Labor Day wedding too much work for out-of-state aunt

August. It so happens to be on Labor Day weekend. Her sister and her fiance's sister are planning a brunch the following day to celebrate this union.

R. Eric **Thomas** Asking Eric



Florida. When I emailed her (and our brothers) about this event, she responded immediately that, since it is Labor Day weekend, she wouldn't be attending as she doesn't go anywhere on major holidays due to crowds and potential flight delays. I am beyond sad and dis-

appointed. It seems she is prioritizing her comfort over this joyous occasion. I don't know how to express this to her, if at all. She is something of a control

freak, who doesn't take criticism well at all. Do I simply let it go, or do I say anything and, if so, what? - Sad Sister

DEAR SISTER: I understand the logic of not wanting to travel around major holidays. Your sister does have other options, though. She can come early, if her work allows for it, for instance. She can travel some or all of the way using means of transportation that aren't planes. Or she can make the trek for family.

Obviously, all of these things are still her prerogative. She may have already thought through the options and still decided to decline. I understand why this is hurtful to you – it's a small ceremony and she's close family, so her presence would be missed.

There are ways of talking about this without it coming across as criticism. Start by expressing what you feel - you want her there, you're sad she can't make it, et cetera. And then ask a question – is there any way that we can make this work? Would you like my help to make this easier?

An open-ended question allows her the option of engaging or shutting it down. Whereas a criticism would make her feel more boxed in. She may still choose to stay home, but by having a conversation with her that starts with your openness to hear her and respect her opinion, you may find a solution that's not too laborious.

DEAR ERIC: A 20-something neighbor we have known since the age of three has recently come out to my husband and me as transgender. We have embraced and accepted "Sara" and are glad she feels able to be eric.com or P.O. Box 22474, Philadelphia, PA 19110.

DEAR ERIC: One of my two daughters is her authentic self to us. Sara's parents, with getting married in a very small ceremony in whom she lives, are unaware of her transgender identity. Often when her parents leave the home for work, Sara will dress in skirts or dresses and walk across our street to visit with my husband and me (we are My own sister lives in retired).

We have encouraged Sara to inform her parents of her identity and have advised her to have an exit strategy should the reveal have a negative result. Our concern is for how our neighbors, who we genuinely love, will take the fact that we knew about their child's transgender identity before them. We have told Sara that we will not "out" her to her parents, but neither will we lie if we are asked.

While we are grateful Sara felt free enough to share with us her identity, this secret is heavy on us whenever we speak to our neighbors. How should we handle the eventual disclosure that we knew long before they were told? – Mums the Word

DEAR MUMS: It's so important that anyone who is sharing a new, potentially vulnerable part of themselves has a safe space to feel seen and cared for before they tell the world. I hope her parents eventually see this as an extension of your love for their whole family.

In the interim, check in with Sara about your anxiety. It's not her job to manage her parents' emotions about this, nor is it yours, but being on the same page about the heaviness of the secret may help to unburden you. It may also help to reframe. By providing modeling acceptance for Sara, you're helping her - and eventually her parents - normalize the kind of security that she deserves in order to thrive.

Reading your letter, I grew curious and potentially concerned that by walking across the street in a dress, Sara runs the risk of another neighbor telling her parents before she's ready. This is something it may be worth talking with her about.

When you do have a talk with your friends, lead with love and with empathy. Acknowledge that it may be hard for them to find out you knew before them. It's a vulnerable conversation, but vulnerability is not a weakness. Be patient with them, be consistent and clear about your care for them, and be steadfast in your love for Sara. That's the message that will outlast the initial shock.

Send questions to R. Eric Thomas at eric@asking

ΟΝΨΛΤΥΛ

One letter stands for another.	CRYPTOQUOTE
In this sample – AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW –	UX ONRKCI QNJC UC RKC
A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc.	QICNRCVR QDOR NWXZWC
Single letters, apostrophes, the length and	LZFBA QDJC NWZRKCI
formation of the words are all hints. Each day	ECIVZW: KC GCBDCJCA DW
the code letters are different.	U C . — S D U J N B J N W Z

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

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

SUDOKU

How to play: Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9.

HOROSCOPE

JUNE 26

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Make choices guided by logic rather than emotion. Avoid collecting things you'll never use. When someone points out your mistakes, take it as a chance to grow - correcting errors can teach valuable lessons for the future.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You may sense pivotal changes ahead, but turning insights into action might require a partner's guidance. Stav focused and avoid distractions to keep your work aligned. Be sure you fully understand all essential requirements

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Network to boost your income. Staying connected with friends and business contacts might be the key to advancing career and finances. Reach out when you have the clarity and inspiration to make those connections count

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Honesty and sincerity can build friendships and impress key figures. If you feel underappreciated, improve your self-validation game. Professional advice can help prioritize your best interests; group gatherings could highlight your wisdom.

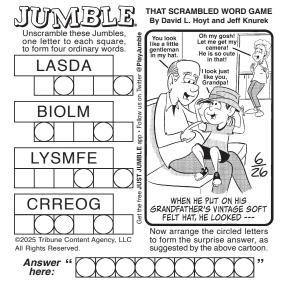
LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You could be in top form today, showcasing skill in financial strategy and business planning. A knack for uncovering truths and being a creative thinker can be razor sharp. Don't let a mis-aligned social scenario deplete funds

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) The missing parts of a conversation can be where problems and issues are hidden. Instead of reacting, discuss thoroughly and fill in the gaps to clarifv the situation. What was heard may not have been what was said.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You can shine and win admiration anytime. remember the competition is only to be your best self. The most worthwhile people judge you by how you treat loved ones, honor promises, and follow social norms, not by possessions.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Your cheerful attitude and friendly vibe may be hard to dampen today and your creative side could be enhanced. Do a deep dive on details to avoid squandering money needlessly. Always be fully accountable to maintain trust and respect.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) A arm conversat on can do v Clear up misunderstandings in a calm chat by focusing on shared goals. A significant other or kindred spirit may offer a soothing presence and truly grasp your deepest creative needs



S	P	C)F	X [Γ.	S		W		BA SC				ME
S		F	Ι	JT		Ŧ				LE.	~ -			
D	С	F	D	A	Х	V	Т	Q	0	М	R	J	Н	F
С	H	0	L	D	S	С	L	А	W) A	Е	Y	W	U
R	A	Р	N	L	J	G	Н	F	D	В	N	Ζ	Х	V
Т	R	Е	Т	Х	Е	D	N	0	Р	R	Ι	Q	0	Μ
S	L	K	S	Ι	Е	K	Н	Ι	F	D	R	N	В	Ι
Ζ	Е	Y	W	Е	R	V	Ι	Т	Н	Е	G	0	R	S
Q	S	L	D	0	Р	Е	N	М	N	С	L	М	K	А
I	L	R	W	Н	U	0	K	N	U	F	Т	М	D	R
С	Ι	A	Ζ	0	D	Х	0	R	W	W	V	A	U	U
В	Е	S	R	Q	F	В	0	W	A	N	G	Н	С	А
М	K	J	Ι	Н	F	Е	N	0	S	Р	Μ	0	Н	Т
			W	/edn	esda	y's ı	ınlis	ted c	lue:	BEY	ON	D		
forv	ward	l, ba	ed w ckwa unlis	ırd, ι	ıp, d	own	and	diag	onal	ly.			ection	ns -
Bird				Dup	ree			Le	slie			Swo	oope	s

	DRITTICET
ipree Les	lie Swoopes
wles Ogv	vumike Taurasi
ammon Par	ker Thompson
oldsclaw Pon	Idexter
	upree Les wiles Ogv ammon Parl

SHEFFER CROSSWORD

		J					UU					
ACF	ross	5	38	Cou	nter	- 5	8 Vil	llage	;	21	"Frie	ndly
1 F	Pear-			feit			Pe	ople)	:	skies	s"
S	hape	∋d	39	Min	ed		hit				co.	
	ruits			mat	ter						Gist	
	Chum			Ref		D	ow				Nosł	
	/layb			Gul			1 Ci				Cat f	
	nopp		45	Exe			2 Tir		t			naser
	Booty	/		perf	ectly	/	3 St				The	
13 E			49	"Rul			su					'tans'
	ecor	d		Brita				ance			sch.	. 1
	abel			nia!'					·		Funr	
14 A				com			5 Sc	0000	11		shap	
	outlet Okla-			Half Golf) -	5 SC 6 "		" in		flowe Histo	
	oma-		52		ers			tin			peric	
	ribe		52	cry Ban	k		7 Br		.	31		u
	Quart	lor-	55	cha			8 G				Pério	non
	ack		54	Nav			9 14		/ iai	36	Papa	3
	Brady	,	54	of "T				ntur	v		Hem	
	Sicilia			Viev				lian	у		way	ing
	olca		55	Thw			po				Golfe	er
	Sushi			Leg		1	0 —		er-		Trevi	
	ondi			wro				n te			Dapp	
	nent		57	Guil		1	1 Gr				Bell	
20 F			• •	grea				wels	;		Bark	
a	inima	als		Pau		1	9 "L	et It	"	42	Loor	IV.
22 F	Ran i	nto									Ρορι	
23 (Dkla-		S	olut	ion	time	: 24	min	6		layer	
h	ioma	city	_		-		1)]]		cook	ie
24 S	Siesta	as					/ 9			44	Two-	way
27 E	Intre	ated		8 O 8		INI	n E	3 N 8	Η	46	Wea	ver's
32 N	/lulti-		Δ				1 E C		Δ		devid	
	ourpo	se	W		d W I S		3 E 5 T V		BB		Idle (
	ruck			во			5	E			Mon	
	Suga	r	Δ				1 5		/ N		Pyth	
	uffix						I B I		(Crèn	
34 -			S ∣ ∀		I N I		1 8 1 1				crèm	
	Mag							_			Away	/
		of a	Э	I d (C	۱V	4 S	39	Е		from	,
þ	alm	tree		Т	oday	's so	olutio	n			SSW	
1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
Ľ	-	Ŭ	ľ.		Ŭ	Ŭ	ľ		Ŭ	Ŭ	10	· · ·
12					13				14			
15					16				17			\square
18				19			20	21		-	-	
			22					23				
24	25	26			27	28	29				30	31
32					33					34		
35			36	37					38			\square
		39					40	41				
42	43				44		45		<u> </u>	46	47	48
	40						43			40	41	40
49					50	51			52			
53					54				55			
56					57				58			
						• • •	•		-			-

1 As well 5 Performs like Eminem 9 Synagogue leader 14 High jump 15 Don't include 16 Cameo shapes 17 Border 18 City near Phoenix 19 Restaurants' lists 38 20 "Wicked" star: 2 wds. 23 _ Arbor, Michigan 24 Insurance company bailed out in 2008 25 Blonde shade 28 Baby skunk 30 Toughens, as metal 34 Poseidon's realm 35 Bratwurst, for 68 example 37 Orchestra's spot Cr 38 Game, ___, match 39 "Uh-uh" 4 40 Broad street: Abbr. 5 41 Look over 42 Shish kebab sticks 6 46 Sales agent, for short 47 Corn plant parts 8 49 Morning moisture 9 10 50 6-point plays: Abbr. 11 51 ____ at a time 52 Spot for a pet cat 12 13 54 Film venue: 2 21 wds 60 AM/FM device 22 25 26 61 Boxing match 62 Price 27 65 Reporting to 66 Certain 29 67 Samoa's capital 30 68 Birds' homes 31 32 69 Leave it to the 70 Loch _ Monster 33 DOWN 36 1 Drink in a stein 42 2 Headed up 3 Multigenerational 43 44 story

	2	3	4		5	6		7	8			9		10	1	1	12	1	3
4					15	T			T			1	6		T			T	
7					18	t			t			1	9		╈			$^{+}$	
		20		21		t			╈		22				╈				
			23								24	╋	_						
5	26	27		28		2	9		3	0		╀	_		3	1	32	3	3
4				35			_	36				╀			3	7		╀	_
				55				50											
8						3	9								4				
1				42	43						44	4	5		4	6			
7			48			Г			4	9		Τ			5	0		Т	
			51								52	t		53					
	54	55				5	6	57	5	8		╈			5	9			
0						6	1		╀					62	╈		63	6	4
5						6	3		╀					67	╀			╀	_
8						6	9		╀					70	╀			╀	_
	L																		
	-	, stell a," fo		vistow	/SKI					Tod	ay'	s s	olu	tior				6/26	6/25
	xam		1		s	s	Э	N		S	0	Я	Ы		S	T	S	Е	N
	adia				A	1	Р	V		Ē	ы В	n	S		ਬ	Ξ	a	N	n
		ineci			Ť	s	0) D		1	n	0	B		0		a	A	Ы
h م	ome	land					Я	E	\bot	¥	E	Н	L	Э	1	Ā	0	Ŵ	
		said i ng To						Ь	¥	1 i			-	Ξ	N	0			
0		ng n	50001		S	D	T		M	E	D		S	1	E	S	S	A	T
		deer			Ы	E	<u>-</u> В		S	<u>-</u> В	Ξ	M	E	К	S		E	Y	Ξ
		e va			Ξ	<u> </u>	A		Ū		H	¥	N	21	Ū		T	E	S
		vent				1	d		Э	อ	¥	s	n	A	S		A	Ξ	S
1 IV 2 C	lusic	al gr sky':	oup e col	or	s	÷ ī	A	Э	N	N	¥	0	T	Î	К		н	S	A
32	023	sci-fi	film	:	0	'	v	Ð	I	V	v		-	N	N	A	11	Ū	v
A	bbr.					Е	D	N	¥	Ъ	อ	A	Ν	¥	1	ч Ы	A		
1 P	en li	quid	S		S	<u>_</u>	N	E	Ŵ		A	s	Э	Ŵ		E	้อ	D	Е
	olled				s	<u>ר</u>	A		0		Ť	1	W	0		Ч	A	Е	7
		thing 2 v			T	B	а В	A	Я		S	Ч	V	<u></u> В		0	s	<u>ר</u>	A
		stan								ent /	Agen					0	0		6/25
		s to s			All	Rigi	nts F	lese	rved			, ,							
		d an	45	W	had	ck v	vith	ו th	е	1	57	1/2	4 c	of a	da	y			
15	epai	rated				ha	nd					1				lse	d ir	ĩ	
	well arts				48				"S	" in				Pa				- 1-	
ן כ מ	roce	SS			53		SSF							eq)uto nt	л	
6 Ť	v loc	vith to						∂'s	hai	r				Go					
		AAF	٩P		55		an	id e						foo	t				
n	iemt	bers			56					¹							nor	n	
3 P 4 P	ertai	er Pa ins	ul				eas br.	sure	eme	ent	•		04	Pro hel	pies pei	SSO rs: .	rs' Abt	or.	

VOLHER PERSON: HE BELIEVED IN ME. WIf Cryptoquote WE THE GREATEST GIFT ANYONE COULD GIVE solution WA EVITHER GAVE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Someone may target your vulnerabilities with precision, remind yourself that doing harm is ignorance, an unhealed flaw in their character, and stand strong. Process emotions before they cloud your judgment and lead to reactive decisions.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Cooperation on the job can be a clear route to success. Do your fair share and hopefully others will do their share as well. Your attention may shift to accumulating power as you focus on money making activities.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Harness both logic and creativity to achieve brilliance. Your ability to recognize hidden themes and subtle nuances gives you a unique awareness. Lead with empathy, ensuring that business decisions create opportunities for everyone to benefit.

Sudoku solution

٢	З	8	2	9	6	Z	4	G
4	9	6	٢	8	L	2	9	3
2	9	L	3	G	4	6	٢	8
8	4	٢	6	2	9	З	G	L
6	2	9	Z	3	G	٢	8	4
G	Z	3	8	4	٢	9	6	2
9	8	2	g	6	З	7	L	ŀ
ε	F	4	9	L	8	9	2	6
1	6	G	7	F	2	8	3	9

Jumble solution

SALAD LIMBO MYSELF When he put on his grandfather's vin felt hat, he looked — "FEDORABLE" uos a6e GROCER



