

VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

# RIDE

DECEMBER 2016/JANUARY 2017

## A YEAR IN REVIEW

VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS  
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*way of life is*

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## COURTESY REMINDER

➔ When Riding VRE, we ask that you make every effort to be courteous to your fellow passengers. Below are a few courtesy reminders for Flu season

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- If you are sick with a virus, the best thing to do is stay home until you are no longer contagious.

Editor in Chief: Paul J. Dean  
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Access RIDE online at [www.VRE.org/RIDE](http://www.VRE.org/RIDE)



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## FROM THE CEO YEAR IN REVIEW



**DOUG ALLEN**  
Chief Executive Officer

**A**s we reach the end of another year, I would like to take this opportunity to review our performance, highlight some of our accomplishments, and perhaps peek a bit into the future as we strive to provide top notch commuter rail service.

Our primary goal at VRE is, and always will be, to provide a safe ride for our passengers and employees, and I believe in 2016 we hit the mark. I am proud that we have experienced another year with no major accidents or threats to the safety of our riders. This is not only a credit to our engineers, conductors and maintenance crew who keep our trains operating in safe conditions, but also to our riders, who remain vigilant of any potential threats and have worked together with VRE to adopt a safety culture that is second to none. We will continue to pursue improvements to enhance the safety of our passengers, such as next year's expected implementation of Positive Train Control, which further enhances the already reliable and effective safety systems we have in place.

VRE is also proud of its track record of providing a positive customer experience. Our annual survey showed an all-time high 89% customer satisfaction rating. We also saw improvements in ratings for customer value, parking availability and traffic circulation. Of course, one of the most important metrics customers are concerned about remains On-Time Performance (OTP). While we recognize that in several months we fell short of our 90% OTP goal, we are working hard on improvements to our service and facilities we feel will help improve those numbers.

VRE also recognizes we must continue to invest in our system to not only maintain our vehicles and facilities in a state of good repair, but also pave the way for future expansion to meet growing ridership demands. We completed a number of improvements to our stations, including parking lot pavement repairs and restriping at the Broad Run station; canopy roof replacements at the L'Enfant and Leeland Road stations, and elevator modernizations at the Franconia-Springfield and Rippon stations, just to name a few. Our facilities maintenance crew is always on the lookout for station repair and maintenance needs, and as always, we invite our passengers to please contact us and let us know if you see any repairs that need to be addressed.

Finally, VRE worked diligently to address major infrastructure needs as we build toward the future by advancing projects outlined in the System Plan 2040, VRE's long-range transportation plan. VRE took major steps in advancing some near-term projects such as platform extensions and second platforms at Franconia-Springfield, Lorton, Rippon, Brooke, Leeland, and Rolling Road stations, and the creation of new train storage at L'Enfant and the Ivy City Yard in the District of Columbia. In cooperation with our community partners and the general public, we advanced plans for a new parking facility at the Manassas Park station and have closely examined expansion and extension options at the end of the Manassas line. VRE staff continued to coordinate with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, District of Columbia Department of Transportation, Amtrak, and Federal Railroad Administration on long term projects to expand rail capacity in the region, including improvements to accommodate higher speed intercity rail passenger service between Washington and Richmond, third track additions on the Fredericksburg Line, expansion of the Long Bridge, and improvements at Washington's Union Station.

As we wrap up another year, I am truly proud of our accomplishments, but acknowledge there is always room for improvement. In the year ahead, we will be working hard to continue to provide a superior rider experience, and work to advance our initiatives that will allow us to remain an important part of the Northern Virginia region's transportation network far into the future. I would like to sincerely thank you, our riders, for your continued patronage of VRE. On behalf of myself and all of the VRE staff, we wish you and your family a joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year!

**DOUG ALLEN**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Virginia Railway Express



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# VRE LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

**A**t VRE, there is a cadre of individuals dedicated to the delivery of service, focused on ensuring your daily train trip is safe and reliable. But there is a small group within the VRE organization looking beyond the immediate horizon, planning and building the physical improvements that will be there in the future to address your travel needs.

The core of this group's work is directed by the vision of System Plan 2040, a long-range plan for VRE adopted by our Operations Board in January of 2014. It imagines a future when VRE trains arrive every 15 minutes during peak service and every hour throughout the day. It projects a system that carries 50,000 passengers every day, compared to the approximately 20,000 that we serve now. While these are generally aspirational goals, at VRE, we believe laying the groundwork to make these dreams a reality is vital to our region's future.

The population in the VRE service area will steadily grow over the next 25 years. This will result in even greater traffic congestion than we experience today as our primary highway corridors struggle to keep up with the addition of a significant number of new vehicles. System Plan 2040 offers ways to mitigate the expected increase in congestion through the logical, incremental expansion of VRE infrastructure and service. Studies conducted by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) have shown that commuter rail service is a very cost-effective means of providing peak relief to regional highway networks. More specifically in the DC region, TTI found that I-66, I-95 and I-395 would need one additional highway lane each if VRE was not operating. VRE handles 11 percent of the commuters traveling in and out of the District during the heaviest hours of travel at the 14th Street crossing of the Potomac River, which also includes I-395, and the Metrorail Yellow Line.

## A THREE PHASE PLAN

The VRE System Plan 2040 is broken into three incremental phases. Phase I would see the implementation of modest infrastructure improvements such as platform and yard extensions and the procurement of additional rolling stock to enable VRE to lengthen trains to provide more seats. Work on this phase is currently underway, starting last year with the extension of service to a new station in Spotsylvania. VRE is constructing a platform extension at Lorton and new train storage tracks adjacent to L'Enfant Station, designing other platform improvements at 12 additional stations (in addition to collaborating with Amtrak on improvements at Washington Union Station), designing new or expanded yard facilities adjacent to Ivy City in the District and at the Virginia ends of both VRE Lines, and making track and signal improvements in Alexandria.

Phase II and Phase III would, if executed, offer even greater growth opportunities and expand the system to accommodate upwards to 50,000 daily riders. That would require even more investment in parking expansion, rolling stock, and storage yard expansion. We are working in collaboration with CSX Transportation, the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to

provide additional tracks over the Potomac River and throughout the Fredericksburg corridor for greater capacity and reliability. VRE is laying the groundwork today to identify funding sources and gain the needed approvals to execute the major infrastructure projects slated for Phases II and III.



## THE END RESULT

So what would VRE look like if the full System Plan 2040 comes to fruition? First, the full plan envisions more daily trains on weekdays (up from the 32 trains operated today), with more frequent service during peak hours and possibly the addition of off-peak service on the weekdays, evenings, and weekends. These new services would not only greatly expand mobility options for riders in our area, but will also alleviate a significant amount of congestion in Corridors of Statewide Significance (I-395, I-66 and I-95). This service will be fully integrated into a regional and national passenger rail network that will provide enhanced connectivity with Amtrak, Maryland's MARC train service, and potential High Speed Rail services to Richmond and the Northeast corridor. The new service could carry up to 50,000 daily passengers, utilizing the latest rail cars on the market, which will incorporate technological advancements for increased fuel efficiency and passenger convenience.

## THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Of course, a plan is only worth the paper it's printed on until funding is secured for its full execution. For VRE to realize its vision of the future, it will take a lot of dedication and commitment from its partners at all levels. Since VRE operates on tracks owned by host rail carriers, we must negotiate access agreements that will allow more trains on the system. For this to become possible, significant infrastructure improvements described in the plan must be completed to help alleviate congestion within the corridor. In addition, new rolling stock must be acquired, and of course, revenue to operate the new services must be identified. Full implementation of the system plan could require as much as \$2.8 billion in capital investment alone. It will take the full commitment of VRE and its funding partners at the Federal, State and local levels to raise the capital and operating funds necessary to carry out this plan. In an era of constrained budgets, this will not be an easy task. However, as we look toward the future, VRE is optimistic and excited about the expanded role it will play in the region's transportation system, and our potential to bring our safe, reliable and efficient service to a new generation of commuters in Virginia.



# VRE PREPARES FOR WINTER WEATHER

**V**RE is preparing for the upcoming winter season, and as always, safety is our main priority. While we work diligently to keep the trains operating and on-time, inclement weather can impact our ability to provide normal service. Another key component to safe VRE operations is the ability for you to reach our stations. When a winter storm is projected to affect our region, VRE works with our host railroads, the National Weather Service and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to help determine if conditions will allow for the safe operation of our trains. We also activate our snow removal plan working with VDOT, the local jurisdictions and our own contractors to clear parking lots, sidewalks and platforms. VRE also participates in regional and state agency “snow calls” when conditions are projected to affect the daily commute.

While we do take the decisions by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) into consideration regarding the operation of the Federal Government, those do not necessarily dictate whether VRE trains operate. We realize that many of our riders are not employed by the Federal Government, or are considered essential personnel who need to get to work. We still make every effort to offer at least an “S” schedule operation. One of VRE’s highest priorities is ensure our passengers reach their stations safely. If we

do need to cancel service, or operate on a modified schedule, we will get that information out as early as possible, usually no later than 4:15 a.m. of the affected service day. All information will be posted to our website at [www.vre.org](http://www.vre.org), on our Twitter and Facebook accounts, through Train Talk text and email alerts, on our station signs and our information hotline, 1-800-RIDE-VRE. VRE also contacts local media including TV, radio and traffic reports.

We also encourage our riders to properly prepare for winter weather travel by:

1. Having a backup plan in the event of a long delay or cancellation
2. Always carrying a fully charged mobile phone
3. Wearing sensible shoes and using great care when driving to stations or walking to the platform
4. Bringing water and snacks, in case there is a long delay
5. Dressing in layers

Thank you for riding VRE!

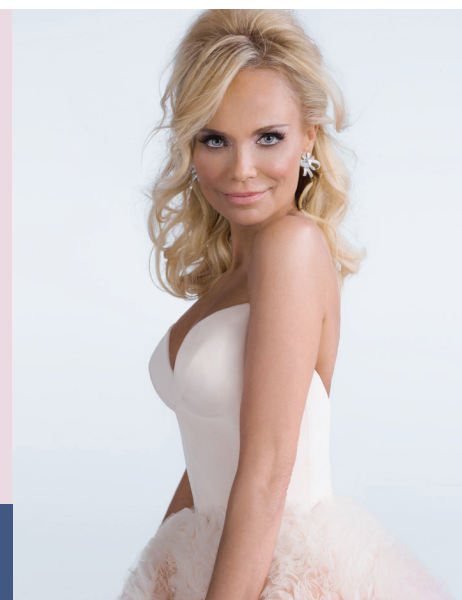


*An Evening with*  
**Kristin Chenoweth**

**Saturday, March 18, 7:30 p.m.**

*Philharmonic*  
 UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON  
 ORCHESTRA

**[umwphilharmonic.com](http://umwphilharmonic.com)**





# MANASSAS PARK GARAGE SITE SELECTED

Planning for a new garage at the VRE Manassas Park station has begun. VRE and the City of Manassas Park are collaborating to address the need for adding parking spaces for VRE riders at this station. The existing parking lot often fills up before the last train has departed, and VRE has plans to add additional trains to serve more riders in the future. A study initiated in July 2016 indicated that 560 additional spaces would be needed by 2040, which is almost double the existing capacity.

The site selection process began by identifying the major factors that would contribute to the success of the proposed garage. VRE and the City of Manassas Park agreed that the site will need to be close to the existing platform, and a publicly-owned site will help reduce the timeline and complexity of the project. Ideally, the proposed garage will support the City's vision and efforts to develop a transit-accessible, high-density mixed-use town center, while minimizing traffic impacts on the road network. Furthermore, the location of the new garage will prevent many riders from having to drive across the tracks to access the station parking lot, and then cross the tracks again as pedestrians to board the train.

A workshop was held in October 2016 to discuss potential sites in the vicinity of the station. Six sites were identified for evaluation, including the existing surface lot and three city-owned sites in the City Center. Public feedback on the preferred site was solicited online and by mail. Outreach included a Town Hall

meeting where questions and concerns were addressed in person during an Open House, and a detailed presentation explained the site evaluation. On November 15, 2016 the Manassas Park Governing Body endorsed the VRE-recommended site in the City Center which had received public support.



The next steps for this Northern Virginia Transportation Authority funded project include engineering and design, and environmental review, as well as applying for construction funds. Stay updated on this project by visiting: [www.vre.org/projects-plans-facility/plans/manassas-park-station-parking-expansion](http://www.vre.org/projects-plans-facility/plans/manassas-park-station-parking-expansion)





### Waterskiing Santa

December 24, 12:45 pm

**Alexandria's Waterfront between King and Oronoco Streets**

Now in its 31st year, this favorite DC-area Christmas Eve event comes to Old Town Alexandria for the third time. Gather at Alexandria's Potomac River waterfront for a spectacular show by the Waterskiing Santa and his wakeboarding reindeer, plus flying elves, the Grinch and his friends, Frosty the Snowman and Jack Frost. Prime viewing area is along the waterfront between King Street and Oronoco Street, which includes Founders Park and the Alexandria City Marina.



### First Night Alexandria

December 31, 12:00 pm - Midnight

**Old Town Alexandria**

First Night Alexandria is a celebration of the new year through the performing arts with fireworks at midnight! Local shops, restaurants and buildings in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia turn into performance venues to showcase local talent. It's fun, affordable, safe and family friendly. For a full schedule of events, visit: <https://www.firstnightalexandria.org/events/schedule>

### Falls Church New Year's Eve Watch Night

December 31, 2016

**100 Block of West Broad St.**

**Falls Church, VA**

Ring in the New Year with FREE family-friendly festivities at the 19th Annual Watch Night New Year's Eve Celebration in the City of Falls Church. With events and entertainment both indoors and outdoors, The Little City's celebration is unique because it is free, run by many community volunteers, City staff, businesses, etc. and open-to-the-public. The City of Falls Church government, businesses, organizations, churches, civic groups and many, many committed volunteers come together to throw what The Washington Post Express called "the coolest New Year's Eve event" for families in the Metro area. For event details, visit: <http://www.watchnightfallschurch.com>

### Fredericksburg Boat Show

January 20, 2017, 1:00pm to January 22, 2017, 4:00pm

**Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center,**

**2371 Carl D Silver Parkway**

**Fredericksburg, VA**

Come in out of the cold and join exhibitors and boaters to plan your spring and summer water activities and purchases. Climb aboard the different Fishing Boats, Pontoons, Cruisers, Speed Boats, and much more. Whether you are looking for a yacht or a jet ski, you will find it at the Boat Show. Products being exhibited at the show include boats, jet skis, personal watercraft, paddle sports, kayaks, marinas, motors, slip rentals, servicing, fishing gear and tackle, educational programs and materials, insurance, trailers, electronics, sanitation, air conditioning, real estate, attire, nautical home décor, winter storage, and financing. <http://www.fredericksburgboatshow.com>



# SPOTLIGHT ON DALLAS RICHARDS PE

## CHIEF ENGINEER



**M** eet Dallas Richards, VRE's new Chief Engineer and Manager of Project Implementation. In this role, he works closely with VRE staff of project managers and the senior management team to deliver infrastructure projects including track, stations, parking and facilities from original concept all the way through their design and construction. His experience of more than twenty-years as an engineer and project manager in the railway industry provides the knowledge and understanding to bring projects from idea to completion. Prior to joining our team, Dallas worked as an engineering consultant, and worked directly with VRE and each of our host railroads (CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, and Amtrak) on many of their infrastructure projects throughout the region. This experience has given him a keen understanding of the construction requirements and related operating parameters for the capital projects along both of VRE's rail lines.

"VRE is poised for tremendous growth over the next five to ten years and I am excited to be part of the team to deliver," Dallas said. In order to sustain high performance and grow our passenger rail system, VRE must make additions to our network. We have a number of projects in the planning and design phase that will soon be built and placed into service. These projects include new midday storage, numerous island platforms, additional track and major structures. "These are the kinds of projects that serve your friends and neighbors well beyond your career, the kind you hope for as a young engineer," says Dallas. "Now I get to help lead these projects

with VRE and our partners."

Dallas is a graduate of both Virginia Military Institute and Virginia Tech. He is a Distinguished graduate of VMI where he earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Nearly ten years later he went on to earn a Master in Business Administration from the Northern Virginia Graduate Center of Virginia Tech. This unique combination of technical knowledge and business acumen serves VRE well by helping its leadership to make wise infrastructure investment decisions.

Dallas also has a passion to teach the skills he has learned to a new generation of engineers. Since 2012 he has served as an adjunct faculty member of the University of South Carolina Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering where he teaches a graduate course on planning and design of railway infrastructure. As a long-time member of the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) he has served as Chairman of Committee 24, the committee charged with technical education and training for the railway industry.

When Dallas is not tackling engineering challenges for passenger rail he enjoys time with his family, crafting homebrew ale, and mountain biking local trails. Dallas is a proud native son of Virginia where his family has lived for more than two centuries. He originally hails from Roanoke, but aspires to visit every county in the Commonwealth. He lives with his wife Mary and their two children in the Burke area of Fairfax County.

## VRE HONORS DELEGATE DAVID BRICKLEY

**A** t its November Operations Board Meeting, VRE presented former Virginia State Delegate David Brickley with a permanent locomotive sign as part of the VRE Operations Board Recognition Program in recognition of his years of dedicated service. Delegate Brickley represented Prince William County and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park in the General Assembly for many years, and was instrumental in advancing legislation to establish VRE. He was one of the original proponents for commuter rail in our region, and in 1985, as chair of the General Assembly's commuter rail subcommittee, he was the chief sponsor of state legislation creating the Virginia Railway Express and the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission. Delegate Brickley was one of the founding members of the VRE Operations Board, and served as Vice-Chairman in 1991 and was Chairman when VRE officially went into operation in 1992. During the Board Operations meeting, Delegate Brickley was presented with a locomotive bumper plate bearing his name, which will be attached to a VRE train.





# VRE OPERATIONS BOARD BIDS FAREWELL TO JONATHAN WAY



The November Operations Board Meeting was the last in the distinguished career of long term member Jonathan Way. Mr. Way joined the Operations Board in 2008, representing the City of Manassas where he served as a Member of the City Council, and most recently as Vice Mayor. The Board commended Mr. Way for his years of dedicated service and contributions to VRE's success. Mr. Way was the first Chair of the Operations Board Capital Committee, and played a key role in establishing VRE's Financial and Debt Management Principles. Several Board members complimented Mr. Way for his dedication to VRE, his creative approaches to solving challenging issues and his commitment to the future vision of VRE. The Board approved a resolution commending Mr. Way for his years of dedicated service, and Board Chairman Gary Skinner and VRE Chief Executive Officer Doug Allen presented him with a framed photograph of a VRE locomotive.



## HOLIDAY CALENDAR

DEC. 23	CHRISTMAS EVE OBSERVED, "S" SCHEDULE
DEC. 26	CHRISTMAS DAY OBSERVED, NO VRE SERVICE
DEC. 27-30	WINTER HOLIDAYS, "S" SCHEDULE
JAN. 2	NEW YEAR'S DAY OBSERVED, NO VRE SERVICE
JAN. 16	MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY, NO SERVICE
JAN. 20	INAUGURATION DAY, REGULAR VRE SERVICE*
FEB. 20	PRESIDENT'S DAY, NO VRE SERVICE

\*INAUGURATION DAY SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE VISIT [WWW.VRE.ORG](http://WWW.VRE.ORG) FOR UPDATED SCHEDULE.



# VRE RIDERS GENEROUSLY SUPPORT THE U.S. MARINE CORPS "TOYS FOR TOTS" PROGRAM

On Wednesday, December 7, VRE riders from across the region generously donated toys, gift cards and cash for the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program that helps underprivileged children to receive gifts during the holiday season. Toys and cash donations totaling more than \$14,000 were left on the trains and with the conductors. The toys were transported to the Ivy City train yard in Washington, DC, where two uniformed Marines met VRE CEO Doug Allen to collect the gifts. VRE and its riders have participated in this program for more than 20 years. VRE would like to thank its riders for your generosity!



## Get Noticed With VRE Advertising

**VRE carries 20,000 passengers every workday and 70 percent of passengers have an annual household income of more than \$100,000.**

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# PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

[illegible]

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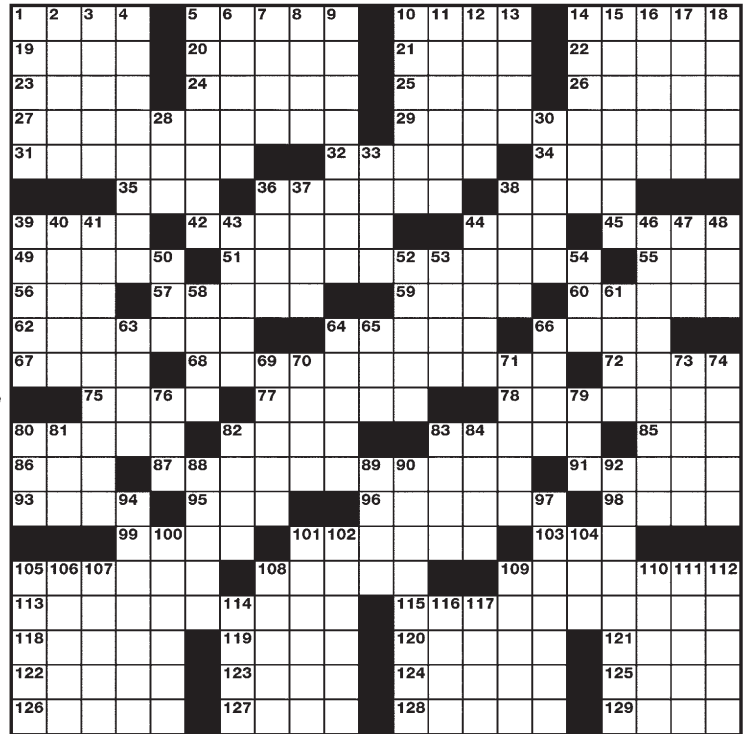
# RAIL TIME PUZZLES

CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2016 STANLEY NEWMAN

WWW.STANXWORDS.COM 12/18/16

## ACROSS

- 1 Falling-out  
5 Make a mess of  
10 Make a mess of  
14 Aids in a crime  
19 Natural skin soother  
20 Licorice-flavored herb  
21 Cannonballs, for instance  
22 Morocco's capital  
23 Textile factory  
24 \_\_\_ one's time (waited)  
25 Data in coll. transcripts  
26 Playground assertion  
27 Human dynamo  
29 Forcefully attacks  
31 Tortuous journey  
32 Capture  
34 Tried a new hue  
35 Obstinate beast  
36 Camper's stove fuel  
38 Thorn in one's side  
39 Bibliography abbr.  
42 Basement racer, perhaps  
44 Episodic story line  
45 Scored 100% on  
49 \_\_\_ Park (Edison lab site)  
51 Hotel employee  
55 *Aladdin* prince  
56 Sra. Perón's homeland  
57 Tibet's capital  
59 Low-fat  
60 Pulls suddenly  
62 Darkened  
64 Interior design  
66 "Take this"  
67 Rural storehouse  
68 Original locale of Muscle Beach  
72 Much of the Old World  
75 Centers of activity  
77 Maior blood vessel  
78 Rec-room scrape  
80 Yellowish brown  
82 Big brute  
83 Parisian school  
85 One-liner  
86 Parisian "Cool!"  
87 Archer's equipment  
91 Complains, so to speak  
93 Medieval drudge  
95 Finish with  
96 Be sorry about  
98 Telly watcher  
99 Essay page  
101 Church officer  
103 Half a figure eight  
105 Ornamental shrub  
108 Sweater size  
109 Arm art  
113 Hollywood nickname  
115 Talent series once hosted by Ed McMahon  
118 Turn out to be  
119 Not minding one's manners  
120 Sleepyhead in an Everlys tune  
121 Nile queen, for short  
122 Ripply fabric pattern  
123 Isn't oneself  
124 Formally establish  
125 Part of S&L  
126 Range rover  
127 Track event  
128 Many *Hamlet* characters  
129 Ending like -trix  
DOWN  
1 Stallone's commando  
2 Homeric epic  
3 Imprudent activity  
4 Blabs  
5 Chatty get-together  
6 Consolidate  
7 Calf-length skirt  
8 Tech support caller  
9 Support for a statue  
10 Loose overcoat  
11 Tennis official  
12 Celebrity's projection  
13 Quick bite  
14 Ascended  
15 "You shouldn't do that"  
16 Fine wood  
17 Fashion sense  
18 Gave up a seat  
20 CIA forerunner  
28 Bingham of *Baywatch*  
33 Antidrug cop  
36 Tourney passes  
37 Golden St. campus  
38 Wheat husk  
39 Cyberzines  
40 Country singer Gibbs  
41 Thin pasta  
43 2009 Peace Nobel  
44 Video arcade pioneer  
46 Domino product  
47 Beast on Michigan's flag  
48 Belittle, so to speak  
50 Long-established  
52 Big name in wrap  
53 Lowly worker  
54 "Science Guy" of TV  
58 Sound of steam  
61 Syrian \_\_\_ Republic  
63 *The Winds of War* author  
64 Was bold  
65 CPR expert  
66 Transport by truck  
69 Keep bothering  
70 Struggling with choices  
71 *A Beautiful Mind* star  
73 Teheran native  
74 Uneasy feeling  
76 Preschooler's dinner wear  
79 Masterpiece  
80 Bout enders  
81 Color-chart listing  
82 Was indebted to  
83 Hence  
84 Edible ears  
88 New Basketball Hall of Famer  
89 Limp as  
90 Took a trial break  
92 Stumbling block  
94 "Without a doubt!"  
97 China-shop purchases  
100 Baby bird  
101 Take one's sweet time  
102 Antarctic explorer  
104 Canonized *femme*: Abbr.  
105 Parts of mushrooms  
106 Wine grape  
107 Non-studio film  
108 Nephew of Donald Duck  
109 Brief moment  
110 First acrylic fiber  
111 Porthole view  
112 Excelled  
114 Airport shuttle  
116 Sushi staple  
117 Strong ox



## SUDOKU

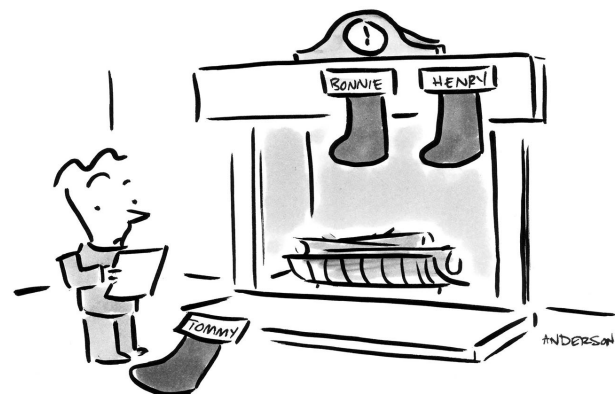
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VRE

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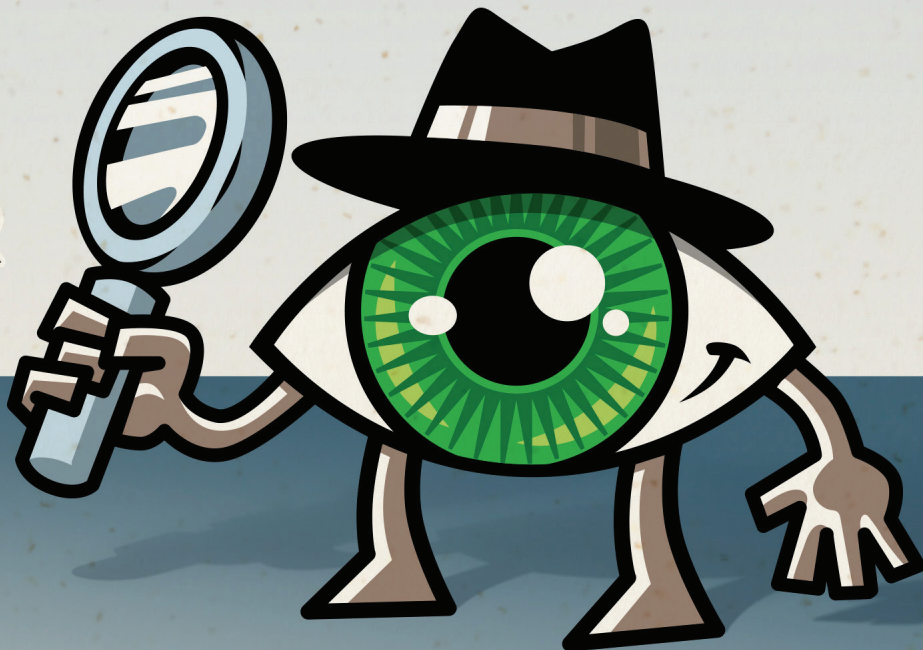
DEAR TOMMY,  
NORMALLY I'D LEAVE A LUMP  
OF COAL, BUT I'M REDUCING  
MY CARBON FOOTPRINT.

SANTA





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