

# RIDE

VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2014



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS  
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VRE station on track  
for 2017 opening



5

THE VRE FREDERICKSBURG STATION

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Magazine Design by DEIBLER DESIGN

# FROM THE CEO



**DOUG ALLEN**  
Chief Executive Officer

**V**RE is working to provide you the best travel value we can. The system investments we are making now and in the future will assure you continue to receive a high quality, safe, and hopefully, enjoyable commuter rail experience. To improve your commute to work each day, I'd like to tell you about some of the projects we are planning or implementing over the next year that are significant.

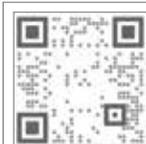
We have just placed in service eight new railcars over the past four months and ordered 12 more which will allow us to replace all legacy cars and expand service. This means more seats for you and adds-up to a more comfortable ride. Over the next couple of months we are repainting the Manassas Park, Rippon, Brooke, Quantico, Rolling Road and Crystal City stations.

Later this year, we will add a new train on the Fredericksburg Line. This new train will provide much needed capacity expansion and allow riders greater scheduling flexibility in their commute.

Early in 2015, VRE will begin pilot testing and then roll-out new mobile ticketing software that will allow riders to purchase and validate VRE tickets using their smart phones or tablets. We are very excited to bring this service to your fingertips. Mobile ticketing will be integrated with your SmartBenefits, and will allow you to purchase tickets anywhere, at any time.

Next year, look for continued station improvements and the extension of the Fredericksburg Line train to Spotsylvania where a new station, third track and 1,500 space parking lot is being built. All these improvements take time and resources but lead to a better commute for you. Thank you for your support and for riding VRE.

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



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# MEET VRE'S CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS STAFF



We know that usually the first VRE representatives you meet on the train are the Keolis conductors and engineers. They are our front line employees, and are some of the very best, we agree! But there is another group of professional and hard-working employees behind the scenes at VRE headquarters who are just as important. They are the VRE Customer Communications team. You have probably spoken to one or more of them on the phone, communicated with them through e-mail or received a written communication from them through Train Talk, Twitter or Facebook.



From left to right: Manager of Operations and Customer Communications Jeremy Flores with Communications Specialists Jennifer Young, Angela Madagu, and Brenda Thompson.

Together, they make up the team that handles Lost and Found, ticket replacements, telephone inquiries, [gotrains@vre.org](mailto:gotrains@vre.org), VRE's web site, Facebook page and Twitter accounts as well as Train Talk, our e-mail message system. They also are responsible for court citations and dates, undercover law enforcement officers, group tickets, and a host of other tasks.

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**"Working for Customer Communications is really like working for the passengers. We're here to support them and ensure they have a well informed and pleasant commute." – Jennifer Young**

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Brenda Thompson has been with VRE for 12 years and one of her many duties is managing the Lost and Found Department. When asked what some of the strangest items were that have turned up in Lost and Found, she replied, "Somebody left their x-rays once, and one time a person forgot their suitcase." We have also had some wedding rings show up. Luckily, VRE's Lost and Found Department has an 85-90 percent return rate.

One of the misconceptions that many people have about VRE is that we have a large call center. There are only two people answering the phones at any one time and they consist of the CCS staff rotating through their shifts.

"We do get some crazy questions and we get a lot of them," says Jennifer Young; "Some questions don't even have anything to do with VRE, but we do our best to answer them or at least direct them to the proper agency." "Working for Customer Communications is really like working for the passengers," they all agree. "We're here to support them and ensure they have a well informed and pleasant commute."



**Jake Shimabukuro  
Concert**  
Oct. 14 & 15  
**The Birchmere  
Alexandria, VA**

Jake Shimabukuro is a ukulele virtuoso and composer known for his fast and complex finger work. His music combines elements of jazz, blues, funk, rock, bluegrass, classical, folk, and flamenco.

## The Fall Home Show

Oct. 18 – 19

**Fredericksburg Expo Center  
Fredericksburg, Virginia**

The Fall Home Show is a great place for homeowners to knock out their to-do lists—renovate your kitchen, plan a new patio addition for the spring or finish your basement like you have always wanted to!

Don't miss all of the Fredericksburg Fall Craft Festival vendors! Get your holiday shopping started early with high-quality crafts, including home decor, specialty foods, knick-knacks, clothing, photography, pottery and more!



## Northern Virginia Fall Brewfest

Oct. 18 – Oct. 19

**Bull Run Regional Park  
Centreville, VA**

This world beer experience will feature more than 40 of the world's best breweries, plenty of delicious food to complement the craft beers and outstanding local and regional bands providing entertainment. More than 40 breweries will have beers to sample including seven breweries new to the Northern Virginia Brewfest.



## Air and Scare

Oct. 25

**Smithsonian National Air and Space  
Museum, Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center  
Chantilly, VA**

See the spooky side of air and space at the annual Halloween event! Arrive in costume for safe indoor trick-or-treating, creepy crafts, spooky science experiments, and other Halloween-themed activities.

The tiniest visitors can check out the Tot Zone to play dress-up and hear a story. Pose for a photo with your favorite Star Wars or Ghostbusters character. Air & Scare is fun for the whole family!



# MEET MATTHEW KELLY

By Jennifer Buske

Fredericksburg resident Matthew Kelly used to travel I-95 often, visiting his family in Alexandria and his girlfriend, now wife, while attending Mary Washington College.

“It was a quick and easy trip, not like today. Now, clogged roadways and traffic make the trip two-plus hours and it is having a detrimental effect on business opportunities, tourism and the shops in the city of Fredericksburg”, he said.

“Transportation is the biggest issue that faces our region and we’re looking at doubling our population in the next 20 years,” adding, “It will only get worse. When you are a tourism town like us, people need to be able to move around.”

Kelly has been involved in regional transportation issues since 2002 when he was elected to the Fredericksburg City Council. He currently serves on the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board, the executive board of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission and the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization policy committee.

VRE’s Fredericksburg station has been in place long before the commuter-rail service began. The station was, and still is, utilized by Amtrak, but now also serves as a regional hub for commuters, attracting riders from Spotsylvania and Caroline counties and as far south as Richmond.

Since joining the VRE Operations Board, Kelly has been involved in several projects including the decision to bring

Keolis Rail Services America on as the new operator of the commuter rail service. He also helped change the funding formula for participating jurisdictions and watched as VRE replaced all its locomotives and improved on-time performance.

“I’ve seen VRE come a long way,” he said. “When I sat in my first VRE meeting, our on-time performance was in the low eighties, maybe even seventies. Today we have a consistent on-time performance record. I’ve seen, even in a short period of time, a lot of improvement in the service.”

Moving forward, Kelly wants to see VRE expand service, which means addressing the storage issue of where to put longer or new trains. While some have talked about adding weekend service, Kelly said it is important to focus on weekdays first because, “First and foremost this is a commuter rail service and we need to keep our ties up to Washington and business opportunities.” But, he would like to do occasional weekend trains to draw people in for special events like the Firecracker train that brought people into Washington, D.C. for Fourth of July.

When he is not addressing the region’s transportation issues or serving on City Council, Kelly is active in the preservation community. He does archaeological work and Civil War reenactments with the 28th Massachusetts Infantry. Kelly also enjoys spending time with his wife, children and grandchildren.



**MATTHEW KELLY**  
VRE Operations Board Member

“

“I’ve seen VRE come a long way. When I sat in my first VRE meeting, our on-time performance was in the low eighties, maybe even seventies. Today we have a consistent on-time performance record. I’ve seen, even in a short period of time, a lot of improvement in the service.”



VRE Fredericksburg Station

# CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY RESULTS 2014

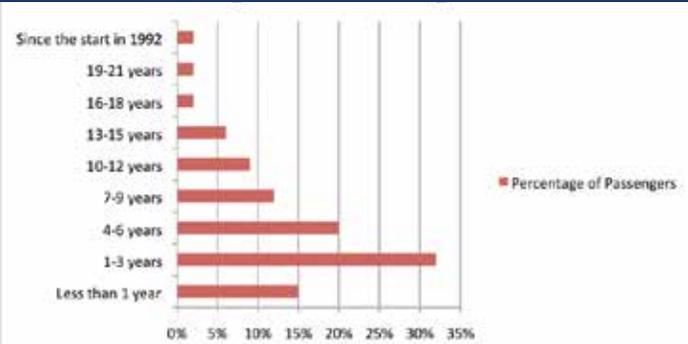


## The Results Are In...

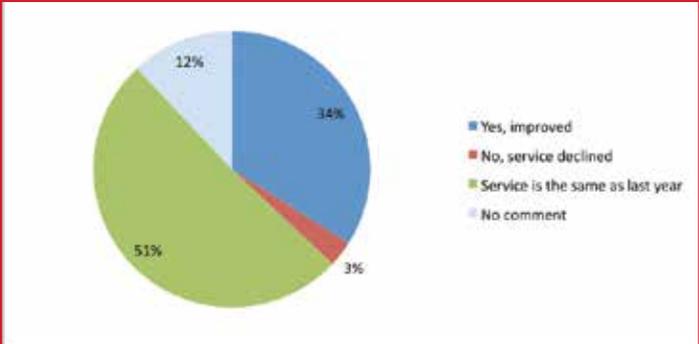
We promised you results from the Customer Service Survey you took in May. These are results from some of the more popular questions.

➤ The full survey can be viewed at [www.vre.org](http://www.vre.org) under feedback, then customer survey results.

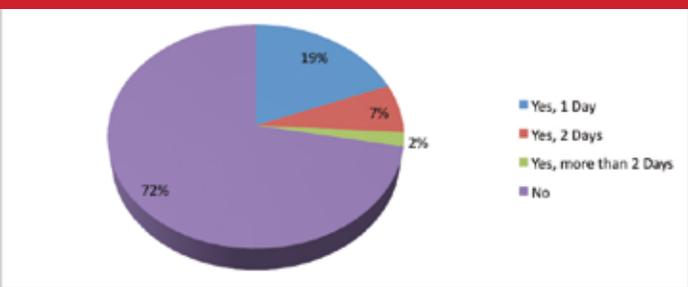
### LENGTH OF TIME RIDING VRE



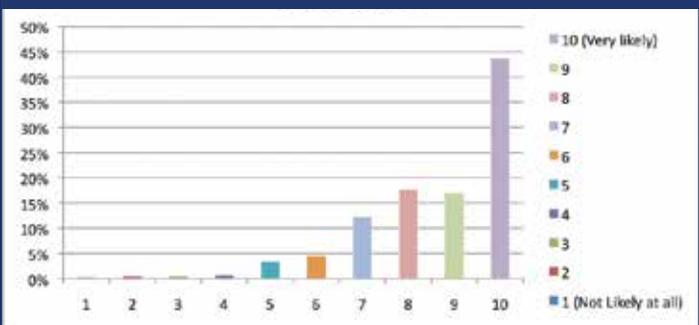
### HAS THE VRE SERVICE IMPROVED OVER THE LAST YEAR?



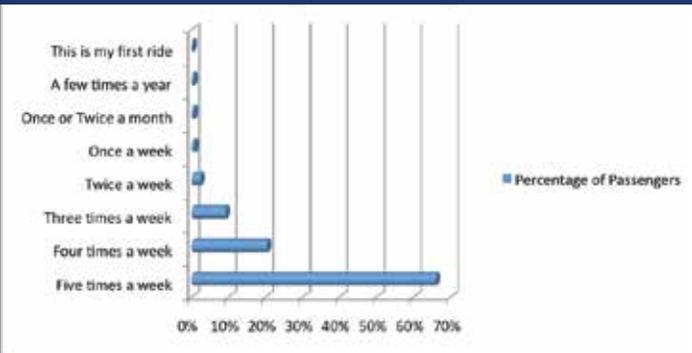
### DO YOU TELE-COMMUTE OR WORK AT HOME ONE OR MORE DAYS PER WEEK?



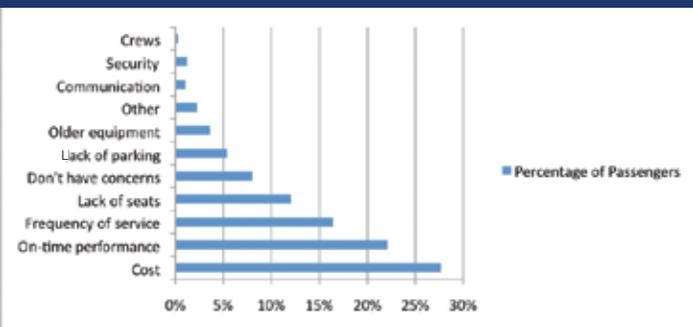
### LIKELY TO RECOMMEND VRE TO YOUR FRIENDS OR COLLEAGUES?



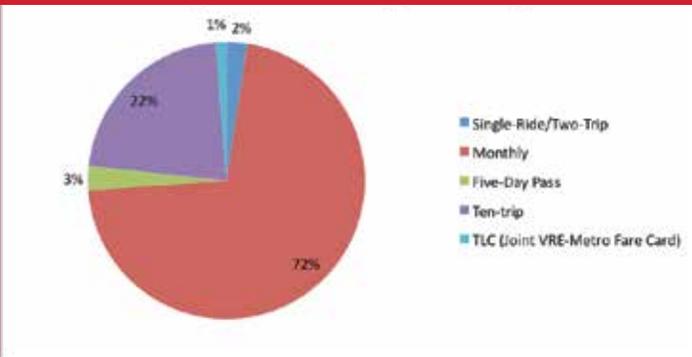
### HOW OFTEN DO YOU NORMALLY RIDE VRE?



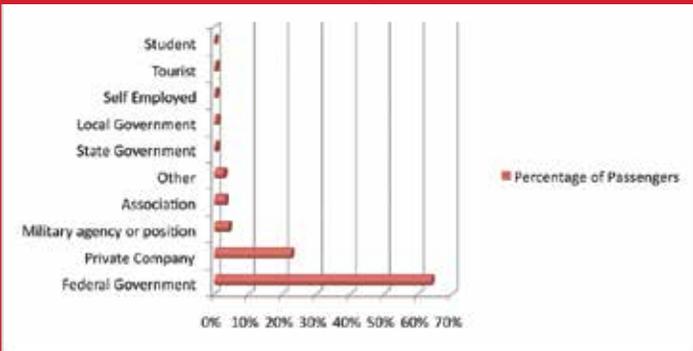
### WHAT IS YOUR NUMBER ONE CONCERN ABOUT VRE SERVICE?



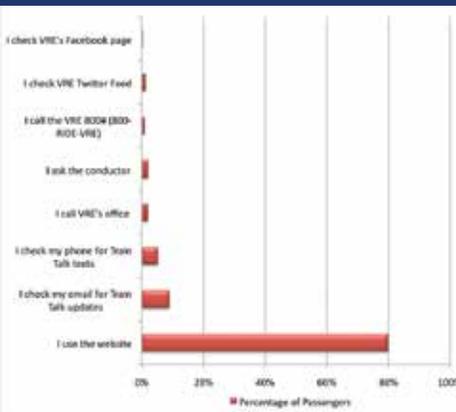
### WHAT TYPE OF TICKET DO YOU USUALLY USE?



### FOR WHOM DO YOU WORK?



### WHEN YOU NEED MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT VRE, HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT GETTING IT?



# GET READY FOR CLIFTON DAY!

DON'T MISS THE 47<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CLIFTON DAY FESTIVAL SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

Come enjoy great food, live music, a train ride and other family-friendly activities when the town of Clifton puts on Clifton Day, an annual festival held in one of Northern Virginia's most beautiful and historic areas. This year's event is on Sunday, October 12 from 9 am until 5 pm.

Around 150 antique dealers, artists, bakers and other street vendors will line the town's streets. Live bands, horseback rides, craft demonstrations, children's activities, a Civil War reenactment and a wide selection of food and beverage choices will add to the fun.

Clifton Day is the only day of the year when the train stops in the town. Festival goers can take the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), which will provide roundtrip train service to Clifton from all stops between Manassas and Rolling Road. The train ride to Clifton is free and the return trip costs \$5 per person (children under age two ride free).

"This is Clifton Day's 47th year, which is amazing," said event chair Barbara Hutto. "The event's longevity is a testament to how much people enjoy bringing their families to spend a fun fall day in Clifton."



"This is Clifton Day's 47th year, which is amazing," said event chair Barbara Hutto. "The event's longevity is a testament to how much people enjoy bringing their families to spend a fun fall day in Clifton."



The 2014 festival, hosted by the Clifton Betterment Association (CBA), will distribute its proceeds to several nonprofit organizations such as the Girl and Boy Scouts, Clifton Lions Club, the CBA, Acacia Lodge and Clifton Presbyterian Church,

"Clifton Day attracts several thousand people throughout the D.C. area and beyond," said CBA president Michelle Stein. "The town of Clifton appreciates the many talented volunteers who dedicate the time and skills required to manage this event."

Sponsors include The Peterson Family Foundation, Ourisman Fairfax Toyota; Concise, LLC; Norfolk Southern; VRE; and Keolis. Admission is free. Parking starts at five dollars per car.

FOR MORE INFO ABOUT CLIFTON DAY, VISIT [WWW.CLIFTONDAY.COM](http://WWW.CLIFTONDAY.COM)

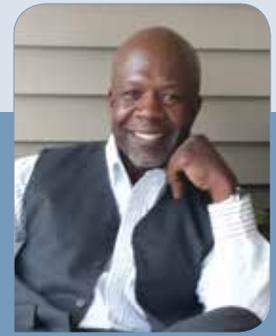


## KEEPING YOUR VRE TICKET SECURE

**You hear it all the time: "Have your tickets out for the conductor to check while on board the train." Of course, having it out sometimes results in passengers leaving them behind and we know that can be a costly mistake. So we'd like to offer you some tips to help protect your investment:**

- **FIRST:** Put your name and phone number on all your tickets! When recovered tickets come into our office, the first thing we do is check to see if it has a name and number on it. If that information is on the ticket, those calls are made first! This is the one sure way to distinguish one passenger's ticket from another's.
- **SECOND:** Report your lost ticket to our office. You can either submit a lost ticket report on our website or call us directly. We'll ask you questions designed to help us identify your ticket from others that are turned in.
- **THIRD:** Try to keep your ticket attached to something you keep on you or with you. A lanyard is usually a good option but it's not fool proof. We recover tickets with clips and lanyards almost as frequently as loose tickets.
- **ONE OTHER TIP:** VRE has a good lost and found program; but it can take a day or two for recovered tickets to get back to our Alexandria staff and until that time, you are responsible for having a valid ticket while riding.

# SPOTLIGHT ON KEOLIS



## MEET LANCE TILMON

The saying goes, "Once a Marine, always a Marine," and Lance Tilmon, Yard Manager at Crossroads on the Fredericksburg line, lives up to that motto in his management and actions. From coast to coast across the States, to Portugal, the Bahamas and Okinawa, Tilmon traveled frequently as a Marine. However, while on duty he still managed to secure his undergraduate degree and Master's in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. After 22 years in the Marines Corp, Master Sergeant Tilmon retired looking for a different experience. "The Marines were the best years of my life, but I wanted to see if I could succeed in the private sector."

Tilmon first worked for Pepsi for two years and then with Norfolk Southern. After five years with Norfolk Southern, Tilmon left the company for VRE. His years as a Marine combined with his experience on the railroad helped prepare him for his leadership position with VRE. "Those (experiences) helped open my eyes for how to lead people and made me a better person."

Sunday through Thursday you can find Tilmon and his crew of 15 in the Crossroads yard working on the 60 cars and 11 locomotives that make up the Fredericksburg line. Tilmon and the crew are responsible for maintaining each

train consist and car, ensuring they are in peak condition for use during the workday commute Monday through Friday.

Another Marine Corp motto is "doing that thing which is right, when no one is looking." From braking systems to wheels, signals to communications, drive-trains and everything in between, Tilmon's team are the people behind the scenes that make the equipment safe to use. "It's all about the customers, and the families that ride these trains. It's our job to provide safe and reliable trains that are punctual."

"It's all about the customers, and the families that ride these trains."

No matter the job, Tilmon strives to be the best of the best. By the time this article is printed he will have celebrated the wedding of his daughter and will be back in the yard. When riding or working on the VRE, don't forget to give a special salute to Master Sergeant Tilmon and his crew for working to keep the VRE safe!



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\*Offer and prices subject to change without notice. For specifics on community savings, see Sales Manager for details. Sale ends 9/30/14.



## COURTESY REMINDERS

**WHEN RIDING ON THE VRE we ask that you make every effort to be courteous to your fellow passengers. Below are a few courtesy reminders.**

- ➔ **QUEUING POLICY:** Remain seated until the train has left the station prior to your stop.
- ➔ **PARKING:** Park properly. Do not take up 1 and a ½ spaces, do not park crooked and do not block in other vehicles so they cannot leave.
- ➔ **BICYCLES:** For safety and courtesy reasons, do not ride your bicycle on the platform at any of our stations.

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

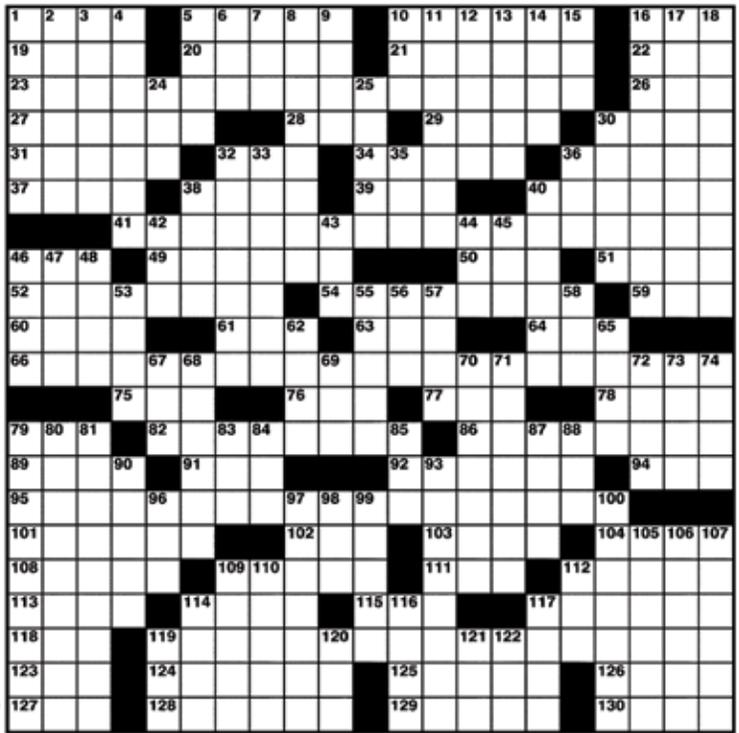


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8	4	1	3	7	6	5	2	9
5	7	6	2	9	1	8	3	4

# RAIL TIME PUZZLES

## ACROSS

- 1 New Testament book
- 5 Bradbury genre
- 10 Big name in racing
- 16 Curtain accessory
- 19 Highchair part
- 20 Enhancement
- 21 VCR insert
- 22 A quarter of tetra-
- 23 Rural trial venues
- 26 Likewise not
- 27 Certain archery target rings
- 28 Innovative
- 29 Flat-screen predecessors
- 30 Addams or Austen
- 31 Hockey broadcaster's shout
- 32 Poker payoff
- 34 Round cheeses
- 36 What "conclusion" starts with
- 37 Hoodlum
- 38 Prefix meaning "beyond"
- 39 Lend a hand
- 40 Apply more varnish to
- 41 Challenge to a bully
- 46 Clamor
- 49 Wise advisor of Odysseus
- 50 Daiquiri essential
- 51 \_\_\_ B'rith
- 52 What holds a screen to a laptop
- 54 Immense
- 59 August hrs.
- 60 Repeat verbatim
- 61 Ending for infant
- 63 Barge puller
- 64 Bidder's subtle gesture
- 66 CD that features Kidman singing
- 75 Fawn's mother
- 76 CD follower
- 77 Honor-roll stat.
- 78 Up to it
- 79 Identify, in a Facebook photo
- 82 Don't hold back
- 86 Scottish liqueur
- 89 Fictional whaler
- 91 Pi follower
- 92 "Oh, no!"
- 94 Shirt or blouse
- 95 Range on Mount Rainier
- 101 Magnate
- 102 Promise to pay
- 103 Comes by
- 104 Typography measure
- 108 Moral code
- 109 "Hide" and "seek"
- 111 Bring to bear
- 112 Full range
- 113 The other team
- 114 Family members
- 115 Up to, for short
- 117 Frequent fliers
- 118 Occupational suffix
- 119 Whom a central California city is named for
- 123 \_\_\_ Lanka
- 124 Jai alai ball
- 125 Bizarre
- 126 *Trinity* author
- 127 Where a hole begins
- 128 Start the day
- 129 Mexican marinade
- 130 Spot for a 58 Down
- 8 Abundant source
- 9 With respect to
- 10 To the \_\_\_ degree
- 11 High-fat fruit
- 12 Drang partner
- 13 Fills roles
- 14 Hoodlums
- 15 Hi-\_\_\_ monitor
- 16 Evasive treatment
- 17 Iroquois League members
- 18 Cannoneer's success
- 24 Three, in Napoli
- 25 Minor alteration
- 30 #3 baby boy's name for 2013
- 32 Carpet-cleaning challenge
- 33 Shakespearean title character
- 35 Home-project cable channel
- 36 Agitated, with "up"
- 38 Trumpet insert
- 40 Keep from forgetting
- 42 DC-based alliance
- 43 Keep from forgetting, perhaps
- 44 Caterer's vessel
- 45 Daily grind
- 46 "If I may interject . . ."
- 47 Gatsby-era architecture
- 48 *From Here to Eternity* setting
- 53 Commented to
- 55 News bits
- 56 Director Van Sant
- 57 Awestruck
- 58 Simple sack
- 62 100 Spanish cents
- 65 Humdrum
- 67 Summer Games org.
- 68 Nerve cell
- 69 Hot tar, for example
- 70 Modernizes
- 71 Do a voice-over
- 72 Adjoin
- 73 Muse of history
- 74 Stay fresh
- 79 Cola-commercial tool
- 80 Nautical greeting
- 81 Lack of grace
- 83 First day of most PGA tourneys
- 84 Fireplace fuel
- 85 www.clemson.\_\_\_\_
- 87 Athos and Aramis, to Porthos
- 88 Last word of a Steinbeck title
- 90 Witch craft
- 93 Inundated
- 96 Two, in Peru
- 97 Shaggy
- 98 Crowd around
- 99 Dethrones
- 100 Uttered with scorn
- 105 "Undoubtedly"
- 106 Briefs
- 107 Swear (to)
- 109 Rural residence
- 110 Paperless bio
- 112 Solidify
- 114 Slow-cooker meal
- 116 Corn Belt state
- 117 Self-defense system
- 119 Resort feature
- 120 Actor McKellen
- 121 Uncle: Sp.
- 122 Sphere on a scepter



## SUDOKU

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