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for residents of solihull

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Spring is in the air (hopefully)!

Welcome to the March issue of The Solihull Index.

As I'm writing this there's a blanket of soft white fluffy snow everywhere, and so I'm just hoping Spring is in the air by the time this edition reaches you.

While it looks pretty, it stops us all from getting out and about as much as we would want to. And there's loads of great things to do on your doorstep, from local events and shows to walks and restaurants. In here you'll find some great ideas from our advertisers, in the local events section and in the cinema and theatre guide.

We've got 2 competitions on offer this month – tickets for the Core Theatre Solihull to see Jess Robinson, the comedienne who was a semi-finalist in Britain's Got Talent; and a chance to win a meal for 4 at the new Boston Tea Party in Solihull.

And remember Easter Sunday is on 1st April this year, so here's hoping you have something lovely planned (including lots of chocolate!) for the long Bank Holiday weekend.

Until next month,

Zoe Reece

Tel: 07557 220585

Email: zoe@dorridgedirectory.com

www.solihullindex.com



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Chartered Architects Gary Winn RIBA and Dean Poulton RIBA are Progression Architects and have been based in Solihull since 1992. They are about to celebrate 25 years in practice.

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As we are also Architects, we tend to think through our solutions creatively, at times from a perspective that is not immediately apparent. As Arboriculturists, we work together where tree issues meet planning issues, such as Tree Preservation Orders.

community events

How to Train Your Husband

Thursday 22nd – Saturday

24th March, 7.30-10pm

St. Mary's Hall, Hobs

Meadow, Solihull B92 8PN

"How To Train Your Husband" is a comedy play by Devon Williamson that addresses an issue close to every woman's heart – how to train their husband! Does that sound impossible? Not when you have a legendary Husband Trainer living right next door. The play follows the adventures of three generations of the Smith family as they attempt to turn their men into fully trained members of the opposite sex. Nothing quite goes according to plan and the result is a hilarious comedy with plenty of unexpected twists and turns. Tickets are £8 for adults and £6.50 for concessions, and can be booked by calling 07760 306605.

Interactive Quiz Night

Solihull Moors Football Club,

Damson Parkway, Solihull B91 2PP

Tuesday 27th March, 6-9pm

Get your smartphones at the ready and join us for our third interactive quiz night. It's fast, it's fun! Bring your team of up to 6 people and a smartphone or tablet. The answers to the general knowledge quiz will be given through an app on the phone. Don't worry - full instructions and a demo will be given on the evening. Fish & chip supper (vegetarian option available) will be served. Call 0121 704 7842 for more information.

Mike Stewart-Lawrence and His Band

St. Mary's Courtyard Hall, Hobs

Meadow, Solihull B92 8PN

Saturday 24th March, 7:30 – 10pm

Come along to an evening with local singer/songwriter Mike Stewart-Lawrence and His Band in

aid of the Alzheimer's Society in the intimate setting of St. Mary's Courtyard Hall. Tickets cost £8 each and can be booked by calling Greg on 0121 706 4859.

Spring Sing!

The Core Theatre, Solihull

Saturday 21st April, 7.30pm

Modern community choir Sing! Bentley Heath invites you to welcome Springtime with an evening of popular songs from 'across the pond'. The singers will be sharing favourite hits from stars as varied as Jackson 5, Ed Sheeran, John Denver, Bryan Adams, The Three Degrees and the Beatles. Tickets (£9.50) are available from The Core Box Office (0121 704 6962) and are also on sale at Palmers (school uniform and clothing shop) on Knowle High Street. Kindly sponsored by Standley and Co Solicitors, Knowle. Profits and collections go to this year's charities: The Dyspraxia Foundation and The Men's Shed Group (Marie Curie Solihull). www.singbentleyheath.org.uk

THE CORE LIBRARY

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- **Councillor's Surgery** - these are face-to-face meetings held by councillors for local people to raise issues in their area. First and last Saturday of the month, 10.00am-12.00pm
- **Rhyme Time** - Wednesdays 10.15am to 10.30am, term-time only. A short interactive session for 0-2s that includes finger and action rhymes and songs. Come along and meet up with other parents/carers and discover what the library can offer your child
- **Meet and Play** - Fridays 10.15am to 11.15am, age 0 - 2 years (term time only). Our new

Meet and Play session offers the chance for young families to meet up, relax, chat, play, sing or make music together! The session is for families, led by families. Toys and musical instruments are provided. For more information contact 0121 704 6965.

- **Homework Club** - Tuesdays 3.45pm to 5.15pm, term time only
- **Silent Reading Cafe** - Held once a month on Thursday evenings, this is a chance to unwind and read in a cosy, informal environment without distractions. It begins with an hour of silent reading from 6pm with a chance to chat (if you want) between 7pm and 7.45pm.

An Evening with Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards

Thursday 3rd May, 7-10pm

It's 30 years since ski legend Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards won the nation's hearts at the Winter Olympics in Calgary in 1988. Join us for a fun and inspiring evening as Eddie talks about his fascinating life on and off the piste. Tickets: £16 for Adults, £14 for Children aged 16 and under. Bookable at The Core, Solihull Central Library. Refreshments available. Raffle on the evening. Profits from the event will go to Age UK Solihull, helping older people with the challenges faced in later life in the Solihull borough. Presented by Age UK Solihull, in partnership with Solihull School and sponsored by Midland Eye.

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Fri 23rd **'THE BEATLES PARTY'** with THE LENNON AND McARTNEY EXPERIENCE £32.50

Sun 25th **AN AFTERNOON TEA PARTY** with VINTAGE VOICES £25.00

APRIL

Sat 14th **'BACK TO THE 80's' PARTY** with 80's EXPERIENCE £35.00

Sat 28th **THE SPRING PINK BALL** with NOLAN BAND £49.50

MAY

Sat 5th **THE MOTOWN PARTY** with MOTOWN COLLECTIVE £37.50

Sat 12th **THE 'BEE GEES' SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER PARTY** with STAYIN' ALIVE £35.00

Sat 26th **DISCO DIVA PARTY** with TAMEKA JACKSON AS DIANA ROSS £32.50

JUNE

Fri 8th **THE 'TAKE THAT' SPECTACULAR** with 'TAKE@THAT' £37.50

Sat 16th **THE 'MIDSUMMER BALL'** with THE SUBTERRANEANS £37.50

Thur 21st **ROYAL ASCOT 'LADIES' DAY** in THE MARQUEE £79.50

Fri 22nd **CHARITY ROYAL ASCOT DAY** in THE MARQUEE £79.50

Sat 23rd **THE 'WHITNEY HOUSTON' DISCO DIVA PARTY** with NYA KING £32.50

JULY

Sat 7th **'BACK TO THE 80's' PARTY** with THE GR80's £32.50

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Mind over matter



The Solihull Index is pleased to introduce Rebecca Mander, Henley in Arden business woman, who swapped the world of manufacturing for matters of the mind in 2015 when she founded her now successful coaching business, GuruYou™.

Rebecca now does what she enjoyed most at the Dutch owned company, Smartwares and coaches individuals toward their goals and to unlock their potential. "Quite often we lack perspective and lose sight of our strengths. This can hold us back in many aspects of life, be it personal issues, business or in educational and career development. Coaching for me is about facilitating change in someone through exploring new possibilities with gentle encouragement and support.

As well as executive coaching, Rebecca works with people of all ages on personal life matters. Tragically, in 2007 Rebecca and her husband lost one of their children and the following year, her mother died in a car accident. "I guess you could say that has helped me get a good grip on reality and what really matters in life."

Many of her clients are moving on from a life changing event or towards one and her experience in life and business really help her gain insight into the struggles we can face at home or at work,

Rebecca's VIPs though, are pupils aged 9 upwards wanting to reduce anxiety and increase performance as a result of having a more positive outlook. MiniGuru workshops as well as 1-1 work within school settings help prepare children for SATS and exams.

Older students can prepare for important presentations and interviews with Rebecca. Having been on the other side of the recruitment panel, she knows what businesses look for in a



candidate! "I am really proud of my student clients; many are offered the position they have applied for immediately following the interview! 75% of an interview panel's decision is based on evidence of soft skills and the candidate's personal attributes.

For more details on coaching for children and adults in business or in life, contact Rebecca on 07930 147799 or for more information or go to www.guruyoucoach.com.

We look forward to hearing more from GuruYou™ in forthcoming issues for hints and tips from the world of coaching and self-development!

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April Fool!

The origins of April Fools' Day seems to be lost in time but like many traditions probably has a number of historical roots.



There was certainly a Roman festival called *hilaria* around that time of year, to celebrate the vernal equinox.

The most popular theory about 'modern' April Fools' Day is that it began to take shape in late 16th century France. At that time, there was a switch to the Gregorian Calendar under Charles IX. Prior to this there had been a New Year's week (March 25th-April 1st), and under the Gregorian system, New year's Day fell on January 1st.

As with any change there was some resistance, and many people stubbornly refused to accept the new system, continuing to celebrate New Year on April 1st.

These people were ridiculed and labelled 'fools' by the general populace and were often the butt of jokes and pranks. They were known as *poisson d'avril*, or April fish, possibly because a naïve young fish is easily caught.

Over the years the custom of prank-playing spread to the general population and eventually to Britain, where schoolboy pranks are still the order of the day. Watch out!

How Eggstraordinary!

It's ironic that most of the traditions associated with the principle religious feast of the Christian year have no basis in Christianity at all.

The word 'Easter' comes from an Anglo-Saxon fertility goddess called *Eostre*, who was associated with spring and new beginnings. Both Easter and Passover centre around re-birth, and bond neatly with the Anglo-Saxon festival of 'Eostre-monath' – Eostre's month.

Hot cross buns, traditionally eaten on Good Friday, are linked to the Jewish festival of Passover. Nowadays they are more palatably leavened and marked with a cross to serve as a reminder of the crucifixion. As an aside you may notice they are more expensive this year due to

a global shortage of raisins and sultanais!

The tradition of eating chocolate eggs stems from *Eostre*, when eggs were given as gifts to celebrate the end of winter and as a symbol of new life and fertility. Chocolate was an ingenious German addition much later.

The Easter bunny seems to have been a German invention too, though it stems from *Eostre* again. The original association was the hare but rabbits look similar so they kind of hijacked the show. German children made nests in the garden and good children were left coloured hard-boiled eggs over night as a reward.

Egg rolling on Easter Monday is an eccentric British custom. As a child I was told the egg represented the rolling away of the stone blocking Jesus' tomb. It's great fun though, whatever the history behind it.

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The Pain of Mother's Day



My mother left home when I was seven. It always struck me as particularly cruel that teachers insisted we made Mother's Day cards.

I pointed out once that my mother had left us. "Do you know her address?" teacher asked. When I nodded she told me I could post it. The irony of posting a card to 'The World's Best Mother' notable mainly by her absence seemed lost on Miss Marriot. Three years ago my friend's mother died from bowel cancer, and she said she would punch the next shop assistant who enquired whether she needed a Mother's Day card.

Don't get me wrong, I think Mother's Day is a lovely tradition but many of us may not realise that Mother's Day is an emotional time of year for those who have lost their mother; those who can't conceive, or those who have miscarried or lost a child

Perhaps Mother's Day needs a make-over. Currently it seems to be about wish-lists, hints to spouses about booking the perfect restaurant and a barrage of adverts featuring the perfect nuclear family.

Our children, and maybe the rest of us need to understand that Mother's Day isn't about spending lots of money or being pressured into meeting crazy expectations.

In the UK it originated when children, mainly daughters (often as young as ten), who had gone to work as domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother and family. This grew from the centuries-old tradition of people

to returning to their home or 'mother' church once a year. The return to the 'mother' church became an occasion for family reunions.

As there is no tradition of gift-giving on Mother's Day we are free to invent our own traditions and I think it's the perfect chance to inspire kindness, compassion and giving of time rather than possessions.

I would love to see an 'alternative' Mother's Day focussed on less material things. I want to talk to my children about what Motherhood means to me and what having a mother means to them.

I want all of us to think about the people around us, at school, or work, in our social circle and community who might be having a hard time in the midst of Mother's Day celebrations? How can we reach out and share a little kindness or hope? With a card? A note? A phone call?

Last year my kids and I chose to sponsor a child at an orphanage in Uganda. It gives us pleasure to know that someone who has no mother of her own is receiving care and education.

This year my friend and her children made a food parcel for their local food bank and donated it in her mother's name. Her mother volunteered at a foodbank before she became ill so this seemed a fitting way to remember her.

If you are struggling with Mother's Day this year, please know that you are not alone. Reach out and talk to a friend; look for others with whom to share. Be kind to yourself, and if there is no-one you feel you can share your thoughts with consider starting with you and reach out to others who might need support.

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UPVC doors are available in a wide range of colours and finishes and their comparative lower cost to alternative materials has made them popular in recent years. They also have other benefits, such as a higher resistance to weathering and generally require less maintenance



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Bifold doors are built to stack neatly to one or both sides of an aperture when open. This allows people to move freely from inside to outside or from one room to another. These can be used as room dividers or to open onto a balcony or terrace.

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Porches



a taster of what's on in march & april ...

CINEMA

Peter Rabbit from 16th March

Peter Rabbit, the mischievous and adventurous hero who has captivated generations of readers, now takes on the starring role of his own irreverent, contemporary comedy with attitude. In the film, Peter's feud with Mr. McGregor escalates to greater heights than ever before as they rival for the affections of the warm-hearted animal lover who lives next door.



and rescue her missing father. With the help of three powerful beings called Mrs. Which, Mrs. Who and Mrs. Whatsit, Meg tries to overcome the ancient evil force that's holding her father prisoner. And the only way to defeat this darkness is to become the light.



To book please visit
www.cineworld.co.uk

THEATRE

The Core Theatre, Solihull
(formerly Solihull Arts Complex)

Tomb Raider from 15th March

Lara Croft is the fiercely independent daughter of an eccentric adventurer who vanished when she was scarcely a teen. Now a young woman of 21 without any real focus, she barely makes the rent. Determined to forge her own path, she refuses to take the reins of her father's global empire and rejects the idea that he's truly gone. She leaves everything she knows behind in search of her dad's last-known destination: a fabled tomb on a mythical island.



Malcolm Stent in the Afternoon Spring 2018

Wednesday 21st March 2pm

His guests vary each show, sometimes singers, sometimes guitarists. His stories will take you back and hopefully make you smile too. Malcolm's warmth and local interest ensures his popularity never wanes and his audiences remain as loyal now as they were 25 years ago!

HOOT OWL Master of Disguise

Thursday 5th April 1.30pm

Hoot Owl is no ordinary owl - He's a Master of Disguise! And he plans



to use his cunning camouflage powers to gobble up the tiny animals of the night. Trouble is, Hoot Owl's prey keep escaping! Original songs, colourful puppets, animation, ridiculousness and rapid costume changes abound in this wildly inventive new show.

Ricky Cool and the In Crowd - A Night at the Flamingo

Friday 6th April 7.30pm



Take a trip back in time to Soho's most iconic music venue of the early 1960's, in the company of Ricky Cool and the In Crowd, and be prepared to be entertained by Red Hot Rhythm and Blues with a side order of classic early Jamaican grooves. You'll find yourself in Wardour streets famous Flamingo 'All Nighters' when Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames held sway and Hipsters with their Chicksters danced the night away.

To book please visit www.thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk

A Wrinkle In Time from 23 March

This follows the incredible adventures of Meg Murry, who sets out on a time and space-bending journey through the cosmos to try



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COMPETITION



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to see Here Come the Girls Tour

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Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist**

Thursday 19th April at 8pm

The Core Theatre, Solihull (formerly Solihull Arts Complex)

For your chance to win these tickets, worth £36, visit the Core Theatre website page for this event - www.thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk - to find the answer to this question:

What did Metro say about Jess Robinson?

Email your answer to: thecoretheatre@solihull.gov.uk – and please
put 'Jess Robinson' as the subject line

**Closing date for entries is 5th April and the winner will be drawn at random
and notified by email after this date.**

About the Show:

Join multi award-winner and Britain's Got Talent 2017 semi-finalist Jess Robinson for an evening of spot-on celebrity impressions, musical comedy and stunning vocal gymnastics. Like a wonderfully malfunctioning jukebox, Jess and her incredible vocals will take you on a dizzying journey through hilarious improvised musical mash-ups, serving a feast of styles and genres from Billie Holiday and Judy Garland to Amy Winehouse and Beyonce. Whether your cup of tea is watching Shirley Bassey belt or if you want to see Jess strut her stuff with Hip Hop's biggest rap stars - there'll be something for everyone, from 9 to 90.

This show is rated PG but is suitable for older children.

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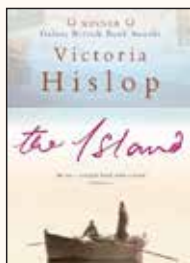
a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

The Island

by Victoria Hislop

It is books like this that remind you, in small ways, how fortunate we are to live in the 21st century when illnesses and diseases that were once considered a death sentence are now curable. One such disease is leprosy which provides the background for this debut novel.



Very often associated with Biblical times, it may be shocking to people to learn that in Europe as recently as 1957, victims of this disease were sent into isolation. The last known leper colony in Europe was the island of Spinalonga off the coast of Crete. This is the island of the novel's title.

Alexis Fielding is a 25-year-old living in London who knows very little about her background other than the fact that her mother comes from Crete. For whatever reason her mother refuses to discuss her past. Frustrated by her silence, Alexis decides to take her own journey to her mother's home village, Plaka, to discover the truth that her mother will not speak of. Through an old family friend, in the heat of the Cretan sun, Alexis learns of her family history. Of her great grandmother, Eleni, and her two daughters, Maria and Anna.

More crucially she learns of the sad past of the now deserted island, just 1 km from Plaka. And how her family's past is forever linked to this place where the shunned inhabitants tried to maintain some level of normalcy amidst their pain and isolation. In a culture where family is everything, how can a family continue when it is ripped apart?

The Monster of Shiversands Cove

by Emma Fischel

Ah, a summer holiday by the beach! Hot days playing in the sand. Days full of digging and snorkelling. Sounds like bliss! At least it DID. Stan is fed up. For the last four years his family have holidayed with his best friend, Rory's, family. And this year was supposed to be the same until Rory's parents both got new jobs and moved away. Now he is stuck in a cottage by the sea with Magnus, his four-year-old brother who is insistent that he is going to spend the whole holiday searching for fairies. Of course, Stan knows that this is nonsense and that fairies don't even exist.

One night he decides he has had enough. Magnus will not stop talking about the fairy he caught and has called Harry. In a moment of anger, he agrees with Magnus that this may be a hot spot for fairies and elves, but that means it is also a hot spot for monsters! Magnus is terrified but of course he has no real need to be. Everyone knows that monsters aren't real. Or are they?

Boiled Fruit Cake

Fruit cakes don't have to be tricky. This one is simple. Use a teacup for measuring.



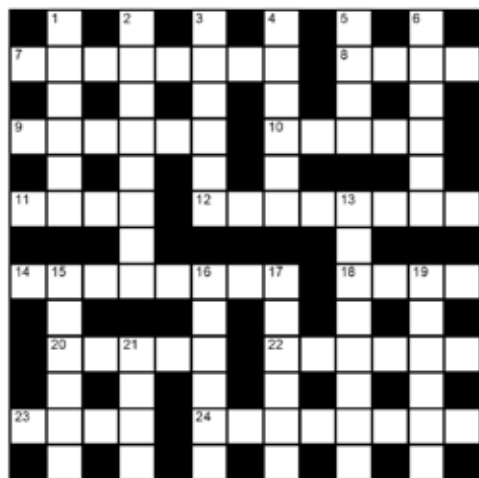
Ingredients

1 cup of water
225g / 8oz unsalted butter
1 cup of soft brown sugar
½ cup peel (if you don't like peel, use chopped ready-to-eat dried apricots)
1 ½ cups raisins
1 ½ cups sultanas
¼ cup chopped glace cherries
1 tsp mixed spice
2 cups plain flour
1 tsp baking soda (bicarbonate of soda)
2 eggs

Method

Place the first eight ingredients into a large saucepan and bring it to the boil.
Reduce the heat and simmer gently for 20 minutes, then set aside to cool.
Heat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4.
Line a deep 20cm/8inch circular cake tin with greaseproof paper.
Mix the beaten eggs well into the fruit mix. It's important that the mixture has cooled because if it's too warm the eggs will cook!
Then sieve the flour and baking soda into the mixture and mix well.
Pour into the cake tin and bake for 1-1½ hours until cooked through (when a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean). If the cake is browning too quickly reduce the temperature a little.
Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the tin for fifteen minutes, then turn out on to a rack.
The cake keeps really well if it's stored in an airtight tin.

crossword



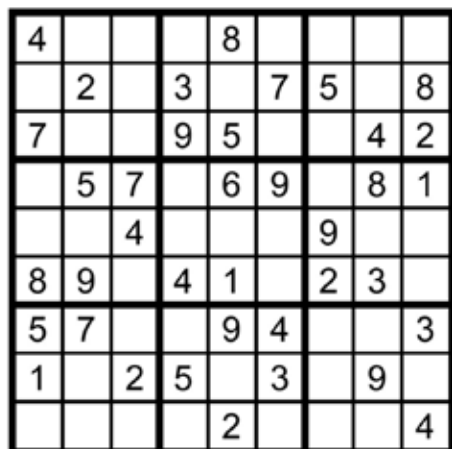
clues

Across

- 7 Put up for election (8)
- 8 Strong impulse, desire (4)
- 9 Small amount of food, a mouthful (6)
- 10 Snow-block house (5)
- 11 Diary keeper ____ Frank (4)
- 12 Accepted, allowed (8)
- 14 Possible (8)
- 18 Cloak (4)
- 20 Nibble, sample (5)
- 22 Small tower (6)
- 23 Puddling similar to semolina (4)
- 24 Gushing streams of water (8)

Down

- 1 Chrysalis (6)
- 2 Beatniks, bohemians (8)
- 3 Pungent bulb used in cooking (6)
- 4 Hand in your notice (6)
- 5 Haul, tug (4)
- 6 Disregard, neglect (6)
- 13 Happened (8)
- 15 Non-speaking actors in crowd scenes (6)
- 16 Gasp, inhale (6)
- 17 Whole, complete (6)
- 19 Lots, abundance (6)
- 21 Excessively studious person (4)



how to play sudoku

It's simple!

Fill in the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box, contains the numbers 1 through to 9 with no repetition. You don't need to be a genius. These puzzles use logic alone. Watch out! Sudoku is highly addictive.

answers on page 37



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

Sudoku Solution
from page 34

C	H	G	R	P	I			
N	O	M	I	N	A	T	E	U
C	P	R	S	L	N			
M	O	R	S	E	L	I	G	L
O	T	I	G			R		
A	N	N	E	C	O	N	D	O
	R					C		
F	E	A	S	I	B	L	E	C
X			R	N	U	L		
T	A	S	T	E		T	U	R
R	W	A	I	R		N		
S	A	G	O		T	O	R	R
S	T	H	E	D				

Crossword Solution
from page 34

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