

Word from the Pastor

Dear Members and Friends,

As residents of New England, we expect snow every winter. When there isn't any, we miss it. When we have a series of snowstorms as we had in the last month, we wish it would just go away. As human beings, we often become tired of too much of a good thing! The same is true of being a leader, and for that reason, part of my Annual Report which was presented at the January Annual Meeting of the Congregation was dedicated to the theme of leadership burn-out. There is no simple explanation of what it happens, but I would like to supplement my Report with the following recommendations by experts on how can avoid burn-out, whether as a leader or in any role we play:

1. Develop and maintain a spiritual disciple: in other words, dedicate a few moments each day to be alone and talk with God.
2. Be a lifelong learner: when we stop learning, we risk falling into a rut.
3. Take care of yourself: it may seem selfish, but you can't help others if you yourself are in shambles.
4. Maintain friendships and fellowship with people both within the Church and in other venues of your life.
5. Dream and allow your imagination some freedom: otherwise we will never be open to the Holy Spirit and there will be little change in our lives.

I also want to make sure that people do not misunderstand comments I made at the Annual Meeting and in my Report about my serving as the Pastor of the Church. The call extended to me five years ago was premised on the understanding that we needed to grow in both faith, spirit and in confidence. We have done far more in five years than I ever imagined, and I thank God for those accomplishments and to each of you for being part of the transformation of our Church. Another understanding was that with such growth, at some point in the future, the Church would need a Pastor who could spend more time in the ministry of the Church. While I want the congregation to seriously consider whether we are reaching that goal, I DO NOT have a timetable for the transition. That is something that we will decide together, with the guidance of God.

Finally, I wanted to thank everyone for their kind words and prayers for my Mom after she broke her ankle. She has moved from Milford Hospital to the Rose Haven Health Care Center in Litchfield where she will undergo physical therapy for about a month. Your support is deeply appreciated by my entire family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Mike



FEBRUARY 2011

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**Happy Chinese
New Year**



Year of the Rabbit

**Happy
Valentine's Day**



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Father's Love Letter...An Intimate Message From God To You.

My Child,

You may not know me,
but I know everything about you.
Psalm 139:1
I know when you sit down and when you rise up.
Psalm 139:2
I am familiar with all your ways.
Psalm 139:3
Even the very hairs on your head are numbered.
Matthew 10:29-31
For you were made in my image.
Genesis 1:27
In me you live and move and have your being.
Acts 17:28
For you are my offspring.
Acts 17:28
I knew you even before you were conceived.
Jeremiah 1:4-5
I chose you when I planned creation.
Ephesians 1:11-12
You were not a mistake,
for all your days are written in my book.
Psalm 139:15-16
I determined the exact time of your birth
and where you would live.
Acts 17:26
You are fearfully and wonderfully made.
Psalm 139:14
I knit you together in your mother's womb.
Psalm 139:13
And brought you forth on the day you were born.
Psalm 71:6
I have been misrepresented
by those who don't know me.
John 8:41-44
I am not distant and angry,
but am the complete expression of love.
1 John 4:16
And it is my desire to lavish my love on you.
1 John 3:1
Simply because you are my child
and I am your Father.
1 John 3:1
I offer you more than your earthly father ever could.
Matthew 7:11
For I am the perfect father.
Matthew 5:48

Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand.
James 1:17
For I am your provider and I meet all your needs.
Matthew 6:31-33
My plan for your future has always been filled with
hope.
Jeremiah 29:11
Because I love you with an everlasting love.
Jeremiah 31:3
My thoughts toward you are countless
as the sand on the seashore.
Psalms 139:17-18
And I rejoice over you with singing.
Zephaniah 3:17
I will never stop doing good to you.
Jeremiah 32:40
For you are my treasured possession.
Exodus 19:5
I desire to establish you
with all my heart and all my soul.
Jeremiah 32:41
And I want to show you great and marvelous things.
Jeremiah 33:3
If you seek me with all your heart,
you will find me.
Deuteronomy 4:29
Delight in me and I will give you
the desires of your heart.
Psalm 37:4
For it is I who gave you those desires.
Philippians 2:13
I am able to do more for you
than you could possibly imagine.
Ephesians 3:20
For I am your greatest encourager.
2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
I am also the Father who comforts you
in all your troubles.
2 Corinthians 1:3-4
When you are brokenhearted,
I am close to you.
Psalm 34:18
As a shepherd carries a lamb,
I have carried you close to my heart.
Isaiah 40:11
One day I will wipe away
every tear from your eyes.
Revelation 21:3-4
And I'll take away all the pain

you have suffered on this earth.
Revelation 21:3-4
I am your Father, and I love you
even as I love my son, Jesus.
John 17:23
For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed.
John 17:26
He is the exact representation of my being.
Hebrews 1:3
He came to demonstrate that I am for you,
not against you.
Romans 8:31
And to tell you that I am not counting your sins.
2 Corinthians 5:18-19
Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled.
2 Corinthians 5:18-19
His death was the ultimate expression
of my love for you.
1 John 4:10
I gave up everything I loved
that I might gain your love.
Romans 8:31-32
If you receive the gift of my son Jesus,
you receive me.
1 John 2:23
And nothing will ever separate you
from my love again.
Romans 8:38-39
Come home and I'll throw the biggest party
heaven has ever seen.
Luke 15:7
I have always been Father,
and will always be Father.
Ephesians 3:14-15
My question is...
Will you be my child?
John 1:12-13
I am waiting for you.
Luke 15:11-32

Love, Your Dad
Almighty God

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News Notes

Teacher Needed

Sunday School is seeking a volunteer to co-teach 2nd and 3rd grade with Kim Janak. Interested? Please see Barbara Mazzei.

Sunday School Superintendant

Welcome Back to Barbara Mazzei, who has graciously accepted the position of Sunday School Superintendant. Barbara will be overseeing Sunday School activities, curriculum and

staffing. Be sure to welcome her back. Make sure she feels the love!

Mission Trip Planning

Some initial meetings have been held for those interested in attending the mission trip this summer. First Church will be taking part in another food distribution with Simply Smiles in Mexico. A very physical, but extremely rewarding week is being planned for August 13 – 20.



Snow Heart photo by Steven Fasano

*Wish winter didn't love us so much
this year!*

More News Notes

Boar's Head Festival Pizza Party

Thursday, January 27th there was a small gathering of 35 who came out for pizza and the Boar's Head Video. Cindy Rines organized food thanks to Laurel City Singers, Denise Torson got soda, John Eggering set up video stuff, Pastor Mike made the coffee and rounded up paper products...and thanks to Tanya Mongitore for the use of her projector, which allowed us to show the video on the big screen in the dining room.

It was a great evening of laughter, fellowship and celebration of our accomplishments. Dinner and a movie...great night out!

Cupcake Sunday to replace Pie Social

Sunday February 12, we will celebrate Valentine's Day by having an extended coffee hour, with cupcakes, coffee and juice for the kiddies. The bakers among us are encouraged to bring their favorite cake recipe in cupcake form, and for fun...decorated with your best amorous artwork? Valentine Day theme...



Tubing at Camp Jewell

A tubing party at Camp Jewell is planned for February 20th at 2 pm. There is a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Room for those who wish to attend this very slippery event. Dress warm! This event rated 4 mittens (a spare pair is a good idea), 2 boots and 1 hat! Wheeeeeeee!!

Confirmation Classes to Begin

2011 Confirmation is planned to take place on Palm Sunday, April 17th. The tentative date for confirmation classes to begin is February 27th after worship service.

The Whale Hockey Game

Our youth are invited to attend a Whalers Hockey game on March 12th at the XL Center in Hartford. Those who are interested in attending, please speak to Ashley Jones or Pastor Wu for details.

YMCA Swim/Pizza Party

The Sunday School Swim Pizza party has a tentative date...March 19th. Stay tuned...splashing announced in the March Bellringer! Dive into that issue for updated details!



YOUTH ROOM UPDATE Great Space to Hang...

Our new Youth Room located in the former Nursery classroom, has been undergoing some renovations. Thanks to Bruce Sherman, new updated electrical outlets have been installed, to all the installation of the new computer, which will sit on a desk donated by the Storrs family.

With the additions of TV/VCR/DVD player, this is turning into a great space for our youth!

Take a trip upstairs and check it out!

Many Thanks...

Thanks to our church family for the Dinner and a Movie gift card Christmas gift!...it hasn't been used yet...maybe "The King's Speech" would be nice!

Debbie Storrs

Cherub Choir will continue to sing his praises...2nd Sunday each month!



THANK YOU!



¡MUCHAS GRACIAS! Many thanks to you, the congregation, for your Christmas gift. A gift card to Puerto Vallarta was a perfect choice for a Spanish teacher. ¡Buen provecho!

Tricia Wu

Morning Coffee...

A sweet little boy surprised his grandmother one morning and brought her a cup of coffee. He made it himself and was so proud. He anxiously waited to hear the verdict on the quality of the coffee.



The grandmother had never in her life had such a bad cup of coffee, and as she forced down the last sip she noticed three of those little green army guys in the bottom of the cup.

She asked, "Honey, why would three little green army guys be in the bottom of my cup?"

Her grandson replied, "You know grandma, it's like on TV..."

'The best part of waking up is soldiers in your cup.'

Upcoming Events - Mark Your Calendars!

<i>Celebrate With Us...</i>		<i>Looking Forward</i>	
Sunday - 10 am Monday - 6 pm Tuesday - 6 pm Wednesday - 7:30 pm Thursday - 6 - 9 pm	Worship Worship Choir Rehearsal Cherub Choir RehearsalAA / Alanon Meetings Laurel City Singers 2/24 Start	February 6 February 6 February 12 February 20 February 24 February 27 March 12 March 12 March 19	Super Bowl Grinders Mission Trip Meeting Cupcake Sunday Sledding at Camp Jewell Laurel City Singers Start Up Confirmation Classes Begin Whalers Hockey Game-XL Center Steam Vent Coffee House Sunday School Swim/Pizza Party
		<i>Board Meetings...</i>	
	February 1 7:00 pm February 15 7:00 pm February 17 7:00 pm February 22 7:00 pm	PM Board Board of Christian Ed. Deacons Cabinet	



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

01 – Elexys Savoy
02 – Susan Tripodina
03 – Sabrina McAllister
03 – Bailey McCaw
03 – Julie Davy
03 – Laura Day
04 – Paul Hamilton
06 – Kate Roys
07 – Lorraine Tatar
11 – Dan Jones
12 – Jessica Toomey
14 – Mildred Barshaw
16 – Holly Cassaday
16 – Devan McCaw
18 – Virginia Hughes
18 – Eric Smith
18 – Jes Wu
20 – Carol Miles
20 – Debbie Storrs
20 – Will Hurlbut
21 – George Majewski
22 – Bill Calkin
22 – Sharon Doyle
22 – Sarah LeKang
25 – Helen Nye
26 – Bud Roberts
26 – Kelvin Smith
26 – Terry Smyth
27 – Alex Cassaday
28 – Jamie McAllister
28 – Eileen Bensle
2/29-3/1 – Peyton Storrs

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

♥ 15 - Robert & Ann Jones
♥ 19 – Paul & Diane Richards

Just for Fun

A drunk man who smelled like booze sat down on a subway car next to a priest. The man's tie was stained, his face was plastered with red lipstick, and a half-empty bottle of gin was sticking out of his torn coat pocket. He opened his newspaper and began reading.

After a few minutes the man turned to the priest and asked, 'Say Father, what causes arthritis?'

The priest replies, 'My Son, it's caused by loose living, being with cheap, wicked women, too much alcohol, contempt for your fellow man, sleeping around with prostitutes and lack of a bath!'

The drunk muttered in response, 'Well, I'll be damned, ' then returned to his paper.

The priest, thinking about what he had said, nudged the man and apologized. 'I'm very sorry. I didn't mean to come on so strong. How long have you had arthritis?'

The drunk answered, 'I don't have it, Father. I was just reading here that the Pope does.'

MORAL: Make sure you understand the question before offering the answer

Interesting Links

12' X 40' Mural of the Resurrection of Christ in the Museum of Biblical Art.
http://downloads.cbn.com/cbnplayer/cbnPlayer.swf?s=/vod/MW131v2_WS

The older lady in this video, a resident of a retirement community in Omaha, NE, was asked to give the invocation at a dinner/convention of retirement community managers. She does so, but then decides to add a few words of her own...

<http://www.caregiverstress.com/2010/07/a-reminder-that-laughter-is-the-best-medicine/>

Chinese New Year

Year of 2011 is the **Year of the Golden Rabbit**, which begins on February 3, 2011 and ends on January 22, 2012. The Rabbit is the fourth sign of the Chinese Zodiac, which consists of 12 animal signs. The Rabbit is a lucky sign. Rabbits are private individuals and a bit introverted. People born in the **Year of the Rabbit** are reasonably friendly individuals who enjoy the company of a group of good friends. They are good teachers, counselors and communicators, but also need their own space. See more on kids page.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE NEWS...

PROJECTS:

- ❖ Dining room has been repaired
- ❖ The floor under the door in the women's restroom has been fixed so that the door does not scrape on the floor when it is opened.
- ❖ The refrigerator in the downstairs kitchen has a new thermostat, and appears to be working well

BROCHURE:

- ❖ Kim Janak has put together a brochure for the Property Maintenance Board, explaining what the board does, in conjunction with helping to carry on Christ's work for the church.

SOUND SYSTEM:

- ❖ It is so important for everyone to be able to hear what is going on during the service. The replacement for the blown amp that is necessary to power the speakers on top of the columns has arrived. Scott Johnson at Big Johnson's Guitars in Litchfield, did some research for us, and found an amp that will replace the one we had that is no longer available.
- ❖ The sound closet still needs to be rewired to accommodate our updated sound equipment, and safeguard our investment. In the meantime, we will continue to use the back-up system, that is now located behind the organ pipes. With the speakers behind the pipes, the choir can also hear Pastor Mike's messages too!
- ❖ We purchased wireless head-set microphones to use with our wireless system, which proved to be a bit awkward. These have been replaced by smaller over the ear wireless mics that allow Pastor Mic to be more mobile, and really seem to amplify much better than the pulpit mics we have been using.
- ❖ Once the speaker system is back up and running, we have purchased small monitor speakers to be installed behind the organ pipes, so that the choir will still be able to hear, once the back-up system has been removed.

HEALTH INSPECTION:

- ❖ Preparation is underway for the upcoming health inspection. Additions of a cooking thermometer and Clorox for washing dishes will be necessary. All pans need to be stored up-side down in the cabinets for water drainage.

REPAIRS STILL NEEDED:

- ❖ Repairs are needed to the flat roof, pointing and louvers on the bell tower to stop water leaks from ruining interior of the building. Other areas of concern include the back stairs, and leaking water from the windows above the organ. This will be put out for quote in the spring.

Property Maintenance News Continued:

LOOKING AHEAD:

- ❖ A study will be done to determine and prioritize future projects that will need to be done.



DIACONATE BOARD NEWS

LAUREL HILL SERVICE

- ❖ A tentative date for our next service at Laurel Hill Health Care has been set for March 27, depending on the availability of the choir.

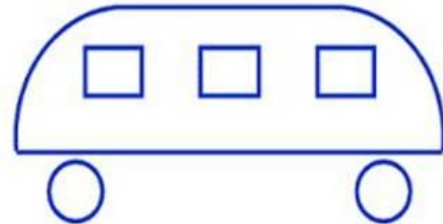
VOICENT SYSTEM CONSIDERED:

- ❖ The addition of a Voicent System is being considered, to automatically call members to notify of upcoming events, storm closings, etc. Lisa Nanni has volunteered to manage the system in the event if a decision is made in favor of the system.

JUST FOR FUN!!

A PRE-SCHOOL TEST FOR YOU

Which way is the bus below traveling?
To the left or to the right?



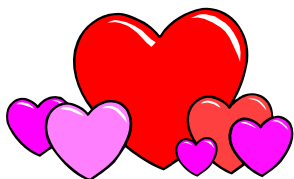
Can't make up your mind? Look carefully at the picture again.
Still don't know?

Pre-schoolers all over the United States were shown this picture and asked the same question. 90% of the pre-schoolers gave this answer.
"The bus is traveling to the left."

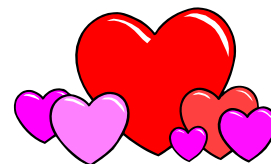
When asked, "Why do you think the bus is traveling to the left?"

They answered:
"Because you can't see the door to get on the bus."

Now how do you feel? As adults we tend to over analyze situations, but kids got it right, just being logical.



February 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 Artist: Karen Delton		1 Cherub Choir 6-6:30 PM Property Maint 7:00	2 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	3  Chinese New Year Year of the Rabbit	4	5
6 Worship 10 am Worship Choir 9:30 am Super Bowl Grinder Pick-up	7 Worship Choir 6:00 pm	8 Cherub Choir 6-6:30 PM Chris Ed 6:30	9 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	10	11	12
13 Worship 10 am Cherub Choir 9:30 am	14  Happy Valentines Day Worship Choir 6:00 pm	15 Cherub Choir 6-6:30 PM	16 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	17 Deacon's 7:00	18	19
20 Worship 10 am Worship Choir 9:30 am Tubing at Camp Jewell 2PM	21 Worship Choir 6:00 pm	22 Cherub Choir 6-6:30 PM Cabinet 7:00	23 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	24 Laurel City Singers Rehearsals Begin 6-9	25	26
27 Worship 10 am Open Mic Sunday Confirmation Classes Begin	28 Worship Choir 6:00 pm					

Kid's Page

I W I N D C H I L L B N T H E
N E O R T H E C R N L H E M I
S P T H E R E E W I I N T E R
S S T A O L S T I C Z E O F C
N H O C K E Y G N I Z E E R F
O C B U R S S D E C A B E O M
W B B E R C T W E N R D T S Y
M R O T S W O N S U D R K T F
A I G R S H T L A O R I T W E
N N A T Y C S R D E I F C O S
J A N U A R Y N D N H T I H T
I S T H E A D A G Y W S O I T
H T R E B M E C E D H V U E L
E A S T A M O U N T E O F L D
A Y L I G I C I C L E S H T S

WINTER WORD SEARCH

BLIZZARD	JANUARY
COLD	MARCH
DECEMBER	SHOVEL
DRIFTS	SKATE
FEBRUARY	SKIING
FREEZING	SLUSH
FROST	SNOWMAN
HOCKEY	SNOWSTORM
ICE	TOBBOGAN
ICICLES	WIND CHILL

HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR – YEAR OF THE RABBIT

People born in the **Year of the Rabbit** share certain characteristics: Keen, wise, fragile, tranquil, serene, considerate, fashionable, and kind. Generally, they are quite calm, do not exhibit aggressive behavior, and will avoid confrontation at all costs. When angry about something, they will approach it calmly and considerately, hardly ever raising their voice. And they are quite keen and pay close attention to the situations developing around them. They are intelligent and quick, and can talk themselves in or out of most situations with no problem.

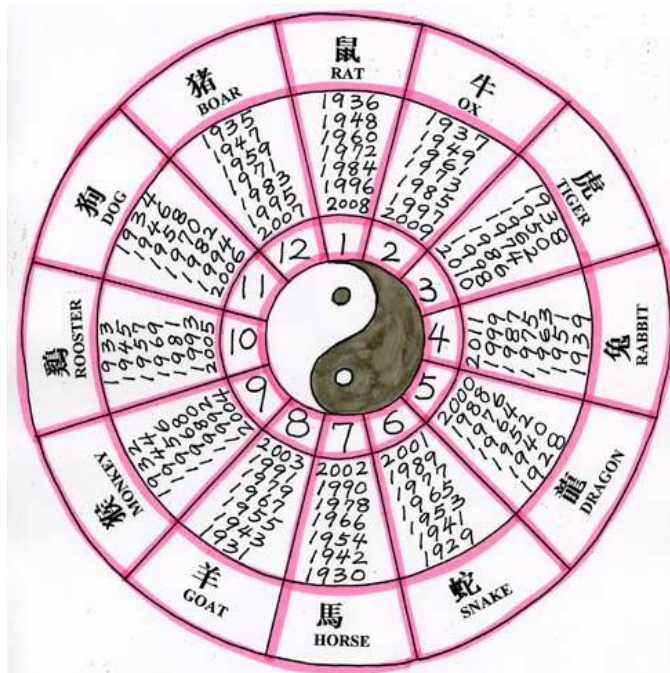
The Rabbit is a symbol for mercy, elegance, and worship of beauty. People born in the Year of the Rabbit are kind, loving persons, and dislike any hostile act. They give others an impression of being frail-looking because of their gentle appearance. But, in fact they are strong-minded and have strong wills. They pursue their ideals all their lives in a precise and orderly way. They do things slowly and deliberately because of their cautious characters.

There is no need to worry about their lives. They are nimble, clever and good at avoiding harm to themselves. They are talented and like artistic ventures, such as painting and music and are generally quite present in these worlds. They are also very hospitable, good hosts and warm-hearted companions. They never embrace others in public places. They know the art of saving face and giving consideration to the interests of both sides.

People born in the **Year of the Rabbit** are apt to be sensitive to ailments and to have bad allergies. Stress or conflict will detriment their health. Exercise could take off unnecessary stress and strengthen their physical condition. They have to learn to incorporate more action into their everyday routines.

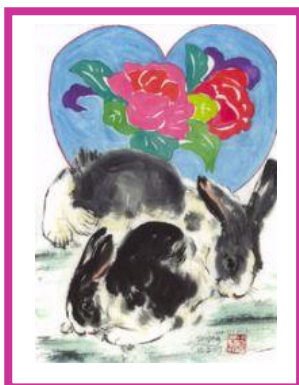
They will become depressed and withdrawn if their homes do not consist of beautiful possessions that make them comfortable. Their homes and offices usually are clutter-free. They have really good communication skills and are best utilized in positions of management. They make great teachers and counselors because they are so diplomatic and well-organized. They can also make great painters or musicians due to their sense of beauty and their love of creativity.

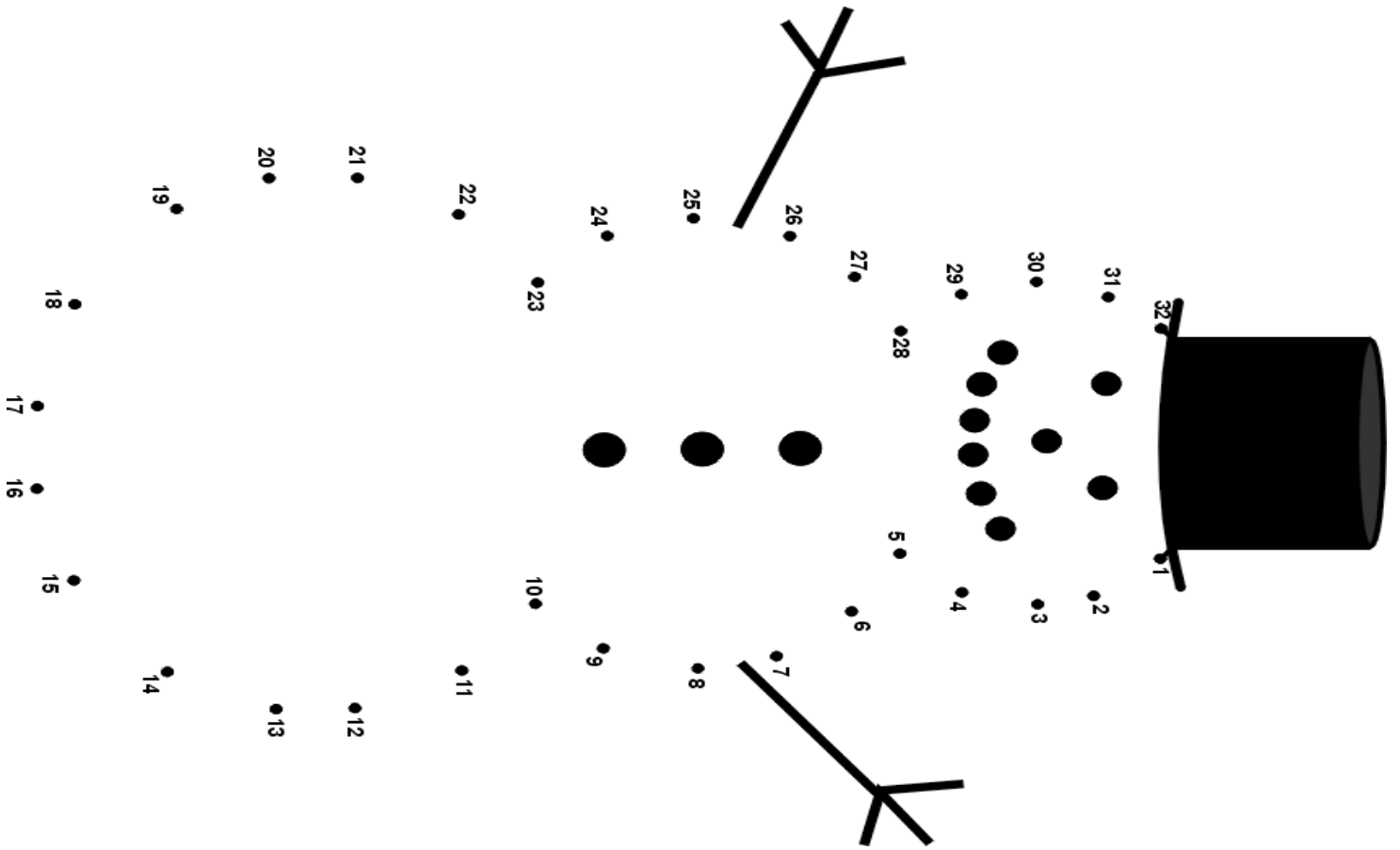
Rabbit people are usually relatively careful when it comes to their finances. They use much of their money for possessions such as their homes, cars or furniture. They love hunting for antiques, arts and crafts and will tend to make sound investments in these types of things.



CHINESE ZODIAC

Which animal sign were you born under?





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BELLRINGER



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