

Light of the World

One of my fondest childhood memories is decorating the family Christmas tree. My father owned a bakery, which meant long hours for him, my mother, and some of my older siblings during the holidays. So creating a festive atmosphere at home fell to my brother Tim and me.

Back then, Christmas lights were as big as lemons and strung along a thick electrical cord. Since we had only a few strands, the placement had to be precise. Once that was finished, Tim carefully hung silvery strands of tinsel with great symmetry among the branches.

When Tim finally declared the tree perfect, he would switch off all the lights in the room and we'd wait a minute until our eyes adjusted to the dark. Only then would Tim plug in the tree's lights, creating a multihued blaze. The effect was magical. It was as if we had been blind—and suddenly Christmas had come alive, filled with light and wonder.

The Bible likens the spiritual condition of many of us to blindness—being in the dark about the true Light, Jesus

Christ. His birth, celebrated at Christmas, offers hope “to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace” (Luke 1:79).

The apostle John described the impact of Jesus' time on earth: “His life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it” (John 1:4-5).

Jesus himself summarized his mission in the same terms: “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life” (John 8:12).

Just as those Christmas lights lit up the room and my eyes as a child, personal faith in Jesus brings light—and sight—to those who believe in him. The lights and colors

of Christmas serve to remind us of the Source of Light that can dispel our spiritual darkness.

Are you following the light of Christ? You can. Do so this holiday season.

[Jim Kraus]

“... to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.”

His life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

JOHN 1:4-5



NAME & ADDRESS:

HAVE A GOOD DAY AND A SPLENDID *forever!*



Some Rally Hat

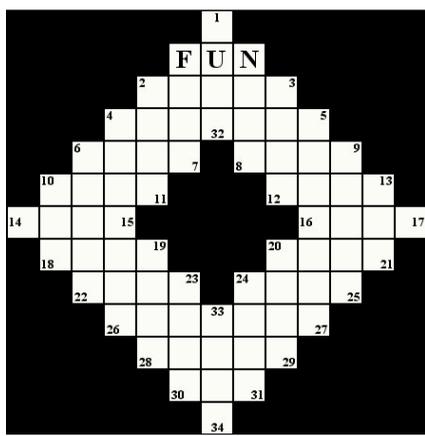
Chicago Cubs baseball fans hate seeing their team lose. But for Kyle McAleer, the Cubbies' poor showing on July 24 saved his life. McAleer, 20, was sitting with his dad and a friend underneath the manually operated centerfield scoreboard. When the Cubs fell behind in the game, the trio donned "rally" buckets—empty plastic bubble gum containers. Minutes later, a 4-pound, 8-inch metal pin fell from the board and hit McAleer on the head. Though he suffered a nasty gash, he's grateful that his protective



headgear did what it was supposed to do. "If the Cubs weren't losing, I would not have been wearing that bucket."

Pens Ready

The *New York Times* called it "a primitive sort of mental exercise." But everyone else loved Arthur Wynne's "word-cross," a brain teaser that he created for the *New York World* newspaper on December 21, 1913. Although Wynne's original puzzle (shown here) had boxes arranged in a diamond shape



rather than a square, the rules were basically the same. You can find the clues (and answers) to this puzzle at www.fun-with-words.com/worlds_first_crossword.html. It took nearly three decades before the *NYT* made the idea their own. Today, the paper's daily crossword is the most famous one in America.

Wallace the Great

His beginnings were humble. After he was abandoned at a young age in Ireland, some locals found him wandering around a bus shelter and fed him. Now 11 years old, Wallace is a celebrity with the British horsey set. Happy for a good roll in the dirt, ginger cookies, and a hearty ear rub, Wallace has also distinguished himself in dressage, an equestrian sport entailing precision movements in an arena. This past July rider Christie Mclean broke the barriers of British dressage rules when she and Wallace, a mule, were allowed to compete. Wallace performed the routine beautifully—and won. "He enjoys his dressage," says Mclean. "He's a happy little chap."



Helping on One Wheel

Ed Pratt of southern England wanted an adventure that would make a lasting difference—all from the seat of his unicycle. He set out three years ago on a 21,000-mile journey across four continents to raise funds for School in a Bag, a charity that provides school supplies to children in need throughout the world. Icy conditions and nearly being hit by a car added more than



a year to his original plan, but in the end Pratt made countless friends, became the first person to globe-pedal on a single-wheeled cycle, and successfully raised nearly \$400,000.

Just for laughs



K.Spear

"Why is it whenever I come back from a run, you're eating donuts?"



K.Spear

"I see you texted me to ask me on a date. Do you mind if I reply with my voice?"

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.

"In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on."
—Robert Frost

Admit when you are wrong. The older you get, the more frequently you'll have the opportunity.

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