

CrossTalk

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter May, 2026

WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND

Here's an interesting story that has been around for a few decades. It may or may not be true, but its message holds true either way.

One day while toiling in his field, a poor Scottish farmer by the name of Fleming heard cries for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped everything and ran until he came to the bog. There, stuck in the muck up to his waist, was a young boy. Fleming, of course, got the boy out, thus saving him from a slow, but certain, death.



A typical Scottish bog

The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up outside of farmer Fleming's house. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and after greeting Fleming, proceeded to sincerely thank the farmer for saving his son's life. He then offered Fleming a cash reward. Fleming, being a down-to-earth kind of man, and not a little proud, refused the reward saying that he had done nothing more than any other ordinary, decent person would have done.

The nobleman insisted, but Fleming continued to refuse the money the nobleman was offering.

At some point during their conversation, the farmer's son came into view and the nobleman hit on an idea. As Fleming would not accept any money as a reward, he proposed this solution:

Waving in the direction of the boy, the nobleman asked Fleming if that was his son. Fleming proudly acknowledged that the boy was.

"OK", said the nobleman, "I'll make you a deal. Let me provide him with the same level of education I will give to my own son." The nobleman deduced that if the boy was anything like his father, the education would not go to waste.

So farmer Fleming's son went to the very best schools and finally graduated from St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London. Later, he became world renown as the discoverer of penicillin. His name was Sir Alexander Fleming,

Years later, as an adult, the same nobleman's son was stricken with pneumonia and, again, his life was saved, this time by..., penicillin!

And, who was the nobleman? His name was Lord Randolph Churchill. His son, Sir Winston Churchill!



Churchill when he was a young boy



Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons on the net!*

Here is some more information about bogs, if you're interested:

<https://www.ducks.ca/our-work/wetlands/what-is-a-bog/>

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua Says: Here is some interesting news: About half of Japan's private universities are failing to meet their quotas for new student enrolments. This is no doubt due to Japan's declining population, especially young people. So, the government is considering cutting, nationwide, the number of private universities by 40%. To achieve this, the plan is to close or merge universities that are struggling to attract new students. Makes you think, will this affect Matsuyama too?

Junko Says: We use language to help understand our experiences. A renowned neuroscientist says that AI programs such as ChatGPT call into question the very notion of how to define "meaning." After over 20 years experience, she says she disagrees with the idea that AI can "understand." As our thoughts and mental processes are never without emotional content, AI responses through computer algorithms can't exactly much understanding. And, she says, mixing AI with human understanding can even lead to dangerous consequences....!



Marek Says: Recent months have seen a matcha craze around the world, leading so serious shortages in the green powder in Japan, the main producer of matcha tea. However, a new trend is emerging, with people falling in love with yet another Japanese staple product. This time it's hojicha. Farmers might have another reason to rejoice, but tea lovers in this country might feel the fallout of its sudden popularity by having to pay premium prices.

Danielle dit Au Québec, fin mars, les gens se rassemblent à la cabane à sucre pour partager un repas traditionnel et célébrer l'arrivée du printemps. L'odeur du sirop d'érable, la musique folklorique et la tire sur neige créent une ambiance chaleureuse et nostalgique. Mes parents nous y emmenaient chaque année et nous faisons même une promenade en traîneau tiré par des chevaux. C'était un moment de bonheur total !



ACROSS

- 4 used in treating infections, diseases
- 6 wet soggy ground
- 7 between ribs and hips
- 10 thick, sticky dirty matter
- 12 an answer to a problem
- 13 close, not far away
- 14 put forward an idea
- 17 feeling much self-respect
- 18 give, make available

DOWN

- 1 decorative, not plain
- 2 well-known, famous
- 3 stylishly, tastefully
- 4 a lung disease caused by a virus
- 5 working very hard
- 8 gives clarity by example
- 9 understood by reasoning
- 11 accepted and agreed to
- 12 unable to move caught
- 15 continued forward
- 16 suffering, adversely affected by

Play A Game!

Find the answers on P1



Print
version
([here](#))

Here's a contribution from S(A)1's Yukiko.

THE STAR AND THE WALLFLOWER

Back in my zoo volunteering days, two little faces etched into my heart; Joe, a clever one and a half years old boy, and Mary, a shy one year old girl. Our mission? To turn these tiny chimpanzees into "civilized" performers.

The act was a classic zoo spectacle. We'd dress them in human clothes, which, at first, they fought tooth and nail against, until they eventually resigned to their fashion fate. The grand finale was "The Formal Dinner", where they had to sit at a table and eat bananas using a knife and fork. Joe was a natural-born prodigy. He mastered the etiquette in no time, wielding his cutlery like a little gentleman. But then there was Mary. During rehearsals, she'd manage a few bites, but the moment the curtain rose and the crowd appeared, she'd be struck by stage fright. Instead of dining, she would press her back flat against the rear wall, shuffling sideways with wide eyes like a tiny, fairy shadow escaping from the entrance straight to the exit.



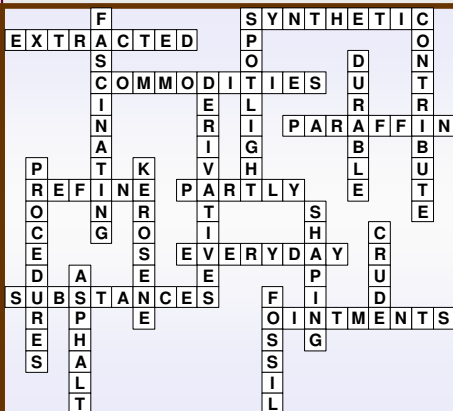
Yukiko with one of her friends

Looking back, I feel a pang of guilt. It was all a show for the crowds, a bit of "zoo business" at their expense. But in those moments, seeing Joe's pride and Mary's quiet rebellion, they felt less like performers and more like little souls just trying to figure out our strange human world.



Find the words in Yukiko's writing that best match these words in meaning:

willingly _____ engraved, imprinted _____ a brilliant display
 _____ gave up, quit _____ finish _____ young genius
 _____ brandishing _____ back _____ a kind of walking
 _____ twinge _____ revolt, uprising _____



Last Month's puzzle Solution

ACROSS

- 2 not of natural origin
- 4 taken out, removed
- 6 materials or products commercially traded
- 8 "kerosine" in the UK
- 11 separate from unnecessary matter
- 12 not completely
- 15 ordinary, common
- 17 materials of a particular type
- 19 kinds of creams or gels

DOWN

- 1 very interesting
- 2 emphasize or focus on
- 3 partly provide or add to
- 5 long lasting, tough, strong
- 7 by-products, offshoots
- 9 moving, going forward
- 10 flammable oil used as fuel
- 13 influencing
- 14 not refined or processed
- 16 used for paving roads
- 18 extremely old, extinct



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