeters on the edge of disintegration not just because their lovingly restored house is perhaps irreparably damaged but because of what happened to them during the hurricane.

In the chaos, Tess and Joe were unable to find Cora and had to evacuate to Houston without her. When they do find her, they learn she had been out during the storm with a friend in a small boat, trying to rescue people. As the novel begins, almost two months after Katrina's landfall, Cora is still so traumatised she barely speaks or eats; she sleeps walk out into the city and comes home plastered with mud.

She's living with Tess near their ruined house, while Joe is staying in a cabin in the countryside with his father, Vincent, somewhat fading splendour in a mansion atop a cliff overlooking Lake Ontario and the city of Hamilton. He's a doctor, although the money in the family is from her side. Margaret runs the house and, in secret, practices the art David made her abandon long ago, creating endless collages in one of the mansion's labyrinth of rooms.

They have three adult daughters, whose boyish names, Georgina, Jacqueline and Philippa, reflect David's bitterly unsatisfied wish for a son. Georgie, an art historian bored with academia, lives nearby, while Jax has made it as far as Florida, where her marriage is stagnating.

Pippa, the youngest, has fled as far as geographically possible, living in New Zealand with her husband and four young sons. She's expecting a fifth child, and, in the book's precipitating crisis, has abruptly announced she's flying back to Canada.

Margaret calls her other daughters home to help her cope with Pippa and with a public tour of the home's 5-acre garden that David is obsessed and excited over, a tour that will turn into one of the plot's several disasters.

Pippa arrives grubby, withdrawn and emotionally wrecked, drawing complicated (and not entirely sympathetic) reactions from the other family members. She's aware of the irony of her return, having moved around the world to start a new life away from her parents' self-absorbed, careless parenting style. "She'd set out to construct a utopia of wonder and amazement, populated by little foot soldiers of joy who would go out into the world and cast that joy around, a storybook on homemade paper, written in vegetable dyes and drawn with love, where the words were symbols so anyone could understand. But what she'd gotten were junkyard dogs. Scary animals. A howling mess."

She doesn't exactly find a perfect haven in the old family home. On the brink of delivering her baby, Pippa disappears into a raging storm.

*Summer Cannibals* is sharply observed, its realism contrasted with gothic, even surreal touches. Hobson tells her tale of disaster like Katrina.

Zealand and raised in Canada, where her novel *Summer Cannibals* is set. The Blackford family, too, is facing possible disaster. Their crisis is much smaller in scale than a hurricane but nevertheless reveals some of the family's darkest secrets in *Summer Cannibals*.

Pippa disappears into a raging storm. *Summer Cannibals* is sharply observed, its realism contrasted with gothic, even surreal touches. Hobson tells her tale of disaster like Katrina.
LEISURE

Colour by choice

Maze

Help the gardener find his way to the garden.

Connect the dots

Join the dots in order to find out more!

Picture crossword

SNACKS
USE THE PICTURES BELOW AS CLUES

ACROSS
1. __________ 3. __________ 5. __________
2. __________ 4. __________ 6. __________

DOWN
1. __________ 2. __________ 3. __________
4. __________ 5. __________ 6. __________
**COMMUNITY CARTOON**

**Pooch Café**

By Paul Gilligan

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**The Witch Doctor is Conjuring Up His Ancient Magic to Cure Your Jungle Fever.**

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**Bound & Gagged**

By Dana Summers

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Super Cryptic Clues

totem (TOH-tuhm) MEANING: noun A person, object, group, etc. that serves as an emblem or symbol. ETYMOLOGY: From Ojibwe/Ojibwa language of the Algonquian language family in North America. Earliest documented use: 1609. USAGE: “The Beats, so long a totem of countercultural cool, now seem anomalous, even old-school.”

prosopopeia or prosopopoeia (pruh-soh-PUH-pee-uh) MEANING: noun 1. A figure of speech in which an imaginary or absent person is represented as speaking or acting. 2. A figure of speech in which an inanimate object or something abstract is represented as possessing human form: personification. ETYMOLOGY: From Latin prosopoeia, from Greek prosopon (face, mask), from pros- (facing) + ops (eye) + poiein (to make). Earliest documented use: 1550.

ullage (uhl-juh) MEANING: noun The amount of liquid by which a container falls short of being full. ETYMOLOGY: From Old French ouillage/ullage, from ouiller/ëullier (to fill a cask), from ouil (eye, hole), from Latin oculus (eye). Earliest documented use: 1444. USAGE: “Too much ullage can be a sign of evaporation, and that’s not good.”

trompe l’oeil (truhm pruh-LEH) MEANING: noun An illusion of reality. 2. A painting, mural, etc., made in this style. ETYMOLOGY: From French, literally “fools the eye”, from tromper (to deceive) + l’œil (eye). Earliest documented use: 1689. USAGE: “The suite had... an elegant chandelier hung from a trompe l’oeil ceiling of blue sky with fluffy clouds.”

occulus (o-SEL-uh) MEANING: noun 1. A small simple eye common to invertebrates. 2. An eyelike colored spot on an animal (as on peacock feathers, butterfly wings, fish, etc.) or on a leaf of a plant. ETYMOLOGY: From Latin oculus (little eye), diminutive of ocus (eye). Earliest documented use: 1819. USAGE: “Each ocular oculus in the turtle’s shell grew like a tiny flower.” — wordsmith.org

Sudoku


The Mall Cinema (1): Mandharam (Malayalam) 2pm; The Princess And The Dragon (2D) 4:30pm; Chalakkudikkaran Changathi (Malayalam) 6pm; Baazaar (Hindi) 9pm; Badhaai Ho (Hindi) 11:30pm.

The Mall Cinema (2): The Princess And The Dragon (2D) 2:15pm; Ana And Bruno (2D) 3:45pm; Ana And Bruno (2D) 5:30pm; First Love (Tagalog) 7:15pm; Halloween (2D) 9:30pm; Hell Fest (2D) 11:30pm.

The Mall Cinema (3): Badhaai Ho (Hindi) 2:30pm; Baazaar (Hindi) 5pm; Hunter Killer (2D) 7:30pm; The King Of... (2D) 7pm.

Landmark Cinema (1): Mandharam (Malayalam) 2pm; Sandakozhi 2 (Tamil) 5pm; Chalakkudikkaran Changathi (Malayalam) 8pm; Badhaai Ho (Hindi) 11pm.

Landmark Cinema (2): Ana And Bruno (2D) 2:15pm; Ana And Bruno (2D) 4pm; The Princess And The Dragon (2D) 5:45pm; Halloween (2D) 7:15pm; Hell Fest (2D) 9:15pm; Chalakkudikkaran Changathi (Malayalam) 11pm.

Landmark Cinema (3): Baazaar (Hindi) 2:15pm; Badhaai Ho (Hindi) 4:45pm; Hunter Killer (2D) 7pm; Baazaar (Hindi) 9pm; Halloween (2D) 11:30pm.

Royal Plaza Cinema Palace (1): The Princess And The Dragon (2D) 2:30pm; Chalakkudikkaran Changathi (Malayalam) 4:30pm; Hunter Killer (2D) 7:30pm; Hot Dog (2D) 9:30pm; Halloween (2D) 11:30pm.

Royal Plaza Cinema Palace (2): Badhaai Ho (Hindi) 2:30pm; Ana And Bruno (2D) 5pm; The King Of Thieves (2D) 7pm; First Love (Tagalog) 9pm; Baazaar (Hindi) 11:15pm.
As the festive season has begun, people are researching eco-friendly ideas to decorate their house. Having an indoor garden is a unique as well as an environment friendly way to beautify the living space and if you have a space issue, then opt for indoor vertical garden.

Nowadays, it's very easy to create your own vertical garden with the presence of new garden concepts like modular planting systems and hanging planters, feels expert Harpreet Ahluwalia, owner of Earthly Creations and Anjali Jain, owner of Kala Drishti.

They also shared some useful tips to celebrate the festivals with indoor vertical garden.

**Frame a vertical garden:** It's a Do It Yourself (DIY) project that can be tried at home without any complication. You need a flat box, a wooden frame, small amount of soil, a metal mesh and a small bud of succulent. Make a photo frame like structure with the flat box and the wooden frame. Add soil into it and cover it with the metal mesh. The box and the mesh hold the soil in place. Now poke the stems of the succulent bud through the mesh into the soil. Leave the frame lying flat in a cool, bright place till the stems take root. Your beautiful vertical garden is ready.

**Recycle plastic bottles:** It is another DIY project where the used plastic bottles are recycled into pots as creative and fun vertical garden.

You need 2-3 plastic bottles, soil, seedlings, string, cardboard and a needle. For the opening, cut a rectangle in the middle of the bottle. Poke small holes with the help of a needle on the opposite side of the bottle. Line the inner sides of your bottle with cardboard, leaving the holes open. Now add the soil, put the seedlings and water it.

**Determine the length of the vertical garden and accordingly cut the strings and tie it to the bottle. Hang it at the desired place.**

**Hanging vertical garden:** This vertical suspended garden will give your home a new freshness and decoration which is required around this festive season. To hang the pots, you can choose macrame pendants, this is a trending fashion for suspended gardens and looks very decorative.

To alternate this method, you can also go for small wooden shelves where you can place the pots, and holding them with a thick cord of the sailor type will give a beautiful effect to your living space. You can use this method to harvest your own fresh herbs right in your kitchen.

**Magnet the plants:** This is a very sweet and a simple way to add some bloom to your walls. All you need are some container, preferably of the same shape, paint, washi tape, soil, a small flower plant and a magnet. Take the empty containers and paint them with bright colours and decorate it with washi tapes. Fix 3-4 magnets behind the container with the help of hot glue. You can now easily hang these small pots on any magnetic surface and add a splash of colours to your house.

These structures enable space management and also decorate the interiors of houses. You can discover your own unique way to make a vertical garden right inside your house.

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**ARIES**
March 21 — April 19

You tend to be pretty self-assured, Aries, but self-esteem issues dating from long ago could surface today. You might feel like a schoolchild called on to recite. This could cause a few snags in your relationships or interfere with your effectiveness at social occasions. Try to remain objective. Don't lose sight of who you are. Don't let old insecurity interfere with your effectiveness.

**TAURUS**
April 20 — May 20

Today you might feel a bit bloated and slow, Taurus, which could interfere with your daily routine. You could also feel unmotivated about work. You might not feel like exercising, but it's important that you do it anyway. Moving the body can clear your head and put you in the proper frame of mind to get on with your day. It can also help purge your tissues of all the excess toxins.

**CANCER**
June 21 — July 22

A subject of interest that you've been pursuing could bring up some deeply buried emotions today, Cancer. You might want to retreat into your mind and try to make sense of it, although analysing it deeply buried emotions today, Cancer. You might want to retreat into your mind and try to make sense of it, although analysing it

**LEO**
July 23 — August 22

This could be a confusing day for you, Leo. Financial issues might be complicated by computer glitches or failures in communication. Keep pushing, however, and whatever you're trying to straighten out will be resolved. An opportunity to participate in a project you've never tried before could have you doubting your abilities. Believe in yourself and then move ahead. There's a first time for everything!

**LIBRA**
September 23 — October 22

Today your intellect is flying high, Libra. A number of new ideas, perhaps about political or social issues, might excite your curiosity and cause you to want to spend hours in the library or on the Internet. Mundane tasks still need handling, however. This might be frustrating, because it takes you away from your quest. If you get the basics done quickly, you can return without causing any undue guilt.

**SCORPIO**
October 23 — November 21

Your imagination is working overtime today, Scorpio, and you might spend hours at a computer writing or in front of an easel or piano creating your own brand of painting or music. This drive to create comes from the heart and shouldn't be ignored no matter what other issues come up. Take care of whatever needs to be handled and then follow your inspiration. You may be surprised at what you produce!

**SAGITTARIUS**
November 22 — December 21

A conflict between your responsibilities to family and obligations to friends could rear its ugly head today, Sagittarius. You might want to attend an event but need to deal with emotional issues in the home immediately. It could be difficult to keep a cool head under these circumstances. If you can, you should find a way to satisfy your family and go out. Step back and be objective!

**CAPRICORN**
December 22 — January 19

Dissatisfaction with certain job conditions might come to a head today, Capricorn. A discussion with colleagues might be necessary to defuse a potentially explosive situation. Clear, honest communication is necessary in order to avoid misunderstandings. Try to remain objective. Don't let your emotions take control. Things will work out to everyone's satisfaction.

**AQUARIUS**
January 20 — February 18

If you've been planning a long trip by air, Aquarius, today you might doubt whether you should continue with your plans. Money might be the issue. Be aware that your fears may run away with you. The situation may be more secure than it appears. You might want to attend a class or lecture, perhaps on computer science or some other technology. As with the vacation plans, try to view this objectively.

**PISCES**
February 19 — March 20

Today you might feel too overwhelmed to concentrate on whatever goals you’re trying to reach, particularly if they’re financial. Past issues might crop up at inopportune times but will still need to be released. If you aren't careful, this could get in the way of just about anything you need to do. Keeping cool is the most important thing to remember.
Donna Gigliotti to produce shorter, zippiest 91st Oscars

By Glenn Whipp

The motion picture academy has tapped Oscar-winning producer Donna Gigliotti to produce next year’s Academy Awards — a ceremony that will be scrutinised more than ever because of the group’s recent mandate to limit the telecast to three hours.

Gigliotti will co-produce and direct the show. Weiss won an Emmy in September for producing this year’s Oscars, providing the Emmys with one of its most memorable moments by proposing to girlfriend Jan Svendsen during his acceptance speech.

Responding to perennial criticism that the telecast runs too long — typically pushing well past three hours, with the longest, in 2002, clocking in at an epic four hours and 23 minutes — the academy recently announced that it would cap the show at three hours, moving the presentation of six to eight of the 24 awards categories to commercial breaks during the programme.

Winning moments from those categories, which have not yet been announced and which will be rotated each year, will then be edited to air later in the broadcast — a means of streamlining the show that the Tony Awards also employ, Academy President John Bailey pointed out.

“We are committed to a three-hour show,” Bailey told The Times in September. “I feel we have a responsibility to the people who watch that show in the Eastern time zone, which is a huge market, to have that show ended by 11 o’clock.”

The academy hopes a tighter show will reverse, or at least curtail the ratings slide that has plagued Oscar telecasts in recent years.

This year’s ceremony drew a record low average of 26.5 million people, a drop of nearly 20 percent from 2017. The previous low came in 2008, when an average of 32 million people watched the telecast hosted by Jon Stewart. The numbers mark a dramatic drop-off from as recently as 2014, the year the Ellen DeGeneres-led show pulled in an average audience of nearly 44 million viewers.

Gigliotti declined further comment at this time. A host for the upcoming ceremony has yet to be announced.

Gigliotti won an Oscar as a producer of the 1998 film Shakespeare in Love. She has also been nominated for producing The Reader, Silver Linings Playbook and Hidden Figures. She was executive vice president at Miramax Films from 1993 to 1996, and in 2010, became president of production for the Weinstein Co. She spent two years as president of production at Barry Diller’s USA Films in the early 2000s.

“Donna and Glenn will infuse new energy and vision into this 91st awards presentation,” Bailey said in a statement announcing the choice.

“I’m grateful to the academy and ABC for entrusting me with this very special opportunity,” Gigliotti said in the statement. “I’m sure it will prove to be a humbling, exhilarating and completely unique experience. Thankfully, I will have Glenn Weiss by my side every step of the way!”

The Oscars will air February 24, 2019 on ABC. – Los Angeles Times/TNS

“T’m grateful to the academy and ABC for entrusting me with this very special opportunity. "I’m sure it will prove to be a humbling, exhilarating and completely unique experience. Thankfully, I will have Glenn Weiss by my side every step of the way!”

- Donna Gigliotti, film producer
**A piece of Broken Wings showcased at Kempinski**

The musical based on a masterpiece novel by renowned Lebanese philosopher

Khalil Gibran is co-written by Dana AlFardan. *By Mudassir Raja*

Broken Wings is a mesmerisingly melodious musical based on a masterpiece novel by renowned Lebanese philosopher Khalil Gibran. The musical show is co-written by Dana AlFardan, a known composer and songwriter of Qatar, and Nadim Naaman, a British Lebanese actor.

The writers, producers and actors recently performed the musical at The Pearl Venezia Ballroom, Marsa Malaz Kempinski. Nadim Naaman and Soophia Forough, both actors from West End London, sang songs from the musical and Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, Sonja Park (at piano) and Joe Davidson, Conductor of QPO, performed at the show.

The singers enthralled the audience with their performance. The musical performance gave a taste of Broken Wings to the gathering as the organisers plan to present the musical in Qatar sometime next year.

**PERFORMANCE**

Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra during their performance at the show.

The musical Broken Wings is an autobiographical tale of tragic love story based on Gibran’s 1912 masterpiece. In the novel, through poetry and music, Gibran transports the readers two decades back and across continents. His eighteen-year-old self returns to the Middle East after five years in America, to complete his education and discover more of his heritage. He falls deeply in love with Selma Karamy. Gibran and Selma fight to reconcile their love for one another, whilst navigating the rules, traditions and expectations that their society lays before them. The musical is directed by Bronagh Lagan and produced by Ali Matar with orchestration by Joe Davison.

After the short performance, Dana and Nadim spoke to the media and highlighted the different aspects of the musical, its successful first performance in London, and their future plans. Talking about the background of the play, Dana said, “As the idea developed, it became a fully blown production with a huge launch as there were 700 people in the theatre. Nadim and Ali are working with a local theatre company in London. All the actors are from West End.”

She added, “What we are doing here is that we are introducing this concept to the Middle East. We are just introducing the story that who Gibran is and why he is relevant. We hope to create and put together the structure that is necessary to present the entire show the way we presented it in London recently. We are hopefully looking forward to doing this in 2019.”

About the cast of the show, Nadim said, “We hope to bring the same cast to Qatar.”

He further said, “The story is so far untouched. We did not want to mess with it. It is his iconic legacy. We have not changed his story line. But, what we have done is that we have added some orchestral songs. It is a story about love and loss and the family.”

Regarding the response of the audience in London, Nadim said, “We got five star reviews in London, which is fantastic. The best thing was that when the show ended, the audience stood up and we saw hundreds of Middle Eastern people. This is not something that happens often in the West End. We proved that there is enough appetite for Gibran.”

Dana added, “It was very successful. We had all five shows sold out. Gibran is a figure that is highly relevant to the world that we live in today. That is why Broken Wings stood out so strongly. There are very few people, who are familiar with Gibran as a man.

Nadim said that they were planning to take the musical to US, Australia and Lebanon. We are trying to piece together an international tour. “We strongly believe that the West needed to be educated about Gibran.”

Talking to Community, Nadim added, “I studied English and theatre in a university in UK. I did a post-graduate diploma in musical theatre. For 12 years, I have been working as an actor and singer. Some three years ago, I started writing and composing.”

He noted, “I see Qatar as a very exciting, welcoming and warm place.” About bringing the musical to Qatar, he said, “Doha is trying to inspire young people that you can have a career in art. It is very important for inter-cultural relations to bring the musical here, where East and West meet and fuse well.”